

Sustainable Farms and Fields modifications to programmatic guidelines

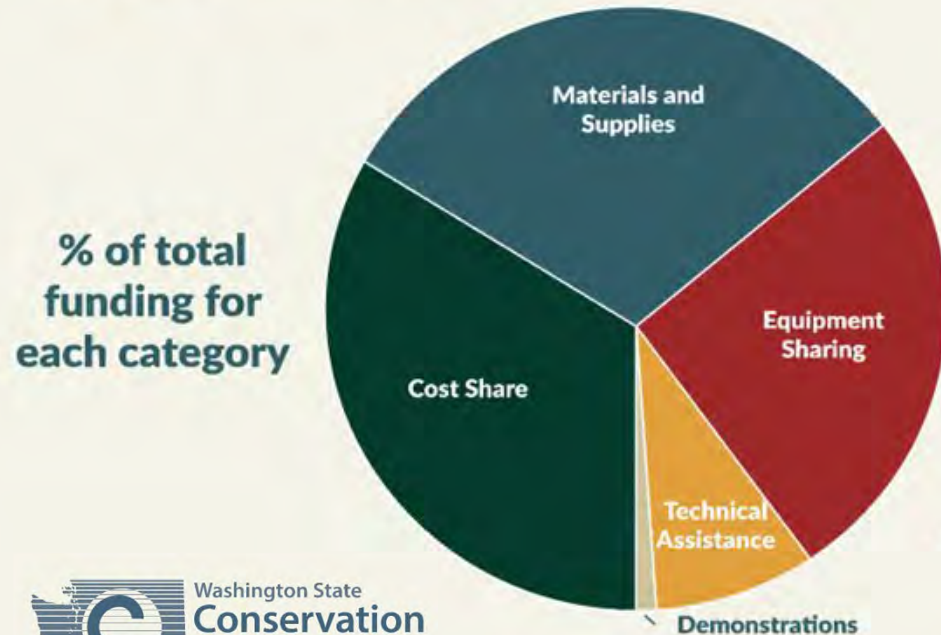
Karen Hills

**Sustainable Farms and Fields Coordinator
May 18, 2023**



Sustainable Farms and Fields 2023 Funded Projects

\$1.8 million awarded to **53** projects



12
projects for
equipment sharing



12
projects for
technical assistance



How are the climate impacts of projects being estimated?



Anticipated impacts
estimated using
Washington's Climate
Smart Estimator

Fine-tuning of final
estimates completed
with COMET-Farm

Is there funding available for next year?

\$1.5 million
anticipated for 2024

For the first fiscal year,
funding awarded to

25/45

Washington's Conservation
Districts and one County
government

Eligible land use types:



Aquaculture
Tideland



Rangeland



Farmland



Proposed SFF Guideline Updates



Project Types

FY 2024

Cost Share

Technical Assistance

Equipment Sharing

Materials & Supplies

Demonstration



Type A demonstration projects

showcase a practice **eligible** through SFF that is not commonly used in an area and must include a substantial outreach component.



Type B demonstration projects are used to gather more information about the feasibility and impact of a practice that is **not yet eligible** but shows promise as a climate-smart practice.

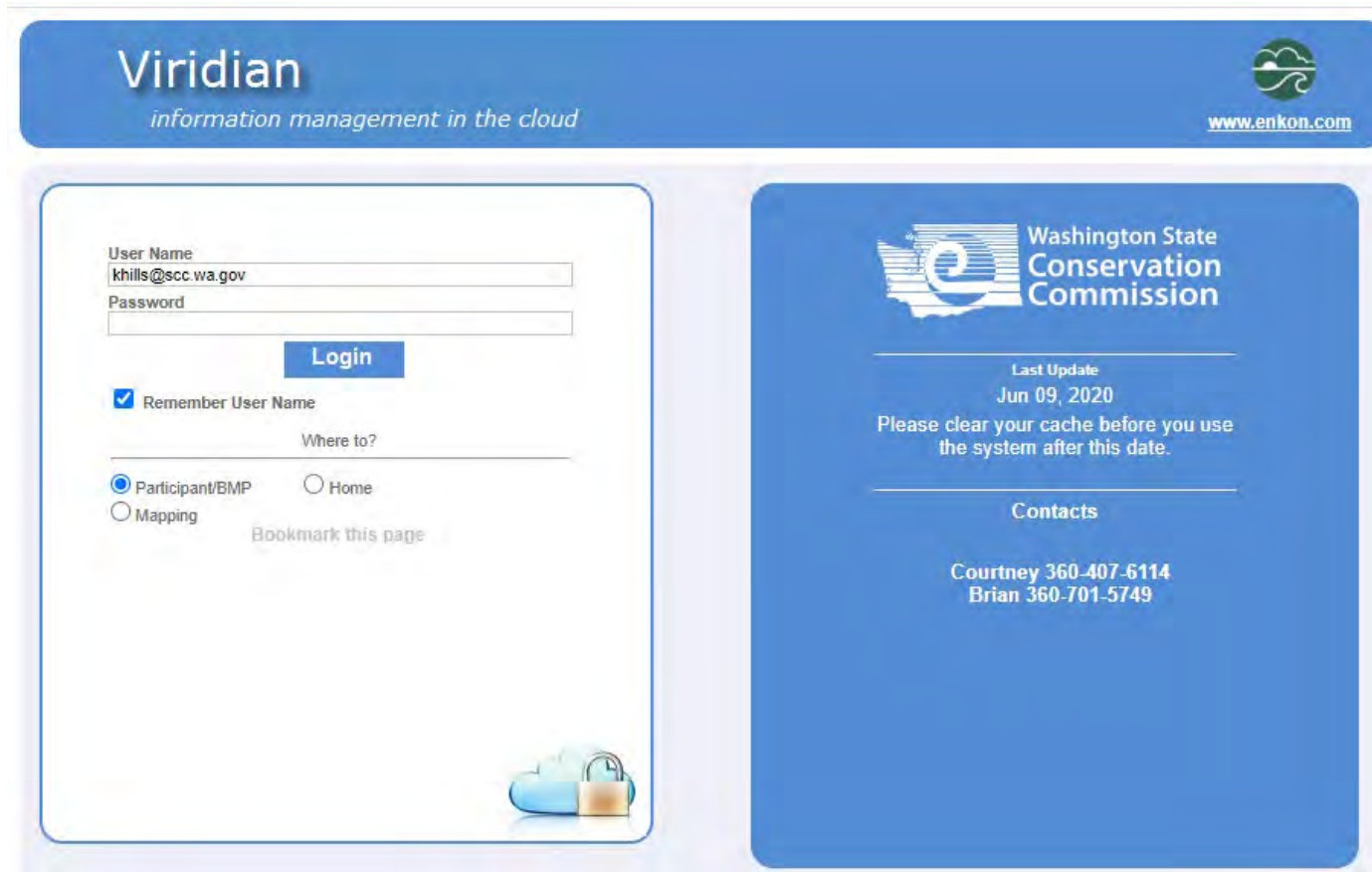
Cultural Resources

The following types of projects *do not* need a Cultural Resource review and project managers *do not* need to fill out a Cultural Resources Complied Statement form.

- Technical assistance-only or outreach-only projects
- Purchase of equipment for lease or sharing
- Purchase of seed, seedlings, or amendments for distribution without a particular site identified.

CPDS

- All projects besides equipment sharing and technical assistance-only projects must be entered into the SCC Conservation Practice Data System (CPDS) upon receipt of the award notification.



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Washington State Conservation Commission

Last Update
Jun 09, 2020

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Contacts

Courtney 360-407-6114
Brian 360-701-5749

<p>Option for districts receiving SFF to use District Implemented Project (DIP) approach or Cost Share approach for materials and supplies and demonstration funding categories.</p>	<p>Proposed projects may include multiple categories of funding in a single application.</p>
<p>Addition of GPS Precision Guidance System (SCC52) and Temporary Fencing (SCCXX), practice number to be assigned) as fundable practices.</p>	<p>Reporting requirement: adding requirement for before and after photos for projects receiving funding for non-TA activities.</p>

Revert to previous text: For the first five years of the SFF grant program, the SCC anticipates using the WSDA Washington State Climate Smart Estimator (WaCSE) ~~COMET-Farm~~ to estimate cumulative GHG emissions reduced and/or carbon sequestered. (We propose that this change will be effective immediately for FY23 projects.)



Feedback

- My feedback to the proposed guideline changes are centered on the fact that biochar is not currently included in either the COMET model or the WaCSE model, so the requirement to estimate the GHG benefits of biochar as a soil amendment using COMET, WaCSE, or another SCC-approved model does not seem to be feasible for biochar projects (and likely for some other soil health practices).

Feedback

- Additional education to both the public and other eligible entities would be greatly appreciated. We have experienced considerable misinformation coming from community members who do not understand what the funding is, how it can be used, or how an application works. Additionally, the tools currently required for funded projects, just as DIP and CPDS, are totally unfamiliar to other eligible applicants so we have experienced them turning away interested community members and sending them all to us. We do not have capacity to put in that many applications or support that many projects so it's been a lot of difficult and disappointing conversations with community members.
- Regarding requirement to enter additional project types in CPDS: This is a potentially prohibitive requirement. The older language is preferable.
- Where do educational components fall? What if it's not a new practice as defined in the 'demonstration' category, but you're combining education with a materials and supplies application? Would that then be entered into CPDS but not a DIP project? As someone interested in applying for these funds for my CD but who doesn't already use DIP or CPDS in my work, I'm really overwhelmed by those requirements and don't know how much work I'm taking on.
- Would a project with multiple sites receiving a small amount of volunteer powered implementation assistance but primarily materials assistance fall here or in a combo of other categories?
- Overall these categories feel really boxed and inflexible - see my questions below about how a combo of project elements would fit into these categories.

Feedback

Page 7 – Materials and supplies

This should include TA funding. Acquiring materials and supplies an working with a landowner or outreaching to many landowners requires TA to accomplish the implementation of climate-smart practices.

Page 10 – Prioritization of Proposed Projects

There should be representation of CD's on the prioritization team. WSCC and CDs work hand in hand. Please add a position for both an eastside and a westside CD staff person to participate on the prioritization team.

Page 10 – Prioritization metrics

The prioritization metrics should be included in the program guidelines. Please add the prioritization metrics to the guidelines so that WSCC commissioners can approve and support all aspects of the this WSCC grant program.

Sustainable Farms and Fields Prioritization Scoring Metrics

These scoring metrics are developed and approved by the SFF prioritization committee consisting of SCC, WSDA, WSU, NRCS, and WDFW staff. Last updated for FY24.

	Project Type				
	TA Only	Cost Share	Materials and Supplies	Equipment Sharing	Demo
Potential of the proposed projects to increase carbon sequestration and reduce CO2e emissions	-	10	5	5	5
Creation of riparian buffers/fish habitat	-	1	1	-	1
Creation of pollinator habitat	-	1	1	-	1
Partnerships/collaboration	1	1	1	1	1
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	2	2	2	2	2
Completeness of application materials submitted	2	2	2	2	2
Fits within program priorities	2	2	2	2	2
Clearly demonstrates or describes ability to complete project (including expanding existing project, having producers identified prior to application, achievable timeline for project completion)	6	6	6	6	6
Total Possible Score*	13	25	20	18	20

More information forthcoming as SCC staff and partners develop the pathway forward to implement the SFF proviso funding received for anaerobic digesters, technical and financial assistance for climate-smart livestock management and crop farming, and research/demo projects highlighting the benefits of methane capture strategies.





Upcoming SFF Activities

- FY23: SFF projects finished by 6/30, Reporting due 7/10
- FY24:
 - SFF Q&A webinar, May 24 1-2 pm
 - RFA 6/1, first application pull 7/14