

Request for Proposals: Lower Columbia River Fall Chinook Habitat Projects

Goal: LCFRB submits one competitive Lower Columbia regional proposal for the 2022 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Targeted Investment program. The proposal will target increases in viability¹ and resiliency of natural origin fall Chinook stocks that are a high priority for regional recovery support, as well as a priority prey resource for southern resident killer whales (SRKW).

Objectives:

- Provide information on Lower Columbia River fall Chinook habitat priorities to support conservation and restoration project development by project sponsors for the 2022 SRFB grant round.
- Review and select one proposal to be submitted by the Lower Columbia recovery region for the 2022 SRFB targeted investment fund by June 3, 2022.

Background: The SRFB approved a \$3.7 million Targeted Investment program for the 2021 – 2023 biennium. The Targeted Investment program will focus on the SRFB southern resident killer whale recovery priority by funding “*actions that benefit natural origin salmon populations that are a high priority in the Southern Resident orca task force recommendations.*”

Salmon recovery regional organizations can submit one project proposal for funding through this program as part of the 2022 SRFB grant round. The review process and evaluation criteria are incorporated into RCO Manual 18 (see Appendix J). Proposed Manual 18 materials can be found in Item 6 of the [September 2022 SRFB meeting materials](#).

Lower Columbia Proposal Submittal Process

Potential applicants must submit a conceptual proposal by January 24, 2022. The full proposal review process is outlined in Table 1. Application requirements are included in RCO Manual 18 and LCFRB salmon grants manual (publication goal of December 2021).

Conceptual proposals must include the following components:

- A vicinity map identifying the subbasin and project boundaries for the proposal, along with landownership within the project boundaries;
- A project detail map with all acquisition and/or restoration elements (i.e. acquisition area by habitat type, large wood installation sites, riparian improvement polygons, floodplain setback locations, etc.) identified within the project boundaries on the vicinity map; and
- A project narrative identifying the following:
 - project goals and SMART objectives²
 - targeted natural origin fall Chinook population(s);

¹ Viability assessment is based on four Viable Salmonid Population parameters: natural origin abundance, productivity, spatial structure and diversity.

² The SRFB describes goals and objectives for habitat projects, and includes examples of these online: <https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SRFB-Goals-and-Objectives-Examples.docx>

- description of anticipated natural origin fall Chinook abundance improvements, and benefits to other Lower Columbia River salmon and steelhead species;
- any project partners and their role (Collaborative proposals are encouraged. Please detail stakeholder and project sponsor partnerships as well as resource leveraging opportunities in conceptual proposal submittals);
- landowner support;
- grant request (no more than \$3.7 million) and potential matching resources to meet minimum 15% match required by the SRFB³;
- existing and proposed conditions and watershed processes in the project area and other impacted areas, including which habitat action priorities are addressed;
- a scope of work detailing roles, timelines, and deliverables.

Table 1. Proposal review process for the Lower Columbia region. Required applicant actions are identified. Timelines may change.

Date	Action	Description
Oct. 26, 2021	Informational workshop	Online webinar to review and discuss funding opportunity with potential applicants. RSVP with Steve West.
Nov. 8, 2021 – Jan. 21, 2022	Required - Pre-Proposal meeting	Meet with staff to discuss proposal. Recommendations on a full submittal will be made.
Jan. 24, 2022	Required - Conceptual proposals due	Submit completed conceptual proposal materials to Denise Smee. Staff will reach out to schedule a pre-proposal meeting.
Mar. 1	Required - Submit preliminary applications	Applicants submit complete preliminary applications in PRISM for RCO grant manager and LCFRB review committee to review.
Apr. 5 – Apr. 21	Required - Site visits	In the field or virtual tours will be held with state and LCFRB reviewers for submitted, eligible preliminary applications.
Jun. 3	LCFRB approves letter of support for one proposal	LCFRB approves a Lead Entity letter of support for one proposal to meet statewide project eligibility requirements. LCFRB completes a Targeted Investments Project Certification form for the approved proposal.
Jun. 27	Required - Submit final application	The approved proposal applicant submits a final application in PRISM.
Jul. 13 - 14	SRFB Review Panel scores and ranks proposals	The SRFB Review Panel will score all regional proposal submittals using statewide evaluation criteria, and submit funding recommendations to the SRFB.
Sept. 21 - 22	SRFB awards funding	The SRFB will approve one project for Target Investment funding.

Project Proposal Criteria

The LCFRB has identified population and habitat actions that support both high priority fall Chinook recovery needs in the Lower Columbia region and SRFB targeted investment program criteria. Conceptual proposal submittals should identify which population and habitat action priorities are supported.

³ Matching resources do not need to be finalized or fully identified at the conceptual proposal stage. SRFB-administered funds do not qualify for the 15% match requirement.

All application materials must meet regional and statewide eligibility requirements listed in this RFP and LCFRB salmon grants manual and RCO Manual 18.

Population and Life Stage Priorities

Priorities include Coast Strata fall Chinook populations (Grays/Chinook, Elochoman-Skomakawa, and Mill-Abernathy-Germany) as well as Toutle, lower East Fork Lewis River, and Washougal populations (see Figure 1).

Projects that could benefit multiple life stages of fall Chinook are encouraged, but survival bottlenecks are assumed to be primarily egg-to-fry transitions and parr/subyearling rearing life stages. Depending on location, these limitations are generally due to redd scouring and burying during fall and winter high flow events, spawner accessibility constraints to higher watershed rearing habitat areas, and limited juvenile freshwater rearing habitat capacity. Fall Chinook survival is also considered lower for fry outmigrant life history strategies across the Lower Columbia, so habitat actions that support greater juvenile life history diversity by increasing capacity for juvenile freshwater rearing are encouraged.

Habitat Action Priorities

Restoration actions that target freshwater habitat areas for the above populations are priorities for this request. Conservation actions can also be proposed, but should include a restoration component. The following freshwater habitat actions are identified as high priority needs for Lower Columbia fall Chinook:

- Floodplain reconnection and complexity;
- Instream channel complexity and stability; and,
- Flow and sediment process restoration.

Habitat actions should be tied to capacity increases to support greater survival of limited life stages identified above, as well as improve long-term habitat quality and productivity to support greater resiliency of salmonids.

Restoration approaches should focus on watershed-scale processes and habitat conditions, and habitat connectivity. Proposals can include multiple smaller sites to accomplish this landscape-scale need, target watershed stressors at specific constraint points, and/or include reach-scale efforts.

Estuary habitat actions will be considered as well, although they must also support Lower Columbia fall Chinook rearing needs, and show strong leveraging and matching resources.

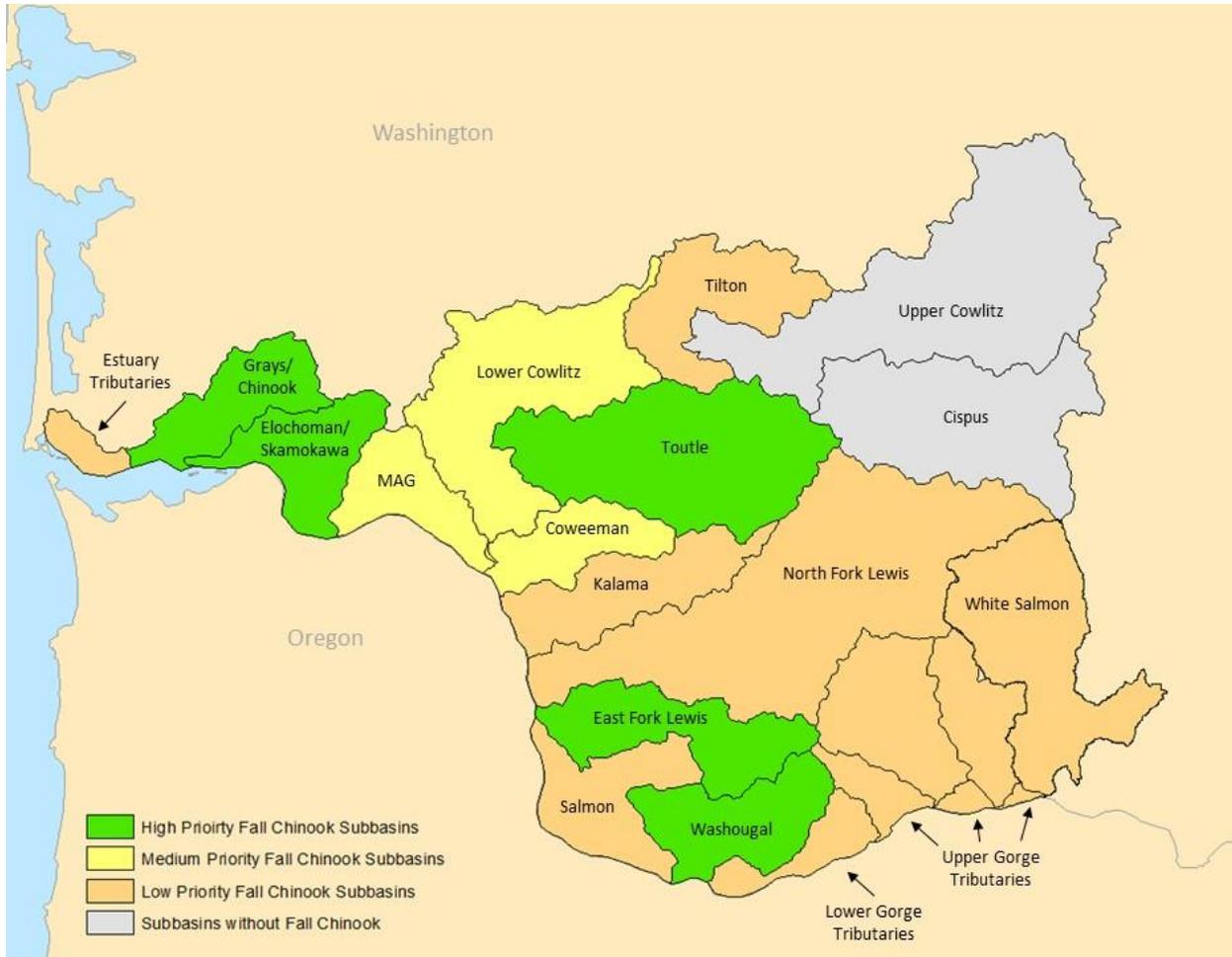


Figure 1. Lower Columbia fall (tule) Chinook watershed priorities for the Targeted Investment Program.

Project Evaluation Criteria

A regional application review committee appointed by the LCFRB will use criteria in Table 2 to evaluate and score all submitted and eligible applications. Scoring and ranking methods in the LCFRB Salmon Recovery Grants Manual will be followed. However, only one proposal will be recommended for funding at the state level from the Lower Columbia region.

Table 2. Targeted Investment review committee scoring questions for Benefits to Fish, Certainty of Success, and Cost considerations. Minimum thresholds for each scoring levels (High, Medium, and Low) are included for each question. Resources to support these questions and score levels are described in the LCFRB Salmon Recovery Grants Manual, including in the Policy Manual Guiding Principles table and Appendix C Evaluation Criteria section.

Benefits to Fish Scoring Questions and Guidelines			Points
High Priority Populations	1. Does the proposal target high priority fall Chinook populations for regional recovery and priority prey for southern resident killer whales?		0 – 50
	High Score:	Proposal targets high priority fall Chinook population(s) listed in the Lower Columbia River Fall Chinook Habitat RFP. There is a high likelihood of benefiting targeted populations.	34 - 50
	Medium Score:	Proposal targets medium priority fall Chinook population(s) listed in the Lower Columbia River Fall Chinook Habitat RFP. There is a high likelihood of benefiting targeted populations.	17 - 33
	Low Score:	Proposal does not target any medium or high priority fall Chinook population(s). There is a low likelihood of benefiting targeted populations.	0 - 16
	2. Is the proposal likely to increase viability or resiliency of natural origin fall Chinook populations?		0 - 50
	High Score:	Proposal approach is likely to increase viability or resiliency of targeted natural origin fall Chinook populations. Improvements are expected to be substantial.	34 - 50
	Medium Score:	Proposal approach is somewhat likely to increase viability and/or resiliency of targeted natural origin fall Chinook populations. Improvements are expected to be moderate.	17 - 33
	Low Score:	Proposal approach is not likely to increase viability or resiliency of targeted natural origin fall Chinook populations. Improvements are expected to be negligible.	0 - 16
High Priority Population Points: 100			
High Priority Habitat	3. Does the proposal target high priority habitat areas and limited life stages to maximize restoration/ protection benefits to the targeted populations?		0 - 50
	High Score:	Proposal addresses habitat limiting factors for life stage bottlenecks of targeted populations.	34 - 50
	Medium Score:	Proposal addresses habitat limiting factors, but not for life stage bottlenecks of targeted populations.	17 - 33
	Low Score:	Proposal does not address habitat limiting factors for any life stages of targeted populations.	0 - 16
	4. Does the proposed approach support the highest priority salmon habitat needs for both short and long-term recovery by working with watershed processes and considering climate change impacts?		0 – 50
	High Score:	Proposal targets the root stressors of high priority salmon habitat needs and watershed processes, and considers long-term impacts of climate change.	34 - 50
	Medium Score:	Proposal targets symptoms that limit high priority salmon habitat and are compatible with watershed processes, and/or does not consider long-term impacts of climate change.	17 - 33
Low Score:	Proposal targets symptoms in a way that is incompatible with watershed processes, and does not consider long-term impacts of climate change.	0 - 16	
High Priority Habitat Points: 100			
Total Benefits to Fish Points Available: 200			

Certainty of Success Scoring Questions and Guidelines		Points
Scope and Approach	5. Does the proposal have a well-defined scope and scale consistent with and appropriate for the stated goals and objectives?	0 – 50
	High Score: proposal is highly likely to achieve the stated goals and objectives	34 - 50
	Medium Score: proposal is somewhat likely to achieve the stated goals and objectives	17 - 33
	Low Score: proposal is unlikely to achieve the stated goals and objectives	0 - 16
	6. Does the proposal apply appropriate and proven methods and technologies, including the use of acquisition, or addressing recovery information gaps?	0 - 50
	High Score: Proposal uses appropriate and proven methods and technologies to achieve the desired outcomes	34 - 50
	Medium Score: Proposal uses moderately appropriate and/or proven methods and technologies to achieve the desired outcomes	17 - 33
Low Score: proposal uses inappropriate and/or unproven methods and technologies to achieve the desired outcomes	0 - 16	
Scope and Approach: 100		
Coordination, Sequence, Constraints, and Uncertainties	7. Is the proposal logically sequenced with other salmon recovery efforts in the watershed, including past habitat projects and actions across the H's?	0 – 25
	High Score: Proposal is well sequenced with other recovery efforts in the watershed.	17 – 25
	Medium Score: Proposal is moderately well sequenced with other recovery efforts in the watershed.	8 – 16
	Low Score: Proposal is not sequenced well with other recovery efforts in the watershed.	0 – 7
	8. What is the potential for funding, scientific/technical, permitting, legal, and/or physical constraints or uncertainties to affect successful project implementation?	0 – 25
	High Score: There is low potential for the described constraints or uncertainties that would affect project implementation success	17 – 25
	Medium Score: There is moderate potential for the described constraints or uncertainties that would affect project implementation success	8 - 16
Low Score: There is high potential for the described constraints or uncertainties that would affect project implementation success	0 – 7	
Coordination, Sequence, Constraints, and Uncertainties: 50		
Qualifications, Community Support, and Stewardship	9. How qualified and experienced is the project team in successfully completing projects of similar scope, nature, and magnitude on time and within budget?	0 – 25
	High Score: The project team is well qualified in completing projects of similar scope, nature, and magnitude on time and within budget	17 – 25
	Medium Score: The project team is moderately qualified in completing projects of similar scope, nature, and magnitude on time and within budget	8 – 16
	Low Score: The project team is not well qualified in completing projects of similar scope, nature, and magnitude on time and within budget	0 – 7
	10. What is the demonstrated extent of community support for and involvement in the proposal? For instance, will local volunteers participate, will the project enhance public knowledge and support, and will the project build capacity and interest for future work?	0 – 25
	High Score: There is extensive community support and involvement in the project	17 – 25
	Medium Score: There is moderate community support and involvement in the project	8 – 16
Low Score: There is broad community opposition to the project	0 – 7	
Qualifications, Community Support, and Stewardship: 50		
Total Certainty of Success Points Available: 200		

Cost Scoring Questions and Guidelines		Points	
Cost	11. Are the requested amount and total project cost reasonable relative to the likely salmon recovery benefits?	0 – 25	
	High Score:	The requested amount and total project cost are highly reasonable relative to the likely salmon recovery benefits	17 – 25
	Medium Score:	The requested amount and total project cost are moderately reasonable relative to the likely salmon recovery benefits	8 – 16
	Low Score:	The requested amount and total project cost are not reasonable relative to the likely salmon recovery benefits	0 – 7
	12. Is the total project cost (grant request and match) reasonable relative to the amount and type of work proposed?	0 – 25	
	High Score:	The total project cost is highly reasonable relative to the amount and type of work proposed	17 – 25
	Medium Score:	The total project cost is moderately reasonable relative to the amount and type of work proposed	8 – 16
	Low Score:	The total project cost is not reasonable relative to the amount and type of work proposed	0 – 7
	13. Are costs well described and justified?	0 – 25	
	High Score:	Costs are well described and justified.	17 – 25
	Medium Score:	Costs are moderately well described and justified.	8 – 16
	Low Score:	Costs are not well described and/or justified.	0 – 7
	14. Are there more appropriate funding sources available for the proposed work?	0 - 25	
	High Score:	This grant program is the most appropriate funding source for the proposed work	17 – 25
Medium Score:	This grant program is an appropriate funding source for the proposed work, but other programs may also support the work	8 – 16	
Low Score:	This grant program is not an appropriate funding source for the proposed work	0 – 7	
Total Cost Points Available: 100			

Questions

Contact LCFRB staff with any questions, or plan to attend the RFP workshop on October 26, 2021.

Staff contacts

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