



Riparian Plant Propagation Programmatic Guidelines

Section 1: Introduction and Program Overview

Background

The Riparian Plant Propagation Program (RPPP) was established to support statewide salmon recovery efforts and the many co-benefits riparian habitats provide by addressing the critical shortage of native riparian trees and shrubs needed for restoration projects. The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) has appropriated approximately \$1.3 million in operating funds per fiscal year to support these efforts.

The program will be implemented through 3 categories: propagation, cultivation, and restoration. The primary objective is to collaborate with nurseries to increase the propagation of locally sourced native trees and shrubs, work with conservation districts to cultivate many of these plants to planting maturity, and then match them with riparian habitat projects through collaboration with restoration groups.

At this initial phase of the program, the guidelines established will be focused on providing support for conservation districts to cultivate and, in some cases, propagate native riparian trees and shrubs at holding sites until mature enough to be used in restoration projects. Guidelines for nurseries and restoration groups will be developed as the program progresses.

Proviso Language

\$1,300,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the commission to develop a riparian plant propagation program of native trees and shrubs to implement riparian restoration projects that meet riparian zone requirements established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Plants will be made available for free or at a reduced cost to restoration projects.

Definitions:

Riparian Habitat: an area of land that surrounds a river or stream and is home to a variety of plant and animal species adapted to wetland conditions. This program aims to restore riparian habitat that is specifically beneficial to salmon.

Native Riparian Trees and shrubs: that have evolved and are naturally adapted to grow in riparian habitats within a particular geographical region. For examples, please visit the [NRCS list](#) of common native riparian trees and shrubs by region.

Section 2: Eligibility

Eligible Applicants:

All Washington conservation districts that possess expertise in cultivating and propagating woody plant materials and own or manage secured land are eligible for funding.

Multiple, adjacent districts are encouraged to work together to identify one holding site to grow to maturity native trees and shrubs until ready to be used in restoration projects.

Districts who are partnering with non-profit, state/federal, or tribal entities, who have existing greenhouses or land where plants can be cultivated, are welcome to apply for funding so long as they have a signed agreement in place prior to funds being awarded.

Eligible Project Types:

Allowable use of RPPP grant funds may be used for the purchase/procurement of native riparian trees and shrubs, expansion/improvement of existing holding sites, and maintenance of ongoing plant cultivation. RPPP grant funds may also be used for the creation of new holding sites, but is subject to geographic need.

Please see below for further detail of each eligible category:

Procurement of native riparian trees and shrubs: Conservation districts may directly procure plants or seeds of native riparian trees and shrubs for cultivation at holding sites where plants can be maintained until they are ready to be used in riparian restoration projects.

Infrastructure: Including irrigation/drip lines, fencing, plant coolers for bareroot storage, reasonably priced/sized greenhouses, and reasonably priced tractors.

Materials and supplies: Including soil, potting containers, mulch, hoses/sprayers, gardening implements, and tarping/solarization film.

Labor: Including installation of holding site infrastructure and/or district staff or crew time to maintain cultivated plants. Examples include prepping fields, potting plants, inspecting plants, watering, and/or weeding. Staff time associated with developing and coordinating the project is

also an eligible expense. Examples include ordering plants, preparing/processing IAA agreements, organizing delivery, and monitoring inventory.

If using a district work crew, copies of timesheets are required. If a work crew is subcontracted, a contract between the work crew and district must be on file with the SCC and the invoice must be clearly broken down.

Overhead: Conservation districts are permitted to use 25% overhead for costs not readily identifiable with a particular project activity including: costs of utilities for a facility shared by a project and other conservation district or entity activities and costs of supervisory personnel who oversee project activities, as well as other conservation district or entity activities. Overhead can be calculated by employee hours x employee rate (composite rate) x 25%.

Utilities: Districts may use up to \$300 monthly to cover utilities that pertain solely for their RPPP project. This includes greenhouse heating, electricity, water, space leasing, and garbage disposal.

Repairs: If unanticipated maintenance repair costs for existing RPPP project holding sites arise, please contact the RPPP Manager before doing any work. Examples may include water system breakdowns, waterline replacement, pipe breakages, fence repairs, etc.

Other: If uncertain whether an expense is eligible for funding, please contact the RPPP manager prior to submitting an application.

Section 3: General Requirements

SCC Grants and Contracts Policies:

Recipients of SFF funding must adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) [Grant and Contract Procedure Manual](#), unless otherwise specified in these programmatic guidelines.

General Guidelines:

All proposals must be entered into a Formstack application and contain a detailed description of the project(s).

A district may submit more than one application, but there is no guarantee that funding will be awarded to any project.

A single district may also apply as a regional plant-holding hub for multiple districts. If serving as a regional hub, districts must create a written interagency agreement (IAA) among participating districts.

The trees and shrubs must be provided at no charge for restoration projects. Districts may not collect a fee for providing the plants for any project.

The RPPP manager may inspect cultivation sites to ensure that all work is underway or has been completed and that the location is secure with reasonable protection against theft. The RPPP manager may also inspect the plants to make sure they are being tended, healthy, and properly identified as belonging to the district (if being held by another entity).

An acceptable mortality/loss rate is not to exceed 10%. If that rate is exceeded, the district must alert the SCC to explain the circumstances that led to that loss. It will be up to the discretion of the SCC to assess damages and the SCC may determine that the district will not be eligible to hold plants unless factors leading to the mortality/loss rate are corrected.

If the plants are held at a facility not owned by the district, there must be a written agreement in place prior to delivery of the plants from procurement source establishing that the plants will be:

- Clearly marked as sold and belonging to the district.
- Set aside from other plants at the facility.
- Cared for until they are ready to be picked up by the district (district-approved delegate) when ready to be used in restoration projects.

Timeline and Funding Process:

The RPPP grant cycle begins at the beginning of each fiscal year on July 1st. To facilitate timely awards of the applications, the Request for Proposals (RFPs) will be released in late spring of the preceding fiscal year. The RFPs will additionally be made available throughout each fiscal year until all the funds are allocated.

RFP's will be reviewed and approved by a committee comprised of SCC staff using the following evaluation criteria:

- The proposal explains in detail how funds will be used to support plant cultivation until the trees and shrubs are grown out for use in local riparian restoration projects.
- Geographic necessity.
- The district's expertise in plant cultivation.
- The district's long-term capacity to maintain plant cultivation for restoration projects.

Once the evaluation process is complete, applicants will be informed of their selection status. Activities funded must result in deliverables being procured, received, and/or implemented each fiscal year by June 30th.

All successful applicants will be required to fill out a final activity report using Formstack. Elements in the report include: number of plants ordered, description of infrastructure

improvement/creation, approximate mortality/loss rate reported as a percentage, and number/species of plants provided to restoration projects.

Cultural Resources

All projects funded must comply with the SCC cultural resources policy and governor's [Executive Order 21-02](#) for State-funded projects. All projects that include any on-the-ground practice implementation or facility construction/modification/repairs that may include soil disturbance must follow the Commission's Cultural Resource Review Process and will require a Cultural Resources Complied Statement form for payment. The review should begin as soon as the location and extent of soil disturbance is known to ensure enough time, as the review could take 45 days or more.

Please refer to the [cultural resource policy](#) located on the SCC website. If you have questions about how to apply this process to a particular project, please reach out to your regional manager or Cultural Resources Coordinator Jean Fike (JFike@scc.wa.gov).