

## **Major Changes to the 2021 LCFRB Salmon Recovery Grant Round Process**

The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) conducted a survey of its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and SFRB grant applicants in the fall of 2020 to assess what materials and support approaches were most effective during the 2020 grant round. These results, as well as staff and TAC discussions, informed the recommended changes for the 2021 grant round.

Feedback on the 2020 grant round approach was positive overall. This result, combined with limited changes at the state level from RCO, has led to only minor recommended revisions to the LCFRB grant round process for 2021. Changes are summarized below. References to relevant grant manual pages are included.

- **Calendar** (see Table 2, page 6): The grant round will open one month later this year (December), with applications still due in February and virtual tours held in mid-March. This timeline is to align with the statewide calendar deadlines for the SFRB Review Panel's "track 1" site visits. Additional time is incorporated into the grant calendar at key points though:
  - Pre-Proposal Meetings: more time is included for pre-proposal meetings prior to applications being submitted at the end of February. These meetings were identified as valuable to those that participate, so staff want to ensure that adequate time is provided for those who are interested. However, pre-proposal meetings will still be **optional** for applicants. Instead of completing a Doodle poll to schedule a pre-proposal meeting time, applicants should contact staff directly to schedule these.
  - TAC Project Ranking Meeting: more time is included between TAC member submittal of proposal scores to staff at the July TAC Project Ranking Meeting. This is to provide TAC members more time to discuss the draft recommended list, and for the TAC and staff to work with applicants in cases where proposals may be partially funded or require conditions. This meeting is now scheduled to occur after SFRB Review Panel final comments are published, providing more certainty with regard to funding potential at the state level.
  - The statewide monitoring schedule now aligns with the habitat application calendar. The LCFRB calendar reflects this alignment.
- **Eligibility** (see Eligibility, page 27): applications that are identified as being fatally flawed by the TAC and/or a Project of Concern by the SFRB Review Panel will not be accepted as returning applications. LCFRB staff will determine if any resubmitted proposals address previously identified deficiencies prior to forwarding applications on to the LCFRB TAC for review. This change will ensure staff and volunteer TAC resources are focused on project proposals that have potential to produce substantive benefits to fish, will likely be successful, and have costs that align with expected benefits. Applicants with projects identified as fatally flawed or Projects of Concern are encouraged to work with staff to ensure future submittals or resubmittals meet LCFRB and SFRB requirements.
- **Grant round event goals** (see Application Process section, starting on page 29): review process goals are included in the LCFRB grants manual this year. This information should help applicants and reviewers better prepare for each grant round activity.
- **Applicant Workshops** (see Application Workshops, page 29): LCFRB held webinars in past grant rounds to review major changes to the calendar and review process. These workshops have not been well attended, and survey results indicate they are not one of the primary ways applicants access information. Instead, staff will recommend potential applicants attend RCO's online workshops, review information posted on the website, and reach out to staff with specific questions and to schedule pre-proposal meetings.

- **Virtual Tours** (see Site Visits, starting on page 30): due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, site visits will be held as virtual tours again in 2021. Staff will be available to discuss with applicants how to best present in the virtual format, and will provide resources like PowerPoint templates, points to address in presentations, and opportunities to practice presentations. Applicants are encouraged to collect photos and videos from their proposal sites as soon as possible so they can provide comprehensive and visual stories of their proposals. Virtual tours will once again include “wrap-up” discussions with the SRFB Review Panel and LCFRB TAC at the end of each presentation day. Applicants are encouraged to attend these in order to get an idea of how reviewers may score their applications, and if any revisions are suggested.
- **TAC Application Review Meeting** (see Site Visits, starting on page 30): this meeting was held in the past to provide TAC members and applicants another opportunity to discuss proposals prior to applicants submitting final application materials, and is proposed for elimination in 2021. Beginning in 2020, limited revisions were allowed as complete applications were required at the beginning of the grant round process. This change, in addition to more detailed discussion during virtual tours and more limited discussion at the 2020 meeting, led staff to determine that reviewer, staff and applicant resources were better spent on finalizing lead entity feedback to the degree possible during virtual tour wrap-up discussions.
- **Lead Entity Feedback** (see Site Visits, starting on page 30): Formally called “comment matrices”, staff will work with TAC members to draft Lead Entity Feedback during virtual tour wrap-up meetings. If potential fatal flaws are identified by TAC members at this stage, they should be shared. Draft Lead Entity Feedback will be provided to the SRFB Review Panel so that they can get an idea of Lead Entity perspectives on proposals before they submit their own comments in early April. Lead Entity Feedback will then be finalized and published in mid-April after TAC members review SRFB Review Panel draft comments on applications. Finalized Lead Entity Feedback will be uploaded by LCFRB staff into PRISM, where applicants will view and respond to feedback. Feedback will again focus on overall strengths and weaknesses of proposals, and any suggested revisions, rather than a series of pros, cons, and comments.
- **Monitoring Proposals:** the LCFRB will be accepting monitoring proposals during the 2021 grant round, based on preliminary discussions with potential sponsors regarding key monitoring needs.
- **Completed Project Review** (see Completed Project Data, page 20): LCFRB staff are working to update completed project data in the statewide Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP) database. Staff will be reaching out to sponsors of completed projects to finalize data stored in this database. This information is essential to helping LCFRB tell a more comprehensive story of salmon recovery by providing restoration and conservation area metrics, linking projects to recovery partners and actions, and understanding the financial cost and local buy-in that project implementation necessitates.