



Washington State Conservation Commission

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TAB A



STATE OF WASHINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

PO Box 47721 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7721 • (360) 407-6200 • FAX (360) 407-6215

September 10, 2024

TO: David Schumacher, Director
Office of Financial Management

FROM: James Thompson, Executive Director
State Conservation Commission

SUBJECT: 2025-2027 SCC Capital Budget Request

The state of Washington faces multiple natural resource challenges, including salmon and orca recovery, climate and drought resiliency, shellfish recovery, and shrubsteppe/rangeland health. The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) implements vital incentive based programs that provide for the construction of conservation projects to not only achieve effective, multi-benefit solutions for our most pressing natural resource issues, but also create jobs and drive economic activity.

SCC is requesting capital funds to continue and accelerate the following programs that empower landowners and conservation districts in every corner of our state to implement vital conservation projects.

Natural Resource Investments (NRI)

Enables conservation districts to help local land users or land managers pay for and construct conservation projects that address the most pressing state and local priorities, such as managing forests for wildfire resiliency, upgrading irrigation systems for water conservation, building manure storage facilities, and installing livestock fencing for pasture management. NRI funding is critical as it provides for the implementation of locally prioritized projects that cover every county and legislative district which is a keystone of locally-led conservation. In addition, it is the most flexible SCC project funding as it can be used to implement capital projects addressing many different natural resources concerns on a wide range of land uses and ownerships. At this time, 837 land users or land managers are ready to invest in 1,360 practices across the state on their properties to improve natural resources, and we expect that number to grow.

Voluntary Riparian Grant Program

In FY24 we have allocated just over \$12 million of original \$25 million appropriation for 23-25 biennium for riparian restoration and maintenance. We have been able to fund all eligible applications at this time and are keeping up with demand as new projects are developed. On this trajectory and with the completion and rollout of permanent protection projects in the next year, this is an estimated amount of funding that may be successfully implemented in the 25-27 biennium. It's important to note SCC received separate funding in our operating budget to support the technical assistance, outreach and education components of this program and it is included as ongoing funding.

Farmland Preservation and Land Access

To continue the critical work of Farmland Protection and Land Access (FPLA) in protecting high quality farmland and facilitating land access to underrepresented farmers and ranchers. Created through a '22 Supplemental Capital Budget proviso with continued support in the 2023-25 Capital budget, FPLA has successfully protected two priority farm properties and has another four properties under contract.

Irrigation Efficiencies

The Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program (IEP) is a statewide effort to improve how water is delivered and applied on agricultural lands. Projects funded through this program save water by increasing the efficiency by which it is conveyed to the farm and applied to the field. These projects reduce water demand from the supply source while maintaining the delivered amount consistent with crop water demand. The projects save water now available for other uses and users. In its 23 years of implementation, the Irrigation Efficiencies Program has demonstrated measurable water resource improvement in over-allocated basins across the state.

Shellfish

The SCC Shellfish Program enables conservation districts to fund voluntary, watershed-based efforts with participants that are proven effective at protecting and improving shellfish growing areas by providing cost-share for the implementation of Best Management Practices that support manure management, livestock exclusion, and other projects that improve water quality. Ideal projects identify the potential non-point pollution concern and its likely pathway into a shellfish growing area, and how the BMP will mitigate that concern. Strong projects also support local collaborations with Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Programs, Pollution Control Action Teams (PCAT), Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), or result from a referral from the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Department of Ecology, county program, etc. At this time, there is over \$1m in projects for FY 25 and all funding has been awarded.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP)

Covers state match needed to bring millions of Farm Bill dollars to Washington for RCP projects that unite multiple partners in solving natural resource issues. The SCC has been designated to pass-through required state capital match for seven ongoing RCP projects. The SCC is also included in eight RCP proposals pending review by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. RCP projects create jobs and make measurable progress on urgent issues including water quality, fish and wildlife habitat restoration, drinking and irrigation water supply, forest health and wildfire resiliency, and farmland preservation.

Voluntary Stewardship Program Project Funding (VSP)

The VSP is currently funded at \$4,000,000 to support capital cost-share projects. The requested funding continues the VSP cost-share program with private landowners first funded in the 2023 supplemental budget and again in the 2023-25 biennial budget.

Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI)

The requested capital funding would fund expanded implementation of the Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative, a collaboration between the State Conservation Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Natural Resources to conserve and restore Washington's Shrubsteppe wildlife and habitat with a focus on reducing wildland fire risk and supporting working lands. This funding would support implementation of key components of the long-term strategy including habitat restoration projects, wildlife friendly fencing, prescribed grazing best management practices, and technical assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Thompson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Thompson
Executive Director

471 - State Conservation Commission Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/25/2024 2:48PM

Project Class: Program

Agency Priority	Project by Account-EA Type	Estimated Total	Prior Expenditures	Current Expenditures	Reapprop 2025-27	New Approp 2025-27	Estimated 2027-29	Estimated 2029-31	Estimated 2031-33	Estimated 2033-35
0	4000020 2021-23 Farmland Protection and Land Access									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	2,000,000	46,000	743,000	1,211,000					
0	4000038 2021-23 Conservation Reserve Enhancement from Operating									
	06A-1 Salmon Recovery Acct-State	5,000,000			5,000,000					
0	9100017 2019-21 CREP Riparian Cost Share - State Match									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	1,800,000	1,521,000		279,000					
0	9100020 Riparian Restoration with Landowners									
	06A-1 Salmon Recovery Acct-State	10,000,000	6,352,000	821,000	2,827,000					
	26D-1 Natural Clim Solu Ac-State	25,000,000		19,000	24,981,000					
	Project Total:	35,000,000	6,352,000	840,000	27,808,000					
0	91001830 Anaerobic Digester Development									
	26C-1 Climate Commit Accou-State	24,900,000			24,900,000					
0	92000016 Voluntary Stewardship Program									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	3,000,000	1,637,000		1,363,000					
0	92000017 Whitman County Fire Recovery									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	961,000		237,000	724,000					
0	92001497 Skagit County Voluntary Stewardship									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	1,000,000		26,000	974,000					
Total: Program		73,661,000	9,556,000	1,846,000	62,259,000					

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class**

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/25/2024 2:48PM

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority	Project by Account-EA Type	Estimated Total	Prior Expenditures	Current Expenditures	Reapprop 2025-27	New Approp 2025-27	Estimated 2027-29	Estimated 2029-31	Estimated 2031-33	Estimated 2033-35
0	30000017 Match for Federal RCPP Program									
	001-2 General Fund-Federal	1,875,000	474,000	32,000	1,369,000					
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	5,341,000	5,341,000							
	Project Total:	7,216,000	5,815,000	32,000	1,369,000					
0	40000006 2019-21 Match for Federal RCPP									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	6,249,000	6,249,000							
0	40000009 2019-21 Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000	1,071,000	103,000	2,826,000					
1	40000016 2021-23 Natural Resource Investment for the Economy & Environment									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000	3,122,000		878,000					
1	40000022 2023-25 Natural Resource Investment for the Economy & Environment									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000		731,000	3,269,000					
1	40000046 2025-2027 Natural Resources Investments for the Economy and Envir									
	057- State Bldg Constr-Unknown									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	85,000,000				10,000,000	15,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000
	Project Total:	85,000,000				10,000,000	15,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000
1	92000011 Natural Resource Investment for the Economy & Environment 2017-19									
	001-2 General Fund-Federal	1,000,000			1,000,000					
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000	4,000,000							
	Project Total:	5,000,000	4,000,000		1,000,000					

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2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/25/2024 2:48PM

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority	Project by Account-EA Type	Estimated Total	Prior Expenditures	Current Expenditures	Reapprop 2025-27	New Approp 2025-27	Estimated 2027-29	Estimated 2029-31	Estimated 2031-33	Estimated 2033-35
2	40000013 2021-23 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)									
	057-1 State Bldg	4,000,000	1,023,000	6,000	2,971,000					
	Constr-State									
2	40000049 2025-2027 Voluntary Riparian Grant Program									
	26C-1 Climate Commit	125,000,000				25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000
	Accou-State									
3	40000015 2021-23 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) PIP Loan									
	552-1 Cons	160,000			160,000					
	Assistance Acct-State									
3	40000024 2023-25 Farmland Protection and Land Access									
	057-1 State Bldg	4,000,000		20,000	3,980,000					
	Constr-State									
3	40000044 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access									
	514- Ag Conserve									
	Easement-Unknown									
	514-1 Ag Conserve	30,100,000				4,000,000	5,300,000	6,000,000	6,900,000	7,900,000
	Easement-State									
	Project Total:	30,100,000				4,000,000	5,300,000	6,000,000	6,900,000	7,900,000
4	40000017 2021-23 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Match									
	057-1 State Bldg	7,000,000	1,046,000	694,000	5,260,000					
	Constr-State									
4	40000025 2023-25 Irrigation Efficiencies									
	057-1 State Bldg	2,500,000		368,000	2,132,000					
	Constr-State									
4	40000045 2025-2027 Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies									
	057-1 State Bldg	80,000,000				30,000,000	20,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
	Constr-State									
5	40000018 2021-23 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas									
	057-1 State Bldg	3,500,000	2,188,000		1,312,000					
	Constr-State									
5	40000029 2023-25 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas									

471 - State Conservation Commission Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/25/2024 2:48PM

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority	Project by Account-EA Type	Estimated Total	Prior Expenditures	Current Expenditures	Reapprop 2025-27	New Approp 2025-27	Estimated 2027-29	Estimated 2029-31	Estimated 2031-33	Estimated 2033-35
5	4000029 2023-25 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	3,500,000		924,000	2,576,000					
5	4000047 2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	32,500,000				5,500,000	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,000,000	7,500,000
6	4000014 2021-23 Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	2,000,000			2,000,000					
6	4000026 2023-25 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	3,000,000		808,000	2,192,000					
6	4000043 2025-2027 Regional Conservation Partnership Program Match									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	55,000,000				15,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
7	4000023 2023-25 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000		1,294,000	2,706,000					
	26D-1 Natural Clim Solu Ac-State	11,000,000			11,000,000					
	Project Total:	15,000,000		1,294,000	13,706,000					
7	4000048 2025-2027 Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Capital Cost-Share									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	22,000,000				4,000,000	4,000,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	5,000,000
8	4000027 2023-25 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) PIP									
	552-1 Cons Assistance Acct-State	100,000			100,000					
8	4000050 2025-2027 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	60,000,000				5,000,000	10,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000
9	4000021 2023-25 VSP Project Funding									

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class**

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/25/2024 2:48PM

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority	Project by Account-EA Type	Estimated Total	Prior Expenditures	Current Expenditures	Reapprop 2025-27	New Approp 2025-27	Estimated 2027-29	Estimated 2029-31	Estimated 2031-33	Estimated 2033-35
9	40000021 2023-25 VSP Project Funding									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	3,000,000		287,000	2,713,000					
10	40000028 2023-25 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration & Resiliency Initiativ									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	1,500,000		307,000	1,193,000					
Total: Grant		569,325,000	24,514,000	5,574,000	49,637,000	98,500,000	95,300,000	97,000,000	98,400,000	100,400,000

Total Account Summary

Account-Expenditure Authority Type	Estimated Total	Prior Expenditures	Current Expenditures	Reapprop 2025-27	New Approp 2025-27	Estimated 2027-29	Estimated 2029-31	Estimated 2031-33	Estimated 2033-35	
001-2 General Fund-Federal	2,875,000	474,000	32,000	2,369,000						
057- State Bldg Constr-Unknown										
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	408,851,000	27,244,000	6,548,000	40,559,000	69,500,000	65,000,000	66,000,000	66,500,000	67,500,000	
06A-1 Salmon Recovery Acct-State	15,000,000	6,352,000	821,000	7,827,000						
26C-1 Climate Commit Accou-State	149,900,000			24,900,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	
26D-1 Natural Clim Solu Ac-State	36,000,000		19,000	35,981,000						
514- Ag Conserve Easement-Unknown										
514-1 Ag Conserve Easement-State	30,100,000				4,000,000	5,300,000	6,000,000	6,900,000	7,900,000	
552-1 Cons Assistance Acct-State	260,000			260,000						
Total		642,986,000	34,070,000	7,420,000	111,896,000	98,500,000	95,300,000	97,000,000	98,400,000	100,400,000

Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class

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Report Number: CBS001
Date Run: 9/25/2024 2:48PM

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Functional Area	*	All Functional Areas
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Include Enacted	No	No
Sort Order	Project Class	Project Class
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids



Allyson Brooks Ph.D., Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

June 14, 2021

Ms. Jean Fike
Washington State Conservation Commission
2021 E. College Way
Mount Vernon, Washington 98273

Re: WSCC Programmatic 2021-02 Process
Log No.: 2021-06-03459-WSCC

Dear Ms. Fike:

Thank you for contacting our department pursuant to Executive Order 21-02. We have reviewed the materials you provided for the proposed WSCC Programmatic 2021-02 Process for all Conservation Districts in Washington.

We concur with your proposed plan to assure the Washington State Conservation Commission and local Conservation Districts address Executive Order 21-02 in a comprehensive fashion.

We look forward to continued consultations and collaboration into the future.

These comments are based on the information available at the time of this review and on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Officer in compliance with Executive Order 21-02. Should additional information become available, our assessment may be revised, including information regarding historic properties that have not yet been identified. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and a copy of these comments should be included in subsequent environmental documents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Whitlam', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert G. Whitlam, Ph.D.
State Archaeologist
(360) 890-2615
email: rob.whitlam@dahp.wa.gov





Washington State Conservation Commission

Policy Name and #	21-02 Cultural Resources
Applies to:	Projects funded by WSCC
Effective Date:	September 16, 2021
Approved By:	 WSCC Chairman, Dean Longrie

PURPOSE

The Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) values the protection of archeological and cultural resources. We encourage each district to develop good working relationships with local Tribes that can help inform and support their conservation activities and better protect cultural resources. The WSCC will ensure that future activities funded by WSCC are compliant with the Governor's Executive Order 21-02 regarding Archaeological and Cultural Resources.

BACKGROUND

The Commission had been operating under Executive Order 05-05 since July, 2015. Policy and procedures were developed at that time to comply with EO 05-05, mitigate impacts and protect cultural resources as conservation districts implement projects funded through Commission programs.

Following the issuance of EO 21-02 on April 7, 2021 Commission staff were in communication with DAHP to determine what changes would be needed in the Commission's cultural resources process to bring it into compliance with the new EO. As in 2015, the process is closely modeled after that used by NRCS.

POLICY

Projects funded by the WSCC must follow current policy and procedures regarding the protection of cultural resources. Before a Conservation District or other recipient can be reimbursed for conservation practices (capital construction projects) with WSCC-managed

funds (regardless of source and including both Operational Funds and Capital Funds) they must attest to WSCC that:

- 1) a cultural resource review compliant with EO 21-02 has been completed or
- 2) per WSCC policy the project/practice does not require EO-21-02 review or
- 3) a cultural resource review was conducted by another state agency in compliance with EO 21-02 or
- 4) a cultural resource review was conducted under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and all records pertaining to cultural resource review and tribal consultation have been emailed to DAHP.

Additionally, unless subject to Section 106 (federal cultural resources review process) property acquisition projects culminating in soil-disturbing construction activities will be subject to cultural resources review under EO 21-02.

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Capital FTE Summary**

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS004

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:36AM

FTEs by Job Classification

<u>Job Class</u>	Authorized Budget		2025-27 Biennium	
	2023-25 Biennium		2025-27 Biennium	
	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>
Contracts Specialist 3			2.0	2.0
Environmental Planner 4			1.0	1.0
Environmental Specialist 4			1.0	1.0
Program Specialist 3			1.0	1.0
WMS 1			2.0	2.0
WMS 2			1.0	1.0
Total FTEs			8.0	8.0

Account

<u>Account - Expenditure Authority Type</u>	Authorized Budget		2025-27 Biennium	
	2023-25 Biennium		2025-27 Biennium	
	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State			1,000,000	1,000,000

Narrative

The FTE's manage and support the capital grant programs, they are critical to meet the statutory conservation objectives. None of these programs would be possible without this support; they are an essential element of each program's implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Capital FTE Summary
2025-27 Biennium
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Report Number: CBS004
Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:36AM

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget

TAB B

TAB C

TAB D

471 - State Conservation Commission Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:41AM

Project Number: 40000046

Project Title: 2025-2027 Natural Resources Investments for the Economy and Envir

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 1

Project Summary

The Natural Resource Investments for the Economy and Environment (NRI) program empowers managers of working lands from every county of our state to take part in conserving Washington's natural resources for the future by providing cost share incentives for implementation of best management practices. Most land managers seek out opportunities to improve their management practices to be good stewards of the land, water, and air. Their most common barriers are not having the expertise and finances to construct conservation projects that address resource concerns on their properties. NRI provides an answer to these barriers by administering capital funds to our state's 45 Conservation Districts (CDs) through the State Conservation Commission (SCC), who help local land managers pay for and construct conservation projects that in turn benefit all Washingtonians. Due to the popularity of this program, hundreds of landowners, users, and managers, are currently waitlisted for NRI program assistance. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy. Directly related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of Puget Sound Action Agenda.

Project Description

What is the problem/opportunity? Identify: priority, underserved people/communities. Operating budget savings, public safety improvements & clarifying details. Preservation projects: include information about current condition of the facility/system.

Activities on working land — including the production of food and fiber on which we depend — can negatively impact our state's natural resources if not properly managed. These activities can result in increased pollution into our water and air, negatively impact wildlife habitat, trigger soil erosion, and cause other impacts to resource priorities. Most working land managers want to be the best stewards of the land they can be, but barriers stand in their way.

Common hurdles to practicing conservation and complying with regulations for land management are:

- 1) the cost to upgrade or adopt natural resource stewardship practices; and
- 2) the need for technical expertise to determine and construct site-specific best management practices that address local natural resource concerns. Washington farmers and producers work long hours and get by on a razor thin profit margin. This makes it difficult to keep up on and comply with regulations and take advantage of innovative, and sometimes expensive, conservation practices and technology. For example, every mile of livestock fence installed costs an estimated \$26,400^[1], and constructing a steel manure storage tank can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. In urban areas, landowners would like to implement conservation practices, but don't always have the technical expertise and funds to install and maintain projects such as stormwater management practices. In addition, project costs have increased exponentially as a result of recent inflation, labor shortages, and disruptions to the supply chain. Many landowners simply can't install these practices on their own, leading to steadily increasing impacts to natural resources.

Regulatory agencies provide a necessary backstop by using enforcement as a last resort to address violations and egregious instances of landowner impacts to natural resources. However, many landowners want to do the right thing; it's the previously mentioned barriers that prevent them. Regulatory agencies also recognize that, in many situations, a non-regulatory approach is less costly and time-consuming than enforcement, and the money and time expended are invested directly in stewardship practices that help solve the environmental problem. These voluntary solutions often are farm and forest-friendly, which improves economic resiliency. Moreover, providing an opportunity to solve a natural resource issue in a partnership with the landowner can result in positive behavior changes that lead to long-term resource stewardship and positive government interaction.

Facilitating voluntary, long-term resource stewardship and public-private relationships have been the strengths of the SCC

471 - State Conservation Commission Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:41AM

Project Number: 40000046

Project Title: 2025-2027 Natural Resources Investments for the Economy and Envir

Description

and our state's 45 CDs for over 80 years. Since 2012, one of our most effective tools has been the NRI program, which makes it easier and more affordable for land managers to engage in voluntary conservation on their properties. Through this program, the SCC administers state capital funds to each CD who then uses it to help landowners cover a portion of the cost of priority conservation practices on their properties. CDs also provide the expertise needed for project design and construction. In short, NRI clears barriers to conservation, facilitates projects that otherwise may not occur, and engages landowners with the success of their projects.

This cost-sharing model has been very successful in engaging land managers with conservation. CDs statewide have waiting lists of interested landowners, land users, and cooperators including farmers and ranchers who want and need the help of NRI to install more conservation projects.

We need to make more progress to conserve Washington's natural resources, especially on private lands projects that benefit the general public. Many private landowners — who own over half the land in our state — are ready and willing to help. But we need continued funding for NRI to break down the barriers and get more conservation on the ground.

This budget request relates to salmon strategy actions that are urgent for the upcoming biennium. Notably strategies found in the Puget Sound Action Agenda that lead to improved salmon habitat, water quality, fish passage, and climate resilience as highlighted in the attachment. NRI provides the flexibility to implement a number of practices that benefit salmon recovery. This budget requests related to actions currently proposed in the draft Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy which is being developed under RCW 70A.05 and will be finalized by Sep 30, 2024.

- What will the request produce or construct (predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)? When will the project start/end? Identify if the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Provide detailed cost backup.

The following are examples of wait-listed NRI projects currently planned for implementation during the 25-27 biennium:

- Improving Water Quality/Quantity: Livestock manure storage and handling facilities, livestock exclusion fencing, irrigation system upgrades and improved technology, open channel conversion to irrigation pipeline, in-stream habitat features and improvements, low impact development and stormwater mitigation.

- Wildlife Habitat Improvements: Enhancing wetlands and ponds, native pollinator plantings, installing bird and bat boxes, minimizing invasive weeds.

- Energy Conservation: On-farm energy efficient technology and equipment or upgrades.

- Soil Health and Erosion Control: Composting systems, revegetation, and vegetation buffers to retain soil on-site and increase crop productivity.

- Urban Conservation: Stormwater management practices such as rain gardens, bio-infiltration structures, de-paving, urban forestry, pollinator and native plant gardens, and urban agriculture.

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2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:41AM

Project Number: 40000046

Project Title: 2025-2027 Natural Resources Investments for the Economy and Envir

Description

Projects will begin on July 1, 2025 and be completed by June 30, 2027

- How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

Funding requested in this NRI proposal will be used to share the costs of constructing \$10,000,000 worth of on-the-ground, locally prioritized, conservation projects across the state that are currently backlogged. At this time, 837 land users or managers are ready to invest in cost-sharing projects to install 1,360 practices on their properties to improve natural resources, and from past experience we anticipate this number will continue to grow.

Not funding this proposal will come at a huge cost to our natural resources, the health of our communities, our public-private conservation partnerships, and our agricultural economy. Progress made by investing NRI dollars in urgent natural resource issues — such as, but not limited to, water conservation in the Columbia Basin and North Central Washington, livestock waste management in NW Washington, water and wind erosion control in the Palouse, and saving our Southern Resident Killer Whales— will be jeopardized. Farmers and other private land managers will lose access to the expertise and financial incentives they need to address natural resource issues on their working lands. Many food and fiber producers will continue to struggle to keep their operations viable and in compliance with regulatory requirements without this assistance available to them. If these problems cannot be addressed voluntarily due to lack of funding, more regulatory action will be required, increasing costs to the state for enforcement and appeals. By relying more on regulatory enforcement, animosity will rise among private landowners who will have more enforcement actions imposed.

In addition, the goals set out in the Governor's Results WA and the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda as well as Washington's species of greatest conservation need recovery plans and locally led long-range plans of each CD will not be met.

- What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered
- The NRI program is unique in that it focuses on local prioritization and includes the ability to address all types of natural resource concerns. Many local, state, federal and private funding sources are specific to singular resource concerns in specific locations and leave out resource concerns that negatively impact our environment and areas of Washington state. Without NRI funding, we would have to fully rely on other funding programs. These specific grants programs are not viable for all Conservation Districts and are not suited for locally-led prioritization. As such important resources concerns are not addressed and communities receiving impact may be limited.

Federal Funding Sources are very limited in scope, the types of cooperators that can be included and often geography. Federal funds are also spread too thin with a similar sized program to what is requested being applied over multiple states and regions. Federal contracting is cumbersome and lengthy and precludes short turn-around actions to address acute concerns.

Other funding sources can help to supplement NRI work but cannot be used in the place of NRI. NRI was chosen as it can address all resource concerns on all lands based upon local priorities.

- Which Clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added, people or communities served, etc.

NRI funding will be invested in every county of our state with multi-benefit and wide-reaching positive impacts. The funding program is equally applied to all Conservation Districts and land managers have the same access to this funding. Washington farmers, ranchers, urban land managers, and other land users will be empowered to complete conservation

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Description

projects on their working lands, supporting rural livelihoods and production of food and fiber. Where CDs encompass urban and sub-urban areas, residents will have the opportunity to implement conservation projects to help mitigate stormwater runoff, support backyard wildlife habitat, and improve wildfire preparedness.

- Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state(or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

To maximize the impact of their work, CDs creatively leverage state funding with a variety of other private, local, state, federal, and non-governmental organization grants and partnerships. Districts match every dollar of state funding with up to four dollars of funding from other sources. Additionally, districts are able to complete large projects by pulling together several funding sources where a single grant is insufficient. Without the funding provided through NRI, many of these projects that leverage other financial resources cannot move forward. In many cases NRI funding is utilized as “seed money” for larger projects or as a way to get projects “over the hump”, providing the last bit of funding needed for implementation.

- Describe how this project supports the agency’s strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

NRI is directly connected to the **SCC2022-2027 Long-Range Strategic Plan** in a number of areas including:

- Strategic Priority Area 1: Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources
- Strategic Priority Area 2: Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support
- Strategic Priority Area 3: Climate Resiliency

Other connections include the Strategic Plans of the State’s 45 CDs:

Conservation District Pages

- Does this project include IT related costs, including hardware, software, cloud based services, contracts or staff? If yes, attach [IT Addendum](#).

No

- If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail. See Chapter 14 Puget Sound Recovery) in the 2025-27 Operating Budget Instructions (links below) or reach out and I can help.

○ [Chapter14: Puget Sound Recovery & Salmon Strategy Requirements \(wa.gov\)](#)

○ [PugetSound Partnership 2022-2026 Action Agenda \(wa.gov\)](#)

NRI Connections to the Puget Sound Action Agenda are detailed in the attachment.

- How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

NRI projects and practices are locally prioritized to meet local needs. These practices encompass a wide range of resource concerns as listed above. While some projects and practices installed such as tree and shrub plantings, waste mgmt.

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(treatment of waste), and practices that promote heathy range, soils, forests, pastures will have a benefit to greenhouse gas emissions it is critical that NRI be able to address all natural resource concerns, some of which may not have a specific benefit to greenhouse gas emissions. Water Quality, Air Quality, Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Water Conservation, Plant and Animal Health, as well as others are perfectly suited to be addressed by NRI due to its flexibility.

- How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

NRI funding will be invested in every county of our state with multi-benefit and wide-reaching positive impacts. The funding program is equally applied to all Conservation Districts and land managers have the same access to this funding. Washington farmers, ranchers, and other land users will be empowered to complete conservation projects on their working lands, supporting rural livelihoods and production of food and fiber. Where CDs encompass urban and sub-urban areas, residents will have the opportunity to implement conservation projects to help mitigate stormwater runoff, support backyard wildlife habitat, and improve wildfire preparedness.

All conservation projects are designed to provide cleaner air, cleaner water, healthier soils, and wildfire resiliency of our working lands, which benefit all Washingtonians, including our most vulnerable communities through improved environmental, recreational, and economic opportunities. In some cases, projects help land managers adapt to regulatory protections related to critical areas, shorelines and endangered species. Through the financial cost-share support for implementation of these projects, we help keep working lands working while conserving natural resources, protect our food system and agricultural economy, and reduce the loss of tree canopy cover. Projects like erosion/flood protection and home wildfire preparedness also reduce the risk to life, home, and other property damage from natural disasters which can displace communities and be a significant cost to individuals and local governments. In urban communities, projects that include on-site stormwater management and pollinator plantings help promote water quality and biodiversity.

Agriculture is one of our state's top economic activities, there are over 35,000 farms and food producers that makeup approximately 14.5 million acres in Washington, and employ over 160,000 people. In 2019, the Washington Department of Agriculture estimated that Washington agriculture production total \$9.49 billion. Moreover, we all reap the benefits of Washington's farmers, since they produce so much of our food. Washington's 45 CDs work with farmers and ranchers throughout the state to help them address natural resource issues in a manner that at least maintains and often boosts the economic viability of their operations. Urban and suburban land managers are assisted with NRI to address small livestock waste management concerns, naturally treat stormwater runoff, and support urban agriculture producers and local food access. This work also provides numerous environmental benefits for the public, including cleaner air, cleaner water, productive soils, and healthy rangelands for greater wildfire resiliency, improved fish and wildlife habitat, and increased climate resiliency

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

NRI has been lauded, and relied on, by CDs as the most flexible, and wide-reaching program to install conservation practices at the local level and is key to the locally-led conservation model to address the highest priority local needs of the local natural resources which benefits all local community members and the local economy. It is the main SCC cost-sharing program that is able to be used by all CDs and, as such, has statewide impacts and can assist a wide variety of cooperators. NRI has proven to be able to get conservation work on the ground and funding must continue to ensure these ongoing positive impacts to our communities.

Some projects are not able to be completed by the end of the biennium for several reasons. Challenging weather conditions, permitting delays, cooperator willingness, cooperator's available funds, availability of supplies, rising costs due to inflation, are some of the key factors that affect projects on the ground. While CDs and cooperators work diligently to avoid delays many factors are not fully in their control. As such re-appropriation is requested to ensure that projects are able to be completed.

[1] Estimated average \$5.00/foot for basic 4-stand barbed wire, other fencing can be more expensive

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Project Number: 40000046

Project Title: 2025-2027 Natural Resources Investments for the Economy and Envir

Description

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Grant Recipient Organization: Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: 89.08

Application process used

CDs enter locally prioritized projects into the SCC Conservation Practice Data System database. Each CD can request a uniform additional amount of funding based upon appropriated budget and the projects "ready to fund" entered into the database. Proposed projects are evaluated for compliance with SCC Programmatic Guidelines prior to award.

Growth Management impacts

Projects will support local GMA requirements to protect critical areas.

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reappropriations	New Appropriations
057	State Bldg Constr-Unknown					
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	85,000,000				10,000,000
	Total	85,000,000	0	0	0	10,000,000
Future Fiscal Periods						
		<u>2027-29</u>	<u>2029-31</u>	<u>2031-33</u>	<u>2033-35</u>	
057	State Bldg Constr-Unknown					
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	15,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	
	Total	15,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000	

Operating Impacts

No Operating Impact

Capital Project Request

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<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000046	40000046
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

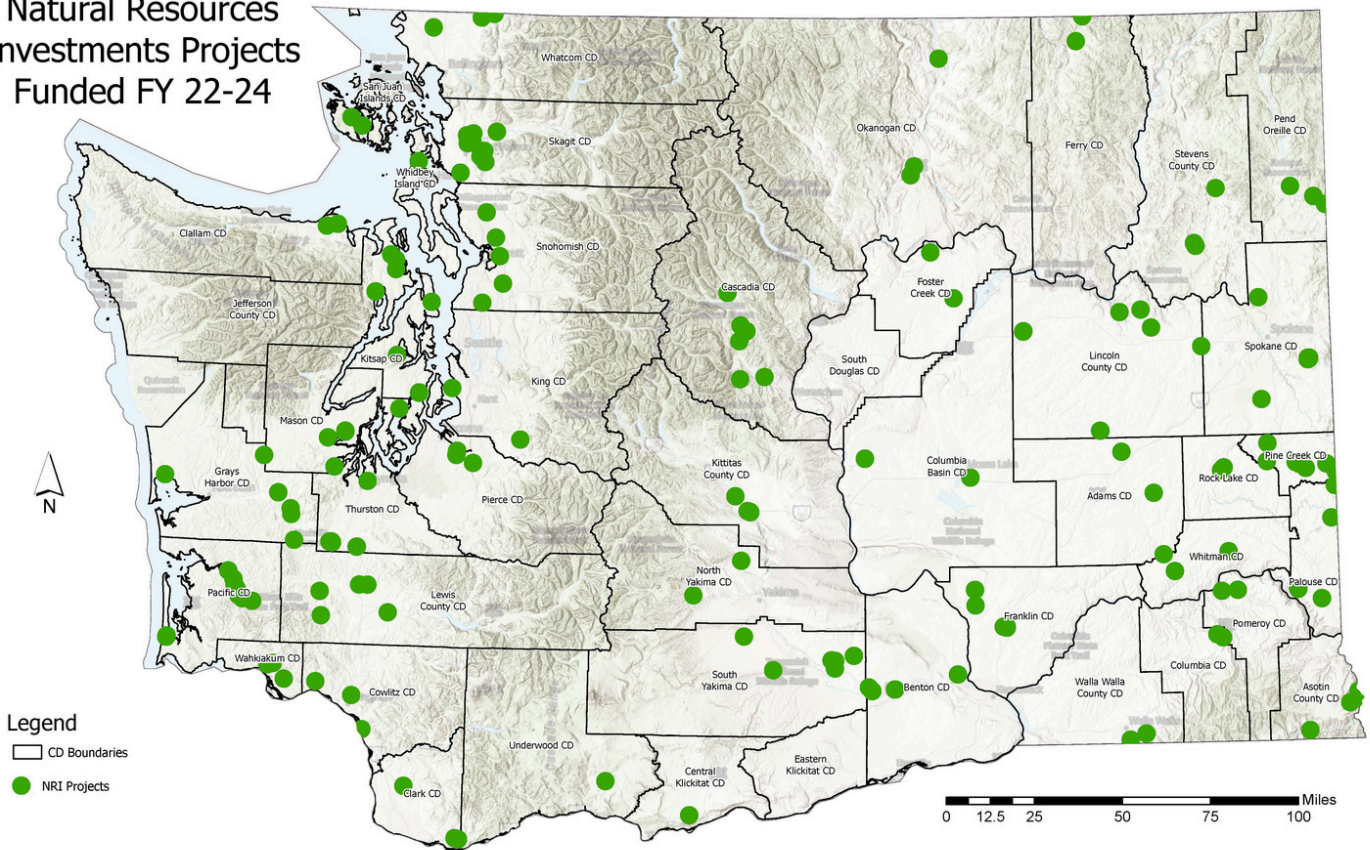
Natural Resource Investments (NRI) Program

Overview

Conservation districts use NRI funding administered by the Washington State Conservation Commission to cover a portion of best management practices (BMPs) costs to incentivize managers to implement them on their properties. BMPs advance progress toward natural resource objectives, such as improved water quality and habitat, and are farm-friendly. NRI funding is utilized statewide to fit a wide array of local resource concerns that conservation districts have prioritized. The flexibility of NRI funds makes it well-suited for success.

NRI Program Project Sites, FY 22-24

Natural Resources
Investments Projects
Funded FY 22-24



Esri, CGIAR, USGS, WA State Parks GIS, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USFWS

**Program
Contact:**

Mike Baden, Regional Manager – North Central and Northeast
Email: mbaden@scc.wa.gov | Phone: 509-385-7510



What do NRI projects look like on the ground?



Spokane Conservation District: The Hangman (Latah) Creek Bank Stabilization Project in Spokane CD addresses 3,000 linear feet of eroding stream banks, critical for reducing excessive sediment and nutrient contributions that impact fisheries, habitats, and water quality in the Spokane River and Lake Spokane. Using bioengineering techniques, such as rock toes, soil lifts, and large woody debris, the project successfully stabilized the banks— planting over 7,600 trees and shrubs, with a 75% survival rate. Funded by a combination of grants, including \$58,999.50 from NRI, this project exemplifies how ongoing funding is needed to protect and enhance our waterways.



Clallam Conservation District

Utilizing Shellfish and NRI funding, Clallam CD has significantly impacted ecosystem recovery by planting over 15,000 native trees and shrubs along the Dungeness River. This riparian buffer project restored 43 acres of habitat on Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe land, effectively reducing sedimentation and fecal runoff in Dungeness Bay. By improving water quality for commercial, tribal, and recreational shellfish harvesting, this initiative showcases a successful collaboration for environmental and economic benefits.

**Program
Contact:**

Mike Baden, *Regional Manager – North Central and Northeast*
Email: mbaden@scc.wa.gov | Phone: 509-385-7510

Natural Resource Investments for the Economy and Environment

Connections to Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda

References cited from the 2022-2026 Action Agenda associated with direct and indirect benefits provided through funding of the *Natural Resource Investments for the Economy and Environment* 25-27 biennial budget decision package.

The SCC and many of the Conservation Districts are coordinating directly with the Puget Sound Partnership in various and multiple roles such as Lead Entity (LE) coordination, LE citizens committees, Local Integrating Organization (LIO), Salmon Recovery Council and many of the various subcommittee and planning level activities coordinated by the partnership. The Districts have an important role as a non-regulatory technically based partner that can work with both rural and urban cooperators in efforts to address the priorities identified in the Action Agenda.

2022-2026 Action Agenda Strategies & Key Opportunities (Actions) Alignment

- Strategy 2: Working Lands - Reduce pressure for land conversion by supporting the long-term viability and sustainability of agricultural lands, including large and small parcel, hobby and working farms, and working forests through resilience and integrated management planning, improved incentives, and improved land use regulations.
 - Key Opportunity: Expand incentives and technical assistance for agricultural lands and owners of working forests
 - Key Opportunity: Streamline and increase funds disbursement to support Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Key Opportunity: Promote working lands BMPs that also sequester carbon and increase resilience.

- Strategy 3: Healthy Shorelines – Protect and restore marine shorelines by improving compliance, incentives, and strategic planning rooted in an understanding of coastal process, with a focus on bluff-backed beaches.
 - Key Opportunity: Implement restoration and protection to improve beach processes and function identified through strategic plan at multiple geographic scales

- Strategy 5: Floodplains & Estuaries – Protect and restore floodplains and estuaries (including associated riparian habitats) by advancing integrated river basin management planning policies and regulations and accelerating funding and implementation of reach-scale plans and projects.
 - Key Opportunity: Enhance funding for and capacity of landowners, tribal governments, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations to acquire, restore, and manage floodplain and estuarine properties
 - Key Opportunity: Improve the function of tide gates, or remove them altogether, where appropriate, to improve water quality and increase habitat complexity
 - Key Opportunity: Remove culverts and other barriers to connectivity to improve and maintain streamflow functions within floodplains and their associated estuaries

- Strategy 6: Fish Passage Barriers – Address fish passage barriers and reopen salmon habitat by accelerating strategic planning and sequenced implementation of projects.
 - Key Opportunity: Consider strategic and varied approaches for private and public culvert removal
 - Key Opportunity: Streamline funding opportunities for private culverts and barrier removal
 - Key Opportunity: Fulfill the state’s obligation to replace fish passage culverts

- Strategy 7: Freshwater Availability – Understand and plan for future freshwater availability and implement regulations, projects, and voluntary approaches to reduce water demand and encourage conservation, as well as reclaimed wastewater.
 - Key Opportunity: Expand and accelerate incentives for voluntary action
 - Key Opportunity: Focus to improve water quality and quantity in key salmon migration and rearing corridors throughout Puget Sound.

- Strategy 11: Wastewater Systems – Reduce and prevent pollutants from wastewater systems (for example, treatment plants and large- and small-scale onsite septic) by improving regulatory controls and incentives and investing in new technology.
 - Key Opportunity: Promote actions by homeowners and commercial developers that reduce runoff during rain events (for example, rain gardens, retention ponds, street trees, and other green stormwater infrastructure)

- Strategy 12: Working Lands Runoff – Reduce and prevent non-point source pollutants from agricultural and forest lands by improving outreach and incentive programs and ensuring compliance with policies.
 - Key Opportunity: Ensure adequate funding and support for voluntary incentive-based programs
 - Key Opportunity: Identify opportunities and priorities for technical assistance, implementing BMPs, and funding.
 - Key Opportunity: Adequately fund the work of voluntary and incentive-based programs
 - Key Opportunity: Support the implementation and monitoring of BMPs
 - Key Opportunity: Promote working lands BMPs that also sequester carbon and increase resilience.

- Strategy 16: Submerged Aquatic Vegetation – Protect and restore submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) by expanding public outreach, education, and voluntary programs, ensuring regulatory protection, and implementing restoration projects.
 - Key Opportunity: Coordinate submerged aquatic vegetation restoration with projects that restore sediment processes to support carbon storage and sequestration

- Strategy 20: Climate Adaptation & Resilience – Integrate climate adaptation and resilience into all strategies to protect and restore ecosystems and human wellbeing.
 - Key Opportunity: Develop strategies to protect and restore aquatic habitats that provide refuge for sensitive species and support resilience from climate-related impacts
 - Key Opportunity: Develop climate-resilient forest management practices (including commercial forestry) and reforestation approaches to reduce risks of drought and wildfire, as well as increase snowpack and low summer streamflow
 - Key Opportunity: Restore and acquire areas that provide flood conveyance, slow water, and deposit sediment during frequent, “ordinary” flood events by reconnecting the floodplain
 - Key Opportunity: Expand local capacity to educate, assist, and incentivize public and private landowners to work proactively to address future effects of climate changes on water quantity and quality
 - Key Opportunity: Create more equitable and resilient communities, economies, and businesses that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon, and adapt to changing conditions
 - Key Opportunity: Provide assistance in municipalities to support urban forest management and green infrastructure that is climate-informed and includes fire-adapted community strategies, updates to the Evergreen Communities Act, and expands urban and community forestry

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:52AM

Project Number: 40000049

Project Title: 2025-2027 Voluntary Riparian Grant Program

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 2

Project Summary

Requested funding will support the design and implementation of best management practices to restore, enhance and protect critical riparian management zones statewide. This DP will continue the accelerated effort through voluntary incentive-based approaches to address urgent salmon recovery goals begun in the 23-25 biennium. Directly related to implementing the Governor’s Salmon Strategy. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy.

Project Description

Salmon recovery is a top natural resource priority for our state and is an important Tribal Treaty Right. Salmon populations in Washington have continued to decline and the level of resources and effort devoted to recovery actions have been insufficient to meet established goals. One key factor in the decline of salmon is the loss or degradation of critical riparian habitat. Addressing riparian habitat restoration on agricultural lands can be challenging as protecting and restoring these lands often reduces the available productive farmland for the farmer. The recently published Riparian Task Force Final Report and Recommendation ("Roundtable Recommendations") calls for a “bold increase in funding for efforts to improve riparian habitat” while also “ensuring agricultural viability”. This request contributes to both. This request also aligns with the Riparian Roundtable Recommendation that specifically states a need to maintain or increase funding for SCC’s Riparian Grant program (RiparianRoundtable Recommendation #4).

In the 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget, the state legislature provided \$10 million to the SCC for salmon riparian projects. Within the first two months of implementation, the SCC had committed over 60% of the funding. All remaining funds are now committed to riparian restoration projects and will be fully expended by June30, 2025. Additionally, in the 2023 legislative session, \$25 million in Climate Commitment Act funds was appropriated to the SCC for riparian restoration and protection projects. Funding awards were first issued in April 2024 and within the first 3 months, as of July 1, 2024, more than \$12 million had been allocated to conservation districts. This figure does not include the potential for permanent protection projects as the framework is under development and could make conservation easements or fee-simple acquisitions eligible. Permanent protection projects are known to be costly and could absorb remaining funds quickly. There is clearly a backlog of riparian restoration and protection work to be done and the SCC is confident that the majority of the initial \$25 million appropriation will be obligated into projects by June 30,2025. This request is crucial to maintaining momentum and sustained effort to address the critical salmon recovery statewide priority.

This budget request is related to actions currently proposed in the draft Washington’s Climate Resilience Strategy which is being developed under RCW 70A.05 and will be finalized by Sept 30, 2024

What will the request produce or construct (predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)? When will the project start/end? Identify if the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Provide detailed cost backup.

This decision package, as a continuation of the accelerated work begun by the SCC in the 23-25biennium, will address this problem by engaging landowners in voluntary incentive-based opportunities with technical and financial resources to implement riparian restoration and protection in a manner to achieve riparian restoration while supporting agricultural viability. This request ensures continued monitoring of completed projects to determine and adaptively manage not only the structure and administration of the grant program but also the effectiveness of techniques and approaches for riparian restoration and protection.

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Description

How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

Not funding this request results in a loss of momentum in work that was begun in FY22 and continued through the 23-25 biennium, de-escalating and de-emphasizing the importance of salmon recovery to Tribes and all Washingtonians, and a discontinuation of services to landowners who are ready to engage in voluntary riparian restoration and protection opportunities.

What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered

Various other alternatives to a voluntary incentive-based approach to riparian restoration and protection have been explored via the Governor's Riparian Round Table discussions. The Riparian Taskforce Final Report and Recommendations prescribes a number of recommendations, one of which is fully funding the voluntary approach while also exploring full utilization of existing, more regulatory methods. Federal courts have consistently stated restoration and recovery of salmon is a state obligation under the tribal treaties.

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added, people or communities served, etc.

Requested funding will be available for all conservation districts in the state with priority areas/projects for riparian restoration and protection to benefit at-risk salmonids. CDs will in turn access funds through the SCC to work to ensure that all landowners or managers with riparian management zones within their control are offered the opportunity to participate in this program, as well as others available to match the best fit program(s) to each prospective participant.

In identifying and developing local priorities and projects, conservation districts coordinate and collaborate with local entities including counties, lead entity salmon recovery groups, watershed restoration groups, state and federal agencies, and non-profit salmon recovery groups. Additional emphasis and effort is being made at the local (CD) and SCC levels to engage and include Tribes as this programs adaptively managed, evaluated, and implemented.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state(or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

Leveraging occurs at the individual and local levels where other programs and fund sources are cobbled together to provide the best opportunity and program fit for a particular site and landowner. A thorough and comprehensive data set around funds' leveraging is not currently available.

Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

This proposal relates to the following SCC Strategic Plan areas:

Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources

GoalI. Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

GoalII. Protect and improve water quality and availability.

GoalIV. Strengthen awareness of natural resources' value and conservation opportunities

Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support

Goal IV. Economically viable farms, farmland, and strong local and regional food systems.

Climate Resiliency

Goal II. Increase carbon sequestration

Goal V. Strengthen the ability of our natural and working landscapes and communities to prepare for and respond to drought, wildfire, flood, and other climate-related hazards

Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration

Goal III. Cultivate a broad and inclusive culture of conservation

Goal IV. Foster collaborative, holistic, multi-benefit solutions for natural resources and agriculture.

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Project Title: 2025-2027 Voluntary Riparian Grant Program

Description

Also connected to the Riparian Taskforce Final Report and Recommendations (attached).

Does this project include IT related costs, including hardware, software, cloud based services, contracts or staff? If yes, attach [IT Addendum](#).

Potentially, the 2023 legislative proviso directed the SCC to create a "shared database" to facilitate collaboration with other state agencies. This work is in progress at the SCC.

If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail. See Chapter 14 Puget Sound Recovery) in the 2025-27 Operating Budget Instructions (links below) or reach out and I can help.

- o [Chapter 14: Puget Sound Recovery & Salmon Strategy Requirements \(wa.gov\)](#)
- o [Puget Sound Partnership 2022-2026 Action Agenda \(wa.gov\)](#)

Please see attachment for details relating to Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda and Governor's Salmon Strategy connections

How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clear Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

This DP impacts greenhouse gas emissions through establishing more permanent trees and shrubs in riparian areas, absorbing and storing greenhouse gases in their growth.

How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

This DP and associated program are intended to focus on implementing riparian restoration and protection projects with those landowners and managers who have control over riparian management areas. However, this vital work of restoring riparian areas benefits all Washingtonians and Tribes through improved salmon habitat, cleaner and colder water, and carbon sequestration.

Proviso

Voluntary Riparian Restoration with Landowners The appropriations in this section are provided solely for the state conservation commission to provide grants for riparian restoration and protection projects with landowners. Allowable expenses to a grantee receiving funds under this section include, but are not limited to, labor, equipment, fencing, mulch, seed, seedling trees, manual weed control, and yearly maintenance costs for up to 10 years. The commission may use up to two percent of any amounts appropriated in this section for targeted outreach activities that focus on critically identified geographic locations for listed salmon species or for appropriate technical training activities for grantees to implement adaptive management. The commission may use up to four percent of amounts appropriated in this section for administrative expenses.

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Capital Project Request**

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:52AM

Project Number: 40000049

Project Title: 2025-2027 Voluntary Riparian Grant Program

Description

Grant Recipient Organization: Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: 89.08

Application process used

Competitive application process

Growth Management impacts

Projects will support local GMA requirements to protect critical areas.

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps
26C-1	Climate Commit Accou-State	125,000,000				25,000,000
	Total	125,000,000	0	0	0	25,000,000

Acct Code	Account Title	Future Fiscal Periods			
		2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35
26C-1	Climate Commit Accou-State	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000
	Total	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,000,000

Operating Impacts

Total one time start up and ongoing operating costs

Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000049	40000049
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

Voluntary Riparian Grant Program

Connections to Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda

The connections noted below are limited to the 12 conservation districts within the Puget Sound region who could access the SCC's Riparian Grant Program. Currently, \$4,310,743 has been allocated to those districts for work this biennium. An anticipated 35-40% of the requested \$25 million could be awarded in the 25-27 biennium to Puget Sound CDs.

2022-2026 Action Agenda Alignment

○ Strategy 2: Working Lands

- Action: Reduce pressure for land conversion by supporting the long-term viability and sustainability of agricultural lands, including large and small parcel, hobby and working farms, and working forests through resilience and integrated management planning, improved incentives, and improved land use regulations.
 - Key Opportunity: Expand incentives and technical assistance for agricultural lands and owners of working forests
 - Key Opportunity: Streamline and increase funds disbursement to support Best Management Practices (BMPs)

- Action: Support the expansion of market mechanisms to increase long-term viability and reduce conversion pressure for working lands. (ID #194)
 - Key Opportunity: Expand transfer of development rights and easements

Also included in implementation considerations for this strategy to integrate human wellbeing:

- Develop engagement strategies that educate and provide technical and financial assistance to support working lands and local food production.
- Promote working lands BMPs that also sequester carbon and increase resilience.

Ongoing Programs Contributing to:

- Farmland Preservation (WSCC)
- Riparian Grant Program (WSCC)

Contributes towards the Land Development and Cover Implementation Strategy

- Support long-term viability of agricultural lands and working forests

○ Strategy 4: Riparian Areas

- Key Opportunity: Fund and implement technical assistance and outreach programs with riparian landowners to assist in the implementation of BMPs that will protect, restore, and enhance riparian habitat;

○ Strategy 12: Working Lands Runoff

- Action: Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices to reduce pollutants and the volume of runoff from agricultural lands and working forests. (ID #5)
 - Key Opportunity: Ensure adequate funding and support for voluntary incentive-based programs.
- Action: Implement agricultural management practices proven to reduce nutrient loads. (ID #6)
 - Key Opportunity: Identify opportunities and priorities for technical assistance, implementing BMPs, and funding.
- Action: Expand and improve incentives and education for agricultural land users to motivate voluntary actions for reducing fecal pollution. (ID #7)
 - Key Opportunities
 - Adequately fund the work of voluntary and incentive-based programs;
 - Develop targeted outreach and engagement approaches to encourage land users to implement BMPs;

- Support the implementation and monitoring of BMPs.
- Action: Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices, including increasing riparian restoration, to reduce stream temperatures. (ID #196)
 - Key Opportunities
 - Increase shade and amount of vegetation;
 - Remove invasive species;

Ongoing Programs Contributing to:

- Puget Sound Conservation Districts (WSSC)

Connections to Governor’s Salmon Strategy - Recommended Actions

The following are connections with the Governor’s Salmon Strategy:

- 1. Protect and restore vital salmon habitat. *This is the intent of the Riparian Grant Program (RGP).*
- 2. Invest in clean water infrastructure for salmon and people.
 - Implement nonpoint source “best management practices,” and nonpoint action plans. *The Riparian Grant Program requires exclusion of livestock from riparian areas for program participants.*
- 3. Correct fish passage barriers and restore salmon access to historical habitat. *Fish passage barrier correction is eligible for the RGP as long as combined with riparian area restoration and protection.*
- 7. Enhance commitments and coordination across agencies and programs.
 - Expand the collaborative, engagement processes with public and private sectors and interest groups that impact and influence salmon recovery (e.g., Columbia Basin Partnership, Yakima Basin Integrated Plan; Flooding, Farms and Fish; business and tech companies, etc.).
 - Expand collaborative engagement with local and state governments to coordinate salmon recovery actions, improve partnerships and enhance operational capacity to implement recovery programs.
 - *The RGP is driven by existing collaborations as well as cultivating more inclusive local collaborations with greater emphasis on Tribal engagement.*
- 8. Strengthen science, monitoring, and accountability. *The RGP requires monitoring of project sites, as long as funding is available to support these activities.*

Connections to Orca Task Force Recommendations

Riparian Grant Program connections to actions recommended by the Orca Task Force include:

- 5. Develop incentives to encourage voluntary actions to protect habitat.
- 40. Better align existing nonpoint programs with nutrient reduction activities and explore new ways to achieve the necessary nonpoint source nutrient reductions.

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2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:56AM

Project Number: 40000044

Project Title: 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 3

Project Summary

This decision package requests \$4,000,000 to continue the critical work of Farmland Protection and Land Access (FPLA) in protecting high-quality farmland and facilitating land access to underrepresented farmers and ranchers. Created through a '22 Supplemental Capital Budget proviso with continued support in the '23-'25 Capital budget, FPLA has successfully protected two priority farm properties and has another four properties under contract. Broadly related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy.

Project Description

What is the problem/opportunity? Identify: priority, underserved people/communities. Operating budget savings, public safety improvements & clarifying details. Preservation projects: include information about current condition of the facility/system.

Washington is outpacing the rest of the nation in farmland loss. We lost more ground in the last five years (824,443 acres; 5.6% of the total farmland) than we did in the previous fifteen (640,000 acres). We also saw a decline in farm businesses of 3,717 farms or 10.4% of the 2017 total. The trends are going in the wrong direction.

Farm and ranch land is the foundation of agriculture supporting a strong agricultural sector contributing over \$12.7 billion in the market value of crops and livestock and over \$20 billion in food processing revenue to the state's economy. To maintain this economic activity and regional food systems, we must preserve our productive agricultural land. However, Washington does not have the necessary resources to prevent the conversion of high-quality farmland to residential, industrial, or commercial development.

The primary drivers of farmland losing Washington include: high cost of farmland, lack of identified farm successor, urban growth area expansion, low-density residential sprawl, farm profitability, and conversion to industrial or non-farm commercial uses.

Washington's farmers are aging with the average age of Washington farmers at 59 years old. There are more than eight times as many producers over 65 than under 35 years old (USDA Agricultural Census, 2024). More than 70% of retiring farmers in Washington have not named a successor, placing more potential land at risk (USDA CSREES, Farmland Transition Update). Washington's farmer age demographics signal that a significant portion of our state's agricultural land will change hands in the next two decades. Farms often face the highest risk of conversion during ownership transitions.

Young and beginning farmers, as well as multigenerational farmers cite secure access to farmland as their greatest barrier and the number one reason that farmers are leaving agriculture. (National Young Farmers Coalition, Land Policy, 2020). Agricultural producers in Washington are disproportionately White (94%) and male (56%) when compared to the populations a whole. Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) producers make up 6% of Washington agricultural producers. No racial group (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander) other than White constitutes more than 2% of agricultural producers in Washington (USDA Agricultural Census, 2022).

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:56AM

Project Number: 40000044

Project Title: 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access

Description

What will the request produce or construct (predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)? When will the project start/end? Identify if the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Provide detailed cost backup.

This request will permanently protect 4-8 high-priority farms and facilitate land access for underrepresented farmers and ranchers. FPLA provides land trusts with grants to purchase agricultural conservation easements. Agricultural conservation easements ensure quality farmland stays open and available for agriculture now and into the future. Through a voluntary transaction, permanent restrictions are placed on a property to prevent development incompatible with farming (e.g. turning the farm into a housing development or warehouse facility). By removing the speculative development value, an agricultural conservation easement increases affordability and promotes land access for farmers who otherwise would be priced out of farmland ownership.

How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

FPLA complements the Washington State Housing Finance Commission's (WSHFC) FarmPAI program, a low-interest revolving loan fund for the fee simple acquisition of high-quality farmland at imminent risk of development. The FarmPAI loan secures the property, the FPLA funds permanently protect it, and then the property is sold to the next generation farmer or rancher. This model is referred to as "Buy-Protect-Sell". To advance equity, reduce disparity, and improve outcomes for all Washingtonians, the programs prioritize historically underserved producers, young or beginning farmers, people of color, and veterans.

Used in conjunction with FarmPAI, the FPLA program will result in the permanent protection of high-quality farmland at imminent risk of development and facilitate transfer to the next generation farmer. Additionally, FPLA reduces rural sprawl and the number of residential exempt wells, supports fish and wildlife habitat, and helps sustain the future of agriculture in Washington.

If this proposal is not funded, the loss of high-quality agricultural land will continue at its current pace, keystone farms in agricultural communities will be lost to development, and inequitable access to farmland will continue.

What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered?

The existing federal, state, and local funding sources for agricultural conservation easements do not allow the ability to act quickly to secure high priority farmland through a Buy-Protect-Sell transaction. Alternative programs typically require 3-5 years to complete a project. This lengthy timeline acts as a barrier for program usage. Additionally, alternative programs all require a conservation entity to cobble together multiple funding sources to fully fund a transaction. Twenty-six counties lack a local funding source. Without local funding, the majority of Washington counties are severely constrained or outright excluded from participating in agricultural conservation easement funding programs, leaving producers without any options. This creates geographic disparity and unequal access to state programs.

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added, people or communities served, etc.

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:56AM

Project Number: 40000044

Project Title: 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access

Description

This budget request will positively impact agricultural communities, agricultural producers, and the Washington food system – which in turn benefits the economy and everyone who consumes Washington grown products. Access to high quality local food requires a critical mass of agricultural land. FPLA will bolster rural and peri-urban communities and economies by ensuring land can stay in production, on the tax rolls, and generating income.

Protecting agricultural land from conversion to more intensive uses benefits all of Washington. Farmland provides many ecosystem services enjoyed by all state residents including open space, scenic views, water storage and filtration, aquifer recharge, carbon sequestration, and fish and wildlife habitat.

The program prioritizes historically underserved producers, young or beginning farmers, people of color, and veterans. These groups represent the fastest growing segment of new farmers in Washington, but they are largely priced out of today's real estate market. These groups experience historic and existing barriers in accessing capital and inland ownership. The program is available statewide.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state (or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

This program leverages investments made through the Washington State Housing Finance Commission's FarmPAI program (non-state, non-federal money). Projects typically see a 2:1 investment (non-state versus state).

Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

FPLA advances the "Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support" priority area of the SCC's strategic plan. The program directly advances all priority area goals:

The SCC is a trusted and knowledgeable partner in advancing working lands protection and agricultural viability across Washington

Working lands are available for future generations

Maintain water supply for agriculture

Economically viable farms, farmland, and strong local and regional food systems

If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail. See Chapter 14 Puget Sound Recovery) in the 2025-27 Operating Budget Instructions (links

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2025-27 Biennium

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Project Number: 40000044

Project Title: 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access

Description

below) or reach out and I can help.

This request directly supports Strategy 2, Working Lands of the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Action Agenda. FPLA advances both actions under this strategy: "Support the long-term viability and sustainability of agricultural lands and working forests to reduce pressure from conversion from the current use to a more developed use. (ID #4)" and "Support the expansion of market mechanisms to increase long-term viability and reduce conversion pressure for working lands. (ID #194)." FPLA directly aligns with the following "key opportunities":

- Expand incentives and technical assistance for agricultural lands and owners of working forests
- Expand transfer of development rights and easements

FPLA will positively impact the following indicators of success: farmland conversion and farmland easements. FPLA is part of SCC's "Farmland Preservation" program that is included in the Ongoing Programs under this strategy of the Action Agenda.

- o [Chapter 14: Puget Sound Recovery & Salmon Strategy Requirements\(wa.gov\)](#)
- o [Puget Sound Partnership 2022-2026 Action Agenda \(wa.gov\)](#)

In the "Project Description", in addition to answering the identified CBS questions, include an explanation of how the budget request relates to a salmon strategy action, is urgent in the coming biennium to advance salmon recovery, is aligned with a federally approved salmon recovery plan, and/or advances a known tribal priority.

This request relates to the "Build Climate Resiliency" strategy priority of the Governor's Salmon Strategy. Removing the development potential from agricultural land ensures the land stays open and available for agriculture and for habitat restoration. Protecting agricultural soils supports opportunities for increasing carbon sequestration and avoids future emissions related to sprawl development. Permanently protecting farmland avoids the conversion of land to developed uses with higher GHG emissions. Studies from American Farmland Trust in New York and California show on average urban areas emit 58 to 66 times more GHG per acre than agricultural land. When considering conversion of farmland to residential development, avoided emissions generally result from reduced electricity consumption, reduced driving, and avoided soil carbon loss. Permanently protecting farmland allows for continued conservation practices benefits and the potential for the land to serve as a carbon sink.

How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

Permanently protecting farmland avoids the conversion of land to developed uses with higher GHG emissions. Studies from American Farmland Trust in New York and California show on average urban areas emit 58 to 66 times more GHG per acre than agricultural land. When considering conversion of farmland to residential development, avoided emissions generally result from reduced electricity consumption, reduced driving, and avoided soil carbon loss. Permanently protecting farmland allows for continued conservation practices benefits and the potential for the land to serve as a carbon sink.

How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

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Project Number: 40000044

Project Title: 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access

Description

The program prioritizes historically underserved producers, young or beginning farmers, people of color, and veterans. These groups represent the fastest growing segment of new farmers in Washington, but they are largely priced out of today's real estate market. These groups experience historic and existing barriers in accessing capital and in landownership. FPLA expands opportunity and access for farmers to acquire land by making farmland more affordable. The program is available statewide.

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

This request directly aligns with recommendations from the state's Food Policy Forum. The Food Policy Forum's Early Implementation Action Report includes a consensus recommendation to "implement a cooperative program between Washington State Conservation Commission and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission to provide low-interest loan capital for practitioners to buy agricultural ground at high risk of conversion." The report further states: "In periods of economic uncertainty such as caused by COVID-19, agricultural land with significant development potential is more likely to be placed on the open market on short notice. By providing non-profits or other entities the loan funds to secure these important properties, this land can ultimately be protected with a conservation easement before being sold to low-income or new and beginning farmers through alternative financing models. The framework and transactional details of such a revolving loan program have been developed by key stakeholders and are ready for rapid implementation with additional agency collaboration." (Early Implementation Action Report, August 5, 2020, pg. 25)

The Food Policy Forum also recommends providing "\$100million in funding to existing WSCC programs for the purchase of conservation easements or development rights to secure multi-benefit agricultural lands owned by producers most impacted by COVID-19. These tools not only provide direct cash support for producers in need but also reduce land costs for the next generation of farmers while protecting the conservation values of the property in perpetuity. The SCC's Office of Farmland Preservation has developed the flexible administrative structure, technical expertise, and relationships with conservation practitioners necessary to get significant funding on the ground quickly to support farmers in dire need." (Early Implementation Action Report, August 5, 2020, pg. 25)

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Application process used

FPLA uses a rolling application cycle to be responsive to the fast-paced real estate market. A Working Group made up of representatives of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State University Extension, and American Farmland Trust, and the Office of Farmland Preservation review project applications and make recommendations for funding to the SCC Commission. The SCC's Commissioner's make funding determinations via formal resolution.

Growth Management impacts

This request provides additional financial resources to permanently protect high quality agricultural land and bolster local agricultural communities in alignment the Growth Management Act, Comprehensive Plans and regional planning requirements.

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps

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Capital Project Request**

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 8:56AM

Project Number: 40000044

Project Title: 2025-2027 Farmland Protection and Land Access

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps
514	Ag Conserve Easement-Unknown	77,800,000				4,000,000
	Total	77,800,000	0	0	0	4,000,000

		Future Fiscal Periods			
		2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35
514	Ag Conserve Easement-Unknown	53,000,000	6,000,000	6,900,000	7,900,000
	Total	53,000,000	6,000,000	6,900,000	7,900,000

Operating Impacts

No Operating Impact

Narrative

This program is currently supported by the Office of Farmland Preservation housed at the Conservation Commission.

Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000044	40000044
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

July 1, 2024

Re: Support for the Farmland Protection and Land Access Program from Washington's land trusts

To Director Thomas, Chair Cochran, and the Washington State Conservation Commission,

Land trusts play an essential role in the permanent preservation of farmland, complementing the work of Washington's conservation districts. We remain excited for the Farmland Protection and Land Access (FPLA) program and are eager to support another \$4 million funding request in the next biennial budget. We urge you to include funding at this level or above as part of your request to the legislature for the 2025-2027 budget.

FPLA has provided a unique tool that, in tandem with the FarmPAI revolving loan program at the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, supports land trusts in protecting farmland at imminent risk of development. The buy-protect-sell strategy complements the suite of tools land trusts have traditionally used, creating a pathway to transition farmland from a retiring generation of farmers to the next generation. With several FPLA projects completed or underway, land trusts are gaining an understanding of just how powerful this opportunity is for supporting our goals to protect working lands and the future of agriculture.

Ongoing funding for FPLA is critical to build on the success and momentum that has been generated over the past three years. Thank you for your ongoing support, and for your service in conserving Washington's natural and working lands.

Sincerely,

Washington Association of Land Trusts
American Farmland Trust
Bainbridge Island Land Trust
Blue Mountain Land Trust
Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
Columbia Land Trust
Dishman Hills Conservancy
Emerald Alliance
Great Peninsula Conservancy
Jefferson Land Trust
Methow Conservancy
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
North Olympic Land Trust
Palouse Land Trust
San Juan Preservation Trust
The Nature Conservancy
Washington Farmland Trust

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 Capital Project Request

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/25/2024 11:27AM

Project Number: 40000045

Project Title: 2025-2027 Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 4

Project Summary

The Water Irrigation Efficiencies Program (IEP) is a statewide effort to improve how water is delivered and applied on agricultural lands. Projects funded through this program save water by increasing the efficiency by which it is conveyed to the farm and applied to the field. These projects reduce water demand from the supply source while maintaining the delivered amount consistent with crop water demand. Projects free up water for other uses and users creating an increase in resiliency to a changing climate and development pressure across the agricultural landscape. In its 23 years of implementation, the Irrigation Efficiencies Program has demonstrated measurable water resource improvement in over-allocated basins across the state. Directly related to implementing the Governor’s Salmon Strategy. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Related to implementing Washington’s Climate Resilience Strategy.

Project Description

What is the problem/opportunity? Identify: priority, underserved people/communities. Operating budget savings, public safety improvements & clarifying details. Preservation projects: include information about current condition of the facility/system.

- The problem driving this request is a significant one: finding sufficient water supplies to meet the needs of people, farms, and fish. Irrigation for farm/food production uses significant amounts of water, especially in the arid regions of the state, and this use impacts water needs for fish and other users. This request addresses that problem by working with producers to improve the efficiency of the delivery and application of water. This program has saved an annual quantity of 26,620 acre feet of water since the initial appropriation in the 2001 legislative session.

What will the request produce or construct(predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)? When will the project start/end? Identify if the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Provide detailed cost backup.

- This request will fund water resource conservation projects that improve water use efficiency and water use demand reduction. This request will prioritize pass-through technical and financial assistance funding to conservation districts in regions where water supply is limited and conflict between instream and out of stream users is high.

This request will fund approximately 43 projects treating an estimated 6405 acres using water savings best management practice standards.

• How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

- This funding package will provide financial assistance for modern, efficient, irrigation infrastructure that is engineered, installed, and managed, to save water. Conservation district staff will work with local irrigators and water purveyors to design, develop, and implement water savings projects. Modern irrigation equipment and delivery systems are more efficient than historically used systems. The new systems deliver enough water to meet crop water demand with measurably less water than historic systems saving water that will be left instream, or in aquifer for other users and uses.

- If no action is taken, no efficiency improvements will be funded and no water will be saved for other users or uses.

• What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered

- Over time, other options have been explored. "Other solutions, such as water acquisition, development

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/25/2024 11:27AM

Project Number: 40000045

Project Title: 2025-2027 Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies

Description

mitigation, and increased water rights enforcement, potentially take agricultural lands out of crop/food production." (**"Of Water and Trust: A Review of the Washington Water Acquisition Program"** -2004, Ruckelshaus Center for Conservation Policy. According to this report, the Irrigation Efficiencies Grants Program, ". . . improves property values and provides great options for land and crop use."

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added? How many people or communities served, etc.

○ Agricultural water users and purveyors are the primary clientele for this request. These water users produce food and crops across the state for local consumption and export. This request would not only serve the project recipients, but also indirectly impact other water users, like downstream communities, recreation, fish populations, and other domestic and industrial uses.

• Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state (or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

○ This request has a potential to leverage \$4,461,558 in non-state funding. Some sources of match may include cost share from project recipients, private or non-profit contributions, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) or Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), and the US Bureau of Reclamation's Water SMART grant program.

• Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

This project supports SCC's strategic priorities in several key areas:

1. Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources:

- Fish and Wildlife Habitat: Enhance fish and wildlife habitat through increased voluntary actions and collaborative efforts. Demonstrate the effectiveness of these actions in meeting habitat benchmarks.
- Water Quality and Availability: Boost voluntary actions to improve water quality and availability. Strengthen collaborative efforts to address state priorities and demonstrate the impact of these actions.

2. Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support:

- Working Lands Protection: Increase SCC and conservation districts' engagement in policy and planning to protect agricultural and forest lands and secure them for future generations through conservation easements.
- Water Supply for Agriculture: Support conflict resolution in water-short areas and facilitate water banking to secure agricultural water resources.
- Farm and Food System Support: Provide resources for small farms, urban agriculture, and rural landowners to ensure economic viability and strong local food systems.

3. Climate Resiliency:

- Adaptive Management: Enhance conservation district capacity to help land stewards adapt to climate change.
- Climate-Smart Practices: Increase understanding of climate-smart practices and their co-benefits, and improve coordination among partners.
- Resilience to Climate Impacts: Strengthen drought, wildfire, and flood resilience in natural and working landscape.

5. Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration:

- Collaborative Solutions: Foster holistic, multi-benefit solutions through locally-led collaborative processes.

Does this project include IT related costs, including hardware, software, cloud based services, contracts or staff? If

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Version: 25 2025-2027 Capital Budget Request

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/25/2024 11:27AM

Project Number: 40000045

Project Title: 2025-2027 Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies

Description

yes, attach [IT Addendum](#). No.

- **If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda.**

○ If conservation districts in Washington State were to provide financial assistance for the installation of efficient irrigation systems, this project significantly aligns with and supports several key elements of the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, Science Work Plan actions, and the Puget Sound Vital Signs.

1. Action Agenda Strategies and Actions

Improving Water Quality: Efficient irrigation systems reduce runoff and pollutant loads, directly supporting the Action Agenda's strategies to enhance water quality in Puget Sound. This aligns with actions aimed at minimizing agricultural pollution and improving overall water conditions.

Ecosystem Restoration and Protection: By reducing water use and preventing soil erosion, efficient irrigation helps maintain healthy riparian zones and stream flows. This supports strategies focused on protecting and restoring aquatic habitats, critical for the survival of fish and other wildlife.

Sustainable Land Use and Conservation Practices: Financial assistance for efficient irrigation promotes sustainable agricultural practices. This aligns with the Action Agenda's goals to foster resource conservation and land stewardship.

2. Science Work Plan Actions

Supporting Ecosystem Health: Efficient irrigation contributes to maintaining natural flow regimes and protecting riparian areas, which are central to the Science Work Plan's actions aimed at preserving ecosystem health and resilience.

Climate Adaptation: By helping farms adapt to climate change through better water management, efficient irrigation systems support the Science Work Plan's focus on enhancing climate resilience.

3. Puget Sound Vital Signs

Water Quality Vital Sign: Efficient irrigation improves water quality by reducing runoff and pollution, directly contributing to the goal of achieving and maintaining high-quality water.

Chinook Salmon Vital Sign: By supporting healthier stream flows and riparian zones, efficient irrigation benefits fish habitats, which is crucial for the recovery of Chinook salmon and other species.

Flood plains Vital Sign: Efficient irrigation reduces soil erosion and improves land use practices, supporting the restoration and conservation of floodplains.

In summary, financial assistance for efficient irrigation systems from conservation districts would be a strategic move that aligns with the Puget Sound Partnership's goals and targets, contributing to improved water quality, ecosystem health, and sustainable land management while supporting critical Vital Signs.

Budget distribution for Puget sound work:

Six of nineteen participating conservation districts work in the Puget Sound area. Based on proposed project

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Project Number: 40000045

Project Title: 2025-2027 Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies

Description

scope and size, approximately 10 percent of the requested funding would serve project work in the Puget Sound region, just under \$3million for technical and financial assistance. All other Puget Sound districts with emerging or developing projects are eligible for funding under this proposal.

○ The Washington State Conservation Commission's Irrigation Efficiencies Grants Program also aligns with the goals and strategies of the 2021 Governor's Salmon Strategy Update by addressing key issues related to water use, habitat protection, and ecosystem health.

1. Improving Water Efficiency:

The program supports projects that enhance irrigation efficiency. By modernizing irrigation systems and reducing water waste, it helps conserve water resources. Efficient water use is crucial for maintaining adequate streamflow's, which are essential for salmon habitats.

2. Protecting and Restoring Salmon Habitat:

Improved irrigation practices can lead to better water management and reduced impacts on natural waterbodies. This is beneficial for salmon habitats, which often suffer from reduced water quality and quantity due to inefficient irrigation practices.

3. Supporting Agricultural Sustainability:

The program aids farmers in adopting more sustainable irrigation methods. This supports the agricultural sector in making environmentally friendly choices while also ensuring that agricultural activities do not negatively impact salmon habitats.

4. Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change:

By promoting efficient water use, the program helps build resilience against the impacts of climate change, such as altered precipitation patterns and increased water scarcity. This resilience is vital for sustaining salmon populations in changing environmental conditions.

5. Fostering Collaboration and Partnerships:

The program encourages collaboration between farmers, conservation groups, and government agencies. This cooperative approach aligns with the strategy's emphasis on collective efforts to address salmon conservation challenges.

Overall, the Irrigation Efficiencies Grants Program contributes to the broader objectives of the Governor's Salmon Strategy Update by ensuring that water management practices support both agricultural needs and the health of salmon ecosystems.

• How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

○ Efficient water use in agriculture plays a crucial role in meeting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions limits and supporting statewide goals in Washington. By employing advanced irrigation technologies such as drip or sprinkler systems, producers reduce the need for energy-intensive water pumping and transport, thereby lowering GHG emissions. Additionally, optimal water management improves soil health and carbon sequestration, enhancing the s

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Description

ability to store carbon dioxide and further reducing atmospheric GHG concentrations. Efficient irrigation also minimizes the risk of nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizers, a potent greenhouse gas. This efficiency extends to supporting Clean Buildings performance standards by aligning agricultural water use with broader energy efficiency goals. Moreover, efficient water use contributes to resource conservation by reducing the energy and emissions associated with water extraction and distribution, aligning with statewide sustainability objectives. By increasing resilience to droughts and other climate impacts, water-efficient practices support broader climate adaptation goals and reduce the need for high-emission emergency interventions. Integration with other sustainable practices, such as crop rotation and reduced tillage, further aids in meeting carbon reduction targets and enhancing overall efficiency. Thus, efficient water use in agriculture supports GHG emission limits and statewide sustainability goals through reduced energy consumption, enhanced carbon storage, lower nitrous oxide emissions, and alignment with broader efficiency and conservation standards.

- **How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?**

- On-farm water use efficiency offers substantial benefits for downstream communities by improving water availability, quality, and resource management, while also fostering economic and social equity. Efficient water use on farms alleviates pressure on shared water resources, resulting in a more reliable supply for downstream needs such as drinking and sanitation. It also helps reduce conflicts over water rights, ensuring fairer access. Improved irrigation practices, like drip systems, cut down on runoff and pollution, enhancing water quality for communities dependent on these sources. Additionally, better soil management reduces erosion and sedimentation, further protecting water quality.

Sustainable water management on farms supports long-term resource availability, benefiting downstream areas by stabilizing water supplies and contributing to regional water conservation efforts. This stability also promotes economic and social equity; reduced water and food costs from improved efficiency make resources more accessible, especially for low-income populations. Thriving farming communities can boost regional economies, benefiting neighboring areas through economic spillover.

Moreover, efficient water use aids climate resilience by mitigating the risk of severe water shortages, thereby enhancing adaptive capacity across regions. Addressing disparities in technology access ensures that marginalized and underserved farmers can also benefit from these practices, promoting equitable resource management and further supporting downstream communities. To address access, the SCC uses its Community Engagement Plan and program guidelines to reach new or underserved communities.

- **Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?**

- Increasing water use efficiency (WUE) provides significant advantages for climate resilience. By allowing crops to grow with less water, efficient water use becomes crucial during droughts or irregular rainfall, thereby enhancing agricultural systems' vulnerability to fluctuations in water availability. Additionally, improved irrigation practices contribute to better soil moisture control, fostering healthier soils that can resist erosion and retain moisture longer, helping them withstand extreme weather conditions. Techniques such as precision irrigation and soil moisture monitoring, which enhance WUE, align with broader sustainable agriculture goals, mitigating climate change impacts and reinforcing resilience. Furthermore, increased WUE often leads to higher crop yields per unit of water used, bolstering food security in the face of climate-related agricultural stresses.

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Project Title: 2025-2027 Water Resource Conservation Irrigation Efficiencies

Description

The State's draft Climate Resilience Strategy identifies this request as a recommended action.

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Grant Recipient Organization: Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: 89.08

Application process used

Conservation districts work with agricultural producers and water purveyors to identify project proposals for funding consideration. Commission staff review project proposals internally for eligibility for funding based on published guidelines. Conservation districts receiving funding manage cost share agreements with recipients to ensure successful project implementation. All irrigation efficiency projects require conservation district and Commission staff to help the recipient determine project eligibility, public benefit identification, design approval, and net water savings.

Growth Management impacts

Projects will support local GMA requirements to protect critical areas.

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	80,000,000				30,000,000
	Total	80,000,000	0	0	0	30,000,000
Future Fiscal Periods						
		2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35	
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	20,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	
	Total	20,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	

Operating Impacts

Total one time start up and ongoing operating costs

Acct Code	Account Title	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
FTE	Full Time Employee	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	325,000	325,000	325,000	325,000	325,000
	Total	325,000	325,000	325,000	325,000	325,000

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Operating Impacts

Narrative

These 2.5 FTE's and the operating funding associated with this would support the 2.5 FTE staff that are currently managing this program.

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<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000045	40000045
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:09AM

Project Number: 40000047

Project Title: 2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 5

Project Summary

Agricultural activities, septic systems, non-point runoff, and other activities can negatively affect water quality draining into Shellfish Growing Areas (SGA). These activities may contribute to shellfish harvest closures. While our state is the leading producer of farmed shellfish in the nation with commercial product shipped around the world, it is sensitive and limited by water quality. Based on Washington State Department of Agriculture data, the shellfish industry directly and indirectly supports around 2,700 jobs in WA, and generates \$184 million in revenue annually. The health of this industry, along with the wild shellfish harvest valued at over \$40 million annually, and treaty protected tribal use can be threatened each year by closures. In addition, poor water quality can exacerbate localized ocean acidification problems. Since 2013, the Conservation Commission has worked with conservation districts and participants to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) that protect SGAs by improving the quality of water draining into these areas. With a focused approach, these efforts help to keep these SGAs open and productive, thereby saving jobs and local economies while helping to honor treaty rights. Broadly related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy.

Project Description

What is the problem/opportunity?

In watersheds that drain into SGAs, upland human activities contribute to poor water quality conditions including fecal coliform and other pollutants that cause shellfish areas to close and prevent closed areas from reopening. Some of these activities include agricultural practices which, when improperly managed, can contribute bacterial and nutrient runoff into nearby streams and rivers, and improperly maintained septic systems, which can leak sewage into waterways. The BMPs that are implemented are designed to improve water quality while also improving agricultural operations. By offering cost share to participants, the state realizes water quality goals, while also providing much needed assistance to homeowners and land managers that may not have the means to implement water quality improvement projects. Grant funding is frequently provided to small-scale agricultural producers who cannot afford to implement the necessary BMPs to stay in compliance with water quality regulations.

What will the request produce or construct (predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)? When will the project start/end? Identify if the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Provide detailed cost backup.

The SCC Shellfish Program constructs and implements a wide array of practices intended to improve water quality in waters that flow into commercial SGAs. During the previous biennium, over 175 individual BMPs on both residential and agricultural operations were implemented. Projects are designed and implemented over the duration of the biennium. Projects can be phased across fiscal years due to design and implementation timelines and budget constraints.

How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

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Project Title: 2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas

Description

This funding allows conservation districts to work with participants – particularly those on agricultural land – to implement an estimated 150-200 practices that help keep our shellfish growing areas healthy. Funding will be administered through the SCC Shellfish Grant Program, which invests funding in high-priority watersheds draining into SGAs and build cumulative results for improved water quality.

CD staff provide site-specific plans and expertise to help participants be better environmental stewards and farm more sustainably. The SCC Shellfish Grant Program allows CDs to provide cost-share for participants to build and install conservation projects. Participants demonstrate their commitment to the projects by investing in their share of the cost, resulting in a partnership with a common goal of protecting and improving natural resources. Often, this support is all participants need to overcome the technical and financial hurdles to address these environmental issues. It also helps participants stay in compliance and avoid enforcement penalties, which are costly to both the participants and the responsible regulatory agency. Because CDs are so successful in building trust with local communities, regulatory agencies often refer participants to their conservation district for assistance before pursuing enforcement proceedings.

In this proposal, CDs will continue their efforts to implement on-the-ground projects with participants within watersheds that drain into SGAs. Projects will be identified in conjunction with other projects in a focused geographic area, such as a sub-basin in the watershed. The projects will be connected with local shellfish improvement efforts, such as a shellfish protection district. With the funding in this proposal, we can expect the increased number of on-the-ground projects implemented by CDs and participants to address inputs that that can be detrimental to water quality.

What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered

There are few focused programs like the Shellfish program that work to address water quality with few alternatives. If this program is not funded, it jeopardizes the Governor's priority objective of re-opening currently closed shellfish harvest areas in Puget Sound. It also will set back the goals of the Puget Sound Action Agenda, where re-opening shellfish growing areas is one of the strategic initiatives. In addition, without funding this proposal will mean negative inputs stemming from agricultural runoff to shellfish growing areas that would go unaddressed and increase the likelihood of continued closures of harvest areas which will negatively impact this important economic activity in the state. Moreover, without funding, it could put the state at increased risk of a legal challenge by Washington's treaty tribes who depend upon shellfish harvest for commercial and subsistence purposes. The state has an obligation to provide for available shellfish for tribal harvest to meet treaty obligations. Recent federal court decision indicate the state could be exposed to legal challenge if the state fails to address the negative habitat impacts that affect shellfish harvest.

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added,

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Description

people or communities served, etc.

At least 170 BMPs have been installed per biennium on average over the course of this program. While the primary clientele are agricultural producers, residential homeowners may also be served. The geographic location is limited to waters that drain to Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state (or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

At the beginning of the biennium, each conservation district establishes a cooperator cost share rate. Generally, it is no less than 25% cost share contribution of project cost by the voluntary participant. In addition, non-state funding is sometimes utilized to supplement project costs but varies depending on availability of funds.

Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

SCCs 2022-2027 long range strategic plan has a vision that our state shall have healthy soils, water, air, and ecosystems, and sustainable human interaction with these resources, including viable agriculture and forestry. The strategic priority area "Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources" includes a goal of protecting and improving water quality and protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat.

Does this project include IT related costs, including hardware, software, cloud based services, contracts or staff? If yes, attach IT Addendum.

No

If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda

The SCC Shellfish Program decision package also addresses several Strategies of the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Action Agenda Implementation Plan, including:

- Strategy 2: Working Lands -Support the long-term viability and sustainability of agricultural lands and working forests to reduce pressure for conversion from the current use to a more developed use. (ID #4)
- Strategy 4: Riparian Areas -Provide incentives, financial and technical support to local jurisdictions that have prioritized riparian restoration. (ID #201)
- Strategy 9 "Water Pollution Source Identification and Correction" (ID #10)
- Strategy 10 "Stormwater Runoff and Legacy Contamination" - Develop and implement education and outreach and behavior change campaigns and fund projects to reduce nutrient impacts from residential,

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Project Title: 2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas

Description

stormwater, and agricultural runoff. (ID #35)

- Strategy 12: Working Lands Runoff- Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices to reduce pollutants and the volume of runoff from agricultural lands and working forests. (ID #5) and Expand and improve incentives and education for agricultural land users to motivate voluntary actions for reducing fecal pollution. (ID #7)
- Strategy 24 “Cultural Practices and Local Food” – healthy watersheds contribute to this strategy
- Strategy 25: Economic Benefits -Support natural resource sector jobs and production opportunities. (ID #164)

Governor's Salmon Strategy -Action 1 Protect and restore vital salmon habitat.

The SCC Shellfish Program decision package also addresses and is in support of fully functioning riparian habitat by preventing water quality degradation from non-point and point source nutrients. In addition, this program is in support of improving habitat conditions on agricultural lands to support salmon recovery through voluntary cooperation with agricultural communities by implementing best management practices (BMPs) that protect water quality. This program serves a dual purpose of implementing practices that prevent contributions to the degradation of water quality for safe, harvestable shellfish including non-point source pollution such as fecal coliform while at the same time supporting water quality improvements for salmon habitat.

Washington Shellfish Initiative

The SCC Shellfish Program supports and is included in objectives in the Washington Shellfish Initiative.

Goal 1 - Ensure Clean Water to Protect and Restore Shellfish Growing Areas in Puget Sound and on the Coast.

Phase II - Ensure clean water to protect and restore growing areas in Puget Sound and on the coast:

- 1.1 - Support sustainable local nonpoint source pollution control programs and strategies. (DOH, ECY, WSCC, WSDA)
- 1.2 - Advance efforts to ensure manure land-application practices do not negatively impact water quality. (WSDA, WSCC, ECY, EPA)

It also supports an objective of Goal 2 - Embrace strategies to address ocean acidification's impact on shellfish:

- 2.2(a) - Understand how local, land-based contributions affect ocean acidification by: providing support to water quality programs that reduce nutrient and organic carbon loading.

How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

N/A

How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include

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Project Title: 2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas

Description

both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

All Washingtonians benefit from this proposal through improved water quality and specifically the reopening of shellfish growing areas. Commercial and recreational shellfish harvesters will benefit by increased opportunities for harvest, which also helps to keep Washington’s economy strong.

Grant funding is frequently provided to small-scale agricultural producers who cannot afford to implement the necessary BMPs to stay in compliance of water quality regulations Conservation districts benefit by having an additional source of funding with which to assist participants in reducing negative impacts to waters of the state.

Tribes in the Puget Sound region as well as in coastal estuarine bays will benefit from reduced pollution impacting their shellfish growing areas, allowing for increased opportunities for them to exercise their treaty rights for the harvest of shellfish. Some of the districts are partnering directly with tribes on shellfish projects. For example, the Whatcom Conservation District has been applying for funding through the Shellfish Grant program to support the Lummi Tribe’s efforts to expand its harvestable shellfish growing area, and the Clallam Conservation District recently partnered with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe on a riparian restoration project using Shellfish Grant funds to filter water flowing into the Dungeness SGA.

- Whatcom County
- Skagit County
- Snohomish County
- King County
- Pierce County
- Island County
- San Juan Island County
- Thurston County
- Kitsap County
- Jefferson County
- Clallam County
- Mason County
- Grays Harbor County
- Pacific County

This budget request is related to actions currently proposed in the draft Washington’s Climate Resilience Strategy which is being developed under RCW 70A.05 and will be finalized by Sept 30,2024.

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Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:09AM

Project Number: 40000047

Project Title: 2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas

Description

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Grant Recipient Organization: Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: 89.08

Application process used

SCC currently utilizes the Conservation Practices Data System whereby project sponsors enter information related to the project site, cost, and practice(s) to implement with measures. In addition, a series of shellfish related questions are included to be answered by all applicants. If funding is available, each month, a committee of SCC staff review projects ready for funding, confirm details with CD staff, review each proposal for eligible criteria and identify the potential non-point pollution concern and its likely pathway into a shellfish growing area, and how the BMP will mitigate that concern. Strong projects also support local collaborations with Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Programs, Pollution Control Action Teams (PCAT), Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), or result from a referral from the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Department of Ecology, county program, etc.

Growth Management impacts

Projects will support local GMA requirements to protect critical areas.

Funding

<u>Acct Code</u>	<u>Account Title</u>	<u>Estimated Total</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>		<u>2025-27 Fiscal Period</u>	
			<u>Prior Biennium</u>	<u>Current Biennium</u>	<u>Reappropriations</u>	<u>New Appropriations</u>
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	32,500,000				5,500,000
	Total	32,500,000	0	0	0	5,500,000

		<u>Future Fiscal Periods</u>			
		<u>2027-29</u>	<u>2029-31</u>	<u>2031-33</u>	<u>2033-35</u>
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,000,000	7,500,000
	Total	6,000,000	6,500,000	7,000,000	7,500,000

Operating Impacts

Total one time start up and ongoing operating costs

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<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000047	40000047
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

*PO Box 47824 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7824
(360) 236-3330 • 711 Washington Relay Service*

September 4, 2024

Jim Cahill, Senior Budget Assistant
Matthew Hunter, Budget Assistant
Office of Financial Management
P.O. Box 43113
Olympia, Washington 98504-3113

Dear Jim Cahill and Matthew Hunter:

The Washington State Department of Health, Office of Environmental Health & Safety, Shellfish Growing Area Section supports the State Conservation Commission Capital Project Request (2025-2027 Improve Shellfish Growing Areas). Partnership aimed at improving water quality benefits not only shellfish harvesters but Washington's water recreation users.

We manage over 370,000 acres of intertidal and subtidal marine areas for the commercial and recreational harvest of shellfish. Our program uses very stringent marine water quality standards and upland investigations to determine the risk for harvest. Harvesting may not be allowed in high-risk areas due to the potential impact to public health.

Historically, farms, septic systems, wastewater treatment plants, and other point and nonpoint sources have resulted in harvest area closures. Our Water Quality Restoration Program works with partners, including the State Conservation Commission, to implement projects that will eliminate impacts to harvest areas and maintain the current high standards in those areas not impacted.

Ongoing efforts by the State Conservation Commission and individual conservation districts are vital to the success of our restoration and maintenance efforts and the protection of public health for shellfish consumers. Grant funding to individual small farms allows the implementation of projects that protect the marine-related downstream shellfish farmers and recreational shellfish harvesters.

We support the State Conservation Commission's proposal and find it vital for the protection of shellfish harvesting and water quality in the state.

Sincerely,

Scott Berbells, R.S., Manager
Shellfish Growing Area Section
(360) 236-3324 Scott.Berbells@doh.wa.gov

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:14AM

Project Number: 40000043

Project Title: 2025-2027 Regional Conservation Partnership Program Match

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 6

Project Summary

This decision package (DP) will provide state matching funds to nine ongoing Regional Conservation Partnership Programs (RCPP) and up to eight new RCPPs that are pending award by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These funds are critical to filling gaps in the complex match budgets of each RCPP to leverage millions of dollars in federal funds. This proposal is for \$15,000,000 for the 2025-27 biennium to satisfy the minimum match funding need. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy.

Project Description

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant program originating with the 2014 federal Farm Bill. The RCPP grant program awards Farm Bill program funding to an identified project lead, such as a conservation district, to implement an approved project proposal. Project proposals often include many other partners committing to do work as well. The RCPP requires non-federal match funding be brought to the table and each RCPP grant that has been awarded in Washington to date has identified and cobbled together multiple sources of match funding in order to secure the grant awards from USDA which bring millions of dollars in federal funding into Washington to be put into conservation on the ground. State match funding through the Conservation Commission is only one source of match funding utilized to meet the requirements of the RCPP program. See attached *RCPP 1-Pager* document.

The RCPP requires coordination between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and state/local partners to deliver conservation technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and landowners. Special emphasis is placed on services to those who are historically under-served. Outreach to new and beginning farmers, veterans, tribal members, limited English proficiency populations, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged potential program participants is considered by the RCPPs based on what is appropriate for the local community needs and composition.

Potential projects and practices include but are not limited to upland and riparian habitat restoration, exclusion fencing to keep livestock out of streams; manure management systems; irrigation water efficiencies; conservation easement acquisition and due diligence; soil health protection and enhancement, and forest health improvements. These types of projects are vital in protecting and restoring natural resources, enhancing soil conservation in agricultural settings and contributing to clean air and water for the benefit of all Washingtonians. Additionally, RCPP projects help support local food producers and food systems through finding practical and innovative solutions to natural resource challenges that also help protect or improve a farm's bottom-line. This request would provide the remaining state matching fund required for nine ongoing and eight pending-approval RCPP projects across Washington for the 25-27 biennium.

Since program inception in 2014, the RCPP program encourages local entities to reach out to multiple partners and develop local, coordinated implementation approaches that will bring together multiple fund sources to address natural resource issues in a targeted fashion. The local entities could be a conservation district, a county, or a local non-profit organization such as a land trust. Potential partners include all of these local entities as well as state and federal agencies or Tribes.

The role of the State Conservation Commission (SCC) in this program is to assist in seeking and providing state matching funds for RCPPs where conservation districts are involved. The SCC works with local project sponsors who have been selected by NRCS as an RCPP project. This work with local sponsors includes the pass-through of state matching funds and tracking the use of the funds to ensure accountability of public funds. All entities involved in natural resource protection and restoration on agricultural lands face limited financial ability and staff capacity constraints. RCPP augments these limited financial and staff resources more efficiently by coordinating the work on the ground.

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:14AM

Project Number: 40000043

Project Title: 2025-2027 Regional Conservation Partnership Program Match

Description

assist landowners. The proposals will also be more effective with the limited funds by targeting combined dollars from multiple sources for a focused resource outcome. There are currently nine RCPP's that are requesting state match funding as part of their overall project budgets. These RCPPs cannot continue implementing conservation practices the ground without this funding. See attached WA RCPP Projects attachment for more information on the scope of each current RCPP.

How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

State matching funds for project costs are required for approved proposals. Without state match, funding the current RCPPs cannot continue and will likely lose their federal grant awards. Additionally, all matching funds must be secured for a proposal to be competitive in the RCPP selection process. This request would provide state match for nine ongoing RCPP projects and, if selected for award by NRCS, eight pending RCPP proposals. This proposal is for \$15,000,000 for the 2025-27 biennium to satisfy the minimum match funding need.

The RCPPs are each structured differently but services and/or materials to be provided includes but is not limited to: technical assistance such as conservation planning, practice implementation assistance, follow up natural resource condition monitoring and assistance; outreach and education to recruit new participants; acquisition of conservation easements; and financial assistance that can be tailored to any demographic or geography of landowners and/or agricultural producers as cost share for implementation of practices. This requested state match funding fills a different niche in the project budget of each RCPP to enable progress to continue based on what resources participating partners are able to bring to the table. This DP solves the problem of missing funding or a gap in the ability of each RCPP to fully implement their projects and bring federal dollars into Washington. This DP also works to solve natural resource issues on a varied and broad scale that are identified and prioritized locally but are also important to all citizens of Washington such as clean water, clean air, improved wildlife habitat, access to locally grown foods and fiber, and economic benefits through job creation as well.

What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen?

No other alternatives were explored at this time. RCPP is an excellent opportunity to greatly leverage federal funding and multiple other resources to achieve results on the landscape. It is the best option available at this time.

This proposal combines efficiencies of a coordinated and targeted project approach with extensive leveraging of other funding sources to implement conservation on the ground across the state. The RCPPs that are ongoing have tremendous implementation momentum with engaged partnerships, leveraging of funds, and willing participants lined up to install conservation practices. This is the best option because prior disjointed, uncoordinated approaches missed resource-leveraging opportunities and did not achieve the rate of conservation adoption and implementation that the RCPPs can. Additionally, this targeted and coordinated approach magnifies the local economic support with an infusion of funds to complete local work and supports our food and fiber producers by bringing together multiple varied resources and programs they may participate in.

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request?

There are three levels of potential positive impacts from this DP. The first level will be realized by RCPP project lead who will be able to continue the great work that has already begun to implement a wide variety of necessary conservation practices across landscapes. The second level of positive impacts will be felt by landowners and agricultural producers participating in these RCPPs who will be able to continue participation as well as new participants will be able to complete projects as well. The third level of positive impacts are public benefits realized by all Washingtonians through the environmental improvements brought about by implementation of RCPP projects, continued access to local foods as our farmers are supported in their work with RCPP projects, and economic support by the jobs created through implementation of conservation projects.

Each RCPP is implemented through a coordinated local partnership approach leveraging the strengths and resources of each participating partner to assist and serve landowners and agricultural producers to implement conservation

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practices or establish conservation easements. It is difficult to make a prediction as to how many clients may be served by each of the RCPPs because each has a different partnership structure and is focusing on addressing different, locally prioritized, natural resource concerns. Conservation districts are often the participating organization that is providing the 1:1 communication and technical assistance to landowners to help them access the opportunities that RCPP can offer. Hundreds of landowners have been assisted since the first RCPP was awarded in Washington 2015. To maintain momentum in responding to requests from landowners, this funding is necessary. Otherwise, it is clear that no clients may be served if this DP is not funded.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other fund source requires cost share, also include the minimum state(or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

See attached RCPP 1-pager for current match leveraging. While each RCPP's total budget is composed of different combinations of federal, state and local funds, this attachment combines the RCPP's into one overall funds leveraging figure.

Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

This proposal relates to the following SCC Strategic Plan areas:

Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources

Goal I. Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Goal II. Protect and improve water quality and availability.

Goal III. Protect and improve soil health.

Goal IV. Improve forest and rangeland health on private land.

Goal V. Strengthen awareness of natural resources' value and conservation opportunities

Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support

Goal II. Working lands are available for future generations.

Goal IV. Economically viable farms, farmland, and strong local and regional food systems.

Climate Resiliency

Goal II. Increase carbon sequestration

Goal V. Strengthen the ability of our natural and working landscapes and communities to prepare for and respond to drought, wildfire, flood, and other climate-related hazards

Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration

Goal III. Cultivate a broad and inclusive culture of conservation

Goal IV. Foster collaborative, holistic, multi-benefit solutions for natural resources and agriculture.

If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail.

See attached RCPP Connections attachment for details regarding contributions towards implementation of the Salmon Recovery and Action Agenda plans.

How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and improve efficiency?

While individual RCPP projects implemented may contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions it is not possible to guarantee that all projects within the RCPPs supported with this request are contributors.

How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

The RCPP requires coordination between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service(NRCS) and state/local partners to deliver conservation technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and landowners. Special

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emphasis is placed on services to those who are historically under-served. Outreach to new and beginning farmers, veterans, tribal members, limited English proficiency populations, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged potential program participants is considered by the RCPPs based on what is appropriate for the local community needs and composition. Positive impacts on equity are anticipated by reducing competition for technical and financial resources. The designated funds provided by, and then focused, by RCPP enhances opportunity for historically under-served and first-time program participants. The RCPPs included in this DP cover a majority of the state and each one is tailored to the natural resource and participant needs within each RCPP geography.

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

Not funding this request could result in the loss of over \$59,000,000 in federal funding awards to nine RCPPs as well as the loss of additional leveraged partner contributions. The tremendous momentum and natural resource improvements already realized by the ongoing RCPPs will be lost and will be extremely difficult to rebuild or regain even if financial matching resources are secured in the future. Also, landowners and agricultural producers currently participating or considering participation would no longer have the opportunity to receive technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices or establish conservation easements resulting in a great step back from achieving natural resource condition improvements and protection as well as the loss of this technical and financial operational support to numerous farm and ranch operations that are working hard to provide locally produced foods for Washingtonians, provide jobs, and support our overall economy.

RCPPs are five-year agreements, minimum, with USDA NRCS and many RCPPs are allowed a one-year extension an option for a 5-year renewal to continue implementation.

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Grant Recipient Organization: Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: 89.08

Application process used

USDA NRCS selects proposals based on published criteria, only if an RCPP proposal is approved for funding by NRCS are they able to access state matching funds from the SCC.

Growth Management impacts

None

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	55,000,000				15,000,000
	Total	55,000,000	0	0	0	15,000,000
			Future Fiscal Periods			
			2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35

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		Future Fiscal Periods			
		2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	<u>10,000,000</u>	<u>10,000,000</u>	<u>10,000,000</u>	<u>10,000,000</u>
	Total	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000

Operating Impacts

No Operating Impact

Capital Project Request

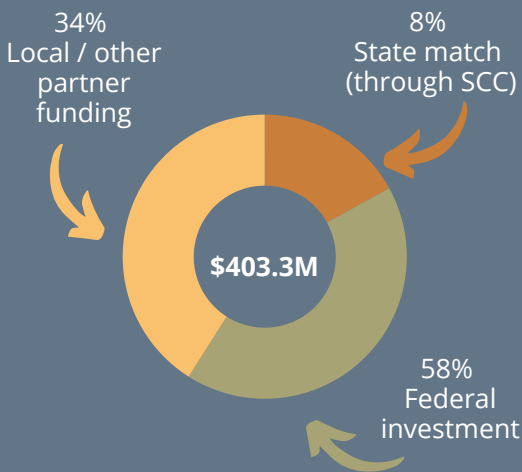
2025-27 Biennium

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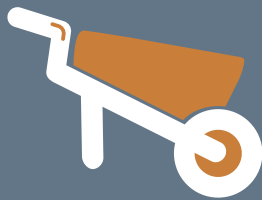
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Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000043	40000043
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

A magnet for leveraged funds



State match represents 8% of the five-year budgets for 17 RCPP projects. The remaining 92% (contingent on state match) is from other partner contributions.



Putting Washington to Work

For each RCPP, multiple projects are constructed. Over time, these projects will generate more than 1,000 jobs.

Funding requested: \$15 million

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program or RCPP is a Farm Bill program that awards federal funding to projects where multiple partners invest in cooperative action to solve natural resource issues in targeted areas. Grant awards require match, and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) has been designated to pass-through state capital matching funds for successful RCPP recipients.

Why this can't wait

- RCPP is an efficient way for federal, state, tribal and local partners to coordinate efforts and make landscape-scale improvements on urgent issues, including soil health, salmon and orca recovery, farmland preservation, drought resilience and forest health.
- Partners of nine RCPP projects in Washington have already committed millions of federal and local funding to support their work. But they need state match to secure those commitments and make their budgets whole.
- Many of these five-year projects have been in progress for years and landowners have signed contracts to work with partners on actions that meet their goals. Without a state match, the project contracts won't be met, jeopardizing trust.

What does RCPP look like on the ground?



Installing fish-friendly screens on irrigation intakes.



Upgrading irrigation systems to more efficient sprinkler systems.



Removing fish barriers and replacing them with bridges that allow fish access.

RCPP projects in Washington state

Testimonial



With assistance from Clark Conservation District, local farmer Colby Sarzycki has been able to install fencing, manure storage facilities, riparian plantings, and more on their babydoll sheep farm.

"We've wanted to do a restoration project on our land for a long time, but without the expertise and funding resources provided by the District, it would have likely taken over a decade to get this much accomplished. Plus, we're already seeing positive impacts from our efforts – there's more wildlife on our property already and our water resources will be better protected in the future."

- Colby Zarzycki, Clark County farmer.

A few current projects include:

Middle Columbia Steelhead Partnership



This proposal, led by the Yakama Nation, will restore vital watersheds and improve natural resources while honoring cultural heritage. Through habitat restoration, irrigation efficiency, and water quality improvements, it will enhance 22.5 miles of river channels—supporting local agriculture and protecting endangered species.

Palouse River Implementation Partnership



Palouse Conservation District is leading the way in improving water quality, protecting farmland, and enhancing wildlife habitats. The partnership supports sustainable farming practices, reduces the risk of flooding, protects the livelihoods of local farmers, and creates a healthier, more sustainable environment for the entire community.

Poop Smart Clark



Clark Conservation District is improving water quality in Clark County by identifying pollution sources, educating landowners, and implementing solutions. Poop Smart reduces harmful runoff in crucial areas and promotes social change by educating the community and providing tools and financial support for better land management practices.



LEARN MORE!

For more information on ongoing projects, scan the QR code to the left.

Contacts

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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Match

Connections to Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda

Each RCPP is a locally built partnership of federal, state, and local organizations and entities to target and focus all available resources towards addressing priority natural resource concerns in a defined geographic area. While this current funding request does not include match funding needed for an ongoing RCPP within the Puget Sound region, we cannot anticipate what new RCPPs will come forward within the region over the course of the 25-27 biennium. Two pending RCPP proposals have connections to the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda. The connections noted below are focused on these two RCPP's proposed work and accounts for approximately 58% of the total \$15 million request.

- Protecting Working Lands and Upland Habitat in the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Landscape RCPP will increase regional agricultural resilience and conserve prairie and oak woodlands' habitat supporting endangered species by implementing conservation easements.
- Western Washington Forestry Project for Climate Resilience and Habitat Improvement RCPP will implement forest health treatments and activities to increase climate resiliency, retain and create crucial wildlife habitat, and support and protect healthy water resources.

2022-2026 Action Agenda Alignment

- Strategy 2: Working Lands
 - Action: Reduce pressure for land conversion by supporting the long-term viability and sustainability of agricultural lands, including large and small parcel, hobby and working farms, and working forests through resilience and integrated management planning, improved incentives, and improved land use regulations.
 - Key Opportunity: Expand incentives and technical assistance for agricultural lands and owners of working forests
 - Key Opportunity: Streamline and increase funds disbursement to support Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Action: Support the expansion of market mechanisms to increase long-term viability and reduce conversion pressure for working lands. (ID #194)
 - Key Opportunity: Expand transfer of development rights and easements

Also included in implementation considerations for this strategy to integrate human wellbeing:

- Develop engagement strategies that educate and provide technical and financial assistance to support working lands and local food production.
- Promote working lands BMPs that also sequester carbon and increase resilience.

Ongoing Programs Contributing to:

- Farmland Preservation (WSCC)

Contributes towards the Land Development and Cover Implementation Strategy

- Support long-term viability of agricultural lands and working forests

- Strategy 4: Riparian Areas
 - Key Opportunity: Fund and implement technical assistance and outreach programs with riparian landowners to assist in the implementation of BMPs that will protect, restore, and enhance riparian habitat;
- Strategy 12: Working Lands Runoff

- Action: Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices to reduce pollutants and the volume of runoff from agricultural lands and working forests. (ID #5)
 - Key Opportunity: Ensure adequate funding and support for voluntary incentive-based programs.
- Action: Implement agricultural management practices proven to reduce nutrient loads. (ID #6)
 - Key Opportunity: Identify opportunities and priorities for technical assistance, implementing BMPs, and funding.
- Action: Expand and improve incentives and education for agricultural land users to motivate voluntary actions for reducing fecal pollution. (ID #7)
 - Key Opportunities
 - Adequately fund the work of voluntary and incentive-based programs;
 - Develop targeted outreach and engagement approaches to encourage land users to implement BMPs;
 - Support the implementation and monitoring of BMPs.
- Action: Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices, including increasing riparian restoration, to reduce stream temperatures. (ID #196)
 - Key Opportunities
 - Increase shade and amount of vegetation;
 - Remove invasive species;

Ongoing Programs Contributing to:

- Puget Sound Conservation Districts (WSSC)

[Connections to Governor’s Salmon Strategy - Recommended Actions](#) (statewide RCPPs)

Each RCPP is a locally built partnership of federal, state, and local organizations and entities to target and focus all available resources towards addressing priority natural resource concerns in a defined geographic area. It is anticipated that all currently ongoing RCPPs and pending applications contribute either directly or indirectly to salmon recovery through protecting and improving water quality, protecting and enhancing riparian and aquatic ecosystem functions, or protecting riparian and aquatic habitat through conservation easements. The following are connections with the Governor’s Salmon Strategy.

- 1. Protect and restore vital salmon habitat.
 - Each RCPP works with agricultural producers and working forestland owners to implement BMPs to reduce and prevent runoff (sediment, chemicals, and nutrients) to improve water quality as well as achieve greater irrigation efficiencies to protect and enhance water quality and in-stream flows for salmon and other threatened fish species. Protecting and restoring riparian buffers is also important work incorporated into RCPPs.
- 2. Invest in clean water infrastructure for salmon and people.
 - Each RCPP works to reduce nonpoint pollution from potential nutrient sources such as livestock.
 - Implement nonpoint source “best management practices,” and nonpoint action plans.
- 3. Correct fish passage barriers and restore salmon access to historical habitat.
 - Fish passage barrier corrections on private lands are commonly included as a component of the planned work under RCPPs.
- 7. Enhance commitments and coordination across agencies and programs.
 - The nature of RCPP is that it requires increased collaboration, coordination, and focusing of collective resources to put more conservation on the ground.
 - Expand the collaborative, engagement processes with public and private sectors and interest groups that impact and influence salmon recovery (e.g., Columbia Basin Partnership, Yakima Basin Integrated Plan; Flooding, Farms and Fish; business and tech companies, etc.).

- Expand collaborative engagement with local and state governments to coordinate salmon recovery actions, improve partnerships and enhance operational capacity to implement recovery programs.
- 8. Strengthen science, monitoring, and accountability.
 - RCPP's are required to include an environmental monitoring component of their scope of work. Palouse Conservation District's RCPP is an excellent example of how RCPP can be utilized to strengthen monitoring.

Connections to Orca Task Force Recommendations (statewide RCPPs)

All RCPPs work in a voluntary manner to implement BMPs with private landowners with varying natural resource concern focuses dependent on the geographic area such as protecting and restoring habitat for salmonids and upland wildlife and protecting and improving water quality from potential nonpoint sources of pollution. RCPP connections to actions recommended by the Orca Task Force include:

- 5. Develop incentives to encourage voluntary actions to protect habitat.
- 40. Better align existing nonpoint programs with nutrient reduction activities and explore new ways to achieve the necessary nonpoint source nutrient reductions

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Projects in Washington

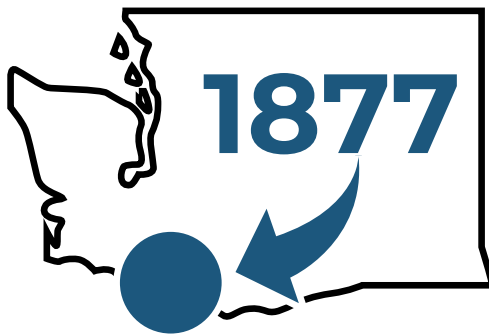


1877 Poop Smart Clark

Lead Partner: Clark Conservation District

Project end date: Feb. 9, 2026

Cradled in the bend of the Columbia River, Clark County is full of contradictions: tidy small farms, exploding development, scenic recreational areas - and



polluted waters. Clark CD has worked tirelessly to improve water quality and now, through a new partnership, proposes to target resource concerns in a fresh way. The Poop Smart Clark RCPP is a Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program that utilizes expertise from local agencies and nonprofits to reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacteria runoff in Clark County. Through pollution

source identification, targeted outreach, education, and implementation of on-the-ground practices, Poop Smart Clark connects landowners with the tools they need to correct pollution, drive social change and spur adoption of better management practices. The East Fork Lewis River forms the hydrologic backbone of our county, reaching from the mountains to the Columbia River. This watershed is a vital link in the agricultural, standards for fecal coliform bacteria and temperature. This puts both Clark County residents and aquatic life at risk. Clark CD will direct our highest priority efforts to this watershed. The goal of the Poop Smart Clark RCPP is to improve impaired water quality. Using technical and financial assistance to landowners, the five RCPP partners will reduce pathogen, nutrient, and sediment levels in area streams, as well as improve soil health and restore habitat on participating properties. Direct measurement of water quality will provide real time feedback on accomplishments. RCPP funds will be used in targeted, on the ground conservation projects that address the sources of the water quality resource concerns.

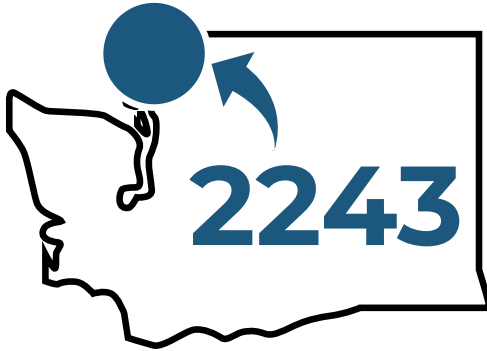


2243 WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery and Water Quality 2.0

Lead Partner: Whatcom Conservation District

Project end date: July 10, 2026

Salmon and Orca recovery is the most critical conservation challenge in the Pacific Northwest. ESA listed species are



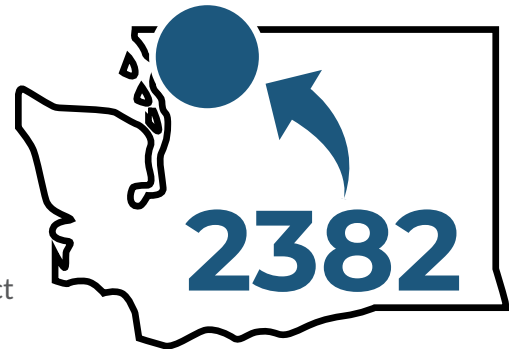
critical to the economy of the region and to the culture, subsistence, and economic wellbeing of Native American Tribes. The Nooksack River is the northern most river in the Puget Sound Basin of Washington State. The upper watershed is largely intact and some of the most productive farmland in the world is found in the lower watershed. A key group of partners have established a robust program to improve aquatic habitat and degraded plant conditions affecting ESA listed Salmon and Steelhead in the Pacific Northwest. Producers here face many economic challenges as well as conservation concerns. Water availability, flood control, urban growth, and water quality effects to downstream shellfish beds are just the beginning of what producers have to think about as they manage their farms. They are generally not opposed to conservation practices that benefit Salmon and Orca but have little time and even less money to put towards such work. Recognizing this the partners have developed an innovative means to leverage local resources and expertise along with RCPP funding to make the implementation of habitat practices hands free and no cost to producers. The Salmon Recovery Plan for the Nooksack River watershed focuses on three practices: removing barriers to fish passage (396 Aquatic Organism Passage), placing large wood habitat structures in the stream channel (396 Stream Habitat Improvement and Management), and planting riparian buffers (391 Riparian Forest Buffer). These are the focus practices for this project. All provide not only benefits to fish but also to farms.

2382 Nooksack Watershed Restoration

Lead Partner: Lummi Nation

Project end date: Sept. 17, 2026

The goal of the Nooksack Watershed Restoration Project is to address the natural resource concerns of inadequate aquatic habitat for fish and water quality degradation. The project will restore fluvial processes to improve



ESA-listed salmonid spawning, rearing and holding habitat while increasing low flow and thermal refugia. Project objectives focus on root causes of habitat degradation, namely the lack of large, stable log jams that maintain habitat-forming processes. The project addresses habitat limiting factors identified in the WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan (lack of key habitats, low habitat diversity, high water temperature, high channel instability, and elevated fine sediment). This project consists of five restoration projects split between two tribal partners - Lummi Natural Resources and Nooksack Natural Resources - working to recover two native chinook salmon populations essential to the recovery of ESA-listed Puget Sound chinook. Project objectives focus on the root causes of inadequate aquatic habitat for fish and water quality degradation, namely the lack of large, stable logjams that maintain habitat-forming processes. We will install 92 engineered logjams (ELJs), 55 feet of flood fencing, remove or lower 1,850 linear feet of riprap levee, and plant 38.05 acres of riparian trees.

1. Increase key habitat quality and diversity by creating pools with engineered logjams (ELJs).
2. Increase length of secondary channels (near-term) and side channels (longer-term).
3. Increase the availability of cold-water refuges (areas over 2C cooler than ambient).
4. Increase rearing habitat by re-connecting, creating and/or enhancing wetland and/or floodplain habitat.
5. Improve riparian forest conditions in and within 300 feet of the Historic Migration Zone. Over time, mature vegetation will reduce stream temperature.

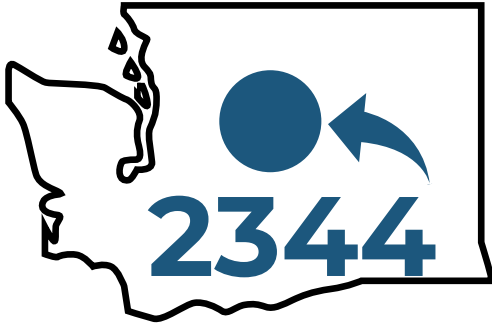


2344 Fuel Break & forest Resilience Partnership

Lead Partner: Cascadia Conservation District

Project End Date: Nov. 26, 2026

The goal of this project is to improve and reduce risk to habitat in Eastern Washington's Wenatchee Subbasin. The project will address priority



resource concerns for the state including inadequate habitat for fish and wildlife, water quality degradation, and drought conditions. Through partner collaboration and implementing conservation practices in strategic locations, fish and wildlife habitat will become more resilient to wildfire, pest damage, drought and disease. Cascadia will be project lead and partner with NRCS, state, local, and regional partners, to use RCPP flexibilities and innovative measures to incentivize landowner participation and increase environmental outcomes. The Wenatchee Valley is home to critical habitat for several endangered and sensitive species (ESA), as well as a thriving agricultural economy. Over 100 years of fire exclusion, past forest management, and development has resulted in an unhealthy forest landscape. The Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (QFRA), commissioned by USDA Forest Service, found the Wenatchee Valley is the highest risk community for catastrophic wildfire compared to all other communities in Washington and Oregon. Project partners have recently invested over 3 million dollars in planning efforts including, landscape evaluations, NEPA planning and risk modeling to determine where investments should occur to reduce risk to forest lands, ESA listed species and water resources. These planning efforts are foundational to this proposal as they identified specific landscapes and projects where investment in forest restoration is strategic, adequately scaled, and urgently needed. Importantly, our existing collaboration has built strong working relationships and trust between our local, state, and federal partners to build landscapes and communities more resilient to wildfire and drought. We are prepared, technically competent, and passionate about providing resources to forest landowners to address an urgent need.

2128 Palouse River Implementation Partnership WRIA 34

Lead Partner: Palouse Conservation District

Project end date: Dec. 6, 2026

The Palouse River Watershed spans over five counties in Washington and Idaho and encompasses both fertile



agriculture land and critical habitat for fish and wildlife. The goals of water quality work objectives will be integrated to compliment the three originally defined objectives:

1. Implement riparian buffers (continuation).
2. Implement conservation tillage and Farmed Smart certification (continuation).
3. Obtain conservation easements to protect prime farmland and Palouse Prairie vegetation communities (continuation).
4. Implement soil health management systems (expanded): Incentivize producers to move beyond conservation tillage by targeting practices such as precision nutrient management, cover crops, and no-till through the utilization of programs such as EQIP, CSP and CRP.
5. Mitigate flooding (expanded) – Implementing practices to mitigate flooding caused by straightening, incising, sedimentation, development, or poor upland management that affecting communities and landowners.

Partners and researchers are developing an innovative watershed planning tool to identify critical source areas of runoff and erosion that will be incorporated into the ranking criteria across both continued and expanded objectives to further optimize the effectiveness of Resource Management Systems (RMS) level planning and practices for future RCPP applicants.



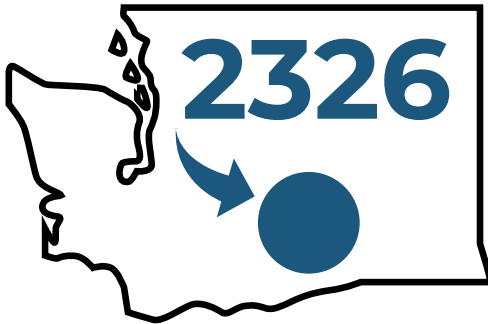


2326 Middle Columbia Steelhead Partnership

Lead Partner: Yakama Nation

Project end date: April 2, 2027

This proposal addresses critical needs for integrated conservation and restoration of watersheds. The primary resource concerns are degradation of habitat, water quality and water quantity. This proposal will accelerate the recovery of Steelhead within the reservation and ceded lands of the Yakama Nation, including the Yakima, Klickitat, Rock and White Salmon River basins within the ESA designated Middle Columbia Steelhead ESU. These actions will also benefit multiple other aquatic and riparian species, including coho, chinook, sockeye, Pacific lamprey, and important cultural plant species. Funds awarded under the RCPP will enable the Yakama Nation to coordinate actions from multiple resource management partners as much of the remaining aquifer as possible for the of the variability of water supplies and prepare for the uncertainties of climate change through operational and structural changes



throughout the watershed. This includes large scale reservoir projects all the way down to individual producer projects. Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) is working within that framework assisting producers with on-farm and delivery irrigation practices and habitat practices to improve water use efficiency, water quality and fish habitat availability. This proposal will replace six irrigation diversion structures with fish friendly structures opening up two miles of habitat, install three acres of riparian habitat; realize over 1000 acre/feet of annual water savings with four miles of piped/lined irrigation ditches and convert 1600 acres of cropland to sprinkler irrigation. Actions are grouped into three types: irrigation efficiency, habitat restoration, and water quality. Habitat actions will increase stream miles available for safe fish passage by removing barriers and screening irrigation diversions and restore riparian habitat. Irrigation efficiency actions include piping/lining open ditches, reducing/eliminating irrigation return flows and the installation of water measurement/management structures. Water quality actions include eliminating irrigation return flows into steelhead waters and improving riparian habitat conditions. In summation, these actions will have a positive cumulative effect on ESA threatened species, Mid-Columbia steelhead, a critical species of cultural and ecological importance and will have a positive cumulative effect on irrigation water availability.



2725 Whatcom County Conservation Easement Program

Lead Partner: Whatcom County

Project end date: March 10, 2028

The Whatcom County Conservation Easement Program's (CEP) purpose is to protect farmland, forestland, and important ecological areas

to ensure economically viable natural resource industries that encourage environmental sustainability. Many of our valuable working and natural lands are zoned for rural development, placing increasing threats to our agricultural and forest industries. These development threats also extend to our critical ecosystems and water resources. The CEP preserves these areas through the placement of permanent conservation easements. These easements not only protect the lands from development and other incompatible uses, but also incorporate conservation planning for sustainable farm and forest land management.



The CEP has also identified an equity issue in relation to beginning, minority and low-income farmers' inability to afford the purchase of farmland in Whatcom County. As such, we aim to utilize conservation easements to make farmland more affordable for those who traditionally have not been able to gain and benefit from ownership access to productive farmland. The primary goal of this project is to protect farmland, forestland, and important ecological areas in Whatcom County. The secondary goal is to make farmland more affordable for beginning, minority, and low-income farmers.

- ◆ This project identifies three objectives to complete these goals:
- ◆ Purchase permanent conservation easements that restrict development and other incompatible uses on important agricultural lands, forestland, and ecological areas.
- ◆ Develop conservation plans to help ensure the management of farms and forests is environmentally sustainable.
- ◆ Develop and implement a buy-protect-sell strategy to acquire valuable farmland, purchase a conservation easement to reduce the price of the land, and sell to a beginning, minority, or low-income farmer.

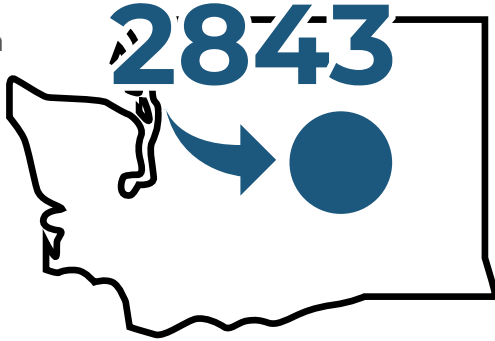


2843 Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program Lateral 80.6 and 84.7 On-Farm Project

Lead Partner: Columbia Basin Conservation District

Project end date: Mar. 25, 2028

This project is part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) located in the heart of the Columbia River Basin in Central Washington. The



goal of this RCPP is to replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for 11,180 acres of high-value irrigated farmland currently relying on the rapidly declining Odessa Subarea Aquifer, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. It is imperative that this new source of surface water is delivered as soon as possible in order to avoid an economic, social, and natural resource disaster. Without more reliable surface water, farmers will continue to be impacted by declining groundwater levels and will likely be forced to convert to dryland farming. Further, our goal is to conserve as much of the remaining aquifer as possible for the 12 communities that rely on it for their drinking water supply. As wells continue to fail, digging more and deeper wells is not a viable alternative. Both the water quantity and quality are compromised at current depths of the confined aquifer, with some wells now as deep as 2,400 feet. To meet these goals, Grant County Conservation District's (GCCD) objective is to leverage partner contributions, RCPP funds, and technical assistance to accelerate the construction of the on-farm projects on the EL 80.6 and 84.7 laterals. Once constructed, this project would deliver Columbia Basin Project (CBP) water from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's (ECBID) canal to 13 farms totaling 11,180 acres, effectively removing 22 wells from pumping groundwater and conserving 33,540 acre-feet (10.9 billion gals) of water in the aquifer each year. This proposal will build upon and leverage anticipated funding through the PL 83-566 program that is currently in development to construct ECBID laterals and pump stations. This proposal is requesting \$6 million to specifically support the construction of the on-farm buildouts that will connect to the EL 80.6 and EL 84.7 system.

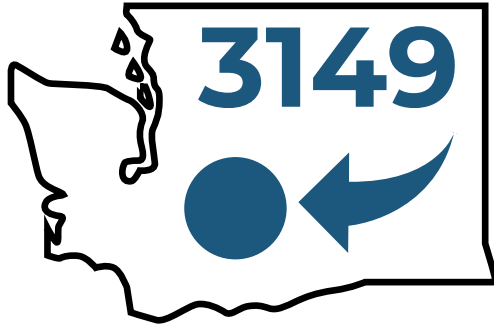


3149 Upper Yakima River Water Supply and Fish Habitat

Lead Partner: Kittitas Conservation District

Project end date: April 15, 2029

Plan (YBIP) is a 30-year water resiliency plan to protect and enhance fish and natural resources, improve water availability and reliability, establish more efficient water markets, manage the variability of water supplies, and prepare for the uncertainties of climate change through operational and structural changes throughout the watershed. This includes large scale reservoir projects all the way down to individual producer projects. Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) is working within that framework assisting producers with onfarm and



delivery irrigation practices and habitat practices to improve water use efficiency, water quality and fish habitat availability. This proposal will replace six irrigation diversion structures with fish friendly structures opening up two miles of habitat, install three acres of riparian habitat; realize over 1000 acre/ feet of annual water savings with four miles of piped/lined irrigation ditches and convert 1600 acres of cropland to sprinkler irrigation. Actions are grouped into three types: irrigation efficiency, habitat restoration, and water quality. Habitat actions will increase stream miles available for safe fish passage by removing barriers and screening irrigation diversions and restore riparian habitat. Irrigation efficiency actions include piping/ lining open ditches, reducing/eliminating irrigation return flows and the installation of water measurement/ management structures. Water quality actions include eliminating irrigation return flows into steelhead waters and improving riparian habitat conditions. In summation, these actions will have a positive cumulative effect on ESA threatened species, Mid- Columbia steelhead, a critical species of cultural and ecological importance and will have a positive cumulative effect on irrigation water availability.



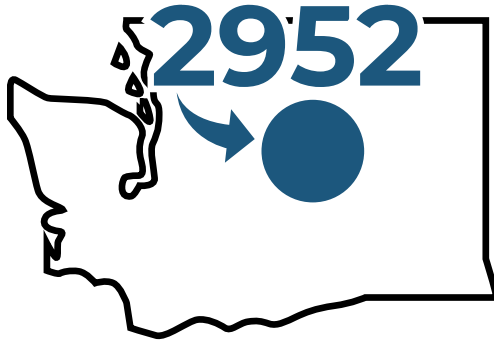
2952 Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program EL 86.4 On-Farm Project

Lead Partner: Columbia Basin Conservation District

Project end date: July 25, 2029

This project is part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) located in the heart of the Columbia River Basin in Central Washington. The

goal of this RCPP is to replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for 5426 acres of high-value irrigated farmland currently relying on the rapidly declining Odessa Subarea Aquifer, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. It is imperative that this new source of surface water is delivered as soon as possible to avoid an economic, social, and natural resource disaster. Without more reliable surface water, farmers will continue to be impacted by declining groundwater levels and will likely be forced to convert to dryland farming. Further, our goal is



to conserve as much of the remaining aquifer as possible for the 25 communities that rely on it for their drinking water supply. Both the water quantity and quality are compromised at current depths of the confined aquifer, with some wells now as deep as 2400 feet. To meet these goals, Grant County Conservation District dBa Columbia Basin Conservation District's (CBCD) objective is to leverage partner contributions, RCPP funds, and technical assistance to accelerate the construction of the on-farm project on the EL 86.4 lateral. Once constructed, this project would deliver Columbia Basin Project (CBP) water from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's (ECBID) canal to 12 farms totaling 5426 acres, effectively removing 16 wells from pumping groundwater and conserving 16,143 acre-feet (5.3 billion gals) of water in the aquifer each year. This proposal will build upon funding through the Washington State Legislature to build the EL 86.4 mainline, utilizing RCPP to complete on-farm infrastructure. If this project is awarded, the EL 86.4 will be fully funded and begin implementation next year. This proposal requests \$7.2 million to specifically support the construction of the on-farm build-out that will 2843 Odessa Groundwater more reliable surface water, farmers will continue to be impacted by declining groundwater levels and will likely be forced to convert to dryland farming. Further, our goal is to conserve as much of the remaining aquifer as possible for the 12 communities that rely on it for their drinking water supply. As wells continue to fail, digging more and deeper wells is not a viable alternative. Both the water quantity and quality are compromised at current depths of the confined aquifer, with some wells now as deep as 2,400 feet. To meet these goals, Grant County Conservation District's (GCCD) objective is to leverage partner contributions, RCPP funds, and technical assistance to accelerate the construction of the on-farm projects on the EL 80.6 and 84.7 laterals. Once constructed, this project would deliver Columbia Basin Project (CBP) water from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's (ECBID) canal to 13 farms totaling 11,180 acres, effectively removing 22 wells from pumping groundwater and conserving 33,540 acre-feet (10.9 billion gals) of water in the aquifer each year. This proposal will build upon and leverage anticipated funding through the PL 83-566 program that is currently in development to construct ECBID laterals and pump stations. This proposal is requesting \$6 million to specifically support the construction of the on-farm buildouts that will connect to the EL 80.6 and EL 84.7 system.

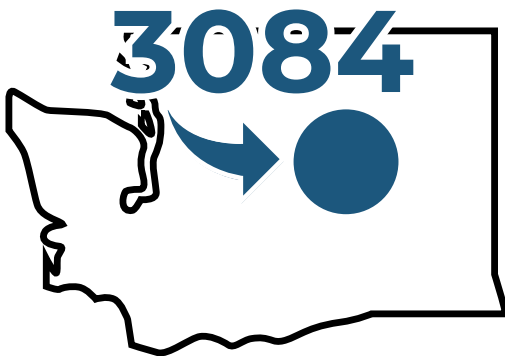




**3084 Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program
EL 80.6 Landowner - Extension Mainline**

Lead Partner: Columbia Basin Conservation District
Project end date: July 25, 2029

This project seeks funding to complete one of the nine lateral systems in the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) located in



Central Washington. The finished EL 84.7 lateral will replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for a total of 7138 acres currently relying on rapidly declining groundwater wells, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. Drilling deeper wells or converting to dryland crops are economic risks and won't sequester as much carbon as irrigated production can through biomass accumulation. By reducing the extraction from deep groundwater wells, the aquifer can recharge

naturally over time, maintaining its long-term viability. This benefits the local communities who rely on it for their drinking water supply by ensuring a stable and reliable water supply for future generations. To meet these goals, Grant County Conservation District dBa Columbia Basin Conservation District's (CBCD) objective is to leverage partner contributions, RCPP funds, and technical assistance to accelerate the construction of the landowner extension mainline on the EL 84.7 lateral. Once constructed, this project would deliver Columbia Basin Project (CBP) water from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's (ECBID) canal to an estimated 15 farms totaling 6773 acres, effectively removing at least 11 wells from pumping groundwater and conserving 17,190 acre-feet (5.6 billion gals) of water in the aquifer each year. This proposal will build upon funding through the Washington State Legislature and CBCD's already awarded RCPP project, to fund the remaining public system portion necessary for on-farm conservation benefits and additional on-farm infrastructure. If this project is awarded, EL 84.7 will be fully funded and begin implementation next year. This proposal requests \$19.66 million to specifically support the construction of the landowner mainline extension and the associated on-farm buildouts for the EL 84.7 delivery system.



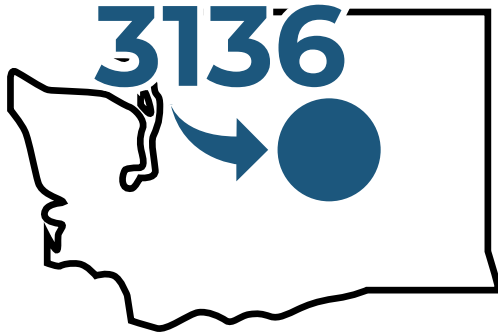
3136 Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program EL 84.7 Landowner - Extension Mainline

Lead Partner: Columbia Basin Conservation District

Project end date: July 25, 2029

This project seeks funding to complete one of the nine lateral systems in the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP)

located in Central Washington. The finished EL 84.7 lateral will replace groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water for a total of 7138 acres currently relying on rapidly declining groundwater wells, thereby helping to prevent source water depletion. Drilling deeper wells or converting to dryland crops are economic risks and won't sequester as much carbon as irrigated production can through biomass accumulation. By reducing the extraction from deep groundwater wells, the aquifer can recharge naturally over time, maintaining its long-term viability. This benefits the local communities who rely on it for their drinking water supply by ensuring a stable and reliable water supply for future generations. To meet these goals, Grant County Conservation District dBa Columbia Basin Conservation District's (CBCD) objective is to leverage partner contributions, RCPP funds, and technical assistance



to accelerate the construction of the landowner extension mainline on the EL 84.7 lateral. Once constructed, this project would deliver Columbia Basin Project (CBP) water from the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's (ECBID) canal to an estimated 15 farms totaling 6773 acres, effectively removing at least 11 wells from pumping groundwater and conserving 17,190 acre-feet (5.6 billion gals) of water in the aquifer in order to enact a holistic, watershed based approach to addressing natural resource degradation. This proposal will restore habitat to benefit 22.5 miles of main and side channels, reconnect 111 acres of floodplain, restore 80 acres of riparian habitat, install 9621 feet of fence, thin 10 acres of forest, plant 149 acres of native upland vegetation and treat 172 acres of weeds. The project will realize over 4602 acre/feet of annual water savings with 15.5 miles of piped/lined irrigation canals, 1170 acres of cropland converted to sprinklers, and replace 8 obsolete diversion dams/screens with fish friendly structures, opening up 2.4 miles of habit. Actions are grouped into 3 types: habitat restoration, irrigation efficiency, and water quality. Habitat actions will restore aquatic/floodplain and upland habitat and increase fish passage. Irrigation efficiency actions include piping lining open ditches, reducing/eliminating irrigation return flows and the installation of water measurement. Water quality actions include eliminating irrigation spills into steelhead waters. In summation, these actions will have a positive cumulative effect on Mid-Columbia Steelhead, a critical species of cultural and ecological importance to the Yakama Nation.



Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our collective ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. Through RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address.

Benefits

RCPP makes available a variety of NRCS conservation activities to help partners, ag producers, and private landowners address local and regional natural resource challenges.

How It Works

Partners apply to NRCS for RCPP project awards. Once projects are selected, NRCS works with partners to set aside a certain pool of funding for an awarded project. Producers, landowners, and partners then enter into producer contracts and supplemental agreements with NRCS to carry out agreed-to conservation activities.

Who is Eligible?

Only eligible organizations interested in partnering with NRCS on conservation projects can develop applications for the RCPP competition. The lead partner for an RCPP

project is the entity that submits an application, and if selected for an award is ultimately responsible for collaborating with NRCS to successfully complete an RCPP project.

See the RCPP funding announcement for details about what types of organizations are eligible to apply.

RCPP projects must be carried out on agricultural or nonindustrial private forest land or associated land on which NRCS determines an eligible activity would help achieve conservation benefits.

Conservation Activities

RCPP projects may include any combination of authorized, on-the-ground conservation activities implemented by farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. These activities include:

- Land management/land improvement/restoration practices
- Land rentals
- Entity-held easements
- United States-held easements
- Public works/watersheds.

How to Apply

Interested partners must apply through the RCPP portal (nrcs.my.salesforce.com). Applications are being accepted through December 3, 2019.

Once RCPP projects are selected, producers and landowners can apply to participate in projects that cover their geographic area. Interested producers should visit their local USDA Service Center to see if their land is included in the scope of any existing RCPP projects.

What's New in the 2018 Farm Bill

RCPP is now a standalone program with its own funding—

\$300 million annually.

NRCS may award up to 15 Alternative Funding Arrangement projects, which are more grant-like and rely more on partner capacity to implement conservation activities.

RCPP now has two funding pools-- Critical Conservation Areas and a State/Multistate pool.

RCPP partners must develop and report on environmental outcomes.

More Information

For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill or farmers.gov.

Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**



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2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:30AM

Project Number: 40000048

Project Title: 2025-2027 Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Capital Cost-Share

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 7

Project Summary

RCW 36.70A.705 establishes the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) as the administering agency of the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP). VSP is designed to protect and enhance critical areas on agricultural land through voluntary conservation. SCC supports, guides, and facilitates the Technical Panel (TP), Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC), science-based monitoring, and administrative tasks. Four state agencies staff the TP: Department of Agriculture (WSDA), Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Ecology (ECY), and SCC. The SAC is made up of county, agricultural, tribal, and environmental representatives. This request is for \$4 million to implement Best Management Projects to support successfully meeting local work group benchmark and goals. Directly related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy. Supports Puget Sound recovery and implementation of the Puget Sound Action Agenda. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy.

Project Description

Twenty-seven of 39 Washington counties participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), covering 70% of Washington. VSP serves as an alternative to regulation under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and directs counties to use incentives rather than enforcement to protect critical areas on agricultural lands. *See Attachment – VSP Map & How It Works.*

This proposal seeks to continue vital capital funding to support on-the-ground projects to install best management practices (BMPs), protecting and enhancing critical areas and supporting agricultural viability. Funding in this package is necessary for counties to continue to successfully implement state-approved work plans and meet time-sensitive goals and benchmarks.

Each county has developed a locally-led work plan to uniquely address critical area and agricultural viability needs at the watershed level. The goals and benchmarks developed in the plan are then implemented on the ground through Technical Service Providers (TSPs), typically local conservation districts (CDs). CDs are key to building relationships and trust with local agricultural landowners. They offer site-specific expertise and evaluation to identify best management practices (BMPs) that will be most effective in protecting and enhancing critical areas while supporting the farm operation. CDs assist landowners in developing projects and providing cost share to implement MP. Examples of BMPs include fencing to keep livestock out of streams, riparian plantings to restore habitat, manure management systems to keep nutrients out of surface water or groundwater, irrigation efficiencies, or climate-smart farming techniques.

Since its inception in 2011, counties and their communities have made significant investments in VSP. Each of the 2 participating counties established a local work group to create a VSP work plan, with goals and benchmarks to meet the program's objectives. As VSP plans are implemented, they are monitored and adaptively managed by each county. Counties submit a status report to the state every two years and a comprehensive five-year report reviewed the state Technical Panel and affirmed by the SCC director after consultation with the State Advisory Committee.

During the first five-year reporting process, counties, the VSP Technical Panel, Statewide Advisory Committee, and SCC found that existing programs were insufficient to meet VSP needs and attract participants. Counties require dedicated cost-share funding to incentivize agricultural producers to meet VSP requirements.

What is the problem/opportunity? Identify: priority, underserved people/communities. Operating budget savings, public safety improvements & clarifying details. Preservation projects: include information about

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current condition of the facility/system.

VSP requires continued capital funding for cost-share and incentives for agricultural landowners to implement best management practices (BMPs) that protect critical areas, fulfill statutory requirements, and deliver on community-led plans and progress made at the county level.

Though VSP is structured to ensure BMPs produce results, only recently has funding been made available to counties to incentivize agricultural producers to use best management practices. Counties have traditionally and continue to leverage other federal, state, and local voluntary incentive-based programs to fund these practices, with mixed results. Cobbling together enough funds for project development, installation, and ongoing maintenance is difficult, time-consuming, and limited by local agency staff capacity. Agricultural landowners often do not have the financial resources to implement these BMPs on their own. In many cases, cost share is the only way landowners can afford to make these stewardship improvements.

Without working farms and viable agriculture, landscapes run the risk of conversion to development threatening salmon and wildlife habitat and water quality as well as moving populations nearer to frequently flooded or geologically hazardous areas. While farming is inherently tough work, the additional pressures of market consolidation, regulatory cost of inputs and labor, and climate change are making it harder to remain viable.

Need and past use

As of Aug. 2024, VSP counties identified a need to fund an estimated 150 BMPs requiring over \$4,000,000 in the 2025-27 biennium. For the first time in program history, during the 2022 legislative session, SCC received \$3,000,000 in supplemental capital funding for VSP for fiscal year 2023. Commission staff drafted guidelines for using these funds for VSP-related cost-share projects. The following session, SCC received \$4,000,000 in capital funding for the 2023-27 biennium (\$3,000,000 for all 27 counties and \$1,000,000 earmarked for Skagit county).

This funding allowed counties to pursue the implementation of plans. Counties and TSPs/CDs continue to build capacity to conduct outreach to producers and design projects.

As of July 2024, all capital funding has been allocated, resulting in 147 completed BMPs and 233 BMPs in progress. All projects must be completed by June 30, 2025. See *Attachment – VSP Capital Project Report July 2024*.

Underserved communities

This request would again serve over a hundred agricultural landowners in 27 counties, or 70% of Washington, primarily in rural communities that are in need of infrastructure and community services or face economic hardship.

Many counties participating in VSP have been identified to have higher rates of people living below the federal poverty level and are also identified as **Overburdened Communities of Washington State**. See *Attachment – American Community Survey & Overburdened Communities Maps*.

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service identifies **Historically Underserved Farmer and Ranchers** as those

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Description

who are beginning, socially disadvantaged, veterans, and limited resource.

According to the **2022 USDA Census of Agriculture** Washington State profile

94% of Washington farms are family-owned.

29% of Washington producers are new and beginning farmers.

42% of farmers are female.

11% of farmers are veterans.

9% of farmers identified as non-white.

The greatest percentage, 43%, of farm value of sales is less than \$2,500 annually.

The 2022 Census indicates smaller average farm sizes, with 36% of farms in Washington between 10 and 49 acres, followed by 26% between 1 and 9 acres.

Without working farms and viable agriculture, landscapes run the risk of conversion to development. While farming is inherently tough work, market consolidation, regulation, cost of inputs and labor, and climate change are making it harder to remain viable.

What will the request produce or construct(predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)? When will the project start/end? Identify if the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Provide detailed cost backup.

This request will produce Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) approved best management practices (BMPs) on the ground that protect and enhance critical areas throughout Washington state. As an example, the type of BMPs identified for future implementation include livestock watering facilities, erosion control, seeding, prescribed grazing, reduced tillage, aquatic fish passage, fish screens, flow meters, roof runoff structures, hedgerows, livestock exclusion fencing, waste storage, nutrient management, heavy-use areas, spring development, riparian planting, wildlife habitat restoration, and more.

Funding will be awarded beginning in July 2025 and projects will be completed by June 30, 2027. Funding is awarded for individual BMPs. While not phased, multiple BMPs on a farm combined to complete a landowner's Individual Stewardship Plan (ISP).

How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

This funding request aims to build on the capital funding investments from 2022 supplemental and 2023-25 biennium. The \$3,000,000 in supplemental capital funding for VSP (Voluntary Stewardship Program) received for fiscal year 2022 was provided by the legislature even before the SCC (State Conservation Commission) made a formal request. After the five-year reporting process, concerns about the participation level of agricultural landowners led the SCC to anticipate a funding request of \$3,000,000 for the 2023-2025 biennium, which was granted.

This request builds upon momentum of the past work and state capital investment (\$7 million since 2022). It addresses issues identified during the five-year reporting process and aims to support efforts to protect declining salmon populations and other critical areas such as aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas, and wetlands. VSP has been highlighted in several state-wide plans and processes, including the Riparian Taskforce Final Report and Recommendations and the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Plan. It is also linked to actions proposed in the draft of Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy, to be finalized by September 30, 2024.

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Description

Without additional funding, counties will struggle to provide cost-share to landowners to take actions on their farms to protect sensitive areas, jeopardizing the investments made in VSP. The more opportunities present for implementing practices identified in VSP plans, the less likely to lose the time and money invested by local stakeholders, agricultural landowners, and state leaders. Seventy percent of the Washington counties that rely on VSP to comply with the Growth Management Act can continue to build off of years of partnership-building and progress in protecting critical areas.

What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered.

This proposed solution will ensure the ongoing successful implementation of the 27 VSP work plans, protection of critical areas, and preservation of agricultural viability. Successful implementation of VSP keeps GMA regulation from threatening agricultural viability in each participating county. Continued funding for VSP builds on the over \$28 million the state has invested in VSP over the last four biennia for planning and implementation.

VSP was a negotiated program designed to meet a wide range of stakeholder interests. If this package is not funded, counties risk falling out of VSP for lack of participation, and that will signal that the State does not support these types of negotiated solutions to complex and contentious natural resources issues.

There are no additional funds available to meet the participation needs of the VSP counties. Providing incentives to participate in VSP cannot be adequately met by reliance solely on leveraging federal, state and local incentive programs. Without this package, there will be a continued reduction in participation, which could result in some counties falling out of VSP and returning to regulation under GMA.

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added, people or communities served, etc.

The agricultural community, consisting of farmers, ranchers, orchardists, among others, will be served by this budget request. Voluntary participation in conservation best management practices (BMPs) will increase as VSP outreach and education occurs across the State.

This requested funding would support projects serving over 100 agricultural landowners in 27 counties, or 70% of Washington, primarily in rural communities that are in need of services and economic investment.

According to the **2022 USDA Census of Agriculture**, 94% of Washington farms are family-owned, 42% of farmers are female, and the greatest percentage (43%) of farm value of sales is less than \$2,500 annually. Additionally, the 2022 Census indicates smaller average farm sizes, with 36% of farms in Washington between 10 and 49 acres, followed by 26% between 1 and 9 acres. See *Attachment– American Community Survey & Overburdened Communities Maps*.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state (or other) share of project cost allowable and

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Description

the supporting citation or documentation.

N/A

Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

VSP is identified in all five of SCC's strategic plan priorities.

Priority 1: Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources

Goal 1: Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Goal 2: Protect and improve water quality and availability.

Goal 3: Protect and improve soil health.

Goal 4: Improve forest and rangeland health on private land.

Goal 5: Strengthen awareness of natural resources' value and conservation opportunities.

Priority 2: Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support

Goal 1: SCC is a trusted and knowledgeable partner in advancing working lands protection and agricultural viability across Washington.

Priority 3: Climate Resiliency

Goal 1: Equip producers and land stewards to strengthen adaptive management strategies to successfully adapt to a changing climate.

Goal 2: Increase carbon sequestration and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Goal 4: Increase resiliency to wildfire, drought, and flooding resiliency of Washington's natural and working landscapes and communities.

Priority 4: Governance and Accountability

Goal 1: The SCC Board and agency operates legally, transparently, accountably and inclusively.

Priority 5: Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration

Goal 2: Demonstrate leadership in voluntary conservation resulting in innovative natural resource solutions that work

Does this project include IT related costs, including hardware, software, cloud based services, contracts or staff? If yes, attach [IT Addendum](#).

N/A

If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail. See Chapter 14 Puget Sound Recovery) in the 2025-27 Operating Budget Instructions (links below) or reach out and I can help.

- [Chapter 14: Puget Sound Recovery & Salmon Strategy Requirements \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [Puget Sound Partnership 2022-2026 Action Agenda \(wa.gov\)](#)

The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) directly or indirectly supports, assists, aids, promotes, affects, or

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Description

contributes to the success of 25 identified Puget Sound Partnership 2022-26 Action Agenda strategies and actions. See Attachment - VSP Connection to PSP Action Agenda.

How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

This budget request is related to actions currently proposed in the draft of Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy which is being developed under RCW 70A.05 and will be finalized by Sept 30, 2024. Restoration and adaptive management of working lands will be enhanced by supporting multi-stakeholder work groups to embed climate strategies into VSP agricultural viability activities, especially strategies addressing water availability and flood resilience.

VSP is relevant to all strategic goal areas—communities, natural and working lands, infrastructure, and governance. Additionally, VSP relies upon science, data, and monitoring to show program effectiveness, all of which are essential components of adaptive management. VSP has the ability to bring together diverse sets of science and data and focused watershed monitoring. Monitoring is an opportunity to not only detect a change in systems but also to identify needs for adaptive management in programs, training, and tools.

How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

Overall, VSP and its collaboration with counties, conservation districts and hundreds of diverse local work group members play a crucial role in balancing agricultural productivity with environmental stewardship, benefiting both urban and rural communities across Washington State.

1.Statewide Benefits: VSP impacts all Washington residents by protecting critical environmental areas—like wetlands and wildlife habitats—while supporting the agricultural economy. This benefits everyone through improved food security and conservation of natural resources.

2.Increased Agricultural Viability: VSP aims to enhance the viability of agriculture, which supports farmers and ranchers and helps lower barriers for underserved populations, including communities of color. This can lead to a more diverse farming community and strengthen rural areas.

3.Local Involvement and Partnerships: The program relies heavily on local conservation districts for planning, project implementation, and monitoring. These districts are well-integrated into their communities, making them responsive to the needs of local agricultural producers and effective partners for VSP.

4.Community Engagement: Conservation districts are required to develop long-range plans that address local conservation needs. SCC supports these efforts by using local feedback to tailor programs and ensure they meet community needs effectively.

5.Ongoing Improvement: SCC is working on updating its community engagement plan to better align with conservation district missions, ensuring more comprehensive community outreach and responsive program development.

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Capital Project Request**

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:30AM

Project Number: 40000048

Project Title: 2025-2027 Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Capital Cost-Share

Description

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Grant Recipient Organization: Counties & Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: RCW 36.70A.705

Application process used

Applications are reviewed and scored by the SCC VSP funding review committee. Higher-scoring projects have the best chance to receive funding, subject to funding availability. All projects must have approval by the county work group at an open public meeting prior to submittal. Funding is awarded based on the following criteria: Projects within a priority watershed, as nominated by the county in their VSP opt-in ordinance. Projects clustered together (within the same HUC 12 as other projects, or another entity's project) or near other projects or projects previously funded by VSP or another state or federal agency to address salmon habitat resource needs/impacts or similar natural resource concerns. This unique targeted approach of clustering projects allows for more effective and efficient use of capital funding targeting focused geographic areas for measurable resource improvement. Projects that are identified pursuant to RCW 77.95.060 (Regional fisheries enhancement group), or by a lead entity, or by another state agency and/or tribe as a priority in the watershed. Projects implemented in areas identified on the 303(d) listings for temperature. Projects with tribal partnership, participation, or funding. Projects that have ancillary benefits to other critical areas and not causing degradation to other critical areas.

Growth Management impacts

Projects will support local GMA requirements to protect critical areas. Seventy percent of the Washington counties that rely on VSP to comply with the Growth Management Act can continue to build off of years of partnership-building and progress in protecting critical areas. VSP serves as an alternative to regulation under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and directs counties to use incentives rather than enforcement to protect critical areas on agricultural lands.

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	22,000,000				4,000,000
	Total	22,000,000	0	0	0	4,000,000
			Future Fiscal Periods			
			2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	5,000,000
	Total	4,000,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	5,000,000

Operating Impacts

Total one time start up and ongoing operating costs

Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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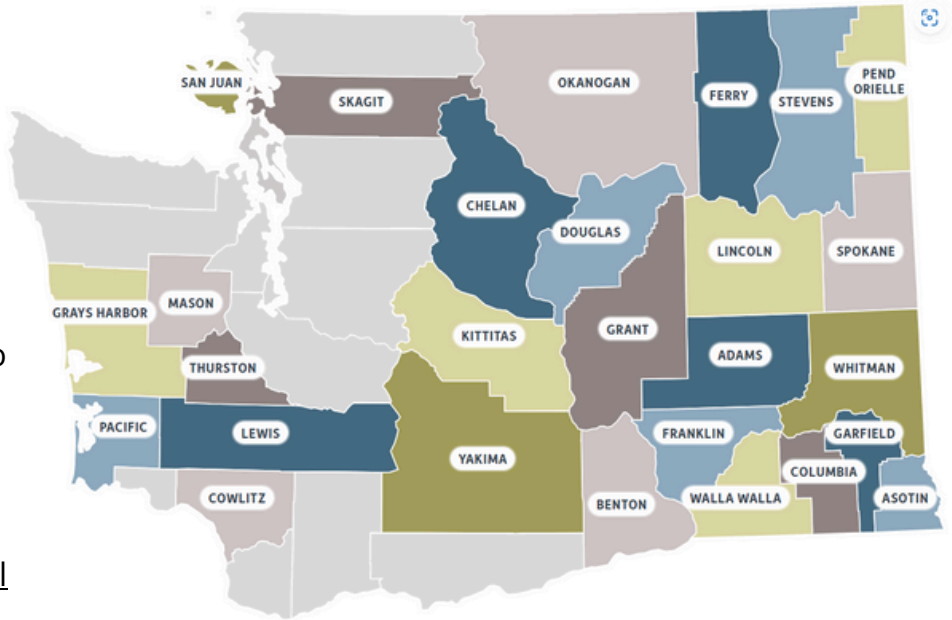
<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000048	40000048
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids



Voluntary Stewardship Program

VSP counties

Twenty-seven of 39 Washington counties participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), covering 70% of Washington. VSP serves as an alternative to regulation under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and directs counties to use incentives rather than enforcement to protect critical areas on agricultural lands.



Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

Creates a non-regulatory approach to meeting the goals of the state of Washington's Growth Management Act by protecting critical areas on agricultural lands.



county work plans

County work groups developed state-approved VSP work plan tailored to local agriculture and critical area needs.



land manager assistance

Technical service providers work 1:1 with local land manager to evaluate stewardship and farm needs and develop plans.



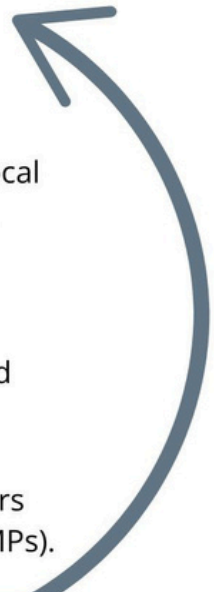
stewardship plans

Stewardship plans identify practices that support agriculture viability and protect and enhance critical areas.



projects on the ground

Expertise and cost-share help land managers implement best management practices (BMPs).



Monitoring → Reporting → Adaptive Mangement



The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) directly or indirectly supports, assists, aids, promotes, affects, or contributes to the success of the following Puget Sound Partnership action agenda strategies and actions:

Strategy 1 – Smart Growth

- Build Puget Sound-wide support to prevent conversion of forests, farms, and natural areas and increase funding for conservation incentives. (ID #1)
- Reduce barriers to infill and redevelopment in high-growth areas. (ID #2)
- Improve the Growth Management Act and local land use planning to effectively channel growth and prevent conversion of ecologically important lands. (ID #178)

Strategy 2 – Working Lands

- Support the long-term viability and sustainability of agricultural lands and working forests to reduce pressure for conversion from the current use to a more developed use. (ID #4)
- Support the expansion of market mechanisms to increase long-term viability and reduce conversion pressure for working lands. (ID #194)

Strategy 3 – Healthy Shorelines

- Increase and improve shoreline regulation implementation, compliance, enforcement, and communication. (ID #14)
- Expand and improve incentives and education for residential property owners to motivate voluntary actions for healthy shorelines. (ID #15)
- Improve long-term strategic planning to reduce development (for example, armor) impacts in the future across all land use types. (ID #16)
- Increase and improve coastal process-based design and technical training. (ID #17)

Strategy 4 – Riparian Areas

- Provide incentives, financial and technical support to local jurisdictions that have prioritized riparian restoration. (ID #201)

Strategy 5 – Floodplains and Estuaries

- Increase the number and accelerate implementation of habitat acquisition and restoration projects as prioritized in salmon and watershed recovery plans. (ID #12)
- Incorporate the economic risks and costs of development into land use planning in floodplain and estuary habitats. (ID #18)
- Develop and maintain a Puget Sound-wide framework to build public support and political will, develop partnerships, mobilize funding resources, streamline permitting, and support monitoring for integrated floodplain management approaches to enhance outcomes for fish populations, flood risk, and agricultural viability (farm, fish, flood). (ID #19)
- Prioritize, design, and implement reach-scale restoration and protection projects within a river basin or watershed. (ID #20)

- Implement habitat protection and restoration projects that restore or maintain natural nutrient attenuation functions and sediment processes in watersheds, estuaries, and tidal wetlands. (ID #24)
- Increase and improve floodplain and estuary regulation implementation, compliance, enforcement, incentives, and communication. (ID #195)

Strategy 6 – Fish Passage

- Barriers Inventory and assess all fish passage barriers (culverts, dams, etc.). Prioritize, sequence, and implement fish passage barrier correction or removal in watersheds. (ID #152)

Strategy 7 – Freshwater Availability

- Implement and improve technologies, voluntary programs, financial and technical assistance programs, and market based approaches to reduce water demand and encourage conservation. (ID #27)
- Implement watershed plans that offset impacts from new domestic permit exempt wells and achieve a net ecological benefit within the watershed. (ID #28)
- Understand and plan for future water needs and changing climate and ecosystem conditions by engaging all water users in a watershed to identify specific actions around water science, technology, management, and conservation. (ID #29)

Strategy 9 – Water Pollution

- Source Identification and Correction Support watershed cleanup implementation and the development of cleanup plans such as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and other strategies to limit fecal pollution. (ID #10)

Strategy 10 – Stormwater Runoff and Legacy Contamination

- Conduct watershed-scale planning and land use planning to protect and restore water quality. (ID #3)
- Encourage retrofits and restoration through education and incentives. (ID #31)
- Increase and stabilize funding that supports actions, incentives, and local capacity to reduce nutrient loads. (ID #34)
- Develop and implement education and outreach and behavior change campaigns and fund projects to reduce nutrient impacts from residential, stormwater, and agricultural runoff. (ID #35)
- Adjust stormwater permitting requirements or other local government programs to address nutrients in stormwater from residential and commercial lands. (ID #36)
- Find and fix toxic hotspots (information, planning, education, funding, and implementation). (ID #41)

Strategy 12 – Working Lands Runoff

- Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices to reduce pollutants and the volume of runoff from agricultural lands and working forests. (ID #5)

- Implement agricultural management practices proven to reduce nutrient loads. (ID #6)
- Expand and improve incentives and education for agricultural land users to motivate voluntary actions for reducing fecal pollution. (ID #7)
- Strengthen and implement authorities and programs that prevent fecal pollution from agricultural lands. (ID #8)
- Facilitate the increased use or performance of best management practices, including increasing riparian restoration, to reduce stream temperatures. (ID #196)

Strategy 14 – Invasive Species

- Prevent and rapidly respond to the introduction and spread of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, including green crab, predatory fish, and invasive plants. (ID #46)
- Create an integrated planning approach to protect and enhance biodiversity in the Puget Sound ecosystem by mitigating the threat of invasive species. (ID #203)

Strategy 15 – Salmon Recovery

- Increase salmon abundance while protecting genetic diversity by implementing hatchery and harvest management strategies and expanding available habitat while ensuring abundant salmon for harvest, treaty rights, and other species such as Southern Resident Orca. (ID #205)

Strategy 16 – Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

- Target public outreach and education to foster community stewardship, individual responsibility, and collective action to benefit eelgrass and kelp conservation and recovery. (ID #59)
- Implement targeted research initiatives to understand the short and long-term factors driving localized changes in eelgrass and kelp. (ID #60)

Strategy 18– Awareness of Effects of Climate Change

- Expand monitoring, research, and assessment of the individual and cumulative impacts and risks of climate change on Puget Sound. (ID #131)
- Educate and train decision-makers and professionals about climate impacts and risks on Puget Sound. (ID #133)
- Improve networks for sharing information across public (transboundary, federal, tribal nations, state, and local) and private sectors. (ID #135)
- Develop and implement social marketing (behavior change) strategies to influence climate-related behaviors. (ID #172)

Strategy 19 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Carbon Sequestration

- Develop and implement plans, regulations, and incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all sources, especially primary emitting sources (those that account for more than 16 percent of emissions) including land use and transportation; electricity; residential, commercial, and industrial building; and heating. (ID #136)

- Monitor, evaluate, and assess the effectiveness of greenhouse gas emission reduction programs and projects. (ID #138)
- Develop and implement land use and transportation planning to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. (ID #139)
- Develop, expand, and improve financial and technical incentive programs that protect, promote, and support carbon sequestration and emissions reduction. (ID #140)
- Quantify and maximize carbon sequestration benefits of habitat protection and restoration projects. (ID #142)

Strategy 20 – Climate Adaptation and Resilience

- Implement multi-benefit projects and programs that synergistically advance Puget Sound recovery goals and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration in Puget Sound ecosystems, increase climate adaptation, and promote climate resilience. (ID #137)
- Increase availability of data, tools, and training, and increase the technical capacity of partners in the recovery community, to reduce the magnitude of and vulnerability to climate change, and advance adaptation of the Puget Sound socioecological system. (ID #149)
- Ensure that vulnerable populations and underserved communities are welcomed and engaged as full partners and support the priorities identified by communities when working to decrease the magnitude of climate change, advance climate change adaptation, and increase resilience to climate change. (ID #150)

Strategy 23 – Good Governance

- Engage with community groups, educational institutions, and communication specialists to develop and share relevant, transcreated, and accessible information on civic engagement and decision-making opportunities. (ID #78)
- Ecosystem recovery processes and decision making are inclusive of a broader set of committed stakeholders, including vulnerable populations and underserved communities, and diverse forms of knowledge. (ID #161)
- Increase capacity for vulnerable populations and underserved communities to engage in environmental decision making. (ID #162)
- Increase trust by including and communicating directly and effectively with new and diverse audiences. (ID #163)
- Honor tribal nations' treaty and sovereign rights, obligations and inherent sovereign interests when considering implementation of Puget Sound recovery projects and programs, and actively engage with tribal nations to align and incorporate shared goals. (ID #197)
- Communications materials should be locally-relevant and clear and concise, avoiding jargon or overly technical language. Incorporate resources in various languages other than English for communications materials. (ID #198)

Strategy 24 – Cultural Practices and Local Foods

- Restore and enhance native fish, shellfish, game, and plant populations consistent with existing species recovery efforts. (ID #89)

Strategy 25 – Economic Benefits

- Conduct and coordinate research to improve the understanding of ecosystem-industry interactions, opportunities, and benefits. (ID #96)
- Support natural resource sector jobs and production opportunities. (ID #164)

Strategy 26 – Human Health

- Adequately resource community-led efforts to promote education and awareness about environmental health risks associated with air pollution, drinking water contamination, surface water pollution, and toxics in fish and shellfish. (ID #114)
- Limit people’s exposures to harmful air pollution. (ID #199)
- Limit people’s exposures to harmful water pollution. (ID #200)

Strategy A – Funding

- Secure sustainable, equitable, and dedicated federal, state, local, and tribal nations funding sources to fully fund Puget Sound and salmon recovery. (ID #173)
- Mobilize new and diverse private funding sources to advance Puget Sound and salmon recovery (for example, private foundations, businesses, individuals, and market-based mechanisms). (ID #174)
- Engage partners in developing the list of Puget Sound-wide resource needs. (ID #179)
- Increase coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness of current funding programs to extend impact of current funding (ID #207)

Strategy B – Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

- Broaden and deepen the coalition demanding a healthy Puget Sound. (ID #209)
- Advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in Puget Sound recovery efforts. (ID #128)
- Strengthen relationships and understanding to enhance collaboration. (ID #210)

Strategy C – Research and Monitoring

- Direct and leverage funding and investments to advance science, monitoring, and adaptive management for Puget Sound recovery. (ID #121)
- Coordinate efforts to assess and report on ecosystem conditions and the effectiveness of ecosystem recovery strategies and actions. (ID #122)
- Collaboratively broaden and improve the knowledge network that supports Puget Sound ecosystem recovery. (ID #183)
- Build and sustain robust programs and relationships across science-policy interfaces to inform recovery. (ID #186)
- Communicate science findings clearly and to the appropriate audiences. (ID #187)

- Develop and analyze alternative future scenarios to help leaders make decisions that will lead to system level change under a range of projections for climate change, population growth, and other uncertainties. (ID #188)

Strategy D – Education Partnerships

- Coordinate planning and implementation across education and restoration partner networks. (ID #189)
- Identify funding sources to support collaborations between ecosystem recovery partners and pre-K educators. (ID #190)
- Include representatives of youth organizations in regional planning forums to increase youth involvement in planning and implementing projects in local areas. (ID #192)

Strategy E – Stewardship and Motivating Action

- Cultivate broad-scale stewardship practices and behaviors among Puget Sound residents that benefit Puget Sound. (ID #125)
- Build issue awareness and understanding to increase public support and engagement in recovery actions. (ID #126)
- Build social and institutional infrastructure that supports stewardship behaviors and removes barriers. (ID #127)



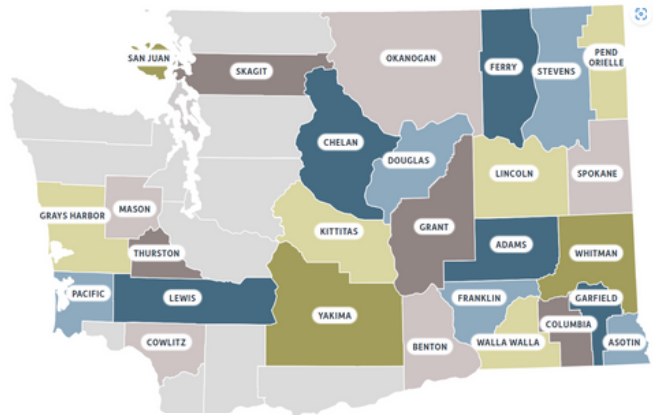
SCC Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) capital funding report - July 2024

Best Management Practices (BMPs) in progress or completed

VSP capital 2022-23 supplemental budget: \$3,000,000 total Completed projects = \$1,553,524 supported 113 BMPs in 15 participating counties. Remaining funding was reallocated. Projects must be completed by 6/30/25.	
BMPs completed	113
BMPs in progress	Funding awarded to complete 26
VSP capital 2023-25 biennial budget: \$4,000,000 total (\$3,000,000 SCC/all VSP counties, \$1,000,000 Skagit only) All SCC capital funding allocated. Projects must be completed by 6/30/25.	
BMPs completed	34
BMPs in progress	Funding awarded to complete 167

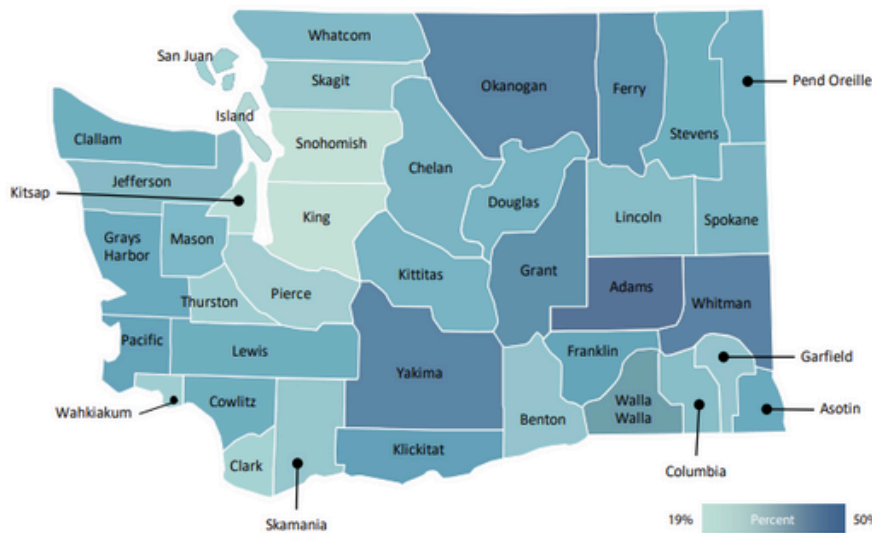
Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

VSP serves 27 counties, or 70% of Washington, primarily in rural communities. Many VSP counties are noted to have high rates of people living below the federal poverty level and are also identified as Overburdened Communities of Washington State.



Percent of people living below 200% of the federal poverty level by county, 2015-2019

27 VSP counties



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

OFM Map of Overburdened Communities in WA State

Washington Geospatial Open Data Portal

Overburdened Communities of Washington State

Records: 513

Private Member
Office of Financial Management

Summary

The Overburdened Communities of Washington State dataset by 2010 Census Tracts

[View Full Details](#)

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Details

- Dataset**
Feature Layer
- May 31, 2024**
Info Updated
- May 31, 2024**
Data Updated
- May 30, 2024**
Published Date
- Records: 513**

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471 - State Conservation Commission Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:40AM

Project Number: 40000050

Project Title: 2025-2027 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency

Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Project Class: Grant

Agency Priority: 8

Project Summary

Shrubsteppe is a large and diverse landscape in Eastern Washington with large expanses of arid mixed shrub and grasslands, scattered permanent and seasonal wetlands, riparian areas, sand dunes, and basalt cliffs and talus. This landscape, east of the Cascades and covering a third of Washington (see attached map), is also the epicenter of the wildfire crisis in the state. The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI), led by a three-agency steering committee (WDFW, DNR, SCC), is focused on restoring a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem, less susceptible to wildfire, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. Shrubsteppe is a priority landscape in Washington where unfortunately, up to 80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded. WSRRI emerged through the Washington State Legislature investment in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's remaining shrubsteppe habitat. The extent of the areas impacted, the speed at which the fires moved, and the intensity at which they burned resulted in severe and immediate impacts to wildlife, habitat, and human communities, through loss of wildlife habitat, forage for wildlife and domestic livestock, and loss of structures and fencing to manage working lands. Partners across this landscape are struggling to provide what is needed for this landscape simply due to a lack of capacity to deliver services. Guided by the WSRRI 30-year Long-Term Strategy 2024-2057 (Strategy) for Washington's shrubsteppe landscape in the Columbia Plateau, WSRRI aims to return resiliency to the people and wildlife of the shrubsteppe landscape. The Strategy provides a framework with identified priorities to strategically direct capacity and resources toward clear outcomes. This planning was completed in collaboration with Tribes and 25 federal, state, and local government organizations, environmental groups, private landowner and industry representatives, and this collaborative is ready to bring the Strategy into action. A key focus is to improve landscape and habitat conditions so that when fire occurs it is less intense and extensive, is less impactful to habitat and landscapes and they recover more quickly. A key need is restoration capacity and support for those that steward working lands and maintain open land for wildlife habitat and connectivity. WSRRI will build capacity by expanding personnel, equipment, and materials needed to increase the pace and scale of habitat restoration efforts and supporting sustainable grazing management with tools such as wildlife-friendly fencing. WSRRI's approach is to explicitly share those resources and services on the ground and across the extensive group of collaborators. Funding this request will direct necessary resources to priority areas and support the expansion of a program that is needed to prepare for and respond to wildland fire impacts and ensure a stable future for the communities and wildlife that call Washington's shrubsteppe home.

Project Description

What is the problem/opportunity?Identify: priority, underserved people/communities.

An estimated 80% of historic shrubsteppe has been lost or degraded due to development, land use conversion, and other stressors. Protecting and restoring remaining shrubsteppe habitats is more important than ever. What little remains of our state's unique native shrubsteppe habitat is under threat due to the unprecedented extent, frequency and severity of wildland fire, invasion of non-native annual grasses, a rapidly changing climate, and increased human pressure. Many human communities within the Columbia Plateau are highly impacted and overburdened by ecosystem degradation. Many of these communities were historically and are currently underserved with respect to wildland fire protection, natural resource management, and ecological restoration. Conserving and restoring shrubsteppe habitats to increase resilience and resistance are essential for native wildlife as well as the human communities that live and work in the Columbia Plateau.

As one of Washington's most diverse ecosystems, shrubsteppe provides habitat for species found nowhere else in the state, such as the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit, greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and pronghorn antelope. Further, the majority of Washington's shrubsteppe is in private ownership, and the health and long-term resiliency of wildlife, habitat and human communities depends on the ongoing stewardship by owners and managers; private lands; ranchers, especially, contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation by maintaining intact habitat and

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Description

open space, complimenting the conservation efforts made by agencies, other partners, and Tribes.

Fires are becoming more intense and frequent, compounding the ecological impacts of climate change and habitat fragmentation in Washington's shrubsteppe landscape, threatening at-risk wildlife and human communities. **Since 2020, more than 1 million acres within the Columbia Plateau have burned in wildland fires**; these included almost 20percent of priority shrubsteppe areas. Based on remotely-sensed data for Washington's shrubsteppe landscape, since 1986, annual grasses have increased dramatically across the Columbia Plateau, so that even much of the remaining habitats infested, influencing increased fire frequency, severity and intensity. Across the shrubsteppe landscape as a whole, since 2020, due to fires and other factors influencing habitat quality and quantity (e.g., climate change), sagebrush and other shrub cover have decreased, while annual grasses have increased further; sagebrush critical for the survival and recovery of greater sage-grouse, Columbia Basin Pygmy rabbits, and other sagebrush-obligate species.

While habitat quality and restoration treatment needs should be determined on-the-ground, our data suggest that much high priority areas likely need some degree of restoration, including invasive plant control, to increase shrub cover, address weed infestations, and improve habitat quality in general, to increase the resistance and resilience of these habitats to future wildfire. **The need is vast, and while the requested funding cannot fully meet that need, it will significantly advance restoration efforts in the highest priority areas and build a foundation for continued work.**

A resilient Shrubsteppe landscape depends on land that is managed to support resiliency. These management actions are directly supported by WSRRI and include 1) livestock grazing rotation to promote health for livestock and wildlife and 2) fencing to help land managers practice sustainable grazing which can promote healthy native shrubsteppe conditions and reduce the threat of catastrophic wildland fire. However, fencing is expensive, and some types are highly susceptible to damage from wildfire, limiting the ability of land managers to maintain the fencing needed to graze lands in the most advantageous ways. Fencing can also pose a threat to wildlife if it is not well designed. For instance, mule deer can get tangled in it, and grouse often collide with fencing due to low visibility of wires, resulting in mortality. When wildland fire burns fencing, the damaged fencing and barbed wire that remains is a threat to a variety of wildlife, as well as humans working on the landscape. After wildland fire, landowners need immediate assistance to remove the burned fencing and replace it with more wildfire resistant, smooth-wired and wildlife friendly fencing, so that such future direct impacts to wildlife and humans are minimized, and grazing can be managed to improve habitat recovery.

We have an opportunity to bring solutions and positive change to the shrubsteppe ecosystem and communities. **The Strategy calls for significant expansion of habitat restoration and sustainable working lands management efforts** across Eastern Washington's shrubsteppe landscape to not only respond to fire, but to proactively build resiliency before fire occurs. The Strategy includes an Implementation Work Plan (March 2024-June 2027) that identifies actions for implementation in the 25-27BN, including habitat restoration and wildlife-friendly fencing. **The Strategy prioritizes *where* these actions should occur so that investments are strategically targeted** to where they are likely to be most beneficial long-term. Taking a "defend the core, grow the core, connect the core" approach the WSRRI partnership collaboratively identified core habitat areas, growth opportunity areas, and corridors as those places collectively warranting long-term conservation investment, including through supporting working lands.

Although habitat restoration and sustainable grazing management efforts have been underway for decades, we learned after the devastating fires in 2020, that key resources were missing. To address the gaps, the Strategy calls for a significant increase in WSRRI base funding to grow and then deliver and share these missing resources and services such as skilled and knowledgeable technical support for project design, on-the-ground personnel to implement restoration treatments, Washington-sourced native plant materials, and wildlife-friendly ranching practices such as virtual fence.

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Description

Implementation lacks an adequate number of practitioners, equipment, and materials available to enhance the pace and scale of restoration and resiliency efforts. This DP and funding will be deployed to expand partners', landowners and land managers' collective capacity to implement restoration: we must partner with local growers to increase the availability of locally adapted native plant materials; we must purchase restoration equipment such as seed drills specialized for native seed; we must establish a restoration hub where equipment and materials can be shared, deployed and maintained, and we must work with partners to provide ranchers with support to graze sustainably such as wildlife-friendly fencing.

This budget request is related to actions currently proposed in the draft Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy which is being developed under RCW 70A.05 and will be finalized by September 30, 2024.

What will the request produce or construct (predesign/design of a building, additional space, etc.)?

Work will begin July 1, 2025 and continue into future biennia as WDFW, DNR, and SCC work strategically with partners and Tribes towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategy. This DP will build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including restoring habitat (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase resiliency to future wildland fire), planting areas disturbed by fire with native seeds and plants, installing wildlife friendly fencing, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, increasing technical capacity to plan and implement habitat and species recovery projects and building a shrubsteppe restoration 'Hub' as a resource to all partners in priority areas, with specialized equipment and necessary storage.

WSRRI will continue to provide resources to partners such as conservation districts, who will work with ranchers to explore and implement practices such as smooth-wire and virtual fencing, which uses cellular technology that communicates with collars placed on livestock, eliminating the need for hazardous barbed-wire fencing, and enhancing rotational grazing to promote plant health. Virtual fencing bolsters the ability for agricultural producers to recover their operations after fire, because fences will not need to be rebuilt due to the rancher's ability to manage livestock with technology without the use of physical fencing, which is friendly to wildlife and well-adapted for fire recovery.

This funding will purchase resources (e.g., specialized equipment, seed storage) to build a foundation for future project implementation. The funding will also support the development of site restoration plans that can leverage other funding sources, such as those administered by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. We anticipate that \$1.5 million for wildlife friendly fencing will replace 450 miles of fire vulnerable and hazardous to wildlife traditional barbed-wire fencing with smooth wire (for safe wildlife passage) fencing and up to 50,000 acres of grazing lands covered by virtual fence. With expanded habitat restoration resources and services, we anticipate implementing habitat restoration treatments on approximately 2,300 acres through weed treatments and native seeding and plantings.

How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not taking action?

Our proposed solution is to implement habitat restoration, fencing, and grazing management actions listed in the Strategy's Implementation Workplan for the 25-27 BN. With this request we aim to expand on current and past WSR work by enhancing available technical and resource capacity to strategically restore habitat and improve working land management *both before and after* fire. This request for funding is meant to expand and implement a framework for restoration and resiliency program that provides WSRRI partners with technical support, materials, and the funding needed to get projects implemented. The majority of this funding is to advance restoration and resilience projects, such as wildlife-friendly and virtual fencing, on the ground. The remainder of the funding is for technical support and administration of the program.

This funding is critical for continuing to build on the investment made by the Legislature in 2021 and to make good on the work completed by over 25 Tribes and partner organizations in developing the Strategy. Not funding this request

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2025-27 Biennium

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Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:40AM

Project Number: 40000050

Project Title: 2025-2027 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency

Description

now would slow the implementation of the Strategy just as it gains speed and result in ongoing devastating outcome for the shrubsteppe landscape, wildlife, and communities that are suffering from increased wildland fires in the face of a changing climate and increased development pressure. Wildlife species such as the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit and greater sage-grouse that depend on the shrubsteppe habitat and are struggling to hang on, would continue to decline and would potentially become extinct. Ranchers would struggle to maintain their operations and working lands would become even more vulnerable to development, further fragmenting the landscape. **WSRRI is the answer to help save and conserve Washington's shrubsteppe in perpetuity.** Funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals to ensure a stable future for the communities and wildlife that call Washington's shrubsteppe home.

Not funding this request would mean:

Potential loss of remaining habitat which is critical for the conservation and recovery of many species, some of which are endemic (unique) to Washington.

A critical deficiency of technical expertise, native plant materials, and equipment, to build resiliency within this landscape and communities and improve their ability to respond to and recover from fire.

Traditional barbed wire fencing, which is detrimental to wildlife, especially mule deer, antelope, greater sage-grouse, and sharp-tailed grouse rebuilt after fires would not have resources available for quick removal from the landscape. In addition, poor grazing management from lack of necessary fencing, could result in loss of native grasses and introduction of and dominance by non-native species, including cheatgrass.

Discouragement of the continuation of family ranches in eastern Washington, who are dealing with ever increasing pressures on their ranching operations, including increasing wildfires and rapid loss of quality forage. Wildlife species are dependent on the continuation of these ranches. Wildlife friendly fencing, especially options such as virtual fencing, and deferred grazing are elegant solutions that allow ranches to continue their operations and provide wildlife habitat.

What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered

Over the FY21-23 and FY23-25 biennia, DNR, WDFW, and SCC have developed a strong partnership in reaching solutions to distribute WSRRI resources and implement projects on the ground. Strong partnerships are necessary to address complex issues in the shrubsteppe, including climate change and drought, human pressures of development in and near priority areas, wildland fires, listed species and their conservation and recovery, and agricultural economies such as ranching. The WSRRI steering committee considered a request for these funds originating from WDFW and DNR, but it was determined that SCC provides the most flexible and efficient processes for administering funds to other partners, and especially to conservation districts, which are primary implementers of WSRRI program through their work with private landowners. Direct appropriation to SCC is the best option to flexibly administer the funding to where it needs to go, whether that is to conservation districts to implement virtual fencing, WDFW to develop a native seed storage area, or towards habitat restoration projects on tribal lands. **WDFW and DNR have expressed support and requested a direct appropriation to SCC for this work.** WSRRI is ready to continue this strong partnership with the three agencies and other partners and land managers to carry out high priority habitat restoration and resiliency work across the Columbia Basin.

Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added? How many people or communities served, etc.

The funding of this decision package will affect all people who live in, recreate in and value the shrubsteppe landscape please see the attached map. Many of the human communities that will be served are highly impacted and overburdened by ecosystem degradation. Many of these communities were historically and are currently underserved.

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Capital Project Request**

2025-27 Biennium

*

Version: 25 2025-2027

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/10/2024 9:40AM

Project Number: 40000050

Project Title: 2025-2027 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency

Description

with respect to wildland fire protection, natural resource management, and ecological restoration. Habitat restoration will benefit numerous wildlife species, including endangered species such as the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit and greater sage-grouse and over 40 additional Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Landowners and managers (tri public, private) who steward these lands will be positively impacted with additional resources to build a resilient ecosystem across the Columbia Plateau, one that is more resilient and adapted to recover from fire. Public benefits will be realized by all Washingtonians through the environmental improvements brought about by implementation of habitat and resiliency projects, continued access to local foods as our farmers and ranchers are supported in their work with WSRRI projects, and economic support by the jobs created through implementation of conservation projects. SCC and partners will benefit from the efficiency of being able to administer WSRRI funds through SCC's familiar and streamlined processes. Success will only occur if the people that steward and live on these lands see their priorities and responsibilities reflected in the Strategy, feel ownership of it, and see value in implementing it.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state (or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

The work of the Strategy will require resources, labor, commitment, and funds from every possible source to be successful. This DP will leverage the operating funds appropriated to WDFW as well as other available federal and state grant funds that will be sought to help accelerate the pace and scale of necessary work on the landscape. WSRRI has secured funding from USFWS to support initial seed storage and cooling capacity, and WSRRI has applied for significant federal funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support plant material production, project implementation capacity, and habitat restoration on tribal lands.

To maximize the impact of their work, conservation districts creatively leverage state funding with a variety of other local, state, federal, and non-governmental organization grants and partnerships. Districts match every dollar of state funding with up to four dollars of funding from other sources. Additionally, districts are able to complete large projects by pulling together several funding sources where a single grant is insufficient.

Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative Long-Term Strategy 2024-2054:

The Strategy calls for significant expansion of habitat restoration and sustainable working lands management efforts across Eastern Washington's shrubsteppe landscape to not only respond to fire, but to proactively build resiliency before fire occurs. This DP requests funding for direct implementation of priorities identified in the Strategy as described above. The Strategy was built upon the collective work of many including the collaborations, analyses, and plans listed below:

- **Washington State Wildland Fire Protection 10-year Strategic Plan (2019)**
- **Washington's State Wildlife Action Plan (2015)**
- **State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan (2022)**
- **Arid Lands Initiative** Shared Priorities for Conservation at a Landscape Scale and Spatial Conservation Priorities in the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion
- **The Washington Connected Landscapes Project:** Statewide Analysis by the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group

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*

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Description

This project will meet objectives of Washington’s state recovery plans for **Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse**, **Ferruginous Hawk**, **Greater Sage-grouse**, and **Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbit**. Further, the habitat restoration proposed here addresses threats identified in **Washington’s State Wildlife Action Plan** for Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, Loggerhead Shrike, Washington ground squirrel, Townsend’s ground squirrel, American Badger, Sage Trash and other shrubsteppe associated wildlife.

This proposal relates to the following **SCC Strategic Plan** areas:

Voluntary Conservation of Natural Resources

- Goal I. Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
- Goal IV. Improve forest and rangeland health on private land.
- Goal V. Strengthen awareness of natural resources’ value and conservation opportunities

Agricultural and Working Lands Viability and Food System Support

- Goal II. Working lands are available for future generations.
- Goal IV. Economically viable farms, farmland, and strong local and regional food systems.

Climate Resiliency

- Goal I. Equip producers and land stewards to strengthen adaptive management strategies to successful adapt to a changing climate
- Goal V. Strengthen the ability of our natural and working landscapes and communities to prepare for and respond to drought, wildfire, flood, and other climate-related hazards

Leadership, Partnership, and Collaboration

- Goal I. Earn and maintain the trust of partners and decision-makers
- Goal II. Demonstrate leadership in voluntary conservation resulting in innovative natural resource solutions that work
- Goal III. Cultivate a broad and inclusive culture of conservation
- Goal IV. Foster collaborative, holistic, multi-benefit solutions for natural resources and agriculture.

Other connections include the Strategic Plans of the State’s 19 CDs within the Columbia Plateau: **Conservation District Pages**

Does this project include IT related costs, including hardware, software, cloudbased services, contract or staff? If yes, attach [IT Addendum](#).

No

If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail. See Chapter 14 Puget Sound Recovery) in the 2025-27 Operating Budget Instructions (links below) or reach out and I can help.

How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, Clean Buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve efficiency?

This budget request is related to actions currently proposed in the draft Washington’s Climate Resilience Strategy

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Capital Project Request**

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Project Number: 40000050

Project Title: 2025-2027 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency

Description

which is being developed under RCW 70A.05 and will be finalized by September 30, 2024. WSRRI is an action proposed by WDFW within the draft Climate Resilience Strategy.

How does this project impact equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted

WSRRI works to ensure that an equity lens is an ongoing thoughtful process throughout implementation and adaptive management of the Strategy over time. Creating the Strategy involved engaging with Tribes and partners to be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible. WSRRI works to incorporate voices from Tribes in the Columbia Plateau by meeting with available Tribal leadership in person to discuss and incorporate Tribe’s feedback into the Strategy. Restoration opportunity in WSRRI priority habitat areas that are on or near Tribe managed lands are communicated to Tribes in a way that provides a clear pathway for collaborative management and resources from WSRRI for restoration. Partners are engaged by communicating WSRRI strategies and resources to all people in the Columbia Plateau. The priority habitat areas are identified with satellite and landscape habitat data and do not lead to favoritism in project locations. WSRRI ensures that resources for our programs, specifically, habitat restoration and fire impact response, deferred grazing, and wildlife friendly fencing are communicated equally to all Conservation Districts, Counties, and land managers.

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

WSRRI is unique in its collaborative approach as it is not led by one agency; rather, it is a strong and successful tri-agency collaboration that produced a Strategy in collaboration with partners and Tribes. The three agencies are committed to implementing the Strategy over the next 30 years. This funding builds upon the initial investments made by the Legislature through the 2021 Shrubsteppe Proviso and expands its on-the-ground impact on wildlife and people.

Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

Project Type

Grants

Grant Recipient Organization: Conservation Districts

RCW that establishes grant: 89.08

Application process used
competitive

Growth Management impacts

Projects will support local GMA requirements to protect critical areas.

Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reapprops	New Approps
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	60,000,000				5,000,000
	Total	60,000,000	0	0	0	5,000,000

**471 - State Conservation Commission
Capital Project Request**

2025-27 Biennium

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Project Title: 2025-2027 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency

Funding

		Future Fiscal Periods			
		2027-29	2029-31	2031-33	2033-35
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	10,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000
	Total	10,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000

Operating Impacts

Total one time start up and ongoing operating costs

Acct Code	Account Title	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	180,000	175,000	175,000	175,000	175,000
	Total	180,000	175,000	175,000	175,000	175,000

Narrative

for a program manager salaries, benefits, and travel as needed.

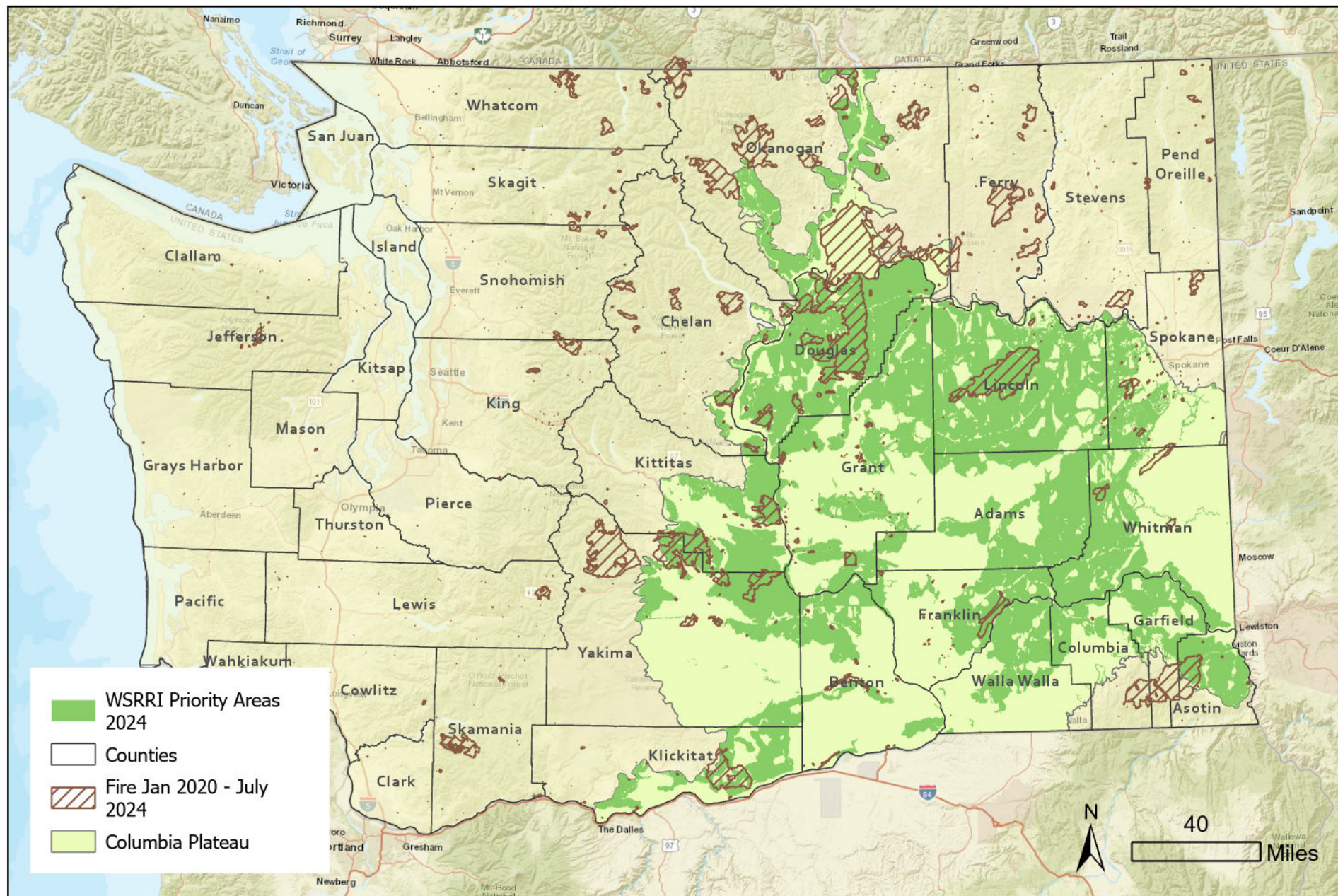
Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

*

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	471	471
Version	25-A	25-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000050	40000050
Sort Order	Project Priority	Priority
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative – Project Area



WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF
**NATURAL
RESOURCES**



Washington Department of
FISH & WILDLIFE



Washington State
**Conservation
Commission**



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200 • (360) 902-2200 • TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

August 1, 2024

David Schumacher, Shelly Willhoite, and Nona Snell
Office of Financial Management
302 Sid Snyder Avenue SW
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative

Dear Mr. Schumacher, Ms. Willhoite, and Ms. Snell:

I write on behalf of The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to express full support for funding a direct appropriation of \$15 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY25-27 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) budget request.

WSRRI is led by a three-agency steering committee that includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). The vision of WSRRI is a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. WSRRI emerged through the support of the Washington State Legislature in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrubsteppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward the initial work called for in the 30-year WSRRI Long Term Strategy and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

By funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program that was established in 2021.

Shrubsteppe Restoration

August 1, 2024

Page 2

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will continue to support WSRRI and look forward to working with SCC, DNR, and many other partners in a collaborative program that will build a resilient shrubsteppe landscape for wildlife and people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kelly Susewind". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kelly Susewind
Director



**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC
LANDS**

1111 WASHINGTON ST SE | MS 47001
OLYMPIA, WA 98504-7001

360-902-1000
WWW.DNR.WA.GOV

August 12, 2024

Director James Thompson
Washington Conservation Commission
PO Box 47721
Olympia, WA 98504-7721

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative

Dear Director Thompson:

I write on behalf of the Washington Department of Natural Resources to express full support for the Washington Conservation Commission's FY 25-27 decision package requesting a \$15 million appropriation for the Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI).

DNR is to partner with SCC and WDFW for the important work being accomplished through the WSRRI. The Legislature initiated WSRRI in 2021 and this is the critical next step for our work to create a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrubsteppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

Through our collaborative partnerships this next investment will ensure we continue our work that will benefit both wildlife and human communities. As you know, WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the last two biennia, including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

We look forward to supporting your WSRRI decision package so that SCC can receive this direct appropriation that will allow for the collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program that was established in 2021.

We look forward to working with SCC, WDFW and our other state, local and private partners to ensure we have sufficient funding to continue to build a resilient shrubsteppe landscape for wildlife and people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian J. Considine".

Brian J. Considine
Legislative Director
Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz
Department of Natural Resources

August 12, 2024

David Schumacher, Shelly Willhoite, and Nona Snell, Office of Financial Management

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative – Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Dear Mr. Schumacher, Ms. Willhoite, and Ms. Snell:

I write on behalf of Foster Creek Conservation District to express full support for funding a direct appropriation of \$15 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY25-27 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) budget request.

The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) is led by a three-agency steering committee that includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). The vision of WSRRI is a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. WSRRI was initiated by the Washington State Legislature in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrubsteppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward the initial work called for in the 30-year WSRRI Long Term Strategy and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

By funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program that was established in 2021.

In Douglas County, this program is vital for so many producers to continue to recover from the impacts of past fires like Pearl Hill Fire in 2020. As an agency we have helped connect 15 different producers with funds from WSRRI to help install 65 miles of fencing infrastructure for working lands, while still providing habitat quality and protection for our key species like the Sage Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse. Foster Creek CD looks forward to working with WDFW, SCC, DNR, and many other partners in a collaborative program that will build a resilient shrubsteppe landscape for wildlife and people. We are proud to get this conservation on the ground.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Becca Hebron', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Becca Hebron, District Manager



Lincoln County Conservation District

July 30, 2024

David Schumacher, Shelly Willhoite, and Nona Snell, Office of Financial Management

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative – Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Dear Mr. Schumacher, Ms. Willhoite, and Ms. Snell:

I write on behalf of the Lincoln County Conservation District we would like to express full support for funding a direct appropriation of \$15 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY25-27 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) budget request.

The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) is led by a three-agency steering committee that includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). The vision of WSRRI is a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. WSRRI was initiated by the Washington State Legislature in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrubsteppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward with the initial work called in the 30-year WSRRI Long Term Strategy and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife-friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

By funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC it will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program established in 2021. We have been involved with WSRRI since 2021 assisting in the establishment and habitat restoration efforts after fires in Lincoln County. We will continue to support WSRRI and look forward to working with WDFW, SCC, DNR, and many other partners in a collaborative program that will build a resilient shrubsteppe landscape for wildlife and people

Sincerely,

Elsa Bowen
District Manager



Okanogan Conservation District

1251 S. Second Ave, Room 102

Okanogan, WA 98840

July 30, 2024

David Schumacher, Shelly Willhoite, and Nona Snell, Office of Financial Management

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative – Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Dear Mr. Schumacher, Ms. Willhoite, and Ms. Snell:

I write on behalf of the Okanogan Conservation District to express full support for funding a direct appropriation of \$15 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY25-27 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) budget request.

The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) is led by a three-agency steering committee that includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). The vision of WSRRI is a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. WSRRI was initiated by the Washington State Legislature in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrubsteppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward the initial work called for in the 30-year WSRRI Long Term Strategy and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

By funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program that was established in 2021.

We will continue to support WSRRI and look forward to working with WDFW, SCC, DNR, and many other partners in a collaborative program that will build a resilient shrubsteppe landscape for wildlife and people.

Sincerely,

Craig T. Nelson
Executive Director



Web and email

conservationnw.org
facebook.com/ConservationNW
info@conservationnw.org

Seattle headquarters

1829 10th Ave W, Suite B
Seattle, WA 98119
206.675.9747
206.675.1007 (fax)

August 2, 2024

David Schumacher, Shelly Willhoite, and Nona Snell, Office of Financial Management

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative – Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Dear Mr. Schumacher, Ms. Willhoite, and Ms. Snell:

I write on behalf of Conservation Northwest (CNW) to express full support for funding a direct appropriation of \$15 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY25-27 Washington Shrub Steppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) budget request.

WSRRI is led by a three-agency steering committee that includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). The vision of WSRRI is a resilient shrub steppe ecosystem, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. WSRRI was initiated by the Washington State Legislature in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrub steppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

Multiple CNW staff have been involved with the WSRRI effort since its inception and have contributed at the field, committee, and long-range planning levels. We have seen and been a part of the great work being done through the funding that initiated with the shrub steppe proviso and is now called WSRRI. We can affirm that dollars are being used wisely to help communities, wildlife and habitats recover from and prevent wildfires. Replacing burned barbed wire fences with wildlife friendly, or even better, virtual fences is especially important to wildlife advocates to improve connectivity on the landscape while benefitting rancher's rotational grazing capabilities at a very affordable price.

WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward the initial work called for in the 30-year WSRRI Long Term Strategy and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrub steppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

Web and email

conservationnw.org
facebook.com/ConservationNW
info@conservationnw.org

Seattle headquarters

1829 10th Ave W, Suite B
Seattle, WA 98119
206.675.9747
206.675.1007 (fax)

By funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program that was established in 2021.

We will continue to support WSRRI and look forward to working with WDFW, SCC, DNR, and many other partners in a collaborative program that will build a resilient shrub steppe landscape for wildlife and people.

Sincerely,

Jay Kehne
Conservation Northwest
Associate Director
Sagelands Heritage Program

August 7, 2024

David Schumacher, Shelly Willhoite, and Nona Snell, Office of Financial Management

Re: Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative and operating budget priorities

Dear Mr. Schumacher, Ms. Willhoite, and Ms. Snell:

I write on behalf of Audubon Washington to express full support for funding a direct appropriation of \$15 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) for the FY25-27 Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) budget request, as well as the following operating budget priorities: \$20M for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), \$3M for the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), and \$6M for Sustainable Farms and Fields (SFF).

Audubon Washington's shrubsteppe program leverages the power of birds—along with Audubon's unique organizational structure—to pursue actions at the local, state, and federal level that benefit ecosystem health. We do this by bringing together the grassroots advocacy strength of our eight local Eastern Washington chapters with the policy, science, and conservation expertise of our state and national offices towards shared goals for shrubsteppe conservation. Audubon's shrubsteppe program addresses urgent landscape-level conservation needs that will have a lasting impact on the well-being of wildlife, people, and the ecological health of the region. We strongly supported the initial funding for WSRRI and continue to support its implementation in multiple ways.

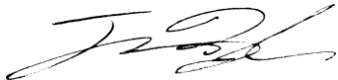
The Washington Shrubsteppe Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WSRRI) is led by a three-agency steering committee that includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC). The vision of WSRRI is a resilient shrubsteppe ecosystem, achieved through collaborative partnerships for the benefit of wildlife and human communities. WSRRI was initiated by the Washington State Legislature in July 2021 in response to unprecedented wildland fires covering more than 600,000 acres of our state's shrubsteppe landscape where 60-80 percent of the habitat in this landscape has already been lost or degraded.

WSRRI and partners are ready to move forward the initial work called for in the 30-year WSRRI Long Term Strategy and build upon initial actions taken with funds appropriated to WDFW and SCC in the 21-23 and 23-25 biennia including habitat restoration (both to recover burned areas and proactively to increase wildland fire resiliency), wildlife friendly fencing projects, increasing the availability of native seeds and plants for shrubsteppe restoration, technical capacity to planned and implemented habitat and species recovery projects, and specialized equipment and necessary storage.

By funding this request and providing direct appropriation of WSRRI funds to SCC will provide for collaborative implementation of WSRRI goals and enable momentum to continue for an effective program that was established in 2021.

We will continue to support WSRRI's policy and budget priorities, as well as other important operating budget priorities for SCC. We look forward to working with WDFW, SCC, DNR, and many other partners in a collaborative program that will build a resilient shrubsteppe landscape for wildlife and people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trina Bayard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Trina Bayard, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Director
Director of Bird Conservation

TAB E

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000046	Project Title:	Natural Resource Investments (NRI)

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000044	Project Title:	Farmland Preservation and Land Access

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000045	Project Title:	Irrigation Efficiencies

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000047	Project Title:	Shellfish

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000043	Project Title:	Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP)

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000048	Project Title:	Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.

Expected Use of Bond/COP Proceeds

Agency No:	4710	Agency Name	State Conservation Commission
Contact Name:	Sarah Groth		
Phone:	(360) 790-3501	Fax:	(360) 407-6215
Fund(s) Number:	057	Fund Name:	State Building Construction Account
Project Number:	40000050	Project Title:	Shrubsteppe

Agencies are required to submit this form for all projects funded with Bonds or COPs, as applicable. OFM will collect and forward the forms to the Office of the State Treasurer.

1. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be owned by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
2. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be leased to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
3. Will any portion of the project or asset ever be managed or operated by any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
4. Will any portion of the project or asset be used to perform sponsored research under an agreement with a nongovernmental entity (business, non-profit entity, or the federal government), including any federal department or agency? Yes No
5. Does the project involve a public/private venture, or will any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments ever have a special priority or other right to use any portion of the project or asset to purchase or otherwise acquire any output of the project or asset such as electric power or water supply? Yes No
6. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be granted or transferred to nongovernmental entities (businesses, non-profit entities, or the federal government) or granted or transferred to other governmental entities which will use the grant for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
7. If you have answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, will your agency or any other state agency receive any payments from any nongovernmental entity, for the use of, or in connection with, the project or assets? A nongovernmental entity is defined as
 - a. any person or private entity, such as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or association;
 - b. any nonprofit corporation (including any 501(c)(3) organization); or
 - c. the federal governmental (including any federal department or agency). Yes No
8. Is any portion of the project or asset, or rights to any portion of the project or asset, expected to be sold to any entity other than the state or one of its agencies or departments? Yes No
9. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be loaned to nongovernmental entities or loaned to other governmental entities that will use the loan for nongovernmental purposes? Yes No
10. Will any portion of the Bond/COP proceeds be used for staff costs for tasks not directly related to a financed project(s)? Yes No

If all of the answers to the questions above are "No," request tax-exempt funding. If the answer to any of the questions is "Yes," contact your OFM capital analyst for further review.