

Environmental Justice Strategy

Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead

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Background

As the state's lead environmental agency, the Washington State Department of Ecology's (Ecology) mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance the environment for current and future generations. As we work to build a healthier environment, we must make sure no community is overburdened by environmental pollution, and that we strive to eliminate environmental and health disparities. Ecology, the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC), and Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), established a partnership coalition to promote innovative and sustainable approaches to riparian management. Restoration of damaged riparian systems takes partnering across jurisdictional boundaries, working with both private and public landowners, and coordinating across state, federal, and Tribal governments. Partnering on this award is a commitment to working together to solve some of the biggest challenges in Washington's waterways.

The Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead (CR2SL) program will administer subawards to Puget Sound partners that result in greater area of riparian acreage protected, restored, or maintained for climate resiliency.

Surrounding Puget Sound communities will benefit from resulting riparian restoration efforts in a variety of social, environmental, and financial ways. Some of the measurable benefits include an increase in canopy cover and green spaces, improved water quality in the surrounding communities, and improved habitat for fish and aquatic life.

Purpose

The purpose of the CR2SL Environmental Justice Strategy (Strategy) is to ensure that the CR2SL program evaluates proposals and administers EPA funds through the lens of equitable and fair access to the benefits from environmental programs for all individuals. This Strategy outlines how funding will be utilized to increase investments in overburdened and/or vulnerable communities and how we will track those benefits.

In compliance with the HEAL Act, Ecology has completed an [Environmental Justice Assessment](#)¹ to identify ways that the funding program can equitably distribute and involve impacted

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2406021.html>

communities. This Strategy outlines ways that the CR2SL program will incorporate these findings as practices in a proactive manner throughout the life cycle of the funding program.

Program Overview

The CR2SL 2024 November Solicitation for applications will competitively allocate approximately \$9 million in funding from the EPA's National Program Office to riparian restoration focused proposals. As funding allows, another solicitation will be released in Spring of 2025 to include updates on the investment priorities and allocation of approximately \$2 million.

The 2024 November Solicitation will encourage applicants to propose collaborative and programmatic projects that include activities from one and up to all of the funding priorities. The focus of future solicitations will be determined after the November 2024 solicitation is complete and may consider smaller scale proposals or activities under a single priority that demonstrate innovation and/or a meaningful local impact.

The final solicitation is anticipated to launch in Fall of 2025 to distribute the remaining grant award funding, likely around \$6.2 million. Recipients may be eligible to re-apply, subject to satisfactory performance, for additional funding using a simplified process.

Program footprint

The geographic footprint of the CR2SL grant program is the boundary of all 19 Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA's) that comprise the Puget Sound basin (see Figure 1). This footprint is inclusive of the entirety of the watersheds, from the headwaters to the point where the rivers enter Puget Sound. Eligible grant applicants focused on river restoration and protection, and climate resiliency activities within this area will be eligible for receiving subawards through the CR2SL grant program. Therefore, any census tract within, or intersecting, WRIA's 1-19 have the potential to be affected by this action. Communities adjacent to rivers or located within riparian areas are those most likely impacted by the program. At this time, it is unknown who will apply for funding and where projects will be implemented.

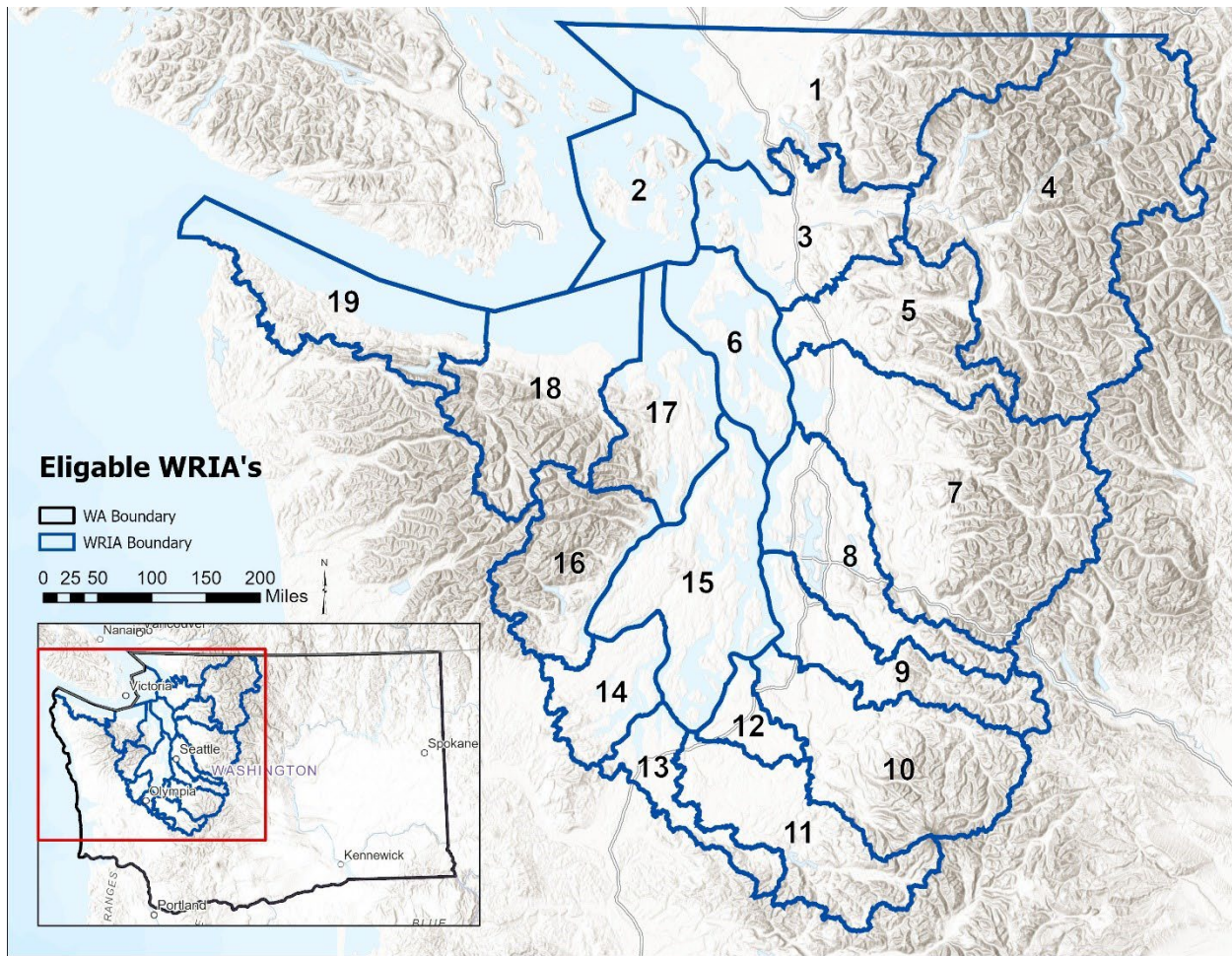


Figure 1 - Map of 19 WRIAs that make up the CR2SL grant program footprint.

Eligible applicants

The CR2SL program solicits applications from organizations and agencies performing riparian restoration activities within the program footprint as described above, including groups that represent typically overburdened and disadvantaged communities. These include, but are not limited to, Tribal governments, local governments and Community Based Organizations.

Eligible applicants for the CR2SL competitive grant solicitation include, but are not limited to:

- Conservation districts
- Local government: counties, cities/towns
- Federally recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations
- Non-profit organizations that are recognized as tax-exempt by the Internal Revenue Service
- Institutions of higher education if the project is not included in the institution's statutory responsibilities

State agencies and for-profit entities are not eligible to apply and cannot be lead applicants on a proposal, however they may serve as supporting partners with a non-profit, or otherwise eligible entity, to submit applications.

More information about applicant and proposal eligibility is available in the [Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead November 2024 Solicitation Funding Guidelines](#)².

Environmental Justice Assessment

The [Healthy Environment for All \(HEAL\) Act of 2021](#)³ is the first statewide law to create a coordinated and collaborative approach by specific state agencies to address environmental justice. The purpose of the law is to improve environmental and health outcomes for everyone, and more pointedly, to address environmental and health disparities for communities of color and low-income communities. The HEAL Act requires Ecology to infuse environmental justice into our operations, including:

- Considering environmental justice in our budget & funding practices.
- Environmental Justice Assessments for Significant Agency Actions.
- Building environmental justice into our strategic plans.
- Community engagement frameworks and improved Tribal consultation guidance.
- Clear metrics, tracking, and reporting strategies for our long-term environmental justice goals.

Throughout the planning and developmental stages of the CR2SL program, Ecology conducted an Environmental Justice Assessment (EJ Assessment) per HEAL Act requirements for significant actions, such as the creation of new grant and loan programs ([RCW 70A.02](#)⁴). EJ Assessments help us to better understand the wide range of environmental justice impacts that the program may have and make informed decisions to reduce environmental harms, equitably distribute benefits and address environmental and health disparities in overburdened communities.

Identification of overburdened communities & vulnerable populations

As a part of completing the EJ Assessment, a series of maps was generated, including one map that displays an aggregate dataset to identify overburdened, vulnerable, and underserved

² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2406020.html>

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Environmental-Justice/HEAL#:~:text=Advancing%20environmental%20justice%20collaborative%20approach%20to%20environmental%20justice.>

⁴ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02&full=true>

communities, (Figure 2). This dataset integrates 2010 census tracts ranked 9 or 10 by the Washington Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) Map, tracts identified as "disadvantaged" by the federal Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), and tracts overlapping with Tribal reservations (as recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs).

In addition to these mapped communities, it is possible that the CR2SL program will affect many different sectors and populations throughout the Puget Sound. Some potential anticipated impacts that are not directly addressed in the program include impacts on unhoused people utilizing riparian areas for shelter, subsistence fishers, and traditional gatherings by Tribal/indigenous communities. At this time, it is unknown where projects will be implemented and at what scale. The CR2SL is working with the Puget Sound Institute to develop programmatic and activity specific metrics to measure ecological, financial, and human well-being metrics where possible and reasonable. More information about how CR2SL plans to track EJ related metrics and others can be found in Appendix O. of the [Funding Guidelines](#)⁵.

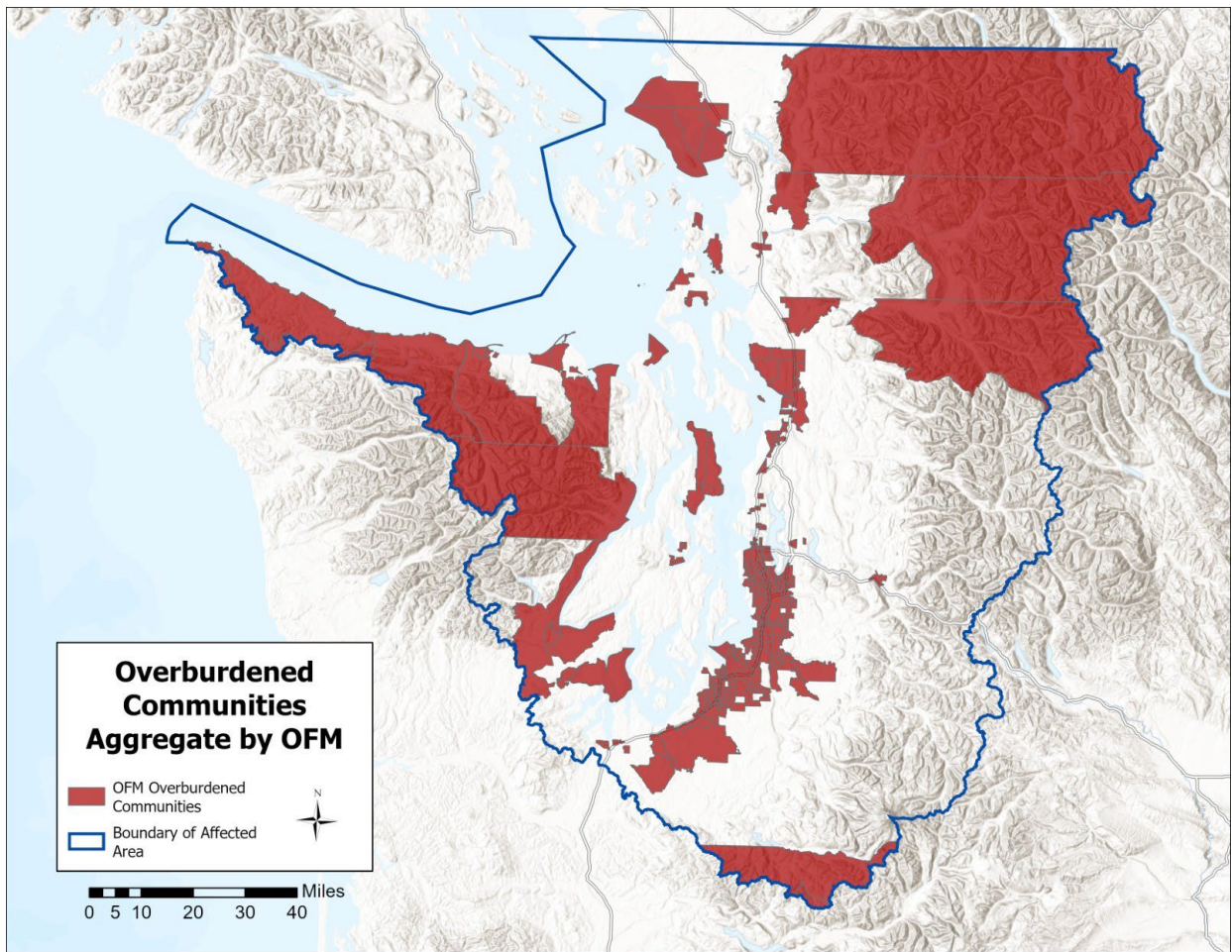


Figure 2 - Overburdened communities located within the CR2SL program footprint.

⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2406020.html>

More information about how Ecology completes EJ Assessments and the full report of findings is available at [Ecology's EJ Assessment website](#)⁶.

Key Environmental Justice Actions

The CR2SL team considered information obtained from multiple sources to inform the key actions that would be built into the program to maximize benefits flowing to vulnerable populations, overburdened communities and Tribal communities. This information included findings from the EJ Assessment, input provided by Tribal engagement and an internal review of EJ practices employed by other funding programs.

The CR2SL program plans to incorporate the key EJ actions identified below, categorized by where they show up in the funding program process. The program will adaptively manage these practices to reflect community feedback and Tribal input throughout the life of the funding program. Pre-grant considerations to leverage and align with other programs.

The CR2SL program will provide and reference common EJ resources and definitions used by similar programs in the application and [Funding Guidelines](#)⁷, to reduce confusion and build agreement on EJ terms and language.

Grant application and eligibility considerations

The following key actions will be built into the CR2SL grant application and guidelines to provide equitable access to the funding opportunity:

- No match will be required;
- Applicants will be required to send a Tribal awareness letter to area Tribes that overlap with their proposed focus area, and submit a copy of the letter in their application;
- Applicants will submit any Tribal responses they receive to awareness letters (Tribal response is not required);
- Capacity funding for Tribes and overburdened/vulnerable communities to participate in local coordination efforts will be an eligible activity for proposals, to encourage local coordination and inclusion of these communities in proposals.

Proposal evaluation and selection

The following key actions will be built into the CR2SL proposal evaluation and selection process to encourage community involvement and Tribal participation in proposals:

- Scoring criteria will encourage proposals that have letters of support from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and/or Tribes in the area;

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/environmental-justice/heal/environmental-justice-assessments#EJA>

⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2406020.html>

- Scoring criteria will prioritize proposals that are led by Tribes, include Tribal partners, reflect Tribal priorities, or demonstrate meaningful Tribal engagement;
- Scoring criteria will prioritize proposals that consider the impacts on environmental justice, environmental health, and disproportionately impacted communities and proposals that make progress towards improving community health and avoid unintended consequences;
- The CR2SL program will seek a member of one or more Puget Sound Tribal governments or representative organization to participate on the evaluation team;
- The CR2SL program will share the draft funding list of proposals to Puget Sound Tribes and invite feedback.

Project implementation considerations

The following key actions will be built into the CR2SL funding implementation requirements to build community and Tribal involvement and equitably distribute benefits:

- CR2SL will contact the Tribes that received a proposal awareness letter from an applicant and offer compensation for Tribal consultation on the proposal, or potentially compensation for additional participation, as determined and in agreement with the applicant;
- Recipients will be required to include community outreach and storytelling in their proposal with the intent to communicate project outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for next steps;
- Applicants will be encouraged to incorporate elements of community outreach or education into their proposals to include Tribes, overburdened and vulnerable communities, such as: notifications, social media, videos, volunteer events, StoryMaps, etc.

Grant management

The following key actions will be built into the CR2SL grant management process to provide environmental justice related technical support and measure the benefits of funded proposals:

- CR2SL will provide technical support to applicants on how to access and use the provided EJ mapping tools to better understand the impacted communities within their proposal focus area;
- CR2SL will provide technical support to funding recipients to map the benefits of their funded proposals:
 - CR2SL technical staff will work in partnership with recipients to map proposal benefits using the provided EJ mapping tools;

- A graphic artist from our coalition partner, BEF, will provide additional support and incorporate the map into visually appealing messaging for community distribution;
- Required EJ reporting for recipients will include metrics (to be determined) to identify Tribal, overburdened and vulnerable communities that are:
 - within the mapped area,
 - has an integrated Tribal partner or coalition in place,
 - is a Tribal led proposal,
 - has disadvantaged or new farmers supported, etc. to tell the full story
- CR2SL will prioritize technical assistance to applicants representing Tribes, overburdened and vulnerable communities;
- CR2SL will offer technical support for required outreach and storytelling activities for certain sub-awardees, to highlight EJ related proposals and success stories;
- CR2SL will offer mediator support when difficulties arise, from our coalition partner, BEF, to be inclusive of different perspectives and cultures with the intent to solve problems and build trust through the process.

Adaptive management and project learning

The following key actions will be built into the CR2SL program to provide opportunities for EJ and Tribal related reflection, growth and sharing of lessons learned:

- CR2SL will engage with Puget Sound Tribes and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission throughout the life of the funding program and will continually adapt the program to incorporate Tribal input, as appropriate;
- At completion of the program, CR2SL will compile and share a summary of program accomplishments to include (but not limited to):
 - Compiled information reported by funding recipients to summarize benefits of the work completed;
 - Benefits maps that overlay with the location of Tribes, overburdened communities and vulnerable populations;
 - Information collected from funding recipients regarding barriers experienced to performing or increasing the rate of riparian restoration in Puget Sound, or other programmatic, administrative or implementation barriers experienced in order to improve upon future grant-making opportunities.

CR2SL will also explore and encourage elements of Ecocultural Restoration when possible along with riparian management approaches. Projects that include any key principles among ecocultural restoration will be strongly supported. This includes (1) centering and valuing ancestral

understandings, (2) building reciprocity and trust between partners, (3) sparking learning across generations, (4) reinvigorating traditions and culture, and (5) engaging communities holistically.

Tracking Benefits

[Washington Tracking Network](#)⁸ (WTN) is a Washington State Department of Health (DOH) program focused on making public health data more accessible. This data includes the DOH [Environmental Health Disparities \(EHD\) map](#)⁹, an interactive mapping tool that compares communities across our state for environmental health disparities, and provides insights into where public investments can be prioritized. With the passage of the HEAL Act, the EHD map is identified as a resource to agency decision-making.

Measures of environmental justice for certain applicant communities, such as agriculture producers represented by conservation districts, for example, can be measured through publicly available data such as those produced by the USDA's Census of Agriculture (which measures producer characteristics by race, ethnicity, and gender profiles) or the USDA Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land (TOTAL) survey. Additional demographic data, such as those that measure income, are available through the American Community Survey, the Small Business Administration's publications, and others. By using these publicly available demographic data, overlaid with areas where CR2SL grants are implemented, it may be possible to track the benefits of work completed using program funds in those communities or for those participants writ large (such as landowners who are considered members of overburdened or vulnerable communities).

In addition to tracking community characterizations and population demographics on a state-wide scale, the CR2SL program intends to track the environmental impacts and benefits to communities near or downstream from restoration activities. Tracking these environmental benefits to vulnerable populations is the first step to achieving the state's collective environmental justice goals. This is a challenging endeavor that is subject to change as data is gathered, compiled, analyzed, and used for progressive decision making. The following information describes the approach that is currently under development for tracking and categorizing benefits and is subject to change.

Under the HEAL Act, "environmental benefits" means activities that:

- Prevent or reduce existing environmental harms or associated risks that contribute significantly to cumulative environmental health impacts;
- Prevent or mitigate impacts to overburdened communities or vulnerable populations from, or support community response to, the impacts of environmental harm;

⁸ <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/climate-projections>

⁹ <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map>

- Meet a community need formally identified to a covered agency by an overburdened community or vulnerable population.

The CR2SL program uses the Puget Sound Action Agenda as a framework for implementing investments under this award. It is a comprehensive plan for the long-term recovery of Puget Sound that includes priorities and support from many partners in recovery. The current Action Agenda covers the years from 2022-2026 and was approved by EPA in 2022. The Action Agenda includes a description of the vision for the recovery of Puget Sound and a framework for working towards the recovery vision. The document outlines several goals, strategies, and measures to track and implement activities in line with the goals for a thriving and healthy Puget Sound. The CR2SL program is operationalizing some of the activities listed in the 2022-2026 Action Agenda, particularly in line with the Action Agenda Strategies listed below. The CR2SL Environmental Justice Strategy focuses on the processes, inclusivity, and environmental justice components of the Action Agenda that align with the ecological goals as well, including:

- Strategy 4: Riparian Areas: Protect and restore riparian areas by improving regulatory frameworks and incentives and increasing funding.
- Strategy 20: Climate Adaptation and Resiliency. Integrate climate adaptation and resilience into all strategies to protect and restore ecosystems and human wellbeing.
- Strategy 23: Good governance. Promote transparent and inclusive governance that engages all peoples equitably, with a focus on expanding trust and inclusion of vulnerable populations and underserved communities.

Several communities throughout Puget Sound hosted feedback workshops on riparian restoration and permanent protection on behalf of the CR2SL program to provide guidance and scoping at the onset of the grant program. Those community representatives expressed several ways that through the grants process, the CR2SL team could also empower the communities, raise awareness of the benefits of climate resiliency and riparian restoration, and increase involvement in the communities. This is aligned with the Puget Sound Action Agenda's Desired Outcome 5.2 "Increase engagement in and trust of Puget Sound environmental and natural resource governance." It is also aligned with Implementation Strategy 23 "Good Governance."

The CR2SL program will continue to engage the restoration community for best practices in monitoring the engagement of these communities. CR2SL looks to other programs for guidance in measuring non-monetary benefits and will continue to refine the process, application of, and definition of non-monetary measuring and metrics. CR2SL administration will continue to engage with leaders in community-based organizations, non-profits, Tribal governments, public agencies and others for their guidance and expertise in metric development, with the aim to maintain mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships between these partners and CR2SL. More information about CR2SL proposed environmental justice metrics can be found in Appendix O of the [Funding Guidelines](#)¹⁰.

¹⁰ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2406020.html>

Tribal Engagement Plan

The CR2SL program developed a [Tribal Engagement Plan](#)¹¹ to discuss, share, and document the ways that Puget Sound Tribes have been engaged throughout the development of the CR2SL program. The CR2SL program aims to effectively and efficiently improve riparian restoration and protection outcomes in Puget Sound watersheds by directing funds to support riparian practitioners how and where they need it most. Extensive feedback was solicited and received from a broad range of partners and stakeholders, including Puget Sound Tribes, shining light on the challenges, barriers and funding gaps commonly faced by Tribes and riparian restoration practitioners. Tribal recommendations received from this engagement are included in the CR2SL Tribal Engagement Plan in the Summary of Tribal Recommendations section. The complete overview of the broader engagement findings and a review of engagement activities completed can be found in the [Summary Report of Input from Puget Sound Riparian Professionals](#)¹².

While the CR2SL public engagement process is robust and may substantively serve many of the interests of Puget Sound Tribes, we also maintain a Government-to-Government relationship with Tribal governments. Tribal engagement is important to guide the development and implementation of the CR2SL program because of the potential direct and indirect impacts and benefits to Tribal interests. Given Tribes' time immemorial connection to the land, Tribal interest in the program may arise from many different factors. In recognition that Tribal interests in the program may change over time, ongoing communication is built into the Tribal Engagement Plan.

The goals of the Tribal Engagement Plan are:

- **Goal 1:** Honor and uphold the Government-to-Government relationship with Tribal Nations.
- **Goal 2:** Increase awareness of the CR2SL program among Tribal Nations.
- **Goal 3:** Learn more about Tribal needs and priorities in order to honor Tribal sovereignty and incorporate Tribal interests into our decision-making.
- **Goal 4:** Fund Tribal capacity and implementation of beneficial riparian conservation and stewardship activities that align with Tribal priorities.

The plan summarizes actions taken during program development, ongoing opportunities to engage, the CR2SL program milestones and planned Tribal engagement in those activities. The Tribal Engagement Plan is subject to change as the CR2SL program continues to incorporate Tribal input on the process itself.

¹¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2406019.html>

¹² <http://ecyapfpass/Biblio2/SummaryPages/2406013.html>

Communications Plan

A Communication Plan to cover all of the communications activities of the CR2SL program is currently being developed. The plan will identify specific audiences for the grant program and specific grant products, different channels for distributing messages to specific audiences, and how we might measure success of the communication.

Some of the main messages that have been currently identified that we will be tracking include:

- How did the CR2SL program accelerate the overall rate of ecological recovery through the investments?
- How did the CR2SL program change the rate of progress?
- In what ways have equity and environmental justice influenced the grant program?
 - What are some of the lessons learned from communities on building programs that lives beyond the grant rounds?
 - What are some of the best ways to improve and connect cold water seasonal streams to climate resilient projections?
 - How are the various buffer widths contributing to recovery? What are the different impacts and challenges of buffer widths?
 - How did the CR2SL program help increase riparian restoration and protection in different watersheds?

The goals of the Environmental Justice Strategy will be incorporated into the Communications Plan to include specific metrics and communication strategies for overburdened communities, vulnerable populations and Tribal communities.

Appendix A: Definitions

Under the Washington State Healthy Environment for All Act (HEAL), environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing **vulnerable populations** and **overburdened communities**, the **equitable distribution** of resources and benefits, and eliminating **harm**. Table 1 includes the definitions used by the CR2SL program for many of the common environmental justice terms.

Table 1 – Environmental justice terms and definitions

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
Cumulative impacts	the combined, multiple environmental impacts and health impacts on a vulnerable population or overburdened community	Chapter 70A.02 RCW: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (wa.gov) Cumulative Impacts Research (epa.gov)
Disparate impacts, disparate treatment	<p>Disparate treatment: sometimes referred to as intentional discrimination, is when disparities are built into operational processes, including the preclusion of access and discrimination.</p> <p>Disparate impacts: may exist, even if there is no disparate treatment, often modeled through statistical disparities.</p>	<p>Disparity refers to a state of being unequal, while disproportionality refers to the state of being out of proportion.</p> <p>Disparity is typically used to describe unequal outcomes experienced by one group when compared with another group.</p> <p>Disproportionality is calculated as a ratio comparing the absolute value of the percent</p>

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
		change from one group to another. If the ratio falls outside of the disproportionality threshold there would be a disparate impact or a disproportionate burden.
Disproportionate effects	Term used in Executive Order 12898 to describe situations of concern where there exists significantly higher and more adverse health and environmental effects on minority populations, low-income populations or indigenous peoples.	EJ 2020 Glossary US EPA
Environmental harm	<p>the individual or cumulative environmental health impacts and risks to communities caused by historic, current, or projected:</p> <p>Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land</p> <p>Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change;</p> <p>Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or</p> <p>Health and economic impacts from climate change.</p>	
Environmental justice	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice	Chapter 70A.02 RCW

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
	<p>includes addressing disproportionate environmental health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.</p>	
Equitable distribution	<p>a fair and just, but not necessarily equal, allocation intended to mitigate disparities in benefits and burdens that are based on current conditions, including existing legacy and cumulative impacts, that are informed by cumulative environmental health impact analysis.</p>	
Fair treatment	<p>The principle that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic or a socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences from industrial, municipal and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local and Tribal programs and policies. In implementing its programs, EPA has expanded the concept of fair treatment to include not only consideration of how burdens are distributed across all populations, but the distribution of benefits as well.</p>	<p>EJ 2020 Glossary US EPA</p>
Highly impacted community	<p>A community designated by the department of health based on cumulative impact analyses, that are highly impacted by fossil fuel pollution and climate change in Washington; or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.</p> <p><i>Note: The HEAL Act definition of an overburdened community includes highly impacted communities, but they are not interchangeable words. A highly impacted community is missing indicators included in</i></p>	<p>Chapter 70A.02 RCW: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (wa.gov)</p> <p>RCW 19.405.020: Definitions. (wa.gov)</p> <p>RCW 19.405.140: Department of health— Cumulative impact analysis. (wa.gov)</p>

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
	<i>the definition of an overburdened community on it's own.</i>	
Indicator	<p>Represents the state or trend of a certain environmental or societal condition over a given area and for a specified period of time. Indicators help us understand observed long-term trends related to the causes and effects of environmental disparities.</p> <p>Examples of indicators include: the concentration of pm2.5 in a particular area, or the percentage of a population at or below the federal poverty line.</p>	Frequent Questions US EPA
Lived-experience	<p>People with lived experience are those directly affected by social, health, public health, or other issues and by the strategies that aim to address those issues. This gives them insights that can inform and improve systems, research, policies, practices, and programs. It is important to ask people if the term lived experience is one they prefer to use in relationship to their expertise and experiences. When we say lived experience, we mean knowledge based on someone's perspective, personal identities, and history, beyond their professional or educational experience.</p>	What Is Lived Experience? (hhs.gov)
Meaningful involvement	<p>Potentially affected community residents have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; the concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process; the decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.</p>	EJ 2020 Glossary US EPA

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
Overburdened community	a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW 19.405.020.	Chapter 70A.02 RCW: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (wa.gov)
Sensitive Groups	<p>Somewhat different than a vulnerable population or an overburdened community, a sensitive group is a group of people who are predisposed to be more affected by an identified environmental harm than others.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <p>People with asthma and other respiratory diseases, people with cardiovascular disease, children, pregnant people, older adults, people of low socio-economic status, outdoor workers.</p>	Which Populations Experience Greater Risks of Adverse Health Effects Resulting from Wildfire Smoke Exposure? US EPA
Underrepresented	<p>Refers to populations or groups of people whose representation in a group is either lower than expected, or lower than is proportionate to broader population statistics.</p> <p><i>Note: Sensitive groups are not necessarily from overburdened communities or part of vulnerable populations. While there are many groups of people who are disproportionately underrepresented in government work, including them would not necessarily lead to greater equity – for instance, prioritizing the inclusion of billionaires who may not receive a ton of outreach, may not result in outcomes that benefits people who need resources or services the most.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, “underrepresented” is a term that doesn't provide clarity about what groups specifically are being referred to.</i></p>	

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
	<p><i>It is, however, important to reach out to folks who are typically excluded from resources and services, for instance in rural areas.</i></p>	
Underserved population	<p>Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.</p>	Adapted from Executive Order 13985
Vulnerable population	<p>Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.</p> <p>"Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial or ethnic minorities. Low-income populations. Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and 	Chapter 70A.02 RCW

Term	Concept	Definition/Reference
	Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.	