Project Funding

SALMONID HABITAT RESTORATION

How-To-Guide for Washington State

Fish First | P.O. Box 1505 | Woodland, WA 98674

PROJECT FUNDING

Habitat restoration work can be time- and labor-intensive. Materials can be costly. While many such projects rely on volunteers and in-kind donations to offset the cost, projects can not be undertaken without funding. Materials need to be bought. Contractors need to be paid.

This is one in a series of Salmonid Habitat Restoration How-To-Guides for projects in Washington State. It was written to help groups and individuals undertaking similar projects and presumes some knowledge of salmon, habitats and project planning. Other guides in the series:

- Rearing Pens
- Culvert Replacement
- Nutrient Enhancement
- Live Plants
- Habitat Restoration
- Permitting
- Project Funding
- Streamside Incubation

Few of these projects are privately funded. Most are funded by grants. Federal, state and local agencies all are sources for such funding, and often, local and state agencies act as pass-throughs for federal dollars. Properly organizing funding for a project requires strong project management skills and attention to detail.

This guide is meant to be an overview for funding salmon restoration projects in Washington State. Requirements and specifics for similar projects in other states will vary.

AN OVERVIEW

Project funding should begin in the earliest stages of project planning. Without funding, there is no project. In simple terms, there are five basic steps to funding a project:

- Identify funding sources
- Identify funding requirements
- Detail project scope
- Determine cost estimate
- Apply for funding

Each of these steps is broken down into more detailed guidelines below.

METHODS & TECHNIQUES

Identify funding sources

Start with the federal government and work your way down. United States Fish and Wildlife Service may be able to help you locate funding sources, and state agencies, such as the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, sometimes fund projects directly. Some states also have regional funding entities that handle grant requests.

In addition, corporate sponsors and private donors are viable sources for project funding.

For Washington state projects, there are several other major funding sources that act as pass-throughs for federal dollars. One such entity is the *Salmon Recovery Funding Board* (SRFB). The SRFB is a state board "that administers two grant programs for protection and restoration of salmon habitat. The board also supports feasibility assessments for future projects and other activities. Eligible applicants may include municipal subdivisions (cities, towns, counties, and special districts such as port, conservation, utility, park and recreation, and school), tribal governments, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, regional fisheries enhancement groups, and private landowners."

Identify funding requirements

Once you've identified potential and appropriate sources to fund your project, there are a number of steps to follow to successfully apply. Specific requirements will vary between funding sources and types of funding.

DATES AND DEADLINES

Many boards have a structured process with calendar milestones involved, which means the process can be long and drawn out. In the case of the *Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board* (LCFRB), it can take more than a year for funding to be approved.

Many agencies will only consider applications during a certain time of year.

SECURE NECESSARY PAPERWORK

Applications can be tedious and time consuming. The first will be the most difficult. Many will overlap, so it's helpful to build a database of information as you go, and draw on for future project applications. Much of this material can be re-used during the permitting process (See "How-To Guide: Permitting" for more information).

DETERMINE WHAT SUPPORTING MATERIALS WILL BE REQUIRED

This may include detailed plans, as well as assessments and studies done by state and federal agencies, that show a project is appropriate for the target area. Watershed studies may already exist for the area. Local or state agencies may have completed an analysis of the region. The better you can show that the watershed will benefit from your project, the better your chances of receiving funding.

GET PERMISSION

This includes both identifying property owners affected by the project and securing their permission for access to the area and any changes or installations as well as identifying what state, federal and/or local permits will be required. Funders may not require this step, but it can't hurt your application, and you will need permission before you can begin the project anyway.

IDENTIFY COLLABORATORS

Often, projects will be mounted with two or more groups working together. It's often helpful to work in conjunction with a state or federal agency as well. Even if the agency is not directly funding a project, its involvement may make a project more appealing to funding sources.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Many funding sources will require a predetermined amount of volunteer commitment and in-kind donations to a project, or matching funds. Find out what will be required in advance and ensure that such demands can and will be met.

Detail Project Scope

Before applying for funding or permitting, a project should be scoped out or designed by a qualified, experienced hydrologist or hydraulic engineer. In some cases, the hydrologist will volunteer his or her time to a project. In other cases the expense may need to be fronted, and will later be reimbursed when funding is secured.

Because projects done in the field are in a dynamic rather than static environment, project plans should be expansive and allow on-site adjustments, as often needs will be reevaluated during actual implementation, or new needs will

be discovered.

They should answer the following questions:

- What the project entails
- Why it is needed
- How it will improve the situation
- Where it will be implemented
- Who will do the work
- When it will be completed

If you're working in collaboration with a state or federal agency, staff biologists may review your proposal with you. Their experience on similar projects can help eliminate unnecessary steps or refine work estimates.

Determine Cost Estimate

Before a project can be priced out, it must be staffed up. This includes hiring a contractor and establishing rates, and lining up volunteers and staff to help monitor and carry out the work. You'll also need to determine the amount of materials and find a provider.

Things to consider:

- Obtain a range of estimates. Once materials have been identified, call around to find other rates, or to see if you can find someone to donate them. In some cases, utility companies such as PacifiCorp may donate landscape materials such as root wads for restoration projects, or functional assistance as mitigation for area projects or as community outreach.
- When estimating the total cost of a project, it's also important to provide for additional, unexpected possibilities with a funding buffer.
- If the funding source does not specify, consider whether to estimate based on time and materials or fixed cost. Because of the uncertainty about the precise execution of many projects of this nature, it may be to your benefit to apply for a maximum amount and get reimbursed for the amount actually spent.

Apply for Funding

Applications should be submitted to allow sufficient lead time for funding. In many cases, there are review committees that meet only sporadically that decide on funding applications, so submitting for funding should be done well in advance of expected project start dates.

Because many restoration or incubation projects are dependent upon the season, coordinating timelines and funding timelines can be a feat. Actual habitat restoration work involves reshaping streambed and banks, re-channeling stream flow, planting vegetation, and other actions to help bring an area back to historically healthy status.

What follows is a high-level overview of different types of restoration work. This is in not meant to be a technical manual—many quality technical manuals already exist. At the end of this guide is a bibliography of such materials.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The nature of securing funding for projects means it is a part of the project best overseen by someone with project management experience, or at least someone detail-oriented. With funding and project timelines, calendar windows, and scheduling volunteers, employees, contractors, and agency collaborations, the task can be daunting.

It gets easier each time. Each successful project establishes credibility for an organization, and credibility means future funding is more likely to be approved. Successful projects also establish an identity for your organization, which can lead to contacts and collaborations for future work.

Other things to consider when seeking project funding:

- **How will the funding be paid?** In some cases, money is paid up front. In others, you're required to front the money before being reimbursed upon completion of the project. For a non-profit salmon recovery group comprised largely of volunteers, coming up with project funding on the front end can be a challenge.
- **How will you pay what you owe?** Is there enough money in your organization's treasury to pay any contractors hired for the project until reimbursement is available? Is there enough to purchase materials?
- **Have you met all funding requirements?** Some money comes with strings attached, whether requiring a minimum of in-kind donations or volunteer hours or other demands. If funding is contingent upon these requirements being met, make sure a process is in place to ensure their completion so your organization isn't left high and dry.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Copies of this document are available through Fish First, and can be found on the Web at www.fishfirst.org. You'll also find a library of how-to guides and fact sheets as well as other resources and information to help with salmon restoration projects.

In addition, here's a list of links to help you find information on funding salmon restoration projects:

- Washington State Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
  http://www.governor.wa.gov/gsro
- Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- http://www.iac.wa.gov/srfb/default.asp
- Washington State Department of Ecology
  www.ecy.wa.gov
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Salmon Recovery
  http://wdfw.wa.gov/recovery.htm

Information in this document came from Fish First volunteers and contractors, with additional information from the Washington State Governor's Salmon Recovery Office.

Written and produced by Chris Bernard at *italics media*. www.italicsmedia.com

Fish First
P.O. Box 1505
Woodland, WA 98674
360.713.7460

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