



Feasibility Grant Applications

2025 Cycle Evaluation Summaries and Review Team Funding Recommendations



Background

Feasibility Study Grants provide funding for project planning studies that evaluate the feasibility of developing a water conservation, reuse, or storage project. A feasibility study is an evaluation of a proposed project or plan and can be used to determine *if* and *how* a project should proceed to the implementation phase. This funding opportunity covers up to 50% of the study cost.

Document Description

The following are study summaries for grant applications received by March 12, 2025, for the current funding cycle. The study summaries are adapted from submitted applications. The application summaries are listed below in alphabetical order.

Next Steps

Applications and the ART recommendations will be posted on the Oregon Water Resource Department's (OWRD) website for a 30-day public comment period from July 1 to July 30, 2025. OWRD staff will present funding recommendations, and the comments received to the Water Resources Commission at its meeting scheduled for September 11-12. The funding recommendations will be based on the ART recommendations and public comments received. The Commission will then make final funding decisions.

More Information

Additional information about this funding opportunity is available on the program [website](#). If you have questions please contact Grant Analyst, Louisa Mariki, at 503-979-9160 or OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov.

List of Applications Received

Study Name	Project Type	County	Funding Requested	Total Cost of Study ¹
Corbett Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Reassessment	Below ground storage	Multnomah	\$157,154	\$314,308
Deschutes Basin Water Bank Feasibility Study	Conservation	Deschutes	\$330,000	\$660,000
Lacomb Irrigation District Water Conservation Study	Conservation	Linn	\$248,423	\$496,846
Molalla Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Study	Below ground storage	Clackamas	\$203,927	\$407,854
Natural Aquifer Recharge in the Upper Klamath and Coos/Coquille Basins	Below ground storage	Coos, Curry, Douglas, Klamath, Lake	\$100,000	\$200,000
		Total	\$1,039,504	\$2,079,008

¹Studies require at least a dollar-for-dollar cost match.

2025 Applications

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Corbett Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Reassessment Study

Recommended for Funding

Study Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Corbett Water District

County: Multnomah

Funding Requested: \$157,154

Total Project Cost: \$314,308

Study Summary: The proposed study would reassess the feasibility of using Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) to develop a supplemental/emergency drinking water source for the Corbett Water District (District). The District currently obtains drinking water exclusively from Gordon Creek, which is vulnerable to low-flow conditions, wildfires, contamination, and other interruptions. ASR is identified in the District's 2023 Water System Master Plan as the preferred option to develop a second water source for the District in the event that its primary water source is temporarily unavailable for use. The feasibility of ASR was previously evaluated through OWRD's 2019 Feasibility Study Grant program which included installation of an ASR test well. Overall findings of the 2019 study indicated that "ASR does not appear feasible." However, subsequent review of the feasibility study by independent experts found that the 2019 ASR test well was not properly constructed and tested, rendering the majority of hydrogeologic data and findings unusable. Due to these construction issues, the potential yield, storage capacity, water quality, geochemical compatibility, and overall feasibility of ASR within the target aquifer is inconclusive at this time.

Evaluation Summary

The proposed study seeks to determine whether Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) is feasible as a second water source and develop a preliminary plan for implementation.

The review team appreciated that the application includes a clear summary of existing plans and demonstrates thoughtful planning, following an established approach for ASR projects. The proposal included several letters showing community support.

The review team recommends funding the application as proposed. If the Commission awards funds, the review team offers the following feedback. The application would be strengthened by a more thorough discussion of lessons learned from the previously funded study.

The proposal would have been strengthened with additional information on the current vulnerabilities of redundancies, for example, when the primary source of water is unavailable or what volume is required to meet short-term emergency demands. Additionally, the review team encouraged the applicant to consider how fish and habitat needs would be addressed if the project is implemented and winter water withdrawals are increased.

Deschutes Basin Water Bank Feasibility Study

Not Recommended for Funding at This Time

Study Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Deschutes River Conservancy

County: Deschutes

Funding Requested: \$330,000

Total Project Cost: \$660,000

Study Summary: The proposed study would examine the development and application of the formalized reallocation of water through voluntary, market-based transactions in the Deschutes River Basin, as facilitated through a basin-specific water bank. Market-based mechanisms, in combination with other practical conservation measures (e.g. piping, on-farm efficiency improvements, turf conversion), can be an effective, economic, and efficient way to move water across users and sectors to meet multiple needs for water. The Deschutes River Conservancy would engage with representatives from the irrigation districts, municipalities, Tribes, environmental interests and others to identify and address barriers, both physical and social/cultural, and help develop information, tools, and communication strategies to support an active and functional water bank for the Basin. Funds from this project would be used for planning, development, and feasibility studies associated with organizing processes, resolving information gaps, and clarifying questions and concerns for potential participants to engage in potential future water bank activity.

Evaluation Summary

This application is not recommended for funding due to concerns the proposal is implementation and not a feasibility study. The application proposed a multi-stage approach to develop a water bank in the Deschutes basin by refining and expanding on existing efforts through the development of educational, communication, and outreach materials and establishing a formal governance structure.

The review team acknowledged that the applicant has demonstrated technical capacity, however, the proposal aligns more closely with implementation and program development. The application outlined tasks and included information that suggested that the project has already been determined to be feasible.

The review team recommends the applicant pursue funding from better suited programs, such as the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Technical Assistance grant programs which support programmatic development.

Lacomb Irrigation District Water Conservation Study

Recommended for Funding

Study Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Farmers Conservation Alliance

County: Linn

Funding Requested: \$248,423

Total Project Cost: \$496,846

Study Summary: The Lacomb Irrigation District Water Conservation Study would assess the feasibility of converting approximately 3.5 miles of the Main Canal from an open channel to a buried pipeline and retrofitting their fish screen facility. The study would assess the water savings and technical feasibility of reducing seepage and evaporation losses along the Main Canal and redesigning the fish screen. The goal of the study is to restore instream flows, support agricultural water supply, and improve fish passage. The study would provide 30% designs and cost estimates for future project implementation.

Evaluation Summary

The proposed study would assess the feasibility of converting 3.5 miles of open Main Canal into buried pipeline and upgrading the districts fish screen facility, producing 30% designs for implementation if feasible. The review team appreciated the synthesis of several components into one project, including instream flow restoration, fish screen improvements, and sediment reduction. The application showed technical preparedness and foresight in addressing multiple concerns simultaneously. The application was strengthened by letters of support and engagement with local agencies.

The review team recommends funding the application as proposed. If the Commission awards funds, the review team offers the following feedback The application would have been improved by clearly articulating how instream flows would be legally protected to improve critical habitats.

The proposal acknowledged canal seepage and inefficiencies but does not clearly define existing delivery deficiencies or urgency from the patron's perspective, and strengthening this narrative would help improve the application. Additionally, outlining engagement with environmental justice communities would have strengthened the application.

Molalla Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Study

Recommended for Funding

Study Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: City of Molalla

County: Clackamas

Funding Requested: \$203,927

Total Project Cost: \$407,854

Study Summary: The proposed study would evaluate the feasibility of using Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) to develop a supplemental/emergency drinking water source for the City of Molalla and enhance the redundancy and resiliency of its water system. The City currently obtains drinking water exclusively from a direct intake on the Molalla River, which is vulnerable to low-flow conditions, harmful algal blooms, seismic events, wildfires, and flooding. The purpose of the proposed ASR Feasibility Study is to: identify potential locations for an ASR system, assess hydrogeologic feasibility and land use compatibility assess potential impacts to the environment and existing groundwater users, develop preliminary designs and planning level costs for a new ASR system, outline permitting requirements and timelines, and provide recommended next steps for implementation if ASR is determined to be feasible.

Evaluation Summary

The goal of the study is to determine whether ASR is feasible as a second water source and to develop preliminary system designs, costs, permitting requirements, and recommendations for implementation if deemed feasible.

The review team recommends funding the application as proposed. If the Commission awards funds, the review team offers the following feedback. The proposal triggers Storage Specific Study Requirements, and if funded, several technical elements will require further development to ensure full compliance with those requirements. The application would have been improved by addressing potential backup storage options and additional analysis of environmental impacts, particularly associated with winter withdrawals.

The application would have been improved by outlining a more robust stakeholder engagement strategy. While the proposal references marginalized populations, there was no specific outreach to marginalized or environmental justice communities. The review team suggests that the applicant engage with governmental agencies, in addition to local environmental groups, if the evaluation of environmental harm identifies any issues.

The review team appreciated how the applicant demonstrated long-term planning. The applicant anticipates sufficient water supply through 2040, which may lessen the perceived urgency for immediate action. The proposal would have been improved by demonstrating the urgency of the project in the narrative.

Natural Aquifer Recharge in the Upper Klamath and Coos/Coquille Basins Feasibility Study

Recommended for Funding

Study Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: The Nature Conservancy

County: Coos, Curry, Douglas, Klamath, Lake

Funding Requested: \$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$200,000

Study Summary: The proposed study would evaluate the conditions necessary for implementing natural aquifer recharge projects in the Upper Klamath Basin, the Coos, and Coquille Basins. With surface water resources nearly fully allocated in Oregon during summer, communities are turning to groundwater to fulfill their water supply needs only to recognize the severity of reduced ground water availability. Natural aquifer recharge projects for storing excess runoff and flood flows can benefit surface water-to-groundwater interactions by slowing and spreading water as it moves across the landscape, thereby allowing more time for subsurface percolation, aquifer recharge, and in many cases important ecological co-benefits. Despite the geographic separation, social, economic, and environmental differences, these two planning areas share many of the same enabling conditions for aquifer recharge projects. The results of this project would directly inform place-based natural aquifer recharge efforts in these basins while providing a framework for the implementation of similar approaches elsewhere in the state.

Evaluation Summary

The goal of this feasibility study is to evaluate the conditions necessary for implementing natural aquifer recharge projects focusing on two specific planning areas: the Upper Klamath Basin and the Coos and Coquille Basins.

The review team recommends funding the application as proposed. If the Commission awards funds, the review team offers the following feedback. The application would have been improved by narrowing the geographic scope of the project and further explaining the water management need in the Coos and Coquille Basins.

Additional community engagement would have enhanced the collaborative efforts outlined in the application. The review team appreciated the support evidenced through several letters of support. The proposal would have been improved by identifying any direct community or public outreach.

The proposal references studies highlighting the benefits of natural recharge and an interest in improving resilience through nontraditional approaches. The application would have been improved by including detailed information on how enhancing late season flows or restoring aquatic habitat would contribute to groundwater recharge. Additionally, addressing degraded habitats or the role of fish species in the study area would have enhanced the proposal.