



Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board

2026 Request for Proposals for Salmon Habitat Projects

Pre-Application Due: **February 20, 2026**

Initial Application Due: **March 27, 2026**

Final Application Due: **June 22, 2026**

Background

The Washington State Legislature established the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) in 1999. The SRFB administers annual salmon recovery grant programs that provide state and federal funds to projects that help recover salmonids (salmon, trout, and steelhead) in Washington State.

This RFP solicits projects for three SRFB funding opportunities:

- 1) The annual regular SRFB salmon recovery grant program, for which we expect to have \$1-2 million to award to projects that promote recovery of salmon, steelhead, and bull trout in the Yakima Basin;
- 2) The SRFB riparian grant program, for which we expect to have \$195,903 to award to projects that protect and restore riparian areas in the Yakima Basin; and
- 3) The SRFB Targeted Investments grant program for large regional priority projects that accelerate salmon recovery, for which we will choose up to 2 projects of \$1-7 million each to forward to a state competition run by the SRFB. Funding for this program will depend on the 2027 legislative session.

Applications for all grant programs will be evaluated using the schedule, processes, and criteria detailed in the [Yakima Basin Lead Entity Manual](#).

Applications must also meet the state requirements detailed in [RCO Manual 18: Salmon Recovery Grants](#), the primary guide to the state's requirements for SRFB projects. *Be sure to download the 2026 version.¹*

Grant applicants must demonstrate how their projects implement the actions defined in the basin's regional recovery plans: the [2009 Yakima Steelhead Recovery Plan](#) and the [2012 Yakima Bull Trout Action Plan \(use the 2017 Action Update\)](#). Examples of previously funded SRFB projects in the Yakima Basin can be found in the Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board (YBFWRB) [Habitat Restoration Projects booklet](#).

¹ If you have downloaded Manual 18 before, you may need to refresh the webpage or clear your browser history/cookies to download the current version, since it is always available at the same link.

State Review – Proposals will be reviewed by the SRFB State Review Panel, a group of engineers, fisheries experts, and habitat experts hired by the SRFB to provide an independent, third-party review of the technical merits of SRFB proposals. Grant applicants must address review panel feedback in their final application to be cleared for funding.

Local Review – Proposals will simultaneously be reviewed by our Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and Citizen Committee (CC). The TAG is a committee of local biologists, scientists, and natural resource professionals who ensure that projects are biologically and technically sound. The CC is a committee of local citizens representing a broad range of community interests who evaluate the projects on social, economic, and cultural values/impact.

The local ranking process has two steps. First, the TAG evaluates the applications on biological and technical criteria and produces a ranking recommendation. Then, this recommendation is forwarded to the CC. The CC evaluates the applications on their own community value criteria and uses the TAG's ranking in conjunction with these criteria to develop the final ranked project lists for each grant program. The CC has the power to adjust the TAG's ranking based on a project's community value or detriment.

The YBFWRB's Board of Directors then approves the final ranked project lists and submits them to the SRFB for approval. Final funding decisions are made by the SRFB in September 2026.

Please see our [Lead Entity Manual](#) for a detailed description of our local review process.

Geographic Scope

This RFP solicits SRFB grant proposals for projects in the Yakima Basin (WRIA's 37, 38, and 39). This includes most of Benton, Kittitas, and Yakima Counties, and the Yakama Reservation.

The Yakima Basin also extends into Klickitat County, but that portion of the basin is under the jurisdiction of the Klickitat Lead Entity and thus is excluded from this RFP.

Technical Advisory Group's Focus Project List

Sponsors are encouraged to submit proposals that address one or more of the Focus Projects on the TAG's [Focus Project List](#). This list is a tool to help identify the most timely/urgent needs of priority species and to focus SRFB resources towards project proposals that address those needs.

A project proposal will receive ten (10) bonus points in the TAG Salmon Recovery Matrix (SARM) if it significantly addresses a Focus Project. If a proposal does not significantly address a Focus Project, zero (0) bonus points will be awarded. (For context, most SARM scores in 2024-2025 were between 10-30.)

The list is used to:

- Give the TAG a way to proactively guide Yakima Basin SRFB funding towards high priority and/or urgent projects
- Provide guidance to sponsors deciding what types of projects to pursue and propose

- Strengthen the link between the SRFB project review criteria and Recovery Plan priorities

It is important to emphasize that the TAG uses this approach as a way to recognize and reward proposals that address Focus Projects, but not as a way to exclude other SRFB proposals. Projects that address Focus Projects but have other significant weaknesses will have their score brought down by other TAG scoring criteria. Projects that do a strong job of addressing real needs, even if not identified as address

ing a Focus Project, will still have an opportunity to compete for funding based on the other TAG scoring criteria.

YBFWRB Lead Entity SRFB Grant Round Schedule for 2026

Date	Event
January 26	Grant Round RFP released
January 29	RCO statewide application workshop and Q&A Register here
February 20	Preapplications due
March 5, 6, 9, 13	Preapplication conferences
March 27	Initial applications due
April 14-16	Sponsor Presentations
May 5-7	Site Tours
May 29	Review panel initial comments
June 8-9	Review panel conference call
June 22	Final applications due
July 14-15	TAG evaluation meeting
July 24	Review panel final comments
July 29-30	CC evaluation meeting
August 5	YBFWRB Annual Meeting
August 7	Ranked list due to SRFB
September 15-16	SRFB Funding Meeting
September 30	Grant round review meeting
October-November	Funding typically becomes available (reg SRFB & riparian)
July 2027	Funding becomes available, at the earliest (Targeted Investments)

Meetings will generally be held using a hybrid format with in-person attendance encouraged at the YBFWRB office, located at 1200 Chesterly Drive, Suite 280, in Yakima.

Eligibility

Eligible Projects

Applicants should review [RCO Manual 18](#) for full details.

Important points to consider:

- The SRFB funds projects that protect, restore, or monitor salmon and steelhead habitat.
- An applicant must request at least \$5,000. There is no maximum funding limit for a grant request.
- There is no longer a 15% match requirement for most projects. Match is required only for certain acquisition and certain riparian planting projects.
- Grants are reimbursement-based. A project sponsor must first spend money and then request reimbursement.
 - An RCO grant agreement includes both the SRFB funding award and the project sponsor match (if applicable). If a project has match, each reimbursement request must include part of the match, based on the match percentage pledged in the grant application.
- An applicant must demonstrate a commitment to ten (10) years or more of stewardship for the project.
- A project sponsor must complete the project within four (4) years.
- An applicant will work with their watershed-based Lead Entity to learn how to apply in the Lead Entity area.
- An application must be submitted electronically through PRISM Online. To start an application in PRISM Online, the applicant must work with the Lead Entity to get a project number through the Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP).

Eligible Applicants

Only the following entities are eligible to apply for SRFB funding:

- Cities
- Counties
- Conservation districts
- Federally recognized Indian tribes²

² Revised Code of Washington 77.85.010 (12)

- Nonprofit organizations
 - Nonprofit organizations must be registered with Washington's Office of the Secretary of State. A nonprofit charter, organizational documents, or corporate purposes must include authority for the protection or enhancement of natural resources, such as salmon or salmon habitat, or related recovery activities. The charter must provide for an equivalent successor organization under the SRFB grant agreement in case the nonprofit dissolves.
- Private landowners
 - Private landowners are eligible if they are private citizens and the restoration or planning projects are on their land. Individuals may not acquire land using SRFB grants. Landowner donation of time spent implementing a project may be eligible as non-reimbursable match. When receiving SRFB funding, individuals should consider any potential tax liabilities and may want to consult a tax professional or the Washington Department of Revenue for advice. Each situation is different and RCO does not provide any tax guidance.
- Regional fisheries enhancement groups
- Special purpose districts
- State agencies
 - State agencies must have a local partner that is independently eligible to be a grant applicant. The local partner must be involved in the planning and implementation of the project and must provide an in-kind or cash contribution to the project. This contribution does not need to be used as match (e.g., with design-only projects, which do not require match); however, the contribution must be documented in PRISM upon project completion. A [Project Partner Contribution Form](#) must be completed and submitted with the application.

Federal agencies may not apply directly, but may collaborate with eligible applicants. Projects may occur on federal lands. Consider federal restrictions on using federal money for match when applying for a grant.

Riparian Eligibility

Unlike in 2024 and 2025, when the SRFB riparian grant round was funded by the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), the 2026 round is funded by state bonds. This means CCA-associated additional reporting, assessment, and tribal consultation requirements won't apply this year.

Requirements specific to this funding program are found in [RCO Manual 18](#), Appendices I & L.

Riparian projects will be scored by the TAG and CC using the same process and criteria as regular SRFB projects, but will be submitted to the state as part of a separate ranked list of riparian projects.

Targeted Investments Eligibility

Targeted Investments projects must restore and/or acquire habitat. Design costs may be included in restoration projects, but standalone design projects are not eligible.

Full requirements specific to this funding program are found in [RCO Manual 18](#), Appendix J.

Targeted Investments projects will be scored by the TAG and CC using the same process and criteria as regular SRFB projects, but will be submitted to the state as part of a separate ranked list.

Application Process

Pre-application

Applicants should complete a [pre-application form](#) before submitting a full application. Refer to the Yakima Basin [Lead Entity Manual](#) for requirements for pre-applications.

The pre-application process is meant to provide early feedback to applicants as they determine which proposals to pursue and how to develop them. Applicants will attend a conference with the pre-application review team – a small group consisting of Recovery Board staff and project permitting officials – to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their project concept.

The Lead Entity Coordinator, Cheyne Mayer (cmayer@ybfwrb.org), and our RCO grants manager, Elizabeth Butler (elizabeth.butler@rco.wa.gov), are both available to discuss preapplications and how they may best fit into SRFB (project type, extent, scope, etc).

Pre-applications must be submitted by email to the Lead Entity Coordinator, Cheyne Mayer, at leadentity@ybfwrb.org by **February 20, 2026**.

Initial Application

When an applicant decides to pursue a proposal beyond the pre-application process, they will need to submit a full application in PRISM, RCO's online database for grant management. The Lead Entity Coordinator will assist project sponsors with this step.

Sponsors must:

- Upload projects to the Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP)
- Obtain a PRISM project number
- Create a SecureAccess Washington (SAW) and PRISM account through the [RCO website](#)
- Complete the application in PRISM

Please review full details in [RCO Manual 18](#), Section 3.

In addition to the data you enter into PRISM, there are several other documents required for a complete application. Please see [RCO Manual 18](#), Appendix A.

- The Yakima Lead Entity requires that sponsors fill out the [RCO template spreadsheet](#) for cost estimates. *This is a change since 2025.*
- For resubmissions, applicants are encouraged to attach a file to their proposal indicating how a project has changed from when it was proposed in a previous grant round. Highlighting any improvements to the previous submission will help our committees understand what improvements have been made.

Initial applications are due in PRISM by **March 27, 2026**.

Final Application

After initial applications are submitted, sponsors will give a slideshow presentation to the TAG and CC in April.

Then, sponsors will give a project site tour to the TAG & CC, along with representatives from the state review panel, in May. Please see the [Yakima Basin Lead Entity Manual](#) for more details.

The TAG, CC, and state review panel will ask questions and provide feedback, and project sponsors will have the opportunity to revise their applications to address that feedback.

Recent changes to required/encouraged documents:

- Any site tour handouts and/or virtual site tour slideshows must be uploaded to PRISM.
- Sponsors are encouraged to provide a summary of changes from initial to final applications, e.g., a document that points reviewers to where in the application the changes were made. This aids our committees in identifying how sponsors have incorporated feedback into their applications.
- Sponsors are encouraged to provide a summary of how their project addresses Citizen Committee criteria, e.g., a document that points reviewers to where in the application the sponsor has explained how the project addresses them. This is an opportunity to help the CC identify how sponsors have addressed CC criteria in their project design. An example form is available in the [Lead Entity Manual](#), Appendix H.1.

Final applications are due in PRISM by **June 22, 2026**.

Further Information

For more information, please visit the [Recovery Board website](#) or contact the Recovery Board Lead Entity Coordinator, Cheyne Mayer, at leadentity@ybfwr.org or (509) 654-7056.