

Grant Opportunity:

Low-tech, process-based riverscape restoration

January 2026



The Biophilia Foundation is seeking proposals for projects to improve the resilience of watersheds in arid and semi-arid regions of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Proposals are due March 31, 2026.

Three types of grants are available:

- **Implementation:** Grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 are available for projects that implement low-tech, process-based, and/or beaver-based restoration of upland streams and watersheds.
- **System capacity:** Grants up to \$25,000 for projects that enhance our collective capacity to implement stream and watershed restoration more effectively or at a larger scale.
- **Engagement:** Grants up to \$7,500 for activities to engage landowners and land managers.

The target geography for these grants includes:

- Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico
- The northern border regions of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Nuevo León.

Background

Rivers and streams are the lifeblood of ecosystems in the arid and semi-arid regions of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Healthy watersheds have more abundant vegetation; are more resilient to extreme conditions caused by climate change such as drought, floods, and wildfire; provide better habitat for wildlife; and provision more ecosystem services for people. Yet land use changes over the last three hundred years have led to deforestation, grassland conversion, beaver eradication, logjam removal, and other practices that changed hydrological function.

When applied at sufficient scale and density, low-tech structures such as beaver dam analogs (BDA), post-assisted log structures (PALS), and rock detention structures (RDS) used on ephemeral, intermittent, and small ('wadable') perennial waterways can reverse the effects of degradation. By slowing down water and enabling soil infiltration, these structures allow more water to be stored in soil and released over time, which can lead to greater water availability in soils and more consistent flow in channels. In-stream and hillslope structures can be coupled with other cost-effective techniques, such as tree planting, enclosure fencing, beaver reintroduction, beaver conflict mitigation, and changes to grazing regimes, in response to local needs.

Funding Opportunities

Grants provided through this initiative will include the categories described below. Eligible entities (see page 3) can apply for funding from one or more categories.

1. Implementation Grants

Implementation grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000 are available for riparian restoration projects using low-tech, process-based restoration (LTPBR) techniques, such as RDS, BDA, PALS, sod plugs, etc., and supporting practices, such as tree planting and exclosures. Structures can be in channel or on hillslopes. Priority will be given to larger projects (50+ structures), geographic areas where LTPBR is not widely practiced, and upper watersheds where numerous small, low-tech structures have the most impact.

Implementation grants can also support restoration for the purpose of beaver translocation or beaver recolonization. Grants for this purpose may include practices for nonlethal management of beaver conflicts (e.g., pond levelers) around restoration sites. Preference will be given to sites that prohibit beaver trapping and hunting.

Implementation grants will be evaluated based on ecological and social criteria, including appropriateness of LTPBR to the context, biodiversity and ecological value, project scale, partnerships, and financial viability. Projects that utilize blended funding, such as government funds, philanthropic resources, carbon credits, or other payments for ecosystem services are viewed favorably.

Only projects in the target geography will be considered for implementation grants.

Funded projects may request grant periods of one, two, or three years, depending on scale and scope.

2. System Capacity Grants

Grants of up to \$25,000 are available to support projects that enhance our collective capacity to implement stream and watershed restoration across the southwestern US and northern Mexico. Examples include, but are not limited to, reducing policy or regulatory barriers, innovative finance for restoration, addressing workforce development, or facilitating place-based landowner networks. Applicants are encouraged to explain clearly how the project will lead to more and/or riparian restoration in the future, by their own organization and others, in the proposal narrative or a logic model.

3. Engagement Grants

Grants of up to \$7,500 are available for activities to engage landowners and land managers. Examples include hosted workshops, videos, websites, or targeted outreach/marketing to candidate landowners on topics such as practice guidance, permitting, financing, benefits, and risk mitigation.

Eligibility

Proposals may be submitted by registered nonprofit organizations, civil society organizations, and Native American tribes in the geographic area described above. Proposals may be for one or more categories, and proposals may be submitted by a single entity or partnerships of multiple entities. Among nonprofit organizations and civil society organizations, priority will be given to those of small and mid-size.

Proposals

Please include the following in the proposal. A 5- to 7-page proposal is usually sufficient to address the questions for implementation grants, and 2 to 4 pages for system capacity and engagement proposals. Proposers may include attachments to support the proposal.

1. Cover sheet with name and location of project, name and contact information for primary contact person, and 2-4 sentence summary of the proposal
2. Description of problem(s) to be addressed and the factors that led to the problem(s)
3. Planned activities, including timeline and budget
4. Explanation of how the planned activities will address the problem and the expected outcomes for the environment, wildlife, and people
5. Risks associated with the project
6. List of stakeholders directly and indirectly affected by the project and how they have been or will be included in planning and decision making
7. The proposers' qualifications

Email completed proposal as a PDF or Word document to Jennifer Gooden at jennifer@biophiliafoundation.org.

The deadline for proposals is March 31, 2026.

Questions?

For more information, or to discuss potential projects or modifications to proposal requirements, please contact Jennifer Gooden at jennifer@biophiliafoundation.org.