

DRINKING WATER PROVIDERS PARTNERSHIP

Supporting projects that protect and restore clean drinking water and native fish habitat in Oregon and Washington



2025 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Proposal Deadline is January 6, 2025 at 5:00PM Pacific Time.

Award announcements will be made in February 2025

Additional information about the Partnership is here:

<https://geosinstitute.org/initiatives/dwpp/>

The 2025 Application can be found here:

[DWPP Apply for Funding – Geos Institute](#)

The Drinking Water Providers Partnership (DWPP) is inviting project proposals for 2025. The partnership includes USDA Forest Service, Geos Institute, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Washington State Department of Health, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, WildEarth Guardians, The Freshwater Trust, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Together, the partners present this watershed restoration funding opportunity for water providers and watershed restoration practitioners in Oregon and Washington. The goals of the DWPP are to:

- Restore and protect the health of watersheds and water quality which communities depend upon for drinking water
- Improve aquatic and riparian ecosystems, including the native fish that inhabit them
- Support local partnerships of drinking water providers, landowners and restoration experts that successfully implement restoration projects

Background

DWPP partner organizations share a common vision that watershed restoration is an important and effective way to provide clean, safe, and affordable drinking water to communities while also restoring native fish habitat and protecting fish populations. Responding to on-the-ground demand, the Partnership supports collaborations between drinking water providers and watershed restoration practitioners in Oregon and Washington by coordinating agency funding for activities that enhance or protect drinking water quality and/or supply and benefit native fish. Through this process, applicants are able to be considered for funding from three federal agencies and two state agencies. Building on eight successful grant award years, the Partnership is pleased to release this Request for Proposals for its 2025 grant cycle.

Grant Awards

The DWPP accepts funding requests up to \$150,000. Funded activities must be completed within 18 months of the award start date.

Project Eligibility

Benefits to drinking water and native fish: Projects must clearly indicate how they benefit native fish habitat *and* water quality or supply for a public drinking water system. Projects should focus on activities that will demonstrably improve or protect aquatic, riparian, and/or watershed health. Applicants are encouraged to submit projects identified in a recognized source water protection plan, watershed restoration action plan, rare species recovery plan, or other publicly vetted prioritization document.

Geography: Only projects located in a drinking water source watershed in the state of Oregon or Washington will be considered for funding. Visit the following sites for interactive map viewers of source watersheds:

- Oregon: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/programs/Pages/DWP-Maps.aspx>
- Washington: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/swap/index.html>

Range of activities: Eligible activities may include feasibility analyses, planning, design, implementation, outreach, education, and effectiveness monitoring. Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state, tribal, or federal law are not eligible.

Types of projects: The following are examples of eligible restoration and conservation projects. This list is not intended to be comprehensive nor exclusive.

- Implementation of pollution prevention or waste reduction projects
- Removal and replacement of aging or undersized culverts
- Removal of dams or other large obstructions

- Breaching or removal of levees and tide gates
- Road decommissioning, improvements, or modifications to improve drainage, minimize erosion, and prevent sediment from entering streams
- Reestablishing river flow patterns, meanders, and channels that were previously altered
- Restoring stream complexity and roughness
- Restoring and enhancing connections between lakes, sloughs, side channels, floodplains, and main channels
- Restoring riverbanks and floodplains, including riparian restoration
- Establishing management plans for conservation easements or lands purchased within source areas
- Management plans for forested areas to address catastrophic fires or impacts from recent fires
- Reducing herbicide and/or pesticide application rates and loadings in source areas
- Reforesting or replanting in sensitive or riparian areas
- Installation of fencing to protect sensitive riparian areas
- Implementation of educational outreach projects emphasizing watershed resource conservation
- Planning and preparation for the purchase of lands or conservation easements in the drinking water source area
- Planning and preparation for the purchase of water for instream flow purposes
- Installation of signs at boundaries of zones or protection areas
- Projects to voluntarily decommission onsite sewer systems affecting the source area and connect homes to existing sewer lines
- Installation of fencing around an immediate water intake area
- Structures to divert or treat contaminated storm water runoff affecting the source area, such as bio-swales, or other green infrastructure
- Implementation of conservation measures related to drinking water source protection
- Development of an Ecosystem Services project in watershed to fund preservation areas
- Implementation of conservation easement elements, such as fencing or habitat restoration, to protect sensitive areas

Eligible Applicants

Applications are encouraged from a variety of organizations, including Tribal, local, state, or federal governments, educational institutions, public water systems, non-profit organizations, watershed councils, landowners, and soil and water conservation districts.

Other Considerations

Applicant type may affect the type of funding that can be awarded from this funding pool. For example, only public water providers are eligible to receive state water quality agency funds.

Because funding in this grant program is coming from both state and federal government funding sources, the Evaluation Committee will match high ranking projects with the funding they are eligible to receive from the different funding sources. This may mean sometimes applicants may receive funding from more than one source.

If you are a public water system in Washington with a project cost of less than \$30,000, or a public water system in Oregon with a project cost of less than \$50,000, and your project does not have a USFS or BLM nexus (i.e., not within a drainage that has USFS or BLM lands), it is recommended that you apply directly to your respective state agency for a source water protection grant.

Your project must EITHER have a nexus to federal land OR the public water system involved in the project must be willing to receive the funding. A federal nexus for the purpose of this partnership means that the project will benefit natural resources associated with USFS or BLM lands, such as migratory fish produced on those lands but using down- or up-stream lands for part of their life history.

Terms of Available Funding

The Partnership brings funding together from various federal and state agencies, which can lead to some confusion for applicants. To better evaluate whether your project will be competitive for DWPP funding, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with the nature of the Partnership and restrictions associated with its various sources of funding. **Note that you do NOT need to identify a specific funding source within the DWPP for your proposal.** The information below is provided for context.

In 2025, there could be as much as \$1.4 million available to fund projects.

Grantees may receive grant dollars from one or more of the following three **federal** agencies: USDA Forest Service (USFS) Region 6, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) OR/ WA State Office, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10.

Applicants may also be recommended for **state** funding. Oregon and Washington each operate a drinking water source grant program available to public water systems within their respective states. As the Partnership team reviews grant applications, those projects qualifying for state funding sources will be recommended to those programs and the **state staff will work directly with applicants and local drinking water providers to assist with the state application process using the application materials already prepared.**

Oregon: The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) manages and administers grant awards through the [Drinking Water Source Protection Fund](#) while the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) assists in the solicitation and review of grant proposals. The OR DEQ & OHA will release their next Request for Proposals in early 2025. Funding under the Oregon Source Protection Fund requires contracting with Business Oregon and meeting state procurement conditions, and funding may not be available until Fall 2025.

Washington: The Washington State Department of Health solicits, manages, and administers grants through the [Source Water Local Assistance Grant Program](#). The Washington State Department of Health accepts proposals year-round until funding is exhausted.

Partnerships

One of the goals of the DWPP is to initiate dialogue and strengthen working relationships between water providers and restoration practitioners at a watershed scale. If the applicant is not a drinking water provider, it should be evident in the funding application that a partnership with the local drinking water system has been developed in order to meet shared goals.

Compliance with NEPA and Other State and Federal Regulations

Successful applicants are likely to receive federal funds and will be required to satisfy applicable financial and programmatic requirements and meet all applicable local, state, and Tribal environmental laws and federal requirements before project implementation, including but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Clean Water Act. While these requirements are often completed by the federal partners, if environmental compliance requirements have not already been completed, applicants can request necessary funding in the application, except for projects that do not have a nexus with a federal agency in Washington

Application Process

- Applicants are required to use the application template available at <https://geosinstitute.org/initiatives/dwpp>
- The total application, including attachments, must not exceed 20 pages.
- Responses to narrative questions may be single-spaced and font must be size 12 or larger.
- Please email all application materials in a single PDF or Word document to rtalbott@wildearthguardians.org by 5:00PM PST on January 6, 2025.

Proposal Overview and Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the eight core DWPP partner organizations, on a scale of 100 points and awarded funding based upon how well it meets the following criteria:

Geographic Focus (10 points total)

Only projects that fall within drinking water source watersheds in Oregon and Washington are eligible for consideration.

- To be eligible for *federal* funds, the project must benefit aquatic resources associated with USFS or BLM lands. For example, a project on private land could be funded with

federal funds if it improves habitat for migratory fish using federal lands for some part of their life cycle.

- Extra consideration will be given to the distance between the project and the intake for the drinking water provider whose project goals are improved drinking water quality. Projects located nearer to the intake will receive a higher portion of the available points.
- Extra consideration will be given to projects that fall within, or will result in benefits to, a “Priority Watershed,” or “Focus Watershed,” as identified by the USFS or the BLM.
- Extra consideration will be given to designated sensitive areas as identified in a Source Water Assessment or watershed plan. For questions, consult with your drinking water provider or a state funding representative listed below.
- Extra consideration will be given to projects proving benefits to census tracts identified as disadvantaged communities on the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool [Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](#)

Project Description, Justification, and Goals (45 points total)

This section of the proposal accounts for almost half of the points in the final score. Use this space to help reviewers understand your project, the challenges for both drinking water and native fish it attempts to address, how your project addresses those challenges, and the outcome expected from the project. If you are requesting funding for a specific phase of a larger project, briefly describe the larger project and the activities included in the phase for which you are requesting support.

Capacity (20 points total)

Partners: The development of local, grassroots partnerships between restoration practitioners and water providers is one of the goals of the DWPP. It should be clear that the relevant public water system is familiar with and supportive of the proposed work. In addition to grassroots partnerships, value is placed on the extent to which partners are involved in the project, as measured by the number and level of confirmed partner contributions.

Experience: Applicants must show capacity to implement the scope and scale of the proposed work and the ability to successfully complete the project within the proposed budget and timeline. Include a brief description of similar projects successfully completed by the lead organization and its partners.

Timeline and Readiness: The project timeline should be feasible and appropriate given the project activities, goals, and budget. The applicant should clearly describe project “readiness” as the degree to which the project is ready for implementation in terms of elements such as landowner willingness, NEPA standing, design, permits, and/or contract preparation.

Monitoring & Community Engagement (15 points total)

Monitoring: Implementation monitoring is required and effectiveness monitoring strongly encouraged where feasible. Successful applicants will be required to submit a final report upon completion of the project using the Partnership’s final report template, which can be found here: <https://geosinstitute.org/initiatives/dwpp/>. Consider reviewing the final report template as you determine how you will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of your project.

Community Outreach: Ideally, projects will demonstrate a high degree of community engagement in and benefit from project development, implementation, and monitoring. Applicants are encouraged to identify complementary public outreach and awareness-building components in their project proposal.

Budget (10 points total)

The budget table should detail all funds requested, as well as all matching funds and in-kind contributions, and whether the contributions are pending or secured. If pending, the timeframe for securing funds should be included in the narrative explanation. The budget form provided in the application must be used. A 25% match (in-kind and/or cash) is encouraged and may be required, depending upon the funding source within the DWPP. Therefore, it is best to show at least a 25% match if possible. Use the table provided to document cash or the value of in-kind contributions by partners for services, personnel, equipment, and other project resources.

Attachments (Optional)

If the project applicant is not a drinking water provider, a letter from the drinking water provider is recommended. Project materials or other letters of support may be added here within the 20-page limit to show partner, landowner, or other commitments.

Points of Contact

DWPP partner organizations look forward to working with you to foster working partnerships between water providers and restoration practitioners throughout Oregon and Washington. The following contacts are available to answer questions regarding project eligibility and the application process.

Affiliation	Contact	Title	Phone	Email
USDA Forest Service	James Capurso	Regional Fisheries Biologist	503-808-2847	James.Capurso@usda.gov
US EPA	Dan Brown	Natural Resource Advisor	503-326-6832	Brown.Dan@epa.gov

US BLM	Mike Brown	Hydrologist		Mebrown@blm.gov
Oregon DEQ	Julie Harvey	Drinking Water Protection Coordinator	503-229-5664	Julie.Harvey@deq.oregon.gov
Washington DOH	Chelsea Cannard	Technical Assistance Coordinator	564-233-1799	chelsea.cannard@doh.wa.gov
Geos Institute	Tonya Graham	Executive Director	541-482-4459 x 301	Tonya@GeosInstitute.org
WildEarth Guardians	Ryan Talbott	Pacific Northwest Conservation Advocate	503-329-9162	Rtalbott@WildEarthGuardians.org
The Freshwater Trust	Mark McCollister	Habitat Restoration Director	503-222-9091 x15	Mark@TheFreshwaterTrust.org
NRCS Washington	Nick Vira	Partnership Liaison	360-704-7758	nick.vira@usda.gov
NRCS Oregon	Erin Kaczmarczyk	ASTC Program Manager	541-727-2325	erin.kaczmarczyk@usda.gov

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