ASRP FISH PASSAGE BARRIER FUNDING GUIDANCE (2023–2025 BIENNIUM)

Updated October 2023

Introduction

The "Eligibility for Barrier Correction Funding Criteria" (eligibility criteria) listed below incorporate results of Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration salmonid life-cycle modeling, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Chehalis Basin Barrier Prioritization Tool. The Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) does not require that barrier projects rank above a specific threshold within the WDFW Chehalis Basin Barrier Prioritization Tool, but all barrier projects should reference this tool, and ranking will be considered during project review (see "Application Materials Considerations"). The eligibility criteria are designed to ensure that barriers selected for funding under the ASRP are in priority geospatial units (GSUs) targeted for restoration and are located where obstructions have been identified as a key limiting factor to fish productivity and abundance in the GSU based on EDT modeling.

Eligibility for Barrier Correction Funding Criteria

To be eligible for funding under the ASRP in the near-term implementation period (2021 to 2031), a barrier selected for improvement must meet all the following criteria:

1. The barrier is within a priority GSU in the near-term implementation period as defined in the Prioritization and Sequencing recommendations and under the "EDT Limiting Factors" listed in the Project Science Guidance.
2. "Obstructions" are identified as a limiting factor.
3. Landowner acknowledgement form has been signed.

Application Materials Considerations

In addition to the above criteria, the following are other factors project sponsors should consider when developing application materials:

1. **Prioritizing and contextualizing within a regional plan.** The ASRP typically only funds barrier corrections ranked within the top 33% of barriers ranked in the WDFW Chehalis Basin Barrier Prioritization Tool ("priority 2"). Barriers ranked within the top 10% ("priority 1") are most likely to be considered for funding. Specific barriers that have been prioritized for correction within an ASRP local strategy or similar regional habitat restoration plan are also much more likely to be considered for funding.
2. **Demonstrating project-specific habitat uplift.** Document current fish use (species and life history specific) of the project area and any upstream and downstream reaches that would be impacted by this project in a spatial graphic. Illustrate on this graphic how this project would improve habitat quality, quantity, and/or access. Coordinating with a WDFW habitat biologist is strongly encouraged.
3. **Addressing limiting factors beyond barrier correction.** Project sponsors should describe **all** limiting factors for their project GSU, including upstream and downstream reaches. Addressing these limiting factors through additional process-based restoration actions can increase the viability of a project but should include a narrative regarding costs and benefits of additional actions.

4. **Improving a barrier will provide benefits for multiple native species.** A key assumption of the ASRP is that correcting passage conditions at barriers for salmon and steelhead will also benefit other native fish species. Sponsors should reference recently published data and/or guidance on native fish, amphibian, and other aquatic species distributions and densities. Sponsors can contact members of the Technical Advisory Group or other experts for guidance on this topic. Project sponsors should address how a barrier improvement will benefit other species (non-salmonid fishes, amphibians, mussels, or other species) if this information is available.
5. **Improving a barrier will not expand the current distribution of invasive species.** Project sponsors should consider this potentially negative aspect of barrier improvement and present information on how this concern is being addressed in the project design, if possible.
6. **Improving a barrier will help address effects of climate change and/or build resilience.** A central goal of the ASRP is to overcome the effects of climate change, and barrier improvement projects should help achieve this goal by restoring connectivity among habitats. Project sponsors should identify how a barrier selected for improvement expands access to cooler portions of the stream network for native species, allowing them to redistribute further upstream through time and adapt to the effects of climate change. Additionally, project sponsors should demonstrate that any structures installed will be resilient to future flow rates and reference the latest WDFW guidance.

Additional Funding Options

Projects receiving funding from another program, such as the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, may receive supplementary ASRP funding through an expediated pathway if they satisfy **all** of the following conditions:

1. The ASRP would be responsible for less than or equal to 15% of total project funding.
2. The ASRP would contribute less than or equal to $80,000 toward this project.
3. The project is located in a near-term priority GSU where obstructions are listed as one of the top three limiting factors.
4. The project is reviewed by the primary funding organization for ecological uplift potential and technical merit.

If **all** of these conditions are met, the Regional Implementation Team can recommend the project proceed directly to the ASRP Steering Committee for funding consideration without undergoing review by the ASRP Technical Review Team. Projects that do not meet all of these conditions could still be eligible for supplemental funding but would be subject to review from the ASRP Technical Review Team.

The ASRP recognizes that there could be time-sensitive opportunities to implement projects outside of near-term priority areas. These projects can still be proposed following the Opportunistic Funding guidance document.