

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW FOR NEW LEAD ENTITY COORDINATORS

WHAT IS A LEAD ENTITY?

Lead entity organizations were created in 1999 and perform an essential role in salmon recovery in Washington State.¹

Lead entities are watershed-based organizations that solicit, develop, prioritize, and submit habitat protection and restoration projects to the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for funding. To create a lead entity, the cities, counties, and tribes within a geographic area comprised of one or more watersheds or Water Resource Inventory Areas formed a mutual agreement. Lead entities consist of:

- Lead Entity Coordinator (usually staff from a county, conservation district, tribe, or regional organization)
- Technical Advisory Group
- Citizens Committee

Lead entities establish and support a Citizens Committee and Technical Advisory Group, develop and adapt strategies, and garner community support for salmon recovery. In the salmon recovery regions of the state, lead entity strategies and adopted plan chapters serve as the foundation for implementing recovery at a local level.

Funding for lead entities and their projects is provided by the state Legislature through the SRFB. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) provides staff support to the board. Many lead entities have additional funding sources specific to their area, such as funding from flood control districts and private power companies that operate dams.

An interactive map of the 25 lead entities in the state is available at http://www.rco.wa.gov/maps/LE_contactmap.shtml. A Lead Entity Directory, updated bi-annually, provides additional detail on each lead entity's geography, structure, committee members, and contact information and is available at http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/salmon/lead_entities/LeadEntityDirectory.pdf. The directory is a public document describing the value of Lead Entities, their role in salmon recovery, and a description of how they function that compliments the more detailed information found in this document. The two pages about each lead entity are modular and can be used as standalone documents in outreach packets about your local lead entity (see Legislative Outreach below).

Chapter 77.85.040.1(b) of the RCW details the lead entities' structure and project list development



¹Refer to [Revised Code of Washington 77.85.050 Salmon Recovery \(HB2496\)](#).

WHY ARE LEAD ENTITIES IMPORTANT TO SALMON RECOVERY?

LEAD ENTITIES PROVIDE AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO GUIDE INVESTMENTS.

The lead entity infrastructure is built at the watershed level with the involvement of local stakeholders representing diverse interests. Directly involving the communities allows them to understand their watersheds and the needs of fish while providing the opportunity to build consensus on how to best protect and restore habitat. Accountability checkpoints are built in throughout the process of evaluating and ranking projects based on the lead entity strategy and criteria (see details in Process Overview section). This infrastructure helps ensure that the best projects, those that provide the highest certainty of success and greatest benefit to salmon, are funded and implemented.

LEAD ENTITIES BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUST.

Lead entities engage a wide range of participants who may act as project sponsors, committee members, agencies providing technical and process support, and on-the-ground volunteers. The partnerships and relationships forged through the lead entity program constitute a sustainable network of individuals and organizations devoted to making salmon recovery a reality within each watershed. Lead entities provide an arena for participants of diverse interests to work toward common solutions for salmon recovery, making difficult decisions possible. Participants have included landowners; tribes; nonprofit organizations; regional fisheries enhancement groups; environmental organizations; neighborhood and other community groups; private businesses and industries; local, state, and federal governments; and local citizens.

LEAD ENTITIES COMBINE LOCAL SCIENCE AND SOCIAL VALUES TO IDENTIFY SALMON RECOVERY PROJECTS.

The complementary roles of the local Technical Advisory Groups and Citizens Committees are essential to ensure that science and community priorities intersect. In this manner, the highest priorities of the watershed rise to the top, and the salmon habitat protection and restoration projects proposed for funding and implementation are cost-effective and balance technical and socio-economic factors.

Lead entity projects funded by the SRFB leverage substantial funding and volunteers. Since 1999, the SRFB has awarded hundreds of millions of dollars to projects identified by lead entities for salmon recovery activities across the state. Matching funds are leveraged from a variety of sources, including private landowners, industry, nonprofit groups, as well as tribal, federal, state, and local governments. Numerous individuals have been directly involved in the lead entity programs across Washington State. Additionally, each of the projects can attract the efforts of numerous volunteers, extending awareness of salmon recovery efforts to the broader community.

LEAD ENTITIES PRIORITIZE PROJECTS TO MAXIMIZE THE PUBLIC'S INVESTMENT.

Lead entities use regional recovery plans and habitat strategies to guide habitat project lists. Habitat strategies ensure that salmon habitat projects will be prioritized and implemented in a logical and sequential manner that produces habitat capable of sustaining healthy populations of salmon.

HOW DO LEAD ENTITIES WORK?

STRATEGY/RECOVERY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Each lead entity uses a salmon recovery strategy or federally-adopted salmon recovery plan to select and rank projects. Ideally, the strategy has prioritized geographic areas, types of restoration and protection activities, salmon species' needs, and local socio-economic and cultural factors to consider. These strategies increase effective decision-making by lead entities as well as define and clarify roles between lead entities and the broader salmon recovery infrastructure.

Regional recovery plans are further discussed below. Links to the regional recovery plans can be found at

www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/regions/regional_orgs.shtml

PROJECT SPONSORS

Projects are proposed by project sponsors, who use the regional recovery plan, lead entity strategy, and recent research to identify high priority actions. Project sponsors typically are regional fisheries enhancement groups, cities, counties, tribes, state agencies, conservation districts, community groups, nonprofits, or private individuals.

Project sponsors fill out an online application and submit it to the lead entity for consideration. There are eight types of projects that can be considered for funding:

- Acquisition
- In-stream diversion
- In-stream passage
- In-stream habitat
- Riparian habitat
- Upland habitat
- Estuarine and marine nearshore
- Assessments and studies (non-capital projects)

Sponsors must obtain landowner acknowledgement forms from affected landowners to ensure the success of projects. The lead entity then uses its Technical Advisory Group and Citizens Committee to evaluate and prioritize the projects. Each lead entity has a slightly different process to reach the same outcome. See Section 3 for some examples of how the process varies across the state.

For examples of project selection criteria from different lead entities, see the Habitat Work Schedule library or lead entity Web sites at:

<http://hws.ekosystem.us/>

See RCO's Manuals 8 and 18 for more information regarding eligible projects, the application process, and reimbursements. See Manual 19 for specifics on managing your Lead Entity grant through RCO:

- *Manual 8: Reimbursements* (www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_8-reimbursement.pdf)
- *Manual 18: Salmon Recovery Grants* (www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_18.pdf)
- *Manual 19: Regional Organization and Lead Entity Capacity Grant Guidance* (www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_19.pdf)

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

The Technical Advisory Group is made up of local, technical experts who rate the projects on their technical merit, benefits to salmon, and the certainty that the expected benefits will develop. Technical Advisory Group members often are the most knowledgeable about the local watershed, habitat, and fish conditions, and their expertise is invaluable to ensure priorities and projects are based on ecological conditions and processes.

CITIZENS COMMITTEE

The Technical Advisory Group submits its evaluation of projects to the Citizens Committee for approval. Citizens Committees may include local residents and representatives of local, state, federal, and tribal governments; community groups; environmental and fisheries groups; conservation districts; and industries.

The Citizens Committee is critical to ensure that priorities and projects have the necessary community support for success. Citizens Committee members often are the best judges of the community's social, cultural, and economic values and of how to increase support for salmon recovery over time through the implementation of projects.

The Citizens Committee ranks the project list, and submits it through the lead entity and/or recovery region for SRFB funding consideration.

REGIONAL RECOVERY PLANS

The Endangered Species Act requires that the federal government develop recovery plans for species at risk of extinction. The federal government measures the health of fish populations based on Evolutionarily Significant Units or Distinct Population Segments and determined that recovery plans should be developed for each unit or segment listed as at risk of extinction under the Act. The agency overseeing recovery plans for anadromous fish, including salmon, is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).²

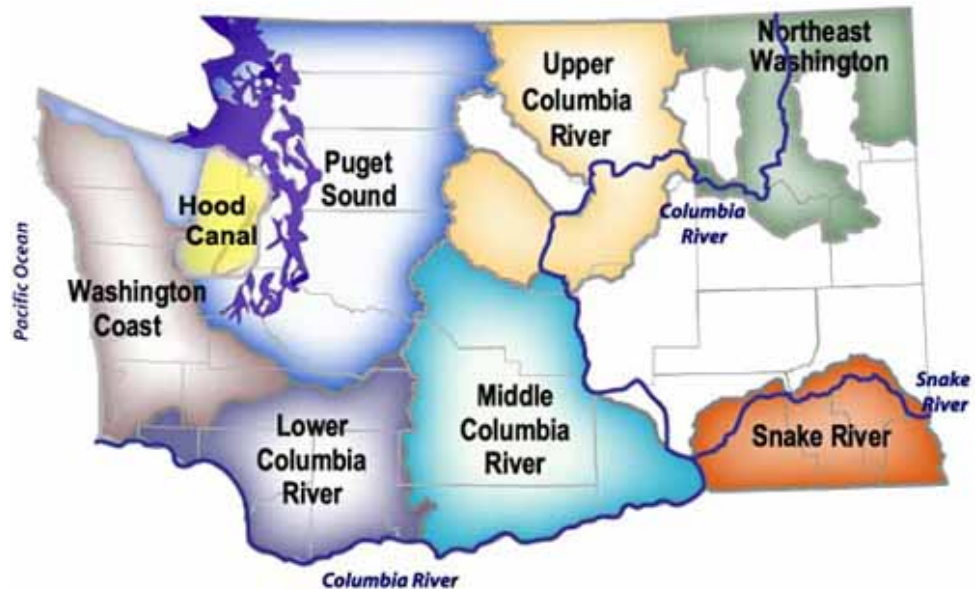
Washington State is divided into eight geographical salmon recovery regions (Hood Canal, Lower Columbia River, Middle Columbia River, Northeast Washington, Puget Sound, Snake River, Upper Columbia River, and Washington Coast), as shown in Figure A below. To coordinate the work of recovery planning and implementation, regional organizations formed in seven of the eight regions, roughly along the lines of the regional recovery areas. Each salmon recovery region works on different species based on what are listed and managed for in the area. Regional

²The agency overseeing the recovery plan for bull trout is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

organizations relied on lead entities and local watershed groups when writing regional recovery plans and incorporated lead entities' strategies into those plans. The regions work together as the Council of Regions.

Each region is working towards recovery for different species. The State of the Salmon report provides an overview of the species, the context for recovery (human dimensions like population size, number of jurisdictions, etc.), and the major limiting factors to recovery in each region. The report can be found at <http://www.stateofsalmon.wa.gov/regions/>

Figure A. Eight salmon recovery regions in Washington. Seven of the eight regions have a formally recognized regional organization made up of lead entities (Northeast Washington does not have a regional organization). An interactive version of this map is available at http://www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/regions/regional_orgs_map.shtml



WASHINGTON SALMON RECOVERY FUNDING BOARD

The Washington State Legislature established the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB, pronounced “SuRF Board”) in 1991 to administer salmon recovery funds appropriated by the Legislature and Congress, and to assist with a broad range of salmon restoration, protection, and related activities. The SRFB is supported by RCO and is composed of five citizens appointed by the Governor as well as five state agency directors. The SRFB brings together the experiences and viewpoints of Washington’s citizens and major natural resources agencies.

Projects are submitted through the lead entity and/or region for funding consideration. The SRFB evaluation generally occurs in three phases:

1. The local lead entity, coordinating with its regional organization, evaluates and ranks applications in its area. The lead entity and region may use locally developed information and criteria to prioritize projects.
2. The SRFB reviews all projects for eligibility based on current criteria and policies. Decisions about eligibility are reviewed first with the assigned RCO outdoor grants manager.
3. The SRFB Review Panel evaluates each project proposal for technical merits and will identify specific concerns about the benefits to salmon and certainty of success.

GOVERNOR'S SALMON RECOVERY OFFICE

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) was established by the Legislature, through the Salmon Recovery Planning Act. Operating out of the RCO, the GSRO is charged with coordinating a statewide salmon recovery strategy. Other tasks include:

- Helping develop and implement regional recovery plans.
- Securing funding for local, regional, and state recovery efforts.
- Helping prepare the biennial State of Salmon in Watersheds report to the Legislature, which can be found at GSRO Web site (http://www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/gсро.shtml) and Executive Summary (http://www.rco.wa.gov/doc_pages/other_pubs.shtml#gsro).
- Advising the SRFB (<http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/srfb.shtml>).

SRFB FUNDING PROCESS

The funding that is available for SRFB to allocate is a combination of state and federal funds. The federal funding is through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF pronounced "PaC SuRF") granted by NOAA to Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, and Alaska.

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, staffed by RCO, applies annually for this federal funding. One reason that Washington State has been so successful competing for this grant is because of the robust local project development and prioritization process by the lead entities. Historically, Washington has received the largest allocation of all of the states. See the box below for an explanation of the "Washington Way."

NOAA reports annually to Congress on the use of the funds, and Washington State legislators play a key role in ensuring that the federal budget includes PCSRF funding. The total funding level for the past several years has been \$65 million, with about \$20 million going to Washington State, which is then matched by state funding.

The following diagrams depict the funding process. Figure B focuses on the overall allocation of salmon recovery funds, tracking the Pacific Coast Salmon Restoration Fund dollars from Congress to Washington State and the lead entities. Figure C focuses on the local lead entity grant process, showing how funding is distributed at the local level.

The Washington Way

When Washington's salmon populations were listed under the Endangered Species Act in the late 1990s, the Legislature and the Governor empowered watershed groups to work on improving conditions for salmon. Seven regional salmon recovery organizations and 25 lead entities now coordinate the work of thousands of people working across the state to restore our rivers, streams, forests, and shorelines. These groups are working with scientists; local, state, tribal, and federal governments; and agriculture, timber, fisheries, business, and conservation interests to identify and implement local solutions that meet the needs of people and salmon. These groups come together to coordinate their efforts in regional forums, providing a cost-effective and efficient approach to salmon recovery.

Figure B. The annual funding process for RCO's administration of federal PCSRF to the regions, lead entities, and project sponsors. Arrow size roughly represents the amount of PCSRF dollars distributed. While project sponsors must operate through both lead entities and regions to obtain funds through the local grant process, the actual grant contracts are awarded directly to project sponsors from RCO. Each lead entity has an assigned salmon grants manager. To find yours, go to www.rco.wa.gov/maps/contact_salmon_mgr.shtml.

Flow of Federal Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funding (PCSRF) to Local Level

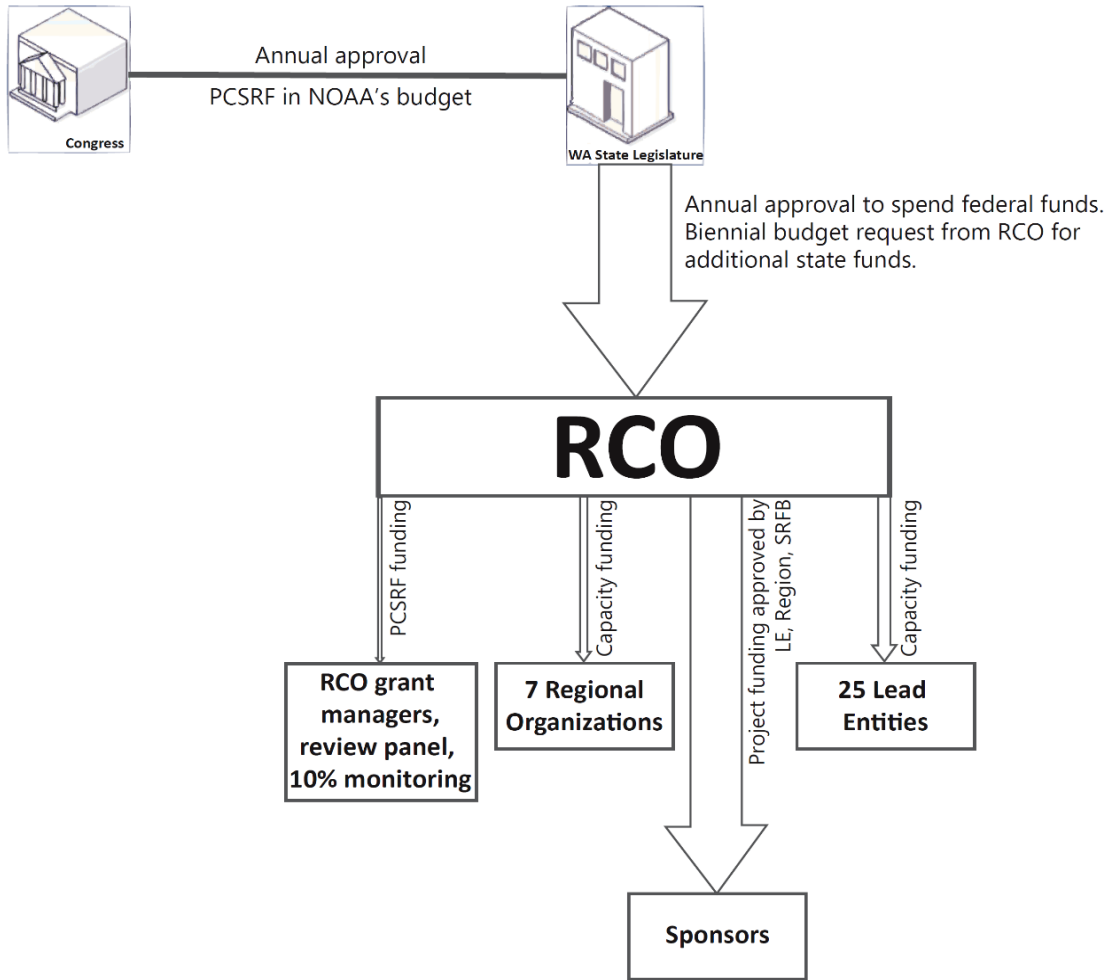
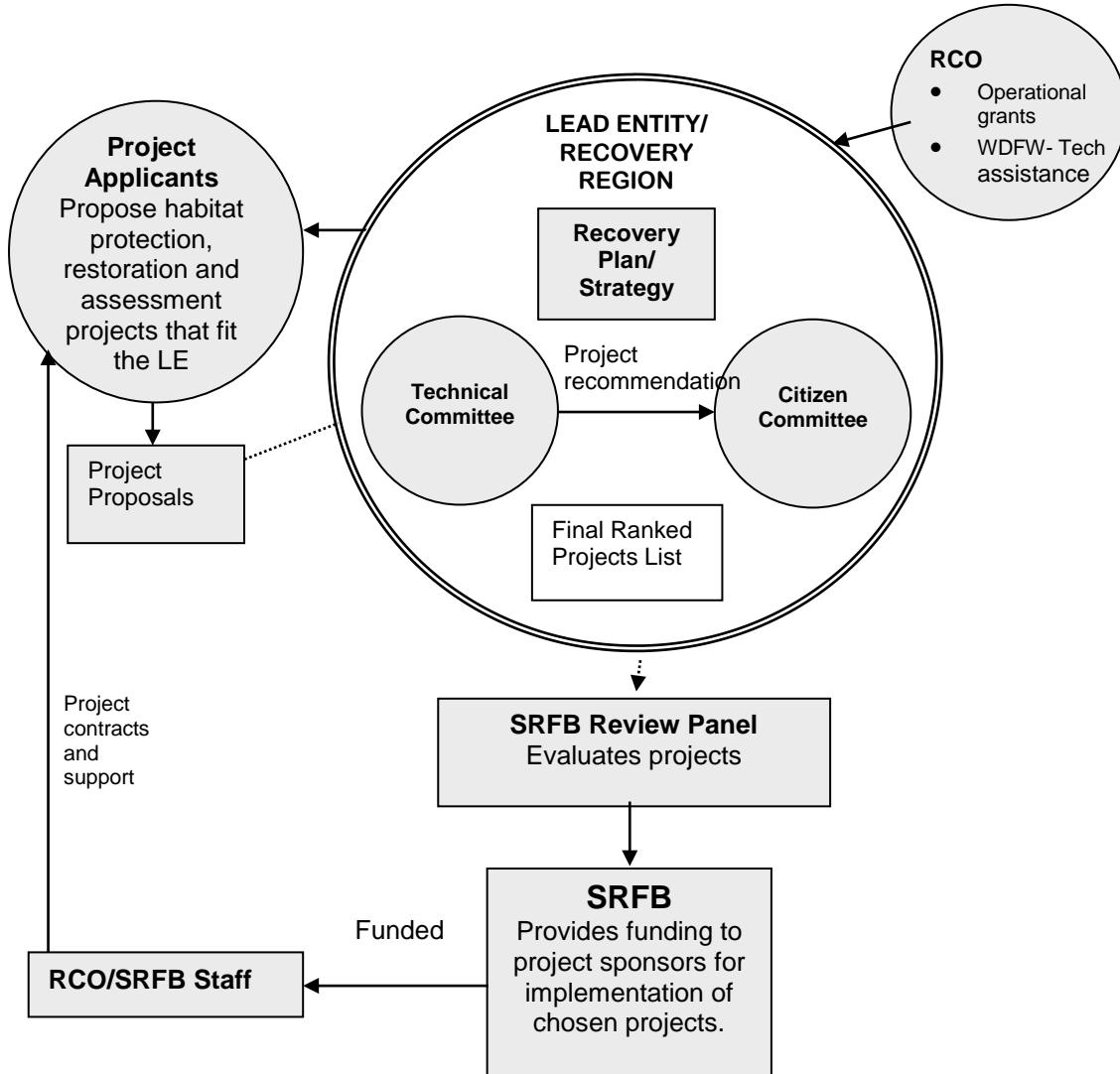


Figure C. Diagram of the project funding process at the local level.



PCSRF and state salmon recovery funds are administered by the SRFB and are the basis for all lead entity grants and RCO contracts. These funds are annually allocated to salmon recovery regions according to the following percents:

SALMON RECOVERY REGION	SRFB ALLOCATION
Hood Canal	2.35%
Lower Columbia	15%
Middle Columbia	9.87%
Northeast Washington	2%
Puget Sound	42.04%
Snake River	8.88%
Upper Columbia	10.85%
Washington Coast	9%

The salmon recovery regions allocate these funds locally for lead entities. The lead entities then run competitive grant rounds to provide funds to eligible salmon recovery projects. The lead entities, in conjunction with regional organizations, play a pivotal role in the SRFB process. While the grant round traditionally has spanned from early spring through early winter, the lead entities are involved in the process all year. See *Manual 18, Salmon Recovery Grants* for more detailed information on RCO’s process and support of regions and lead entities.

Applicants must submit their project proposals to the local lead entity rather than directly to the SRFB. The lead entity is responsible for assembling a ranked list of projects from its area. The lead entity, working with regional organizations as appropriate, establishes its own deadlines for applications to accommodate its review process. Lead entities within regions are responsible for complying with the region’s application process. It is desired, but not required, that regions create one prioritized project list. At a minimum, the region must provide a recommendation for funding its component lead entity lists.

The lead entities (coordinating with their regional organizations) evaluate and rank project proposals from their area. Lead entities and regions may use locally-developed information and criteria to prioritize projects, including criteria that address social, economic, and cultural values. SRFB will review all projects for eligibility. Project applicants and their lead entities are encouraged to consult with SRFB staff early in the application process to determine any questions of eligibility. Decisions regarding eligibility are reviewed first with the assigned SRFB grants manager and then confirmed with the salmon section manager. When eligibility continues to be questioned, the director shall provide a final review. The director may request assistance from the SRFB Review Panel as well.

Often lead entities are well through a grant round before knowing how much is available to award to projects. This is due to the timing of the federal funding approvals by Congress as displayed in Figure B above. Lead entities take different approaches to partially funding projects when the approved project costs exceed the funding available for a grant round. This decision at the local level often depends on the project type and amount available. Depending on the region, there are additional funding sources for some projects, and lead entities can approach the allocation of funding to different types of projects strategically based on the funding requirements. Examples of these additional funding sources are Bonneville Power Administration, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Estuary and Salmon Recovery Program, Floodplains by Design, and local funds like that available to King County via its Flood Control District. Talk to your regional organization to learn more about additional funding sources in your area.

RESOURCES

- For more on PCSRF: Go to http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/salmon_steelhead/recovery_planning_and_implementation/pacific_coastal_salmon_recovery_fund.html
- For more on SRFB: Go to <http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/srfb.shtml>
- For more on regions and tracking progress: See the State of Salmon in Watersheds Report at <http://www.stateofsalmon.wa.gov>
- For more information on regional salmon recovery organizations: Go to http://www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/regions/regional_orgs.shtml
- For *Manual 18, Salmon Recovery Grants*: Go to http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_18.pdf
- For *Manual 19, Regional Organization and Lead Entity Capacity Grant Guidance*: Go to http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_19.pdf
- For all recent RCO manuals: Go to http://www.rco.wa.gov/doc_pages/manuals_by_number.shtml
- For the Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon: Go to <http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/gsro/2006StatewideStrategy.pdf>
- For other documents related to Salmon Recovery: Go to http://www.rco.wa.gov/doc_pages/other_pubs.shtml#salmon
- RCO Salmon Grant Project Staff Contacts: Go to http://www.rco.wa.gov/about/contact_by_program.shtml#salmon

LEAD ENTITY CAPACITY FUNDING

Lead entities receive their operational (also known as capacity) funds from a grant distributed by RCO and managed by the lead entity program manager in the Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office. Grants are awarded biennially; however contracts are written or amended annually to correspond with the state fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

Contracts are written for the first year of a state fiscal biennium allocating each lead entity half of their biennial grant amount. Upon close of the fiscal year, unspent funds are no longer available to the lead entity.

At the end of the biennium, funds cannot be reallocated. For this reason, if you expect to have any unspent funds at the end of a biennium, please notify RCO by the end of April so that funds can be reallocated before the close of the biennium on June 30.

Capacity funding = the funding for planning and program implementation (i.e. salaries, outreach materials, etc.)

Capital funding = the funding that pays for project implementation (design, construction, etc.)

RCO expects invoices to be submitted at least quarterly and no more than monthly.

Progress reports documenting the tasks completed to date are due to RCO April 1 and October 31. Refer to the current lead entity operational grants policy and procedures in Manual 19 for more detailed contracting information www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_19.pdf.

ANNUAL SRFB GRANT ROUND WORK FLOW

Each lead entity has a slightly different process and timeline. Below is a generalized flow chart for what a new lead entity coordinator can expect during the annual grant round. Each year, the specific dates for the grant cycle are published in *Manual 18, Salmon Recovery Grants*. Note that your region may have its own deadlines in addition to those in the manual. Check with your region before finalizing your grant round schedule.

<u>ANNUAL WORK FLOW OF GRANT ROUND</u>		
TASKS	NOTES	
Create timeline for local grant round	Use dates in Manual 18 as a starting point; this is referred to as annual work plan by RCO	Jan-Mar
Schedule site visits for SRFB Review Panel	Submit request online. Some LEs schedule combined site visits for their TAG and Review Panel; others keep them separate.	
Review project sponsor's pre-application materials in PRISM	Due 3 weeks prior to site visit	
Coordinate site visit	Some LEs combine SRFB review panel and local technical review.	
Distribute SRFB Review Panel pre-application comments	2 weeks after the site visit	Apr-Jun
Work with sponsors on application materials including budget & proposal		
Local scoring and project approval – TAG and Citizen's Committee	Some Lead Entities combine these groups; others have separate processes.	
Applications submitted in PRISM		
Grant materials due to regions	Grant materials include those identified in Manual 18 appendices; work with your region for details	Jul-Sept
Distribute SRFB Review Panel final application comments to project sponsors		
If response needed, work with sponsors to develop	Responses are submitted via PRISM	
Attend SRFB regional area meeting with sponsor to address any projects of concerns	(LE Progress reports due to RCO in October)	
Submit signed copy of ranked list		Oct-Dec
SRFB awards grants at funding meeting	Final approval at December SRFB meeting	