

Briefing Book

Doug Nygren is inviting select Steering Committee Members, virtual presenters, and those registered to attend the meeting virtually to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: RFHP\FOR 2026 Annual Meeting

Time: Sep 23, 2026 08:15 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Every day, until Sep 24, 2026, 2 occurrence(s)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Daily: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZcod-utqDoqH93ELAF4WFPcYNVTzXSRIgf4/ics?icsToken=DGDMuiAah8_k3uMDZwAALAAAPQcsTzVuNGvOjH3pOli6IDksqQs08sVgHj0qJRFvbMlc-QzWw5zLtRes1oogm4FfUTk1biGsrjE5x3gCTAwMDAwMg&meetingMasterEventId=Gki9ErirTKuf-1VfeYXmcw

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STEERING COMMITTEE BRIEFING BOOK 2026 RESERVOIR FISHERIES HABITAT PARTNERSHIP



BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

September 23rd, 8:30 am Mountain Time Zone

Welcome/Introductions

Presentation by Brett High, Regional Fisheries Manager, Idaho Fish and Game

Approval of 2025 Minutes/Financial Statement (page 4)

2026 Coordinator Work Plan Accomplishments and 2027 Work Plan (pages 5-11)

2027 Budget (page 12)

Current Executive Committee Members and Working Group Members (pages 13-15)

2027 RFP Process for NFHP federal funds, Discussion on federal permitting challenges
(pages 16-18)

New NFHP Conservation Priorities (page 19-20)

Project Updates and Small Grants (pages 21-39)

Science and Data Committee Update (page 40)

FRIENDS OF RESERVOIRS MEETING

FOR Membership Update (no handout)

Communications Committee Report – Rebecca Krogman (pages 41-42)

Conservation Partnerships Accomplishments and Work Plan (page 43-47)

	Income and Expenses Jan1- Aug31	
	Beginning Balance (1-Jan 2026)	\$37,935.28
Income		
	Grant	\$54,934.85
	Grant App Fee	\$216.00
	Membership	\$560.14
	Bank Adj\Hotel Refund\Travel Reimbursement	\$300.00
	Sponsorship	\$1,000.00
	Meeting Registration (Not transferred from PayPal yet)	0.0
	Donation	\$12,025.111
	Fundraising\Brand Apparel\Promo	652.83
Total Income		\$69,060.94
Expenses		
	Coordinator Salary	\$40,000.00
	Outreach Coord Salary	\$9,000.00
	Director of Conservation Partnership	\$8,000.00
	Annual Meeting/Membership Refunds	\$0.00
	Bank Fees	\$84.00
	Bank Adjustments - Fraud issues	\$0.00
	Travel	\$1,683.72
	Membership	\$0.00
	Postage/shipping	\$0.00
	Meeting Expense	\$368.73
	Tax Prep	\$400.00
	Outreach	\$0.00
	Website	\$3,651.24
	Legal	\$0.0
	Office Expense	\$0.0
	Fundraising\Brand Apparel\Promo	0.0
	Grant Distribution	\$2,000.00
Total Expense		\$65549.49
Ending Balance (31 August 2026)		\$41,446.73
Estimated Ending Balance (31 Dec 2026)		\$56,645.28

RFHP Coordinator Report

2026

Overview

2026 RFHP activities focused heavily on expanding and administering grant funding, strengthening partnerships and fundraising capacity, supporting new and existing chapters, managing federal grant requirements, coordinating with NFHP, and preparing for the 2026 Annual Meeting in Idaho.

Significant effort was also devoted to developing new funding opportunities, improving project-submission and reporting processes, maintaining the organization's financial and administrative requirements, and resolving compliance and funding issues associated with federal awards.

Grant Development, Administration, and Funding

- Distributed separate RFPs for Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund, NFHP Federal Fund, RFHP Small Grants, and responded to applicant questions and requests for assistance.
- Utilized RFHP's online project-submission and review process to streamline applications and evaluations.
- Developed project-selection criteria that incorporated the five essential components required by the ACE Act and addressed applicant readiness for federal funding, including SAMS, ASAP, and Grant Solutions requirements.
- Coordinated the 2026 Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund grant process, including soliciting projects, working with new and existing chapters, reviewing and scoring 15 project proposals, entering projects into the NFHP database, and completing the final submission and ranking process.
- Distributed project Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund proposals to Regional Working Groups for scoring and summarized project scores and rankings for Executive Committee review and approval.
- Provided the prioritized Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund project list to the Beyond the Pond/NFHP Board on March 31, 2026.
- Received notification of a \$250,000 Bass Pro Shops contribution, providing an important opportunity to strengthen future conservation funding.
- Assisted with subsequent Bass Pro Shops grant awards, including coordination with NFHP on distributing awards to three successful recipients and assisting with contract development.
- Worked with Therese Thompson and others throughout the year on Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund projects funded from three annual donations totaling \$1,250,000.
- Continued preparations for the 2027 federal project prioritization process.
- Worked with FWS personnel and grantees to address challenges associated with 2025 federal grants, including environmental compliance, contracting, funding amounts, and other federal requirements.

- Coordinated with project partners and FWS to streamline submission of compliance documentation through the new Small Grant Grant Solutions process.
- Focused significant attention on resolving DOI funding holds affecting the Cochiti, New Mexico, and Blue Marsh, Pennsylvania, projects and coordinated with FWS and affected grantees while awaiting final resolution.
- Worked with three federally funded project leaders on their 2026 federal grant applications.
- Revised the 2026 Operations Grant in response to FWS requests for a higher funding amount and additional information.
- Developed the FY2024 and FY2025 annual grant solution reports for the Operations and Maintenance Grant and completed the reports in compliance with federal requirements.
- Completed required federal financial processes for operations funding throughout the year and closed out documentation associated with the 2025 Operations Grant.
- Ensured timely reporting and accounting of funded projects and developed an online project-update form to collect information for projects funded during the previous five years.
- Awarded the Greers Ferry small grant following approval by the Steering Committee.

Fundraising, Sponsorships, and Partnerships

- Began the process of creating additional organizational capacity focused on securing new funding for the partnership.
- Assisted with securing \$5,000 in grant funding to support a new part-time fundraising position.
- Hired Tom Lang as Director of Conservation Partnerships to assist with corporate sponsorships, fundraising, and development of new conservation partnerships.
- Worked with Tom Lang and others to develop new sponsorship and fundraising efforts.
- Explored partnership and funding opportunities with organizations including Lowes, Data Center Coalition, Aqua Real Time, and others.
- Met with Lowes regarding a potential North Carolina pilot program involving unsold Christmas trees.
- Met with the Data Center Coalition to explore potential collaboration, including AI services and reservoir water-use issues associated with data centers.
- Assisted Lake Wichita, Texas, with utilizing RFHP's nonprofit status to support fundraising.
- Completed online donation and funding-request forms for Biobase, TriMarine, and Oase partnership opportunities.
- Continued efforts to identify additional corporate sponsors and strengthen RFHP's long-term fundraising capacity.

Chapter Development and Member Support

- Worked with new and prospective chapters as well as other organizations interested in participating in RFHP grant opportunities.

- Assisted chapters and small-grant applicants with applications, submissions, project development, and questions.
- Supported chapters in navigating the Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund RFP and other funding opportunities.
- Continued to strengthen communication and participation among RFHP chapters and project partners.

NFHP Coordination and Organizational Representation

- Regularly participated in NFHP/FHP Coordinator meetings, providing opportunities for Fish Habitat Partnerships to share information, discuss challenges, and report successes.
- Participated in NFHP Policy Committee activities while serving on the NFHP Policy Committee.
- Attended NFHP Board meetings, either in person or via webinar.
- Presented an overview of RFHP to the NFHP Board and represented RFHP at NFHP events and meetings.
- Worked closely with NFHP staff on grant submissions, project administration, funding decisions, database updates, and partnership priorities.
- Provided NFHP with photographs and other materials for use in its database and outreach and education efforts.
- Participated in the NFHP 20th Anniversary celebration and assisted with ideas and planning for the event.
- Reviewed new NFHP key performance indicators for partnership evaluations and tier determinations.
- Continued efforts to advance the goals and priorities of NFHP through coordination with other Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Outreach, Recognition, and Communications

- Worked with the Outreach Committee to promote and market FOR/RFHP.
- Added content to the RFHP website and worked to expand available website features.
- Expanded RFHP's social media presence and supported broader outreach and communications efforts.
- Assisted with the development of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Champion Award recognizing Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops for their significant contributions to fish habitat conservation.
- Participated in ceremonies recognizing Johnny Morris's contributions to NFHP.
- Worked with Ryan Roberts (NFHP staff) on development of an RFHP/NFHP partnership fact sheet to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of NFHP

Financial and Administrative Management

- Served as Business Manager for RFHP, working with the Steering Committee on organizational financial and administrative matters.

- Worked with the Steering Committee to establish the RFHP operating budget, excluding project funding.
- Produced financial information and reports for the Annual Meeting.
- Completed the 2025 income and expense report and provided required documentation to tax-preparation accountants.
- Completed documents necessary for IRS tax filings.
- Maintained the official Income and Expense Report for 2026 and continued ongoing financial administration.
- Completed federal financial processes necessary to draw operations funding during 2026.
- Updated the organization's SAM registration for the coming year.
- Maintained required grant, financial, and organizational documentation.
- Continued Steering Committee conference calls and meetings, including meetings held in February, April, June, and August.

2026 Annual Meeting

A substantial portion of the spring and summer was devoted to planning and preparing for the 2026 RFHP Annual Meeting in Idaho Falls.

Activities included:

- Selected Idaho Falls as the site for the 2026 Annual Meeting.
- Worked with Idaho Fish and Game and the Henry's Fork Foundation on meeting logistics and arrangements.
- Coordinated lodging, meeting space, accommodations, transportation, and other meeting details.
- Developed and finalized the Henry's Fork workshop and field tour.
- Coordinated with meeting hosts and partners regarding the workshop, field trip, transportation, accommodations, and meeting schedules.
- Prepared the meeting briefing book and associated reports.
- Coordinated with partners on the workshop, field tour, and other Annual Meeting activities.

Key Accomplishments and Priorities

The first eight months of 2026 reflect substantial growth and activity for RFHP. The organization successfully managed a significant volume of grant activity while continuing to expand its chapter network, improve grant-administration processes, and develop new sources of funding.

Major accomplishments include the successful administration and submission of the 2027 Bass Pro Shops project package, continued progress on federal grants and Operations Grant funding, securing new funding for a dedicated fundraising position, hiring a Director of Conservation Partnerships, receiving notice of a \$250,000 Bass Pro Shops contribution, and expanding sponsorship and partnership discussions.

RFHP also strengthened its grant-administration systems through expanded online application and review processes, improved project reporting and compliance procedures, and greater coordination with FWS and NFHP. The organization continued to address federal grant compliance and DOI funding holds while working to ensure that funded projects remain on schedule and in compliance with federal requirements.

The organization also made significant progress toward increasing its long-term fundraising capacity, strengthening relationships with corporate and conservation partners, supporting the development of new chapters, and increasing RFHP's visibility through outreach, recognition, and participation in NFHP activities.

The 2026 Annual Meeting planning effort represented another major organizational priority, with RFHP successfully coordinating with Idaho Fish and Game and the Henry's Fork Foundation to develop the meeting, workshop, and Henry's Fork field tour.

2027 RESERVOIR FISHERIES HABITAT COORDINATOR - FY2026

Work Plan

- Develop FY2025 and FY26 Annual Grant Solution Reports for our O&M grant;
- Work with Outreach Committee to promote/market FOR/RFHP
 - Add content to website and expand available features;
 - Expand social media presence
 - Seek to secure additional corporate sponsors
- Solicit projects for funding
 - Project selection criteria to reflect the new NFHP Conservation Priorities as required by the ACE Act and continue to require the applicant to state they have or can obtain a SAMS account, access to ASAP, and Grant Solutions
 - Utilize online submission and review on website (as needed)
 - Distribute separate RFPs for Bass Pro Shop Outdoor Fund (February 2027) , NFHP Federal Fund (August 2027), and FOR Small Grants
 - Distribute project proposals to Regional Working Groups for scoring
 - Summarize projects and scores/rankings for Executive Committee review and approval
 - Provide prioritized project list to Beyond the Pond\NFHP Board by March 31, 2027 for Bass Pro Shop Outdoor Funds and by November 15, 2027 for federal funds.
 - Ensure timely reporting and accounting of funded projects
 - Work with project partners and FWS to submit project compliance documents using the new streamlined Grant Solutions process
 - Update RFHP and NFHP Project Databases
 - Assist\ensure compliance of projects funded by Bass Pro Shops funding for reservoir projects
- Liaise with other NFHP Partnerships
 - Advance goals of NFHP
 - Attend NFHP Board Meetings (either in person or via webinar)
- Serve as Business Manager for RFHP
 - Work with Executive Committee to:
 - Establish budget for operations of RFHP (excluding project funding) to include more salary funding and funding for year 2 of the new assessment project in the 2028 operations budget.

- Produce financial report for annual meeting
- Compile income/expense statement and provide to accountant for completion of FOR tax return
- Continue Steering Committee conference calls
- Serve on the NFHP Partnership Policy Committee
- Work with local arrangements to schedule/arrange accommodations for RFHP meetings
 - Produce and distribute minutes of RFHP Annual Meeting
 - 2027 meeting (Location TBD)

Priorities for 2027

- Strengthening fundraising and corporate sponsorship efforts.
- Expanding chapter participation and support.
- Successfully administering current and future federal and private grants.
- Resolving outstanding federal funding and DOI hold issues.
- Completing the federal project prioritization and submission process for 2028.
- Developing new strategic partnerships and funding opportunities.
- Continuing to improve project reporting, compliance, and grant-administration systems.
- Building on the relationships, visibility, and momentum generated through the 2026 Annual Meeting and NFHP activities.

Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership - Budget (2027)	
Estimated Beginning Balance of FOR Account (Jan 1, 2027)	\$56,645.28
2027 Income (projected)	
FY2026 FWS O&M Project Award	\$114,201.00
Annual Meeting Registration	\$5,000.00
Small Grant/Mossback Application Fee	\$200.00
FOR memberships	\$150.00
Sponsorships	\$10,000.00
Donations	\$40,000.00
TOTAL	\$169,551.00
2027 Expenses (projected)	
Coordinator Salary	\$60,000.00
Outreach Salary	\$12,000.00
Director of Conservation Partnerships (not federally funded)	\$24,000.00
Travel	\$17,000.00
Mileage (\$1,000)	\$1,000.00
Tax Return	\$350.00
CT Corp (501 c 3 registration)	\$275.00
Annual Meeting (FOR rooms/Meals)	\$7,000.00
Office Expense	\$1,000.00
Small Projects Grants	\$20,000.00
Website\Web Services\Virtual Meeting support\Software	\$10,000.00
Outreach O&M (unspecified)	\$5,000.00
TOTAL	\$157,625.00
INCOME MINUS-EXPENSES	\$11,926.00
Projected Ending Balance	\$68,571

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Steering Committee) COMPOSITION FROM RFHP BYLAWS & WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

The membership of the RFHP Executive Committee includes by category of organization:

- Four State agency members
- Up to six Federal agency members
- Up to four Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Up to three Industry representatives
- One at large member; candidates include, but are not limited to Tribal Nations

Individual members of the Executive Committee will be selected, respectively, by the organizations that are assigned seats to the committee.

1. State and Federal agencies constitute eight (8) to 10 positions on the Executive Committee.
2. Executive Committee members will designate the specific organizations within stated categories for all other Executive Committee seats by a majority vote of a quorum of the Executive Committee.
3. Remaining Committee seats are designated by category for:
 - a. Outdoor recreation and fishing industry
 - b. Non-Governmental Organizations
 - c. At-Large, including but not limited to Tribal Nations
4. Organizations and individuals from each of the categories mentioned in (3) above must be invited to join the Executive Committee.

- Richard Zweifel, Ohio DNR, MAFWA
- Ben Page, NEAFWA
- Mike Homer, Steering\Executive Committee Chair, TPWD, SEAFWA
- Craig Walker, Utah Division of Wildlife Resource, WAFWA
- Lynn Quatro, South Carolina DNR, FAS\AFS
- BLM vacant

- Gene Gilliland, B.A.S.S.
- BOR- vacant
- Reed Green, NALMS
- Kevin Pope, USGS
- Jeremy Crossland, USACE
- Mark Porath, USFWS.
- John Okeefe, Yamaha
- FWS Coordinator – Trevor Luna

REGIONAL WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

WAFWA

Don Wiley, Utah Division of Wildlife, W Working Group

Steve Gale, Wyoming Fish and Game Department, W Working Group

Nathan Bailey, Arizona Fish and Game, W Working Group

Lacey Schmitt, Arizona Fish and Game, W Working Group

Jacob Miller, New Mexico Department of Fish and Game, W Working Group

MAFWA

Sandra Clark-Kolaks, Indiana DNR, MW Working Group

Joe Conroy, OH DNR, MW Working Group

Ben Dodd, IA DNR, MW Working Group

Mike Mounce, Illinois DNR (retired), MW Working Group

Jeff Jackson, Nebraska Game and Parks, MW Working Group

Shane Bush, Missouri Dept of Conservation, MW Working Group

Jeff Conley, KS KDWP, MW Working Group

SEAFWA

Michael Homer, TX Parks and Wildlife, SE Working Group

Mark Fowlkes, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, SE Working Group

Jeremy Shiflet, KY Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, SE Working Group

Lynde Dodd, USACE, SE Working Group

Jeremy Risley, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, SE Working Group

Brian Todd, M) Missouri Dept of Conservation, SE Working Group

NEAFWA

Ben Page, PA Fish and Boat Commission, NE Working Group

2027 RFP Process for NFHP federal funds and federal permitting challenges

2027 RFP Process for NFHP federal funds

Our 2027 Package for submission will include:

1. Cover Letter -Submit a cover letter explaining what you are requesting and why, not to exceed one page.

2. NFHP Funded Project Status

The purpose of this section is to validate that NFHP funded projects are being completed in a timely manner, and information is updated and communicated with NFHP. This includes all active or ongoing projects and completed projects from FY2021-FY2026. Please use the NFHP project tracking system to export project lists and provide any additional notes as needed.

NFHP ProjectID	Project Name	FY Funded	Status (MM/YY completed)	Notes about status ₁	Project Products (e.g. links, press releases, websites, etc)
1234	Creek Restoration	2021	Active		Website with project status link here.
2222	Estuary Restoration	2020	Completed (09/22)		Project website. Project report link.
1222	FHP Coordination	2022	Completed (09/23)		FHP website here.

Status notes may include expected completion date, or notes about progress of the project.

3. Key Performance Indicators Spreadsheet

Partnership Score Sheet to be used to determine funding tier (2027 allocation)
Key Performance Indicator
Steering committee or other partner meetings held (AP)
Inclusivity of steering committee (seats available for state, federal, NGO, fishing community, Tribal representation) (ACE AND AP)
New, updated, in progress, or currently implementing regional assessment tools that are used in FHP project decisions or strategic planning (ACE)
Up to date Communications plan (AP)
Updated strategic plan with shared priorities (ACE AND AP)
NFHP funded project information completely and accurately maintained in the NFHP data system
Engagement with the NFHP Board (committees, attending meetings, Board buddy engagement, etc)
Up to date and/or actively maintained website
PROJECT RELATED METRICS (45 Points)
Key Performance Indicator
Project funding (\$) secured with non-NFHP funds directly or indirectly by FHP that explicitly address FHP strategic priorities (ACE AND AP)
% of projects that directly address a SWAP, FMP, watershed plan, or similar state or regional plan (ACE AND AP)
Non-federal match ratio leveraged on NFHP-funded projects (ACE Min 1:1)
Funds projects that improve recreational fishing (ACE)
Funds projects that increase or improve public access to fisheries resources (ACE)
Project funding (%) provided to federally recognized tribes (ACE)
% of NFHP-funded projects that specifically address findings of national or regional assessments
SCIENCE AND DATA EFFORTS (30 Points)
Key Performance Indicator
Fill relevant science and data gaps and share with partners (ACE)
Reporting evaluation/accountability for project results in NFHP data system- % of NFHP-funded projects over the past 5 years that have an evaluation report documented in the project tracking system- can be a link or attachment
COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH (25 Points)
Key Performance Indicator
Webinars/symposia hosted to share science (AP)

4. Detailed Operations Budget Spreadsheet - For salaries, please note the total amount of funding and number of FTEs for each position, along with the source(s) of the funding.

5. Proposed Projects (FY 2027) - The goal of this section is to ensure that projects proposed for NFHP funds meet the requirements of Title II of the America's Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act).

Complete the online form in the Project Tracking Database for EACH proposed project for which you are seeking FY27 NFHP project funds, including a project to request FHP operational funds.

Federal Permitting Challenges – actions after discussion from last year's meeting

Discussion on the pathways toward resolution with Jason Olive changed the path slightly. We had mentioned working with the NFHP Policy Committee, but Jason recommended the Partnership Committee.

We also checked with AFWA's Fisheries and Water Resource Committee to see if they had been concerned about permitting issue. I was informed that was not on their agenda but it could be added.

To add this to the AFWA and NFHP Partnership Committee workload we would need to put together some specific examples of problems that we have been experiencing.

NFHP Board - National Conservation Priority (NCP) Update

For 2026-2031, the National Fish Habitat Board has designated the following National Conservation Priorities for the purpose of improving fishing and public access:

Conservation of adequate amounts of clean water for fish and fishing

- Conservation of water quality and quantity in headwater streams
- Promotion of best land use practices to reduce nutrient inputs to aquatic systems to reduce the occurrence of harmful algal blooms and hypoxic zones
- Reduction of impacts of water diversions and dewatering of streams

Using a watershed-based approach to conserve fish habitat connectivity

- Support fish habitat connectivity projects that restore watershed function, including instream flow, temperature, salinity, nutrients, and sedimentation balance
- Expand, improve, and utilize the [National Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative](#) (NACC) barrier inventory and prioritization tool to prioritize aquatic connectivity projects

Conservation of healthy and productive fish habitats

- Conservation of nearshore and estuarine nursery habitats
- Conservation and expansion of kelp, coral, and other reef structures, including natural and artificial
- Conservation of complex habitat in lake and reservoir systems
- Conservation of riparian habitats

The NFHP National Conservation Priorities for FY 2026 were:

- **Conserve waters and habitats where all processes and functions are operating within their expected range or natural variation.** - This priority focuses action on acquiring or protecting in other ways fish habitats that are currently functioning and

are considered intact for the purpose of preventing future degradation. In essence: protect what is currently working.

- **Conserve hydrologic conditions for fish.** - This priority focuses on ensuring that appropriate hydrologic (annual and daily flows and water levels) and hydrodynamic (current or velocity) conditions are always available to allow fish to optimize their production. This is accomplished by rehabilitating degraded and improving engineered hydrographs and hydrodynamic conditions to ensure all needed fish habitats are available at the appropriate times.
- **Conserve physical and living habitats and features that support viable and sustainable species and/or populations in impacted or at-risk systems.** - This priority focuses on protection, rehabilitation, and/or enhancement of those critical habitat features within a waterbody that are necessary to support ecological function and processes such as structure, vegetation, and habitat complexity that may be lacking, may have been altered, or simply may not be functioning effectively.
- **Reconnect fragmented fish habitats.** - When aquatic habitats lack full connectivity, fish cannot freely move among the places they need to complete their life cycle and maximize their production. This priority is focused on identifying, removing, rehabilitating, or otherwise addressing anthropogenic barriers so they no longer restrict fish movement and instead allow fish to access habitats, migrate, locate refugia, and seek food and mates.
- **Conserve water quality for fish.** - This priority focuses on efforts to conserve the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of water quality, mitigate impairments, and restore degraded conditions to support improved fish habitat.
- **Support the structure and function of Fish Habitat Partnerships.** - The FHPs conduct the foundational work necessary to ensure that NFHP achieves its mission to protect, restore and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people. This priority focuses on supporting strong and effective FHPs and their unique approaches to collaborative, science-driven fish habitat conservation.
- **Enhance recreational, commercial, subsistence, and traditional fishing opportunities when conducting projects that conserve fish habitat.** - This priority includes actions that are intended to broaden support for fish habitat conservation, increase fishing opportunities, support traditional fishing practices, and increase participation in fish habitat conservation activities by local communities, particularly young people, by improving access, education, and participation.

Large Projects and Small Grants Update

2024 NFHP Board Funded

NC - Expansion of North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission's native aquatic plant program (\$75,000) Project Complete

Aquatic plants can play a major role as a food source for aquatic invertebrates as well as juvenile and adult fish habitat. Aquatic plants can improve water clarity and quality and can reduce rates of shoreline erosion, sediment resuspension and help prevent spread of nuisance exotic plants. Ageing reservoirs begin to lose a significant portion of their aquatic habitat due to siltation, eroding banks, decaying of large wood debris and poor water quality. This loss can affect the quality of the fishery, which could have detrimental economic impacts. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (Commission) has been establishing native aquatic vegetation in reservoirs for decades. In 2018, a small-scale aquatic plant nursery was constructed at our facility in Mebane, NC to address increasing demand. While this nursery has expanded our capabilities, we are currently limited to a production capacity of 3,500 plants annually, and we have limited capabilities to overwinter plants or maintain self-sustaining on-site sources of various plant species. The construction of a larger facility will increase plant production capability as well as provide a better capability to overwinter plants and create sustainable on-sites sources of material. An expanded nursery will also provide more space for aquatic plant research that will be used to increase the overall effectiveness of our in-reservoir habitat enhancement projects.

ID - Stop the Squeeze: utilizing hypolimnetic oxygenation to improve sport fish habitat, water quality, climate adaptation, and economic opportunity for Island Park Reservoir and the Henry's Fork of the Snake River, Idaho (\$50,000) Project completed

Develop a hypolimnetic oxygenation design plan to oxygenate the Island Park Reservoir hypolimnion to 6 mg/L. Project goal is to permanently eliminate the drawdown-driven oxythermal habitat squeeze by designing, evaluating, and installing a hypolimnetic oxygenation system. A shovel-ready plan allows leveraging up to \$3 million in USBR WaterSmart grants available through the Infrastructure and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act.

IA - Lake Red Rock Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (\$56,500) Project Complete

Lake Red Rock is the largest lake in Iowa with a surface area of 15,250 acres at conservation pool. The lake lacks adequate littoral structure. The project will increase structural habitat, improve angler opportunities and enhance the quality of the fishery in Lake Red Rock. The project will provide quality structural habitat for natural spawning, nursery locations for young fish, congregation areas for forage fish and feeding opportunities for predator fish. The project will place 42 Mossback Essential Shallow Water Bundles, 20 Mossback Essential Deep Water Bundles, 22 Mossback Basic Shoreline Bundles, 14 Mossback Mega Reef structures. In addition, there will be placement of 30 Cedar Trees Adjacent to the newly treated USACE shoreline riprap stabilization project.

II - Rend Lake Native Habitat Improvement and Shoreline Erosion Prevention (\$40,000) Project active

Rend Lake has a surface area of 20,633 acres, a maximum depth of 35 feet, and a mean depth of 10 feet. The lake is thirteen miles long and three miles wide and has 162 miles of shoreline. It is the second largest impoundment in Illinois. This project is proposed to create biological habitat, inhibit shoreline erosion on highly eroded areas, inhibit mobilization of sediment and nutrients, and reintroduce native plants to an area invaded by common reed. The benefits expected include: increased complexity and diversity of habitat for fish and other wildlife, decreased turbidity, siltation, and nutrient loading for improved water quality, increase of native plant species, and the protection of infrastructure necessary for the outdoor recreators to Rend Lake and its surrounding communities. This will promote increased density of priority game fishes and other desirable organisms for greater quality of experiences for anglers, campers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. This improvement project will also increase tourism dollars spent in the surrounding communities.

PA - F.J. Sayers Lake Shoreline Enhancement Project (\$75,000) -Funded with Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund donation Project completed

F.J. Sayers Lake located in central Pennsylvania is a popular fishing destination and at one time had the second most application for bass tournaments. The lake hosts over 500,00 visitors to the park generating over \$18 million revenue to the local community. The lake was constructed in the late 60s for flood control by the US Army Corps of Engineers and has an annual winter drawdown of 20'. Drawdown and reservoir aging are extremely detrimental to the fishery. Lack of aquatic habitat is the limiting factor. The lake and region in general has been impacted by storm events, climate change, and urbanization which fluctuates lake and stream levels. Native aquatic plants are usually frozen out during winter

and ice crushes all artificial and natural habitat in the 5'-20' water column. We feel that planting trees as part of the riparian buffer plantings and shoreline enhancement structures should help protect and prevent issues from climate change. The objective of this project is to stabilize shorelines at F.J. Sayers Lake by creating stone deflectors at specific locations. The plan is to create 103 stone framed deflectors at several sites. Project partners will create riparian buffer plantings and access points where practicable. The partners will continue volunteer scale efforts at the lake and plan to add an additional 1600 rock rubble reef, 300 short vertical plank structures, and 180 channel catfish boxes.

MO - Mark Twain Lake Fisheries Habitat Development Project (\$20,000) Project active

Mark Twain Lake, built in 1984, is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project authorized for flood risk management in the Salt River Basin, hydroelectric power generation, water supply, fish and wildlife conservation, recreation, and incidental navigation support to the Mississippi River system. At normal pool, the reservoir provides 18,600 acres of warm water fisheries habitat. The reservoir has progressed through the natural maturation process associated with man-made impoundments. The standing timber is deteriorating, and the underwater structure it creates is diminishing. This results in impacts to aquatic invertebrate populations, species recruitment, and protective habitat. The project will place 100 4'x4'x4' MTL Fish Cubes, 150 Spider Blocks, and 150 Porcupine Cribs in the basin of the reservoir based on strategic habitat requirements. 63 reservoir acres will be addressed with this project. This proposal is on a small, but impactful scale, address the loss of structural habitat, create appealing shoreline access to the management unit, and encourage increased recreational angling opportunities.

KY - Paintsville Lake Habitat Improvement Initiative \$20,000 – Funded with Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund donation Project active

Paintsville Lake is an impoundment of Paint Creek in eastern Kentucky, operated by the USACE for flood control. As with the majority of reservoirs across Kentucky, and the nation, essential fish habitat in the form of submerged structure has deteriorated significantly through time. This project will utilize reef balls to establish five new fish habitat sites and enhance several existing fish habitat locations where handicap accessible bank fishing sites have recently been established. Natural and artificial materials will be added to the reef balls to further enhance the habitat provided to fish.

2025 Funded Projects from both NFHP Funds and Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund donation

Blue Marsh Lake Shoreline Project – Blue Marsh Lake, PA Project active

Sponsor - Berks County Conservation District, USACE, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Amount of Grant Request – Federal Funds	\$75,000.00
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Description - The Berks County Conservation District in partnership with the PA Fish & Boat Commission and US Army Corps of Engineers proposes to address severe shoreline erosion caused by boat wake and wind wave action near a popular boat launch on Blue Marsh Lake. Project partners plan to install 600 feet of saw-toothed deflectors, increase complex littoral zone cover, and provide spawning and ambush habitat for multiple fish species. Partners will also address a lack of quality spawning habitat for panfish and other species at the 5-foot winter draw down contour using concrete and rock rubble reefs.

DeGray Lake Fisheries Revegetation -DeGray Lake, AR Project complete

Sponsor - Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Amount of Grant Request - Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund	\$35,000.00
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DeGray lake is a high use reservoir consisting of 13,800 surface acres and is managed as a flood risk reservoir that provides hydropower, water supply, and recreation. The fluctuating hydrology and sustained periods of high water on DeGray Lake is detrimental to communities of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and limits the availability of quality fisheries habitat. The goal of this project is to support DeGray Lake fisheries by installing a combination of artificial habitat structures and native SAV that complement the fluctuating hydrology of DeGray Lake.

Enhancing Spawning Habitat at Lake Ouachita - Lake Ouachita Corps of Engineers, AR Project complete

Sponsor -USACE and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Amount of Grant Request - Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund	\$15,000.00
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Lake Ouachita, a 40,000-acre reservoir in Arkansas, is renowned for its diverse fish species and recreational opportunities. Our project aims to address the habitat degradation that has led to a decline in the spawning success of bream, a member of the sunfish family, and foundational species for the lake's ecological balance and recreational fishing industry. This proposal seeks funding to construct 45 gravel bream bed structures near Joplin Recreation area, enhancing spawning habitats to bolster the bream population and, subsequently, the populations of predator species such as largemouth bass and crappie.

J. Strom Thurmond Lake - Aquatic Vegetation Habitat Establishment - J. Strom Thurmond Lake, SC Project complete

Sponsor - USACE and GA B.A.S.S. Nation

Amount of Grant Request - Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund	\$10,044
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Project partners will establish emergent and submersed aquatic vegetation to provide long-term stabilization of soils and protective nursery/feeding areas for Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) and other species at twenty locations in J. Strom Thurmond Lake. Vegetation establishment will include emergent Water willow (*Justicia americana*) and submersed Eelgrass (*Vallisneria spiralis*). Submersed plants will be protected in exclosures to allow time to establish founder colonies. Emergent plants will be

South Holston Reservoir Habitat Enhancement – South Holston Reservoir, VA Project active

Sponsor - Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

Amount of Grant Request - Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund	\$74,850.00
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This project aims to improve the available shoreline habitat at various sites across the Virginia portion of South Holston Reservoir. Additional shoreline habitat for both juvenile and adult life stages of sportfish and associated forage species will be created utilizing artificial habitat structures. The primary strategy will be to construct and install concrete reef balls on shallow flats and other areas currently devoid of complex aquatic habitat. The reef balls will be enhanced with hard and softwood material and will be supplemented with a variety of other artificial habitat structures.

Cochiti Lake Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Project – Cochiti Lake, NM Project active

Sponsor - Sun Country Outdoors, Cochiti Pueblo, and USACE

Amount of Grant Request -Federal Funds	\$40,000.00
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Fully implement greenhouse modifications, aquatic and riparian plant nursery upgrades and re-vegetation efforts led by the Cochiti Pueblo in partnership with Sun Country Outdoors and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Major high-water events prevented plant restoration efforts in 2023-2024 but apparently eliminated the Eurasian Water-milfoil infestation. A concentrated effort is needed to establish a sustainable capability and commitment to restoring native aquatic plants and robust riparian plants. The project will improve capabilities at the Cochiti Pueblo fish hatchery and demonstrate plant propagation through aquaculture and supply native plants.

Lake Keomah Fish Habitat Improvement – Lake Keomah, IA Project terminated (funds reassigned)

Mahaska County Conservation Board

Amount of Grant Request – Federal Funds	\$75,000
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Lake Keomah is a 78-acre public lake in Iowa's first state park. Much like other reservoirs in the Central Plains ecoregion, the lake suffers from poor water quality and is designated as impaired for high levels of bacteria, excessive algae, and periodic low concentrations of dissolved oxygen. These challenges derive from a long history of sedimentation and eutrophication, with restoration opportunities available on both state-managed land and private land in the watershed. As part of a larger, watershed-level and park-level restoration, this fish habitat improvement project will focus on re-establishing in-lake structure for the most popular recreational species and expanding angler access.

Truman Lake Habitat Project – Truman Lake, MO Project active

Sponsor – Missouri Dept. of Conservation

Amount of Grant Request - Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund	\$75,000.00
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The Truman Lake Habitat Project involves deploying natural fish habitat structures (i.e., primarily anchored cedar trees) throughout Truman Lake utilizing a habitat barge. The habitat barge is equipped with a hydraulic lift, allowing staff to strategically place clusters of cedar trees, enhancing fish habitat. Cedar trees will be sourced from public land surrounding the lake, benefiting terrestrial habitat, and will be anchored with concrete blocks. Following completion, we aim to promote our efforts to the public and monitor angling use and condition of these habitat structures.

Mark Twain Lake Fisheries Habitat Development Project – Mark Twain Lake, MO Project active

Sponsor – USACE

Amount of Grant Request - Federal Funds	\$20,000
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Mark Twain Lake has sustained a strong and viable fishery. Its natural maturation process though has yielded a decline in structural underwater habitat. The topography of the reservoir also presents limited shoreline access contributing to an environment not proactive to the pursuit of recreational angling. This proposal will realize three distinct goals that will address the loss of habitat through the placement of two forms of artificial vertical structure, the development of littoral zone habitat supporting recruitment and retention of native game fish species, and creating appealing shoreline access to the management unit encouraging increased recreational angling opportunities.

Kentucky Reservoir Habitat Improvement Project – Kentucky Reservoir, TN Project active

Sponsor - Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Amount of Grant Request – Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund	\$57,589.53
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Description

This project focuses on enhancing spawning and sanctuary habitat for Largemouth Bass in Kentucky Reservoir. Kentucky Reservoir has been a premier bass fishery for decades, hosting multiple Bassmaster Elite series events and attracting anglers from across the country. Unfortunately, Largemouth Bass numbers and electrofishing catch rates have declined since 2010, possibly due to variability in recruitment, which has been attributed to the effects of reservoir aging. Our goal will be to select embayment's with historically high recruitment and

provide multiple artificial spawning beds, encircled by sanctuary habitat, to improve spawning success, recruitment, and angler catch rates in Kentucky R.

Final Five Projects Funded by the Bass Pro Shop and Cabela's Outdoor fund from the first \$500,000 donation.

The RFP for these projects was titled **Johnny Morris Fish Habitat Conservation Grant** and is also referred to as a “medium sized grant opportunity”.

Following the October 2024 Announcement of eight priority Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership projects, the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) announced an additional five projects that received the remaining funds from a \$500,000 grant received from the Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Fund in 2024. NFHP received these funds through Beyond the Pond, the 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization established to benefit the work of NFHP through its 20 Fish Habitat Partnerships across the U.S.

In total, the 13 projects funded through the 2024 Outdoor Fund grant selected are matched with \$1,492,174 in additional funding that will go directly to on-the-ground projects benefitting fish habitat and improving angling opportunities.

The additional five projects that received funding are:

Siloam Springs City Lake, Crystal Lake and Beaver Lake, Arkansas Project active

Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation\Northwest Arkansas Fish Habitat Partnership, Grant amount (\$22,500 with \$71,000 in partner match funding).

This project will improve fish habitat and fishing access at Siloam Springs City Lake, Crystal Lake and Beaver Lake. The Northwest Arkansas Fish Habitat Alliance will work with local high schools to place Mossback Fish Habitat in Siloam Springs City Lake and Crystal Lake. The Alliance will work with a local fishing club to add either cedar trees or Mossback Fish Habitat to Beaver Lake. The fishing access improvement will take place at Hickory Creek Park on Beaver Lake and plans are to construct a fish cleaning station at this heavily used lake access. Funds for this part of the project have been donated by Pradco Outdoor Brands via Bobby Garland Crappie Baits.

Developing Infrastructure to Reduce Temperature and Turbidity in the Henrys Fork Snake River Watershed, Idaho Project active

Henry's Fork Foundation, Grant amount (\$22,500 with \$645,311 in partner match funding).

To address persistent water quality concerns, the Henry's Fork Foundation (HFF) along with Idaho Department of Fish and Game and partners have launched the “Developing

Infrastructure to Reduce Temperature and Turbidity” (DIRTT) project. The DIRTT project aims to tackle challenges in the Henry’s Fork Watershed: high water temperatures, high turbidity, low dissolved oxygen, and harmful algal blooms (HABs). Water quality problems arise due to eutrophication in Island Park Reservoir, aging and outdated infrastructure at Island Park Dam, degraded tributaries, and drought. The DIRTT project will develop implementable 60% design plans, fill data gaps, and engage stakeholders regarding the watershed.

Woodcock Creek Lake Habitat Improvement Project, Pennsylvania Project complete

Crawford County Conservation District, Grant amount (\$22,500 with \$81,500 in partner match funding).

This project will create an access road for Reef Ball installation on the west side of the lake. This project installs over 200 Concrete Reef Balls. The Reef Balls will provide long lasting and high quality aquatic habitat at the lake which is lacking due to winter draw downs. The reef balls will be supplemented with trees and other brush periodically to improve all types of habitat for aquatic organisms.

The project provides new fishing opportunities as well. The road can be used to reach areas which were previously difficult to access.

Pineview Reservoir Middle Arm Fish Habitat Augmentation, Utah Project active

Muskies Inc. Chapter 65\Utah Division of Wildlife, Grant amount (\$22,500 with \$165,120 in partner match funding).

The project places artificial habitat structures in deep water areas of Pineview Reservoir generally in close proximity to spawning areas of primary panfish species. The goal is to place structures in 'patches' of approximately 0.1- 0.25 acre areas. Aquatics biologists will be consulted to target the most advantageous areas for the structures. It is likely that locations for structures will be expanding the areas where previous habitats have been placed. This phase will concentrate heavily on the Middle Fork arm, as previous phases have focused on the north and south forks.

Jordanelle Reservoir Habitat Enhancement, Utah Project active

Muskies Inc. Chapter 65 Mountain West Muskie\Utah Division of Wildlife, Grant amount (\$22,500 with \$45,500 in partner match funding).

Artificial habitat structures (Mossback and Pond King) will be placed in nearshore and offshore habitats to increase the refuge for larval and adult fish. An estimated total of 190 structures (70 funded through this grant request) are expected to be added to Jordanelle Reservoir. Habitat enhancement areas will be assessed pre- and post-placement by regional biologists, and the total area in acres improved will be quantified using side-scan sonar. The goal of enhancing fish-holding habitat is designed to directly benefit forage fish of Yellow Perch and predatory fish such as Smallmouth Bass, both highly desired species by anglers. It is expected to offer indirect benefits to other predatory fish, such as Hybrid White Bass and Tiger Muskellunge, a relatively new species added to the system in 2018. This preliminary project will be used to jumpstart a large-scale project that will span a complex of two reservoirs in the region. One is returning to this reservoir of Jordanelle but additionally adding in Deer Creek Reservoir, which is just downstream.

2026 Proposed\Funded

2026 List of Projects for Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund Consideration

We completed a 2026 request for proposals that included projects seeking funding from Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund. The projects listed below total \$509,697 with \$604,487 in match. We submitted these to Beyond the Pond for funding consideration.

The projects are:

Arkansas\Missouri, Upper Bull Shoals Lake Habitat Improvement Project

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Grant amount \$75,000 with \$79,300 in non-federal match

Bull Shoals Lake is a highly popular recreational fishery in the heart of the Ozarks. Impounded in 1951, this aging highland reservoir faces habitat degradation due to sedimentation, fluctuating water levels, and loss of natural structure. To combat this, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) will replenish 100 fish habitat structures (brush piles) in the lake's upper section. The project also aims to restore riparian habitat in the West and East Sugarloaf tributaries to protect critical spawning habitat. Anglers will receive maps and GPS coordinates to locate the newly created habitat structures, increasing fishing opportunities and promoting project awareness.

USACE, WV, East Lynn Lake Habitat Development Program

USACE, Grant amount \$33,697 with \$21,903 in match

East Lynn Lake's Habitat Development Program is an ongoing initiative of the reservoir's environmental resource management activities. Initiated in 2022, the project utilized Reef Balls to develop habitat throughout the reservoir for sport fish such as bass, black crappie, catfish, and bluegill. Budget constraints have hindered timely development of this project. We will continue installing reef balls in 5 of the channels at East Lynn Lake; 20 in East Fork, 30 in Lick Creek tributary, 30 in Rich Creek tributary, 10 in Brush Creek tributary, and 60 within the main channel. 20 bald cypress trees will be planted along approximately 3,100 feet of East Fork's shoreline and one mudflat to reduce sedimentation due to shoreline erosion.

East Branch Fish Friends, PA, East Branch Clarion River Lake Multi-Purpose Pier

USACE, Grant amount \$75,000 with \$150,000 in match

This project aims to create a safe and accessible fishing area by constructing an artificial rock pier along the boat launch parking lot, enhancing public access to the shoreline and lake. The project will benefit local anglers, and the community by providing recreational opportunities and boosting local economies. Funded by multiple state, local, and federal organizations, it involves consultation with professional environmental agencies to ensure minimal disruption to aquatic ecosystems. The project will complete a long rock faced fishing pier. This fishing pier will be a local destination fishery which will improve water quality, fish populations, fishing access, education, and habitat for fisherman. This fishing pier will be enhanced with over 400 habitat improvement structures which will put fish in front of fisherman.

USACE, MO, Mark Twain Lake Fisheries Enhancement Development Project

USACE, Grant amount \$66,000 with \$41,000 in match

Mark Twain Lake has sustained a strong and viable fishery, the decline in structural underwater and shoreline habitat, and the limited shoreline access is contributing to an environment not proactive to the pursuit of recreational angling. This proposal will on a small, but impactful scale, address the loss of structural habitat, create appealing shoreline access to the management unit, and encourage increased recreational angling opportunities. This project proposes the funding needs required to purchase materials in order to construct 100 MTL cubes, 200 spider blocks and 50 porcupine cribs.

Texas Parks and Wildlife, Lake Brownwood Fish Habitat Enhancement Project

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Grant amount \$40,000 with \$11,500 in match

The intent of this project is to install artificial fish habitat in six locations within Lake Brownwood. This project would expand on five areas previously enhanced in fall 2024, which was a collaboration with Brown County Water Improvement District, T.X. B.A.S.S. Nation, Black Bass Stewardship Group, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. One additional area not previously enhanced will be included in the project. Artificial fish habitat structures to be installed would include reef balls, porcupine crib structures, and brush piles. We plan to install 42 pallet balls, 60 porcupine cribs, and twenty-four brush piles among these locations within a year of the funding being awarded. Structures will be georeferenced, mapped, and will be made available to the public in a downloadable format on the TPWD website.

South Carolina DNR, SC Lake Hartwell Fish Habitat Enhancement Project

South Carolina DNR, Grant amount \$75,000 with \$270,000 in match

To address the fish habitat deficiencies in Lake Hartwell, the SCDNR proposes to use a variety of materials and techniques to enhance fish habitat in project areas on Lake Hartwell for both Black Crappie and Largemouth Bass. Materials to be utilized include concrete, rock, stumps, trees, bamboo, and manufactured fish attractors.

Fish habitat structures will be constructed to provide cover, spawning and nursery habitat, and improve forage for popular gamefish species. These habitat additions may increase population densities, improve size structure, and increase reproductive success. Habitat enhancement sites also function to concentrate fish which improves angler success rates. The project will install eighty-six (86) structures at six (6) areas on Lake Hartwell.

The WYldlife Fund, WY, Rock Lake Habitat Enhancement

The WYldlife Fund, Grant amount \$40,000 with \$64,200 in match

Many reservoirs in the Western US are aging and have lost habitat complexity due to lack of woody recruitment, increased sedimentation, or changes in hydrology. Numerous variables can affect game fish abundance and size structure. One variable worth addressing at Rock Lake is in-lake habitat. Rock Lake significantly lacks quality structural habitat in its littoral area. Over 80% of the littoral area is open water, indicating a lack of habitat complexity. The addition of complex habitat structures in the littoral area would greatly benefit Black Crappie and Largemouth Bass and improve angler catch rates. A standard deep-water bundle (five structures in total) from Mossback (\$1,650 per bundle) has zone of influence of around 900 ft². To increase the available habitat within the zone of deployment by 10% we will deploy 39 deep water bundles.

Arizona Game and Fish Department, AZ, Canyon Lake Habitat Enhancement

Arizona Game and Fish Department, Grant amount \$30,000 with \$52,500 in match

We propose installing 1,000 Christmas trees, 170 Mossback Conservation Cubes, 40 concrete Reef Balls, and 160 Mossback Safe Havens across 14 preselected sites in Canyon Lake, Arizona. Canyon Lake has had several habitat projects over the years, but many of the installed habitats have degraded. In fall of 2026, the Salt River Project (SRP) is planning a

drawdown of the reservoir for dam maintenance, this presents the Department with an opportunity to do a large-scale habitat project in January 2027. This project will benefit all sportfish species found within the reservoir, with an emphasis on Largemouth Bass and Yellow Bass.

Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, TN, Habitat Renovations at Chickamauga Reservoir

Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, Grant amount, \$75,000 with \$49,084 in match

With Chickamauga Reservoir created in the 1940's, habitat that was once present in the reservoir has drastically declined or decomposed over time. This project will allow Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, or TWRA, to deploy some of this habitat in the reservoir. These funds would allow TWRA to construct and deploy artificial habitat structures for ecological benefit, angling opportunity, spawning benefit, juvenile fish protection, and tournament released fish sanctuary.

Deploy at least 20 artificial (for longevity purposes) fish habitat structures, that are at least 40 inches tall, at each of the 18 fish attractor sites on Chickamauga Reservoir by December 2026. Deploy at least 10 artificial fish habitat structures, that are at least 40 inches tall, at a minimum of 3 tournament release areas for fish sanctuary by December 2026. Deploy at least 10 artificial fish habitat structures, that are at least 40 inches tall, at a minimum of 3 statewide hatchery stocking sites for juvenile fish protection by December 2026. Deploy at least 20 artificial fish habitat structures, that are at least 40 inches tall, at a minimum of 3 major creek arms in natural spawning areas for juvenile fish protection by December 2026. Deploy at least 5 spawning sites, comprised of rock piles and smaller gravel spawning areas, by February 2027. Create at least 10 new fish attractor sites, comprised of artificial structure of at least 40 inches in height and rock piles, by December 2026.

Proposed for FY2026 NFHP Federal Funding

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, KY, Kentucky-Barkley Lakes Habitat Restoration

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Grant amount, \$19,799.44 with \$73,911.62 in total matching and leveraged funds

Much littoral woody fish cover that once existed in Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley is no longer present, leaving huge expanses of shoreline with little cover in some places. This project aims to replace a portion of this cover while potentially improving spawning success of bass and sunfish. Bass are the most sought after species by anglers in Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley. This project plans to address several impairments. The overall project will be split into four main habitat type categories: cypress tree (*Taxodium distichum*) planting, shallow water laydown placement, refurbishing shallow stakebeds, and refurbishing deepwater fish attractors.

Friends of Sheridan State Fishing Lake, KS, Sheridan State Fishing Lake Kansas Renovation

Grant amount, \$75,000 with \$348,869 in matching funds

Since initial impoundment, sedimentation has reduced mean depth resulting in a windswept, turbid waterbody. Establishment of common carp and gizzard shad populations contribute to increased turbidity, alter nutrient cycling and compete with sportfish. Annual gizzard shad production fails to provide a viable forage resource to larger-gaped sportfish thus limiting condition, growth, and population size structure. Complete fish population eradication will eliminate carp and shad and necessitates dewatering of SDSL. Lake dewatering allows; sediment removal, increase bathymetric diversity, armor wave-prone shorelines, augment fish habitat, and construct fishing piers.

Northwest Arkansas Fish Habitat Alliance and Beaver Watershed Alliance AR/MO, Northern Arkansas and Southwest Missouri Fish Habitat Enhancement

Grant amount, \$75,000 with \$443,315 in matching and leveraged funds

The Northwest Arkansas Fish Habitat Alliance, Beaver Watershed Alliance, Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation, and Missouri Department of Conservation are collaborating on a habitat enhancement project across several lakes. Goals include: 1) Partnering with schools to grow and plant native aquatic vegetation on local lakes, 2) Building fish habitats with high schools for multiple lakes, 3) Using cedar trees for large habitat projects on Beaver and rough cut lumber cribs for Table Rock lakes, and 4) Developing restoration and recreational plans for bank fishing and public access on the East Fork of the White River, a key tributary of Beaver Lake.

FY2027 NFHP Federal and Bass Pro Funded Projects (federal projects RFP closes October 1, 2026)

H2Ozarks, MO, Stockton Lake Habitat Project

Grant amount, \$75,000 with \$183,832 in matching and leveraged funds (originally slated for 2026 federal funds, but reassigned to 2027 Bass Pro Funds)

The proposed Stockton Lake Habitat Project would utilize natural material (i.e., eastern red cedar trees and American sycamore trees) to replenish and enhance fish habitat throughout the lake. This would be accomplished by using a large habitat barge equipped with a hydraulic lift and winch. This would allow staff to build large fish habitat structures placing them strategically throughout the lake using concrete weights as anchors. Trees would be sourced locally from the flood pool-of the lake and bordering upland habitats on public land. Trees removed could also benefit upland glade habitats with the extensive removal of invading cedar trees.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, AR, Lake Overcup Habitat Improvement and Shoreline Stabilization Project

Grant amount, \$100,000 with \$103,198 in matching funds

This habitat and shoreline stabilization project is a multi-faceted initiative to combat reservoir senescence and address ecological pressures unique to Lake Overcup's fisheries. Through a management drawdown, the project will achieve measurable gains in water volume and availability of suitable substrate for aquatic organisms. In addition to extensive habitat deployment for fish and anglers, the project will expand recreational infrastructure and allow lake managers to engage the public. This collaborative effort seeks to revitalize fish habitat in Lake Overcup and to foster stakeholders' stewardship ethic in a region of Arkansas that does not have a Friends of Reservoirs member group. 1. Stabilize 300 feet of badly eroding bank adjacent to Overcup Landing. 2. Create 60 diverse habitat sites and refresh five existing bank angling sites. 3. Plant 100 Bald Cypress along half a mile of shoreline as a sediment trap. 4. Conduct an 8-foot management drawdown from June 2027 to January of 2028. 5. Construct a kayak access at Campground Road to meet the growing demand from kayak bass anglers. 6. Improve spawning habitat and engage community members by constructing 1,000 concrete spawning disks for landowner pickup and deployment. 7. Host two habitat building days to educate and involve community members in fish habitat enhancement.

Cambria County Conservation District, PA, Glendale Lake Habitat Project 2027

Grant amount, \$37,500 with \$37,500 in matching funds (originally requested \$100,000 but accepted a lower offer utilizing the remaining funds from the Bass Pro donation.

The Cambria County Conservation District is looking to improve shoreline, littoral zone, and open water fish habitat at Glendale Lake, Cambria County. Glendale Lake is the centerpiece of Prince Gallitzin State Park that is owned and managed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Glendale Lake is 1,635 acres and has 26 miles of shoreline. Prince Gallitzin State Park is the third most visited state park in all of Pennsylvania with approximately 1.8 million visitors per year. This project will improve three eroded shorelines and add large amounts of submerged structure with the PA Fish and Boat Commission Lake Habitat barge and land based heavy equipment.

This is not a prioritized list.

2026 Small Grant Program (\$2,000) + Mossback or Reef Ball products		
FOR Partner	Project Name	
Innsbrook Fishing Club, MO	Fish Habitat Improvements in Lake Alpine	
FLR Outdoors LLC, NC	Enhance and maintain the underwater habitat and aquatic vegetation in B. Everett Jordan Lake	
Pony Creek Lake Conservation Association	Pony Creek Lake Reservoir Fish Habitat Project	
Bald Eagle Area School District Fishing Club	Create additional aquatic habitat at Black Moshannon Lake	
Friends of Cordell Hull Lake	Cordell Hull Lake Fisheries Enhancement Project	
Friends of Santee Cooper Country	Santee Cooper Lakes Fish Attractor Array Maintenance	
TX Parks and Wildlife Department	Autry Memory Reservoir Fish Habitat Improvement Project	
Friends of Lake Livingston	Friends of Lake Livingston Aquatic Habitat Restoration	

Recommendation: Wait for the 2026 Operations Grant final approval and additional fund-raising efforts to play out with the goal of funding all eligible small grant applications.

Science & Data Committee Update:

Two related research grants can support RFHP's science assessment needs, both led by Dr. Steve Miranda at Mississippi State University. Dr. Miranda is a Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit Fisheries Professor until the end of 2026, and then will continue his work as an Affiliate of the university.

The first project is "Developing a National Framework for Monitoring and Assessing Reservoir Habitat Condition", a multi-state conservation grant starting January 1, 2027. The goal of this project is to develop and evaluate a remote-sensing framework for monitoring reservoir habitat conditions across the conterminous United States, and is the first phase of a broader effort to develop remotely based assessment tools capable of supporting fisheries conservation and management at regional and national scales.

The second project is the Updated National Reservoir Assessment, a M.S.-level project which may begin January 1, 2028 with Assessment funds from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The objective of this project is to apply an Index-of-Biotic-Integrity approach to fitting the Index of Reservoir Habitat Impairment to regionally-relevant predictive variables, similar to the work of The Ohio State University (Moore, Conroy, and Hood).

Communications Coordinator Report

Overview

From January through July 2026, outreach activities focused on maintaining and improving the organization's website and member resources, supporting grant and funding initiatives, sharing information with members and partners, and assisting with strategic planning and organizational activities.

Website and Member Support

- Updated and refined the **FY2027 Bass Pro Shops grant application** and developed the associated scoring form; collected and compiled reviewer scores.
- Continued development and maintenance of the **comprehensive project dashboard**, incorporating information and functionality aligned with NFHP's dashboard.
- Continued updating the **member dashboard** to improve access to member information and resources.
- Worked extensively to resolve the **PayPal membership issue**, including assisting several new members with account setup. The issue was ultimately resolved by June–July.
- Addressed ongoing **bot attacks on the website server** and implemented measures intended to resolve the problem; continued monitoring is warranted.
- Maintained website-related services and tools, including Canva Pro.

Information Sharing and Communications

- Finalized the **Bass Pro Shops video** recognizing Johnny Morris's award and coordinated its distribution through NFHP and the organization's regular communication channels.
- Compiled and shared results from the **Science & Data prioritization process**, including presentation of the results during the quarterly call.
- Distributed the **small grants RFP** and the **FY2027 Federal Grant RFP** to members and partners.
- Continued developing a strategy for sharing information about **plastics and related issues**, in coordination with partner Mossback.

Planning, Partnerships, and Strategic Initiatives

- Assisted with planning for **Johnny Morris's award**.

- Participated in quarterly calls and regular organizational check-ins.
- Discussed potential **sponsorship and partnership opportunities** and the possible need for a dedicated position to support this work.
- Worked with **LE Miranda** on Science & Data research planning, including exploring the possibility of hiring a graduate student to update the organization's Assessment in January 2028.
- Participated in the development of a related **federal grant application submitted by LE Miranda**.

Expenses

- Monthly **Canva Pro** subscription charged to the organizational credit card.
- **Flight expense for the 2026 Annual Meeting**.

Key Accomplishments and Priorities

Overall, the first seven months of 2026 saw meaningful progress in several areas. Major accomplishments included resolving the PayPal membership issue, advancing the project and member dashboards, completing grant-related materials and scoring, expanding distribution of grant opportunities, and supporting Science & Data planning.

Looking ahead, priorities include continued website and dashboard maintenance, monitoring website security, advancing the plastics information-sharing strategy, developing Science & Data research capacity, and exploring new sponsorship and partnership opportunities.

Friends of Reservoirs - Director of Conservation Partnerships

2026 Accomplishments (May–August 2026) and FY2027 Work Plan

Fundraising Strategy Development: *Develop a comprehensive RFHP/FOR fundraising plan identifying and prioritizing funding opportunities and supporting FOR Chapters in localized fundraising efforts.*

- Initiated development of a comprehensive RFHP/FOR fundraising strategy identifying corporate, philanthropic, conservation, and government funding opportunities.
- Engaged technology-sector sustainability teams and met several times with the Data Center Coalition; prepared briefing materials and anticipated Q&A for partnership exploration.
- Coordinated with Nick Mayer Wildlife Fund, Craig Solutions, CCA Texas, and others on a potential Texas Lotto Scratch-off concept to support fisheries habitat and angling conservation. Requires substantial work with Texas legislature which is currently unfunded.
- Developed event for Club Limited fundraiser with private landowners, pro anglers, and trip managers; event dates set for May 11–14, 2026. Anticipated to bring in \$25,000 to FOR in FY 2027 to support position for 12 months.

Partnership Engagement: *Conduct targeted outreach to prospective and existing partners to support funding and collaboration opportunities.*

- Conducted targeted outreach to existing and prospective partners to expand funding support for FOR and RFHP initiatives.
- Held meetings with Lowe's sustainability team, ATFCO, Tackle Addict, Livingston Lures, Trophic Innovations/Tri-Marine, and other industry partners to cultivate support for small grants, annual meeting sponsorships, and broader FOR initiatives.
- Hosted meeting with two leaders in N. Carolina for a two-day fisheries management and habitat strategy discussion.
- Engaged TWRA, Douglas Lake FOR Chapter, and other local partners to support chapter-level project planning and fundraising.
- Met with U.S. Rep. Ronny Jackson's office to educate federal staff on aging reservoir challenges and national habitat needs.
- Developed and executed a sponsorship plan for the 2026 Annual Meeting, resulting in \$9,500 in commitments for the meeting from Mossback, Trophic Innovations, BASS Conservation, and the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame.

- Developed support to fund Director of Conservation Partnership position for 2026 with \$10,000 from Mossback, \$5000 from Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, \$4000 from Black Bass 2025 proceeds, and \$1000 from the Fisheries Conservation Foundation.
- Supported efforts for large project grant funds from Bass Pro Shops/Cabela's Outdoor Fund.
- Supported efforts to garner support for small grant projects from Mossback, Reef Ball Foundation, and Costa Compete + Conserve.
- Coordinated with Bass Pro Shops/Cabela's Outdoor Fund staff to confirm that local store grant requests by FOR Chapters are encouraged and do not conflict with national NFHP support and garner appropriate direction.
- Met with Aqua Real Time to evaluate water-quality monitoring technology for potential partnership and chapter use.
- Engaged Troutman Pepper Locke regarding end-of-year giving and corporate philanthropic opportunities.
- Engaged with General George Stillhouse distillery in Falls of Rough KY about potential partnership to support FOR efforts through portion of distilled spirit sales.

Outreach and Communications Support: *Develop fundraising and outreach materials and expand communication platforms.*

- Drafted a news release announcing the new Director of Conservation Partnerships position.
- Began development of a national webinar series featuring industry partners, pilot projects, and new technologies relevant to reservoir habitat work.
- Provided input for annual meeting presentations focused on helping FOR Chapters build localized fundraising capacity.
- Participated in a national sportfishing industry podcast (WeFishASA) to highlight aging reservoir issues, FOR Chapters, and opportunities for industry support.
- Attended SWAP Learning Series #33 on national NFHP coordination.
- Supported annual meeting needs

Proposal and Grant Development: *Prepare and submit grant proposals aligned with RFHP priorities.*

- Reviewed NFWF funding programs and other conservation grant opportunities for alignment with reservoir habitat needs.
- Supported internal discussions on operational fund usage and contingency planning if federal projects were not approved.
- Coordinated with Fisheries Conservation Foundation and Black Bass 2025 partners on funding strategies.

Reporting and Coordination: *Provide regular progress updates and measurable outcomes.*

- Provided regular progress updates to RFHP leadership, including quarterly reporting to the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame.

- Coordinated with RFHP Coordinator and Outreach Coordinator on funding scenarios, operational needs, and partner engagement strategies.

Friends of Reservoirs - Director of Conservation Partnerships

FY2027 Work Plan

Fundraising Plan Development

- Finalize and implement a comprehensive RFHP/FOR fundraising plan identifying corporate, philanthropic, government, and conservation-sector funding sources.
- Expand categories of funding to include:
 - Direct habitat enhancement project support
 - Annual meeting sponsorship
 - Policy and congressional engagement support
 - Administrative and operational overhead
- Develop training materials and guidance for FOR Chapters to strengthen local fundraising capacity, including templates, checklists, and outreach scripts.
- Support planning and execution of the May 2027 Club Limited fundraising event, anticipated to fund the next 12 months of the Director position.

Partnership Engagement

- Conduct targeted outreach to current and prospective funders emphasizing ecological, recreational, and economic benefits of reservoir habitat enhancement.
- Strengthen relationships with existing partners (Mossback, Reef Ball Foundation, Trophic Innovations, Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, BASS Conservation, industry sponsors).
- Expand outreach to new sectors including:
 - Technology and data-center sustainability teams
 - Outdoor recreation manufacturers
 - Agricultural and watershed organizations
 - Corporate environmental responsibility programs
- Support creation of new FOR Chapters and re-engagement of inactive chapters through direct outreach and partnership development.
- Coordinate with federal, state, and tribal partners to align funding opportunities with national reservoir habitat priorities.

Outreach and Marketing Materials

- In collaboration with the Outreach Coordinator, develop RFHP/FOR-branded fundraising materials including brochures, digital content, one-page investment briefs, and sponsor packets.
- Expand communication reach by increasing email databases, enhancing social media presence, and leveraging partner platforms.

- Launch and manage a national webinar series featuring industry partners, new technologies, and chapter-level pilot projects.
- Provide annual meeting support through sponsor recognition materials, presentations, and partner engagement.

Proposal and Grant Development

- Prepare and submit proposals to state, federal, and private conservation funding sources aligned with RFHP priorities and NFHP National Conservation Priorities.
- Assist FOR Chapters in preparing local grant requests, including Bass Pro Shops/Cabela's Outdoor Fund local store submissions.
- Identify multi-year funding opportunities to stabilize long-term support for reservoir habitat work.

Reporting and Coordination

- Provide quarterly progress reports to RFHP leadership and partner organizations.
- Track measurable outcomes including funds raised, partnerships established, chapter engagement, and sponsor retention.
- Coordinate with RFHP Coordinator and Outreach Coordinator to ensure alignment with national NFHP priorities, congressional designation requirements, and annual meeting needs.
- Support development of annual financial summaries and briefing-book materials for Steering Committee review.