



CALIFORNIA FISH PASSAGE FORUM

California Fish Passage Forum Annual Request for Proposals FY27

Funding Opportunity Description

As one of 20 nationally recognized fish habitat partnerships (FHPs) under the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) the California Fish Passage Forum (Forum) is pleased to announce its FY2027 funding opportunity. Since its recognition as an FHP in 2012, the Forum has received funding through NFHP via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to advance shared goals of protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish habitat – with the Forum’s specific focus on anadromous fish populations in California.

From 2012-2025, the California Fish Passage Forum has supported 53 projects across California, from research, assessment, implementation and monitoring of fish passage improvement and habitat enhancement, collectively representing a significant investment in the recovery of anadromous fish populations statewide. These projects include 36 projects removing one or more fish passage barriers, six habitat enhancement projects, four research and two monitoring projects, and two fish passage assessment projects. Many projects are a combination of these activities.

So far, the Forum has invested almost \$2 million, helping to leverage an additional \$350 million from agency partners including NOAA, DWR, CDFW and many others. The Forum funding opportunity represents a comparatively small but important contribution for helping projects reach their cost share needs. Amounts funded by the Forum typically range from around \$25,000-\$50,000 for smaller planning or assessment efforts to \$100,000 for complex dam removal or multi-phase design and construction projects.

The Forum is committed to investing in sometimes hard-to-fund aspects of fish passage projects, including watershed and barrier assessment, research, monitoring and project evaluation.

[See previous projects supported by the Forum](#)

Funding Available, Project Budget, And Matching Funds Requirement

The California Fish Passage Forum receives funding through the National Fish Habitat Partnership via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to advance shared goals of protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish habitat – with the Forum’s specific focus on anadromous fish populations in California. The Forum will award an estimated \$155,00 in FY2027. To fund a diverse portfolio of projects, strong project proposals that request less than \$100,000 are preferred. However, proposals of merit may be funded at a higher level, at the Forum’s discretion.

Unfortunately, the Forum always receives more applications than we have the funds to support. The review process is a competitive ranking of projects, and not being selected for funding does not mean a project is not worthy of restoration funds. The Forum recommends applicants pursue a diversity of funding applications. Learn about restoration funding sources at [Restoration Funding Opportunities](#)

America’s Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President on October 30, 2020. Importantly, the legislation made significant changes to project requirements to be eligible for NFHP funding. The ACE Act places an emphasis on restoration efforts that will improve recreational fishing opportunities and public use of the resource. Improvements in public access as a component of projects are also encouraged.

The ACE Act requires that the suite of projects submitted from the Forum as NFHP-funded projects demonstrate a combined ratio of 1:1 non federal matching funds:

- Matching funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind support from non-federal sources and must be spent during the project period.
- Matching funding requirements are waived for projects proposed by tribal sponsors where the tribe is the applicant and funding recipient. Providing matching funds from tribes does not qualify a project for matching fund waivers.

A detailed project budget is required, specifying which components of the project will be paid for with Forum funds, cost shared funds and the required matching funds. Funding status (in-hand, proposed, in-kind) should be indicated. See Attachment C: Project Budget for information required.

The project, or portion of a project, that Forum funds should be spent within three years of receipt of funding and all funds matching Forum funding should be spent during that time. The proposal should include a detailed timeline for the use of Forum funds. See Attachment B: Project Timeline.

Project Review Period and Timing of Funding

Project sponsors should assume that funding will be received in Summer of 2027. See below timeline for project funding timeline.

Date	Action
Monday June 15 th , 2026	Application period opens

Monday October 5 th 2026	Application period closes
Friday November 6 th 2026	Projects are reviewed and ranked
Winter 2026-27	Ranked list is submitted to Department of Interior by NFHP*
Winter 2026-27	Department of Interior approves project list*
Spring 2027	Announcement of award recipients*
Summer 2027	Funding available*
At invoicing and final report	Project progress reports due

*Subject to change. Funding availability is dependent upon the federal appropriations process and varies year to year.

Eligibility

Eligible Costs

- Barrier assessments to prioritize and plan barrier removals.
- Design and implementation of fish passage barrier removal or remediation.
- Fish passage-related monitoring that is directly related to barrier assessment, removal, or remediation. Any data collected should conform with standard data collection methods recommended or used by the Forum.
- Community outreach and education actions directly related to barrier assessment, removal, or remediation.
- Land acquisition/easements; and
- Projects that assess the effectiveness of restoration techniques relevant to the Forum’s geographic scope and priority species.

Forum funding can be used for all phases of a project, from feasibility to post-construction monitoring. Proposals should clearly detail which part of the project will utilize Forum funds in the project budget, see Appendix A. Acquisition projects - The ACE Act allows a state, local government, or other non-federal entity to receive NFHP funds for the acquisition of real property or protective easements involving willing sellers if the acquisition ensures public access for fish and wildlife-dependent recreation or contributes a scientifically based, direct enhancement to the health of fish and fish populations as determined by the NFHP Board. Acquisition projects will be evaluated using the same criteria as restoration projects and must address California Fish Passage Forum priorities. Please contact The Forums Coordinator if you have a project request that includes real property acquisition.

Ineligible Costs:

The following types of costs will not be paid for with Forum funds:

- Pre-award costs.

- Operation and maintenance of facilities or structures. This applies to buildings and structures only and not to maintenance or construction of earthen structures.
- Actions required by existing regulatory programs (e.g., mitigation projects), except that funds may support activities under voluntary agreements that exceed regulatory requirements for conserving habitats (e.g., hydropower licensing in which the licensee enters into a voluntary agreement to restore habitat that exceeds regulatory requirements).
- Incentive payments.

Priority Species and Priority Projects

To protect and revitalize anadromous fish populations in California by restoring connectivity of freshwater habitats throughout their historic range. California Fish Passage Forum has identified the following priority/focal species.

- Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)
- Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
- Steelhead/rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
- Pacific Lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*)
- Coastal cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkia clarkia*)
- Green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*)
- White sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*)
- Eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*)
- Threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*)

In addition to anadromous species, the Forum recognizes the importance of aquatic connectivity for potamodromous fishes, which migrate from lakes to streams to complete their life cycle. **In 2026, the Forum has opened our funding opportunity to non-anadromous CA ESA-Listed fishes.** Interested applicants should confirm their proposed projects benefit a listed species by checking the [State and Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Animals of California](#)

Forum Funded Projects should align with one or more of the California Fish Passage Forum objectives.

1. Remediate barriers to effective fish migration.
2. Facilitate coordination and communication among agencies, agency staff, and other entities that may propose, review, or promulgate fish passage criteria within California.
3. Coordinate funding mechanisms to remove fish passage barriers.
4. Support state and federal permit coordination and streamlining.
5. Facilitate plans to monitor and evaluate fish passage restoration effectiveness to ensure accountability.
6. Encourage existing state and national policy and actions that support fish passage improvement in California.

7. Implement education and outreach activities, targeting both the public and fish passage practitioners.

Projects must also support at least one of the NFHP National Conservation Priorities

1. Conserve waters and habitats where all processes and functions are operating within their expected range or natural variation.
2. Conserve hydrologic conditions for fish.
3. Conserve physical and living habitats and features that support viable and sustainable species and/or populations in impacted or at-risk systems.
4. Reconnect fragmented fish habitats.
5. Conserve water quality for fish.
6. Support the structure and function of fish habitat partnerships (FHPs).
7. Enhance recreational, commercial, subsistence, and traditional fishing opportunities when conducting projects that conserve fish habitat.

Project Monitoring

All project proposals must include a monitoring plan. At a minimum, projects should describe the implementation monitoring plan designed to document that the project was constructed or completed as proposed. If possible, additional long-term effectiveness monitoring is advised to better understand best practices in anadromous fish passage remediation. The Forum For a good description of the difference between implementation and effectiveness monitoring, please see [Monitoring and Evaluation for Restoration Projects](#)

Project monitoring plans will be evaluated on the extent to which they:

1. Appropriately assess the biological, ecological, or other results of the Forum funded activities.
2. Articulate adaptive management strategies if the monitoring indicates that project objectives are not being met.
3. Identify improvements to existing fish populations, recreational fishing opportunities for the local community of the fish habitat conservation project.
4. Include completion of a monitoring report, which should be submitted at project completion, describing monitoring results and conclusions.

Acquisition and assessment projects must also include a monitoring plan. These plans should include methods to monitor project progress, including evaluation of progress at key milestones, such as data collection, draft reporting, etc.

Project Reporting Requirements

Recipients of Forum funding are expected to provide reports along with invoices to the agencies who award the project contracts, either the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission or the US Fish and

Wildlife Service. Additionally, a final report is required upon project completion that includes descriptions of all objectives met, associated deliverables, and before and after photos of any barriers removed or remediated.

For any barrier remediation projects, the Forum will require applicants to describe monitoring results and submit any associated reports to the [California Fish Passage Forum's Fish Passage Barrier Removal Performance Monitoring Form](#)

How to Apply

During the open RFP period, fill out the below application, and fill and attach the 3 appendices below to the online application form.

1. (Optional) download a clean copy of the application questions to work on your application

Download [California Fish Passage Forum FY27 RFP Blank Questions](#)

2. Download and fill all 3 required attachments

Download [Attachment A: FY26 Project Metrics \(fillable excel spreadsheet\)](#)

Download [Attachment B: FY26 Project Timeline \(fillable excel spreadsheet\)](#)

Download [Attachment C: -FY26 Project Budget \(fillable excel spreadsheet\)](#)

3. Submit information to the online application on JotForm

[Open Forum Funding Application on JotForm](#)

Evaluation Criteria

Preference will be given to proposals which include the following aspects

- Benefit at least one of the Forum's priority fish species, streams, rivers and/or fish habitats throughout their historical range.
- Align with one or more of the Forum's seven objectives, and one or more of NFHP's FY24 National Conservation Strategies.
- Provides measurable project metrics as described in Attachment A: Project Metrics
- Address a priority identified by state, tribal, and/or federal agency(s).
- Address actions/barriers listed in a key restoration plan for the region.
- Include adequate plans for monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate project success.
- Are led by a tribe or indigenous restoration group.
- Has an outreach and education component, especially engaging tribal or underserved communities.
- Expect to complete Forum-funded activities within 3 years of receiving funds, described in Attachment B: Project Timeline.
- Contain a detailed budget outlining all expected project contributions and outlining how Forum funding will be applied, as described in Attachment C: Project Budget.
- Secure non-federal financial match of at least a 1:1 ratio, with additional points given for more match - matching funds may be in the form of in-kind support from non-federal sources and must be spent during the project period. Projects led by a Tribal organization are exempt from the 1:1 match requirement.

Forum FY26 Project Scoring Sheet

Benefit to the Forum's Goals & Objectives - 20 points max

Technical Merit - 20 points max

- Objectives, approach and scope are clear and technically sound.
- Project includes a monitoring/evaluation plan.

Scale of Benefits - 20 points max

Cost Effectiveness - 15 points max

- Includes a well-defined, reasonable budget clearly referencing deliverables.
- Leverages funds and resources (cash and in-kind)

Organization Qualifications - 10 points max

Community Involvement/Outreach – 7.5 points max

Match – 7.5 points max

- Project demonstrates 1:1 non-federal/federal match.
- Any additional leveraged match (i.e., federal) is also desired, but will not be scored as high as non-federal.
- Match from tribal partners can be considered non-federal, and Forum funds going to tribal organizations does not require non-federal match.

Total=100 points