



Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
Habitat Restoration Program
Habitat Restoration Design and Implementation Project Application Process

Applications Due: **4:00 pm, Friday, October 18, 2019**
Submit Applications Electronically To: ccorbett@estuarypartnership.org



**Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss project ideas with the Estuary Partnership before applying.
To discuss project ideas or to ask questions about the application process, please contact:**

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Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
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APPLICATION PROCESS FOR HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS IN THE LOWER COLUMBIA RIVER AND ESTUARY

INTRODUCTION

The Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (Estuary Partnership) is accepting proposals for habitat restoration projects in the lower Columbia River and estuary. Since 2000, the Estuary Partnership, as part of its Ecosystem Restoration Program, has secured funds from a variety of sources to disperse towards local restoration projects throughout its study area. A significant portion of the projects funded have been focused on habitat for threatened and endangered species.

The Estuary Partnership has received an award through the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to review and provide funding for habitat restoration projects designed to improve the access to, and quality of, juvenile rearing habitats for salmonid populations that inhabit the Columbia River Basin. The primary objective of this solicitation is to identify salmonid restoration and protection projects to help satisfy mitigation requirements established in the Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS BiOp).

OBJECTIVE

The lower Columbia River and estuary provide juvenile salmonids refuge from predators, feeding grounds, and areas to transition physiologically from freshwater to saltwater, and thus are critical areas in the migration corridor for all Columbia Basin salmonid species, especially those listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. In the last 100 years, the amount of wetland habitat in this important region has decreased by as much as 75% from historical levels because of many activities, including development, agriculture, and hydrosystem operations. Restoration of habitat for juvenile salmonids migrating through the lower Columbia River and estuary is an important component of regional salmonid recovery efforts.

ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP BACKGROUND

The Estuary Partnership works to protect and restore the nationally significant lower Columbia River and estuary, one of 28 estuaries in the nation designated as an “Estuary of National Significance.” The Estuary Partnership is a collaborative program of the states of Oregon and Washington, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses and economic interests and citizens. The Estuary Partnership works in three areas to: protect the ecosystem and species, reduce toxic and conventional pollution, and provide information about the river to a range of audiences.

The Estuary Partnership’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (*Management Plan*) calls for the restoration of 25,000 acres by 2025. The *Management Plan* is an ecosystem-based plan that incorporates species recovery, but also works to ensure all habitats for fish and wildlife are protected and restored.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

Eligible applicants include: any state, county, city, town, conservation district, or other political subdivision; municipal or quasi-municipal corporations; for profit private sector corporations; any tribe recognized by the federal government; most non-profit, community, civic and environmental organizations; and schools, school districts, community colleges, and universities. **Individuals are not eligible to apply.**

GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

Projects shall be located in the National Estuary Program boundaries of the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (Figure 1). The Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership study area encompasses the lower 146 river miles of the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam to the Pacific Ocean.

For this request for proposals, projects must be located within the area of contemporary tidal influence.



Figure 1: Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership Study Area

FUNDING

Project applications are accepted throughout the year and reviewed by the Estuary Partnership's Project Review Committee three times each year. The Estuary Partnership estimates that up to \$2,000,000 will be available annually for restoration projects. Individual award amounts are expected to range between \$50,000 and \$500,000, although all requests that meet the funding criteria will be considered. The next round of review for project proposals will be in January 2020.

Projects selected for funding will demonstrate significant benefits to Columbia River salmon and steelhead. Please note that not all of the project proposals submitted may be funded.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECT PROPOSALS

Funds pursuant to this request for proposals can be used to support multiple phases of restoration projects, including planning and design, permitting, and project implementation. Projects that achieve physical and measurable habitat improvements may be given preference over others. Project sponsors are strongly encouraged to discuss potential proposals with the Estuary Partnership. Please contact Catherine Corbett (ccorbett@estuarypartnership.org).

All project proposals shall meet the following requirements:

- **FCRPS BiOp.** Increase access to and improve the quality of juvenile salmonid habitat;
- **Estuary Recovery Plan Module.** Provide spatial metrics (acreage/feet) of proposed restoration activities and

how they relate to listed Management Actions, specifically CRE-1, 9, 10, and/or 15.

- **Action Effectiveness Monitoring.** All projects supported by this funding are required to include pre and post construction action effectiveness monitoring data collection for Level 3 standard metrics (photo points, water surface elevation, water temperature, sediment accretion, site topography and the location/time of monitoring). For more information, please contact the Estuary Partnership Research Scientist, Matthew Schwartz (mschwartz@estuarypartnership.org at 503-226-1565 ext. 223). Additionally, project proponents are required to use the standardized monitoring protocols found in *Protocols for Monitoring Habitat Restoration Projects in the Lower Columbia River and Estuary* (Roegner, et al. 2009). This document is available at:
http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/assets/25/861_04272009_142851_ProtocolsForMonitoringTM97WebFinal.pdf
- **Estuary Partnership Management Plan.** Implement an aspect of the Estuary Partnership Management Plan, available at
<http://www.estuarypartnership.org/sites/default/files/CCMP%20Action%20Update%20Final%200212.pdf>;
- **Estuary Partnership Study Area.** Be located in the tidally influenced portions of the Estuary Partnership study area.

Additionally, proposals incorporating the following elements may receive preference over others:

- Projects that result in tangible **on-the-ground** restoration of specific resources, including restoration of estuarine habitats, slough and drainage networks, and wetland habitats through:
 - Breaching or removing levees;
 - Removing tide gates or culverts;
 - Reestablishing flow patterns that have been altered by causeways, pile dikes, and tide gates;
 - Restoring channels in inter-tidal areas;
 - Restoring and enhancing connections between lakes, sloughs, side channels, or floodplains with the mainstem of the Columbia River.
- Projects that use passive restoration techniques to return the habitat to its natural conditions.
- Projects that support the recovery of multiple salmonid Evolutionary Significant Units (ESUs).

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The project application form, available on the Estuary Partnership's Project Applications webpage (<http://www.estuarypartnership.org/resource/restoration-design-and-implementation-project-application-form>), shall be used when submitting an application. *Please ensure that all information requested is included in the completed application.* In addition to the project application form, guidance documents are also available on the Project Application webpage. A complete application shall include:

1. Background and Project Description
2. Project Narrative
3. Project Budget
4. Project Map and Site Photos

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals will be evaluated against the Estuary Partnership's project review criteria. Full criteria descriptions, and the number of points that different criteria are worth, are available at:
(http://www.estuarypartnership.org/sites/default/files/Rest_EP%20Review%20Criteria.pdf).

The Estuary Partnership's Project Review Committee will formally score project proposals based on the Estuary Partnership's project review criteria. The Project Review Committee will use the answers to the questions contained in the Project Narrative (Section 2) of the application to inform its project scoring methodology. Before the Project Review Committee formally scores the projects, project sponsors shall have the opportunity to present their projects to the Committee. As part of the review process, site visits by reviewers are expected to occur before the Project Review Committee scores projects. At its discretion, the Project Review Committee may use supplemental information, including the Estuary Partnership's Restoration Prioritization Strategy (<http://www.estuarypartnership.org/restoration-prioritization-strategy>) when reviewing and evaluating projects. The Project Review Committee provides a ranked list of projects and funding recommendations to BPA. BPA will make

final funding decisions and pursuant to that decision may require additional project review.

As part of its review process, BPA may evaluate project proposals against the review criteria used by the Expert Regional Technical Group (ERTG). The ERTG, formed in response to the 2008 FCRPS BiOp, is responsible for assigning survival benefits units (SBUs) for juvenile salmon to restoration projects. SBUs are an indication of a restoration project's potential contribution to mitigation requirements pursuant to the 2008 FCRPS BiOp. ERTG review criteria include certainty of success, potential access benefit, and potential capacity benefit from the project. Full descriptions of the ERTG criteria can be found in the ERTG Resources document, available at http://www.estuarypartnership.org/sites/default/files/Rest_ERTG%20Resources.pdf. After a project is evaluated against these criteria, the ERTG calculates an SBU score for the project. The process for assigning SBUs is explained in the ERTG's SBU History and Calculator Description document (http://www.estuarypartnership.org/sites/default/files/Rest_SBU%20History%20and%20Calculator.pdf).

SELECTED PROJECTS

Projects selected for funding shall also meet the following requirements:

Compliance with Laws: Applicant's Permit Requirements. Applicants shall provide where relevant a list and status (obtained, application filed, anticipated approval date, or have not applied) of all necessary federal (including NEPA), state, tribal and local permits required to complete the project. The Estuary Partnership will require copies of permit and compliance documentation once the documentation is secured. Contractors will be required to satisfy all financial and programmatic requirements and meet all local, state and tribal environmental laws and federal consistency requirements before project implementation.

Administrative and Reporting Requirements. After the selection process and before work begins, the selected applicants will work with the Estuary Partnership to create a Statement of Work that includes a narrative description of tasks, an outline of deliverables, financial and programmatic reporting requirements, and an itemized budget. Contractors are required to have a safety plan in place for any volunteers working on the project (e.g., liability waivers). The current set of terms and conditions that are required for work funded by BPA is available at [BPA Revised Terms and Conditions for Contracts April 2018](#), however additional clauses may apply.

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