**ESRP Application Worksheet to Respond to**

**Small Grants Project Evaluation Criteria**

NOTE: Project applicants must respond to all evaluation criteria directly in PRISM. Use of this worksheet is optional. Its intent is to serve as a tool as you develop your responses.

**Evaluation Criteria Categories:**

Ecological Importance (30 points)

Technical Merit and Readiness (30 points)

Cost Justification (15 points)

Public Support and Involvement (25 points)

***ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE (30 pts.) -****An ideal project will restore natural ecosystem processes, structures and services. Preferably, the project will result in site conditions that restores or protects complex natural processes and is resilient to current and future development impacts, and will provide highly valued habitat to target species. Please respond to the questions below.*

* + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Will the project provide long-term ecosystem benefits?** Describe how your project will maintain existing ecosystem services or protect intact ecosystem processes or restore the sources of degradation to ecosystem processes. *To help respond to this question, refer the 2-page Process Unit Summary Report for the Shoreline Process Unit or Delta Process Unit in which your project is located[[1]](#footnote-1),*[*Beach Strategies*](https://beach-strategies-wdfw-hub.hub.arcgis.com/)*, other*[*Puget Sound Nearshore Technical Resources*](https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/nearshore/conservation/technical)*, and other relevant documents.* [Response is limited to 5000 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Restores or protects ecosystem processes or services.
* Protects intact areas.
* Addresses priority restoration or protection needs (i.e., degradation or future risk) within a site.
* Proposed action(s) addressesa PSNERP strategy for the shoreline or delta process unit in which it lies [Cereghino et. al. 2012](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02182/wdfw02182_0.pdf).
  + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Will the site be resilient to future degradation?** The project results in a functioning site that restores or protects ecosystem dynamics and connectivity and, if not delivered fully by the project action, the proposal describes how incremental work (through future actions to which this project contributes) will reach this target condition at the site scale. (Note: climate change will also be addressed in a later category.) [Response is limited to 4500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Expected future condition of target ecosystem is clearly described including predicted changes over time. A full range of ecosystem components ([Shipman 2008](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02190/wdfw02190.pdf)) or conditions ([Cereghino et al 2012](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02182/wdfw02182_0.pdf)) will provide increasing levels and complexity of ecosystem services over time.
* Proposed actions will result in contiguous patches of habitat that are hydrologically connected in a manner sustainable by natural processes, and open to unconstrained river and/or tidal processes.
* If incremental restoration is proposed: future restoration is feasible, and designs do not preclude full restoration in the future.

* + - 1. **[0-10 pts] Do the surrounding conditions support the project?** The project approach is 1) responsive to potential risks of intense or complex site degradation, 2) responsive to potential future impacts from population growth, and 3) demonstrates a preference for work where, over time, historical processes will be restored or protected at the scale of the process unit or ‘nearshore ecosystem site’. (Note: climate change will also be addressed in in a later category.) [Response is limited to 4000 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following*

* The project will protect or restore an ecosystem component or landform that is critical for increasing the integrity of the region, compared to historical composition.
* Project actions respond to risks identified in [Cereghino et al. 2012](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02182/wdfw02182_0.pdf) and utilize local assessments.
* Upland and watershed modifications do not substantially limit the ability of the proposed actions to provide intended benefits and/or such modifications are or will be addressed through the project design.
* The potential for future development within and adjacent to the site is explicitly explored. The processes and services of the site will be resilient to anticipated change. [Cereghino et al. (2012)](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02182/wdfw02182_0.pdf) provides a range of risk metrics following [Simenstad et al. (2011)](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02186/wdfw02186.pdf).
* Adjacent areas support the function of the site (e.g., well-vegetated buffers deliver clean, cold water; up-drift bluffs provide sediment etc.).

*Sample questions to consider in this section*

* What are the known or anticipated (current and future) impacts to the project site from the surrounding landscape conditions?
* What are the known or anticipated (current and future) benefits to the project site from the surrounding landscape conditions?

* + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Does the proposal achieve goals listed in your geographic area’s local plan for nearshore beach restoration/protection (e.g., Marine Resources Committee, Salmon Recovery Lead Entity, Local Integrating Organization, Shore Friendly Program)?** List and describe how your project meets the goals and objectives of local nearshore planning priorities. [Response is limited to 2500 characters, including spaces]

* + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Does the project provide ecosystem services that benefit society?** – The site provides a high level of ecological services compared to other similar landforms, based on an identified and accurately cited assessment. [Response is limited to 3500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Proposed actions restore or protect ecosystems that have experienced significant loss in size or quantity in Puget Sound or sub-basin or that contain rare, vulnerable or ecologically important species or resources (e.g., PSP indicators: estuaries, eelgrass, seabirds, unarmored shorelines, forage fish, and Chinook salmon; state and federal listed species, WDFW’s priority habitats and species).
* Proposed action is logically linked to a change in habitat and other conditions that provide direct benefits for species of concern. The mechanism by which habitat change leads to species benefits is described (e.g., increases in tidal wetland area and re-establishment of channel networks is anticipated to increase juvenile salmon carrying capacity; predicted change in sediment texture and increase in overhanging shoreline vegetation increases forage fish spawning area).
* Proposed actions are clearly identified in regional or species recovery plans.

***TECHNICAL MERIT AND READINESS (30 pts.) -****A strong technical and social review of the project is well documented or proposed for the current phase. Work will be done quickly, and the project is being designed to meet a range of contingencies, advance ecological science, and maximize resilience under climate change. Please respond to the questions below.*

* + - 1. **[0-10 pts] Are the techniques reliable and likely to have the desired outcomes?** 1) The project team includes the range of professional skills and experience suited to the scope of the project, ensuring high confidence the project will result in the predicted benefits, and 2) the project has been improved by an interdisciplinary technical review process, as appropriate for the project. [Response is limited to 4500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

All Projects

* The project team contains the range of expertise needed to complete proposed actions.
* Proposal references or proposes an interdisciplinary technical review of project strategies and alternatives, as appropriate for the project. Involvement and support of the interdisciplinary team is well documented and provided.
* The project addresses links between restored or protected habitats and the processes that maintain them so that project actions are likely to have the outcomes described in Ecological Importance (considers ecological context, confidence in predictions, and predictability of the management measures).

Restoration

* Sponsor has engaged key interested parties and technical experts regarding project performance and identified how design techniques will lead to desired project outputs.
* Restoration stewardship and adaptive management plans are in place.

* + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Have you identified a strategy for addressing or resolving uncertainty around the project?** – Describe 1) the factors that may create uncertainty in project outcomes and their associated risk, 2) your strategy for implementation monitoring and managing uncertainty, and 3) if your technique is experimental, opportunities for learning are fully developed and integrated into the project design development process. [Response is limited to 2500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

Feasibility and design

* Proposal explicitly lists factors anticipated that may create uncertainty in project outcomes, including impacts from partial restoration, landscape setting, future threats, ongoing human use, and fundamental assumptions about climate change.

Restoration

* Projects requesting implementation monitoring funds should have completed a monitoring and adaptive management plan.
* A management strategy, including an appropriate level of implementation monitoring, has been (or will be) developed to monitor the evolution of natural processes and to observe characteristics of the site during and following implementation that are explicitly linked to outcomes. Note that implementation monitoring is to ensure project completion as planned and to address any post-construction issues in the ESRP project agreement; effectiveness monitoring is not eligible through this grant program.
* Proposed approach is designed to address the uncertainties and constraints to the extent possible and consider alternative scenarios in the design process. For construction projects, the sponsor has a clearly defined contingency plan to address uncertainties.
* A restoration stewardship plan has been, or will be, developed based on known uncertainties and risks.
  + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Is the project designed to be resilient to climate change and/or does it promote ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change?** – The action fosters adaptation to anticipated sea level rise and local climate change or increases the resilience of both natural and human systems. [Response is limited to 3500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Restoration projects include specific modeling, design, and construction activities that account for applicable effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, changes in precipitation, changes in freshwater and groundwater hydrology, potential biological changes and changes in temperatures. Project sponsor will reference the Washington Coastal Resilience Project (e.g., [Miller et al. 2018](https://cig.uw.edu/resources/special-reports/sea-level-rise-in-washington-state-a-2018-assessment/), [Raymond et al 2018](http://www.wacoastalnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Restoration-Raymondetal.2018-compressed.pdf)) [associated visualization tools f](https://wacoastalnetwork.com/research-and-tools/slr-visualization/)or Sea Level Rise elements.
* Proponent demonstrates an understanding of how processes at the site are vulnerable and/or resilient to climate change.
* Opportunities to facilitate landward movement of coastal ecosystems subject to dislocation by sea-level rise and other climate change impacts are considered. For example: Beach projects allow for landward migration of shorelines within the project and sustained sediment supply necessary to adjust beach elevations.

* + - 1. **[0-10 pts] Is the project ready to go?** The proposed schedule is reasonable for the project phase and not likely to be significantly delayed by social controversy or over landowner willingness. [Response is limited to 3500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Affected landowner(s) has provided written support or acknowledgement as required for the project.
* Proposed actions are consistent with local land use goals, policies, and regulations.
* Budget needs for the proposed phase of projectare secured or pending and likely. A clear strategy is provided for financing necessary additional phases that comprise the whole project.
* All appropriate permits, government approvals, and land access are secured, as required by the project phase and project scope.
* Social barriers have been identified and addressed so implementation is possible and will occur in an efficient timeframe. Sponsor has engaged key partners, tribes, affected community members and groups,technical experts, and other interested parties to overcome obstacles that may prevent the project from being successful. Proposed approach is designed to address barriers and consider alternative scenarios during the design process. For construction projects, the sponsor has a clearly defined contingency plan to address any unresolved issues. Sponsor has documented their interested parties’ communication efforts concerning the project and has taken appropriate steps to address concerns.

***COST JUSTIFICATION (15 pts.)****Ideal projects will have clear budgets that are appropriate for the type of actions proposed in the given location and demonstrate that cost-saving mechanism (design considerations, low-cost partners, diverse funding sources etc.) have been incorporated into the project. Please respond to the questions below.*

* + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Are actions cost appropriate for the site?** The relationship between expected outcomes and total project cost is appropriate for the project location and landform in this location. [Response is limited to 2500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Costs are comparable to what is appropriate for implementation of similar projects at the same location.
* Costs are focused on the most relevant management measure(s). Only a limited proportion of funds are focused on supporting management measures.
* Operations and maintenance costs are minimized, and cost-savings mechanisms are used (e.g., low-cost partners; volunteers, partnerships etc.).
* Non-state funding sources are leveraged to maximize the ecological protection and restoration benefit.
  + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Are actions cost effective?** – The relationship between expected outcomes and total project cost has a high benefit/cost value at the Puget Sound scale. [Response is limited to 2500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* There is a clear cost/benefit estimation for investments at the Puget-Sound scale. This project provides strong process-based restoration or protection outcomes vs a similar project that is higher cost elsewhere.
  + - 1. **[0-5 pts] Is there a clear and understandable budget?** Evaluators will consider the budget narrative and attached project cost estimate to assess whether the budget is complete and provides a fair estimate of all elements required for successful implementation of proposed actions. [No Response Necessary]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* The whole project budget is complete, sources of funding are explicit and their status can be clearly discerned.
* Line-item costs are clearly described in a budget narrative so that the nature of the costs and the estimation method can be easily discerned.
* Budget narrative describes uncertainties considered when developing the budget. Modest but reasonable contingency (based on specific identified risks) is built into the budget at the task level.
* Funding partners and contributions reflect the diversity of benefits that will be delivered by the project (e.g., projects addressing drainage or flood control have contributions from agricultural groups or dike districts; if public access is improved, leveraged funds or in-kind donations from a user-group are included; if salmon recovery project, SRFB dollars are included).

[No Response Is Necessary to #12. Evaluators will consider the budget narrative on the Project Proposal page in PRISM and the attached project cost estimate.]

***PUBLIC SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT (25 pts.)****The project will build community support for protection and restoration, engage the local community and/or encourages valuable partnerships. Please respond to the questions below.*

* + - 1. **[0-10 pts] Are there social benefits?** The project provides benefits in addition to ecological restoration or protection. [Response is limited to 2500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* The project references or provides documentation that the project will deliver multiple benefits to local communities including but not limited to public education or engagement, appropriate low-impact public use, flood hazard mitigation, drainage improvements, or infrastructure upgrades.

* + - 1. **[0-15 pts] Are the appropriate levels of partners, tribes, affected community members and groups, technical experts, and other interested parties involved?** – The project engages local and regional partners that will collaboratively support public outreach and education, technology transfer, and community participation. [Response is limited to 2500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all the following:*

* Letters of support indicate a broad and diverse base of support.
* Proponent has a project communications strategy describing how specific groups of interested parties have been or will be made aware of project activities and related issues.
* Partners and key parties are actively engaged in feasibility, design and/or implementation.

1. Find the Shoreline Process Unit (SPU) by going to the [Nearshore Data Map](https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/puget-sound/project-maps). Click on “See the PSNERP Maps”. Once at the site, access the information with these instructions:

   1. In the layer list to the right of the screen, check the box next to “Process Units”. Zoom into the map and click on your area of interest.
   2. The SPU/DPU number will appear in a pop-up screen, along with links to the 2-page summary for that process unit from the PSNERP [Strategies for Nearshore Protection and Restoration in Puget Sound](https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/nearshore/conservation/technical) report. The 2-page summary provides a process unit overview, nearshore process degradation summary, recommended management strategy, historic shoreline alterations, and landform composition.

   Find the updated drift cell and associated shoreform data by using the [Beach Strategies Data Explorer](https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/beach-strategies/) and associated [Hub Site.](https://beach-strategies-wdfw-hub.hub.arcgis.com/)

   1. Click on the drift cell or bluff of interest and then click “download report” to view a summary of drift cell features including armor proportion and sediment supply length. Depending on internet browser, pop-ups may need to be temporarily enabled to download the report.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)