



Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership (PSSRP)

Request for Projects

Introduction

The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Partnership (PSSRP) is a voluntary natural resources conservation effort to help recover salmon in the Puget Sound Basin. Along with project proponents, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will work with agricultural producers and tribes to implement a suite of beneficial NRCS conservation practices for targeted activities including fish passage barrier removal, riparian habitat improvement, and waste storage structure closure or construction.

NRCS is seeking high-priority project proposals from potential partners and tribes that encompass targeted activities in one or more of the designated watersheds that will address resource concerns related to salmon, salmon habitat, and water quality. The Puget Sound Basin includes the colored section of the map (Fig. 1) and the 22 watersheds listed in Fig. 2. Once high-priority project proposals have been selected, NRCS will provide technical and financial assistance to landowners, tribes, and tribal members through individual contracts under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) on lands they manage or own. Project proponents are expected to provide technical assistance, outreach, and/or sources of funding to support their proposals.

Fig. 1: PROJECT AREA MAP

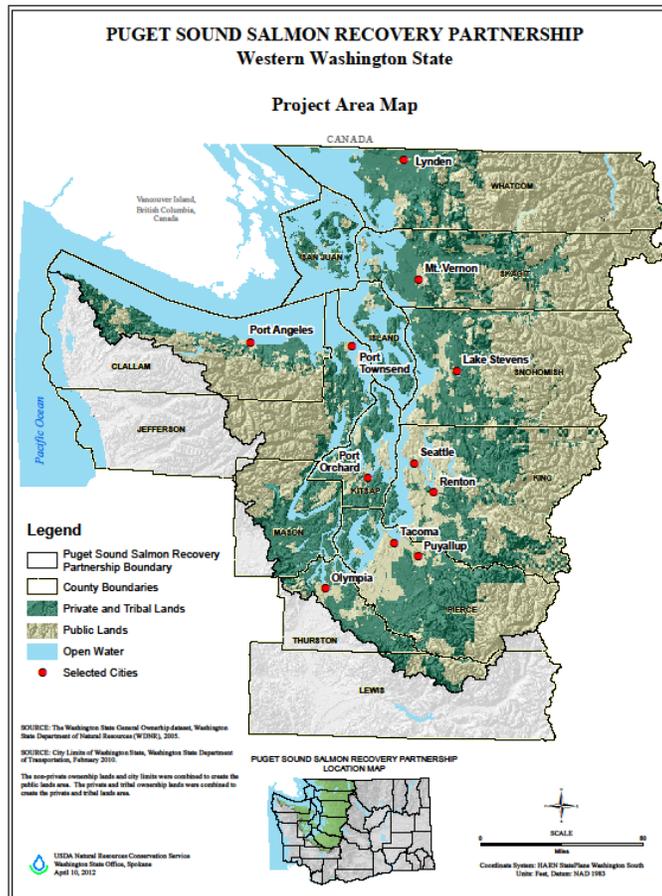


Fig. 2 DESIGNATED FOCUS AREAS FOR THE PSSRP FY 2012 (8-DIGIT HUICS)

Hydrologic Unit Code	Watershed	Hydrologic Unit Code	Watershed
17100101	Hoh-Quillayute	17110011	Snohomish
17110001	Fraser	17110012	Lake Washington
17110002	Strait of Georgia	17110013	Duwamish
17110003	San Juan Islands	17110014	Puyallup
17110004	Nooksack	17110015	Nisqually
17110005	Upper Skagit	17110016	Deschutes
17110006	Sauk	17110017	Skokomish
17110007	Lower Skagit	17110018	Hood Canal
17110008	Stillaguamish	17110019	Puget Sound
17110009	Skykomish	17110020	Dungeness-Elwha
17110010	Snoqualmie	17110021	Crescent-Hoko

How PSSRP Works

This notice solicits high-priority project proposals from potential partners and tribes to implement salmon recovery objectives. Project proposals are due from potential partners by **May 24, 2012**. Project proposals must encompass an area in one or more of the watersheds listed in Fig. 2. Project proponents are encouraged to submit proposals that describe how their resources, coupled with the NRCS funds for individual landowner contracts, will take a systemic and all-inclusive approach to address the resource concerns. Project proposals should also identify the potential landowners who are interested in participating in the EQIP for this effort. Project proponents will support the EQIP-eligible landowners or managers who are integral to the project proposals. Entities may submit more than one project. Several projects may be selected to receive EQIP funding.

Once the project proposals are selected, operators engaged in livestock or agricultural production, and private non-commercial forest landowners in the area covered by the project may apply for technical and financial assistance through EQIP. The project EQIP sign up will be from **May 30 to June 13, 2012**. Funded eligible applicants will enter into individual landowner/operator contracts with NRCS and agree to implement conservation practices designed to protect salmon and salmon habitat on their lands. To receive funding, potential landowner participants must agree to implement one or more of the targeted activities (fish passage barrier removal, riparian habitat improvement, waste storage structure decommissioning/construction) and conservation buffers on sites where water temperature has been identified as a resource concern and an adequate buffer is not present. Eligible land includes headquarters, water, wildlife land, cropland, hay land, pasture, private non-industrial forestland, other farm or ranch lands and tribal lands. See the NRCS [EQIP program website](#) for additional information on how to apply. Project proponents are expected to do outreach and encourage EQIP-eligible. For more detail regarding EQIP eligibility and application requirements contact your local [NRCS field office](#).

Funding

NRCS has EQIP funding available to implement salmon recovery activities. EQIP funding will not be provided, however, to project proponents, partners, or tribes who bring forth high-priority project proposals. Rather, NRCS will provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners who have eligible conservation practices that partners and tribes have identified in their project proposals. Also, partners may bring additional resources, either through in-kind services or funding.

Eligible Partners

Any of the following project proponents may submit project proposals for consideration:

- Indian tribes
- Units of federal government
- Units of state government
- Units of local government
- Agricultural, non-profit organizations, or other non-governmental groups working on fish passage, habitat restoration, and water quality projects

Project Requirements

Project proposals must:

- 1) Be submitted to NRCS by **May 24, 2012**.
- 2) Be located in one or more of the 22 watersheds listed in Fig. 2.
- 3) Include an aspect that will result in the obligation of NRCS program funds through individual landowner contracts by **August 1, 2012**.
- 4) Address one or more of the following :
 - a. Fish Passage – Replace existing fish passage barriers with structures that meet Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) /United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) fish passage criteria.
 - b. Water Quality – Decommission existing waste storage ponds that do not meet current NRCS standards and where needed construct new waste storage facilities with the purpose of improving water quality and salmon habitat.
 - c. Water Quality – Construct fish passage structures in place of existing in-stream crossings to facilitate movement of livestock and equipment across a water body, related to water quality and salmon habitat improvements.
 - d. Water Quality –Buffers and salmon habitat improvements consistent with salmon recovery objectives and water quality improvement. These practices must deliver water quality and habitat protections to the surface and subsurface waters that feed into fish-bearing waters. Buffers may help provide habitat and thermal regulation, stabilize stream banks, provide for requirements for wood, and absorb and filter nutrients and pathogens; and
- 5) Implement conservation buffers on sites where water temperature has been identified as a resource concern and an adequate buffer is not present.

Targeted NRCS Activities for the PSSRP:

- Fish Barrier Removal
- Riparian Habitat Improvement and Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- Water quality improvement through Waste Storage Structure Decommissioning and Construction

Supporting practices:

Figure 3. Core NRCS Practices for the PSSRP:

Practice Code	Practice Name
396	Aquatic Organism (Fish) Passage
360	Waste Facility Closure
643	Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats
391	Riparian Forest Buffer
395	Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
612	Tree/Shrub Planting
313	Waste Storage Facility

**Other NRCS conservation practices may be used to fully address the resource concerns, provided the practices support the target activities and practices listed above.*

A higher priority may be given to project proposals that:

- 1) Identify ready and willing agricultural and/or non-industrial private forest landowners who would be eligible to apply for EQIP contracts and are able to enter into contract by August 1, 2012.
- 2) Provide an all-inclusive and systemic approach to addressing all resource concern(s).
- 3) Leverage non-USDA federal and state and local financial and technical resources and coordinate with other local, state, or federal efforts;
- 4) Provide for environmental monitoring and evaluation of conservation practices and activities; or
- 5) Assist the participants and/or NRCS in meeting state and federal requirements.

Project Proposal Requirements

- 1) Project Title;
- 2) Project director/manager name, telephone number, mailing address, and email address;
- 3) Name and contact information for lead project proponent submitting proposal and other collaborating partners; and
- 4) Brief project summary
- 5) A detailed project description including:
 - a. Estimated project start and end dates and a project timeline
 - i. Note the EQIP application period is May 30 through June 13, 2012
 - ii. All EQIP conservation contracts must be obligated by August 1, 2012
 - iii. EQIP contract holders must begin installing conservation practices beginning no later than August 1, 2013
 - b. A description of the geographic area covered by the proposal, including:
 - i. The location and size of the proposed project area;
 - ii. Types of land uses to be treated; and
 - iii. Designated watershed(s) or sub-watershed(s) where the project is located, including the county(s);
 - c. A detailed map showing the project area. Include on the map:
 - i. Outlined areas that need conservation treatments;
 - ii. Location where conservation treatments are needed;
 - iii. Priority order for the areas to be treated.
 - d. A listing of anadromous fish species located within or near the project site.
 - e. General project objectives and resource concerns to be addressed as they relate to PSSRP priorities and objectives;
 - f. A description of how an all-inclusive and systemic approach will be taken to address the resource concern(s);

- g. A listing and description of the approved PSSRP core conservation practices and partner activities to be implemented during the project timeframe and the general sequence of implementation of the project.
- h. Estimated total cost of the project(s) and sources of funding.
- i. Land ownership (or control) where conservation treatments are needed.
- j. Estimated cost of the EQIP contracts with landowners. This cost estimate can be developed with assistance from your local NRCS office.
- k. Whether the PSSRP project proposal will be used in conjunction with any other federal, state or local programs to meet PSSRP objectives. Include the name of the program and the associated federal, state or local entity and contact information. (*Note: Other USDA federal funds cannot be used on practices funded with EQIP funds.*)
- l. Technical assistance efforts that will be made by the partner. Describe any activities that are innovative and include outcome-based performance measures, such as engineering designs, and fish monitoring, to be implemented by the partner, along with the schedule of such activities.
- m. Indicate whether the project will address specific regulatory compliance and any other outcomes the partner expects to complete during the project period.
- n. A listing of anticipated permits required to implement the project; and
- o. For fish passage, a listing of the known blockages upstream/downstream and the amount of habitat that will be opened through implementation of proposal.

How to Apply

Project proponents may submit proposals for PSSRP via email or U.S. Postal Service; however, all proposals must be received before close of business **on May 24, 2012**.

Applicants are encouraged to submit project proposals electronically to PSSRP@wa.usda.gov. If submitting a paper project proposal, the project proposal may be mailed or delivered to:

Rick Noble
Western Washington Area Conservationist/PSSRP Team Leader
Natural Resources Conservation Service
1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite D
Olympia, WA 98512

If submitting more than one project proposal, please submit each separately.

Once project proposals have been submitted for review and ranking, there will be no further opportunity for the potential partner to change or re-submit the project proposal. However, NRCS may request certain changes before finalizing the selection and approval of a project. In order to be considered, the project proposal must address, in sufficient detail, all of the criteria outlined in the **Project Proposal Requirements** section of this notice in order to be considered. Incomplete project proposals or those that do not meet the requirements set forth in this notice *will not* be considered, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. Partner project proposals may be withdrawn by written notice to Rick Noble, West Area Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, at any time prior to selection.

If the project proposal is submitted in hard copy, the project proponent must submit two copies of the proposal, typewritten or printed on 8-1/2" x 11" white paper. The entire project proposal, not including letters of support, cannot exceed 12 pages in length including a summary, responses to the information required by this request for project proposals, maps, and other supporting documents.

How Projects Are Selected

NRCS will review and evaluate project proposals based on the criteria set forth in the **Project Proposal Requirements** section above. NRCS may consult with other federal agencies or other groups to assist in evaluating project proposals.

Notification:

Project proponents whose proposals are selected will receive an official letter of notification. Upon notification of selection, the proponent should contact Rick Noble or Sherre Copeland. Project proponents should note that the actual amount of funding that will be committed to the project will depend upon available funding and agency priorities and the number and cost of eligible individual landowner applications that can be funded under the project. NRCS may require adjustments to the proposal as a condition of approval. Selected project proponents will be expected to assist with outreach and ensuring that eligible landowners identified in the project proposal are notified of the opportunity to apply for EQIP by June 13, 2012. Non-selected project proposal proponents will also be notified by mail.

For further information contact:

Sherre Copeland
PSSRP Coordinator and Partnership Liaison
Natural Resources Conservation Service
(360) 704-7758
sherre.copeland@wa.usda.gov

Rick Noble
PSSRP Team Leader and West Area Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
(360) 704-7782
rick.noble@wa.usda.gov

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