



RESTORATION PROGRAM



# ESRP Nearshore Restoration and Protection Projects

REQUEST FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS  
December 7, 2023

2025-27  
ESRP  
Investment  
Plan

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### CONTACT INFORMATION

The Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) is jointly administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). RCO functions as ESRP's fiscal agent. Questions regarding this RFP should be directed towards:

- Jason Alberich, Puget Sound Section Manager - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (360) 791-7764, [jason.alberich@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:jason.alberich@dfw.wa.gov), or
- Vacant, ESRP Program Manager - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please contact Jason Alberich with Program Manager questions until position is filled.
- Kay Caromile, ESRP/RCO Grants Manager- Recreation and Conservation Office (360) 867-8532, [kay.caromile@rco.wa.gov](mailto:kay.caromile@rco.wa.gov), or
- Tish Conway-Cranos, Nearshore Science Manager –Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (360) 902-2540, [tish.conway-cranos@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:tish.conway-cranos@dfw.wa.gov)

### PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**The Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) is seeking nearshore restoration and protection project proposals in Puget Sound**, including new and portfolio projects. Proposed project actions will be competitively evaluated based on assessment of completed project costs, technical merit and readiness, stakeholder support, and ecological benefits. A competitive review of proposals will result in a ranked project list. This ranked list, along with funding recommendations, will be the basis for ESRP's 2025-27 Investment Plan. A draft Investment Plan will be presented to the State Legislature in consideration of 2025-27 state appropriations.

## SCHEDULE AND IMPORTANT DATES

TASK	DATE	DESCRIPTION
Informational Webinar for Restoration and Protection, Learning (Pre-Design) and Small Grants Programs	November 28, 2023	Informational Webinar for Restoration and Protection, Learning (Pre-Design) and Small Grants Programs. Recording is available on the <a href="#">Restoration and Protection Grant Program site</a> .
RFP published	December 7, 2023	Request for proposals to ESRP mailing list and posted on WDFW's and RCO's ESRP websites.
Pre-proposals due in PRISM (New and Portfolio Projects)	February 8, 2024 11:59 PM	Pre-proposal submitted through <a href="#">PRISM Online</a> .
Register for site visits (New and Portfolio Projects)	February 8, 2024 11:59 PM	All applicants must fill out and submit the <a href="#">ESRP Restoration and Protection Site Visit Questionnaire</a> . This form is required for all applicants for each project, even if choosing not to participate in site visits. See below for tentative site visit dates and locations. Site visit scheduling questions can be sent to <a href="mailto:daron.williams@dfw.wa.gov">daron.williams@dfw.wa.gov</a>
Pre-proposal site visits (New and Portfolio Projects)	March 4-29, 2024	Optional Pre-Proposal Site Visits with ESRP Technical Advisory Team and ESRP staff. March 4-8 Central/South Sound (in person) March 11-15 North Sound (in person) March 18-22 West Sound/Hood Canal (in person) March 25-29 Optional virtual site visit opportunity, if in-person site visit is not feasible during scheduled week
Applicants invited to submit Full Proposals or notified of Portfolio Program Eligibility	April 8, 2024	Pre-Proposal review complete. Applicants of eligible projects will be invited to submit Full Proposals or Portfolio Program Application Material
Final applications due in PRISM (New and Portfolio Projects)	May 22, 2024 11:59 PM	See application process steps and criteria. Proposals submitted through PRISM Online.
Presentations	July 8 –12, 2024	Applicant Presentations (virtual) to ESRP Technical Review Team.
2025-27 ESRP Preliminary Investment Plan Released	October 1, 2024	Preliminary ranked project list and funding recommendations published and submitted to the Governor's Office and the Washington State Legislature for funding consideration
Final Investment Plan released	Spring 2025	Determined by WA Legislature.
Grant Funds Become Available	July 1, 2025	Funding notification dependent upon final 2025-27 state budget. Funds are anticipated to be available July 1, 2025.

## ESRP NEARSHORE RESTORATION AND PROTECTION PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The mission of the ESRP is to ***restore and protect the natural processes that create and sustain the Puget Sound nearshore ecosystem.***

ESRP nearshore restoration and protection projects are one of four ESRP investment types managed through the ESRP. The four investment types include:

- Nearshore Restoration and Protection
- Regional Pre-Design (Learning)
- Small Grants, and
- Shore Friendly

Nearshore restoration and protection projects are projects of regional importance that provide substantial and cost-effective nearshore ecosystem restoration or protection of ecosystem functions, goods, and services. Our work is centered on the scientific principles and ecosystem restoration strategies developed by the [Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project](#) (PSNERP) during the feasibility phase of the Sound-wide PSNERP General Investigation.

### PROTECTING AND RESTORING NEARSHORE ECOSYSTEM PROCESSES

The nearshore ecosystem of Puget Sound is a dynamic environment strongly shaped by physical and ecological processes. PSNERP research and findings suggests that projects designed to protect and restore the ecosystem processes that shape and maintain nearshore structure will result in self-sustaining improvements in ecosystem functions, goods, and services, thereby justifying our capital investments in nearshore ecosystem projects. The broad restoration objectives of ESRP include:

1. Restore the size and quality of large river delta estuaries and the nearshore processes that deltas support.
2. Restore the number and quality of coastal embayments.
3. Restore the size and quality of beaches and bluffs.
4. Increase understanding of natural process restoration to improve the effectiveness of program actions.

The most competitive ESRP nearshore restoration and protection project proposals will be those that employ [management measures](#) that can most fully address the source of degradation of these natural processes or that are focused on protection of intact areas.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION (DEI) AND ESRP

#### Definitions:

**Diversity:** Any difference in the characteristics that make individuals unique. It is used to describe the various combinations of group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability, as well as cultural, political, religious and other affiliations) and human differences (e.g., personality, learning style, and life experiences).

**Equity:** The act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people, with a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.

**Inclusion:** Intentionally designed, active, and ongoing engagement with people that ensures opportunities and pathways for participation in all aspects of group, organization, or community, including decision-making processes. Inclusion refers to how groups show that people are valued as respected members of the group, team, organization, or community.

**Environmental Justice (EJ):** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, physical and mental ability, or class with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Justice will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, access to the decision-making process, and benefits of a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

As a regional grant program serving nearshore restoration and protection project applicants that include state, federal, and local agencies, Native American tribes, and non-governmental organizations throughout Puget Sound, ESRP is committed to applying a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Environmental Justice (DEI/EJ) lens to each component of our work. To meet this goal, we are exploring ways to incorporate DEI/EJ values into all aspects of our grant program, including the way we form review teams, hire staff, evaluate projects, make decisions, and develop communication materials. As a starting place, for the 2024 grant round (projects to be funded in the 2025-2027 biennium), we will ask applicants about how their project or organization is supporting the values of DEI and EJ. We anticipate using the responses to inform a programmatic approach toward a holistic and thoughtful application of a DEI and EJ lens throughout our work to restore and protect Puget Sound nearshore ecosystems. Links to DEI and EJ resources are provided in [Appendix C. Other Resources](#).

## ESRP PROGRAM GUIDANCE

In addition to the information contained in this RFP, program information can be found at WDFW's [Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program](#) and [PSNERP](#) web pages. Application material and project management information can be found at RCO's [Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program](#) web page. Available materials summarize our current understanding of the important processes and functions of the nearshore ecosystem as well as restoration and protection strategies, including:

- [Strategies for nearshore ecosystem restoration and protection](#)
- [Strategic Needs Assessment: Analysis of Nearshore Ecosystem Process Degradation in Puget Sound](#)
- [Management Measures for Protecting and Restoring the Puget Sound Nearshore](#)

This RFP contains the most up to date ESRP grant program policy guidance specifically related to grant competition requirements.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### ESRP NEARSHORE RESTORATION AND PROTECTION PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

ESRP is accepting applications for new projects and for subsequent phases of projects that qualify for Phased Portfolio Funding.

#### PHASED PORTFOLIO FUNDING FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS

ESRP provides awards for project activities that can be completed within a roughly 2-year time frame to align with our biennial budget cycle. However, we recognize that many projects require several years and multiple phases to complete. To support phased project funding, ESRP has developed a streamlined application or “portfolio” process for restoration projects that meet certain eligibility criteria, providing more reliable long-term support for projects that continue to fall within the approved scope of work. Sponsors of eligible portfolio projects may apply for additional phases of funding **without** preparing a full application and presentation to the ESRP Technical Review Team. Projects must still satisfy all ESRP program eligibility criteria, including match requirements.

While the application process is streamlined, additional phases of funding for eligible portfolio projects are still dependent on competitive evaluation among portfolio projects by ESRP staff. Funding awards to eligible portfolio projects will be placed at the top of the ESRP Investment Plan.

#### *Portfolio Program Eligibility Criteria*

The fundamental premise behind the portfolio program is to streamline the application process for high-performing sponsors seeking funding to complete the next phase of already-approved priority projects. If your project competed well and won an ESRP award to complete an earlier phase of design or construction, you’re making good progress towards completing your funded project phase, the scope of the project hasn’t changed (or any changes do not substantially reduce or alter the potential ecosystem benefits represented in the original ESRP grant competition), there is no need to compete in a full grant competition process to fund the next project phase.

The goal is to maintain the integrity of the original grant competition that ranked the project while creating a streamlined funding and application process. Projects whose scope and potential benefits change substantially from what was originally proposed and ranked will need to seek funding for their next project phase through the normal ESRP grant competition process for new projects. To minimize risk of change, **prior to submitting their final application in the original ESRP grant competition**, applicants should have already resolved key elements that determine project feasibility (including technical and landowner considerations) sufficiently to select a preferred design alternative that is unlikely to shift greatly as the project continues to develop.

To be eligible for consideration as a portfolio restoration project, the project and applicant must meet the following criteria:

1. Scored well and won an ESRP funding award in a previous regional grant competition for an earlier project phase (or the same project phase, see criteria 5b and 5c). Note that the chosen design

alternative must have been identified and included in the final application of the original grant competition.

2. Maintained the same whole project scope that was originally funded through the regional grant competition, or not altered the whole project scope sufficiently to cause a substantial change to the project costs or benefits represented in the original project application.
3. Demonstrated substantial progress towards completing the already-funded project phase.
4. Demonstrated continued landowner support for the chosen design alternative.
5. Be requesting funds for:
  - a. A new scope of work for the next phase of a previously-funded ESRP project.

ESRP staff will also consider requests for the following, on a case-by-case basis:

- b. Supplemental funding to complete the same scope of work of a previously-funded active ESRP project to fill a funding gap in the original “whole project” cost. (The “whole project” cost hasn’t changed, but additional ESRP funding is being sought to make up for project fundraising efforts from other sources that were so far unsuccessful.)
- c. Supplemental funding to complete the same scope of work of a previously-funded active ESRP project to address higher-than-expected costs due to unforeseen circumstances, provided the ESRP funding request is less than 20% of the project cost of the active grant in PRISM (including both the ESRP award and match), unless otherwise approved by the ESRP Management Team.
- d. Adaptive management of an active project, or a completed project whose agreement closed within the last 4 years, may be considered for Portfolio Program Eligibility. We define adaptive management as additional restoration actions that are needed to ensure the original funded project achieves its ecosystem goals and objectives. In order to receive portfolio funding, applicants need to show evidence the project is not meeting its original goals. Proposed adaptive management actions must be submitted with your pre-proposal application so they may undergo technical review. Particularly complex adaptive management projects may be required to apply through the normal ESRP grant competition process for new projects.

The ESRP Management Team, in their sole discretion, determines which projects are eligible for inclusion in the portfolio program and whether a proposed portfolio project will need to seek funding through the normal ESRP grant competition process for new projects.

#### *How to Apply*

Applicants must seek ESRP funding for their initial ESRP project proposal through the normal [ESRP grant competition process for new projects](#). **Prior to submitting their final application in the original ESRP grant competition**, applicants should have already resolved key elements to determine project feasibility (including technical and landowner considerations) sufficiently to select a preferred design alternative that is unlikely to shift greatly as the project continues to develop.

Applicants that already received an ESRP funding award for a previous project phase (or the same project



phase, see criteria 5b and 5c) and believe their project qualifies for the Portfolio Program may apply to ESRP to fund subsequent project phases through the [Portfolio Program Project Application and Review Process](#).

## OTHER 2024 ESRP FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The ESRP Small Grants Program released a request for proposals on November 1, 2024. The [ESRP Learning Program](#) for Regional Predesign Projects will release a request for proposals on December 7, 2023. The ESRP [Shore Friendly program](#) will release a request for proposals on January 17, 2024.

## ANTICIPATED FUNDING SOURCES

### STATE FUNDING

This RFP will be used to develop the 2025-27 ESRP Investment Plan containing a ranked project list and funding recommendations. This spending plan will be used to direct 2025-27 state capital appropriations to sound conservation investments in Puget Sound. ESRP anticipates a \$25 million request for the biennium. ESRP received a \$14,309,000 biennial appropriation during the 2023-25 fiscal period.

### FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS

The 2025-27 Investment Plan process and the resultant ranked project list can be used to identify opportunities with other state and federal partnership funding mechanisms (e.g., NOAA, PSAR, HSIL, FEMA, and EPA) as part of a coordinated investment strategy or for new state or federal funding sources. ESRP has successfully leveraged supplemental funding from federal and state partners in the past to support projects on the ESRP investment plan that align with the core criteria and goals of those partner programs.

## ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### FUNDING REQUEST LIMITS

There is no maximum or minimum funding limit for proposed projects. Previous awards have ranged from \$25,000 to \$2,600,000, with average requests from \$200,000 - \$400,000. Final award amount and scope may differ from proposed amounts and will reflect a thorough evaluation of investment plan alternatives, technical reviewer recommendations, and a project sponsor's readiness to complete work within the award period. Negotiation of final award amounts will occur after a capital budget is passed for ESRP.

### AWARD PERIOD

Project awards are for work to be completed between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2027, unless additional time is required and approved by the ESRP Management Team. Applicants with projects requiring extended timeframes to complete should consider breaking the project up into multiple planning and/or construction phases, each with their own set of deliverables that can each be completed in roughly a two-year time frame. Phased restoration projects that score highly may be eligible for [ESRP's Phased Portfolio Project program](#).

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants may be state, federal, or local agencies, Native American tribes, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and quasi-governmental organizations (e.g., conservation districts, irrigation districts, regional fisheries enhancement groups).

## ELIGIBLE GEOGRAPHIES AND SCOPE

1. Project sites/project types within Puget Sound Nearshore (East of Cape Flattery to the Canadian border). ESRP defines the nearshore zone as 200 meters immediately upland of tidal influence to the end of the photic zone in the marine shoreline. It includes the shoreline bluffs, the tidal portions of streams and rivers, and shallow water areas out to a depth where sunlight no longer supports marine vegetation.
2. The proposed project need must be identified by PSNERP, a salmon recovery Lead Entity or Marine Resource Committee, or listed in a current watershed, salmon recovery, or nearshore habitat restoration or protection plan.
3. The primary purpose of the project must be to restore or protect Puget Sound nearshore ecosystem processes or functions.
4. Projects with the primary purpose of providing recreational access are not eligible as stand-alone projects; however, these activities may be eligible components of larger efforts.
5. Projects awards will not be provided for work that relieves obligatory compensation or mitigation requirements incurred by the sponsor or a third-party. Funding, however, may be provided for actions associated with compensation or mitigation, if those elements are above and beyond the mitigation requirements and can be easily isolated from the required mitigation activities.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

- Acquisition (protection)
- Feasibility Studies
- Design
- Restoration implementation

## MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

ESRP requires that projects provide a match equaling 30% of the total project cost entered in PRISM (including your ESRP request and match). This match must be incurred according to RCO policies. Some of this match must be non-state. Match eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Match may include cash, bond funds, grants, labor, equipment and equipment use (see [RCO Manual 8](#) for restrictions), materials, staff time, and donations. All match must be an integral and necessary part of the approved project, must be for ESRP-eligible elements for the project, and must be committed to the project. Match expenses are reviewed for eligibility, and with the same criteria, that reimbursement requests are

reviewed.

No funds administered by the ESRP may act as match for an ESRP grant. Other funds administered by RCO may be used as match; consult with the ESRP/RCO Grants Manager to determine whether a specific grant may be used as match for the ESRP project.

## WORKING WITH LANDOWNERS

To ensure the complete application may be submitted by the deadline, and to expedite project implementation, make sure to work with landowners, including state or local agencies, early. Make time to review all project control and tenure documents to confirm information is complete and they are signed by the appropriate person. RCO's [Landowner Acknowledgement Form](#) is required at application for all projects proposed to occur on property not owned by the applicant at the time of application. Include a signed Landowner Acknowledgement Form from each landowner acknowledging that their property is proposed for ESRP funding consideration.

After funding, sponsors of restoration and design projects must provide a [Landownership Certification Form](#) (due prior to agreement) to document there are no encumbrances that would adversely affect the ability to restore the property. [Landowner Agreement Forms](#) (and/or a use authorization, if working on state-owned aquatic land) are required before implementing any restoration project on property not owned by the sponsor.

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Lands:** If the project is on land owned or managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the applicant should initiate consultation with the department early to allow enough time to get the required agency support documents. The department's State Lands Division manager is the only authorized person who may sign the required control and tenure documents and access permits. Regional staff contact information may be found online. Successful applicants should be prepared to work with the department's regional staff to prepare these documents.

**State-owned aquatic lands:** Applicants with restoration or design projects that include shoreline, in-water work, over-water work, or public water access should contact the Washington Department of Natural Resources early in the application process to determine whether the project is on state-owned aquatic lands, which could affect project scoping. See the Department of Natural Resources' [online map](#) to find the contact information for the department's aquatic land manager in the applicant's area, or call the department at (360) 902-1100.

## RELEVANT RCO POLICIES

### RCO POLICY MANUALS

Sponsors must abide by all RCO policies when implementing their projects. Please refer to [Manual 3 – Acquisition Projects](#), [Manual 5 – Restoration Projects](#), [Manual 7 – Long-Term Obligations](#). Use [Manual 8 – Reimbursements](#) for all billing instructions and forms.

## REPORTING

Sponsors are required to enter two progress reports a year for all funded projects using the [PRISM Online](#) progress reporting tool. Sponsors are also required to complete and submit a final report in PRISM Online at the completion of their projects. Through the online final report, sponsors provide a final project description, narrative, and information about the project scope, metrics, and costs. Sponsors will verify or update metrics reported through earlier progress reports and billings. Final reports must be submitted within 90 days of the grant expiration date.

## GRANT REIMBURSEMENT

RCO pays sponsors through a reimbursement process. This means that sponsors will not receive a lump sum grant in advance. That said, short-term [advances](#) may be available to eligible sponsors. Sponsors must provide documentation for all expenditures before receiving compensation. RCO [Manual 8 – Reimbursements](#) describes RCO reimbursement policies and procedures. Reimbursement workshops are available online on the [RCO Website](#).

## ELIGIBLE COSTS

All project costs and donations submitted for reimbursement or match must directly relate to the work identified in the grant agreement and be considered reasonable, necessary, and eligible. Itemized lists of eligible expenses are in [Manual 3 – Acquisition Projects](#) and [Manual 5 – Restoration Projects](#).

### Monitoring Costs

Grant recipients must monitor project implementation to ensure project completion as planned and address any post-construction issues in the ESRP project agreement. This is referred to as implementation monitoring.

ESRP does not fund project-specific effectiveness monitoring but supports a learning program that collects region-wide data to inform future restoration.

### Pre-Agreement Costs

Generally, RCO will not reimburse costs incurred before the project start date of the grant's project agreement. However certain pre-agreement costs within the project scope are eligible for reimbursement (or to be used as match) if approved by the ESRP/RCO grants manager in writing. Eligible pre-agreement costs include the following:

- Engineering and design costs for restoration projects.
- Engineering and design costs (e.g., surveying, geotechnical, other data gathering) for planning projects.
- Costs necessary to determine control and tenure of the restoration site (e.g., title report).
- Costs necessary to establish land values for acquisition projects (e.g., survey, appraisals, title report).
- Acquisition projects granted a [Waiver of Retroactivity](#).
- If cost-effective (i.e., materials are available at a reduced cost), the following construction materials and any associated transportation costs:
  - Large woody materials,
  - Culverts, and

- Bridges.

RCO requires advance approval by the ESRP/RCO grants manager to reimburse pre-grant purchase of any of the above-listed construction materials.

ESRP will not pay for purchases of land, construction materials and associated costs, or installation costs except those noted above, that were incurred before the project start date of the grant's project agreement.

### **Indirect Costs Are Not Eligible**

Agency indirect costs are not eligible for ESRP Restoration and Protection projects.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE**

[Governor's Executive Order 21-02](#), Archaeological and Cultural Resources, directs state agencies to review all acquisition and construction projects for potential impacts to cultural resources<sup>1</sup> to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to these resources. The federal government, through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires the same compliance for projects with federal involvement, for example, projects on federal lands, with federal funds, or those that require a federal permit.

RCO facilitates review under the Governor's executive order. The appropriate lead federal agency facilitates review under the National Historic Preservation Act. If the federal review covers the entire RCO project area, there is no additional review needed to meet state requirements. Both processes require review, analysis, and consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and affected Native American tribes.

After the initial consultation, a funded project may be required to complete further cultural resources review and continue the consultation process to determine next steps. Costs for cultural resources review (survey, monitoring, etc.) are eligible for reimbursement and should be included in the grant application.

Sponsors must complete the consultation process and satisfy all requirements before beginning any ground-disturbing activities (including demolition). Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval will be considered a breach of the grant agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the notice to proceed.

For acquisition projects, cultural resources requirements must be completed before final reimbursement will be made.

See RCO Manuals 3 or 5 for additional details on the cultural resource review process for acquisition and restoration projects, respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural resources are archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional tribal areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses.

## APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

### PORTFOLIO PROGRAM PROJECT APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Project Sponsors who recently received ESRP funding for a previous project phase, are interested in requesting funds for a subsequent project phase, and feel they meet the [Portfolio Program Eligibility Criteria](#) should do the following:

- **By 11:59 PM February 8, 2024:** Complete Steps 1, 2 and 3 of the [New Restoration and Protection Application and Review Process](#) described below. Please keep the following in mind:
  - Contact Kay Caromile, ESRP/RCO Grants Manager, if you'd like her to copy your previous PRISM project to create your new application. This can save you time when completing your new application.
  - As part of Step 2, be sure to complete the *Pre-Proposal* portion of a [Portfolio Project Status Sheet](#) and attach it to PRISM.
  - Portfolio project applicants may respond "n/a" to questions on the Evaluation Criteria page of their PRISM application, but must respond to all other questions.
  - Applicants are encouraged to attach all available deliverables from your previously-funded project phase, even if draft.

ESRP staff will notify applicants if their project qualifies for the Portfolio Program by **April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.

Participation in the pre-proposal phase of the application process 1) assures ESRP staff have adequate and consistent information to consider in determining portfolio program eligibility and 2) facilitates technical review of available deliverables from the previously-funded project phase. Applicants who don't qualify for the portfolio program may continue through the application process for new projects.

- **By 11:59 PM May 22, 2024.** Applicants who receive notification that their project qualifies for the Portfolio Program do not need to submit a full project application in PRISM. Instead, by **May 22, 2024** applicants should attach the following information to their active PRISM project (if the previously-funded project phase agreement is still active) or new PRISM application (if the previously-funded project phase agreement is closed or ESRP staff otherwise direct you to do so):
  - Completed [Portfolio Project Status Sheet](#). Update your responses to the Pre-Proposal questions, as needed, and respond to all final application questions.
  - Updated Whole Budget Worksheet that includes your new and previous ESRP funding requests. (Download your previous phase budget worksheet from PRISM or use a fresh budget [template](#).)

Project sponsors may work with Kay Caromile, ESRP/RCO Grants Manager, to update their record in PRISM.

Completed Portfolio Program application material will be reviewed and scored by ESRP staff using the Evaluation Criteria for Portfolio Projects described in [Appendix B](#).

### NEW RESTORATION AND PROTECTION PROJECT APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The following application process pertains to new ESRP project proposals. Project sponsors of potentially

eligible Portfolio Program projects should follow the process described [above](#).

ESRP's application process for new projects includes a required pre-proposal, an optional site visit, and a required full application and presentation. The site visit is optional, but strongly encouraged as it provides an opportunity for applicants to discuss their proposals on site with the Pre-Proposal Technical Advisory Team and receive eligibility and technical feedback to improve their project scope and design prior to submitting a full proposal. Note that, although pre-proposals are required, ESRP staff will consider accepting full applications from applicants who did not submit a pre-proposal on a case-by-case basis to take advantage of emerging project opportunities. ESRP will notify all project sponsors who submit a pre-proposal if they are invited to submit a full proposal by **April 8<sup>th</sup>**.

## REVIEW TEAMS

### Pre-proposal Technical Advisory Teams

This team's role is to advise ESRP grant applicants on process-based restoration and protection best practices for projects and for fit to the ESRP program during in-person or virtual site visits. This team will review and advise project sponsors on how to consider natural processes and ESRP grant criteria. This team will advise whether the project should proceed to the full application stage. Projects will not be ranked and scored. Projects sponsors are responsible for capturing technical feedback as they consider refining their application if invited to submit a full proposal. This team consists primarily of local and statewide WDFW engineers and biologists, ESRP staff, and local technical advisors (like Lead Entity staff or others), as available.

### ESRP Technical Review Teams

This team's role is to evaluate full ESRP proposal applications, score, and provide critical analysis and feedback for an ESRP recommended funding award. This review process creates the ESRP ranked list for an agency funding request called the ESRP Investment Plan. This team consists of volunteer technical reviewers from across the Puget Sound region and small teams are grouped together to review projects that provide a spectrum of expertise across policy, science, and practice. Reviewers for individual applications may or may not be part of the Pre-Proposal Technical Advisory Teams.

## STEP 1. SIGN UP FOR A SECUREACCESS WASHINGTON ACCOUNT AND A PRISM USERNAME AND PASSWORD

All applicants must use PRISM Online to complete and submit applications. New PRISM users must fill out a [New User Account Form](#) to obtain a username and password and sign up for a [SecureAccess Washington Account](#). When signing into PRISM for the first time, users will be asked to sign into both PRISM and SecureAccess. After the initial sign in, users will sign into PRISM using their SecureAccess credentials only. For more details on the double sign-in, visit RCO's [PRISM information Website](#).

*Questions about using PRISM?* PRISM instruction and training videos are available on [RCO's website](#). Feel free to also contact:

- ESRP/RCO Grants Manager at [kay.caromile@rco.wa.gov](mailto:kay.caromile@rco.wa.gov) or (360) 867-8532 or
- RCO's PRISM support staff at [prismsupport@rco.wa.gov](mailto:prismsupport@rco.wa.gov) or (360) 902-3086. (*Telephone Relay Service for the Hearing Impaired (800) 833-6388.*)

## STEP 2. SUBMIT PRE-PROPOSAL THROUGH THE PRISM ONLINE APPLICATION WIZARD

**Due Date: By 11:59 PM February 8, 2024.** Proposals received after this time or not in the described format may not be considered for competition.

**Pre-Proposal Requirements:** A complete pre-proposal includes a PRISM application and supporting PRISM attachments (e.g., supporting maps, budget, and designs). Additional detail on contents and format for application materials is provided below.

### Pre-Proposal PRISM Application Submittal Process:

#### A. Create and Fill Out Your Pre-Proposal PRISM Application:

To begin an application, log into [PRISM Online](#) using the SecureAccess credentials. On the PRISM home page, users can search for applications, apply for grants, manage grant agreements (active projects), and submit billings for reimbursement and progress and final reports. From the PRISM Online home page, applicants can locate and click on the orange “+ New Application” button to launch the Application Wizard. You then will be prompted to fill out several screens of information about your project. When prompted to “select the program for which you are applying”, select “**ESRP Pre-Proposal**”.



Once a PRISM project number is assigned, you may leave and return to your application at any time. To return to your application, sign in to [PRISM Online](#), select “Project Actions,” and enter the project number in the “Go to Project” field. Doing so will open the “Application Wizard” for the project. Alternatively, in “Project Actions” select the Applications icon, which will display a list of applications for the applicant’s organization.



Complete the required information on each screen and click the “Next” button. This process will take the applicant through the entire application page by page. Be sure to save work often.



Multiple users may work on one application in PRISM, just add individuals to the Project Contacts list, but it is best not to have two people working in the application at the same time.

*B. Attach Supporting Project Information to Your PRISM Application.*

- **Project location or vicinity map** (assign it a PRISM attachment type of “Map-Site Location”). Maps should show nearby towns and major roads. For acquisitions, the map should depict the project site as well as lands in the vicinity that are owned publicly or have protection status.
- **Detailed site or parcel map.**
- **Design plans or sketches, if available** that clearly convey the intent of the proposed restoration project.
- **Draft cost estimate:** Please provide a cost estimate to supplement the general cost information required by PRISM. You may create your own budget format for this proposal stage or use the Restoration and Protection [Budget Worksheet](#) that will be required with your final application.
- ([Portfolio Program](#) project applicants *only*) [Portfolio Program Status Sheet](#) – please complete only the *Pre-Proposal* portion of the sheet

*C. Check for Errors and Submit Your PRISM Application.*

After completing all the application information and requirements, check the application for errors on the “Submit Application” screen. Pages indicated with a red exclamation mark (!) in the navigation table on the left of the screen require refinement. Continue to check for errors after making corrections. If errors persist, reach out to the ESRP/RCO grants manager for assistance. Once all pages are cleared of errors and show a green check mark, submit the application.

### STEP 3. REGISTER FOR SITE VISIT

Site visits are optional, but **participation is strongly encouraged**. All applicants must submit an [ESRP Restoration and Protection Site Visit Questionnaire](#), even if choosing not to participate in site visits as part of the pre-application process. The form provides basic information to assist ESRP staff in scheduling.

ESRP staff will contact all applicants who wish to participate in site visits soon after the Pre-Proposal Submittal Due Date to confirm a site visit schedule. In-person site visits are typically 1 hour long, including time to walk to and from the parking area. Scheduling questions can be sent to [daron.williams@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:daron.williams@dfw.wa.gov).

ESRP is planning to schedule in-person site visits to different areas within Puget Sound as follows (though this is subject to change if a critical mass of applicants justifies altering the timing for an area):

<b>March 4-8</b>	<b>Central/South</b>
<b>March 11-15</b>	<b>North Sound</b>

March 18-22  
March 25-29

West Sound/Hood Canal  
Virtual Site Visits, if needed

The site visit is an opportunity for project applicants to have an early dialogue with the ESRP Pre-proposal Technical Advisory Team with the goal of helping applicants develop more clear and robust final grant application proposals.

The team will review application material and provide technical feedback to applicants to improve project concepts and benefits and advise applicants on how to consider natural processes and ESRP grant criteria. The team's feedback will also help inform ESRP staff's decision as to whether the project should proceed to full application. Factors considered in that decision include the following:

- Is the project a good fit for ESRP funding or should the applicant consider other more appropriate funding sources that are better aligned with project goals?
- Is the project ready to proceed or are design or feasibility concerns likely to strongly affect ecosystem benefits or implementation timing and cannot be expediently resolved through contract negotiation?
- Is the project consistent with a process-based approach to restoration?

#### STEP 4: SUBMIT FULL APPLICATION MATERIALS, IF INVITED

**Due Date: By 11:59 PM May 22, 2024.** Applications received after this time may not be considered.

**Requirements:** ESRP staff will notify applicants soon after site visits whether they are invited to submit a full application for ESRP funding consideration. Only applicants who are invited should submit a full application. All applications must be submitted through the [PRISM Online](#) application process. The full application builds off the pre-proposal material already submitted, but requires much more information to be entered into PRISM. RCO strongly encourages applicants to start the online application early.

Application material will be evaluated by the ESRP Technical Review Team using the relevant ESRP criteria provided in [Appendix B](#). A ranked list will be developed based on reviewer scores. Once the list is developed there will be no changes to the project ranking, although funding award recommendations may differ from requested amounts.

#### Full Application Submittal Process:

- A. *RCO Will Convert Your Pre-Proposal to an ESRP Project Application in PRISM.*

This step will be completed prior to your invitation to submit a full application. **Your PRISM project number will remain the same.** The information in your pre-proposal will be transferred to your full application.

- B. *Complete Your Full Application:*

Open your ESRP Project application in PRISM. The information in your pre-proposal will already be entered in your full application, but there will be many more questions and screens to fill out to ensure a complete application. Complete the required information on each screen and click the “Next” button. This process will take the applicant through the entire application page by page. While some of the information required in PRISM will not directly influence the technical evaluation process, it is required for all projects awarded ESRP funds. Be sure to save work often.

**Project Evaluation Criteria Worksheet (optional):** You will respond to the Nearshore Restoration and Protection Project evaluation criteria questions directly in PRISM (rather than filling out a separate form and attaching it PRISM). For your convenience, a Nearshore Restoration and Protection Grant Project [Evaluation Criteria Worksheet](#) is available to use if you wish to craft your responses before copying them into PRISM. Use of this worksheet is optional. Its intent is to serve as a tool as you develop your responses. There is no need to attach this to PRISM. Pay close attention to the character limits established for each response as PRISM will cut off all text that exceeds the limit. If you are having trouble staying within the character limit, please notify your ESRP/RCO Grants Manager so we can determine if it is necessary to extend the limit.

C. *Attach Supporting Project Information to Your PRISM Application.*

An application checklist is provided in Appendix A, complete with links to necessary templates. It may also be downloaded from [RCO’s ESRP website](#). Required PRISM attachments include the following.

- **Restoration and Protection Budget Worksheet** (MS Excel file [template](#))

Applicants must complete and submit ESRP’s “whole project” budget worksheet that presents whole project costs (not just the individual project phase for which you are applying for grant funds). Project costs must be defined by project tasks (e.g., feasibility, design, and construction) and by object class (e.g., salaries, supplies, contract expenses). The worksheet must be supported by the budget narrative in PRISM and/or other supporting materials that justify task costs. Project funding is typically limited to what applicants can commit to accomplish within a 2-year award period, with the understanding that the initial award may be amended to include additional tasks. It is understood that the whole project costs are estimates; exact amounts will be defined at the contract stage.

- **Visual Scope of Work** (Image/JPEG)

The visual scope of work is a map that clearly articulates the present and future vision for the project site. Create the map to the best of your abilities using available resources (e.g., GIS, desktop publishing software, aerial imagery with hand-drawn markups, etc.). Washington Department of Ecology’s [Coastal Atlas](#) can be useful for this exercise. The visual scope of work does not need to be professional quality, but whatever best creates a visual demonstration of the vision for the project. Do not submit formal design documents to serve as your Visual Scope of Work unless they are 1-2 pages at most and fulfill the criteria stated here. See RCO’s ESRP website for [Example Visual Scopes of Work](#) from previously funded ESRP applications.

- **Landowner Acknowledgement** (MS Word [template](#))

If the proposed project will occur on property not owned by the applicant at the time of application, attach a signed and complete landowner acknowledgement form from each landowner

to demonstrate that all affected landowners are aware of the project and supportive of the application. If there is landowner conflict or uncertainties to the project proposal, please provide rationale and how the project applicant proposes to manage that circumstance. Refer to [Working with Landowners](#) for information on who to contact if you are proposing work on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands or state-owned aquatic lands.

Exceptions:

Assessments, inventories, and studies that cover a large area and encompass numerous properties do not require Landowner Acknowledgement Forms. Multi-site acquisition projects that involve a large group of landowners, require (at minimum) signed Landowner Acknowledgement Forms for priority parcels.

- **Applicant Resolution and Authorization** (MS Word [template](#))

The applicant's governing body must pass a resolution that authorizes submission of the application for funding. This resolution will identify who may sign a contract and amendments on behalf of the organization. The format of the authorization may change, but the text may not change. Only one form is required for each applicant, so long as each project name and number are included in the resolution. Forms filled out incorrectly, or unsigned, are not valid and will require revisions. For help, contact your ESRP/RCO grants manager before signing the form. Secondary sponsors must also complete this form.

Applicant Authorization Resolution Forms are not required from tribal sponsors at the time of application. However, RCO will need an organizationally drafted resolution from tribal sponsors before signing the agreement. Tribal sponsors should work with their grants manager to fulfill this requirement.

- **Two Photos of Project Site** (JPEG)
- **Additional Supporting Documents** (Word, PDF, Image, JPEG, etc.)

The following suggested supporting documents improve the ability of reviewers to evaluate projects based on criteria. Reviewers are instructed to treat absence of information as an indicator of insufficient capacity or resources. Suggested supporting documents:

- Letters of support
- Feasibility studies and design drawings (if applicable) useful for understanding project scope and configuration.
- Nearshore maps illustrating the project's location relative to priority habitats or previously restored or acquired properties, its location within the drift cell or process unit, or other relevant information.
- RCO Waiver of Retroactivity (for parcels acquired prior to application)
- Monitoring or stewardship plans, if available.

*D. Check for Errors and Submit Your PRISM Application by the Application Due Date.*

After completing all the application information and requirements, check the application for errors on the "Submit Application" screen. Pages indicated with a red exclamation mark (!) in the navigation table on the left of the screen require refinement. Continue to check for errors after making corrections. If errors persist, reach out to the RCO grants manager for assistance. Once all pages are cleared of errors and show a green check mark, submit the application before the deadline.

## STEP 5: SPONSOR PRESENTATIONS: JULY 8 – 12, 2024

Project applicants will have the opportunity to present their project to our ESRP Technical Review Team virtually through MS Teams or Zoom. The technical review team will use this time to gain a better understanding of the proposed project and ask the applicant clarifying questions that may help them in their review and scoring. Applicants must be able to present on the day they are assigned, so it is highly recommended that applicants keep the entire review week free until the presentation schedule is established.

Presentations are typically no more than 15 minutes, with an additional 15 minutes for Q&A with the technical review panel. Additional information on presentation guidelines and schedule will be made available no later than June 21.

## STEP 6: PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING

Full proposals and presentations are reviewed and ranked by the ESRP technical review team using the following evaluation criteria categories:

### Evaluation Criteria Categories

Ecological Importance	(40 points)
Technical Merit and Readiness	(40 points)
Cost Justification	(15 points)
Public Support and Involvement	(15 points)

The full evaluation criteria and guidance for incorporating the criteria into your application are provided in [Appendix B](#).

## INVESTMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### INTEGRATING RANKED PROJECT LISTS

The ESRP review process results in a separate prioritized project list for each sub-program:

1. Ranked new project list.
2. Ranked portfolio project list.
3. Ranked learning project list.
4. Ranked small grants project list.
5. Shore Friendly local program funding request.

These separate lists are “zippered” together to create a single integrated ESRP Preliminary Investment Plan to be submitted to the Governor’s Office and the Washington State Legislature for funding consideration. The integrated ESRP investment plan is created with the top ranked portfolio project becoming the top ranked ESRP project, followed by the top ranked new project, then 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked portfolio project, and so forth. Learning and small grants projects will compete against other learning projects/small grants projects for a portion of ESRP’s total appropriation that will be set aside for these opportunities. (Learning grants receive 10% of the total ESRP appropriation and small grants receive a maximum of 5% of the total ESRP appropriation.) Shore Friendly’s funding request to the legislature may be integrated at various incremental appropriation levels on the ESRP investment plan.

The ESRP Preliminary Investment Plan will remain preliminary until state capital funding is secured and a Final ESRP Investment Plan is published. Contact the ESRP Program Manager for more information on the integration of multiple ESRP grant programs into one investment plan.

## AWARD AND CONTRACT INFORMATION

ESRP awards will be administered through contracts between project sponsors and the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), ESRP's fiscal partner. All discussion of award funding level, scope, and project implementation schedules are preliminary until publication of the Final ESRP Investment Plan and distribution of award notices. The project sponsor assumes full risk for any costs incurred prior to publication of the Final ESRP Investment Plan and subsequent award notification.

Contracts will be developed and executed using RCO documents. These materials will be made available upon request. Projects eligible for streamlined review in future grant rounds (via the ESRP Portfolio process) are not assured funding in future spending plans. Project sponsors should not assume that funding of a project phase will result in guaranteed funding of future phases.

Projects receiving federal funds must also comply with the relevant federal terms and conditions associated with the funding agency.

## APPENDIX A: APPLICATION ATTACHMENT CHECKLIST

All ESRP applications must be submitted in PRISM Online. Note that PRISM is designed to check for certain required attachments, but PRISM cannot check for all. Use the application checklist below to ensure all required application material is attached to PRISM.

PRE-PROPOSAL PRISM Online Attachment Checklist Items - New and Portfolio Projects	Template / Form Link
<b>Draft Cost Estimate or Budget Worksheet.</b> You may create your own budget format for this proposal stage or use the Restoration and Protection Budget Worksheet that will be required with your final application.	<a href="#">Spreadsheet</a>
<b>Maps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General vicinity map for all projects</li> <li>• Site plan for restoration projects</li> <li>• Parcel map for acquisition projects</li> </ul>	Applicant Creates
<b>All Available Design Materials for Restoration Projects.</b>	Applicant Creates
<i>(Portfolio Program Applicants <u>Only</u>)</i> <b>Portfolio Program Status Sheet</b> – please complete only the <i>Pre-Proposal</i> portion of the sheet	<a href="#">Form</a>
FINAL APPLICATION PRISM Online Attachment Checklist Items - New Projects (The following are in addition to your Pre-Proposal Application requirements)	Template / Form Link
<b>Final Budget Worksheet.</b> Use the Restoration and Protection Budget Worksheet template to illustrate “whole” project costs (not just the individual project phase for which you are applying for grant funds).	<a href="#">Spreadsheet</a>
<b>Visual Scope of Work</b> (see <a href="#">examples</a> on RCO Website)	Applicant Creates
<b>Landowner Acknowledgement Form</b> is required for projects on land not owned by the applicant or on state-owned aquatic lands.	<a href="#">Form</a>
<b>Applicant Resolution and Authorization</b> is required for any applicant that will sign the project agreement.	<a href="#">Form</a>
<b>Project Site Photographs.</b> At least two photographs of site conditions before project implementation are required in .jpg file format.	Applicant Creates
<b>Other Materials (optional)</b> “Waiver of Retroactivity,” graphs, nearshore maps, letters of support, etc.	Applicant Creates

## APPENDIX B: EVALUATION CRITERIA

### UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING ESRP'S CRITERIA

ESRP has a unique and rigorous approach to selecting new nearshore investments, providing funding and programmatic support for successful projects that improve ecosystem processes. The criteria ESRP uses to guide and analyze new and ongoing projects represent a substantial amount of information. However, projects that pass through initial stages are entered into ESRP's "portfolio status," offering a streamlined process and providing more reliable long-term support for projects that fall within the approved scope of work. ESRP makes every effort to simplify the application process, while asking for all the information necessary to assure investments for the nearshore and salmon recovery are well spent.

#### **How to demonstrate evidence in the space provided?**

While ESRP requests a lot of detail and rationale in grant applications, sometimes the details being requested are already articulated in published online materials (PSNERP, PSP, and NOAA resources to name a few). Sometimes, both the project sponsor and the technical reviewer do not need a full re-iteration of a published and well-articulated piece of nearshore research. In order to save narrative space, applicants are encouraged to provide a succinct description about how their project is supported by and/or fulfills the intentions described in published research available online (i.e., previously identified priority areas). Proper citations will include the web address/URL, and page number (paragraph number if needed). Only publications available online are allowed to be cited. Please use recommended publications in grant criteria. A successful narrative will succinctly explain why an individual project meets ESRP objectives, while providing the citation for appropriate publications (i.e., PSNERP document, web link, and page #).

### DEFINING NEARSHORE ECOSYSTEM SITES

Every action occurs within a landscape setting. The PSNERP approach proposes that important physical and ecological processes operate at large scales, drive ecosystem structure, and control the delivery of ecosystem services. Therefore, our ability to evaluate the importance and technical merit of a nearshore action depends, in part, on understanding how an action affects and is affected by a larger landscape.

For the purposes of ESRP, the landscape context should be evaluated at the scale of one of three "process domains": shoreline process unit, delta process unit (Simenstad et al. 2011), or coastal inlet site (Cereghino et al. 2012) unless a compelling rationale (e.g., local assessment) demonstrates that a larger or smaller frame of analysis than the process unit is sufficient to insure sustained ecosystem services over time. Projects that fully restore processes within large complex landscapes (i.e., high potential sites in the sense of Cereghino et al 2012) are generally favored over comparable projects at smaller sites.

An application should clearly identify the 'nearshore ecosystem site' in which project actions are proposed. Typically, this is a single shoreline process unit (SPU) or delta process unit (DPU) but may include a complex of multiple process units or a separable piece of a process unit such as a coastal inlet if that can be justified. The definition of a 'nearshore ecosystem site' is therefore somewhat subjective and depends on what the applicant is willing to 'bite off' and what the scale of benefits is in relation to the scope of their proposed work. Larger more complex sites are generally encouraged, but within that site you must account for risks and the degree to which your action addresses the integrity of the system.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposals should describe a logic chain that justifies how physical changes being proposed will deliver predicted ecological/ecosystem functions, goods and services (e.g., Restoration Action - Restored Process - Structural Changes - Functional Response).

To adequately address the criteria an application should:

- **Define the ‘nearshore ecosystem site’ in which the action is being proposed.** Unless a compelling justification is provided, this should be the Shoreline Process Unit (SPU) or Delta Process Unit (DPU). Detailed instructions for identifying SPU or DPU number(s) in which your project is located are provided in [Appendix C](#). Projects in beach systems can refer to the [Beach Strategies](#) project for updated shoreline armor, shoretype and drift cell information.
- **Define the effect of the action** in relation to the change from historical conditions. High ranking projects would substantively address the impacts to a site, rather than proposing superficial treatments that do not address impacts. Proposals should identify the documented (and undocumented) stressors, nearshore and watershed modifications influencing the site, and specifically list those that will be affected by the proposed restoration action.
- **Describe the ‘target state’ of the nearshore ecosystem site**—how will the composition and configuration of the site look when the site has reached a certain level of “restoration maturity”? Partial and incremental actions may be perfectly appropriate. However, if there is no pathway toward substantive restoration of a whole site, that is a concern that may affect prioritization. ESRP strives to fund actions that move us toward some target future condition that is sustainable and has integrity.
- **Describe how the project overcomes risks from degradation**, both from current process degradation, and potential future impacts, including anticipated future population change. However local planning analyses, PSNERP [Change Analysis](#) upland and watershed modifications, zoning and other information can provide another perspective. Projects should address the extent to which existing protection mechanisms and/or land ownership patterns create risk.
- **Link the anticipated outcomes of an action to precise benefits for target species.** The presence of a species in the system does not necessarily indicate there is benefit to the population. If the applicant wishes to claim benefit to a valued species, the mechanisms that result in population benefits should be explicitly stated and supported.
- **Indicate a peer-review mechanism employed** to ensure that design is rigorous, and the action maximizes ecological and social benefits. Many projects are developed in isolation. Transparent, independent, interdisciplinary, and well-documented peer review should increasingly become a standard feasibility task for restoration actions.
- **Be focused on primary restorative and prerequisite management measures** (in the sense of Clancy et al. 2009) to ensure the majority of funding is focused on actions that have the ability to protect or restore the target ecological processes at the site. A strong justification should be provided for

funding requests that focus on other less significant management measures. Match or partnership funds may be more appropriate for these non-essential management measures.

## TAILORING PROPOSAL REVIEW TO LANDFORM

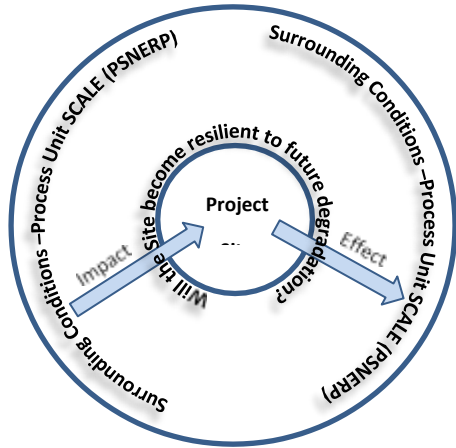
Our criteria will be applied based on what we understand about the dynamics of different coastal landforms (following [Shipman 2008](#)). Deltas, beaches and their barrier embayments, and coastal inlets each are shaped by a different set of physical processes and provide a unique set of services, that are in turn degraded by distinct patterns of development. The interpretation of ESRP evaluation criteria will be informed by strategic recommendations developed for each landform (Cereghino et al. 2012).

The following describes how ecological *importance* may be differentially evaluated based on landform:

- **Deltas - *Substantial benefits*** are derived for restoring large estuarine areas to both tidal flow and freshwater inputs, through dike and levee setback. ***System Integrity*** requires consideration of sediment deposition, and representation of diverse wetland types, particularly oligohaline transition and freshwater tidal components, which are delta components which have been disproportionately lost in Puget Sound (Fresh *et al.* 2011; Simenstad *et al.* 2011). ***Sustainability*** may be compromised in places where accretion rates are insufficient for keeping up with sea level rise, and/or where the potential for landward wetland migration in response to sea level rise is limited. ***Highly valued services*** include nursery services for estuarine dependent fish like Chinook and chum salmon.
- **Beaches – *Substantial benefits*** are derived by restoring or protecting substantial sources of sediment or removing substantial barriers to sediment transport to large beach systems that support complex depositional features. ***System Integrity*** requires the presence of a critical mass of sediment supply and transport, nearshore forest, intact groundwater and surface hydrology. ***Sustainability*** is threatened by residential clearing and shoreline stabilization in combination with sea level rise and can be overcome through nearshore ecosystem site scaled local management of sediment and coastal forest resources. ***Highly valued services*** include forage fish spawning.
- **Embayments (both barrier embayments and coastal inlets)** – Substantial benefits are derived from reconnecting or reestablishing tidal flow to large historical embayments that have been lost or degraded or reestablishing large areas of tidal wetlands where they have been lost. ***System Integrity*** requires management of coastal forest, and maintenance of freshwater quantity and quality through watershed management, and for barrier systems, the integrity and sustainability of the surrounding beach system. ***Sustainability*** is threatened by watershed development that degrades freshwater inputs, and where barriers sustain embayment structure, the degradation of updrift sediment supply. Sea level rise potentially affects both the sustainability of wetlands (similar to deltas) and increases the importance of sustained sediment supply. ***Highly valued services*** include nearshore rearing associated with natal salmon streams and rivers, and shellfish production.

## ESRP'S EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR NEW PROJECTS

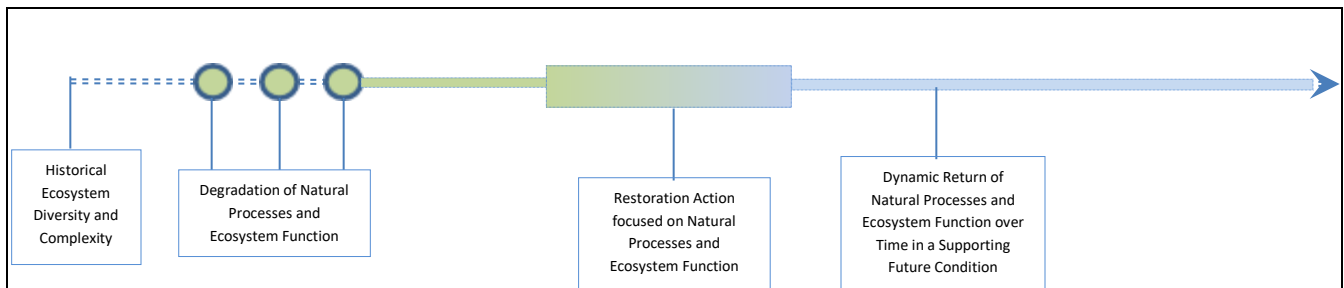
Conceptual diagram of ESRP Evaluation of the project site as it relates to the surrounding landscape context.



### Definitions from Evaluation Criteria

- Surrounding Conditions
- Process Unit
- Project Site
- Resilient? (project site regarding future conditions)
- Effect? (on surrounding conditions) Impact? (on project site)

### TIMELINE



The following evaluation criteria are questions to be answered in your full application in PRISM online. They are copied here for reference and to offer guidance and best practices for responding to each question.

### Evaluation Criteria Categories

Ecological Importance	(40 points)
Technical Merit and Readiness	(40 points)
Cost Justification	(15 points)
Public Support and Involvement	(15 points)

**ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE (40 pts.)** - An ideal project will restore dynamic natural ecosystem processes, structures and services, resulting in site conditions that restores or protects the highest level of process complexity within a large process unit, and where the site is both resilient to current and future development impacts, and known to provide highly valued habitat services to target species.

1. [0-10 pts] **Does it have a large effect on the delta or shoreline process unit?** – The project will protect intact existing ecosystem processes and services or provide a large increase in ecosystem services by restoring the most significant 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<sup>2</sup>, [Beach Strategies](#), other [Puget Sound Nearshore Technical Resources](#), and other relevant documents. [Response is limited to 4500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of the following:*

- Restores or protects the greatest degree of functioning ecosystem processes or services.
- Defines and provides context for relevant ecosystem benefits.
- Addresses a high proportion of the restoration or protection needs (i.e. degradation or future risk) within a site.
- Project site is large and complex relative to other similar sites.
- Proposed action(s) addresses the PSNERP strategy for the shoreline or delta process unit in which it lies [Cereghino et. al. 2012](#).
- Cumulatively restores critical stressors within a group of smaller and simpler process units.

2. [0-10 pts] **Will the site be resilient to future degradation?** – The project results in a highly 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 will reach this target condition at the site scale. (Note: climate change will also be addressed in a later category.) [Response is limited to 4000 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of the following:*

- Expected future condition of target ecosystem is clearly described, including predicted changes over time. A full range of ecosystem components ([Shipman 2008](#)) or conditions ([Cereghino et al 2012](#)) will provide increasing levels and complexity of ecosystem services over time.
- Proposed actions will result in large 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.

3. [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

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<sup>2</sup> Find the Shoreline Process Unit (SPU) or Delta Process Unit (DPU) by going to the [Nearshore Data Map](#). 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](#) 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](#) and associated [Hub Site](#).

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.

population growth, and 3) demonstrates a preference for work where 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 4500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of the following*

- The project will protect or restore an ecosystem component or landform that is critical for increasing the integrity of the surrounding sub-basin, compared to historical composition.
- Project actions respond to risks identified in [Cereghino et al. 2012](#), and utilize local assessments.
- The whole of intact surrounding areas is protected, and/or target processes are comprehensively restored. The project addresses multiple stressors and their cumulative impacts.
- 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. \(2012\)](#) provides a range of risk metrics following [Simenstad et al. \(2011\)](#).
- 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?

4. [0-10 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 4000 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of the following:*

- Proposed actions restore or protect ecosystems and ecosystem services 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.
- Rare shoreform types (e.g., lost barrier estuaries, oligohaline and freshwater tidal marsh), and relatively rare ecosystem components (e.g., stream deltas) are recovered.

**TECHNICAL MERIT AND READINESS (40 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.

5. [0-15 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 4000 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of the following:*

All Projects

- The project team contains the range of expertise needed to complete proposed actions.
- Anticipated and measurable project outputs and performance are clearly identified and linked to the best available restoration design techniques and methods. If needed, new and innovative design considerations are identified, and conceptual hypotheses are provided.
- Proposal references or proposes an interdisciplinary technical review of project strategies and alternatives, particularly for complex projects. 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).

Acquisition

- Risks to ecological processes at the site can largely be controlled through acquisition.
- A strong stewardship plan is provided or is proposed as an early project deliverable.

Restoration

- Sponsor has engaged key interested parties and technical experts regarding project performance and identified how design techniques will lead to desired project outputs.

6. [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 3500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of 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.

Acquisition

- Long-term stewardship and management plan has been or will be developed based on known uncertainties and risks.

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.
- Large-scale projects and/or those with high uncertainty have identified specific learning objectives and have created (or will create) a “learning and adaptive management plan” in coordination with the ESRP Nearshore Science Manager. This plan will identify hypothetical connections between implementation monitoring findings and potential future alterations.

7. [0-10 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 of 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](#), [Raymond et al 2018](#)) associated visualization tools for 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.
  - Adequate opportunities for landward migration of tidal wetlands are available with the project area.
  - The project design and system conditions allow for adequate and timely delivery of sediments to support marsh accretion within the project area and drift cell.
- Proposal identifies and addresses potential impacts of the project to adjacent land uses under climate change scenarios.

8. [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 due to lack of involvement, engagement, and support of landowners, traditional stakeholders, non-traditional stakeholders, and tribes. [Response is limited to 3500 characters, including spaces]

*Ideal projects have some or all of 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 project, including matching funds, are 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 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.

9. [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 of 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 benefits.

10. [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 of 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.

11. [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 of 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, matching funds or in-kind donations from a user-group are included; if salmon recovery project, SRFB dollars are included).

**PUBLIC SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT (15 pts.)** - The project will build community support for protection and restoration, engage the local community and/or encourage valuable partnerships.

12. [0-5 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 of 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, recreational/commercial fisheries, appropriate low-impact public use, flood hazard mitigation, drainage improvements, or infrastructure upgrades.

13. [0-10 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 of the following:*

- Letters of support indicate a broad and diverse base of support.
- Proponent has a project communications strategy describing how specific 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.
- Large-scale projects and/or those that may affect a broad spectrum of the community include a public engagement strategy to overcome obstacles and identify multi-benefit opportunities. The target audience for public engagement may include landowners; tribes; diking districts; industry groups; NGOs; wildlife, hunting, fishing, and recreation groups; and local, state, and federal agencies. Consider engaging with groups and key individuals outside of traditional audiences, as appropriate.

## ESRP'S EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PORTFOLIO PROJECTS

Membership in the ESRP Portfolio is not guaranteed and is not an assurance of funding. Membership in ESRP Portfolio System requires meeting eligibility described above in this RFP. While the application process is streamlined, funding is still dependent on competitive evaluation among portfolio projects and across the Investment Plan. Instead of a full proposal, a portfolio project provides a **Budget** and **Status Report**. These portfolio ranking criteria are intended to support consistent review and ranking of funding requests provided by applicants.

Scoring is conducted by ESRP staff. For additional phases of funding, projects must still satisfy eligibility criteria, particularly match requirements. Reviewers look for specific evidence that the proposed project meets the following criteria.

### Portfolio Criteria for Restoration and Protection Projects

Pts.	Criteria	Definition
15	Technical Ranking	The project performed well within its last strategic competition.
15	Leverage	The project has secured additional matching resources for subsequent phases of work.
15	Readiness	The project has completed proposed work on time and on budget and has provided evidence of readiness to complete subsequent project phases.
15	Urgency	Failure to provide additional funding may jeopardize initial investments or result in substantial cost increases beyond inflation.
10	Project Type and Location	The project type or location has been identified as a high local or regional priority.

## APPENDIX C: OTHER RESOURCES

### LOCATING THE SHORELINE OR DELTA PROCESS UNIT, AND DRIFT CELL FOR YOUR PROJECT

Find the Shoreline Process Unit (SPU)/Delta Process Unit (DPU) by going to the [Nearshore Data Map](#). Click on “See the PSNERP Maps” and follow 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](#) 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](#) and associated [Hub Site](#).

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.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following websites may provide additional information that supports your application. Current hyperlinks are provided on the ESRP website under [ESRP Grant Resources](#).

- [DEI/EJ Resources](#)
  - [US EPA Eco-Health Relationship Browser](#)
  - [Washington DOH Social Vulnerability Index](#)
  - [US EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#)
  - [Puget Sound Regional Council Opportunity Mapping](#)
  - [Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map](#)
- ESRP 2024 Grant Competition Resources
  - [ESRP Learning Program webpage](#)
  - [ESRP Restoration and Protection webpage](#)
  - [ESRP Shore Friendly webpage](#)

- [ESRP Small Grants webpage](#)
- [RCO's ESRP webpage](#)  
Includes the majority of needed application and funded-project resources, such as grant material templates and examples, program policies, and billing resources.
- Letter of Support Resources
  - [Local Integrating Organizations](#)
  - [Northwest Straits MRCs](#)
  - [Shore Friendly Programs](#)
  - [Local Lead Entities](#)
- Science/Technical Resources
  - [Beach Strategies for Restoration Hub site](#)
  - [Beach Strategies Data Explorer](#)
  - [Puget Sound Nearshore Chinook Salmon Strategies](#)
  - [Sea level rise projections for Puget Sound](#)
  - [Sea level rise considerations for nearshore restoration and protection in Puget Sound](#)
  - [PSNERP Publications \(Technical Reports\)](#)
  - [PSNERP Change Analysis Geodatabases](#)
  - [Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda](#)
  - [The Nature Conservancy Ecoregional Assessment](#)
  - [Ecology Oblique Aerial Photography](#)
  - [WA Dept. of Ecology Coastal Atlas](#)
  - [Puget Sound Partnership Salmon Recovery and Watershed Work Plans](#)

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