

## Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Habitat Conservation Account

### Riparian Protection Category: Revised Evaluation Criteria



The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recently adopted revised evaluation criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Riparian Protection Category.

The new criteria is intended to bring clarity to old questions, consider climate change impacts to proposed projects, and reduce redundancy of the detailed questions. The adopted criteria will be implemented beginning with the 2020 grant cycle and are reprinted below.

#### Questions?

- If you have questions about a project, applying for a grant, or the revised criteria, please [contact your grants manager](#).
- If you have questions about development of the revised criteria, please contact [Ben Donatelle](#), Natural Resource Policy Specialist.



#### Riparian Protection Category Evaluation Criteria

"Riparian habitat" is defined as land adjacent to water bodies, as well as submerged land such as streambeds, which can provide functional habitat for salmonids and other fish and wildlife species. Riparian habitat includes, but is not limited to, shorelines and near-shore marine habitat, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, streams, and rivers<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> RCW [79a.15.010](#)

## Riparian Protection Category Evaluation Summary

Scored By	Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Maximum Score
Not Scored	Project Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map</li> <li>• Project goals and objectives</li> </ul>	Not Scored
Advisory Committee	1. Acquisition benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological makeup</li> <li>• Riparian Habitat</li> <li>• Pollinator Habitat</li> <li>• Surrounding Land Uses</li> <li>• Level of protection</li> </ul>	20
Advisory Committee	2. Planning and community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan support</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> </ul>	15
Advisory Committee	3. <u>Stewardship and Restoration</u> Part 1: Acquisition Projects/ <u>Combination Projects</u> Part 2: Combination Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational capacity</li> <li>• <u>Stewardship plan</u></li> <li>• Restoration Plan</li> </ul>	<b>16 points</b> <hr/> 16 points/ 8 points <hr/> 8 points
Advisory Committee	4. Threats to the habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats to the site</li> <li>• Immediacy of threat</li> </ul>	5
Advisory Committee	5. Community Benefits and Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple Benefits</li> <li>• Public Access</li> <li>• Education and scientific opportunities</li> </ul>	10
RCO Staff	6. Matching share		4
RCO Staff	7. Growth Management Act preference		0
<b>Total Possible Points</b>			<b>70</b>

### Project Introduction

This is an opportunity to set the stage for the project. The following detailed criteria will provide an opportunity to describe the project in more depth; however, the intent here is primarily to help orient the evaluators to the project.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context within the landscape; and
- Briefly provide a broad overview of the site and the project's goals and objectives (e.g. acquisition goals, habitat or ecosystem type, and opportunities for connecting people with nature)

▲ **Project introduction is not scored**

## Detailed Scoring Criteria

### 1. Acquisition Benefits

Describe the specific environmental benefits for this project.

- a. Describe the ecological structure and composition of the property to be acquired. What riparian habitat types exist on the property (e.g. wetland, stream, estuary, etc.)? What non-riparian habitat types exist on the property and how do they contribute to the riparian function? Describe the extent to which priority species, including threatened or endangered species, occur on-site?
- b. How much of the property is considered riparian? How is the riparian area defined (e.g. flood maps, channel migration zone, wetland delineation, tree height, local regulations, etc.)?
- c. How does the site support the feeding, nesting and reproduction of pollinator species (e.g. honey bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc.)?<sup>2</sup>
- d. What are the land uses surrounding the site? In your description, consider how this site is adjacent to other protected habitat, connects otherwise isolated habitat, or generally improves landscape connectivity.
- e. What level of protection will be placed on the property? Will the site be protected in perpetuity? If the site will be protected with a conservation easement, describe the plan for inspection and enforcement.

▲ **Point Range: 0 - 20 points**

### 2. Planning and Community Support

- a. How does this project, or its ecological characteristics, support a current organizational plan or a coordinated state or regional prioritization effort? Who is the plan's proponent(s) and how does this proposal help meet the goals or strategies of the identified plans (e.g., Natural Heritage Plan; watershed plan; salmon recovery plan; climate adaptation plan; or other local comprehensive plan or shoreline master program)?
- b. What are the future potential additions to the conserved land base in the area? Is this site an "anchor site" for future conservation opportunities? Why is this site a high priority at this time?

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<sup>2</sup> Consideration of pollinator habitat required by passage of 2019 Session Laws, Chapter 353; codified RCW 79A.15.060(5)(c)(x).

- c. Describe the community engagement efforts for this project proposal. How was the local community engaged in the scoping and development of this project?

▲ **Point Range: 0-15 points**

### 3. Stewardship and Restoration

NOTE: If this is an acquisition only project, answer Part 1 and receive up to 16 points. If this is a combination (acquisition and restoration) project, answer both Parts 1 & 2 and receive up to 8 points for each part.

#### **Part 1: All applicants please describe:**

- a. What expertise and capacity your organization has for long-term management of the site including staff, volunteer, and financial resources, and any other relevant factors.
- b. What partners are involved and how these partners have demonstrated a commitment to assist with project implementation or long-term management of the site.
- c. The stewardship plan for the property and the ongoing funding sources to implement the stewardship plan. Include in your discussion consideration of future ecological condition, and plans for controlling or removing invasive species and noxious weeds.
- d. Describe the risks to achieving the stewardship or management goals.

#### **Part 2: If this project seeks restoration funding, please also describe:**

- e. What expertise and capacity your organization has to conduct this riparian restoration project.
- f. Other sources of funding or resources that will be used for the restoration activities.
- g. The desired future condition of the site, the restoration goals, and the project design: What is the restoration plan and timeline? When will it be implemented? How does the restoration plan consider and anticipate future ecological conditions?
- h. Describe the risks to achieving success of the restoration goals.

▲ **Points Range: 0-16 points**

#### **4. Threats to the Habitat**

- a. Characterize the threat(s) to the site. Threats may be ecological, biological, human-caused, or related to climate change. Include in your discussion the county zoning, critical areas, and shoreline master program regulations, and why these are not adequate to protect the property. Based on this assessment, please also describe the potential for development or conversion of the property.
- b. What are the near-term consequences of the identified threats to the project site? How do these threats affect the function of the riparian habitat?
- c. How will this project address these threats? What will happen if this project is not funded?

▲ **Point Range: 0-5 points**

#### **5. Community Benefits and Public Access**

- a. How does this project provide multiple benefits to the community, habitat or surrounding ecological landscape? Include in your discussion:
  - i. Other resource uses or management practices that are compatible with and provide the ability to achieve additional conservation benefits (e.g. grazing uplands for weed control, supporting community-based forestry, etc.);
  - ii. Describe how this project provides other ecosystem service benefits to the surrounding land (e.g. increased tree canopy cover in a dense urban area, aquifer recharge, flood attenuation, increased fire security, etc.).
- b. If public access is not currently allowed on this site, describe your plans to facilitate public access and/or recreation. Describe how the recreation opportunities are compatible with the conservation goals of this project? How will public access or recreation opportunities be managed so as to not interfere with the conservation purpose of this project? If public access will be excluded from some or all of the project area, please explain why?
- c. Describe the plan for community outreach for use of this site. For example, how will this site will be used for youth and community education and/or scientific study, (i.e. university research, school programming, citizen science, etc.)?

▲ **Point Range: 0-10 points**

## Scored by RCO Staff

### 6. Matching Share

To what extent will the applicant match any Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant funds with other contributions?

This question is scored by RCO staff based on information submitted as part of the application. Native American tribes, local agencies, nonprofits, and lead entities are required to provide a 50 percent match.<sup>3</sup> Of the 50 percent match, 10 percent must be from non-federal and non-state sources. State agency applicants are not required to provide a matching share.

All applications are scored whether a match is required or not.

To qualify, matching resources must be eligible for Riparian Protection Category funding. An RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.<sup>3</sup>

▲ Point Range: 0-4 points

0 points	50 percent of project's value will be contributed from other resources
1 point	50.01-60 percent of project's value will be contributed from other resources
2 points	60.01-70 percent of project's value will be contributed from other resources
3 points	70.01 percent or more of project's value will be contributed from other resources

Add 1 point to the score assigned above if the matching share includes non-federal or non-state contributions equivalent to more than 10 percent of the total project cost.

### 7. Growth Management Act Preference

Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?

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<sup>3</sup> Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.120(7)

State law<sup>4</sup> requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant<sup>5</sup> has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it:
  - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
  - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
  - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection (B) over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

RCO staff score this question using information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulation, or amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

▲ **Point Range: -1 to 0 points**

- 1 point      The applicant does *not* meet the countywide planning policy requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250
- 0 points      The applicant *meets* the countywide planning policy requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250
- 0 points      The applicant is a nonprofit, state agency, or tribal government

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<sup>4</sup> [Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250](#)

<sup>5</sup> County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agency, tribal government, nonprofits, or lead entity applicants.