



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Saltwater Algae Program

Grant Guidelines

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Saltwater Algae Program

Grant Guidelines

*Prepared by
The Water Quality Program's
Financial Management Section*

Water Quality Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

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The Saltwater Algae Program

What is the Saltwater Algae Program?

The 2009 Washington State Legislature set aside funds in the Freshwater Algae Control account during the 2009-11 biennium for grants to “manage and study excessive saltwater algae with an emphasis on the periodic accumulation of sea lettuce on Puget Sound beaches.”

The legislation authorized the Department of Ecology to provide grants to cities, counties, tribes, special purpose districts, and state agencies.

Background

Beaches in Puget Sound are fertile grounds for blooms of sea lettuce (several species of the genus *Ulva*). Sea lettuce, because of its rapid growth rate and thin leafy structure, can accumulate rapidly in thick piles driven by winds and ocean currents. Sea lettuce grows in shallow bays and inlets when the long hours of bright sunlight of the summer combine with a lack of wind and an influx of nutrients from a variety of sources. All types of seaweeds, including sea lettuce, are essential components of the Puget Sound ecosystem. They provide food for several species of sea birds, fish, and other marine animals, as well as shelter for several fish species.

At times, sea lettuce accumulates on beaches and its decay releases unpleasant odors. Residents living near these accumulations would like to manage the accumulated material and reduce the impact on their ability to enjoy the shoreline.

Ecology’s grants under the Saltwater Algae Program will target projects involving the management of sea lettuce accumulations, as well as research on the environmental processes that produce the blooms and distribute the algae; long-term trends of sea lettuce accumulations; and the impacts of these accumulations on habitat, human health, and quality of life. Because this program is funded only for the 2009-11 biennium, applicants seeking a grant for management of accumulations will be required to plan for the formation of a beach management district to provide long-term funding.

Who can apply?

Ecology will accept applications for Saltwater Algae grants from state agencies, cities, counties, tribes, and special purpose districts to fund projects to manage or study excessive saltwater algae growth. Federal agencies are *not* eligible for funding.

How much money is available?

The Legislature set aside \$140,000 out of the 2009-11 biennial budget for this one-time, competitive program. These funds will be distributed approximately equally between applicants with projects to study the saltwater algae and projects to manage excessive algae growth.

How are the guidelines organized?

The Saltwater Algae Guidelines describe the funding process in chronological order, starting with general information, then application assistance, and finally guidance for financial management once Ecology awards a grant. Applicants for grants are encouraged to read these guidelines before applying for funds.

You can obtain more copies of the guidelines, application forms, and further information about the Saltwater Algae Control Program from Ecology's website at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/SWalgae/index.html>

You can also contact:

Melanie Tyler
Financial Management Section
Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600
Telephone: 360-407-7489;
E-mail address: Melanie.Tyler@ecy.wa.gov

How the Saltwater Algae Program Will Work

The Saltwater Algae program will run concurrently with the Aquatic Weeds Management Program annual funding cycle. The application period opens October 1, 2009, and closes on November 2, 2009. Ecology will evaluate grant applications according to criteria established in these guidelines. Ecology will provide a list of projects proposed for funding within two months after the application deadline.

For this program, applicants have up to six months from the date of the offer letter to negotiate an agreement.

Ecology expects those who receive grants to proceed with their project in a timely manner. Because of the way this program is funded, Saltwater Algae projects must be completed by June 30, 2011. Unless the Legislature re-authorizes the program, Ecology will not be able to allow any time extensions beyond this date.

General project requirements

Applicants must demonstrate that their projects will:

- Manage the accumulation of excessive saltwater algae on Puget Sound beaches; or
- Research the processes that result in these accumulations; or
- Research the effects of management strategies; or
- Research the impacts of sea lettuce accumulations on habitat, human health, and quality of life.

Ecology will give funding priority to projects in areas where a beach management district has been formed. Ecology will also give priority to projects in areas where documented excessive accumulations have occurred within the past three years.

Management projects must include the following:

- Education and outreach: Activities designed to inform property owners and beach users about saltwater algae, environmental processes that result in its accumulation, and ways to reduce human impacts on the shoreline ecosystem.
- A plan to form a beach management district (if one does not already exist) for the affected area. (See Chapter 36.61 RCW Lake and beach management districts for information about beach management districts.)
- A plan to obtain the appropriate permits if in-water removal is proposed. Grant recipients may be required to obtain permits from a local government (for example, city or county), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and possibly from the US Army Corps of Engineers. If a project includes removal on state-owned aquatic lands, the recipient may be required to obtain an aquatic lands lease or right-of-access from the State Department of Natural Resources. The recipient will also need to identify an appropriate legal upland disposal site willing to accept the material.

- Decision criteria to identify when removal is warranted, based on hydrogen sulfide concentrations or other odor monitoring, in consultation with appropriate agency fisheries' biologists.

Maximum grant amounts

Ecology has set the maximum grant amount for Saltwater Algae program grants for *management* of algae at \$35,000 (\$46,667 total eligible project cost assuming 25 percent match) for each project selected for funding.

Maximum grant amounts per grant recipient

The maximum grant amount per grant recipient is \$70,000. That is, one recipient could apply for and be awarded grants for two project proposals.

Local match requirements

Grant recipients are required to provide matching funds for Saltwater Algae grants. Projects will be funded at 75 percent state share and 25 percent local share.

Match can consist of any combination of cash, interlocal costs, or in-kind contributions (volunteer labor and/or donated materials).

Eligible activities

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Education and outreach.
- Saltwater algae management and removal.
- Investigations of the effects of saltwater algae accumulation removal.
- Saltwater algae research or studies investigating underlying causes of intense sea lettuce growth.
- Nutrient control and reduction activities including septic system testing and other nutrient source investigations.
- Formation of a beach management district.

Projects on any Puget Sound or Strait of Juan de Fuca shoreline are eligible for funding.

Ineligible projects

- Septic system repair and replacement
- Projects proposing to relocate rather than remove excess saltwater algae
- Projects dealing with invasive, non-native algae (Sargassum, Undaria, etc.)

How to Apply for Saltwater Algae Projects

Ecology will accept applications for these projects October 1, 2009, through November 2, 2009.

Eligible applicants can request an application packet from Ecology or download an application at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/SWalgae/index.html>

The grant application consists of two parts. In part one of the application, the applicant is asked to provide general information including funds requested and the project location. In part two, the applicant is asked to provide detailed information about the project. Ecology uses part two of the application to evaluate and score the proposals.

The applicant should submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of the application for evaluation purposes. The hard copy must be an original with an original signature of a person authorized to sign on behalf of the applicant. **Ecology must receive these applications by the application deadline. The deadline is close of business on November 2, 2009.** The applicant must deliver the hard copy application (by hand, mail, or package delivery service) to Ecology's headquarters building in Lacey. The electronic copy may be delivered on disk (CD or DVD) or emailed to Melanie Tyler at mety461@ecy.wa.gov. Applications must *not* be delivered to the Ecology regional offices.

Ecology's mailing address:

Melanie Tyler
Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Ecology's physical address for those who plan to hand deliver or overnight the application:

Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Drive
Lacey, WA 98503

See Appendix C for driving directions to the Ecology Headquarters Building.

Project proposal

The project proposal should answer the following questions or include the following elements:

1. Is this a management project or a saltwater algae research project?
2. Which water body or water bodies are being targeted for action? The applicant must include a map of the targeted water body with the application.

3. If this is a saltwater algae **management** project, has the targeted area experienced an excessive accumulation of saltwater algae in recent years? Provide verification from a third party; this could be published reports, plans, articles, or studies looking at the problem in the target area.
4. For **management** projects: How are the saltwater algae impacting the targeted water body—or how will this project benefit the public? *Impacted uses could include loss of or impacts to: swimming, boating, fishing, hunting; fisheries, wildlife, and waterfowl uses; and aesthetics or odor control.*
5. For **research** projects: How will the results improve our understanding of saltwater algae accumulations in Puget Sound as a whole or in particular bays and beaches. Or how will this project help guide management of this problem?
6. What are the project goals? What will you accomplish by undertaking this project?
7. How will you achieve your project goals? Discuss and describe specific methods you will use.
8. Does this project have statewide or regional significance? *Examples of statewide significant projects include: Public education projects with a regional or statewide target audience; projects that demonstrate new saltwater algae control techniques (pilot projects); projects that commit to disseminating information about the project or project methods to a regional or statewide audience (demonstration projects); and projects conducted in water bodies of statewide significance.*
9. Who are the key people who will make this project a success? *Please list the people who will actually lead or work on the project. Note their commitment to the project and any special skills they bring to the endeavor.*
10. For **management** projects: Do you have local citizen support for the project — especially support of citizens who live on, use, or have an interest in managing the accumulation of saltwater algae in the targeted area? What is the long-term commitment to this project? Are the applicant and beach residents prepared to continue implementation of long-term objectives without grant support?

Local interest may be shown by the establishment of a continuing funding source such as a beach management district, by publication of newsletters, public meetings, or volunteers willing to devote time to this project and permission of waterfront property owners to access the beach or shoreline.
11. Explain why you think this project will be successful. How will you evaluate success?
12. Provide a detailed project budget and a timeline for project completion.

Project evaluation

Ecology is looking for well thought out projects with clear goals and achievable objectives and outcomes. Ecology staff will review and rate each project proposal with the following priorities in mind:

1. Projects on beaches where excessive accumulations of saltwater algae have occurred within the past three years; projects in these areas that also have an established Beach Management District will receive the highest funding priority.
2. Projects that include establishing a Beach Management District as one of its primary goals.
3. High quality nutrient control and reduction activities.
4. High quality education projects.
5. High quality research projects that increase understanding of trends in saltwater algae accumulations in Puget Sound as a whole or in particular bays and beaches.

Selection process

Eligibility review

Ecology will *not* accept any additional or revised project information after the application deadline, but may request clarification of budget or eligibility information. After the close of the application period, Ecology staff will review the applications to determine if the proposed projects meet general eligibility criteria. Ecology staff may contact applicants or other state or local agencies to clarify or verify information contained in or referenced in an application. If a proposed project does not appear to meet these criteria, Ecology will notify applicants of their potential disqualification. Applicants will have two weeks from notification to submit a request for reconsideration with an explanation to demonstrate that the proposed project meets eligibility criteria.

Project proposal evaluation

Saltwater algae and water quality specialists from Ecology regional and headquarters offices will review and evaluate Saltwater Algae grant applications. The information contained in the grant application is the basis on which the project is reviewed and evaluated. If Ecology funds the project, the scope of work in the grant agreement will be based on information from the application. Ecology may withdraw the funding offer if the applicant proposes major changes to the scope of work during the negotiation process. Ecology will offer funding to applicants for high priority projects based on the availability of funds.

Funding list

Ecology will develop a final offer list after staff review and evaluate all eligible applications. After Ecology's Water Quality Program Manager approves the list, Ecology will issue the list within two months after the application deadline. Ecology will send a grant offer letter to applicants proposed for funding within 15 days of the date of the funding list. The letter will identify any special grant conditions and the Ecology project manager who is responsible for negotiating the grant agreement. Grant offers are effective for six months from the date of the offer letter. Ecology will consider a recipient who is unable to negotiate a signed grant agreement during this time to have declined the grant offer.

Developing a Grant Agreement

Developing and signing agreements

Ecology will notify the recipient by telephone and letter when a project is proposed for funding on the final offer list. Ecology's project manager assigned to the proposed project will develop a draft grant agreement based on the scope of work in the grant application. The project manager and the recipient will confer by phone or in a work session to resolve concerns, refine the draft scope of work, and discuss the grant requirements and the budget. Both parties will finalize the grant agreement after they concur on an appropriate scope of work, schedule, eligible costs, and other details. A final project report is a requirement in Saltwater Algae grant agreements, and educational activities are encouraged.

Prior authorization

Ecology recognizes that under certain circumstances, it may be necessary to commence work on a project in advance of a signed and executed grant agreement. In addition, various projects may be required to meet certain environmental conditions or may be bound through permit requirements to proceed by a certain date. Under such circumstances and by written request of the applicant, Ecology may provide the applicant written authority to incur grant eligible expenses.

Ecology will not release funds until a grant agreement is signed. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the written notification of prior authorization from Ecology (*the prior authorization date*) will be the sole responsibility of the recipient. Until the recipient signs a grant agreement, it must assume responsibility for costs incurred as prior authorization does not guarantee by that a grant will be awarded. Any work performed by the recipient that is not consistent with the conditions specified in Ecology's prior authorization letter and all other applicable criteria will not be eligible for grant funds.

Important dates in agreements

The grant agreement becomes effective on the date that Ecology's Water Quality Program Manager (or designee) signs the agreement, unless otherwise stated in the agreement. Any costs incurred before this *effective date* are not eligible for reimbursement unless the recipient obtains prior authorization in writing from Ecology. If the recipient does not begin work on the funded project within four months of the effective date (or another mutually acceptable start date), Ecology reserves the right to terminate the agreement.

The *expiration date* is the date the grant is no longer in effect. Both parties negotiate this date as part of the grant agreement. The recipient should complete all required work before this date. Unless the Saltwater Algae Program is extended by the Legislature, June 30, 2011, will be the latest expiration date permitted.

Costs incurred after the expiration date are not eligible for reimbursement unless Ecology extends this expiration date by an amendment.

Amendments to agreements

All modifications and changes to grant agreements and scopes of work must be established in writing as amendments to the agreement. This can be done only through a formal or letter amendment as described in *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*, available on the internet at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/9118.html>, or from your project manager.

General Guidance

Local match requirements

The recipient must match state grant funds with local funds. Local match may be cash, a grant, or loan from another source, or in-kind contributions such as local volunteer time or donated materials. The cost of goods and services provided to a recipient by another eligible local government under the terms of an interlocal agreement is also eligible for local match. Please refer to the *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*.

Saltwater Algae project matching requirements are 75 percent state share and 25 percent local share. For all projects, the match can be any combination of cash, in-kind contributions, or interlocal costs (considered a form of in-kind).

In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions must meet the requirements explained in *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*. In addition, in-kind contributions are subject to the following limits:

- In-kind contributions must relate directly to the funded activity.
- In-kind contributions are limited to time, material, or real or personal property donated to the grant recipient to fulfill project requirements.
- Volunteers may donate time at Ecology's accepted in-kind rate (\$15.00 per hour for adults and minimum wage for volunteers 18 and under).
- Volunteered time from individuals receiving compensation through the grant does not count as an in-kind contribution.
- The recipient must fully document in-kind contributions.
- The recipient must report in-kind contributions on the Contributed Services Report Forms (or equivalent form) available from Ecology.

Interlocal agreements

Contributions from another public body may be eligible for grant participation if there is a signed interlocal agreement. The recipient may use salaries and benefits paid by the contributing public body as cash match to the grant. All indirect rates associated with the contributed salaries and benefits and other costs are ineligible for grant participation. By signing the grant agreement, the recipient certifies that all negotiated Interlocal Cost Agreements and Interlocal Agreements are consistent with the grant agreement terms and conditions and Chapter 39.34 RCW, Interlocal

Cooperation Act. To be eligible, interlocal costs must meet the conditions specified in *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*.

Procuring goods and services

The grant recipient is responsible for the procurement of goods and services in a manner consistent with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, orders, regulations, and permits including those related to discrimination, labor, job safety, and the state regulation for minority- and women-owned business. Ecology requirements for procurement are contained in *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*. By signing the grant agreement, the recipient certifies that they procured all consulting and personal services in accordance with Chapter 39.80 RCW, *Contracts for Architectural and Engineering Services*, and other applicable state laws and regulations. Recipients must submit a copy of the final signed consultant/engineering contract to the project manager. The project manager will review the contract for eligibility and consistency with the grant requirements.

Public awareness

Recipients are encouraged to inform the public about the project and the participation of Ecology in the project through project signs, the media, or other public announcements. Announcements usually include the goals of the project, total cost, and the involvement of Ecology.

Appeals process

Once both parties sign the grant agreement and work begins, the recipient may appeal a written decision by an Ecology project manager through a formal appeals process. The recipient must file an appeal in writing with the Ecology Water Quality Program Manager within 30 days from the date of Ecology's final written decision on the issue. The Water Quality Program Manager will appoint an appeals panel and the members of the panel will address the issue. Ecology's appeal determination is final and conclusive. The recipient must file any appeal of Ecology's final determination in the Superior Court of Thurston County.

Following a final decision of a dispute, Ecology and the recipient will proceed with the project in accordance with the decision rendered. Administrative or legal costs and other expenses incurred as part of an appeal will not be eligible for reimbursement under the grant.

The project manager can provide further details of the appeal process.

Financial Management and Administration of Grants

Grant recipients must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, orders, regulations, and permits including those related to discrimination, labor, job safety, and applicable provisions of the state or federal regulations for minority- and women-owned businesses. Recipients must also secure any necessary permits required by authorities having jurisdiction over the project and must provide documentation to Ecology upon request.

All grant recipients are required to maintain accounting records in accordance with generally accepted government accounting standards. These standards include those contained in the most recent editions of the United State General Accounting Office publication, *Standards for Audit of Government Organizations, Programs, Activities, and Functions*, and *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*. In addition, grant recipients are required to maintain an accounting system that can track project expenditures separately from general local government expenses.

Ecology may conduct periodic administrative reviews of funded projects to evaluate a recipient's records and accounting systems. These reviews are intended to verify that eligible and ineligible costs have been documented for audit and that recipients are complying with applicable state statutes, regulations, and requirements (including special grant conditions).

Grant disbursements and payments

Payments are disbursed as costs are incurred. Recipients will submit requests for payment at least quarterly, but not more than monthly, except in exceptional circumstances.

Payment requests and progress reports

All payment requests must follow the procedures described in *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*. Payment request forms are available online or from Ecology's project manager.

Recipients are to submit progress reports quarterly, unless otherwise established in the grant agreement. Progress reports are due 15 days after the end of the reporting period

In addition to a description of the progress made, the progress report should describe any problem, delay, or adverse condition that will affect the objectives, time schedule, or tasks. The recipient should include a statement of the corrective or compensatory actions taken or proposed, and should identify any Ecology assistance that may be needed.

Payment holds or termination

If a recipient does not satisfy all conditions contained in the agreement, Ecology may withhold payment, decrease the agreement by an amount proportionate to the incomplete work, or terminate the agreement. Following termination, Ecology may require the recipient to repay all or a portion of the funds dispersed.

Termination may also result in a financial settlement, reflected in an amendment to the grant agreement. In such a settlement, the recipient must demonstrate to Ecology's satisfaction that a specific portion of the project's agreed upon scope of work was accomplished. The Water Quality Program Manager must issue a written notice of termination at least five working days prior to the effective date of the termination.

Saltwater Algae Glossary

Applicant

A project sponsor – must be a city, county, state agency, conservation district, tribe, or special purpose district.

Effective date

The grant agreement becomes effective on the date that the Water Quality Program Manager signs the agreement, unless otherwise stated in the agreement.

Eligible cost

The portion of the cost of activities financed under the provisions of these guidelines.

Grant agreement

A contractual arrangement between a public body and Ecology that includes an approved scope of work, total project cost, set grant percentage, eligible costs, budget, and a schedule for project completion (in addition to other requirements).

Indirect costs

Costs that benefit more than one activity of the recipient and not directly assigned to a particular project objective. For example: insurance, operating supplies, and utility services. Some portion of these costs may be eligible for reimbursement. Please refer to *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*.

In-kind contributions

Property or services that benefit a project and are contributed to the recipient without direct monetary compensation. For example: volunteer hours or equipment donated for a project.

Local share or match

Local match is the percentage of costs that the recipient contributes to the project, including actual cash, interlocal, and in-kind contributions. For Saltwater Algae projects, recipients must contribute 25 percent of the total project cost. The state contributes 75 percent.

Saltwater algae

In this document, saltwater algae refers to sea lettuce, which is any of a number of species of the genus, *Ulva* (including species formally in the genus *Enteromorpha*), *Ulvaria*, or *Monostroma*. Sea lettuce is a bright green algae composed of lobed, ruffle-edged leaves that are coarse and sheet-like and resemble a leaf of lettuce. The leaves may appear flat, thin, broad, and often rounded or oval. Its leaves are often perforated with holes of various sizes. Almost no stalk exists at the point of attachment, and no true roots are present.

References

1. *Administrative Requirements for Ecology Grants and Loans*, Washington Department of Ecology Publication No. 91-18, September 2005.
2. *Blooms of Ulvoids in Puget Sound*, prepared by Gretchen Frankenstein for The Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, November 2000. Available on the web at:
http://www.psparchives.com/publications/our_work/science/blooms_report.pdf
3. *Focus on Saltwater Beach Odors*, Washington Department of Ecology Publication 07-10-054, November 2007.