

Columbia Slough Natural Resource Fund

DEQ has a Natural Resource Damage Fund to pay for natural resource improvements in the Columbia Slough. Industrial facilities and other liable parties along the Columbia Slough have paid into this fund to mitigate for environmental damages. The fund is available to government entities interested in improving the Columbia Slough habitat.

Columbia Slough environmental issues

The Columbia Slough area in Portland has a long history of farming and industrial use.

Investigations have found chemicals associated with these uses, such as pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls, commonly known as PCBs, in Columbia Slough sediments above acceptable limits for benthic toxicity and bioaccumulation in fish.

In 2005, the Department of Environmental Quality issued a Record of Decision for the Columbia Slough that described the framework for cleanup of sediment contamination in the slough. The three primary components of the sediment cleanup approach are:

- Pollutant source reduction
- Specific site cleanup
- Long-term monitoring

There are numerous industrial/commercial facilities located along the Columbia Slough that may have contributed to slough degradation. DEQ is actively working with a number of facilities in the Columbia Slough watershed to cleanup upland contamination, control sources of contamination to the slough and cleanup or otherwise resolve their contribution to in-water sediment contamination.

Some facilities have been hesitant to conduct site-specific Columbia Slough sediment investigation due to concerns that DEQ would hold them responsible for investigation and cleanup of contamination caused by others.

Alternative approach

DEQ has developed an alternative approach to sediment cleanup that allows parties to settle potential sediment cleanup liability with the State without conducting in-water investigation and cleanup themselves.



The Columbia Slough provides habitat for Western Painted Turtles

DEQ has developed a settlement framework that calculates a payment amount for each facility based on estimated costs that would be incurred in a sediment investigation and cleanup. Facilities pay this amount to the Columbia Slough Cleanup fund to be used for the necessary environmental cleanup work required in the impacted area. Each facility is still required to complete necessary upland cleanup and associated source control measures under new or existing agreements with DEQ.

In addition to settling liability for sediment cleanup costs, DEQ, in collaboration with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, also developed an option for settling state natural resource damages associated with contaminant-related impairment of the Columbia Slough beneficial uses. The payments are dedicated to habitat restoration within the slough.

Who can use the natural resource funds?

Typical applicants are expected to be local government agencies interested in improving the Columbia Slough habitat. DEQ and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will evaluate proposed projects. Once a project is selected, DEQ will negotiate an agreement that describes the project and associated reporting and cost sharing procedures.

What type of projects will qualify?

The money must be spent in the Columbia Slough Watershed, preferably within the water channel or floodplain. Wetland projects may be considered. DEQ prefers a 25 percent match of in-kind work or grant monies, but this preference is negotiable.



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DEQ is looking for thoughtful, well-planned projects that meet one or more of the following objectives and outcomes:

- Enhance fish and wildlife habitat within the Columbia Slough watershed
- Improve Columbia Slough sediment quality
- Improve Columbia Slough water quality

DEQ will give preference to parties who could not otherwise fully fund their project.

How much money is available?

The total amount of funds collected so far is approximately \$500,000 and \$300,000 remains available. The suggested project award amount is \$100,000. However, at DEQ's discretion, projects meeting multiple objectives may be funded up to \$200,000.

When do I need to apply?

There are no submittal deadlines.

For more information please contact:

If you would like to submit a proposal or have additional questions, please contact DEQ's Columbia Slough Restoration Project Manager Sarah Miller, at 503-229-5040

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/cu/nwr/columbiaslough/index.htm>

Alternative Formats

Alternative formats of this document can be made available. For more information, call 503-229-5696.