

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917
(360) 902-2636

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Salmon Recovery Funding Board grants nearly \$32 million for salmon recovery projects.

OLYMPIA – The Salmon Recovery Funding Board has approved funding more than \$31.8 million in salmon recovery grants across the state. The state board approved the grants project list at its meeting in Olympia Friday. Combined with local matching funds, the total value of the project list is over \$46.5 million.

The SRF Board funded 147 individual projects across the state. Twenty-two involve acquisition of key salmon habitat, 68 focus on habitat improvements (including vegetation plantings for stream shading, fish passage barrier removal, and large woody debris placement), 43 center on feasibility studies that will help to identify future priority projects, and 14 are a combination of acquisition of and improvements to key habitat areas in the state.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board Chair William Ruckelshaus said, “We are steadily improving the quality of our salmon habitat grants. This is because the lead entities – the watershed groups that sponsor project requests – are making more sophisticated choices for the fish. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board’s success depends on the enthusiasm at the watershed level and that effort is increasing every day.”

The board received 249 grant applications requesting a total of \$52.5 million, more funding than was available. A wide range of interest groups including local governments, nonprofit organizations and tribes proposed projects. These projects were reviewed and ranked locally within each watershed. A scientific review panel created by the SRF Board rated the proposals based on benefit to salmon and project certainty. This review panel met with each of the 25 watershed groups, the so-called lead entities that sponsor project requests. The review panel also toured watersheds last summer.

After the funding meeting, Shirley Solomon, lead entity coordinator in the Skagit County area, said, “We commend the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and its Technical Review Panel for all their hard work in helping us develop our project list. We see them as partners in our cause – that of making sure to keep our salmon going. They’ve set a high standard and that will serve us well – both immediately and over the long haul.”

(more)

Mike Kaputa with the newly created Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board and lead entity coordinator in the Chelan County area, said, "The regional process that the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board undertook two years ago has been a long and arduous task, and many times along the way we questioned whether we would make it. We did, and the SRF Board rewarded us handsomely, a clear endorsement of our efforts and regionalization to address natural resource efforts. This funding gives our community the energy to continue down this road for many years."

"Salmon recovery is dependent on strong partnerships and committed local action. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board is one of our key partners for fish recovery in the lower Columbia. These grant awards will allow landowners, citizen organizations and local governments to work in concert to restore the habitat needed for healthy fish populations and clean water," said state Rep. John Pennington, chair of the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board.

The SRF Board was established in July 1999 by the state legislature to help oversee the investment of state and federal funds for salmon recovery. Citizen members are appointed by the governor. William Ruckelshaus, Seattle, chairs the Board. Other members include Frank "Larry" Cassidy, Vancouver; Brenda McMurray, Yakima; John Roskelley, Spokane; and James Peters, Olympia. Five state agency directors also serve as ex-officio members.

Gov. Locke has requested \$56 million in state and federal money for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board in his proposed 2001-03 budget.

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(Editors note: Both a summary and detailed listing of projects will be available on the SRF Board web site tomorrow at www.wa.gov/iac/SRFBwhatsnew.html)

Contacts:

Jim Fox, Salmon Recovery Funding Board staff, 360-902-3021

Tammy Owings, Salmon Recovery Funding Board staff, 360-902-2637