

For Immediate Release

February 5, 2019

Call for Project Proposals: Salmon Habitat Restoration and Protection in the Chehalis River Basin

Would you like to see thriving salmon populations in your local rivers and streams? Do you have an idea for a salmon habitat restoration project in your community? If so, you will be pleased to know that the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity is soliciting applications for salmon habitat restoration and protection projects for the 2019 grant year through the state's Salmon Recovery Funding Board program.

What is a salmon habitat restoration project?

A salmon's habitat is the condition in and around the water that the fish needs to thrive. Maintaining and restoring those conditions can occur in many ways.

Types of projects that benefit salmon include planting native vegetation along stream banks, reconnecting side-channels with a river main stem, placing tree trunks and large branches in creeks to provide shelter and create pools, and removing invasive plant species from streambanks. Protecting land containing key habitats that are either in pristine condition or could benefit from restoration is also an eligible activity for this grant.

The most common restoration actions that have taken place in the Chehalis Basin over the past few decades have been fish barrier corrections. Undersized and poorly constructed culverts impede salmon passage, making it impossible for an adult salmon to access spawning habitat, or for a juvenile salmon to access feeding areas. By correcting barrier culverts, we allow a stream to fully use its channel and salmon to fully use their habitat.

What are some habitat restoration projects that have been completed recently?

The Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force used a grant to design and get permits to remove two barriers to fish migration on Taylor Creek, southeast of Elma. The barriers were replaced with a structure that is passable to all salmon and opened access to 2.86 miles of excellent spawning and rearing habitat in forestlands.

The Lewis County Public Works Department used this grant to design a project to remove a 4-foot-round corrugated metal pipe that carries Van Ornum Creek under Bunker Creek Road.

The Chehalis River Basin Land Trust used this grant to design a project to restore tidal action and fish passage to a railroad-impounded wetland along the Middle Fork Hoquiam River and the Hoquiam River, on land owned by the Trust.

Capitol Land Trust bought a voluntary land preservation agreement, also called a conservation easement, which will limit farming to areas currently farmed, widen shoreline buffers to 100 feet on the salmon-bearing Black River and Beaver Creek, and limit development intensity and location on the property, all reducing water pollution and increasing the shade and cover that fish need.

The Lewis Conservation District used a grant to remove three barriers to fish passage in the Middle Fork Newaukum River, near Onalaska. Additional cool water habitat is now open to coho salmon, steelhead, and resident and searun cutthroat trout.

How much funding is available for projects?

The minimum amount of funding eligible applicants can apply for is \$5,000. There is no maximum, but the total amount available for all projects in the river basin is approximately \$600,000. Each grant needs to be “matched” with funds from other sources, equivalent to 15% of the total project cost.

How do I apply?

To apply, eligible applicants must submit a project form to the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity by April 2nd, 2019. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the Lead Entity Coordinator, Kirsten Harma, at kharma@chehalisribe.org, to discuss their project idea. To learn more about how to apply and to download application materials, visit the Chehalis Lead Entity website www.chehalisleadentity.org (see “For Grant Applicants”).

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For more information, contact:

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