

January 27-28, 2015 OWEB Board Meeting

Executive Director Update #J-3: Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Background

On an annual basis since Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2000, OWEB has applied for and received funding from NOAA Fisheries through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PSCRF) as the designated grant recipient for the State of Oregon. This funding is an important complement to the Board's investment of dedicated lottery funding and Salmon License Plate revenue. Over the previous 14 years, the PSCRF has contributed nearly \$185 million to Oregon for salmon and steelhead recovery efforts. The OWEB Board and the state's Legislature have used the funding to support watershed restoration related actions and for staffing in state agencies. The PSCRF has significantly enhanced OWEB's expenditures through grants within the salmon habitat and recovery zones in the state.

Current Status

At the time of writing this staff report, it is anticipated that NOAA will announce the latest funding opportunity of \$65 million for the FFY 2015 PSCRF program in early February. It will likely include a two-step application process – submittal of a draft for NOAA staff review (typically late February) and submittal of a final application in March or April of 2015.

In 2012, NOAA developed new priorities for the program and those were further modified, slightly, in FFY 2013 and FFY 2014. The priorities reflect an emphasis for PSCRF funds to 'hit-the-ground' supporting high priority projects benefiting salmon and steelhead that are called for in Recovery Plans for those two species. This change in emphasis is intended to result in an increased ability to directly address factors limiting the productivity of ESA-listed salmon. Beginning with FFY 2012, less emphasis is being placed on capacity funding, planning, design, research and other activities.

As with the last three federal fiscal years, NOAA's grant solicitation and awards for FFY 2015 will reflect the use of the modified priorities. The priorities are in rank order and the majority of funding will be provided to grant recipients for the first priority, implementation of on-the-ground habitat actions. In addition, large-scale effectiveness monitoring and critical monitoring for population viability assessments for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead, is budgeted by NOAA such that approximately 10 percent of any given year's funding is made available for this second program priority.

OWEB, on behalf of Oregon, will request the maximum funding possible which is anticipated to be \$25 million. This request will carry a mandatory 33% match, which in the past has come from Measure 76, salmon license plates and match from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). As in the past few years, funding received from NOAA will be split to satisfy both OWEB's and ODFW's budget needs if the Legislature approves the use of these funds in both of the agencies' budgets later this summer. The leadership teams of both agencies are working to finalize a Memorandum of Agreement that will dictate the principles and provisions for how the funding would be split between the agencies. The information will be used in the grant application submittal to NOAA and, if the funding request is successful, when determining grant award amounts for each agency.

With the emphasis toward on-the-ground projects, as defined by the newly refined PCSRF priorities and funding, staff expect PCSRF to be used differently than the majority of the last decade. These changes will continue to require adjustment by the Board, staff, grantees and other agencies when applying these funds to programs and projects.

Staff will update the Board on new developments at future Board meetings.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Greg Sieglitz, at greg.sieglitz@state.or.us or 503-986-0194.