



## **Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program Round 4 Request for Proposals**

***Application Deadline: Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009.***

### **Background & Purpose**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC) have established the Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program to develop innovative projects that benefit salmon recovery while also strengthening the viability of agriculture and small-scale forestry businesses in Washington State. Pioneers in Conservation grants are intended to help farmers and foresters protect and restore salmon habitat in a manner that is both environmentally sustainable for fish and economically sustainable for farm or forest businesses. This program is also intended to strengthen the farm and forest conservation community partnerships that emerged through development of the Salmon Recovery Plan by Shared Strategy for Puget Sound and similar efforts across Washington State.

**Note:** The forest businesses referenced in this program are those owned by small forest landowners as defined in RCW 76.09.450.

### **Goals**

The goals of the Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program are to:

- Fund restoration and protection projects that have a substantial benefit to both salmon habitat and active agricultural/forestry businesses.
- Stimulate creativity and innovation among farmers and small forest landowners to address conservation needs and become engaged in salmon habitat preservation, restoration, and stewardship.
- Encourage projects that significantly advance regional salmon recovery.
- Encourage projects that significantly advance the viability of agriculture/small-scale forestry at the regional or statewide level.

### **Project Eligibility**

To be considered eligible for funding under this program, projects must:

- Effectively solve a discrete salmon habitat issue or problem; and
- Effectively solve a discrete agricultural/forestry issue or problem.

All projects must provide on-the-ground benefits for salmon habitat on or directly affecting specific agricultural or forest lands in Washington State. Applicants will need to describe the problem they plan to address, as well as how their proposed actions will fix this problem. Projects should provide such benefits by addressing one or more long-term habitat restoration or protection need, such as:

- In-stream habitat (e.g. woody debris placement, expansion of usable habitat and habitat diversity, innovative ditch maintenance, tide-gate replacement, culvert replacement and other fish passage barrier removal)
- In-stream flows (e.g. water conservation, water trust acquisitions)
- Riparian habitat (e.g. riparian plantings, fencing, livestock crossings)
- Water quality (e.g. filter strips, wetland protections, ponds & swales)
- Marine shore lands (e.g. restoration of estuarine habitat)

All projects must also provide benefits to an agricultural or small-scale forest business. Applicants will need to describe the problem they plan to address, as well as how their proposed actions will fix this problem. In addition to solving a farm/forest problem, applicants must show how the proposed on-the-ground work will create a net financial gain for the farm or forest owner. For example, projects may provide these benefits through:



- Reduced operational expenses (e.g. improved access to and around the land, better access to stock or irrigation water, savings in labor or other inputs)
- Increased productivity of the business or of the land (e.g. improved livestock management, stock watering, or animal health; improved soil quality; improved drainage)
- Protection from damage or loss (e.g. stream bank stabilization, protection from flood damage, protection of future water rights)
- Increased access to markets for farm/forest business products

Projects that address regional conservation priorities for salmon recovery and/or the viability of agriculture and forestry region or state-wide are strongly encouraged. Applicants will need to describe the broader regional problem they plan to address, as well as how their proposed actions will significantly advance regional salmon recovery and/or conservation on farmland in Washington State. The emphasis here is on sector-wide benefits, rather than just benefits to individual project sites – to encourage projects that tackle larger threats and issues facing both salmon recovery and conservation of farm and forest land and move the issue forward.

### **Grant Amounts and Match**

The maximum grant award for Pioneers in Conservation projects is \$75,000, though awards usually range from \$20,000 - \$50,000. Projects must include matching funds of at least 50% of the total grant request in non-federal funds (e.g. for a grant request of \$40,000, an applicant will be expected to show at least \$20,000 of matching funds, for a total project cost of \$60,000).

Match details:

- Match must be non-federal in nature
- Matching funds may be cash, other grant funds, in-kind donations of goods and services, or volunteered time and labor.
- Volunteer labor may be used as match at a rate of \$18/hr for adults and students (note: students must be of legal working age to qualify for match hours)
- Land can be used as match only if being placed in an easement (additional documents are required at the time of application; please contact Pioneers staff for information)

### **Eligible Costs**

The Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program's primary focus is on smaller-scale, locally-oriented restoration projects that reflect the goals of protecting salmon habitat and agriculture/forestry. Requests for funds to complete large-scale restoration projects (such as SRFB, LIP or EQUIP projects) will not be considered. Projects must not be directly tied to mitigation or restoration action required by a regulatory agency or court of law. Freestanding educational projects not associated with restoration activities, mitigation or corrective actions, general planning and studies, and legal or lobbying efforts are ineligible. Projects should be completed within two years. The following costs are eligible:

- Materials & equipment
- Salaries, technical assistance
- Contracting/consulting
- Printing, copying, postage, etc.
- Travel and transportation
- Acquisition of real property interests\*

*\*Note: Acquisition of interests in real property must be in direct support of substantial habitat restoration activities and must have separate approval – discuss this in advance with Pioneers program staff.*

### **Applicants**

Applicants can be farm or forest organizations & other non-profits, conservation districts, drainage or diking districts, educational institutions, local governments, or tribes. Individual property owners interested in applying will need to partner with a fiscal sponsor and are encouraged to contact Pioneers staff to discuss their



options. All applications must demonstrate a direct and willing partnership between the applicant and one or more active farmers, ranchers or foresters who own or work the land where the project will be completed, are committed to long-term agriculture or forestry, and are willing to participate in public education in connection with the project.

Successful applicants will:

- Use innovative and creative techniques to address identified problems for salmon habitat, agriculture, and/or forestry
- Incorporate a comprehensive plan for post-project monitoring and maintenance for any on-the-ground restoration
- Have “ready-to-go” projects where partners are on-board, permits are secured or currently being pursued, and work could begin upon receipt of award
- Show a variety of partners contributing match to the project, including from the property owner
- Involve a location, project type, sponsor, and/or community partner that is under-represented in salmon recovery efforts

### **Application Process and Schedule**

Applications for Round 4 of the Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program are due March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. A team of regional representatives from the salmon recovery, agriculture, and forestry fields will review proposals based on technical merit, potential benefit to the community, and cost-effectiveness. Grants will be jointly selected by NFWF and WSCC, and administered by NFWF. Applicants will be notified of the results by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. *Please note:* Funded projects should be completed within two years of grant award.

The Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program uses NFWF’s online application interface: EasyGrants. To start an application, please click on the following link: <http://www.nfwf.org/easygrants>. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting their application. Once you have started an application, you can save it and return at a later point to complete it, up until the application deadline. Please be sure to disable the pop-up blocker on your Internet browser prior to beginning the application process.

### **Further Information**

For more information about the Pioneers in Conservation Grant Program, along with links to the application and additional program information, please visit [www.nfwf.org/pioneers](http://www.nfwf.org/pioneers) or [www.farmland.org/pioneers](http://www.farmland.org/pioneers). For questions about the program, please contact ▪ Brian Ferrasci-O'Malley, Evergreen Funding Consultants, Phone: (206) 691-0700, Email: [bferrasci-omalley@evergreenfc.com](mailto:bferrasci-omalley@evergreenfc.com), or ▪ Cara Rose, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Western Partnership Office, Phone: (503) 417-8700, Email: [cara.rose@nfwf.org](mailto:cara.rose@nfwf.org), or ▪ Don Stuart, American Farmland Trust, Phone: (206) 860-4222, Email: [dstuart@farmland.org](mailto:dstuart@farmland.org).