



## Riparian Funding Programs

**Local, state, and federal funding partners shared a brief overview of their upcoming or current riparian funding opportunities.**

### Colin Hume – Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead (CR2SL); WA Department of Ecology (WDOE)

- Climate Resilience Riparian Systems Lead (CR2SL) Current Status: The CR2SL is a partnership between the WDOE, the State Conservation Commission (WSCC) and Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) that supports restoring and protecting riparian areas in Puget Sound. The final work plan was approved and the program officially launched on Oct 1 2023. Approximately \$26 million was budgeted by the EPA. This funding will be dispersed incrementally over the first 4 years of the 6-year agreement, in a structure similar to NEP funds. About \$17-19 million is budgeted for subawards.
- Timeline to develop Investment Plan:
  - o Fall 2023 – Winter 2024: Partner and stakeholder engagement plan developed, advisory group charters established, and Riparian State and Federal fund manager engagement.
  - o Spring and Summer 2024: Geographic prioritization, Environmental Justice, and Climate Change Guidance for subawards.
  - o Summer and Fall 2024: Initial Investment Plan Produced, Initial request for proposals released.
  - o Beyond: Two or more additional solicitations for RFPs will go out. CR2SL will host riparian management workgroups focused on implementation needs, innovative pilots conducted on incentive approaches, adaptively manage subaward process, and support long-term funding conversations at the state level.
- What will be funded: The funding is flexible at this point; feedback from partner engagement and the advisory group processes will inform priorities. Projects must be focused on riparian recovery in Puget Sound watersheds. WDOE is very aware of the need for riparian funding. Some of the likely themes for funding include pilot approaches for landowner incentive programs, capacity needs, native plant propagation and procurement, etc. The program is also looking at ways to reduce the administrative burden of grant applications and management. The minimum buffer widths will be the same as Ecology’s Voluntary Clean Water for Agriculture Guidance (based on stream type and width).
- Contact info: Colin Hume, [Colin.hume@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Colin.hume@ecy.wa.gov), 425-395-5283

### Carson Moscoso – WA Department of Ecology

- Combined Water Quality Funding Program: One application for all Water Quality funding that includes Section 319 (nonpoint) funding, State Centennial funding, CWSRF Loans
- Timeline: 3 year agreements, applications due October 15, 2024. Applicant Workshop August 14
- Details: no match requirement, max grant amount of \$500,000; funding guidelines (section J pertains to riparian projects)

- [Water quality grants and loans - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)
- Carson Moscoso, [carson.moscoso@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:carson.moscoso@ecy.wa.gov), 564-999-1269

### Nick Norton – Recreation Conservation Office (RCO)

- SRFB Riparian Funding: RCO has \$25 million for riparian funding to be distributed in this biennium. This regional allocation will be dispersed to salmon recovery organizations through their normal processes, with each lead entity receiving no less than \$300,000 of this funding. A total of \$9.8 million will be allotted to Puget Sound lead entities.
- Timeline: Happening now, making the initial agreements for awards in early October 2024.
- Project type: Trying to offer more flexibility, 5 yr. grants, stewardship of old sites, livestock exclusion, habitat projects, acquisition projects that meet certain requirements, and 10% could go towards riparian assessment work at the local level. Also planning and learning from conversations at the governor’s office in the riparian roundtable, should more funding become available in the future.
- [Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration - RCO \(wa.gov\)](#)
- Nick Norton, [nicholas.norton@rco.wa.gov](mailto:nicholas.norton@rco.wa.gov), 360-902-2219

### Chemine Jackels – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- Community Based Habitat Restoration Program: \$1.3 billion, 4 grant programs. Two national criteria based, peer review process grants that can include costs that cover riparian work. These funds are focused on fisheries and ESA recovery. Currently spending down funding provided through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. This year the PNW is nationally dominate with this fund, 1/3 of national funds to WA and OR, and in the round 2 fish passage only. Emphasis on coalition requests, multi-benefit projects, and amplifying the community voice.
- Timeline: 3-4 yr cooperative agreements, very flexible, can move the money around as needed.
- Project type: Typically funding the priority habitat restoration actions identified in recovery plans for threatened and endangered species. These include big projects along the Puget Sound corridor. Winning applications are typically:
  - o Restoring flooding to large landscapes, lots of riparian landscape associated with that
  - o Connecting to salmon population recovery
  - o Portfolio/coalition applications
  - o Flagship projects - high certainty large scale project, with riparian integrated into that project

There is a separate pot of funds for Tribal and underserved communities. For these funds, winning applications are typically:

- o Tribal dominant or include direct leadership by tribal or underserved community
- o A project with a restoration outcome, not just capacity building
- o Expanding or leveraging an existing effort
- o An addition of new capability
- o Increasing competition
- [Community-Based Habitat Restoration | NOAA Fisheries](#)
- Chemine Jackels, [chemine.jackels@noaa.gov](mailto:chemine.jackels@noaa.gov)

## Josh Giuntoli – Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC)

(Did not present, included are notes provided by BEF from South Sound Workshop on 6/7/24)

- Riparian Grant Program: \$25 million Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funding to restore and protect riparian habitat, structured with a wide range of project eligibility, for distribution to Conservation Districts exclusively (regional partners are encouraged to collaborate with their local CDs). Private, tribal, federal, state, non-profit and local government land ownerships are eligible. All stream types regardless of salmonid presence are eligible.
- Timeline: Ongoing. All south sound counties have received funding for projects under this program.
- Project type: Eligible project types include: riparian program outreach, technical assistance, planning, design, monitoring, cost-share, riparian project implementation, tiered incentive payments, maintenance, and permanent protection. Tiered incentive program with landowners entered into 10-15 yr agreements, tiered benefit based on the width of the buffer, \$300 per acre min, \$1000 per acre max (200 yr. SPTH).
- Riparian Plant Propagation Program: coordination between nurseries, CDs and local partners to increase plant availability and match plants with projects. Meant to support statewide salmon recovery efforts. Also looking to determine the statewide need for native plants.
- Timeline: For propagation, nurseries can apply annually in the spring. CDs can apply in June for funds to support cultivation. Restoration partners can fill out an annual form to assess plant needs and contract grow orders.
- Project type: Propagation nurseries can receive funds for labor, trees and shrubs, and materials. CDs can receive funds for cultivation efforts to cover infrastructure, materials, trees and shrubs, and labor.
- Link to SCC riparian funding program information:  
<https://www.scc.wa.gov/programs/riparian-grant-program>
- Josh Giuntoli, [jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov](mailto:jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov), 360-407-7474

## Riparian Work Gaps and Challenges - Brainstorming Around the Room

**Participants shared thoughts on gaps and challenges and captured them on a virtual whiteboard space.**

Discussion questions:

- What are the local challenges/barriers/gaps to effective riparian restoration and protection?
- What's working well/not well
- Specific questions for funders

The ideas shared are shown in the tables below, organized into the following categories:

- Funding coordination
- Landowner outreach & education
- Priorities for riparian function
- Regulatory enforcement
- Workforce & supply chain

FUNDING COORDINATION
Removal of match requirements would be helpful!
Ongoing maintenance is crucial to support beyond 10+ years for protected and restored areas
More funding to support capacity building
Grant writing assistance
Funding to continue monitoring and maintaining restoration projects: Stewardship
Do any of these funds provide funding for capacity to get capacity to apply for the grants? These grants are a lot of work. Thinking about concepts of equity and justice, those groups and governments that are more well-off are going to be more successful at getting funding.
Coordination of funding for local discussion of best practices/ combined funding usage and contracts
Timing of funding award with crew request window
Funding does not cover full scope of needs
Complete funding from planning, planting, and maintenance to ensure success
Some apps used for applying are prohibitively complicated.
Multiple online portals for applications and billing/reporting creates burden for sponsors
Monitoring and ongoing noxious weed support
Match is a barrier and creates a drain on precious unrestricted funds to have to apply for multiple grants
Does riparian include marine and nearshore areas?
Competitive funding models leads to partial implementation instead of fully funding and implementing ERPs/Salmon Recovery Plans
Capital funding timelines vs restoration timelines are very different

LANDOWNER OUTREACH & EDUCATION
Funding education/outreach as part of restoration funding
Investing in relationship building
How to get landowners on board with increasing buffer requirements
How to reach and effectively educate landowners on River functions

Landowners need a single contact to understand all the funding opportunities.
Support and fund youth programs that educate future stewards about riparian areas.
"How to" workshops!
Can funds provide capacity for outreach to landowners- to prepare for larger riparian asks?
Educating the general public about riparian areas is critical, so they can be better stewards
Focus more on how a functioning riparian impacts human health, food sources, flooding, etc.
invasive weed ID and native plant education is really needed. Landowners generally want to do the right thing and often don't know what that is
Local partnerships can establish really good connections with local landowners and bring a great benefit to restoration programs
Model restoration-property owner agreements
More workshops and public outreach on invasive weeds
Outreach component of restoration projects after they are completed

<b>PRIORITIES FOR RIPARIAN FUNCTION</b>
Preserve larger riparian buffers and suitable beaver habitat
Use of drainage, watershed improvement, and other kinds of districts?
Ongoing maintenance in the decades after riparian plantings
Understanding projected future flows (we're going to see 40%+ reduction in summer flows in some of our streams and rivers around here by 2040) and designing restoration around that future reality.
Use WRIA SR plans to determine priorities
What are the priorities for riparian funding? Are these clearly defined and focused? Some riparian areas are more critical and more important than others. Some riparian areas have other problems that need fixing outside of the riparian area. Are the priorities chinook? Steelhead? Human well-being?
Coordinating a top-down approach to noxious weed/knotweed control w/ unwilling landowners
Ensuring plants that are installed will survive temp changes in the next decades/centuries
How does assisted migration fit into restoration
Much contributes to riparian function and well-being that isn't necessarily adjacent to the water body. How is the line drawn for what is a riparian project? There are upland areas that contribute to downstream
No clearing house for BMPs many new riparian planners struggling to invent the wheel
Reed Canary Grass!
Use future modeling of stream flows when designing projects

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT
Regulatory compliance for maintaining degraded buffer conditions
Agriculture exemptions to wetland impacts makes it hard to make a case to establish a buffer.
Common to hear that plantings are delayed by slow navigation of cultural resource
Regulatory enforcement as a tool for working with landowners
Restoration permitting is not incentivized compared to development permitting
Variance permit approval. Need to track this at jurisdiction level.
Violation of critical areas enforcement followed through
Common to hear that plantings are delayed by navigating cultural resource review
I often hear that enforcement is not a level playing field - those with the means and the connections get away with variances and regulation infractions
OSS rule updates, where water quality could be impacted

WORKFORCE & SUPPLY CHAIN
Need for more YEAR-ROUND crews that have a livable wage, HOUSING availability
Can we just fund solid WCC crew years and have them available to go to projects as needed? Sponsors aren't always ready to request crew time in the Spring prior.
Expand capacity in riparian depts to allow for more outreach, education, grant writing and technical and efficient execution
Housing is a pervasive issue across all sectors.
Stable Crews that can work more efficiently across the landscape
WCC is an amazing resource. Trained supervisors are critical. Housing for crew members is challenging and limits recruitment
More Washington Conservation Corps crews
Plant availability, ensuring they are native species
Recycling and re-use program for Blue Tubes (since they are \$1 per tube)

## Focused Discussions on Riparian Challenges

**Participants voted on the three topics they were most interested to dive deeper into discussion, selecting Funding Coordination, Landowner Outreach and Education, and Workforce and Supply Chain.**

### Funding Coordination

- Administrative barriers
  - o Match requirements: Outdated, inequitable approach.

- CR2SL will not require match, the state has provided it for the entire program; but will ask for leverage
    - Current NOAA programs do not require match – Transformational and Fish Passage programs have scoring criteria for match or leverage ratio.
  - Burdensome applications – time and capacity burden is enormous on small organizations
    - Keep application questions simple
    - Single online portal for applications
      - Preference for PRISM over EAGL – significant cost to learn new grant management systems
      - SmartSimple works
    - Sno-Stilly LIO dug in on this and presented in June 2023 to the Leadership Council, led to work with ALIGN group
      - Are agencies willing to coordinate more and let go of control in favor of an application portal that works best for project sponsors?
      - Item for ALIGN workplan?
- Adjustment of current funding guidelines
  - Need mechanism for long term monitoring and maintenance of riparian restoration, without it, it is wasted funding
  - Capacity for funding grant writing
    - NOAA Tribal and Underserved community grant program could help provide capacity
    - Puget Sound Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead recently had RFP for local capacity
    - Puget Sound Partnership Strategic Funding Team/RAFT (IIJA funding) will have a grant writer on staff to provide additional capacity for local organizations
      - TBD how this position’s capacity will be used – coordinated through LIOs
      - PSP just hired grant writer
  - Local prioritization –
    - Ensure local priorities are recognized and incorporated into scoring criteria
    - It is hard for riparian, especially long term maintenance, to compete against capital projects



## Landowner Outreach and Education

- How to effectively educate landowners
- Buffers & incentives
  - o Nearshore vs. Freshwater incentive availability
    - More resources allocated to freshwater systems for recovery purposes historically, hard to prioritize marine and nearshore against freshwater systems
    - Depends on type of incentive (BMP vs. Direct payments vs. Education)
- Coordination around different programs and consistent messaging to landowners
  - o LO outreach effective when done in partnership, our local implementers all work really well together, have coordinated priorities
    - Local partnerships can establish really good connections with local land owners and bring a great benefit to restoration programs
    - Ongoing maintenance of partnerships - crucial to achieving the goals of protected and restored areas long term
  - o Programmatic approach is needed, and hard to fund – what does this look like? What staff are needed, what would deliverables be, etc.?
  - o Landowner relationship-building/negotiations is not currently funded, but is very important and necessary work to even get to the point of being ready to develop a grant proposal. Creates a big barrier to entry to under-resourced communities and small organizations. (e.g. stewardship plans)
    - IDEA: every riparian grant includes a percentage (10-12%) for unspecified outreach and education to build relationships with landowners
      - Ability to be creative, work with the funder to create a plan that works best for the project
      - Develop plan after grant is awarded
      - Relationship building is the work
      - Outreach is not administration (in terms of project budget)
    - IDEA: build in mechanism for reimbursement of this pre-planning work after project specific grant is awarded
      - Stewardship plans, landowner communications and education
    - Create more operational budget pass-through funds to fund landowner outreach and education – riparian is social work and cannot be funded through capital projects
      - Who is responsible for this shift?
        - o Legislature – need to change legislation around how operating funds are used and allocated
        - o Actions: project sponsors communicate this need during site visits with legislators
- Youth education and outreach – educate youth to instill good land management, habitat protections in the future

## Workforce and Supply Chain

- Need more boots on the ground, people planting trees, doing invasive species control; less of a need for managers and project management support
- Training program to learn the Puget Sound recovery system and project implementation process - project conceptualization, grant writing, contract work, project implementation, etc. - Crew members are often very interested in career development in this field. Work-exchange with partner organizations?
- Year-round crew needed
  - o No increase in crew requests to WCC in Olympic Region, yet. Expected soon, due to increase funding for riparian work.
    - Following covid, members and supervisors moved around and left organizations leading to a workforce reliability challenge
  - o In WCC model, an organization would need to sponsor a crew
- Interrelated issues of housing availability and crew sustainability – crew members are lost in rural areas like Hood Canal/Strait because of lack of housing
  - o Focusing recruitment on post-high school age
  - o Fund acquisition of dedicated crew housing for AmeriCorps members; pilot program for the rest of the state?
  - o Tie in with community colleges to provide dorm housing. Had success with this currently/in past; dorms are rented.
- Plant availability
  - o Riparian Plant Propagation Program helping with this to boost plant availability
  - o Plant availability has been a persistent problem in this geography, worry about future availability with more projects coming online
  - o Ordering timelines are important to consider
  - o Alternative plant procurement: carbon capture programs
  - o Climate adapted seedlings
  - o Funding available for plant propagation through NOAA Tribal and Underserved funding (more competitive if coupled with on the ground riparian actions)
  - o North Olympic Salmon Coalition has nursery; this is a band aid – would rather have large investment to meet plant needs at a system wide level
  - o Mason CD has plant propagation system – Has increased plant stock, but don't want to be spending capacity on this, would prefer the supply chain be sufficient so they don't have to propagate their own plants.
  - o Need for culturally significant understory plants not common in riparian restoration planting plans, but play big role in watershed, are hard to find at nurseries (blue elderberry, devils club)

- Not necessarily a desire for tribes to do the propagation, but a desire to have investment in these resources at the state level
  - Challenges with plant sourcing: highly local sources as well as assisted migration seed sources and species
  - Often encounter shortages among certain species
- Re-use and sharing of resources like blue tubes
- Monitoring plantings
  - Need for monitoring where these plantings are done - tracking how they are doing, surviving, aerial surveys, etc - more stewardship space - more innovative approaches for growing and maintenance of plantings as climate change increases and growing seasons get warmer, drier, etc.
    - Dungeness as an example of scraping of the top layer and allowing the underseed native plants to grow and thrive; Learn and share what is and isn't working in light of climate change.
    - This knowledge may exist within WCC crew members, they see a lot of different sites and conditions – develop mechanisms for sharing this information
- Noxious weeds
  - Need more dedicated programmatic funding for coordination and implementation of noxious weed control

## Wrap-up/Next Steps

- Hood Canal and Strait LIO and Leas Entity networks are open and interested in coordinating around funding and strategic planning around riparian work
- Colin Hume – Climate Resilient Riparian Systems Lead
  - The information shared today will inform our funding structure and investment strategies
  - Think big moving forward – it is time to address the full spectrum of needs in riparian rather than tucking it into other capital funding programs
- Chemine Jackels – NOAA
  - NOFOs are written at a national level, so not a lot of feedback from local level can be incorporated into these documents
  - Can offer guidance on how to best develop grant proposals
- Carson Moscoso – WA Department of Ecology
  - [Link](#) to sign up for Combined WQ Funding news including 3 hour applicant webinar