



Skagit Watershed Council

2025 LEAD ENTITY PROGRAM GUIDE

FOR THE SKAGIT AND SAMISH WATERSHEDS

WRIAs 3 AND 4

02/06/2025

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Skagit Watershed Council 2025 Grant Process Timeline, v1.4.24

Date	Activity / Milestone	Sponsor	TRC	LECC
Feb 6	2025 Request for Proposals released			
Mar 6	Letters of Intent due to SWC, all applicants	X		
Mar 13	Draft applications invited			
Feb 1 - Mar 31	Letters of Intent due to monitoring grants manager	X		
Apr 14	Draft regular and riparian applications due in PRISM	X		
Apr 21	Draft applications to TRC and LECC for review			
May 1	Submit draft monitoring applications in PRISM	X		
May 6, 7, 8	Project site visits in the field for all applicants	X	X	Encouraged
May 15	TRC/LECC review comments due to SWC		X	X
May 22	TRC and LECC reviewer comments available to sponsors via PRISM for sponsor response	X		
May 30	Initial SRFB Review Panel and monitoring Science Panel comments available			
Jun 4, 10am-noon	Council of Members meeting. Sponsors available for Q&A.	X	Optional	Encouraged
Jun 9-10	Conference call with Review Panel or Science Panel	Optional		
Jun 23, noon	Final SRFB applications due in PRISM along with response to comments in review module in PRISM and responses to SWC LECC supplemental questions	X		
Jun 26	Final applications available to TRC and LECC			
Jul 10, 9am-noon	TRC review mtg. Required for sponsors w/critical comments.	X	X	Invited
Jul 10, 12-4pm	TRC technical scoring meeting		X	Invited
Jul 17, 9am-noon	LECC informational project workshop		3 reps	X
Jul 25	Final SRFB Review Panel comments received			
Aug 6, 9am-noon	LECC project ranking meeting		3 reps	X
Aug 7	Accept science panel "condition" if applicable	X		
Aug 8	Lead Entity ranked list submitted (Regular)			
Sep 2	Final grant report available for public review			

TRC = Technical Review Committee members

LECC = Lead Entity Citizens Committee members

INTRODUCTION TO THIS LEAD ENTITY PROGRAM GUIDE

The following is the Lead Entity Program Guide (Guide) that sets forth the procedures and processes the Skagit Watershed Council (Council) will use in soliciting, reviewing, ranking, approving, funding, administering, monitoring, and evaluating salmon recovery projects funded through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Program (PSAR). This includes several funding streams and programs as described herein. This Guide serves as a reference that will assist all participants (project sponsors, committee members, staff, reviewers, community members, etc.) throughout the process, from project development to final presentation to the SRFB.

This Guide represents the cumulative policies from past decisions, along with long term practice, that, together, make the Skagit Watershed Council process as effective, efficient and transparent as possible. Also identified are those other lead entity program functions that support the SRFB funding process and the capital portion, i.e. habitat restoration and acquisition, of the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan.

The Skagit Watershed Council lead entity grant process is divided into several phases, each with several steps that include both lead entity and project sponsor actions within the context of the state-wide grant application process. The timing and iterations in this process are established in Washington statute by the Legislature and in policy by the SRFB. This Guide describes each of these steps and what participants can expect.

The SRFB produces an updated Grants Manual ([Manual 18](#)) each year that outlines state-wide processes, which is an important companion to this Guide. In addition, several other manuals are both relevant and important, and it is the responsibility of the project sponsors to understand and follow all policies. These materials are available on the RCO website [here](#).

BACKGROUND OF THE LEAD ENTITY PROGRAM

In 1991, the federal government listed the first species of salmon in the Pacific Northwest under the federal Endangered Species Act. By the end of that decade, populations had dwindled so much that salmon and bull trout were listed as threatened or endangered in nearly three-fourths of Washington State waters. In response to those listings, a variety of measures were taken. One of those measures was the passage of Washington state salmon recovery legislation (RCW 77.85). That legislation spells out a process for the creation of local “lead entities” to identify local priorities for action to recover salmon in collaboration with tribes, local governments, conservation groups, and other stake holders in the watersheds. Currently, there are 26 local lead entities operating within Washington State. The statute reads: “The lead entity shall establish a committee that consists of representative interests of counties, cities, conservation districts, tribes, environmental groups, business interests, landowners, citizens, volunteer groups, regional fish enhancement groups, and other habitat interests.” The intention of the Governor’s plan is to put decision making about salmon restoration priorities, based on recovery plans, in the hands of locals for a grassroots approach called “the Washington way”.

The Council is the fiscal agent and administrator of the lead entity grant program and is accountable for the process. The term lead entity more accurately relates to the role of the local committees that are responsible for developing a science-based habitat strategy, draft list of projects that are consistent with science and technical policies as well as the local community’s interests and values. RCW 77.85 also spells out the duties of lead entities. Those duties include encouraging qualifying local groups, (project sponsors), to propose actions to aid the recovery of salmon. Those actions can include habitat studies, habitat restoration projects, and acquisition of property and development rights to protect salmon habitat. In addition to encouraging local groups to develop and propose actions to aid

salmon recovery, lead entities are charged with compiling lists of those proposed actions, reviewing those proposals, and prioritizing them for funding. Local lead entities are responsible for organizing and coordinating a technical advisory group to serve technical and science-related needs as well as a committee of diverse community interests which prioritizes the project list for funding. Each area's local lead entity list is then submitted through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The SRFB makes decisions about which actions receive funding from those lists and then directs the RCO to issue contracts with the individual project sponsors.

THE SKAGIT LEAD ENTITY PROGRAM

To fulfill the requirements described above, the Skagit Watershed Council's lead entity program is made up of several different components. They include a program coordination function (the SWC Board and executive director), a technical work and review function (TWG and TRC), and a project prioritization function (LECC). These components work to support the development, vetting, funding, implementation, and monitoring of salmon habitat protection and restoration projects.

LEAD ENTITY CITIZEN COMMITTEE

The Lead Entity Citizen Committee (LECC) makes habitat project priority decisions as required in RCW 77.85. The LECC membership is defined by statute to include "representative interests of counties, cities, conservation districts, tribes, environmental groups, business interests, landowners, citizens, volunteer groups, regional fish enhancement groups, and other habitat interests." The Lead Entity Coordinator recruits representatives for the listed constituencies and brings the list to the SWC Board for approval to ensure the LECC meets the statute. Each LECC member gets one vote in the project ranking process, though we strive for consensus. We have always achieved consensus on the ranked project lists. Refer to the section below on Habitat Project List Prioritization for more information on the committee's role in that process. LECC members are required to attend both the information sharing workshop and the project prioritization meeting. If any member foresees missing one of these two meetings, they should either propose a replacement committee member or not vote.

TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The lead entity SRFB Project Technical Review Committee (TRC) provides the technical review and scoring of project proposals for funding by the SRFB. Membership in the TRC will be drawn primarily from the TWG and supplemented when necessary for required and diverse technical expertise and to maintain an objective process. In general, membership requirements of the TRC are the same as for the TWG, except that they are not required to be from the Council's membership.

Membership on the TRC is revisited annually prior to convening the committee for each grant round. The Watershed Coordinator will solicit participants, and the Board will review and appoint committee members. Membership may vary from year to year depending on the type and number of grant proposals received, expertise required for technical review, and maintaining an objective process. Because of the limited number of sources for technical expertise, and the fact that the agencies for which these staff work are often project applicants and sponsors, potential conflicts of interest are inevitable. To minimize this problem, we strive for a large membership of at least 10 qualified individuals with less than 50% of them with potential conflicts of interest on any single project in each grant round. Additionally, those members with conflicts of interest are not allowed to score or evaluate their own projects during ranking meetings. Our adopted and implemented Conflict of Interest Policy is on page 7 of this guide.

The Watershed Coordinator or another appointed and qualified individual will facilitate the TRC meetings and field review (site visits), and ensure participants adhere to procedures outlined in this Guide. The facilitator does not score project applications as they must remain unbiased. Refer to the section below on Technical Review and Scoring for more information on the committee's role in that process.

Because the grant schedule is published with the Request for Proposals (RFP) far in advance and has little room for delay, a decision-making quorum of the TRC for purpose of the grant round is defined as those voting members in attendance at a scheduled and published meeting. Only members in good standing participate in decision-making, defined here as attending all scheduled committee meetings and field reviews, or informing the Watershed Coordinator of their absence prior to the scheduled meeting and having reviewed all project and meeting materials and provided the committee chair or convener with their scoring materials and/or comments as requested.

TECHNICAL WORK GROUP

The Technical Work Group (TWG) is the primary standing work group of the Council. The TWG's role is to advise the LECC, Board, and external interests on the technical aspects of salmon habitat recovery in the Skagit and Samish Watersheds. This includes but is not limited to technical habitat strategy development, project updates, project development and sequencing, and project vetting for funding recommendations that fall outside of the typical grant round (where that role is performed by the TRC).

TWG members are drawn from the staff of tribal, federal, state and local government agencies, as well as NGOs and other groups engaged in salmon recovery. Areas of expertise recruited for the TWG are from the following disciplines: hydrology, geology, riparian forestry, water quality, fluvial geomorphology, fish biology, freshwater and estuarine ecology, restoration project implementation, protection project implementation, and engineering. Qualifications for TWG membership include the required expertise and the willingness to participate regularly.

Membership for the TWG will be affirmed and published annually. New members may be proposed during the year, subject to confirmation by the Board. The TWG operates with a set membership of no specific number. The chair of the TWG is appointed by the Board following a recommendation of the committee. The chairs serve for two-year terms and may be reelected up to 6 years consecutively. Appendix A contains the current members of the TWG.

The TWG operates under the direction of the Council's Board of Directors (Board) and makes recommendations to them and to the LECC for consideration, except where explicit decision-making authority has been granted to the TWG.

PROTECTION SUBCOMMITTEE

The [Protection Subcommittee](#) (PS) implements the decisions of the LECC in allocating SRFB funds for salmon habitat protection. The primary responsibility of this committee is the application of the Protection Strategy and oversight of the selection and approval process by which grant funds are applied to acquisitions for habitat and floodplain protection. The PS works with the TWG

MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee's main function is to develop an adaptive management & monitoring framework to augment the Skagit Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan (2005). The primary responsibility of this committee is to recommend and advance monitoring projects that inform salmon recovery and strategy adaptation. They are also responsible for communicating Skagit salmon science to the broader community. The current membership of this committee is listed in Appendix A.

DECISION MAKING

Committee meetings are conducted using the procedures laid out in this document. Committee meetings are conducted to ensure that each member and project sponsor is heard in a systematic and fair manner. It is the responsibility of the committee chair and/or facilitator to make sure that proceedings are conducted in a transparent, systematic and fair manner.

Because the grant round schedule is published with the RFP far in advance and has little room for delay, a quorum for decision-making is defined as those voting TRC and LECC members in attendance at a scheduled and published meeting. Though organizations may have multiple representatives on committees, each organization has only one vote, which will be established at the beginning of the grant round.

The preferred mode of decision-making is by consensus or general agreement. It is the responsibility of each member to educate themselves on the projects under consideration by reviewing the project information provided, being familiar with evaluation criteria and guiding documents, seeking information, and networking with each other in hopes of finding agreement in a timely way. If general agreement is not achieved, the preferred mode is to continue to seek agreement, within a reasonable timeframe set by the group. For our SRFB process, this time frame is dictated by the established RCO grant round timeline. A vote will be taken only when it becomes clear that general agreement is unlikely to occur within the reasonable time frame set by RCO. At that point the chair may call for a vote, with the majority constituting two-thirds of the members qualified to vote (i.e., potential conflict of interest). Each organization has one vote only.

Only members in good standing participate in decision-making, defined here as attending all scheduled committee meetings and field reviews, or informing the Watershed Coordinator of their absence prior to the scheduled meeting and having reviewed all project and meeting materials and provided input as requested.

Voting by proxy is not allowed during the grant round. Further, questions presented by proxy must be provided in writing in advance of each opportunity to share input to both the Watershed Coordinator and the project sponsor before being allowed into the record and project dialogue.

POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

This potential conflict of interest policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest. This policy applies equally to all members of the lead entity SRFB committees and support staff engaged in the SRFB review process. Our goal is to be objective in our acceptance, evaluation, and advancing of habitat project proposals, and to reach conclusions that advance salmon recovery in the watershed, hence the need for a policy to ensure our awareness of and sensitivity to potential conflicts of interest.

A potential conflict of interest may exist when a participant responsible for acting in the best interests of the lead entity and SRFB grant program has another interest or loyalty that could influence or impair, or may appear to influence or impair, the individual's ability to act in the best interests of the lead entity. A potential conflict of interest exists where a lead entity SRFB committee member or member's organization directly or indirectly benefits financially, sits on the applicant's Board of Directors, or has a family relation who is, and/or is themselves significantly involved in the development of a project. Employees of project sponsoring organizations, their financial partnering individuals and organizations, and landowners are defined as such. Prior knowledge of the proposal or prior contact with the applicant does not constitute a potential conflict of interest, as long as none of these criteria apply to the reviewer.

The term “potential conflict of interest” includes:

- actual or direct conflicts of interest as defined above
- potential future conflicts of interest (situations that could become actual conflicts in the future based upon foreseeable events or the passage of time), and
- perceived conflicts of interest (situations that others could reasonably perceive to be, or that have the appearance of, a conflict of interest)

The Watershed Coordinator will conduct conflict of interest policy training with participants by reviewing these policies at the beginning of each evaluation and ranking meeting. TRC and LECC members are required to recuse themselves from scoring or ranking any grant applications where a potential conflict of interest as defined above exists. In the event a lead entity SRFB committee rules upon an issue in which a member has unavoidable potential conflict of interest, that member will be asked to recuse themselves from the deliberation and voting on the project, though they may stay in the room for basic information-sharing purposes. If a participant has any concerns or questions about whether their relationship with an applicant or proposal warrants recusal, the participant will explain their situation to the other members of the committee at the meeting. The committee will decide jointly whether it constitutes a potential conflict of interest.

All potential conflicts of interest and how they were addressed must be documented in meeting notes.

This Program Guide provides corrective action procedures that must be followed to deal effectively with conflict-of-interest violations if they occur. Specifically, if a violation is undiscovered during the grant round but determined later, the Board of Directors will document the occurrence, reasons, and potential implications of the action, and make a specific resolution to correct the implications and adjust policies to keep it from happening again. If there is a violation of these policies that occurs during the grant round, the Executive Director will immediately act to remove the offender from the committee and refer the offense to the Board of Directors for the actions outlined immediately above.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The Skagit Watershed Council is a registered nonprofit organization and as such is not subject to Washington State’s Open Public Meetings and Public Disclosure Acts (OPMA). However, the LECC is considered a subagency to the state and is subject to components of the OPMA as described in Manual 19 because the LECC makes decisions about ranking salmon recovery projects for public funding. The lead entity subcommittees (Technical Review Committee, Technical Working Group, Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee and Protection Subcommittee) are considered ‘advisory’ and not subject to OPMA (Manual 19, 2021). Basic components of the OPMA policy include: training committee members regarding public meetings, announcing public meetings on our website, posting agendas for meetings, welcoming members of the public to meetings, allowing time on the agenda for public comment, documenting decisions in meeting notes, posting notes on our website, and making relevant materials available to the general public upon request. The Skagit Watershed Council’s Program Assistant, reachable at kmathis@skagitwatershed.org, is responsible for implementing these practices and is the primary contact person for any related public disclosure requests. Meetings that are held virtually will be open to the public as well. Links to virtual meetings are provided upon request to the Program Assistant.

LEAD ENTITY STAFF FUNCTIONS IN SRFB FUNDING ROUND

The Watershed Coordinator is a resource to project proponents throughout the grant application process and is staff to the Technical Review Committee and the Lead Entity Citizen Committee.

In addition to the functions and responsibilities assigned to the Watershed Coordinator and described above, the Watershed Coordinator will help facilitate the movement of proposals through the review process. This includes assuring that the TWG, TRC and LECC receive review copies of project proposals at appropriate times.

The Watershed Coordinator and the project sponsor have responsibility, per Manual 18, to ensure each application is complete, free of mathematical errors, contains all required attachments, has documented additional funding, meets lead entity grant program criteria and guidelines, is consistent with the lead entity habitat strategy and other documents, is technically sound and complete, and meets SRFB eligibility requirements.

The Watershed Coordinator will also forward any mandatory conditions placed on projects by the TRC/LECC to the RCO-SRFB grants manager to be incorporated into the final grant agreements. The Watershed Coordinator will complete both lead entity and Regional Area submittal packets that list Skagit projects in rank order, summarize the nature of the projects submitted to the SRFB from the lead entity, and address the project lists' fit to the salmon recovery plans. The Watershed Coordinator will prepare presentations on the project list for the SRFB, SRFB Review Panel, Council of Members, Puget Sound Partnership, and any other regional bodies based on their specific interests and policies.

ANNUAL SRFB GRANT ROUND PROCESS

REVIEW AND UPDATE OF GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND GRANT MATERIALS

Published grant materials for the current grant round include:

- this Program Guide,
- the Request for Proposals (Appendix B),
- current technical and prioritization criteria (Appendix C),
- current grant timeline,
- [the SWC 2022 Strategic Approach](#),
- [the 2016 Interim Steelhead Strategy](#),
- [Manual 18](#) published by the state Recreation and Conservation Office which administers the SRFB grant round.

The updating of any critical grant materials will occur prior to release of the Request for Proposals for the current grant round in early February. These are all available to project sponsors, project reviewers, and the public on our website or via the above links.

Changes to the local SRFB grant process (i.e., this Guide) will only occur to update or revise the process as necessary for clarification or to meet new regulatory or contract requirements. The lead entity's Technical Work Group (TWG) will participate in the review and update of this Program Guide and the included technical criteria and submit their recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval. All active committee members are requested to attend these meetings so that consensus can be reached on process documentation and the associated grant materials for

the upcoming SRFB grant round. The TWG and Board will have at least two meetings each to review and approve changes.

DEVELOPING THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Request for Proposals (RFP) is a formal announcement and solicitation for project proposals issued at the beginning of the annual SRFB grant round (sample RFP in Appendix B). The Watershed Coordinator will develop a draft RFP for review by the TWG and acceptance by the Board. It will be:

- Based on the latest version of the Skagit Watershed Council Strategic Approach,
- Consistent with the Habitat Protection and Restoration Strategy (SWC 1998) and the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan (2005), and
- Include all funding opportunities available and managed by the Skagit Lead Entity under one RFP.

The RFP may include solicitations for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) regular funds, PSAR Large Cap funds, monitoring funds, targeted investment funds, and riparian funds in addition to regular SRFB salmon funds. The process for applying for these funds is the same, as described herein, with a few exceptions, each of which is described in Manual 18 and below. The funding pots are described later in this document.

The RFP is issued as a document separate from this Guide. The RFP will be announced via wide, electronic distribution and the SWC website. It will remain open at least two weeks. Any organization that has expressed interest in proposing projects will be included in the electronic distribution list.

ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

The lead entity has established technical criteria for the TRC to evaluate and technically score the project proposals. The technical criteria as presented in Appendix C were drafted in 2011 based on the SRFB's Guide for Lead entity project evaluation, specifying benefit to fish and certainty of project success criteria, and including local priorities for implementation of the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan (i.e. process-based restoration and priority tiers). The lead entity may revise its criteria periodically to better address technical issues and project types, to incorporate new technical data or approaches, or to ensure compatibility with evaluation criteria adopted by the SRFB. SWC criteria were revised subsequent to the 2011 table being drafted as follows: in 2015 to address projects in overlapping target areas and to incorporate interim Steelhead priorities, in 2016 to improve evaluation of cost effectiveness, and in 2021 to address new criteria for riparian projects and pocket estuary projects based on the updated 2022 Strategic Approach, and in 2024 to clarify cost effectiveness criteria. The TWG will review the Project Evaluation Criteria and submit recommended revisions to the Board of Directors for approval.

ESTABLISHING LECC PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

The project list produced by the TRC will provide the basis for LECC final prioritization. The LECC will use a qualitative process to arrive at the final list for submittal to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The evaluation and ranking criteria for prioritizing projects are presented in Appendix C. Additional information on this process is found in the section below titled "Step Seven: LECC Habitat Project List Prioritization".

GRANT TIMELINE IMPLEMENTATION

The Watershed Coordinator sets a grant round timeline in alignment with RCO's timeline provided in Manual 18. The grant timeline takes into consideration adequate time for all the process steps described herein along with requirements of both the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP, our regional salmon recovery organization) and the published SRFB schedule. The timeline is approved by the TWG and SWC Board when the Program Guide is reviewed and approved. Every effort will be made to make the grant application process as short as possible while still

providing sufficient public notice and sponsor opportunity to respond to reviewer comments. The grant timeline is available at the beginning of this document, before the Table of Contents.

A firm commitment to grant timelines and deliverables is required. The timeline identifies sponsor obligations. The Watershed Coordinator tracks compliance with stated responsibilities and deadlines. For unavoidable circumstances resulting in missed deadlines, The Watershed Coordinator may make exceptions. A project sponsor may appeal the Watershed Coordinator's determination of non-compliance with program requirements or failure to meet grant round obligations to the Lead Entity Citizen Committee, via the committee chairs.

Where foreseeable and appropriate, Council staff and committee members are responsible for alerting other participants in the project review process as early as possible to any anticipated or problematic areas of the project so that sufficient time and opportunity is available to thoroughly vet and address potential project weaknesses with sponsors.

GRANT APPLICATION STEPS

STEP ONE: LETTER OF INTENT SUBMITTAL

Project sponsors are required to first submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for a project proposal to the lead entity as outlined in the issuing RFP. A Letter of Intent is required from each project proponent requesting funds from the SRFB. Proposed projects must be either referenced in the most recent Skagit Watershed Council 4 Year Work Plan or deemed to be consistent with it. Potential project proponents are encouraged to contact the Watershed Coordinator to discuss the proposed project and confirm eligibility for funding. Refer to SRFB Manual 18 for a list of eligible applicants and project types. Letters of Intent are due to the Watershed Coordinator on the date established in the timeline made available in the Request for Proposals. The Letter of Intent form (Appendix F) is to be submitted as an email attachment as specified in the RFP, along with a project summary (up to 2 pages), and project site and vicinity maps.

This pre-grant application requirement helps proponents in several ways. First, it is an opportunity for the project proponent to think through the details of a potential project early in the funding process. It is also an opportunity for the project proponent to identify areas where technical assistance may be needed to ultimately develop a strong final proposal, or to invest less time in the application process if a proposal is not accepted for further consideration in the grant round for any reason.

The Letters of Intent provide an indication of how close the watershed is to meeting the target allocation of funds from the SRFB and other funding sources. It is also an early opportunity to identify additional cost-share programs that most effectively leverage the resources needed to implement projects. For these reasons, no exceptions will be made for considering a new proposal after the Letter of Intent phase.

Although not required by the granting agency, a standardized naming convention for your proposal is important for tracking projects in PRISM and the Salmon Recovery Portal database, and for project reviewers. The use of landowner names in proposals should be avoided to protect landowner privacy. Proposal names should include the following elements and be no more than 50 characters long:

- Geographic link (e.g., stream reach name, estuary, nearshore area)
- An indication of project type (acquisition, restoration, assessment, etc.)
- Project phase (feasibility, preliminary or final design, construction, etc.)

The Watershed Coordinator will review all Letters of Intent received by the date due and accept those that meet the criteria specified in the RFP, SRFB Manual 18, and this Guide. The Watershed Coordinator will communicate to the submitting sponsors the rationale for rejection of their proposed projects or acceptance for further consideration in the grant round. Those accepted will be invited to submit a SRFB application for further evaluation in the grant round, and, if not already included, they will be added to the 4-Year Work Plan. Acceptance of a project proposal at this stage in the grant process does not guarantee successful final acceptance or funding.

A proposal may be rejected because it does not meet the qualifications of the RFP or due to lack of sufficient information to determine qualification. A sponsor whose proposal was rejected may appeal to the Council's Board of Directors within one week of receiving notification of rejection. An effort will be made to resolve the appeal prior to the next grant application deadline.

Where qualification against the RFP criteria is uncertain the Watershed Coordinator will forward Letters of Intent to the Technical Work Group and/or the Council's Board of Directors for review depending on the technical or policy nature of the uncertainty. A proposal may also be invited to proceed with the caveat that eligibility is yet unresolved and will be determined at a later date, following more deliberation and review by the TWG and/or Board. Caveated projects may be disqualified at any time after the Letter of Intent is submitted, depending on when a final eligibility determination is made. This contingency allows projects to continue through the process and not miss process deadlines while more complex issues of qualification are determined on a parallel track. The project sponsor proceeds at their own risk that the project may be disqualified. During any point in the grant application process the project can be withdrawn by the project sponsor.

The Watershed Coordinator will create a Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP) page for the accepted proposed projects and generate a PRISM contract number. PRISM and SRP databases are connected and communicate with each other. When a sponsor receives the PRISM contract number via email, they may proceed with the SRFB application process in PRISM (see next section). Project sponsors are not responsible for inputting initiating application information into SRP but are responsible for all SRFB application data entry in PRISM as well as post-grant award project updates in PRISM (see section on Post-Grant Award and Implementation Reporting below). Sponsors should be aware that both PRISM and SRP have public-facing interfaces and are used by the public, other agencies for reporting on salmon recovery progress and for communicating with legislators. Project summaries are most visible and should be less than 50 words, summarize the central action, and identify the quantitative benefits of the project (acres of habitat restored, fish impacted). Use of these databases is required of sponsors and Lead Entities by RCO and PSP. The Watershed Coordinator can assist sponsors in setting up and maintaining their database information.

LARGE-SCALE AND COMPLEX PROJECTS

The SRFB encourages completing acquisition, restoration or acquisition/restoration projects in 3 years. Large-scale, complex projects may take substantially longer. Recognizing that many projects require years for completion, applicants should consider phasing the project and grant proposals over several grant cycles rather than requesting a large grant covering multiple years and phases. To provide the lead entity with greater flexibility in funding projects, applicants are also urged to break down their draft applications and budgets into discrete elements that can be implemented independently. Project applicants may propose large, multiple year projects; however, the Lead Entity may approve only partial funding in order to allow the funding of additional project proposals. Applicants should also consider requesting feasibility or design-only grant funds for complex projects with significant scale, technical, and/or budget uncertainties. Addressing critical uncertainties through a feasibility or design-only project could significantly enhance the likelihood of implementation funding and project success.

While optional in the SRFB requirements specified in Manual 18, Appendix D, the Skagit Lead Entity requires that sponsors conduct a stakeholder review during the feasibility and preliminary design process and explain in the project report how comments from stakeholders were addressed. In conducting a stakeholder review, the sponsor should include parties with a substantial interest in the project. Depending on the scope, nature, and complexity of the proposed project this could include the landowner of the project site, adjacent landowners, and relevant federal, tribal, state, and local agencies.

The Skagit Lead Entity also requires that previously funded deliverables related to the current proposed project be sufficiently completed at the time the applications are due. These requirements are to ensure the technical and stakeholder support information necessary to adequately inform the next phase of a project funding request is available for review. For example, a feasibility report must be complete before the project can advance to design or construction; a smaller scale project may require a lesser level of design work to facilitate technical review than a large-scale project. We are also trying to avoid what would constitute a change in scope between what was reviewed and then subsequently contracted. Technical reviewers will determine if the project is sufficiently developed to proceed at the same time as the Step Three proposal presentations.

All projects submitted through the lead entity process should seek to contain their costs. Large scale projects over \$1 million dollars in construction costs should incorporate third party review for this purpose to maximize their technical scores.

STEP TWO: DRAFT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

Following acceptance of a Letter of Intent, draft SRFB applications are due in the state's on-line grant management database (PRISM) by the date in the grant timeline. To equitably evaluate all proposed projects in a grant cycle, the SRFB requires the following minimum level of information for draft applications before they will schedule their required site visits with the lead entity (SRFB Salmon Recovery Grant Manual 18):

- A project location or vicinity map entered using the PRISM or SRP mapping tool, including latitude and longitude for a point representing the project location (i.e. a centroid for a project area. For acquisitions, the map should depict the project site as well as lands in the vicinity held by the public or having protection status)
- A more detailed site or parcel map including metrics (i.e. acres planted, number of logjams, etc.)
- Site or aerial photos (at least 2)
- Design plans or sketches that convey the intent of proposed restoration projects. Applicants should provide all available, relevant design information (detailed construction plans, specifications, planting plans, and design reports). Sponsors with minimal available information should include example photos, designs, and conceptual sketches to convey their intent.
- Draft Detailed Cost Estimate to supplement the general cost information required by PRISM. This cost estimate will include enough detail to support the proposed budget. Clearly label the attachment in PRISM "Cost Estimate." See SRFB Manual 18 for instructions.
- A completed project proposal questionnaire. Every SRFB applicant must answer project proposal questions in PRISM.
- A 300-character project summary in SRP/PRISM that includes major project goals and metrics.
- Verbal declaration to RCO and Council staff as to whether the proposed project should be considered for inclusion in the Intensively Monitored Watershed Program

In addition, the Skagit Lead Entity also requires that sponsors:

- Include an 'area of potential effect' map.

- Include in the project proposal a quantification of the benefit to fish - if and where good information exists. For feasibility or design projects, if and where good information exists, provide a range based on the alternatives proposed.
- Complete previously funded deliverables related to the current proposed project sufficiently by the time the draft applications are due, with a limited exception for Large Capital PSAR.
- Enter work site project metrics in PRISM/SRP.
- Answer supplemental questions for the Lead Entity Citizen Committee. This form is available in Appendix E of the Guide.
- For Tier 2 projects, provide evidence that proposed projects in Tier 2 tributaries are within documented Chinook and/or Steelhead areas as well as within eligible floodplain habitats.

After sponsors have completed their draft applications, they will hit the SUBMIT button in PRISM so that their applications can be distributed to reviewers ahead of site visits. Draft applications are available for review by the TRC and SRFB Review Panel two weeks before the site visits.

STEP THREE: SPONSOR PRESENTATIONS AND SITE VISITS

Project proponents are required to present their project proposals to the lead entity committees (TRC and LECC) and SRFB reviewers. The intent is to provide additional details to increase understanding of the project. This is also an opportunity for the lead entity to clarify expectations of the grant round and to provide information and resources to sponsors that will strengthen proposals and partnerships. Sponsor presentations of their projects will be scheduled to occur either in the field during the project site visits, or if more appropriate, in virtually. Site visits may best be held in the virtual format using drone or other video footage, maps, and photos. Sponsors can choose the best format for conveying the breadth and scope of their projects to reviewers.

Project proponents are encouraged to share any refined or additional information and materials during the site visit. The need for a project site visit will be determined by the Watershed Coordinator, in consultation with the TRC and SRFB Review Panel, if necessary. Some project proposals may not require a site visit (e.g., assessments, feasibility studies, inaccessible sites, or project sites previously visited in other grant rounds), although sponsors may request one regardless.

Once the portfolio of potential projects is finalized and the need for field review established, the Watershed Coordinator will finalize an agenda and itinerary for a field tour. The TRC, Watershed Coordinator, SRFB Review Panel members, and RCO-SRFB grant manager are required to attend, while the LECC is encouraged to attend. Each attendee's role will be identified visually with colored name tags. A discussion of the project evaluation criteria among the TRC and LECC members will also be held at this time to ensure a common understanding and application. For projects with previously funded deliverables, TRC members will determine if those deliverables are sufficiently completed for the proposal to advance to review.

Virtual site visits may be recorded if sponsors wish and other participants agree. SRFB Review Panel members have requested that recordings be made available to them if possible. Any recordings made will be posted to a secure Box site for Review Panel members to view only and given to sponsors. SWC will delete the recordings following the grant round process and will not keep them on file.

Following each site visit, the group will circle up, aggregate by role, and introduce themselves and their role (e.g. sponsor, TRC, LECC, SRFB Review Panel, staff). An open round of questions and answers from the group will be facilitated by the Watershed Coordinator following each site visit, keeping each role clear. Questions or comments that cannot be easily addressed in the field, that would require or benefit from changes to the grant application, or

that need to be documented to avoid them coming back up again in different venues at a later date, will be documented as TRC or LECC comments. The Watershed Coordinator will ensure that each TRC reviewer has specified whether their comments are editorial (i.e., suggested) or critical (required). Sponsors are required to address critical comments in final applications, or the application can be rejected by the TRC. Additionally, LECC members present will be asked to raise questions or comments so they can also be documented and shared with the project sponsors. Comments will only be editorial, from the perspective of the individual LECC member, and won't represent the perspective of the entire LECC. The LECC's process for building consensus takes place during Step 7.

STEP FOUR: REVIEW AND RESPONSE FOR DRAFT APPLICATIONS

Draft applications submitted by sponsors are reviewed during the site visits and during the subsequent review period in May. Following receipt of lead entity and SRFB Review Panel review comments, sponsors will refine their proposals to appropriately address comments and update and/or complete the PRISM application and required attachments (SRFB Manual 18). Final applications are submitted after the review and response. There are two parallel tracks for review: one for the Lead entity and one for the SRFB Review Panel.

LEAD ENTITY REVIEW PROCESS

Council staff will compile all lead entity comments and enter them into the review module in PRISM. Sponsors will get an email from PRISM when the lead entity comments are posted, usually one week following the site visit. No comments will be attributed to any individual Watershed Coordinator. If further discussion is necessary, an additional meeting may be called to review and finalize comments. The Watershed Coordinator may provide additional technical or administrative comments and instructions to grant applicants consistent with lead entity responsibilities itemized in SRFB Manual 18. These may be communicated formally or informally throughout the grant application process. Sponsors will document their responses to formal comments posted in the PRISM Review module and make necessary changes in their PRISM attachments and questionnaire responses. This step is the last chance to make significant changes to the project proposal unless requested to do so by the lead entity or SRFB later in the process. The term "significant" means changes that would substantively alter the proposed goals/objectives, scope of activities, geographic location, outcomes or budget totals.

By the deadline for revised final applications, sponsors should verify that all required data fields in PRISM are complete by "verifying" their applications in the "Submit" tab. Once complete, notify the Watershed Coordinator that the SRFB application is complete and available in PRISM. Submit the application at this time, which will end the pre-application status and edit capability. Grant applications will be returned and then formally re-submitted to the RCO per the published grant timeline to accommodate any additional requests for changes by the SRFB Review Panel or Lead Entity after the site visits and comment period.

SRFB REVIEW PANEL PROCESS

The SRFB Review Panel will be responsible for documenting their own comments or questions in PRISM separately. Sponsors are required to document their responses to comments in PRISM and make changes to their PRISM application. Applicants will receive SRFB Review Panel comments identifying projects as "Clear", "Conditioned", "Needs More Information", or "Project of Concern". RCO staff accepts "Clear" applications and returns "Conditioned", "Needs More Information", and "Project of Concern" applications so applicants may update and respond to comments. An optional conference call with SRFB reviewers is available for sponsors to discuss first round comments on projects that were not cleared. The Skagit Lead Entity is allotted only one hour for all projects in the conference call. The Watershed Coordinator will prioritize how that hour is best spent between projects. Final responses to comments are due on the final application deadline date at the end of June.

STEP FIVE: PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL OF MEMBERS

Each project sponsor shall work with SWC staff to provide information about their proposal to the full Council of Members at a formal meeting. Each sponsor will provide the location, goals/objectives, fish species benefited, relation to SWC Strategic Approach, and budget and funding request in a PowerPoint slide and be available at the June Council of Members meeting to answer questions. This may be in the format of a panel question and answer session, or whatever format seems most effective and efficient for the given slate of projects. Project sponsors should anticipate a broad audience to attend this formal meeting.

STEP SIX: TRC FINAL TECHNICAL REVIEW AND PROJECT SCORING

After final project proposals have been completed, the Watershed Coordinator will convene the TRC for a final technical review and scoring virtually or in person. Prior to the meeting, members will receive the revised final grant application materials for review, an individual scoring form to fill out and return, and a draft conflict of interest matrix. The TRC members score proposals based on the grant application materials and sponsor response to technical comments. The technical review criteria for scoring projects are included in Appendix C. If there are any corrections to be made to the draft conflict of interest matrix, those should be provided to the Watershed Coordinator when individual scores are submitted and thus before scores are compiled for the scoring meeting.

The final technical review will be completed in the first half of the TRC meeting by inviting all project sponsors to review each project's changes. The TRC should collectively determine if critical comments have been satisfactorily addressed for each individual project. If the TRC feels the critical comments have not been addressed they can recommend to the LECC that the project be dropped. If agreement cannot be reached, the majority/minority report will be advanced to the LECC for resolution. This will serve to equitably inform the TRC and clarify any lingering technical questions. The second half of the TRC meeting will be the project scoring meeting that must follow potential conflict of interest policies as outlined above.

Individual reviewer's scores will be averaged by the Watershed Coordinator to present an initial ranking of projects for the TRC to use as a basis for their discussions at the formal scoring meeting. Depending on the scoring distribution, scores will be reported as either normalized scores or the arithmetic mean where the coefficient of variation (the standard deviation of the scores divided by the mean score) for all projects is less than 20%. Where the coefficient of variation is 20% or greater for any project using the arithmetic mean, scores will be reported using the median values. The scoring process and outcomes are shared with the TRC at the start of the scoring meeting. Individual reviewer's project scores are shared without reviewer names. Comments are considered only from those TRC members who are eligible and who scored a project (see potential conflict of interest above).

The TRC will begin their deliberations with a review of the technical criteria to ensure a common application among members. The TRC will then discuss the merits of each project and how the sponsor has responded to their earlier comments, followed by the draft list of scored projects in its entirety. During deliberations, reviewers have the option of revising their scores based only on technical criteria outlined in Appendix C. At the end of the meeting, the TRC will determine a final ranked list of projects based on the technical ratings, to be forwarded to the LECC for their consideration and prioritization. The TRC may also relay to the LECC for their consideration where the project rankings derived from technical scores did not reflect the TRC's qualitative assessment of priority order. The TRC may make recommendations (elective) and/or conditions (mandatory if approved by LECC) on the projects based on the sponsor responses to comments or other issues not able to be resolved prior to the end of the grant round. These will be included in the meeting summary.

The TRC can remove any project from consideration for funding for the following reasons:

1. if through the proposal development process the project no longer meets the criteria in the RFP,
2. if it scored so low that the proposal would likely never move forward without major revisions,
3. if it did not address critical comments sufficiently, or
4. if it is insufficiently developed by the scoring meeting.

The TRC may also develop and forward to the LECC recommendations on fine-tuning project components relative to the target funding allocation given to our area. LECC members are welcome to attend the TRC's technical evaluation and ranking meeting.

STEP SEVEN: LECC HABITAT PROJECT LIST PRIORITIZATION

The project list produced through technical scoring and recommendations by the TRC shall provide the basis for prioritization. The Lead Entity Citizen Committee prioritization process follows the two-meeting rule in this step, with a first meeting for information sharing and a second meeting at least 2 weeks later for decision-making where no new information can be presented without full consent of the group. Two or three members of the TRC shall be present at the LECC meetings to improve information sharing between committees. Members of the LECC shall bring forward any new information or concerns at the first meeting so that project sponsors have a clear understanding of those concerns and adequate and equitable opportunities for addressing them before final decision-making. These concerns, information requests, or comments should be finalized by the LECC after their first meeting and shared with the project sponsors as soon as possible. LECC members are required to attend both the information sharing workshop and the project prioritization meeting. If any member foresees missing one of these two meetings, they should either propose a replacement committee member or not vote.

The following steps guide the LECC in its second meeting for deliberations and decision-making to develop the final prioritized list for the Skagit Lead Entity.

- An LECC member may make a motion to move a particular project up or down on the list or adopt a recommendation by the TRC.
- The LECC member making such a request must include rationale based on the prioritization criteria in Appendix D.
- The Committee will then engage in discussion regarding the motion to move a project on the list or condition a project.
- After discussion, the Committee will seek consensus on the recommendation.
- If consensus is not achieved, the Committee will vote – approve, oppose, abstain – on the motion to move the project on the list.
- The motion will carry upon a two-thirds majority of the eligible Committee members present (excluding “abstain” votes).

The LECC has the authority to remove any project from consideration of funding for the following reasons:

1. if, through the proposal development process, the project no longer meets the criteria in the RFP,
2. if it did not address LECC comments from their information-sharing meeting or criteria sufficiently,
3. if it is insufficiently developed by the ranking meeting, or
4. if insufficient funding is available to meet requests of projects ranked low in the list.

The result of this decision-making meeting is the final recommended and prioritized list of projects submitted to the SRFB for consideration for funding. The LECC may impose conditions on the contract. Any mandatory conditions placed on projects by the LECC will be formally incorporated into the sponsors' final funding contract.

At this time the LECC may also adjust funding requests relative to the target funding allocation given to our area, as well as recommend which projects are funded by SRFB and/or Puget Sound Acquisition & Restoration (PSAR). Similar to previous grant rounds, the Skagit lead entity is required to forward habitat project lists that meet precisely the allocation funding target provided for our region. This step in the process will be discussed by the committees and will be finalized administratively through discussions between the Watershed Coordinator and affected project sponsors should available funding fall short of a request. Affected project sponsors will be required at this time to go back to PRISM to update their final project applications to reflect any and all financial and/or design changes resulting from the review process or shortage of funds.

Alternate projects exceeding our target allocation may be included on the list in the event a funded project is withdrawn before contracted or needs fewer dollars. Alternate projects need to have gone through the entire SRFB review process to receive funding at a later date during this grant round.

The final prioritized list is due to the SRFB by the date published for the current grant round. The final technical scoring and final prioritized project list will be distributed to TRC and LECC members and project sponsors and made available on the Lead Entity website.

SRFB REVIEW AND FUNDING

In the final phase of the funding process, the SRFB Review Panel will meet during July to review all the project applications across the state. The SRFB Review Panel will conduct a “project of concern” review and determination. The Watershed Coordinator, committee members, and sponsors will present project information to the SRFB Review Panel, regional recovery organization (Puget Sound Partnership), and SRFB as needed to answer any clarifying questions or address requests for more information. Final project scopes may need to be altered again during this phase.

The SRFB Review Panel will develop a draft State Technical Review Panel report of its findings, by region, and distribute that for review and comment to the SRFB. The SRFB Review Panel will consider comments and additional materials submitted during the comment period and finalize its report of recommendations for funding to the SRFB in late August. Project sponsors and the Watershed Coordinator will respond as appropriate to proposals remaining as “Projects of Concern” at this point by the SRFB Review Panel; however, projects labeled as such may not be forwarded on the final ranked list by the Lead Entity.

The SRFB will meet in September to make its final funding decisions for the current grant round. SRFB grant funds are available for contract in September while PSAR grant funds, if provided by the legislature, would not be available for contracting until July of the following year. The SRFB may or may not choose to fund projects identified as “Projects of Concern.” For projects that are not under contract within the requisite 180-day window, the SRFB allows regions and lead entities to allocate those funds to the next available project alternate on that lead entity’s ranked list.

OTHER LEAD ENTITY PROGRAM FUNCTIONS

In addition to the annual SRFB funding process, the Skagit Lead Entity is responsible for other duties that support the SRFB funding process and the habitat restoration and protection portion of the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan. These duties include: maintaining a standing Technical Work Group, updating and refining a habitat restoration and protection strategy, processing Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Funds, working with project sponsors and RCO staff as needed to review and recommend contract amendments and changes to active grants,

and maintaining/updating the RCO Salmon Recovery Portal and the Puget Sound Partnership and the Council's 4 Year Work Plan.

HABITAT RESTORATION AND PROTECTION STRATEGIES

Consistent with salmon recovery legislation and the current lead entity grant agreement, the Skagit Lead Entity is responsible for the development of a habitat restoration strategy to guide the selection and ranking of salmon recovery projects. For the Skagit Watershed Council, this includes the Habitat Restoration and Protection Strategy (1998), Application of the Strategy (2000), SWC 2022 Strategic Approach, and the 2016 Interim Steelhead Strategy. The strategies prioritize geographic areas and types of restoration and protection actions, and identify salmon species' needs as well as other factors, such as social, economic and cultural, that might affect salmon recovery. Objectives are grounded in and implement the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan. The Strategic Approach is updated as new information is available based on the consensus of the Watershed Technical Committees and the Citizens Committee.

MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

A comprehensive monitoring and adaptive management (M&AM) program is essential to an effective salmon recovery program. It allows recovery partners to track recovery progress, assess the effectiveness of recovery-related actions and programs, adjust strategies and actions when necessary, and effectively allocate resources.

SALMON RECOVERY MONITORING GRANT PROGRAM

The Salmon Recovery Monitoring Grant Program, offered in odd-numbered years, was revised in 2024. Only monitoring projects are eligible to receive this grant (i.e. status and trends monitoring, effectiveness monitoring). Projects must be regionally important and directly inform salmon recovery actions. The goals of the monitoring program as well as the process and requirements for this grant can be found in [Manual 18M](#).

Each region may submit up to two applications and rank their proposals for reviewers. Regions may collaborate on applications, in which case the cap on funding is lifted. Phased projects are considered, with each phase as a separate application. The overarching benefits of the phased project will be considered on individual project applications, but there is no guarantee for future funding. Projects must be able to be completed in three years.

The Salmon Recovery Monitoring Grant Program application process begins with a Letter of Intent emailed to the monitoring grants manager. RCO will respond with eligibility within two weeks of submittal. After the initial screening, applicants can submit projects in PRISM (examples of required documents include a study plan, authorization, landowner acknowledgement, and permits). Presentations to the SRFB science advisory panel occur in the spring, after which comments from the panel are provided. Revised applications are due shortly after and a public meeting to award the funding will occur in the fall.

The Council is committed to supporting local recovery partners in design, development, and implementation of watershed and regional monitoring projects in the Skagit Watershed and Puget Sound. These efforts are guided by:

- Puget Sound and Skagit Chinook/Salmon Recovery Plans (2005, 2007)
- Puget Sound Common Framework for Monitoring and Adaptive Management
- Various federal guidance documents and programs such as The Guidance for Monitoring Recovery of Pacific Northwest Salmon & Steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (NOAA 2010)
- [Skagit Watershed Monitoring and Adaptive Management Report \(2020\)](#)
- Skagit Watershed Council Monitoring and Adaptive Management Committee 4 Year Work Plan 2024

Potential Skagit monitoring project concepts should be developed early and vetted through the M&AM Committee to determine consistency with the RFP and above referenced plans, importance of proposed outcomes, and coordination of data collection and analysis methods. The Subcommittee may also choose to provide project recommendations to sponsors at this stage. Proposed monitoring projects must specify regional and state significance of monitoring activities proposed. Statewide monitoring project policies are documented in [RCO Manual 18m](#).

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

In addition to Salmon Recovery Monitoring Program projects, SWC strongly encourages sponsors to work with their advisory committees and stakeholders to develop robust monitoring and adaptive management plans that consider each of the project's goals and objectives. SWC is in the process of developing project-level adaptive response policies and procedures to support funding for projects that are not meeting their objectives and working with funding agencies to support that.

THE SKAGIT INTENSIVELY MONITORED WATERSHED

The Skagit delta is one of 4 state-funded Intensively Monitored Watersheds and as such has been mapped, monitored and researched for more than 20 years with support from all three treaty tribes, federal and state agencies. The outcomes of this research have been fundamental to developing salmon recovery strategies in the Skagit and more broadly. Principle investigators in this work are from Skagit River System Cooperative, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. SWC is committed to supporting this work in whatever way possible.

PUGET SOUND ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION (PSAR) FUNDS

Since 2007 the state capital budget has included funds to accelerate implementation of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. The SRFB in coordination with the Puget Sound Partnership distributes these funds to each Puget Sound watershed based on an allocation formula adopted by the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council. There is some discretion available to Lead Entities in allocating these funds through a process different from state or federal SRFB funds. It is the intent of the State of Washington and the Council that these funds be expended as quickly and effectively as prudent; delays in allocation and expenditure may cause funds to be rescinded. Lead Entities work with the Puget Sound Partnership in the process of allocating PSAR funds outside of their annual SRFB grant round.

If an approved Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) project cannot be implemented due to a change in circumstances or is completed under budget, unused funds are considered to be returned funds and remain within the watershed for up to 4 years as opposed to returning to Puget Sound-wide accounts. The lead entity may request that these funds be applied to cost increases associated with another PSAR project in its lead entity area. Any cost increase requests must adhere to the SRFB amendment process. See SRFB Manual 18 Appendix B. Return funds also may be used by the lead entity in the next grant cycle for another approved PSAR project.

All funds must be expended within four years after the funds were appropriated. If an approved PSAR project cannot be implemented due to a change in circumstances or is completed under budget within the 4-year window (follows state biennial fiscal years), return funds will be:

- Awarded to another project within the lead entity if it can be expended within the 4-year window.
- Awarded to another lead entity needing funds to complete an approved PSAR project if it can be implemented within the 4-year window.

- If the return funds cannot be used within the 4-year window, these funds may be pooled into a regional fund to address cost increases for PSAR projects in areas where lead entities have no PSAR funds available to complete the project. These funds will be limited to completing projects within their existing scope.

Beginning in 2013, the Partnership's Salmon Recovery Council created an additional funding category called the Large Capital PSAR program. Generally, it is a funding vehicle for regionally important salmon habitat projects typically larger than those able to be completed given an individual watershed's needs versus resources. For each biennial Large Capital PSAR grant request (occurring every other year), the Council will expand the RFP to include these larger projects, evaluating and ranking them in a manner similar to other projects. However, they will complete a separate site visit with PSAR reviewers in early spring and also submit answers to supplemental questions to the Partnership in August to compete regionally. If successful, projects will be proposed to the Legislature for funding in the appropriate biennium. It is recognized that these large projects proposed at least one year earlier than funding is available may have less specific and certain details than other projects. Which projects are most appropriate for this funding source and how the process may need to be amended to complete the local ranking process will be determined by the TRC, TWG, and the LECC, with the latter acting as the final decision body locally.

Beginning in 2016, the Partnership altered the grant cycle and moved the PSAR grant round up one year (to even year grant rounds) so that a final, vetted list of typical and large PSAR projects would be available to propose to the Legislature for consideration of funding. Thus, all projects proposed for PSAR funding wouldn't be awarded funds until the beginning of the subsequent biennium in July. This presents significant uncertainty into the process, which is mostly outside of the control of the Skagit Watershed Council and state agencies.

RIPARIAN-SPECIFIC FUNDS

Beginning in 2023, RCO added a riparian project specific funding allocation that can be applied to planting, stewardship, noxious weed control and land acquisition projects. Riparian projects go through the regular lead entity grant round and are ranked along with regular projects but will be allocated riparian funds rather than SRFB and PSAR regular funds until riparian funds are expended. Details are available in Manual 18. Riparian-specific funding is applied to eligible projects that go through the regular grant round following LECC direction.

TARGETED INVESTMENT FUNDING

The Targeted Investments Program allows the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to invest funding in specific regional priorities to accelerate salmon recovery. SRFB intends to use targeted investments for projects that 1) drive significant population-scale benefits consistent with regional recovery priorities and 2) accelerate the on-the-ground pace and scale of project implementation. The Targeted Investments Program was established by the SRFB in September 2020, and most recently amended in May of 2023. Skagit sponsors can apply for these funds in even years. Targeted Investment (TI) projects go through the regular grant round of the Lead entity. Following ranking at the local level, projects are submitted to the SRFB Review Panel to be ranked state-wide. The local rank of a project is taken into consideration in the state ranking. All TI projects must obtain a letter of support from Puget Sound Partnership prior to state submittal. The schedule for obtaining a letter is set by PSP and included in the Skagit grant process timeline. The minimum request is \$1,000,000 and the maximum request is \$5,000,000. Funds are available in July of the following year, like PSAR funds.

CHANGES TO ACTIVE GRANTS

After projects move from proposed to funded, it is not uncommon that projects evolve and the outcomes become different than what was proposed in the application process. SRFB Manual 18 outlines the process for SRFB approval

of contract amendments. Most project amendments require consultation with the Lead Entity, which involves the Technical Work Group and LECC. Once contracted with the RCO, changes to the scope, location, or cost of a project different than originally reviewed and approved by the Lead Entity require the sponsor to obtain a decision from the Lead Entity prior to submitting the amendment request to the RCO-SRFB for consideration. When PSAR funds are requested, the Lead Entity must also secure a decision from Puget Sound Partnership, our Regional Organization and source of PSAR funds. Sponsors are to submit grant amendment requests to the Watershed Coordinator in the current format used by RCO. Appendix I of Manual 18 outlines the decision process and includes a link to the amendment form. No grant amendment requests will be accepted after the grant expiration date.

The Lead Entity process for obtaining the decision necessary to apply to RCO for a change are as follows:

- If the amendment is for a cost increase less than 20% of total project cost and less than \$50,000, with no change in scope, the Watershed Coordinator can approve the change prior to submittal to the RCO-SRFB for consideration.
- All other amendments are processed by the Watershed Coordinator working with the Technical Work Group and LECC. The TWG reviews the request and makes recommendations to the LECC for its decision. This can occur via email or a meeting if further clarification is required.

The Lead Entity decision is forwarded to the RCO-SRFB.

SALMON RECOVERY PORTAL REPORTING

The Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP) database is a state-wide on-line mapping and project tracking tool that allows Lead Entities to share their habitat protection and restoration projects with the public. By mapping projects, linking them to each other and to recovery goals, and making it all available on the web, the SRP system makes salmon recovery more accessible to partners, potential funders, and the public.

Our database of salmon projects primarily contains completed, active, and planned activities in the Skagit River supporting the recovery of ESA-listed Chinook salmon and other salmonids in the Skagit and Samish basins. This database has a public-facing interface and is used by many agencies, including RCO, PSP, and GSRO. Data entered in the database is also downloaded and presented to legislators to advocate for funding. Therefore, maintaining accurate and appealing information in SRP is important.

At the beginning of each grant round the Watershed Coordinator creates a page in the SRP for eligible proposed projects, which also generates a record in the RCO's PRISM contract management database. As project data are updated in PRISM some of these updates are translated into SRP as well.

Project sponsors are responsible for updating their proposed, active and recently completed SRFB projects in the SRP database on no less than an annual basis as part of the 4 Year Work Plan update process. At a minimum, mandatory data fields are required to be updated. Additional information, goals, progress toward goals, maps and photos can also be shared to help communicate and support the project. Updating SRP is a reimbursable expense under RCO contracts. SRP pages are public-facing, as is PRISM. The Skagit SRP has been configured to support implementation tracking of the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan.

FOUR YEAR WORK PLAN

All Lead Entities within Puget Sound began developing Four-Year Work Plans in 2006 following adoption of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, with the intent to improve efficiencies with implementing a large capital improvement program over several years, increase the strategic focus of our proposed projects, and facilitate multiple levels of

review which occur in this process. This expansion from an annual project review process towards a capital improvement program (CIP) approach allows us to integrate restoration priorities, project sequencing and phasing, life history modeling, and H-integration (Habitat, Harvest, Hatchery and Hydropower) more fully. More recently, other funding sources beyond just SRFB have been requesting or requiring that projects applying for funding be included in a strategic planning 'list' of some kind, making the 4 Year Work Plan more impactful for facilitating salmon recovery work. In addition to the 4 Year Workplan, beginning in 2020 RCO has required that each lead entity update a Planned Project Forecast List (PPFL). This list is used by RCO to communicate with the state legislature about salmon recovery funding needs. The PPFL is a 2 year subset of 4 Year Work Plan. Each lead entity's PPFL is posted on an RCO website by legislative district.

Annual updates to the Skagit 4 Year Work Plan are coordinated by lead entity staff working with the TWG to vet the list before final adoption by the LECC. The SWC list is made of two sections: a section for projects eligible for SRFB funding under the Annual SRFB Grant Round Process, called Priority Projects, and a section for projects not eligible for SRFB funding but supported for seeking other funds, called Supported Projects. The 2-part list will be constructed as follows:

- Potential projects that would be eligible under SWC's lead entity grant round Request for Proposals (RFP), as determined by the Watershed Coordinator, are added to the Priority Projects list which is Chinook focused. Any ambiguous projects are taken to the TWG for confirmation of eligibility to be on the 4 Year Work Plan and on the Priority Projects list.
- Fish barrier projects not eligible to be on the Priority Projects section of the list are added to the Supported Projects section of the list with consensus of the TWG. TWG reviews these projects on an as-needed basis to ensure they:
 - Benefit anadromous salmonids
 - Meet a minimum threshold for habitat benefit, based on professional judgement. Sponsors should provide information to inform this judgement, such as amount of habitat blocked and beneficial existing habitat or habitat potential.
- Other projects applying to be on the Supported Projects list are evaluated case-by-case by the TWG before being added to the Supported Projects list. Evaluation steps are based on best professional judgement of TWG members, including the following considerations:
 - Projects should be consistent with the 1998 Habitat Restoration and Protection Strategy.
 - The Target Area criterion will not be considered.
 - Projects should benefit Bull trout, Steelhead, Coho, Chum, Sockeye or Pink salmon.
 - Projects do not need to be focused on juvenile fish.
 - Sponsors will benefit if they can provide evidence the project will address a factor known to limit population productivity or align with strategies and actions in a local watershed restoration plan.
- A summary of the TWG's review and recommendation will be communicated to the LECC.

Sponsors will need to provide a ~500 word project description listing benefits and addressing criteria (the Letter of Intent may suffice). If TWG requires further information for their review, they may ask the sponsor to attend a TWG meeting for question and answer.

Expanding the 4 Year Work Plan to include projects that would not be eligible under our lead entity RFP helps those projects get funded by other means than the SRFB and allows the Watershed Council to write letters of support for those projects on a faster timeline, not requiring additional committee approval. An additional consideration for including non-Chinook projects that the Watershed Council supports on the 4 Year Work Plan is that, for Regional

Fisheries Enhancement Groups, having a project on the list makes that organization eligible for liability insurance under state law.

New projects are usually proposed for addition to the 4 Year Work Plan in January before the grant round. The status and funding needs of currently active and proposed projects already on the current 4 Year Work Plan are updated with information provided by project sponsors at that time. Updates for other program areas of the 4 Year Work Plan are provided by those holding that information. For example, the M&AM Subcommittee proposes monitoring projects. Updates are presented to the TWG/TRC in March and April with final adoption by the LECC by mid May. The PPFL portion of the workplan must be approved by the LECC by June 1st according to the Watershed Council's contract with RCO. Only Chinook Focused projects will be included on the PPFL subset of the 4 Year Work Plan. Since the PPFL is a subset of the first two years of the 4 Year Work Plan, the combined list of the PPFL and 4 Year Work Plan is presented for approval all at once for simplicity's sake.

Proposed projects for the PPFL and 4 Year Work Plan are entered into the SRP database and coded for Chinook Focused or Other Salmonids categories prior to the June 1 RCO deadline. Projects are also coded by priority tier. Both lists are generated from records in the SRP database, maintained by the Watershed Coordinator with input from project sponsors. Each project proposed for and added to the 4 Year Work Plan must include the required fields and metrics for the SRP database. The Watershed Coordinator will work with project sponsors to complete the required fields. Work in SRP is a reimbursable expense.

TRANSFERRING FUNDS BETWEEN LEAD ENTITIES

The Skagit Watershed Council may, in some grant years, have the option of borrowing money from other lead entities for a short duration to meet pressing funding needs in the current grant round. The decision to borrow funds is made by the LECC based on a recommendation from the TRC as to the time sensitivity and salmon benefit of funding a project. If the TRC identifies that a proposed project that would fall below the funding line is urgent to implement, the TRC can recommend to the LECC every effort be made to fund the project in the current grant round, in addition to higher ranked projects. The LECC can then explore options including borrowing from another lead entity. An urgent project is one for which:

1. the conditions to move forward will pass before the next grant round, or
2. future options for progress will foreclose at a certain deadline, or
3. the ecological benefit and technical score is ostensibly equal to higher ranked, high quality projects.

The LECC may also identify other reasons, agreed to by consensus, for expediting a project with borrowed funds. This decision must be weighed against the risk of obligating future funding to repay the loan. For instance, borrowing small amounts of funding from an adjacent watershed for high value salmon habitat recovery projects likely makes more sense than borrowing larger amounts for lower value projects considering the uncertainty of exactly which projects will be proposed in the following year.

In cases where SWC has more allocated funds than projects to fund, the LECC may choose to reallocate funds to other Lead Entities, starting with adjacent watersheds, until the following grant round when those funds would be repaid.

APPENDIX A TECHNICAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Technical Work Group Members (2024):

Alex Richard, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Colin Wahl, Skagit River System Cooperative
Emily Derenne, Skagit County Natural Resources
Jeff Fisher, Seattle City Light
Jess Lange, Skagit Land Trust
Rick Hartson, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, chair
Taylor Scott, Skagit Conservation District
Yuki Reiss, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

Technical Review Committee Members (2024):

Alex Richard, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Aundrea McBride, Skagit Watershed Council
Colin Wahl, Skagit River System Cooperative
Emily Derenne, Skagit County Natural Resources
Jeff Fisher, Seattle City Light
Jess Lange, Skagit Land Trust
Rick Hartson, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, chair
Taylor Scott, Skagit Conservation District
Yuki Reiss, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Micah Wait, Wild Fish Conservancy
Michelle Quast, Department of Ecology
Rick Hartson, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

Protection Subcommittee Members (2024):

Rick Hartson, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Chair
Aundrea McBride, Skagit Watershed Council
Kari Odden, Skagit Land Trust
Denise Krownbell, Seattle City Light
Scott Heller, Puget Sound Energy
Bengt Miller, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Kate Ramsden, Skagit River System Cooperative
CJ Jones, Skagit County

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Subcommittee Members (2024):

Aundrea McBride, Skagit Watershed Council
Erin Lowery (Alternate), Seattle City Light
Jeff Fisher, Seattle City Light
Jen O'Neal, Natural Systems Design
Mike LeMoine, Skagit River System Coop., Chair
Catherine Austin (Alternate), SRSC
Rick Hartson, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

APPENDIX B REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issued February 6, 2025,
by the Skagit Watershed Council

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), Salmon Recovery Monitoring Program and
Riparian Grants

The Skagit Watershed Council (SWC), as lead entity for [Water Resource Inventory Areas \(WRIAs\) 3 and 4](#), is accepting proposals for salmon habitat restoration and protection projects for three different funding programs through the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The SRFB has allocated funds for the regular SRFB grant round and two additional programs: a special Riparian Program, and a new Regional Monitoring program. Table 1 below summarizes these programs and our most current estimation of funds available. These are subject to change after the legislative session. All applicants will go through the lead entity review process as described in SWC’s [Program Guide](#) and the timeline in Table 2 on page 3. The Regional Monitoring Program has some different deadlines (see below). All funds will be available in September of 2025.

Table 1. Funding, decision-making, and criteria

Funding Source	Available Amount	Date Avail.	Project Ranked by	Grant Admin.	Criteria Reference Materials
SRFB	\$1,718,372	9/25	SWC	RCO	SWC Program Guide Manual 18
Riparian	\$1,000,000	9/25	SWC	RCO	SWC Program Guide Riparian Policy (Man. 18)
Monitoring	\$300,000	9/25	SRFB Science Advisory Panel and PSP	RCO	Manual 18M

Projects Considered for Funding:

- 1) Tribal, state, and local governments, and nonprofits are eligible to apply.
- 2) Projects that address the priority objectives within the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 2S Target Areas described in the [SWC 2022 Strategic Approach](#) for Chinook salmon recovery and the [2016 Interim Steelhead Strategy](#) are eligible for funding. Restoration or protection in Tier 3 Target Areas may be a secondary component of proposed projects.
- 3) Riparian-specific funds (Riparian Program) included in this RFP will fund riparian and floodplain planting and stewardship projects within Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 2S Target Areas. A maximum of \$300,000 of the Riparian Program funds is dedicated to small-scale projects as a non-competitive set aside. Proposals received for this set aside will compete amongst each other for these dedicated funds unless sponsors are able to work in advance to present a coordinated proposal. All other proposals received for Riparian Program funds will compete amongst each other for the balance of the Riparian Program funds. Riparian projects seeking the Riparian Program funds must meet criteria specified in the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) Riparian Policy in [Manual 18](#).
- 4) Regional salmon recovery organizations, partners, and federal agencies are eligible for funding for monitoring projects. Phased projects are considered but approved independently. Preference is given to projects referenced in the [Action Agenda for Puget Sound](#) as well as Puget Sound partners (if eligible). Monitoring funds available to regional organizations have a cap of \$300,000 unless collaborating with another region. Two proposals per region are allowed, which must be monitoring specific projects.

In addition to the criteria above, all proposals must meet SRFB eligibility criteria defined in Manual 18 and be consistent with the Council's guiding documents:

- [1998 Habitat Protection and Restoration Strategy](#),
- [Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan](#) (SRSC & WDFW 2005),
- 2023 4 Year Work Plan, and/or
- [SWC 2023 Protection Strategy](#), and
- if located in the Middle Skagit, be consistent with the restoration strategies described in the [Plan for Habitat Protection and Restoration in the Middle Reach of the Skagit River](#) (SWC 2011).
- if located in the lower 24 miles of the Sauk River, be consistent with the restoration strategies described in the Sauk River Habitat Protection and Restoration Assessment and Plan (SWC 2023).

Applicants should be aware that previously funded deliverables related to the current proposed project must be sufficiently completed at the time draft applications are due, as determined by the Board of Directors.

Letters of Intent (LOI) to submit a proposal are due in electronic format by 5:00 pm on March 6th, 2025. [The LOI form is available for download here](#). Late or incomplete submittals will not be accepted. Submit LOIs to [Megan Corbiere](#), mcorbiere@skagitwatershed.org. Please contact Megan for questions or assistance: office: (360) 419-9326, cell: (360) 630-1233.

APPENDIX C TECHNICAL PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Criteria	Lower Scoring	Medium	Higher Scoring	Score	Weight	Total
Target Area ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 3 - 1 point Steelhead-only areas identified in SWC 2015 Interim Steelhead Strategy - 2 points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 2 - nearshore pocket estuaries; single Chinook population in freshwater - 4 points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier 1 - multiple Chinook populations - 5 points 	1,2,3,5	4	4-20
Watershed Processes and Habitat Features	Habitat creation ² or remediation; does not restore habitat-forming processes lowest scoring - not proven to address an important habitat condition; higher elevations relative to mainstem (REMs)	Addresses, protects or Improves habitat conditions but may not address the most important limiting factor; partial restoration ² of natural habitat-forming processes; moderate elevations relative to mainstem (REMs)	Addresses, protects or restores high priority habitat ³ and/or restores watershed processes that form and sustain salmon habitats; lower elevations relative to mainstem (REMs)	1 - 5	4	4-20
Scale/benefits	Localized or limited action or impact.	Potential for moderate increase in restoration of habitat area or juvenile capacity relative to targets	Potential for large increase in restoration of habitat area or juvenile capacity relative to targets (e.g. >10%).			
Restoration	Riparian planting not adjacent to salmon rearing habitat.		Riparian planting maximizes habitat and water quality benefits and is continuous with other plantings..			
Acquisitions for Protection	Has not been demonstrated to protect an important habitat; site too small and adjacent acquisitions unlikely or insufficient to achieve protection goal	40-60% of total project area is intact habitat with plans for restoration; site too small to accommodate protection goal but further acquisitions nearby possible	More than 60 % of total project area is intact habitat, or is a key parcel in larger assemblage of protection acquisitions; size is sufficient quantity to accommodate goal	1 - 5	3	3-15
Assessments	Addresses a lower priority action or geographic area; information insufficient to determine if addresses an important habitat condition or data gap	Will lead to new projects in moderate priority areas. Fills an identified data gap	Is directly relevant to project development or sequencing and will clearly lead to new projects in high priority areas. Fills important data gap			

¹ Skagit Watershed Council Year 2022 Strategic Approach; ² Table 2 in Strategic Approach; ³ Table 3 in Strategic Approach

Scope	Scope not well matched to project goals or target area objectives	Scope is appropriate to meet some or many of the project goals and relevant target area objectives	Scope is appropriate to meet clearly articulated project goals and relevant target area objectives			
Methods	Employs questionable treatments, methods, or practices or those not proven to be effective	Uses methods that may have been tested but results are incomplete; or employs experimental treatments or methods with well developed rationale and experimental design	Employs accepted or tested standards, methods, or practices	1 - 5	2	2-10
Sequence	May be in the wrong sequence with other protection and restoration actions	Is dependent on other actions being taken first that are outside the scope of this project but are being addressed	Appropriate phase of multi-phased project; Is in the correct sequence, or is independent of other actions			
Cost Justification	Costs are high relative to predicted benefit. Costs are unsubstantiated or unrealistic.	Costs are reasonable relative to predicted benefit. Costs are based on past projects and/or internal review.	Costs are low relative to predicted benefits. Costs are vetted by 3 rd party review or multiple bids.	1 - 5	1	1-5
Certainty of Success	Uncertain or limited design life of habitat benefit; uncertainties not acknowledged or addressed; no adaptive management, maintenance or contingencies proposed	Project may require some maintenance; habitat benefit on the order of decades; uncertainties acknowledged; includes contingency for adaptive management or maintenance of site	High likelihood of project being self-sustaining; long term habitat benefit; the significant uncertainties well described; contingency for adaptive mgmt or maintenance of site included as appropriate	1 - 5	2	2-10

* Projects in overlapping target areas are eligible and will be assigned target area points based on the proportion of project in each target area. In the case of acquisition projects where the target area may not be known in advance, 4.5 target area points will be assigned based the assumption that almost all purchases will be Tier 1. Historically all purchases have been Tier 1.

APPENDIX D LECC PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

SKAGIT LEAD ENTITY

Skagit Project Prioritization Process

The Lead Entity Committee will rely on the technical review process conducted by the Council's Technical Review Committee. The list produced by the technical scoring will provide the basis for prioritization. The Lead Entity Committee will use a qualitative process, using the following questions, to arrive at the final list for submittal to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

- Are there projects that give you pause? Why?

COMMUNITY IMPACT & EDUCATION ISSUES

- Does the surrounding community support this project? Who is that community and how can you substantiate that support?
- Is there any community opposition to this project? Who is opposed and how will you address that opposition?
- Does this project have any educational value? Who is being educated, what are they being educated about, and how can you substantiate that? Will this project educate the public and raise their awareness about salmon and habitat protection/restoration issues?
- Will this project receive any publicity/visibility? How and whose attention will it gain? Will publicity be helpful to salmon recovery efforts?
- Will this project elicit more support in the future? From whom and how?

PROJECT COST ISSUES

- Is this project expensive relative to other projects on the list? Is that expense justified? How did you determine the expense is justified?
- If this project is funded, will it bump other (or several other) good projects out of probable contention for funding, based on historical Skagit Lead Entity SRFB funding?
- Is this project appropriate for SRFB Partnership Salmon Funds?

PROGRESS TOWARDS SALMON HABITAT RECOVERY

- Is the cumulative effect of the list of projects moving us closer to Chinook recovery?

APPENDIX E LECC SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

For Salmon Habitat Project Proposals

1. List the stakeholders that will be affected by your project development and implementation.
2. What is your stakeholder outreach plan?
3. What is your education and/or publicity plan to tell the story of the project to the general community?
4. What community support and partners for the project are already in place?
5. What stakeholder/community concerns might lead to project opposition and how will they be addressed proactively?
6. What cost containment measures have you or will you employ to manage project costs relative to benefits?

APPENDIX F LETTER OF INTENT FORM

(A digital, fillable form is available [here](#). Download the form to fill it out—it cannot be filled out online.)

Letter of Intent

Skagit Watershed Council Lead Entity Grant Round for SRFB, Riparian, and Targeted Investment Funding

To submit a project for consideration in the Skagit Watershed Council's 2025 grant round, please provide the following information to Megan Corbiere, mcorbiere@skagitwatershed.org, by March 6 2025.

Sponsor Information

PROJECT SPONSOR NAME Click or tap here to enter text.	ORGANIZATION Click or tap here to enter text.	
MAILING ADDRESS Click or tap here to enter text.	CITY/STATE Click or tap here to enter text.	ZIP CODE Click or tap here to enter text.
PHONE NUMBER Click or tap here to enter text.	EMAIL ADDRESS Click or tap here to enter text.	

General Project Information

PROJECT NAME Click or tap here to enter text.	
PROJECT LOCATION DESCRIPTION Click or tap here to enter text.	
PROJECT LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE (a representative point is required) Click or tap here to enter text.	
WATERBODY NAME (if applicable) Click or tap here to enter text.	TRIBUTARY TO (<i>optional</i>) Click or tap here to enter text.
LANDOWNER(S) Click or tap here to enter text.	CO-SPONSOR/PARTNER Click or tap here to enter text.
PARTNER Click or tap here to enter text.	PARTNER Click or tap here to enter text.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Project Type
(check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration <input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition <input type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input type="checkbox"/> Enhancement <input type="checkbox"/> Development | <p>Application Type
(check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> IMW <input type="checkbox"/> PSAR Large Cap <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Investment <input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Specific Funds <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring set aside | <p>Target Area Tier
(see SWC Strategic Approach)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tier 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Tier 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Tier 2s Steelhead Only <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Tiers (please explain in narrative) |
|--|--|--|

Estimated Project Costs

TOTAL PROJECT COST Click or tap here to enter	TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST Click or tap here to enter	MATCH (If required, see below) Click or tap here	AMOUNT FROM OTHER FUNDERS* Click or tap here	A&E (optional) Click or tap here to enter
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Estimated Project Metrics

Each sponsor is requested to estimate, using PCSRF metrics below, the number of habitat acres or miles predicted to be restored or protected. These Progress Indicators will be part of your Salmon Recovery Portal database entry, PRISM application, the project summary for reviewers, and part of a metric roll up undertaken by Puget Sound Partnership.

Progress Indicator	Estimate
Acres of Floodplain Improved through Restoration	Click or tap here to enter text.
Acres of Estuary Improved through Restoration	Click or tap here to enter text.
Acres of Riparian Areas Improved through Restoration	Click or tap here to enter text.
Acres of Floodplain and Riparian Areas Protected through Acquisition	Click or tap here to enter text.
Acres of Estuary and Nearshore Areas Protected through Acquisition	Click or tap here to enter text.
Miles of streams made accessible	Click or tap here to enter text.
Miles of in-stream habitat improved through restoration	Click or tap here to enter text.
Miles of nearshore shoreline armor removed	Click or tap here to enter text.

Project Description

Please provide a brief description of the project (maximum 2 pages) that clearly describes the full project scope, including its specific Chinook and/or steelhead benefits and the quantity and type of habitat to be restored or protected.

- Explain how the project meets the intent of the SWC strategy documents and other criteria as specified in the RFP.
- Include a project site map that explains the project.
- Include up to 2 additional pages (maps, photos, and design drawings) of project description and scope.
- Please begin your project description with a <50-word summary sentence or two that include project metrics. This summary will facilitate communication with reviewers. Here is an example:

“Complete final design and construction of a fish barrier on an agricultural crossing at GN31. This will open up 0.56 miles of habitat in Lower Day Creek slough for Chinook, Steelhead, Coho, Chum, Cutthroat, and Lamprey.”

Click or tap here to enter text.

APPENDIX G SRFB GRANT AMENDMENT REQUEST FORM

SKAGIT SRFB AMENDMENT REQUEST

Project Name:
Project Number:
Project Sponsor:
Lead Entity: Skagit Watershed Council
Lead Entity Ranking:
Source of Funding:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed (if proposing cost change)</u>
SRFB Funds:	\$ xxxx %	\$ xxxx%
Sponsor Match:	\$ xxxx %	\$ xxxx%
Project Total:	\$ xxxx	\$ xxxx

Request:

Background, justification, rationale:

LE Technical review recommendation:

LE Board Decision:

RCO Staff Recommendation:

SRFB Decision:

APPENDIX H RIPARIAN ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Skagit Watershed Council adopted the [1998 Habitat Protection and Restoration Strategy](#) with the goal of assisting and encouraging the voluntary protection and restoration of natural landscape processes that form and sustain salmon habitats. The Strategy documented the methods used by SWC of evaluating proposed projects based on our best scientific understanding and in the context of watershed and reach-scale processes. Riparian habitat functional curves were used to establish SWC's requirement that voluntary planting projects be at least 40m wide to provide functioning habitat. The 2010 and [2022 SWC Strategic Approach](#)es further defined Chinook salmon and interim steelhead priority Target Areas and the need to protect and restore functioning riparian areas from floodplains down to pocket estuaries.

In 2020 the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife published [Riparian Ecosystems, Volume 1: Science Synthesis and Management Implications](#), as well as [Riparian Ecosystems, Volume 2: Management Recommendations](#). This review and synthesis of the best available science yielded recommendations of using site based, 200-year, site potential tree height (SPTH) as the standard for riparian restoration in forested ecoregions such as the Skagit Watershed. An [online mapping tool provided by WDFW](#) shows SPTH species and estimates by soil type polygons, ranging from ~85 feet to ~250 feet. However, WDFW also recommends no less than 100 feet to ensure pollution removal functions. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) adopted these recommendations into the salmon grant round in [Manual 18](#). As a result, SWC adopts SRFB's eligibility rules by default, except for maintaining SWC's minimum planting width of 40 meters (132 feet).

Basic SRFB eligibility requirements from Manual 18 and specific SWC requirements include:

- Projects with a primary purpose of riparian planting should achieve the site-specific, 200-year SPTH minimum width as defined in Riparian Ecosystems Volume 2, and not be less than 132 feet wide, as defined in the Skagit Watershed Council's 1998 Habitat Protection and Restoration Strategy.
- Minimum width should be measured from ordinary high water mark (OHWM), with eligible planting areas extending out to SPTH beyond the active floodplain. The project sponsor should document evidence of the active floodplain where relevant, including GIS polygons or recent field observations. For marine areas such as pocket estuaries, minimum width should be measured from extreme high water and subject to the same basic exceptions listed here and in Manual 18.

Exceptions to the basic eligibility requirements above, adopted from Manual 18, can be made in the following cases:

- In the presence of a structure or property line; road or railway, pipeline, powerline, or other utility; or topography that impedes the ability to meet minimum width requirements;
- If projects have a primary salmon habitat purpose other than riparian planting and for which the riparian planting provides an ancillary benefit (in-stream work, etc.);
- With policy-level support from a WDFW or Tribal biologist;
- When review justifies that the planting still achieves riparian functions though less than the minimum width (i.e., continuity, shade, pollution removal, contributions of detrital nutrients, recruitment of large woody materials, and bank stability, etc.);
- Average buffer width except for along water bodies on the 303.d list for dissolved oxygen and temperature meets basic eligibility;
- Where any unvegetated gaps in the lateral continuity between salmon rearing habitat and the proposed planting project are justified by the project sponsor.

Exceptions will be evaluated and approved or not on a case-by-case basis during the regular project review process.