



STREAMFLOW RESTORATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS, 2026

GUIDANCE FOR PROJECT APPLICANTS

REVISED OCTOBER 2025

PUBLICATION 25-11-021

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2511021.html>

Contact Information

Water Resources Program

P.O. Box 47600

Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Phone: 360-407-6872

Email: sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY — <https://ecology.wa.gov>

Headquarters, Olympia	360-407-6000
Northwest Regional Office, Shoreline	206-594-0000
Southwest Regional Office, Olympia	360-407-6300
Central Regional Office, Union Gap	509-575-2490
Eastern Regional Office, Spokane	509-329-3400

A MAP OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY'S REGIONS IS INCLUDED IN APPENDIX A.

COVER PHOTO: BOISE CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT.

To request ADA accommodation for disabilities, or printed materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-6872, email WRpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call 877-833-6341.

STREAMFLOW RESTORATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS, 2026

Guidance for Project Applicants

WATER RESOURCES PROGRAM
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

This page is purposely left blank.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables	ii
Figures	ii
Tables	ii
Abstract	iv
Chapter 1: Overview.....	1
Critical grant funding considerations.....	2
Completing an application.....	6
Eligible applicants	10
Chapter 2: Application considerations for project types.....	11
Water right acquisitions	12
Water storage.....	14
Altered water management or infrastructure.....	17
Watershed function, riparian, and fish habitat improvement.....	18
Environmental monitoring	20
Planning and feasibility studies	22
Select ineligible project elements.....	24
Chapter 3: Applying for funding	25
The application	25
Appendix A: Department of Ecology Region Offices	35
Appendix B: Priority Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs)	37
Appendix C: Reference Information for Project Applicants.....	31
Habitat restoration and consistency with watershed and community planning.....	31
Tribal government, partner government, and stakeholder engagement.....	31
Climate change.....	32
Appendix D: MAR Feasibility Study Details.....	34
MAR feasibility study tasks	34
Appendix E: Cultural Resource Review	39
Appendix F: Important Regulations that Apply to State Funded Projects.....	40
Background – Applicant/Recipient Role and Responsibility	40

Project and Non-project SEPA Actions	40
Environmental Checklist	41
Mitigation	41
Threshold Determination	41
Information on SEPA.....	42
Questions on SEPA	42
Appendix G: The Role of Appraisals in Determining the Purchase Price for Water Right Acquisitions	43

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1. Map of counties served by region.	35
Figure 2. Basins prioritized for funding under chapter 90.94 RCW.	37

Tables

Table 1. Acronyms and abbreviations.	iii
Table 2. Scoring overview.....	26
Table 3. Regional contact information.	36

Table 1. Acronyms and abbreviations.

Acronym or Abbreviation	Meaning
ASR	Aquifer Storage and Recovery
DAHP	Washington State Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation
EAGL	Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
MAR	Managed Aquifer Recharge
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
QAPP	Quality Assurance Project Plan
RCO	Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SAW	Secure Access Washington
SWSL	Surface Water Source Limitation
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
WAC	Washington State Administrative Code
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WRIA	Water Resource Inventory Area

Abstract

This guidance is intended to aid grant applicants in developing complete and competitive applications for this grant offering.

This competitive grant round will provide up to \$40 million for eligible projects. If the full amount is not awarded in this round, Ecology reserves the right to, and may, hold another competitive grant round in this biennium. If the full amount is not awarded in this grant round and Ecology does not hold another round in this biennium, the remaining funds will be used in subsequent competitive grant rounds.

The grant funding opportunity opens on January 15, 2026, and closes on March 16, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.



River flowing in a forest near the mountains.

Chapter 1: Overview

Since the start of this grant program in 2018, the Washington State Department of Ecology has awarded approximately \$130 million to nearly 90 projects across the state. Each of these projects is a direct investment in local economies. Projects actively manage our state's water resources, prepare for the impacts of climate change, and restore streamflows to levels necessary to support robust, healthy, and sustainable salmon populations.

Thanks to the continued support of the Legislature, Ecology will begin accepting applications for the fifth round of competitive streamflow grant funding on January 15, 2026. Up to \$40 million is available, and the most competitive proposed projects will:

- Measurably improve streamflows.
- Directly address the cause of aquatic resource degradation.
- Benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern, including threatened or endangered salmonids.
- Benefit overburdened communities or vulnerable populations.
- Be durable, especially in the face of the impacts of climate change and drought.
- Be cost effective.
- Implement a watershed plan.
- Have an executed agreement within six months and have a maximum project length of three years.

Successful applicants from the previous grant rounds all agree that the best way to secure a streamflow restoration grant is to:

1. Use the Scoring Criteria on page 27 to guide and shape your grant application.
2. Attend the applicant workshops. Please see the [streamflow restoration grant website](#)¹ for dates and times.
3. Schedule a pre-application meeting with Ecology. To schedule a pre-application meeting, please send a completed [meeting request form](#)² to sfrprigrants@ecy.wa.gov prior to March 3, 2026. Any meeting requests submitted after March 3, 2026, will be dependent upon staff availability.
4. Coordinate closely, early, and often with both Ecology and the local community where the project is proposed to occur.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/payments-contracts-grants/grants-loans/find-a-grant-or-loan/streamflow-restoration-implementation-grants>

² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070741.html>

Ecology is excited to continue collaborating with tribal partners, non-profit organizations, and our local, state, and federal colleagues as we manage our water resources to benefit all Washingtonians and protect the natural environment for current and future generations.

For Streamflow Restoration Grant Questions:

Please contact Vanessa Brinkhuis at sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov or 509-406-6505.

For EAGL Application Website Questions:

Please contact Brandy Reynecke at sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov or 360-870-5294.

Critical grant funding considerations

Potential grant applicants should keep the following in mind as they prepare to submit an application for competitive funding:

- This is a statewide competitive grants initiative.
 - The funds that the Legislature has provided to Ecology for this purpose are limited. Therefore, demand for these competitive grants is likely to exceed available funding.
 - No application or project proposal is guaranteed funding, including those projects identified in adopted watershed plans or a rulemaking under RCW 90.94.020 or 030.
 - Applicants may choose to divide large, expensive, or complex projects into phases, particularly when each phase can be shown to provide streamflow or improved instream resource benefits. Ecology also reserves the right to divide a proposal into phases due to funding availability, priorities, or other considerations. Please note, however, funding for one phase does not imply any intent, nor create any obligation by Ecology to provide further funding for any subsequent project phases.
 - Ecology retains the discretion to not provide funding for an eligible project or to provide less funding to an eligible project³. Ecology may not award funding if there are concerns about project eligibility or project quality (i.e., benefits to streamflow and instream resources, appropriateness of the project to address stated needs, feasibility, and whether the project is an effective use of funds considering need, costs, and benefits)⁴.
- The types of projects prioritized from one grant round to the next may vary. Projects that would quantitatively improve streamflows are the highest single priority factor for funding in this grant round. *Funding Priorities are additive*, so projects meeting *multiple* Funding Priorities are more competitive. Numerous other criteria are also considered in final project scores (see Chapter 3).

³ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-566-300>

⁴ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-566-140>

- Projects that neither increase streamflow nor benefit instream resources are unlikely to receive funding during this round unless they are a critical component or phase of a broader project that does increase streamflow or benefit instream resources.
For example: Planning and feasibility studies alone do not provide streamflow benefits. Applicants proposing a feasibility study as part of a multi-phase project should describe anticipated streamflow benefits in later project phases, even if that phase is not currently being applied for in this grant round.
- Monitoring is not appropriate for all projects and is not a required project component. If environmental monitoring is a component of the proposed project, applicants should demonstrate that monitoring is appropriate and necessary to achieve desired outcomes and an effective use of limited state funds. As appropriate for the proposed project, applicants will quantify the project’s impacts with verifiable data. Quantitative project impacts can be measured through monitoring or estimated through modeling.
- Applicants seeking planning support funding for project development should describe the problems in that watershed, how the problems and risks of the planning area will be evaluated, and potential benefits of project concepts that will be developed.
- In scoring projects and assessing potential benefits, Ecology will consider any *adverse* impacts from the proposal. Examples of adverse impacts include degradation of natural streamflow processes or instream resources in either the source or receiving waterbodies.
- For projects that tailor restoration actions to natural, ecological, or streamflow conditions on or near the project site, applicants should consider and enable the desired project outcomes. Examples include considering process-based principles to address the root causes of degradation, with the goal of restoring ecological functions.
- Applicants are encouraged to consult with any relevant [watershed planning groups](#), [watershed plans](#),⁵ and [salmon recovery groups](#)⁶ (where applicable) to ensure their project aligns with the priorities and sequencing of projects in the watershed.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider planning and preparedness for the impacts of drought and climate change as they relate to the promotion of healthy streamflows and instream resources.
- Sustainable projects provide benefits for the lifetime of the project by design. Project benefits should be designed to persist in the face of impacts from climate change and drought. Projects resilient to climate change and drought are more likely to be successful.
- Applicants are encouraged to incorporate adaptive management principles into their project design and implementation. Adaptive management is a structured, iterative

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-supply/Streamflow-restoration/Streamflow-restoration-planning>

⁶ <https://rco.wa.gov/salmon-recovery/managing-organizations/lead-entities/>

process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim of reducing uncertainty over time.

- Applications should identify both the amount and the anticipated source(s) of any additional funding needed to fully implement the proposed project, including estimated costs for operation and maintenance, and adaptive management over the lifetime of the project. If such funding is needed but not yet secured, the application should include a detailed plan on how funding will be secured.
- Because this competitive grant initiative must make the best use of limited public funds, applicants should demonstrate that the proposed project provides benefits for a reasonable relative cost. The best way to show this is by providing examples of similar projects within a relevant area.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to request a pre-application meeting. While a grant offer is never guaranteed, most applicants who have secured grant funding in previous rounds completed a pre-application meeting with Ecology staff in order to ask questions about the funding opportunity or share information about their proposal.
- Match funding is not required.
- Ecology reserves the right to require a feasibility study on any project. A feasibility study required by Ecology may be included as the first phase of a larger project application. An offer by Ecology to fund a feasibility study does not imply any intent, nor create any obligation by Ecology, to provide additional funding for any subsequent project phases.
- If Ecology makes an offer to fund a given application, Ecology and the applicant will collaboratively negotiate the scope of work, schedule, and budget. There is no guarantee of any funding until an agreement is finalized. Budgets in the final agreement often differ from the amount requested in the application.
- The effective date of the grant agreement can go back no earlier than the date of the funding offer letter. The applicant may incur project costs on and after the effective date and before Ecology's signature of the final grant agreement, but expenditures cannot be reimbursed until the agreement has been signed by Ecology's Water Resources Program Manager. Work done prior to signature on the grant agreement is at the applicant's own risk and there is no guarantee that any costs incurred prior to signature will be reimbursable.
- While project elements required under statute, rule, ordinance, or court order (except pursuant to chapter 90.94 RCW) are ineligible for funding, additional related or supplemental project elements that are not required by law may be eligible.
- The timeframe for completing a project should align with the needs and complexity of the project.
- The applicant is responsible for obtaining and complying with all permits necessary to execute the project.
- Requirements and considerations for strategic land acquisition projects.

- These are complicated projects. Applicants should request a pre-application meeting with Ecology to discuss their project prior to applying.
- The project must align with the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) [Acquisition Manual 3](#).⁷
- Prior to applying, applicants need to carefully consider any potential contingency terms likely to be in the purchase and sale agreement.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to involve Ecology early in establishing all aspects of the acquisition timeline. There is no guarantee Ecology will be able to meet an anticipated closing date for a property purchase if Ecology is not involved with setting the timeline.
- Ecology may decline strategic land acquisition proposals that have limited benefits to fish habitat, including limited riparian and instream habitat conservation or restoration potential.
- For strategic land acquisition and conservation easements, grant applicants must be clear about what entity will hold the title or easement. Ecology will not be a holder or co-holder of land titles or conservation easements. Ecology reserves the right to be a third-party beneficiary to any deed restriction or conservation easement recorded on a property acquired with these funds.
- Grant recipients shall comply fully with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, orders, and regulations related to the grant agreement. When there are regulatory requirements identified for a funded project (for example stormwater infiltration projects), the grant agreement will include specific requirements.
- Grant recipients will be required to submit a project outcome summary near the end of their grant agreement that will be used for Ecology publications and communications. The Ecology project manager will provide a template for the summary to the grant recipient.
- All project grants will be administered in Ecology's Administration of Grants and Loans System (EAGL).

⁷ <https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Manual3.pdf>

Completing an application

Applicants must accurately describe their proposed project and corresponding benefits. Ecology expects all project applications to follow the instructions below:

- All applications must be submitted between January 15, 2026, and March 16, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Applicants are strongly encouraged to plan on submitting their application early to allow time to address any system flags on application requirements that prevent submission.
- Applicants must submit their applications through the Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system.
 - EAGL is an automated system for processing applications.
 - Applications without all mandatory elements are incomplete.
 - Incomplete applications will not be accepted by the EAGL automated system.
 - Therefore, incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
 - EAGL closes periodically for system maintenance. Maintenance periods will be announced in advance. Applicants should save their work and log out of EAGL during that time.
- All submitted materials should be easy to read and understand.
 - Give clear, complete, and concise answers to all questions.
 - Write in complete sentences and avoid ambiguous statements.
- Applicants must submit all supporting information and evidence needed to evaluate the project proposal.
- Ecology prioritizes funding for overburdened communities or vulnerable populations:
 - For the purposes of this grant funding, the applicant's project area is considered to include an overburdened community or vulnerable population(s), if one of the five following conditions are met:
 1. Communities ranked as a 9 or 10 on the overall cumulative indicator on Environmental Health Disparities Map⁸ (on the map legend, “Environmental Health Disparities 2.0”); or
 2. Communities ranked as a 9 or 10 for the Socioeconomic Factors indicator on the Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map; or
 3. Communities ranked as a 9 or 10 for People of Color indicator on the Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map; or

⁸ <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map>

4. Communities ranked as a 9 or 10 for only the Population living in poverty indicator on the Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map; or
 5. Applicant is, or serves, a federally recognized Tribe. If the applicant serves a federally recognized Tribe, the applicant must state the Tribe name and describe said relationship.
- If the applicant states that the above criteria are met, the application must state which indicator is met and at what ranking.
 - If the project area includes overburdened communities or vulnerable populations, the applicant must also state how the project will benefit these communities or populations and meet their needs where possible. This may be in terms of project benefits, design, or other implementation considerations or outcomes of the project.
 - Applicants may provide an explanation that the proposed project area includes overburdened communities and vulnerable populations not identified through these indicators. Staff will evaluate any explanations and may consider the quality of data sources, the relationship to the project, and benefits to these populations.
- The more relevant information and evidence provided by the applicant, the stronger the application is likely to be. Applications without relevant information and evidence will score poorly.
 - The application should:
 - Address all relevant items identified in the grant guidance and scoring guide as described in Chapter 3.
 - Provide documentation and citations to support your responses to application questions. If referring to a large document, upload only the relevant portions or provide clear information on where in the document the reference is located.
 - Identify the documented streamflow, fish, or other instream resource problem(s) that your project would address and provide citations or other evidence. Examples of evidence include referencing streamflow records, citing a specific concern in a salmon recovery plan, or referring to documented fish conservation status.⁹
 - Describe why you selected the proposed project over other potential solutions to address the local issues the application identifies.
 - A project includes all phases of work, even if an application is only for a single phase of the entire project. Ecology may determine your application includes some ineligible project elements, even if your application is otherwise eligible. A competitive application clearly indicates the eligibility of the various project elements.

⁹ Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) has several sources for this information including SalmonScape, Salmon Conservation—Recovery (SCORE), Priority Habitat and Species (PHS on the Web), or contacting the local WDFW habitat biologists.

- Demonstrate that the project is well thought out:
 - Explain how you will determine and demonstrate any project benefits. For example, how you calculated a quantified estimate of the ultimate streamflow benefits of the project as a whole (alone or after the completion of all phases) in terms of both the amount and location of flow added to the stream.
 - Provide a project plan, that includes an introduction, a description of the planning process, a community profile, and data that suggests that the proposed work would have an impact on streamflows and instream resources.
 - Include a well-defined scope of work that has goals, objectives, timelines, and measurable outcomes.
 - Describe all steps and tasks needed for the project such as permits, approvals, or the cooperation of landowners or agencies.
 - Demonstrate that the funds will be well invested in this local project.
- The following project elements often affect a project’s scope of work, budget, and timeline and should be planned for and considered in the application.
 - Funded projects that include the collection of environmental data, analysis of existing environmental data, or use environmental data for modeling will be required to develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that meets Ecology standards (See [Guidelines for Preparing Quality Assurance Project Plans for Environmental Studies](#)).¹⁰ The QAPP must be approved by Ecology prior to the commencement of any work that is contained in the QAPP.
 - Quality Assurance Project Plans are complicated. The types of data that are planned to be collected or used for the project determine which QAPP template must be used. The Ecology project manager will provide the appropriate QAPP template grant recipients must use.
 - If environmental data are generated for the project, those data must be uploaded by the grant recipient to Ecology’s Environmental Information Management (EIM) system annually.
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the role(s) and cost(s) associated with requiring licensed professionals (e.g. hydrogeologists and engineers) to complete certain components of the project. Applicants should plan accordingly and consult a licensed professional prior to applying to determine if or what professional services may be necessary for their project. For example, but not limited to, for projects analyzing surface water and groundwater interactions, a licensed hydrogeologist is required to be involved in developing the applicable QAPP, overseeing measurement equipment

¹⁰ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/0403030.pdf>

installation, and for data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. For these grants, Ecology will not provide licensed engineering review of project designs unless that review is a standard process step associated with required Ecology permitting for the project.

- Projects that include ground disturbing work or land acquisitions are required to undergo a cultural resource review and must comply with Governor’s Executive Order (GEO) 21-02 concerning archeological and cultural resources. See Appendix E for more information. If applicable, consider potential cultural resources review elements (e.g., archaeological surveys, archaeological monitoring, historical property inventories, landowner agreements) in the project scope of work, budget, and timeline. The anticipated area of potential effect (APE) for a project can be reviewed in the Washington Information System for Architectural and Archeological Records Data database (WISAARD).¹¹
- Demonstrate readiness to proceed:
 - Show that preliminary measures have been taken to prepare for implementing the proposed project. Demonstrate knowledge of any potential barriers and the means for addressing those barriers.
 - Provide a timeline for implementation.
 - There is a six-month deadline for agreement execution for all projects offered funding. Likewise, there is a maximum timeframe of three years for all projects funded this grant round. Please integrate these timing requirements into your project conceptualization, grant application, and project scope. Ecology staff will always take proactive measures to collaborate and support our grantees to ensure their success.
- Demonstrate local support:
 - Robust, ongoing engagement from relevant partner governments and stakeholders is important for project success. Demonstrate that the project has support from the community, interested tribes, agency partners, stakeholder groups, and watershed planning groups (if applicable) including any disadvantaged communities. Include letters of support as documentation. If the applicant could reasonably conclude that any communities will experience adverse impacts from the project, the applicant must demonstrate that there has been outreach to address those issues, and that adverse impacts have both been explicitly articulated and will be minimized through appropriate project design (see Appendix C).

¹¹ <https://dahp.wa.gov/project-review/wisaard-washington-information-system-for-architectural-and-archeological-records-data>

- Applicants proposing to purchase property or complete work on private property should include the [Landowner Acknowledgement Form](#)¹² with their application. If not provided at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to Ecology signing the grant agreement.

Eligible applicants

Applicants eligible for funding include Washington state agencies, local governments and quasi-governments within Washington state, agencies of the federal government, tribal governments with reservation lands or treaty rights within Washington, and non-profit organizations.¹³

Ecology will evaluate all complete competitive grant applications that have been submitted by the funding opportunity deadline. Eligibility of the applicant and the proposed project will be determined according to WAC 173-566-030. For any eligible application, Ecology will then use the detailed scoring criteria described in Chapter 3.

Additional guidance and authorities

- [Administrative Requirements for Recipients of Ecology Grants and Loans](#)¹⁴
- [Chapter 173-566 WAC](#)¹⁵
- [Chapter 90.94 RCW](#)¹⁶
- Washington Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) [Acquisition Manual 3](#)¹⁷. See Appendix C for additional reference information.

¹² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070614.html>

¹³ WAC 173-566-030

¹⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1701004.html>

¹⁵ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-566&full=true>

¹⁶ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=90.94&full=true>

¹⁷ <https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Manual3.pdf>

Chapter 2: Application considerations for project types

This chapter provides specific considerations, including project elements, for the eligible project types identified in chapter 173-566 WAC - Streamflow Restoration Funding. As you review each of these project types, be aware that each project type has minimum requirements for application submission. Please see “Minimum requirements for application submission” in each section for project specific requirements. These minimum requirements are in addition to the project-specific “Additional requirements” that must be satisfied for an application to be competitive.

Eligible project types include but are not limited to:

-  Water right acquisitions.
-  Water storage.
-  Altered water management or infrastructure.
-  Watershed function, riparian, and fish habitat improvements.
-  Environmental monitoring.
-  Planning and Feasibility studies.



Water right acquisitions

Purpose and primary environmental benefits:

Ecology's interest in acquiring water rights and placing them into trust is to increase streamflows to benefit vulnerable fish and wildlife by allowing the water to remain in the stream. Acquired water rights may also serve to offset the impacts of other water use and help build resilience against drought and the impacts of climate change.

Minimum requirements for application submission:

1. The Applicant must attend a pre-application meeting to discuss their proposal prior to submitting an application for a water right acquisition project.
2. The project must change the water right purpose of use to instream flow under RCW 90.03.380.
3. The project must permanently convey the water right to Ecology's Trust Water Rights Program.

Additional application requirements:

The materials required for the pre-application meeting will be components of the later application submittal if the applicant chooses to proceed with requesting Streamflow Restoration Competitive Grant funding.

During the pre-application meeting, Ecology staff will provide technical assistance and ensure that grant application requirements can be met.

Pre-Application Meeting details

How to schedule a pre-application meeting:

Send a completed [meeting request form](#)¹⁸ to sfrprigrants@ecy.wa.gov prior to March 3, 2026

Meeting requests submitted after March 3, 2026, will be dependent upon staff availability.

Include three (3) or more potential meeting dates and times. Plan for the meeting to take no more than 90 minutes.

At least one week prior to your confirmed meeting time, submit the following documentation:

1. A clear description of the project including the locations of the historical point of diversion and the stream reaches where the benefits are anticipated to occur.
2. The timing and quantity of additional streamflow (cubic feet per second) and volume (acre-feet) the project is anticipated to provide.
3. A proposed price in dollars per acre-foot and documentation supporting the price (See Appendix G).
4. An executed change application or a signed declaration of project support by the water right holder [and the landowner, if they are different].

¹⁸ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070741.html>

Other information:

Water right acquisition proposals must identify the water right(s) for which the purpose of use has or will be changed to instream flow under RCW 90.03.380. Ecology will make a tentative determination of the extent and validity of the water right during the change process.

Payment will be based on:

- Fair market value as determined by an appraisal (see Appendix G).
- Quantity of water found to be valid under the right.
- Completion of the change to the purpose of use.
- Final conveyance of the equity interest of the water right (or portion of the water right) to Ecology by deed or other contractual means.

Acquisition of a groundwater right is eligible for funding, but it may be difficult to estimate streamflow benefits of such projects. Applicants are encouraged to provide well logs, pump records, and any applicable groundwater studies in their application. Applicants may also consider completing a feasibility study prior to a water right acquisition. Please review the “Planning and feasibility study” section of this guidance for more information.



Water storage

Definition:

Water storage projects, including “retiming” projects, which involve the capture of water when it is physically and legally available (such as during high-flow periods) and the later use or release of that water when needed, thus increasing streamflow.

Examples:

- **Active Surface Storage:** Depressions in the land surface can be used or created to serve as surface storage reservoirs. The reservoir can be lined to prevent seepage loss and allow the maximum retention of stored water (minus evaporative loss) until it is needed. In some instances, Ecology may require a phased approach that includes a feasibility study for this type of project.
- **Managed Aquifer Recharge:** Managed aquifer recharge (MAR) is the purposeful recharge of water to the uppermost aquifer through engineered infiltration for subsequent recovery or for environmental benefit.¹⁹ MAR projects can augment dry-season streamflow by increasing surficial aquifer discharges to the streams beyond what occurs under current conditions. MAR projects typically involve diverting a small fraction of high seasonal streamflows to spreading basins or other infiltration facilities in the adjacent floodplain or uplands. This diverted surface water infiltrates into a shallow aquifer, migrates through the aquifer, and ultimately discharges back to surface water as re-timed groundwater base flow.

All MAR projects require a phased approach, which includes a feasibility study that addresses both Ecology’s Water Resource and Water Quality program requirements. Further information and requirements are provided in “MAR Feasibility Study” in this section and Appendix D.

- **Aquifer Storage and Recovery:** Aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) is a water resources management technique for injecting and storing water in deep aquifers during wet periods for recovery when needed, usually during dry periods.²⁰ ASR projects are generally developed to increase municipal water system resiliency by lessening the dependence on surface water during the dry season. This in turn leaves more water in surface waters during the dry season and can benefit aquatic species and their habitat. Prospective applicants should review Ecology’s flowchart for ASR permitting requirements prior to requesting a pre-application meeting or submitting a grant application.²¹ Aquifer storage

¹⁹ <https://www.ngwa.org/what-is-groundwater/groundwater-issues/managed-aquifer-recharge>.

²⁰ <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/california-water-science-center/science/aquifer-storage-and-recovery>

²¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2212003.html>

and recovery projects require close coordination with Ecology Water Resources and Water Quality staff, as well as the Washington Department of Health (WDOH).

- All ASR projects require a phased approach, which includes a feasibility study that addresses Ecology’s Water Resource Program, Water Quality Program, and WDOH requirements. For more information on ASR projects, visit Ecology’s website.²²
- **Cisterns:** A cistern is a waterproof receptacle for holding water. They have historically been built to catch and store rainwater and then used for irrigation or other non-potable domestic use. Below-ground cisterns are distinguished from wells by their waterproof linings.

There are a wide variety of possible water storage projects. Applications that provide evidence that the project would quantitatively improve streamflows as well as enhance instream resources and watershed functions are likely to score well in this competitive grant program.

Purpose and primary ecological benefits:

Water storage can have many benefits depending on location and design, including – depending on the management regime – increasing the resilience of both instream and off stream uses to the impacts of drought and climate change.

Projects that artificially recharge groundwater aquifers can improve surface water flows when groundwater contributions to rivers are normally at their lowest and have worsened over time due to human impacts. Surface water benefits are often achieved by retiming water from high-flow events in the winter to supplement streamflows during low-flow periods in the summer. This benefit can occur through passive release from groundwater or through timed release from above-ground reservoirs. When aquifer storage is used, significant streamflow temperature reductions may also result where high temperatures are a limiting factor for salmonid migration and survival. Water storage could also be used to provide water for out-of-stream uses, which could reduce the impacts of that water use on streamflows and water temperature.

It is expected that a feasibility study (if required) will thoroughly investigate the estimated timing and magnitude of streamflow benefits that would result from the project.

Minimum requirements for application submission:

Most water storage projects will require a feasibility study. These projects may need guidance and input from region Water Resources staff, Ecology’s Water Quality Program, or the Department of Health.

Additional application requirements:

MAR, ASR, and other retiming project proposals are required to include a phased approach. The first phase should include a study examining project feasibility, quantifying project benefits,

²² <https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/water-supply/water-recovery-solutions/aquifer-storage-recovery-recharge>.

water right permitting requirements and constraints, and water quality issues. Feasibility studies may be completed prior to application for the grant and submitted as part of the application. At Ecology's discretion, previously completed feasibility studies may require additional study to provide necessary information. Elements of a MAR feasibility study are detailed in Appendix D. Applicants proposing other types of storage and/or retiming projects should consult with Ecology to determine how the processes in Appendix D can be adapted for their specific project.

Other information:

It is strongly recommended that project proponents meet with Ecology before applying as these types of projects often require oversight by other Ecology programs or partner agencies.

MAR projects do not require National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System or State Waste Discharge permits if they are not introducing pollutants into surface or groundwater. While no Water Quality Program permits are issued for MAR projects, water quality anti-degradation rules still apply, and waters of the state need to be protected. The feasibility study requirements (described in Appendix D) are designed to allow projects to proceed without the need for a Water Quality Program permit and in acknowledgement of the water quality benefits of having more water in streams. If feasibility study results indicate unanticipated water quality issues, the Water Quality Program may re-evaluate the assumption that the project will not require a water quality permit.

Groundwater augmentation projects not using a surface water source (e.g., municipal water, reclaimed water, stormwater) can be proposed but may require additional source water characterization to maintain groundwater anti-degradation standards or have added permitting requirements not covered under this grant guidance. It is strongly recommended that applicants request a pre-application meeting with Ecology to discuss their project prior to applying.

Projects that include a stormwater infiltration component must meet the requirements of Ecology's Water Quality Program [State Fiscal Year 2025 Funding Guidelines Water Quality Combined Funding Program, Stormwater Financial Assistance Grants](#).²³ The project must be designed consistent with Ecology's Water Quality Program's stormwater management manuals. Those requirements should be identified in the feasibility study permitting analysis component. Applicants must consult with the Water Quality Program on their stormwater infiltration project to understand the requirements prior to applying.

²³ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2310020.pdf>



Altered water management or infrastructure

Definition:

Altered water management and infrastructure improvement projects may involve changes in how and when water is diverted, withdrawn, conveyed, or used to benefit streamflows and instream resources. Ecology is very interested in applications that propose innovative methods that increase resilience to the impacts of drought or climate change.

Examples:

- Conservation and efficiency projects such as diversion modifications, lining and piping ditches, sprinkler conversion.
- Source switches.

Purpose and primary ecological benefits:

Although there are a wide variety of projects of this type, in general, these types of projects reduce water waste, such as losses to evaporation or leakage, or use water more efficiently. For example, irrigation efficiencies can benefit crops by providing water only as needed, while conserving excess water that can tax the plants, leach out nutrients from the soil, and reduce the effectiveness of fertilizers. However, aspects of some conservation measures result in unforeseen consequences. Ditch lining, for example, may result in less water being used to irrigate crops, but may also reduce water seeping from the ditches into the ground, subsequently reducing streamflow. The balance of water that remains or ends up in a stream to benefit flows and support natural processes determines the true benefits conservation measures provide.

Minimum requirements for application submission:

Conservation and water use efficiency projects must permanently convey saved water to Ecology's Trust Water Rights Program and create a permanent instream flow improvement. Alternatively, access to new water supplies when identified in a watershed plan adopted under chapter 90.94 RCW.

Additional application requirements:

Applicants proposing altered water management or infrastructure projects must include in their proposal, per WAC 173-566-220, sufficient provisions and protections to ensure that completed projects provide:

- Permanent streamflow improvement; and/or
- Access to new water supplies when the project is identified in a watershed plan adopted under RCW 90.94.020 or 90.94.030.

Conservation and water use efficiency projects must permanently convey the saved water to Ecology to be held in the Trust Water Rights Program for instream flow purposes.



Watershed function, riparian, and fish habitat improvement

Definition:

- Watershed function as well as riparian and fish habitat improvement projects involve upland, riparian, or instream changes that restore and support natural watershed functions, benefitting threatened and endangered salmonids or other native aquatic species of concern. The range of benefits of these projects tend to be both short-term as well as long-term, such as helping to increase resiliency to both episodic events (e.g. drought) and to the impacts of climate change.
- These projects (by design) prioritize habitat benefits and tend to have streamflow benefits that are harder to quantify than water right acquisitions or water storage projects. This can make them less competitive for these grants. Applications that articulate how the project will quantitatively improve streamflow as well as provide benefits to instream resources are generally more competitive.

Examples:

- **In-channel habitat improvements:** Streambank restoration, gravel and woody structure augmentation, and channel re-meandering.
- **Riparian restoration:** Riparian planting to replace invasive species with native vegetation, providing future sources of woody debris; livestock exclusion fencing; removing creosoted wood and garbage; reducing impervious surfaces.
- **Strategic land acquisition:** Acquisitions, conversions, or easements that protect stream banks, promote a healthy riparian corridor, and preserve an area against future development. See Chapter 1 for the required landowner acknowledgement form.
- **Levee modification:** Levee removal or setback projects that change the slope, location, vegetation, or structure, *and* improve stream conditions.
- **Floodplain modification:** Projects intended to provide benefits for instream resources, such as increased rearing habitat, high-flow refuges, and increased species diversity.
- **Large wood placement in incised streams:** Strategic placement of large wood to improve fish habitat and water quality, as well as promote aggradation of incised stream channels.
- **Fish passage:** Removing or modifying barriers to allow fish passage and increase the range of salmonid access.
 - Removal of barriers required by law, executive order, or consent decree; or removing an upstream barrier when downstream barriers still exist that prevent fish access (i.e., threatened or endangered salmonids, or other native aquatic species of concern) and usage of the project site by different life stages are not eligible for funding under this grants program.

- **Beaver dam analogs and/or beaver introduction:** The construction of artificial beaver dams and/or the deliberate introduction of beaver to increase the water table, channel complexity, species diversity, and salmonid rearing habitat. Additional permitting is required to handle and translocate beaver. Please contact your local Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) habitat biologist to discuss applicable regulations.

Purpose and primary ecological benefits:

Projects of this type can improve watershed function, improve riparian and aquatic habitat, reduce water temperatures, improve food availability, provide fish protection from predators, restore spawning gravel, improve water quality, reduce flooding and flash flooding, increase dry season base flows, restore natural processes, foster species diversity, expand habitat for fish development, restore wildlife corridors, and promote ecological health.

Minimum requirements for application submission:

Projects involving the use or acquisition of private property must show landowner awareness by including a Landowner Acknowledgement Form (see Chapter 1) with the application.

Additional application requirements:

Applicants must clearly identify how the project will improve instream resources and include quantitative and/or qualitative estimates of the benefits provided.



Environmental monitoring

Definition:

Environmental monitoring is eligible for funding, including but not limited to:

- Stream gauging and groundwater monitoring directly related to restoring, maintaining, or enhancing streamflows or instream resources and values.
- Monitoring as a component of broader Streamflow Restoration Grant projects.
- Data collection that supports climate change or drought preparedness.

Purpose and primary ecological benefit:

Environmental monitoring provides the most benefit when it is used to develop or trigger actions that restore, maintain, or enhance streamflows and instream resources. One example is monitoring the benefits of a project to implement any contingency actions necessary to maintain project benefits.

Minimum requirements for application submission:

Environmental monitoring is typically a component of a larger project. Environmental data generated must be uploaded to Ecology's Environmental Information Management (EIM) system annually.

Other information:

Environmental monitoring is most likely to be funded when incorporated into a broader project proposal. Projects that do not increase streamflow but do benefit instream resources are eligible; however, they will tend to be less competitive for this grant funding program.

Funded projects that include collecting environmental data, analysis of existing environmental data, or use of environmental data for modeling will be required to develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that meets Ecology standards (See [Guidelines for Preparing Quality Assurance Project Plans for Environmental Studies](#)).²⁴ The Ecology project manager will provide the appropriate QAPP template grant recipients must use, based on the type of data to be used or collected. The QAPP must be approved by Ecology prior to the start of any work that is contained in the QAPP. The environmental data generated must be uploaded to Ecology's Environmental Information Management (EIM) system annually.

Additionally, applicants should demonstrate an understanding of the role(s) and cost(s) associated with requiring licensed professionals (e.g. hydrogeologists) to complete certain components of the project. Applicants should consult a licensed professional prior to applying to

²⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/0403030.pdf>

determine what professional services may be needed for their project. For example, but not limited to, for projects analyzing surface water and groundwater interactions, a licensed hydrogeologist is required to be involved in developing the applicable QAPP, overseeing measurement equipment installation, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results.

Quality Assurance Project Plans are complicated, and the effort involved is often underestimated, affecting a project's scope of work, budget, and timeline. Data reporting requirements can also take significant time and effort. Applicants are encouraged to meet with Ecology prior to applying if there are questions about whether a QAPP may be required for their project or to better understand the level of effort.



Planning and feasibility studies

Definition:

Planning and feasibility studies are a type of decision support tool. They serve to guide future actions and expenditures by systematically examining the factors likely to both help and hinder implementation, while proposing the best pathways for successful project implementation.

Strong studies tend to include:

- The issue(s) the proposed project will address.
- Project lifespan.
- Planning processes, including but not limited to the meaningful engagement with tribes, interested parties, and underrepresented or vulnerable populations.
- Parties identified to undertake specified roles.
- Uncertainty in calculating estimated benefits.
- Cost.
- Implementation timeframe.
- Technical hurdles or barriers.
- Permitting hurdles or barriers.
- Operations and maintenance needs and costs.
- Other elements to properly assess risks to success faced by the proposed project.
- Connections to existing projects and actions.

Examples:

- Specific pre-project plan analyzing the practicality and potential methodologies of the proposed project.
- Local / regional/ watershed scale plans that increase either instream or off stream resilience to articulated and specific drought impacts.
- Local / regional/ watershed scale plans that increase either or instream or off stream resilience to articulated and specific impacts from climate change.
- Water rights acquisition development.

Purpose and primary ecological benefit:

Planning and feasibility studies that provide no demonstrable benefit to streamflow or instream resources are rarely competitive for these grants. Their benefit is in their ability to save effort, money, and time by determining - up front - the viability of a project proposal while quantifying

risks and benefits. Generally, the closer the timing of a study is aligned with the project it is assessing, the easier it is for applicants to demonstrate its competitiveness.

Minimum requirements for application submission:

A feasibility study for a managed aquifer recharge project must follow special requirements (see Appendix D). Other feasibility studies are eligible with no special requirements.

Additional application requirements:

Feasibility studies may be funded for any eligible project type. In addition, Ecology reserves the right to require a feasibility study for any project. A feasibility study required by Ecology may be included as the first phase of a larger project application. An offer to fund a feasibility study does not imply any intent or create an obligation to provide grants or otherwise fund any subsequent phases of the project.

Applicants interested in conducting a feasibility study are encouraged to apply for grant funds to complete that study as part of a multi-phased, well-developed project proposal. Such applications will be assessed based upon both the feasibility study and the additional phases of the project. These applications are likely to score more competitively than stand-alone feasibility studies. In general, stand-alone feasibility studies (i.e., those not embedded within a well-developed project proposal) will not compete well in the evaluation, scoring, or ranking under this competitive grant program.

All managed aquifer recharge (MAR), aquifer storage and recovery (ASR), and water retiming project proposals are required to include a phased approach; the first phase must be comprised of a study examining project feasibility including water quality considerations as described in Appendix D.

If environmental data are to be collected, recipients will need to submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) as an initial project component that meets Ecology standards for submitting environmental monitoring data (see Ecology Publication No. 17-11-013).²⁵

²⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1711013.html>

Select ineligible project elements

An additional consideration for potential applicants is that there are projects and project components that are ineligible to receive competitive grant funding under this program. The following is a non-exhaustive list of common project elements that are ineligible for Streamflow Restoration Competitive Grants Program funding:

- Project elements previously funded by Ecology.
- Project elements that are otherwise required under statute, rule, ordinance, or court order, except pursuant to chapter 90.94 RCW.
- Costs to meet an individual or general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirement.
- Capital equipment and major purchases made without prior approval from Ecology.
- Property purchases made without prior written approval from Ecology.
- Contaminated soils removal or remediation.
- Projects that conflict with other Ecology rules, projects, or guidance.
- Aquatic plant control for aesthetic purposes, navigational improvements, or any other reason that does not provide increased streamflow, nor benefit ecological functions or critical stream habitat.
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) costs.

More information on broader ineligibility considerations can be found in WAC 173-566-310 and [Administrative Requirements for Recipients of Ecology Grants and Loans](#) (the “Yellow Book”).²⁶

²⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1701004.html>

Chapter 3: Applying for funding

Applications will be reviewed and scored based on the guidance and scoring criteria described in this document. Ecology reserves the right to conduct further assessments, including but not limited to on-site field evaluations, consultations with other agencies or entities, and feasibility assessments. The application period is specified in Chapter 1.

As noted in Chapter 2, a pre-application consultation is required for all water right acquisition projects. Applicants for other types of projects may request a pre-application meeting with Ecology staff if project-specific assistance is desired. Although Ecology cannot guarantee availability, requests will be accommodated to the extent possible.

- To request a pre-application meeting, please complete and submit a *Streamflow Restoration Grant Pre-application Meeting Request Form* ([ECY-070-041](#)²⁷) by email to sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov and include "meeting request" in the subject line of the email. Ecology will contact you to discuss scheduling.

The application

Applicants submit their applications through the Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system using a [Secure Access Washington](#)²⁸ account. The funding application is available by going to [Ecology's Grants and Loans webpage](#)²⁹ and following the instructions to access the funding application and the EAGL User's Manual available in the EAGL system. Applicants without access to the electronic system should contact Ecology for assistance.

The system is designed to allow up to five applications for each entity. If you expect to submit more than five applications, contact sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov to request additional applications.

Please note: EAGL closes down periodically on Mondays for system updates, and the system will automatically stop accepting applications at the March 16, 2026, 5 p.m. deadline.

The information found in the project application is the basis for developing the funding agreement. Funding agreements for clearly defined project proposals that include a detailed scope of work, measurable objectives, O&M plans, and accurate budgets will take less time to develop. If the applicant makes significant changes to the scope of work after the award, Ecology reserves the right to withdraw or modify a funding offer.

²⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070741.html>

²⁸ <https://secureaccess.wa.gov/public/saw/pub/displayRegister.do>

²⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans>

Scoring criteria

Streamflow Restoration Competitive Grant applications will be reviewed for their technical merit and competitively scored using the following scoring criteria. A total of 300 points is available (see Table 2).

Table 2. Scoring overview.

Scoring Category	Points Possible
1. Funding priorities	95
2. Project benefits	48
3. Project budget	30
4. Project durability and resiliency to impacts of climate change and drought	42
5. Project scope	30
6. Applicant’s community collaboration and readiness to proceed	25
7. Additional project considerations	30
Total	300

1. Funding priorities

Grant applications that demonstrate the following will receive added priority under each of the following five independent criteria.

1.1. The proposed project is identified in an RCW 90.94.020 or 90.94.030 watershed plan that has been adopted by Ecology, or through a rulemaking process to meet the requirements of RCW 90.94, or is in a designated RCW 90.94.040 Metering Pilot Project Area.		Possible	Earned
	True	30	
	False	0	
1.2. The proposed project would actively manage water to provide quantitative improvements to streamflows that will benefit instream resources (see Critical Grant Program Considerations in Chapter 1). Projects that rely on restoration of natural watershed functions and the passive response of the hydrogeologic system to improve streamflows do not qualify for points under this criteria.		Possible	Earned
Ecology has strong confidence that the project will improve streamflows based on evidence provided and technical evaluation of proposal.		21–30	
Some confidence that the project will improve streamflows based on evidence provided and technical evaluation of proposal.		11–20	
Minimal confidence that the project will improve streamflows based on evidence provided and technical evaluation of proposal.		1–10	
No confidence or convincing evidence that the project will improve streamflows based on evidence provided and technical evaluation of proposal.		0	
1.3. The proposed project would benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern.		Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that the project will benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern.		11–20	
Some evidence that the project will benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern.		6–10	
Minimal evidence that the project will benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern.		1–5	
No convincing evidence that the project will benefit native fish or aquatic species of concern.		0	

1.4. The proposed project would benefit threatened or endangered salmonids.	Possible	Earned
Evidence that the project will benefit threatened and endangered salmonids.	10	
No evidence that the project will benefit threatened and endangered salmonids.	0	
1.5. The proposed project would benefit overburdened communities or vulnerable populations	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that the project area includes overburdened communities or vulnerable populations. The application explains how these communities or populations were identified (by which indicator and ranking) and how they will benefit from the project.	5	
Some evidence that the project area includes overburdened communities or vulnerable populations. The application states the indicator but does not include an explanation on benefit to these communities or populations.	3	
Minimal evidence that the project area includes overburdened communities or vulnerable populations. The application does not state the indicator and no explanation on benefits to these communities or populations is provided, although some other relevant information is provided.	1	
No evidence that the project area includes overburdened communities or vulnerable populations.	0	
1.1–1.5 Total Points	95	

2. Project benefits

Competitive grant applications will demonstrate that the proposed project will provide benefits directly addressing the local causes of aquatic resource degradation, as well as water quality, and other environmental considerations.

2.1. The application has identified one or more local causes of aquatic resource degradation that the proposal is designed to address (fully or in part).	Possible	Earned
Evidence that the proposal is designed to address problems in the watershed.	5	
No evidence of a problem.	0	

2.2. The proposed project would have a lasting, durable, and meaningful effect on local causes of aquatic resource degradation without causing adverse impacts on the source or recipient watershed.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that the proposal will have a meaningful effect on the problem.	20	
Some evidence that the proposal will have a meaningful effect on the problem.	13	
Minimal evidence that the proposal will have a meaningful effect on the problem.	5	
No convincing evidence that the proposal will have a meaningful effect on the problem.	0	
2.3. The proposed project would provide timely benefits.	Possible	Earned
Evidence that the project will provide benefits immediately after completion.	5	
Evidence that the project will provide benefits between 1 and 5 years after completion.	2	
Evidence that the project will provide benefits, but not for more than 5 years after completion.	1	
No evidence that the project will provide benefits.	0	
2.4. The proposed project and project benefits align with the needs of the community and other watershed planning processes (see “Consistency with Watershed and Community Planning Partner and Stakeholder Engagement” in Appendix C).	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project and project benefits align with watershed and community planning.	11-15	
Some evidence that project and project benefits align with watershed and community planning.	6-10	
Minimal evidence that project and benefits align with watershed and community planning.	1-5	
No convincing evidence.	0	
2.1–2.4 Total Points	48	

3. Project budget

Competitive grant applications will demonstrate that the proposed project will deliver benefits for instream resources that justify the project cost.

3.1. Cost estimates for proposed project and individual tasks are based upon defensible and relevant data.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that costs are based upon defensible and relevant data.	10	
Some evidence that costs are based upon defensible and relevant data.	5	
Minimal evidence that costs are based upon defensible and relevant data.	2	
No convincing evidence.	0	
3.2. Proposed project is an effective use of funds in terms of costs and quantifiable streamflow benefits as demonstrated in the application.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project provides streamflow benefits for a low relative cost.	7-10	
Strong evidence that project provides streamflow benefits for a reasonable relative cost.	4-6	
Strong evidence that project provides streamflow benefits for a high relative cost.	1-3	
No convincing evidence.	0	
3.3. Adequate funding has been identified for the proposed project.	Possible	Earned
All funding has been applied for or secured.	10	
Some funding has been applied for or secured.	5	
No convincing evidence that sufficient funding has been applied for or secured to meaningfully advance the proposed project.	0	
3.1–3.3 Total Points	30	

4. Project durability and resilience to impacts of climate change or drought

Competitive grant applications will demonstrate that the applicant has used a complete and well-defined set of criteria to determine the durability of the proposed project and its benefits, including considerations of climate change and drought.

4.1. Proposed project would increase resiliency to the impacts of climate change or drought.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project addresses specified impacts of climate change or drought	11-15	
Some evidence that project addresses specified impacts of climate change or drought.	6-10	
Minimal evidence that the project addresses some impacts of climate change or drought.	1-5	
No convincing evidence that project addresses any impacts of climate change or drought.	0	
4.2. Proposed project is feasible and likely to succeed.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project is feasible and likely to succeed. Examples of strong evidence include feasibility study covering proposed application scope, water right change recently completed, or final designs.	10	
Some evidence that project is feasible and likely to succeed. Examples of some evidence include technical studies or desktop exercises.	5	
No convincing evidence that project is feasible and likely to succeed.	0	
4.3. The uncertainties and risks of the proposed project have been identified, evaluated, and minimized to the extent possible.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that risks have been identified, evaluated, and minimized.	9	
Some evidence that risks have been identified, evaluated, and minimized.	7	
Minimal evidence that risks have been identified, evaluated, and minimized.	4	
No convincing evidence that risks have been identified, evaluated, and minimized.	0	
4.4. Application demonstrates an understanding of how climate change may impact the proposed project and identifies how it will address climate change and drought resilience for the project (see Critical Grant Program Considerations in Chapter 1 and Appendix C).	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project design considered climate change and drought resilience.	8	
Some evidence that project design considered climate change and drought resilience.	4	

No convincing evidence that project design considered climate change and drought resilience.	0	
4.1–4.5 Total Points	42	

5. Project scope

Competitive grant applications will demonstrate the following three independent criteria.

5.1. Application scope covers all elements necessary to develop, implement, and complete the project.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project scope covers all necessary elements.	10	
Some evidence that project scope covers all necessary elements.	5	
No convincing evidence that project scope covers all necessary elements.	0	
5.2. Application provides sufficient maps, plans, and other documents for the project.	Possible	Earned
Detailed and useful maps, plans, and other documentation.	10	
Incomplete or insufficient maps, plans, and other documentation.	5	
No maps, plans, and/or other documentation.	0	
5.3. Project deliverables would provide clear evidence that project tasks have been successfully completed.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence that project deliverables will provide clear evidence that project tasks have been successfully completed.	10	
Some evidence that project deliverables will provide clear evidence that project tasks have been successfully completed.	5	
No convincing evidence that project deliverables will provide clear evidence that project tasks have been successfully completed.	0	
5.1–5.3 Total Points	30	

6. Applicant’s community collaboration and readiness to proceed

Competitive grant applications will demonstrate that the applicant has sufficient staff, planning, and commitments in place to complete the project, monitor effectiveness, and sustain the benefits of this project.

6.1. Applicant has identified affected tribes, governments, and key stakeholders (see “Consistency with Watershed and Community Planning” in Appendix C) and gained their support for the proposed project.	Possible	Earned
Application both describes a meaningful intent to engage with affected tribes and key interested parties during project development and includes documentation of project support from affected tribes and key interested parties.	1-13	
No letters of support.	0	
6.2. Applicant is prepared to start on the proposed project (e.g., design and/or permitting work is already completed or underway).	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence of readiness to proceed with project.	4	
Some evidence of readiness to proceed with project.	3	
No convincing evidence of readiness to proceed with project.	0	
6.3. Application has demonstrated that sufficient staff, planning, and commitments are in place to ensure that the project will be completed and adequately maintained. Applicant roles, responsibilities, and qualifications are adequate for the scope of work.	Possible	Earned
Strong evidence of experience completing similar projects.	8	
Some evidence of experience completing similar projects.	4	
No convincing evidence of experience completing similar projects or there are concerns on file with the applicant.	0	
6.1–6.4 Total Points	25	

7. Additional project considerations

Competitive grant applications have identified all additional concerns or considerations relevant to the proposed project, not directly addressed in the previous scoring criteria.

7.1. Project does not raise any legal or policy concerns, and applicant has identified and adequately addressed probable failure points, permitting concerns, inter-programmatic comments, multiple environmental goals, geographic considerations, concerns identified by technical reviewers and agency staff, and all additional concerns.	Possible	Earned
	1–30	
7.1 Total Points	30	
Total Points	300	

Appendix A: Department of Ecology Region Offices



Figure 1. Map of counties served by Ecology's region offices.

Table 3. Regional contact information.

Region	Counties served	Mailing address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum.	PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom.	PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133-9716	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima.	1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman.	4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400

Appendix B: Priority Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs)

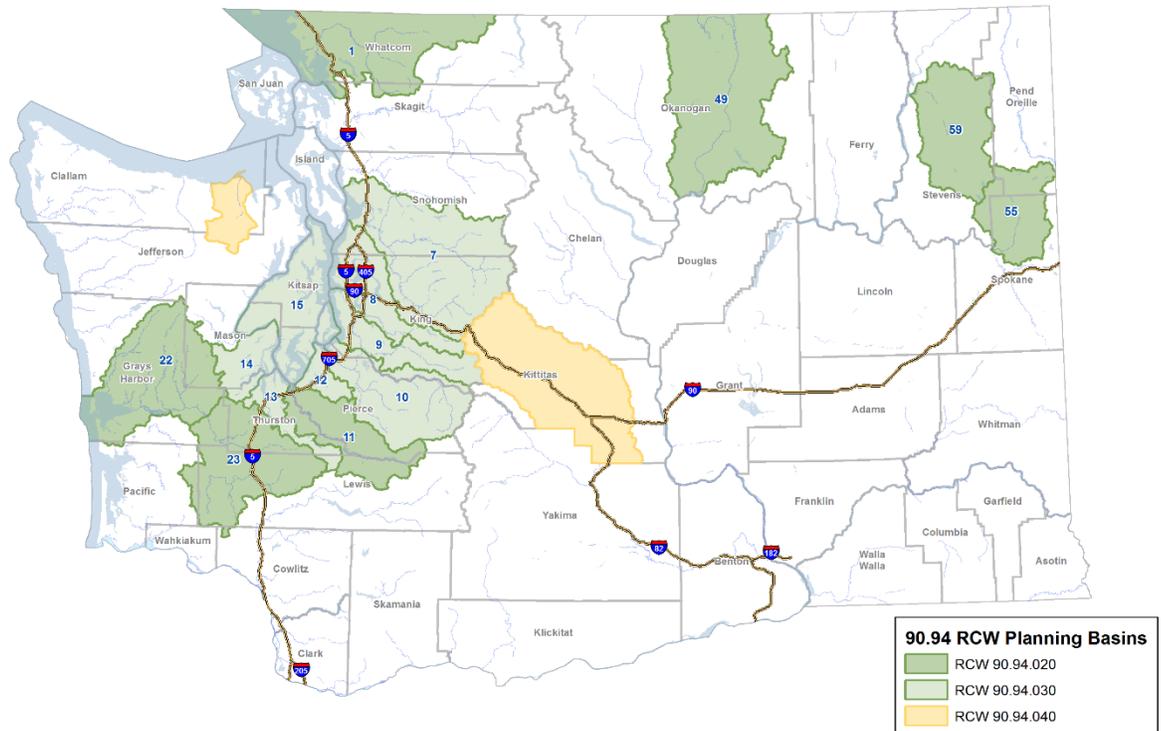


Figure 2. Basins prioritized for funding under chapter 90.94 RCW.

The following basins have priority for funding under chapter 173-566 WAC:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| WRIA 1 — Nooksack | WRIA 14 — Kennedy-Goldsborough |
| WRIA 7 — Snohomish | WRIA 15 — Kitsap |
| WRIA 8 — Cedar-Sammamish | WRIA 22 — Lower Chehalis |
| WRIA 9 — Duwamish-Green | WRIA 23 — Upper Chehalis |
| WRIA 10 — Puyallup-White | WRIA 49 — Okanogan |
| WRIA 11 — Nisqually | WRIA 55 — Little Spokane |
| WRIA 12 — Chambers-Clover | WRIA 59 — Colville |
| WRIA 13 — Deschutes | |

Additional priority watersheds include those areas of WRIAs 18 (the area regulated by chapter 173-518 WAC — Dungeness) and 39 (the Kittitas County water bank program area) designated in RCW 90.94.040 for metering pilot projects.

Appendix C: Reference Information for Project Applicants

Habitat restoration and consistency with watershed and community planning

Riparian and wetland restoration can be a critical part of streamflow restoration habitat projects. The design of habitat restoration components should be consistent with watershed-specific planning and conditions and should be based on best practices identified in relevant manuals and guidance.

Salmon Recovery Lead Entities are key groups that support watershed-based habitat restoration across the state. It will be very important to ensure that projects are in harmony with the habitat [recovery objectives of the Lead Entity](#).³⁰

Other sources of habitat information are [WDFW](#)³¹ and [tribal biologists familiar with your region](#).³²

Resources providing best practices for habitat project design and applicable science include:

- [The Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines](#)³³ (2012).
- [Ecology's Restoring Wetlands in Washington: A Guidebook for Wetland Restoration, Planning & Implementation](#)³⁴ (1993).
- [Riparian Ecosystems, Volume 1: Science Synthesis and Management Implications](#)³⁵ (2018).
- [Riparian Ecosystems, Volume 2: Management Recommendations](#)³⁶ (2018).

Tribal government, partner government, and stakeholder engagement

To maximize project scores, applicants are encouraged to engage with all tribal governments, partner governments, and stakeholders, early and often. This engagement and coordination are to occur both prior to, and after, submitting an application for funding, during project development and implementation, and after a contract is signed. Robust and ongoing engagement from relevant partners and stakeholders is crucial to project success because doing so demonstrates thoughtful project planning and management.

³⁰ <https://rco.wa.gov/salmon-recovery/managing-organizations/lead-entities/>

³¹ <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regional-offices>

³² https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gispublic/DataDownload/map_TribalReservation_statewide.pdf

³³ <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01374>

³⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/93017.html>

³⁵ <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01987>

³⁶ <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01988>

A strong application that maximizes project scores will include letters of support from interested tribes, local governments, and stakeholders. The applicant should include as many letters of support as they believe reasonably demonstrate broad project support:

- All project proponents are strongly advised to contact and consult with interested or potentially interested tribes. As part of Ecology’s commitment to coordination with our governmental partners, Ecology provides an opportunity for Tribes to review and comment on the submitted applications.
- If your project is in an RCW 90.94.020 planning area, contact the appropriate [planning unit](#).³⁷ If your project is an RCW 90.94.030 planning area, refer to adopted plans and individual watershed planning webpages to identify interested parties.³⁸
- If your project impacts salmon habitat, contact the Salmon Recovery Lead Entity and local Tribes in your region.
- If your project impacts agricultural lands, contact local conservation districts, drainage districts, and farming organizations.
- If your project is located in the Puget Sound region (except for WRIAs 3 & 5 - the Skagit Watershed), contact the [Local Integrating Organization Coordinator](#)³⁹ in that area.
- If your project will impact water quality, contact Ecology’s Water Quality staff and the local conservation district for input.
- If your project impacts recreation, contact local user groups and/or local or state parks departments.
- If your project impacts local flooding and flood control structures, contact floodplain managers in your region including diking and drainage districts and flood control districts.

Climate change

Ecology encourages integrated approaches that consider climate impacts. Climate change is projected to result in highly variable patterns with prolonged drought, interspersed with years of heavy rain.⁴⁰ Washington state is expected to experience reduced snowpack, increased stream temperatures, and changing ocean conditions.⁴¹ These changing conditions are a significant concern for all aspects of streamflow restoration project management.

³⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-supply/Streamflow-restoration/Streamflow-restoration-planning>

³⁸ RCW 90.94.030 Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committees are no longer active but the adopted plans and/or membership information is available online: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-supply/Streamflow-restoration/Streamflow-restoration-planning>

³⁹ <https://www.psp.wa.gov/LIO-overview.php>

⁴⁰ Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: The Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II (2018)

⁴¹ [Ibid](#)

The extent and frequency of flooding is projected to increase in the future, resulting in higher flood risks to human communities and further impacts to salmon populations.⁴² Projected low summer flows may cause warmer water temperatures that exceed the thermal threshold for salmon.⁴³ Projected shifts in temperature and precipitation regimes are likely to compound existing stressors on habitats and salmon populations.⁴⁴

Proposals and project designs should consider the effects of climate change and address future changes to hydrology, sediment delivery, and other factors that affect stream systems. Strong applications will:

- Identify critical impacts of climate change specific to the project area or to partner and stakeholder interests. Many regions have completed vulnerability assessments or climate action plans that identify these key risks. In regions where these plans have not been completed, applicants can use the available regional data to make their best assessment of key impacts in their watershed.
- Incorporate climate projections into project modeling and design plans so that there is confidence that projects will continue to meet goals into the future.
- Discuss the specific effects of climate change resilience in the project or planning area, and describe how this information was used in project selection and design. Relevant information includes:
 - Citations of existing research or reports that are relevant to the project area.
 - Consideration of impacts observed during historical events that serve as an analog to future conditions (e.g., recent large flooding events, warming events/trends, etc.).
 - Description of how climate change predictions were incorporated and used during project site selection or design.
 - Models/projections of future climate change impacts (where possible).
 - Description of confidence in future flood, ecosystem, and stream conditions.

⁴² The Washington Climate Change Impacts Assessment: Evaluating Washington’s Future in a Changing Climate (2009)

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

Appendix D: MAR Feasibility Study Details

Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) can augment dry-season streamflow by increasing surficial aquifer discharges to streams beyond what occurs under current conditions. MAR projects typically involve diverting a small fraction of high seasonal streamflows to spreading basins or other infiltration facilities in the adjacent floodplain or uplands. This diverted surface water infiltrates into a shallow aquifer, migrates through the aquifer, and ultimately discharges back to surface water as re-timed groundwater base flow.

As provided in Chapter 2 of the grant guidance, all MAR project proponents seeking streamflow restoration competitive grant funding must complete a feasibility study prior to any other phases of the MAR being eligible for Streamflow Restoration grant funding. This section describes the requirements MAR project proponents must meet in preparing a feasibility study.

MAR feasibility studies are eligible for competitive grant funding pursuant to the requirements provided below. Alternatively, such feasibility studies may have been undertaken and completed prior to seeking competitive grant funding for the MAR project itself. In such cases, the feasibility study must meet the requirements provided below and a thorough report of the methodologies and results must be included with the application for the MAR project. To the extent that previous feasibility work does not meet the requirements below, recipients may seek competitive grant funding to fill in the gaps.

MAR feasibility study tasks

Information developed based upon the tasks listed below will need to be consolidated into a single technical memorandum presented to Ecology for review. This document must clearly describe aspects of the proposed MAR required to assess project feasibility. Environmental evaluations in this report will be required to follow the [Water Resources Program QAPP Template](#)⁴⁵ for non-water quality datasets and the [Water Quality Program MAR feasibility QAPP Template](#)⁴⁶ for water quality datasets. All feasibility study work must be conducted according to study designs described in these QAPPs and as approved by the respective program Quality Assurance Coordinators.

1. Preliminary site assessment and site access

Task description: Evaluate proposed MAR site(s). The applicant will use the best available information and data (e.g., geologic maps, nearby well logs) and collect any additional existing relevant data to identify local aquifers and evaluate aquifer head conditions. The applicant will also demonstrate that they have secured access and permission from the entities that own the property, through the [Landowner Acknowledgement Form](#)⁴⁷, to conduct on-site work and are arranging for long-term access to the property if the project ultimately moves forward.

⁴⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/1811018.html>

⁴⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/1910050.html>

⁴⁷ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070614.html>

2. Delineation of the water source

Task description: Describe available water sources that can be developed for use in a MAR project. The water must be available within the physical and legal constraints of the watershed, including any applicable watershed rules (WACs) or surface water source limitations (SWSLs). In instances where an MAR project would remove surface water during a period when water is not legally available per an existing watershed rule, grant recipients should consult with the Water Resources Program to determine if additional work is needed to address this aspect of project feasibility (contact sfrprjgrants@ecy.wa.gov).

3. Field investigation and analysis of MAR site

Task description: Conduct field investigations and analyses of the resulting data to determine whether hydrogeologic conditions are favorable for a MAR project.

MAR field investigations will likely include the following:

- Test pit investigations to evaluate sub-surface conditions.
- Infiltrometer testing to evaluate infiltration rates.
- Monitoring well installation for conducting hydraulic tests, assessing water table elevations, and sampling groundwater to test water quality parameters.
- Surface water source flow measurements and water availability analyses.
- Water quality sampling of potential MAR source waters (see Item 6 below).

4. MAR permitting analysis

Task description: Identify all applications and permits required for project implementation. The analysis will estimate the anticipated costs of obtaining the necessary permits, as well as the timeline needed to acquire these permits.

Permit requirements for recharge facility design, permitting, and compliance monitoring are likely to vary from site to site. The recommended permitting approach will be developed in consultation with Ecology, WDFW, and other regulatory agencies, as necessary.

5. Preliminary MAR project design

Task description: Develop a preliminary MAR project design. The preliminary design summarizes project and design costs, project operational elements, expected project infiltration quantities, expected timing and quantities of instream flow benefits, monitoring needs to support permit requirements and performance assessments, and includes relevant design drawings. Since it will be a preliminary design, the final project design will be subject to change based on the outcomes and recommendations of the feasibility study.

Preliminary design elements could include:

- Surface water collection and conveyance structures.

- Infiltration basins and/or subsurface galleries.
- Methods to limit diversions to periods of high water availability and available infiltration capacity.
- Geotechnical considerations.
- Electrical power access (if needed).
- Monitoring requirements.
- Cost estimates for project permitting, construction, implementation, and operation.

6. Water quality considerations

Task Description: Assess the aquifer and source water compatibility, and likely water quality impacts from conveyance and infiltration.

MAR projects do not require National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System or State Waste Discharge permits if they are not introducing pollutants into surface or groundwater. While no Water Quality Program permits are issued for MAR projects, water quality anti-degradation rules still apply and waters of the state need to be protected. The feasibility study requirements described here are designed to allow projects to proceed without need for a Water Quality Program permit and in acknowledgement of the water quality benefits of having more water in streams. If feasibility study results indicate unanticipated water quality issues, the Water Quality Program may re-evaluate the assumption that the project will not require a water quality permit.

The water quality feasibility study will be designed to answer the question, “Will this proposed MAR project be protective of groundwater and surface water quality?” Project proponents must assess the source water and aquifer water compatibility, potential water quality changes that might occur during infiltration, and potential implications for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) load and waste load allocations and/or water quality standards. If either of the surface (source) water or groundwater characterizations results exceed applicable receiving water standards, the project if implemented, a water quality treatment approach and/or a post-operation study may be required.

MAR projects do not receive stormwater runoff, and instead involve infiltrating high-flow-season stream/river water into the ground to create surface water discharge later in the year. These projects vary in design, but most employ either spreading basins (ponds) or infiltration galleries (e.g., perforated pipe) for infiltration. The latter facilities qualify as Underground Injection Controls as described in Chapter 173-218 WAC, which require on-line registration with Ecology’s Water Quality Program.

In order to evaluate how water quality (surface and groundwater) is likely to be affected at a proposed MAR project site, the following tasks will need to occur.

A. Surface (Source) Water Characterization

Surface water characterization monitoring data will be evaluated to determine water quality conditions in the stream from which the diversion is planned. The purpose of this monitoring is to provide a basis for comparison of the quality of the source water to the receiving groundwater quality conditions.

The source water characterization data shall be collected during the period of ambient high flow, but not during flooding conditions when a stream exceeds its banks and picks up additional pollutants from the surrounding land areas.

The source water characterization data must be collected during the first six months of a water year, which begins on October 1. A total of three samples are needed during the October through April time period, spaced at least one week apart. Existing data may be used in lieu of or in addition to collecting new data.

The project applicant will need to:

- Check [WQ Atlas](#)⁴⁸ for 303(d) listings, and any TMDLs for a 4A-waterbody, for the proposed MAR project location and upstream reaches. Water quality parameters listed as 303(d) or TMDL in the WQ Atlas will need to be included in the source water characterization.
- Collect the required number of samples of total suspended solids, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, dissolved and total metals (arsenic, cadmium, chromium, zinc, and lead), fecal coliform, and E. coli bacteria, as well as any parameters identified in the 303(d) listing.
- Prepare a source water characterization report that includes all laboratory data presented in a table. Groundwater quality standards for all applicable parameters will need to be included in the table for comparison.

B. Groundwater (Receiving) Characterization

Groundwater from a monitoring well screened in the surficial aquifer near the project site will be sampled once for laboratory analysis of total suspended solids, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, dissolved and total metals (arsenic, cadmium, chromium, zinc, and lead) and fecal coliform and E. coli bacteria, as well as any 303(d) or TMDL parameters, prior to authorization of the project. If no monitoring wells exist at or near the project site, a nearby well may be used, or a simple temporary well may be constructed for the sampling. Determination of appropriate wells will occur in consultation with Ecology. The project applicant will prepare a groundwater characterization report that includes all laboratory data presented in a table. Surface water quality standards for all applicable parameters will be included in the table for comparison.

C. Conveyance Characterization

Ecology's strong preference is that all diverted water be conducted through a pipeline or other conveyance structure constructed specifically for the MAR project. If diverted water will be routed through a ditch, abandoned irrigation water canal or other pre-existing conduit, then the project proponent must provide sufficient information to demonstrate that there is little potential for the conveyance to contribute pollutants during the MAR project's operation. Specifically, in those instances

⁴⁸ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/waterqualityatlas/wqa/startpage>

the study will need to be designed to demonstrate that the flow through said conduit(s) will not lead to significant contamination (e.g., nutrients and/or pesticides).

The project proponent will need to consult with Ecology's Water Quality Program to determine appropriate analyses for this characterization based on known prior uses or conditions surrounding the proposed conveyance. Results will be presented in a summary table and any issues of concern must be highlighted in the report. Further discussion may be required to identify how those issues will be addressed.

D. Additional Water Quality Considerations

MAR project feasibility studies should provide information regarding other aspects of the project design and operation relevant to water quality.

For example, MAR projects should be designed to ensure that operation only occurs during ambient high water flows. Diversions should not take place during flooding events where a stream is exceeding its banks and picking up additional pollutants from the surrounding land areas. Similarly, stormwater should not be mixed with diverted river flows. If high total suspended solids concentrations were reported through the source water characterization, a pre-settling basin in advance of the spreading basins/infiltration galleries may be needed. If additional pollutants of concern were identified, further appropriate structural pre-treatment controls may be required.

MAR projects may not withdraw water from a tidally influenced river reach, or from a mixing zone for a permitted point source discharge. The project applicant should verify that the spreading basin location is not listed as a [cleanup site](#).⁴⁹

7. Operation and maintenance costs

Task description: O&M costs must be estimated for the proposed MAR project, and funding sources will need to be secured. O&M costs are ineligible for Streamflow Restoration grant funding.

The MAR project design will need to include an O&M plan that describes how the diversion will be managed to prevent potentially contaminated floodwaters from entering the spreading basin/infiltration gallery. The project O&M plan must also include maintaining records of operations, repairs, and monitoring including the date, staff person, activity, and any unusual observations or issues of concern.

⁴⁹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/neighborhood/>

Appendix E: Cultural Resource Review

Grant recipients must comply with Governor’s Executive Order (GEO) 21-02 concerning archeological and cultural resources. Projects involving construction, demolition, or land acquisitions must undergo cultural resource review. Applicants must complete and submit the following to allow for a cultural resource review:

- [Cultural Resources Review form \(ECY 070-537\)](#)⁵⁰
- [Inadvertent Discovery Plan \(ECY 070-560\)](#)⁵¹
- Any other information required to comply with GEO 21-02

Ecology staff, grant recipients, the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and affected tribe(s) work together to determine if a site has the potential of disturbing or significantly impacting cultural or historic resources. If the review indicates high risk of finding human remains or cultural artifacts, a survey may be required, a cultural resource specialist may be needed on-site, or a part or all of the project may be unable to proceed as originally intended. Cultural resources review must occur prior to the expenditure of any state funds for construction, demolition, or acquisition.

Applicants should consider potential cultural resources costs associated with their project and include these requests in their application. DAHP hosts the publicly available [WISAARD](#)⁵² database, which can be a helpful, quick, and user-friendly resource for initial assessments by applicants, and can be verified by grant application evaluators in coordination with the Program’s Cultural Resources Contact (CRC).

Cultural Resources Review Process

- 1) Preliminary Determination: An Ecology CRC will use the Ecology Cultural Resources Review form, the [WISAARD](#) database, and any other documentation to identify the potential for any archaeological and historic archaeological sites, historic buildings/structures, traditional cultural places, sacred sites, or burial sites within or directly adjacent to the Area of Potential Effect (APE). In some cases, a consultant archaeologist may assist with this preliminary determination. This preliminary determination is open for comment by all consulting parties. The format may be an electronic letter, paper, or digital correspondence.
- 2) Request for Concurrence with Preliminary Determination: The CRC initiates cultural resource review by requesting comments and concurrence on the preliminary determination. The CRC includes DAHP, consulting parties, tribes, and any other identified parties. This correspondence includes a detailed project description, map, and Ecology’s Cultural Resources Review form with a cover letter or email. The comment period is typically 35 days, but Ecology may extend it.
- 3) Final Determination: The Final Determination is based upon any comments or concurrence received.

⁵⁰ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070537.html>

⁵¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070560.html>

⁵² <https://wisaard.dahp.wa.gov/>

Appendix F: Important Regulations that Apply to State Funded Projects

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) The Washington state legislature adopted the SEPA in 1971; the act is modeled on the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Chapter 197-11 WAC implements SEPA. SEPA provides information to agencies, applicants, and the public to encourage the development of environmentally sound proposals. The environmental review process involves the identification and evaluation of probable environmental impacts; and the development of mitigation measures that will reduce adverse environmental impacts. Agency decision-makers use environmental information, along with other considerations, to decide whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a proposal. SEPA applies to actions made at all levels of government within Washington state. SEPA review must be completed before ecology may sign a funding agreement for construction projects or before construction begins for combined design/construction projects.⁵³

Background – Applicant/Recipient Role and Responsibility

SEPA applies to decisions made by every state and local agency, including counties, cities, ports, and special districts. Responsibilities of a SEPA lead agency include identifying and evaluating the potential adverse environmental impacts of a proposal, including certain nonpoint source activities. As defined under SEPA, the Recipient is generally the Lead Agency - responsible for the preparation, circulation and consideration of the environmental document prior to approving the project. Responsibilities of Ecology and other agencies having jurisdiction over the proposed project include reviewing and considering the information in the environmental document prior to approving any portion of the project.

SEPA is often a stand-alone requirement for many municipalities planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA). For all Recipients of state grants, SEPA is required for all agency actions unless specifically exempted by the SEPA Rules (WAC 197-11-800 to 880). See the EID Guidance for CWSRF guidance on exemptions. Please note that completion of the SEPA process does not take the place of a formal cultural resource review and consultation by Ecology.

Project and Non-project SEPA Actions

SEPA describes proposals as project or non-project action. A non-project action (WAC 197-11- 704 (2)(b)) is a governmental action that involves decisions on policies, plans, or programs that contain standards controlling use or modification of the environment or that will govern a series of connected actions. For example, the development of a City's Stormwater Management Plan for a specific region is a non-project action. Project actions are governmental decisions to license, fund, or undertake a specific project. Construction of a stormwater detention pond is a project action, as described in the City's Stormwater Management Plan.

⁵³ WAC 173-566 (3)

When moving from non-project to project level SEPA, Phased Review streamlines the process between planning/design and construction (WAC 197-11-060). Coordinate with the Ecology Project Manager when applying Phased Review to multiple agreements. Phased Review assists with project planning, permits, and discussions with regulatory agencies.

Environmental Checklist

SEPA requires an environmental checklist. Ecology Project Managers use the checklist to learn about the proposal and its probable environmental impacts. Ensure your Ecology Project Manager is included in the SEPA distribution list. The environmental checklist form is in the SEPA Rules under WAC 197-11-960. If you need assistance, please go to the Ecology SEPA Website.⁵⁴

Mitigation

The consideration of environmental impacts and possible mitigation measures during agency decision-making is a cornerstone of SEPA. SEPA substantive authority gives all levels of local and state government the ability to condition or deny a proposal based on environmental impacts.

Mitigation means the avoidance, minimization, rectification, compensation, reduction, or elimination of adverse impacts to the built and natural elements of the environment. Mitigation may also involve monitoring and a contingency plan for correcting problems if they occur.

In determining mitigation, the lead agency reviews the environmental checklist and other information available on the proposal, including consultations with other agencies, such as Ecology. Mitigation required under existing local, state, and federal rules may be sufficient to eliminate any adverse impacts—or even to deny the proposal.

If additional mitigation is warranted, the lead agency's SEPA procedures identifies ways to address potential adverse impacts. Agencies with jurisdiction or expertise, such as Ecology, tribes, and the public may assist the lead agency in determining appropriate mitigation for a proposal. Mitigation conditions must be reasonable and capable of being accomplished. Mitigation measures and stipulations are outlined prior to the threshold determination. Discuss mitigation with your Ecology Project Manager.

Threshold Determination

After evaluating the proposal and identifying any mitigation measures, the lead agency will determine if the SEPA action will still have any likely significant adverse environmental impacts. The SEPA Rules state that significant “means a reasonable likelihood of more than a moderate adverse impact on environmental quality.”

If the lead agency has enough information and concludes that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, the agency issues a determination of nonsignificance (DNS). If

⁵⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review>

the applicant mitigates adverse impacts, the agency issues a mitigated determination of non-significance (MDNS). If the information indicates the proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, the lead agency issues a determination of significance (DS) and requires an environmental impact statement (EIS). The DNS and MDNS provide a minimum 14-day public comment period (generally) while the EIS provides a formal process involving public hearings, scoping, evaluation of alternatives, and formal input on how the agency selects measures intended to eliminate or reduce the likely environmental impacts of the preferred alternative.

Information on SEPA

- [General Information on Washington’s State Environmental Policy Act](#)⁵⁵
 - [A basic overview of SEPA](#)⁵⁶.
 - [The SEPA Guide for project applicants](#)⁵⁷ provides detailed guidance on the process.
- Electronic versions of [SEPA forms](#)⁵⁸.
- [SEPA Register](#)⁵⁹.
- SEPA rule, [Chapter 197-11 WAC](#)⁶⁰.
- SEPA statute, [Chapter 43.21C RCW](#)⁶¹.

Questions on SEPA

- For SEPA-related questions: sepahelp@ecy.wa.gov or 360-407-6922.

⁵⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review>

⁵⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/basic-overview>

⁵⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/guide-for-project-applicants>

⁵⁸ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/UIPages/PublicationList.aspx?IndexTypeName=Topic&NameValue=SEPA&DocumentTypeName=Form>

⁵⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-register>

⁶⁰ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=197-11>

⁶¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=43.21C>

Appendix G: The Role of Appraisals in Determining the Purchase Price for Water Right Acquisitions

As summarized in Chapter 2, complete water right acquisition applications include the proposed total price of each water right proposed for purchase along with all supporting documentation.⁶²

An important component of documenting the purchase price is an appraisal. Ecology requires an appraisal to determine the fair market value of real property.⁶³ Due to the complexities of the appraisal process, not contacting and collaborating with Ecology prior to obtaining an appraisal is likely to result in unnecessary delays or circumstances where Ecology is unable to accept the appraisal or provide grant funding.

An appraisal is a self-contained report that is independently and impartially prepared by a qualified appraiser setting forth sufficient rationale to define the value of an adequately described property as of a specific date, supported by the presentation and analysis of relevant market information.⁶⁴ If multiple water rights are proposed for purchase, a separate appraisal is required for each right. If an appraisal is not submitted with the application, an appraisal will be required (as an eligible cost) as part of the grant funded project.

Appraisals used by streamflow restoration grant applicants and grantees:

1. Be prepared using one or more generally accepted water right valuation methods.⁶⁵ Contact Ecology immediately when considering a method(s) that is not, or may not be, considered generally accepted. Coordinating with Ecology prior to either applying for the grant or obtaining that appraisal will clarify if the valuation method in question can be used to meet this funding opportunity's appraisal requirement.
2. Provide "a point value," a reasonably circumscribed value range, or both that describes and contextualizes the fair market value of the water right.
3. Use a method(s) that appropriately reflects the proposed purchase scenario.
4. Present the value as a cost per acre foot of consumptive water.
5. Be accompanied by a rationale supporting the proposed price. In the event the appraisal differs from the proposed price, the applicant's rationale must be sufficient to facilitate Ecology's

⁶² Documentation includes but is not limited to purchase and sale agreement(s) reflecting the agreed value.

⁶³ It is well established that "a water right, or an interest in a water right, is real property, and it is so treated under all the rules of law appertaining to such property." *Madison v. McNeal*, 171 Wash. 669, 675, 19 P.2d 97 (1933) (quoting 2 *Kinney on Irrigation and Water Rights* (2d ed.), p. 1328).

⁶⁴ Based upon RCW 8.26.20

⁶⁵ Methods include, but are not limited to: comparable sales, income capitalization, land price differential (Hedonic), or replacement/avoidance cost.

conclusion that despite this difference, the proposed price is nevertheless a reasonable and responsible use of taxpayer funds.

Because each acquisition is different, Ecology will carefully review all appraisals on a case-by-case basis. Based on this review, the applicant, or their appraiser, may be required to provide additional clarification or information. Depending on the outcome of this additional inquiry, Ecology reserves the right to deem the appraisal not usable for the purposes of this grant offering.

At any time prior to completion of the transaction and for any reason, Ecology reserves the right to obtain an additional appraisal or require an independent review of all or portions of the original appraisal.

Ecology may, if it determines the documentation does not justify the proposed price, require the grant recipient to renegotiate the cost per acre foot of the water right with the seller.

The final price of the water right will be determined using the negotiated cost per consumptive acre-foot multiplied by the valid quantity to be purchased. Ecology will only disburse funds for purchasing the water right after the change process is complete.