

April 26-27, 2016 OWEB Board Meeting

Executive Director Update #O-5: Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Background

On an annual basis since Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2000, OWEB has applied for and received funding from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (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 15 years, PSCRF has contributed just over \$200 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. PSCRF has significantly enhanced OWEB's expenditures through grants in salmon and steelhead recovery areas around the state.

FFY 2016 Funding Opportunity

In early February 2016, NOAA announced the latest funding opportunity of \$65 million for the FFY 2016 PSCRF program. The solicitation included a two-step application process: submission of an optional, but recommended pre-application by March 4, 2016 for review by NOAA staff; and submission of a final application by April 10, 2016.

In 2012, NOAA developed new priorities for the program, with further slight modifications occurring in 2013-2014. 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, capacity funding, planning, and outreach activities were de-emphasized as funding priorities.

As with the last three federal fiscal years, NOAA's grant solicitation and awards for FFY 2016 will reflect the use of these 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.

The PSCRF solicitation also includes several emphasis areas that align well with OWEB programs and priorities. The PSCRF emphases include:

- The restoration and protection of riparian habitats in priority areas for salmon and steelhead;
- Use of large-scale strategies that maximize benefits through the implementation of coordinated projects that address multiple priority limiting factors;
- Achievement of lasting benefits through the restoration of self-sustaining natural ecosystem functions and processes; and
- Maximized benefits by leveraging of additional coordinated investments from other entities and programs.

OWEB, on behalf of Oregon, is requesting \$25 million, the maximum amount of funding possible. This request will provide a required 33% match, which in the past has come from lottery funding, salmon license plates and match from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Consistent with the last few years, funding received from NOAA will be used 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 of both agencies have worked together to outline principles and provisions for how the funding would be split between the agencies. This information is being used in development of the grant application to NOAA and, if the funding request is successful, will be used to determine grant award amounts for each agency.

Status of Other PCSRF Related Efforts

OWEB staff continue to work with NOAA to address issues associated with data and information reported under PCSRF grants. PCSRF reporting requirements have evolved during the program's existence, and review of the information reported by PCSRF grantees is increasing. From NOAA's perspective, accuracy of the information that OWEB and other state and tribal grantees report is important for several reasons: 1) NOAA uses this information to respond to questions about PCSRF program performance from Congress and the Executive Branch (including the Office of Management and Budget) regarding the use of PCSRF funds to recover at-risk and ESA-listed salmon species along the West Coast; 2) Proposed accomplishments for projects being funded with PCSRF dollars are used to estimate PCSRF program performance for the next fiscal year; and 3) Proposed and actual metrics for project accomplishments are compared to track program performance through time. OWEB is working diligently to address reporting questions and issues, with the intent of supporting NOAA's ability to have quality data and information to meet the aforementioned needs.

In addition to this ongoing work on reporting improvements, OWEB and NOAA staff are coordinating on such topics as organizing visits for NOAA staff to PCSRF funded restoration projects, and aligning the two agencies' information systems to more efficiently and effectively gather data about salmon and steelhead recovery in Oregon.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Renee Davis, Deputy Director, at renee.davis@state.or.us or 503-986-0203.