



NFWF

## **STREAM MITIGATION FUND FOR TENNESSEE** **2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

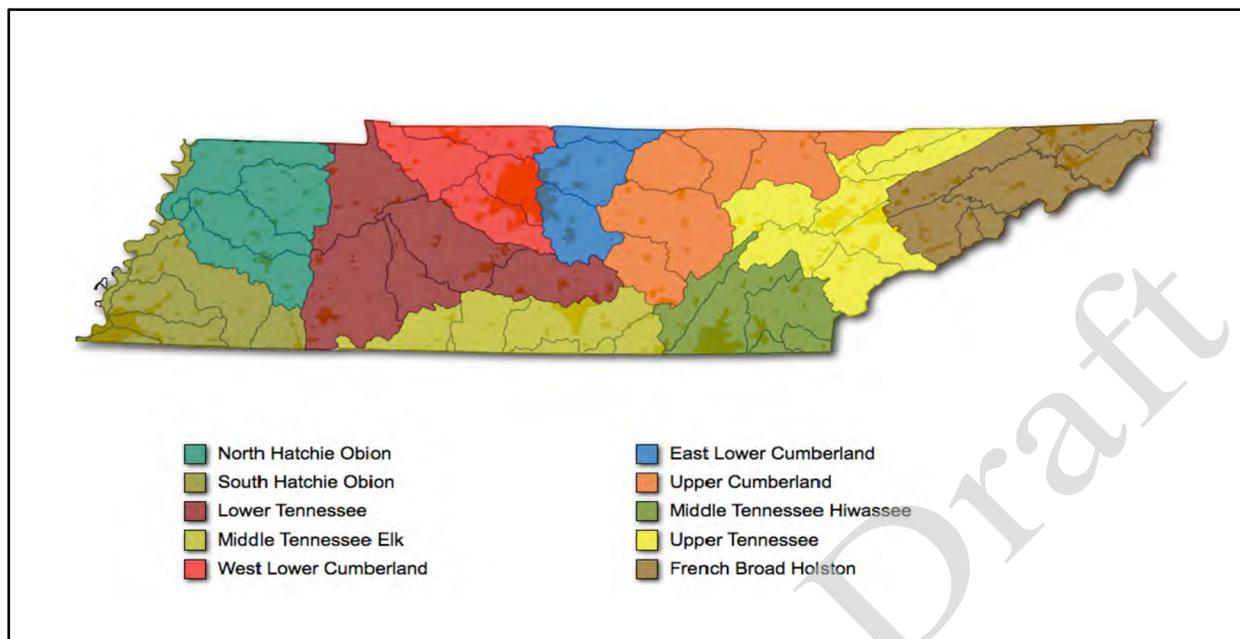
Proposal Due Date: **Day, Date by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

### **OVERVIEW**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nashville and Memphis Districts (“USACE”) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (“NFWF”) are soliciting proposals to provide compensatory mitigation through the restoration, establishment, enhancement, and/or preservation of streams and associated riparian buffers in the State of Tennessee. The Stream Mitigation Fund for Tennessee (“SMFT”) will award approximately \$35,000,000. NFWF established and administers the SMFT with monies it received in 2024 from the now-defunct Tennessee Stream Mitigation Program (“TSMP”), which was a privately operated In-Lieu-Fee mitigation program. These funds will be applied to appropriate compensatory mitigation projects, activities, and related expenses as approved by the USACE, in consultation with the Interagency Review Team, in accordance with the 2008 Final Rule on Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources (33 CFR Parts 325 and 332; 40 CFR Part 230) and the 2004 Stream Mitigation Guidelines for the State of Tennessee.

### **GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS**

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within one of the Service Areas depicted in the map below. Projects that overlap or that cover multiple service areas will also be considered. See a list of the Tennessee Service Area 8 Digit HUC Watersheds in the Appendix.



Priority will be given to those projects in the Service Areas with the largest mitigation deficits based on TSMP Credit liability, as noted in the chart below.

Geographic Service Areas	TSMP Credit Liability
Upper Cumberland	29,238.50
South Hatchie Obion	23,886
Middle Tennessee Hiwassee	21,969.00
West Lower Cumberland	13,573
Middle Tennessee Elk	13,414
Upper Tennessee	11,452.75
Lower Tennessee	5,270.25
East Lower Cumberland (ELC)	4,433.40
French Broad Holston (FBH)	4,407.32
North Hatchie Obion	4,285.50

## SMFT PRIORITIES

All proposals must comply with the 2008 Mitigation Rule and specifically address how projects will provide compensatory mitigation through the restoration, establishment, and enhancement of degraded streams and associated riparian buffer areas, or preservation of high-quality streams and

associated riparian buffers in the State of Tennessee, within a specific Service Area. Priority will be considered for projects that are lower in cost per credit and can be implemented quickly.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible and Ineligible Entities**

Eligible entities include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, and private businesses.

### **Other Eligibility Criteria**

- Eligible applications must:
  - Provide proof of experience with stream restoration projects and/or experience executing site protection.
  - Be able to be bonded and acquire financial assurances for restoration projects.
  - Be able to submit the following documents: Certificate of Existence, Certificate of Insurance, Statement of Litigation, IRS Form 990, and GAAP Audited Financial Statement.

### **Ineligible Uses of SMFT Funds**

- Awards under the SMFT may not be used to support an applicant's ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, compensatory mitigation, and settlement agreements.
- Awards under the SMFT may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities, or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- Also see the "Other" section below.

## **FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The total amount of funding available from the SMFT for stream mitigation projects is approximately Thirty-Five Million Dollars (\$35,000,000). Awards of funds will be prioritized and allocated based on the Service Areas of greatest need as noted in the chart above. Award size will also be determined by cost/credit, the quality of project proposal, the likelihood of the long-term success of the project, and availability of funds to support the portfolio of selected projects. Funding will not be tied to the funds received by the TSMP within a given service area under that program.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with the *Stream Mitigation Fund for Tennessee Request for Proposal Submittal Guidance and Narrative Application*, and USACE and NFWF policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

**SMFT Goals and Priorities:** Project contributes to the SMFT's overall goals to provide stream mitigation to compensate for impacts authorized using previously sold and unfulfilled credit liabilities accrued by the now-defunct TSMP. Priority will be given to proposals that target the Service Areas with the most need.

**Technical Merit:** Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages qualified technical experts throughout project planning, design, implementation, and perpetual site protection to ensure activities are technically sound, feasible, and have long-term viability.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the most economically efficient way to meet project objectives. Projects will be evaluated on a cost per credit basis as well as a percentage or portion of total funds used in relation to the percentage of total mitigation deficit or TSMP credit liability for that Service Area.

**Past Success:** Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing stream mitigation projects with specific, measurable results and/or executing site protection for preservation sites. Past performance associated with proposed Preservation only projects may not weigh as heavily, but rather the evaluation will focus the ability of the project sponsor to deliver a suitable conservation easement.

**Project Sustainability:** Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. Projects must be environmentally sustainable with a high likelihood of success and have the appropriate long-term site protection.

**Site Selection and Use of a Watershed Approach:** Applicant has selected a site related to known impacts in the area and uses a watershed approach when project siting. Demonstrated support from agencies and/or the public via watershed plan or other documentation that identifies the priority of the site for acquisition.

**Readiness:** Project will be implemented quickly after funds are awarded. Specifically, how soon after award notification could site acquisition and/or initial physical and biological improvements occur.

**Additional Priority Considerations:**

- Proposals that target the Service Areas with the greatest need.
- Consideration will be given to the percentage or portion of total funds used in relation to the percentage of total mitigation deficit or TSMP credit liability for that Service Area fulfilled.
- Restoration proposals that include:
  - Streams or stream reaches with species listed as endangered, threatened, or the stream reach is upstream/downstream of waters with State or Federal aquatic threatened and endangered or rare species.
  - Waters adjacent to other USACE-approved mitigation sites/banks or other protected conservation lands.
  - Critical headwater systems that protect source water.

- Priority areas identified in State Wildlife Action Plan or other watershed plan.
- Waters on the 303(d) list or known impairments.
- Areas of high habitat loss, historical aquatic impacts or development trends.
- Areas with higher outstanding credit liability with limited mitigation sites.
- NRCS priority watersheds that are included in the Nutrient Reduction Strategy.
- Projects that propose riparian buffers wider than the 50-foot minimum.
- Priority for projects proposing the entire watershed.
- Preservation proposals that include:
  - Projects that meet the criteria outlined at 33 C.F.R. § 332.3 (h).
  - Streams or stream reaches with species listed as endangered, threatened, or the stream reach is upstream/downstream of waters with State or Federal aquatic threatened and endangered or rare species.
  - Streams identified by as having high aquatic biodiversity, or the stream reach is upstream or downstream of waters with a diverse biological community (TDEC TMI 32 or greater that pass biocriteria).
  - Exceptional Tennessee Waters and Outstanding National Resource Waters and their direct tributaries.
  - Projects that propose riparian buffers wider than the 50-foot minimum.
  - Priority for projects proposing the entire watershed.
  - Priority areas identified in State Wildlife Action Plan or other watershed plan.
  - Waters with species listed as rare or uncommon.
  - Critical headwater systems that protect source water.

## **OTHER**

Projects may be sited on public or private lands. SMFT funds are eligible for funding compensatory mitigation projects that produce credits on public land. However, the credit generation must be based solely on aquatic resource functions provided by the compensatory mitigation project, over and above those provided by public programs already planned or in place (33 C.F.R. § 332.3(a)(3)).

Except for compensatory mitigation projects undertaken by federal agencies, or where federal funding is specifically authorized to provide compensatory mitigation, federally-funded aquatic resource restoration or conservation projects undertaken for purposes other than compensatory mitigation, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Program, and Partners for Wildlife Program activities, cannot be used for the purpose of generating compensatory mitigation credits for activities authorized by Department of the Army permits. However, SMFT funds are eligible for funding compensatory mitigation credits generated by activities undertaken in conjunction with, but supplemental to, such programs in order to maximize the overall ecological benefits of the restoration or conservation project (33 C.F.R. §332.3 (j)(ii)(2)).

SMFT funds are eligible for funding Preservation only projects that meet the following criteria (33 C.F.R. § 332.3 (h)):

- The resources to be preserved provide important physical, chemical, or biological functions for the watershed;

- The resources to be preserved contribute significantly to the ecological sustainability of the watershed;
- Preservation is determined by the district engineer to be appropriate and practicable;
- The resources are under threat of destruction or adverse modifications;
- The preserved site will be permanently protected through an appropriate real estate or other legal instrument.

## **TIMELINE**

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the SMFT page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

SMFT RFP Released  
Proposal Deadline: 90 days  
IRT Review Period and Site Visits: 45 days  
Award Announcements: 60 days  
Project Permitting: <550 days  
Project Construction: site specific  
Monitoring: Five years (for construction projects)

Appendix: Tennessee Service Area 8 Digit HUC Watersheds  
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Service Area	8 Digit HUC Watersheds
<p>Lower Tennessee</p> <p>West Lower Cumberland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 06040005 Tennessee River (NW TN)</li> <li>• 06040001 Tennessee River (SW TN)</li> <li>• 06040004 Buffalo River</li> <li>• 06040003 Lower Duck River</li> <li>• 06040002 Upper Duck River</li>   <li>• 05130205 Lake Barkley Reservoir</li> <li>• 05130206 Red River</li> <li>• 05130202 Cheatham Lake</li> <li>• 05130204 Harpeth River</li> </ul>
<p>East Lower Cumberland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 05110002 Barren River</li> <li>• 05130201 Old Hickory</li> <li>• 05130203 Stones River</li> </ul>
<p>Middle Tennessee Elk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 06030005 Pickwick Reservoir</li> <li>• 06030002 Lower Elk River</li> <li>• 06030004 Richland Creek</li> <li>• 06030003 Upper Elk River</li> <li>• 06030001 Battle Creek</li> </ul>
<p>Upper Cumberland</p> <p>Middle Tennessee Hiwassee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 05130106 Cordell Hull</li> <li>• 05130105 Obey River</li> <li>• 05130104 Big South Fork</li> <li>• 05130101 Clear Fork / Cumberland River</li> <li>• 05130108 Caney Fork</li> <li>• 05130107 Collins River</li>   <li>• 06020004 Sequatchie River</li> <li>• 06020001 Chickamauga Reservoir</li> <li>• 06020002 Hiwassee River</li> <li>• 03150101 Conasauga River</li> <li>• 06020003 Ocoee River</li> </ul>
<p>Upper Tennessee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 06010208 Emory River</li> <li>• 06010201 Fort Loudoun Reservoir</li> <li>• 06010207 Clinch River</li> <li>• 06010204 Little Tennessee River</li> <li>• 06010205 Upper Clinch River</li> <li>• 06010206 Powell River</li> </ul>
<p>French Broad - Holston</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 06010104 Holston River</li> <li>• 06010107 Lower French Broad River</li> <li>• 06010106 Pigeon River</li> <li>• 06010105 Upper French Broad River</li> <li>• 06010108 Nolichucky River</li> <li>• 06010103 Watauga River</li> <li>• 06010102 South Fork Holston River</li> <li>• 06010101 North Fork Holston River</li> </ul>



Appendix A: Tennessee Service Area 8 Digit HUC Watersheds  
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Service Area	8 Digit HUC Watersheds
North Hatchie - Obion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 08010205 South Fork Forked Deer River</li><li>• 08010206 Forked Deer River</li><li>• 08010204 North Fork Forked Deer River</li><li>• 08010203 South Fork Obion River</li><li>• 08010202 Obion River</li></ul>
South Hatchie - Obion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 08010211 Nonconnah Creek</li><li>• 08010210 Wolf River</li><li>• 08010209 Loosahatchie River</li><li>• 08010208 Hatchie River</li><li>• 08010207 Little Hatchie River</li><li>• 08010100 Mississippi River</li></ul>

Discussion Draft



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