



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

National Estuary Program Watershed Protection & Restoration Grant Program

**2015 Solicitation for Proposals to Target
Riparian Protection in Agricultural
Landscapes of the Puget Sound Basin**

Grant Guidelines

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**National Estuary Program
Watershed Protection and Restoration
Grant Program**

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Riparian Protection in Agricultural
Landscapes of the Puget Sound Basin**

Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Background on Grant Program	1
Available Funding	1
Funding Phases	2
Planning Phase (Phase I) - Developing a Reach-Scale Plan for Priority Streams and Watersheds	3
Guidance on What Constitutes a Reach-Scale Plan	3
Eligibility Requirements	5
Application Evaluation Criteria for Development of Reach-Scale plans	8
Implementation Phase (Phase II) - Protection and Restoration of Riparian Buffers ...	17
Approval Process for Implementation Funding	17
Eligible Activities for Riparian Protection and Restoration Implementation	20
Easement Terms Required for use of NEP Funds	22
Riparian Buffer Requirements on Agricultural Lands	23
Evaluation Process for Implementation Proposals	24
Process for Applying and Deadlines	25
Application Process	25
Informational Meeting on Grant Solicitation and Application Process	26
Grant Funding Cycle Schedule	27
To Ask Questions	27
Appendix 1. Maps of watersheds which likely contain eligible stream reaches	28

Background on Grant Program

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is soliciting applications for grants under the National Estuary Program (NEP) Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant Program. This grant program was established in early 2011 and is co-administered by Ecology and the Washington State Department of Commerce. The program is supported by federal funds from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). For this current grant solicitation, we will be using funds from our fifth and sixth rounds of award from EPA, from federal fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

Under this competitive process, applicants should propose projects that focus primarily on acquiring conservation easements for riparian zones (freshwater, marine, and estuarine) across agricultural landscapes¹ in lowland areas of the Puget Sound Basin (see [Eligibility Requirements](#) section below for a more complete description of the geographic focus of this grant program). Successful applications will propose work that ultimately leads to the acquisition of easements on parcels that will support the protection of salmonid habitat and provide water quality benefits for salmonids and downstream shellfish beds. Some restoration actions will also be considered eligible activities when demonstrated to augment the acquisition activities and further reach-scale goals for the stream, shoreline, or small watershed that is the focus of funding.

As described below, this grant opportunity is a multi-phased approach to providing support for both planning and implementation activities that focus on protection and restoration of riparian areas in targeted stream reaches, shorelines, or small watersheds. This competitive process will initiate the planning phase for these proposed areas and project proponents will submit applications primarily for planning related activities. Implementation funds will be made available (non-competitively) to successful applicants following the approval of a reach-scale plan developed with support from the planning related funds.

Available Funding

A total of approximately \$5,500,000 will initially be available for grants under this competitive process. Unless additional funds become available the maximum amount of award per project can be up to \$550,000 for each of 10 successful applicants. An individual organization may receive awards for no more than two focus reaches/watersheds for grant funding in the planning phase because Ecology maintains a preference for a diversity of recipients of the funding. However, an organization may propose more than two projects. We encourage partnering on projects to allow other organizations to lead as the primary grant recipient.

Project proposals submitted under this solicitation will outline planning (Phase I) activities and provide an associated budget for a maximum of \$120,000. Subsequent (Phase II) implementation related activities (i.e. easement acquisition and restoration) will be funded (upon

¹ Agricultural landscapes refers geographical areas where agricultural practices occur as a substantial proportion of overall land use and include rural residential and hobby farms.

approval of a submitted implementation phase scope of work) in addition to the planning phase budget to a sum of up to \$550,000 for the total award upon completion of the project. There is the potential for additional implementation related funding above the \$550,000 for the 10 grantees should it become available. A planning phase proposal may be submitted for less than \$120,000 in which case the extra funds can be utilized for implementation related activities during that phase of the project. There are no match requirements for the use of funds from this grant program. See the following section for funding deadlines for both the planning phase and implementation phase of this grant.

Funding Phases

The grant opportunity outlined in this solicitation is a multi-phased approach to investing in the development of reach-scale strategies and implementation of protection (i.e. easements and fee-simple acquisition) and associated restoration projects (e.g. riparian buffer plantings) for riparian zones in agricultural landscapes of Puget Sound. The grant program is designed to provide access to both planning and implementation funds under a single competitive solicitation. Grant award decisions under this competitive process will be based solely on the evaluation of the reach-scale planning approach and associated tasks. Budget totals proposed under the planning phase scope of work are capped at \$120,000 and implementation awards are pre-allocated to a maximum of \$430,000. As there is the possibility of obtaining additional federal funds for this grant program, Ecology may choose to increase select awards for high quality reach-scale implementation plans and acquisition opportunities.

To be eligible for the implementation funds, a grantee must submit and have approved a reach-scale plan as outlined below. Once the plan is approved, a grantee will negotiate and develop Phase II implementation tasks in at least one scope of work to amend the existing agreement with Ecology. In some cases as needed, more than one scope of work will be negotiated. Eligible funding activities are generally outlined below for each phase, though each reach-scale project may approach their planning and implementation strategy differently. In some cases, those tasks listed as implementation activities (e.g. easement appraisal) may be approved for funding during the planning phase where the applicant demonstrates the need. Similarly, some additional planning activities, particularly those related to outreach or landowner recruitment, may be warranted in the implementation phase scope(s) of work.

Ecology will convene an advisory committee called the Riparian Protection Coordination Team (RPCT) to evaluate both the reach-scale plan deliverable and any implementation tasks proposed by a grantee. Members of the RPCT will be recruited from the existing agency representatives which constitute the Watershed Grant Core Team, and additional technical advisors and agency representatives as warranted. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of Ecology.

Implementation funds will be pre-allocated for each successful grantee. However, there is no guarantee of implementation funds being made available until a reach-scale plan and an appropriate implementation scope of work are approved by Ecology. Further, given the tight timeframe for use of NEP funds by Ecology, pre-allocated implementation dollars will not be made available under this grant agreement if: (1) a reach-scale plan is not submitted to Ecology

by February 2017, or (2) an implementation scope(s) of work that allocates remaining grant funds (to the total award amount) is not approved by Ecology by November 2017.

Table 1. Approximate deadlines for both the planning and implementation phases of this grant program. This assumes an agreement is finalized between Ecology and the grantee by March 1st, 2016. Formal deadlines will be determined by approved scopes of work as outlined in the grant agreement.

Reach-scale Planning Grant Phase (Phase I)	
March 1 st , 2016	Required to be able to start no later than this date.
December 31 st , 2016	Final date for submission of DRAFT reach-scale plan deliverable
February 28 th , 2017	Final date for submission of FINAL reach-scale plan deliverable
May 31 st , 2017	Closeout date for all deliverables to be submitted to Ecology from Phase I work.
Implementation of Riparian Protection and Restoration Grant (Phase II)	
Generally to be submitted after reach-scale plan is approved OR with permission by Ecology	Implementation SOW(s) submitted for use of pre-allocated funds (\$430K). Additional tasks added to grant agreement.
November 30 th , 2017	Final date for submission of implementation SOWs to use pre-allocated grant funds for this phase (\$430K)
March 31 st , 2019	Closeout date for all deliverables to be submitted to Ecology from Phase II work.

Planning Phase (Phase I) - Developing a Reach-Scale Plan for Priority Streams and Watersheds

Proposals submitted for funding under this grant solicitation should outline the approach which will be utilized to recruit interest from landowners and develop a reach-scale plan for the protection and restoration of targeted riparian areas in the Puget Sound Basin. The intent of this planning phase is to provide a strategic framework to guide and prioritize implementation activities conducted in the second implementation phase of funding described [below](#). These plans are also intended to help provide the rationale and basis for grant funding decisions from sources other than the NEP Watershed Grant, ideally facilitating coordinated investments across agencies and programs focused on the protection and restoration of riparian areas in agricultural landscapes.

Guidance on What Constitutes a Reach-Scale Plan

The primary focus of this grant opportunity is to plan for and acquire conservation easements that protect high quality habitat in riparian zones within agricultural landscapes. We also recognize that in many agricultural landscapes, a strategic approach to addressing the habitat needs of salmonids should also account for restoration opportunities that will provide or augment protected habitat. A reach-scale plan developed with support from this grant opportunity can, and

in many cases should, document both easement/acquisition opportunities as well as restoration needs and opportunities at a reach and parcel scale.

There is no single approach to developing a reach-scale plan. Each watershed or set of stream reaches has a different combination of conditions that need to be accounted for in a strategic approach to protection and restoration. Landowner composition and community perception of restoration differ greatly across Puget Sound agricultural areas. There are several existing planning efforts and programs that are in place that may be leveraged for greatest benefit. Each stream reach or watershed is at a different stage of “maturity” with regards to readiness for applying implementation funds strategically and effectively. This grant program intends to allow a project proponent to outline the planning needs for their specific area and develop a scope of work that ultimately results in a plan that provides guidance for implementation funding decisions tailored to their locale.

The general characteristics of a good reach-scale plan are listed below. This is not an all-inclusive list, but many tasks outlined in the [Scope of Work](#) portion of a project proposal should contain some elements of the characteristics described below. Generally, using maps and qualitative/quantitative analyses, a reach-scale plan proposed for grant funding should document:

- Current riparian buffer conditions comprehensively across the focus reaches, shoreline or small watershed. Including -
 - Existing land uses, zoning, and ownership at a parcel scale.
 - Existing high quality riparian habitat.
 - Existing sources and locations of water quality impairment.
 - Areas essential to riparian and in-stream habitat processes, structure, and function.
- Characteristics of the agricultural practices in the reach and how these impact (positively or negatively) riparian habitat.
- Current and potential pressures from development activities in the reach.
- Existing and relevant planning coverage that should fit into the reach-scale strategy (e.g. Shoreline Master Programs, Critical Areas Ordinance regulations, Voluntary Stewardship Planning – VSP applies only in San Juan, Skagit, Mason, and Thurston counties at this time).
- Current and planned protection and restoration programs that can complement and be leveraged by focusing on the reach or small watershed.
- Existing infrastructure within the riparian zone that may impact or shape protection and restoration opportunities.
- Protection (easement and fee-simple) and restoration (e.g. buffer planting) opportunities at a parcel-scale of specificity identified through landowner outreach activities. Ideally the opportunities and “gaps” in opportunity are captured comprehensively across the focus reach or small watershed.
- Likely stream movement and channel migration over time that should be accounted for in project design considerations.
- Reach-scale monitoring scheme for habitat and water quality parameters to establish baseline conditions off of which to track benefits of project outcomes over time.
- Areas where buffers are in alignment with the buffer widths in the term and condition (outlined in the [Riparian Buffer Requirements on Agricultural Lands](#) section below) or

may be challenging/impossible to implement due to existing infrastructure or other factors. Provide a description of those challenges.

- Document areas where buffer width variance may be proposed. Scoping of the “scientific justification” for proposed variances should be included. Note – a scientific justification is not needed for an infrastructure variance, but variances from the buffer widths on the basis of infrastructure should be clear.
- Prioritization scheme and alternatives for easement acquisition and restoration that can guide implementation activities in future phases of work.

Eligibility Requirements

The following section outlines requirements which must be met to determine if a proposal is eligible for funding.

Eligible Applicants

The following lists those organizations considered eligible as the lead applicant for this grant opportunity:

- State government
- Local government
- Non-governmental organizations
- Special purpose districts (e.g. conservation districts)
- Tribal governments
- Consortia of local and/or tribal governments
- Land trusts

If you are unsure of your organization’s eligibility, please contact Ecology to verify such.

The intent of this grant opportunity is to fund approaches to riparian protection and restoration that are conducted at a reach-scale, and as such, an application must be proposed to focus planning and implementation activities on a stream reach, series of connected/nearby stream reaches, or small watershed. This grant program has a desire to achieve some degree of geographic spread throughout Puget Sound and Ecology may take this into consideration when evaluating proposals and making final award decisions. Similarly, while there is no limitation as to the number of applications a single organization can submit, the maximum number of awards per organization is two. We encourage organizations to partner with other entities instead of submitting multiple applications.

Applicants should check www.sam.gov to verify they are not suspended or debarred from contracting by the federal government. Any suspended or debarred parties are not eligible to receive a funding award.

Where a lead applicant on a proposal does not directly include or employ such expertise, a partner(s) must be indicated and commit (with letter of endorsement) to advising and

Important Change to Application Process:

Ecology is now using an online application process for all grants and loans. It is known as Ecology Application for Grants & Loans ([EAGL](#)). Users of this system must sign in with a Secure Access Washington (SAW) account and then gain approval to access the EAGL application site. This approval process can take several days. **Applicants are advised to request EAGL authorization at least one week prior to the application deadline.**

collaborating with the applicant on the project who: (1) has demonstrated experience in successful easement acquisition in Washington state, and (2) is eligible under Washington state law to hold and steward the eased land. A statement of qualifications is required for the partner(s). The commitment of the acquisition specialist and potential easement holding partners is only required to cover the planning phase of the proposed project. Implementation proposals can identify different entities to fill those roles in that phase of the project.

Eligible Areas of Focus

A proposal under this grant solicitation must describe a geographic area of focus for where reach-scale plans are to be developed that is consistent with the intent of the funding theme. Specifically, focus areas which meet eligibility criteria for this grant solicitation are stream reaches, shorelines, and/or small watersheds located within agricultural landscapes (using a broad definition of agriculture which includes rural residential and hobby farms etc.) of the Puget Sound Basin. Eligible riparian areas for the focus of this grant program include freshwater, estuarine, and marine varieties for which the protection and restoration of such will benefit water quality, salmonid habitat and shellfish beds.

[Appendix 1](#) provides a series of maps developed by Ecology which illustrate the watersheds that likely contain stream reaches that would be eligible as a geographic area of focus for this funding if the primary beneficial use the project is attempting to address is related to salmonid habitat. Additional maps are in development to illustrate areas to focus on for benefits to shellfish beds. These maps are only for guidance purposes to prospective applicants and do not define eligibility for funding. Eligibility for funding is based upon the criteria described above.

In addition to the above, to be considered eligible a proposal also must:

- Indicate that the applicant will be ready to proceed with the project by March 1st, 2016.
- Indicate that the planning phase work will be completed no later than May 31st, 2017 and a final reach-scale plan will be delivered to Ecology by February 28th, 2017. If the project timeline or deliverable due dates in the application extend beyond this date, the application will be considered ineligible.
- Be located within the geographic scope of this solicitation: the Puget Sound area, including the land and freshwater bodies (including estuarine) that drain to greater Puget Sound, Hood Canal, southern Straits of Georgia, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Applicants must be located within the United States and have federal tax identification and DUNS numbers.
- Include achievable and quantifiable objectives with clear methods for meeting them and well-defined benchmarks that will be used to measure the success of the project.
- Include in the scope of work a strategy for soliciting advice, review, and feedback from a technical review by relevant subject matter specialists and the Department of Ecology.
- Include in the scope of work deliverables for project status reports: standard quarterly reporting required with payment requests plus semi-annual reporting on project accomplishments required using EPA's reporting format – Financial and Ecosystem Accounting Tracking System (FEATS). Also include a deliverable for a final brief written report that summarizes the results of the project and the outcomes achieved, to be submitted to Ecology at the completion of the project.

- Include in the scope of work completion of a waiver form for a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). This task will be automatically included in online applications as “Task 1”. The waiver form must be completed prior to conducting work for all projects. The form will be evaluated by Ecology staff to determine whether a QAPP is needed. QAPPs are typically required for all environmental data collection, monitoring, modeling, and data analysis. If a QAPP is required, these activities may not begin and will be ineligible for reimbursement until the QAPP is approved. The QAPP approval process may take some time to complete. Ecology may elect to permanently withhold reimbursements for QAPP-covered activities that are conducted prior to approval of a QAPP. For further information on quality assurance requirements under NEP grants, see: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/qa/docs/NEPQAPP/index.html>.
- Meet the following requirements: any project that funds activities related to nonpoint best management practices (BMPs) that are intended to address water quality parameters, including BMP implementation, must be consistent with Ecology’s combined funding guidelines (SFY 2017 Water Quality Financial Assistance Guidelines) at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/1510033.pdf> . Where that document conflicts with this grant solicitation, the information and conditions in the grant solicitation will take precedence.

Eligible activities to develop reach-scale plans

Activities funded under the planning phase of this grant and for which a project proponent should develop a scope of work in the application are those which support the development of a reach-scale plan. The purpose of funding this work is to achieve an approved plan which provides the basis for further funding decisions in the subsequent implementation phase. An additional, longer-term benefit of funding the development of a reach-scale plan is to help access funding from other grant programs which may support similar work.

It is recognized that each applicant and set of partners attempting to protect and restore riparian areas in agricultural lands has different planning needs to set up the use of implementation funds. There are often existing efforts and programs which are already in place and available to an applicant which can be leveraged by these grant funds. This grant program intends to provide the flexibility to a project applicant to describe and justify the planning needs for the focus reach or small watershed. Though not a comprehensive list, primary and expected activities this program intends to fund for the planning phase are listed below:

- Landowner outreach and recruitment of interest in participation
- Data gathering and documentation to support the development of a reach-scale plan such as (note, some of these will require development of a QAPP as described above) -
 - Feasibility studies
 - Geospatial analysis and mapping
 - Habitat surveys
 - Parcel surveys
 - Water quality or other environmental parameter studies
- Development of a reach-scale plan and report
- Development of implementation proposals for Phase II.

- Preliminary due diligence steps for specific easement acquisition opportunities identified prior to or during this planning phase (e.g. title review). Generally, appraisals/review appraisals and the majority of due diligence steps are not recommended to be proposed for this phase given the requirement of an approved reach-scale plan for accessing implementation funds. However, if a good case can be made for these activities leading to a high quality acquisition prior to a fully approved plan, Ecology will consider funding such.

Application Evaluation Criteria for Development of Reach-Scale plans

The following section describes what applicants for Phase I work will be asked to provide in their proposals. Applications will be evaluated based on seven categories of criteria. A total of 200 points are available as follows:

Section	Relative weight (%)	Points (out of 200)
Planning Area Focus	20	40
Planning Approach	20	40
Scope of Work	10	20
Partnering and Collaboration	25	50
Programmatic Capability	10	20
Feasibility	10	20
Budget (tables and narrative)	5	10

The application is organized based on the seven categories of evaluation criteria. Applicants should closely follow the guidance provided under each of the evaluation criteria and address each bullet listed in the “Scoring Guides”.

Planning Area Focus

Describe and provide maps (as attachments) of the specific area which will be the focus of the reach-scale planning effort.

Describe (and if possible provide maps illustrating) the current reach or watershed setting (e.g. riparian cover, water quality conditions) and those areas which provide or support important processes to the maintenance or restoration of habitat of high value to salmonids.

If known, describe what the limiting factors (e.g. infrastructure, barriers, altered drainage, legacy effects of past land use activities) may be to riparian area function as it supports salmonid habitat and water quality processes.

Describe (and if possible illustrate with maps) the current land ownership and land use (including zoning category if known), the type of agriculture which takes place, and other intensive land uses in the reach or watershed and how this impacts riparian conditions.

Describe past, existing, and proposed (with high likelihood to be implemented) protection and restoration efforts being conducted in the reach or watershed. Describe how a riparian protection and restoration effort supported by this grant program could support or augment these efforts.

Describe why the planning area should be the focus of riparian protection and restoration. Where applicable, describe and provide documentation that the focus planning area is within a *High Priority Reach or Small Watershed* as identified below (e.g. in salmon recovery plan, TMDL plan, or PIC program) and how protection and restoration of riparian cover would contribute to ongoing, regionally relevant efforts. Nearby and associated tributaries to the below list may also be included as warranted by science demonstrating that actions implemented would contribute to protection or restoration of processes important to salmonids, shellfish and water quality).

Priority Reach or Small Watershed:

- Identified in local salmon recovery chapter (or through consultation with the local salmon recovery lead entity) as a high priority and protection and/or restoration of riparian cover can contribute to stated goals.
- Identified in Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan (or through consultation with TMDL lead for Ecology) as a high priority for protection and/or restoration of riparian cover.
- Reach identified in Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) planning process (or through consultation with PIC leads) as a high priority for protection and/or restoration, and protection and/or restoration of riparian cover can contribute to stated goals for shellfish beds.

If there are other local planning efforts that are not connected to regional planning work that identify the reach as a priority, describe what makes the reach or watershed a priority at a local scale. Generally, examples should describe how the reach is identified in a science-based planning process conducted at local level as a high priority for protection and/or restoration of salmon habitat, shellfish beds, or to further water quality goals. A good example of this is locally developed assessments or prioritization schemes, including Shoreline Master Program restoration plans.

Scoring Guide – (40 points total) - Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

- Clarity and quality of description of the proposed planning area (focus reach, existing riparian cover, existing high value habitat, existing water quality conditions, existing land ownership). (7 points)
- Degree to which the current land use activities and ownership are understood by the applicant in terms of their impact on riparian function as it relates to salmonid habit and water quality. (7 points)
- How the proposed focus planning area will support and augment existing protection and restoration efforts in riparian zones. (7 points)
- Degree to which the focus planning area is in or supports a regional *High Priority Reach or Watershed* (listed above). If consultation with salmon recovery/TMDL/PIC program leads is cited as justification, provide documentation to that effect. (14 points)
- Demonstration of why and how the focus planning area is a high priority for local protection and restoration priorities. (5 points)

Planning Approach

Describe the overall approach that will be taken to develop a reach-scale plan including (to be further outlined as tasks in the Scope of Work section):

- The key partners (described in more detail in Partnerships section) to undertake each major activity (e.g. landowner outreach) in developing the reach-scale plan.
- The types of analyses that will be conducted (or documented if previously performed) to prioritize use of funds and focus of activities within the reach or watershed.
- The activities that will be conducted to recruit landowners on high-priority parcels for future implementation phases.
- The type of landowner engagement that will be planned to gain acceptance of the program at a reach-scale.
- Any existing efforts that will be used to leverage proposed activities (likely described with more detail in the Feasibility section below)
- The review and advisory steps that will be established with important reach and watershed stakeholders to achieve plan “buy-in”.

Describe how the outreach and planning proposed above will be done at a scale which can provide comprehensive coverage across the proposed focus area. Additionally, describe how this strategy is designed to fit with existing efforts.

Describe specific outputs and outcomes of the proposed planning activities above and how they will be captured comprehensively across the various partners to document a reach-scale plan. Where appropriate, indicate benchmarks or milestones that will be used to measure and assess progress during the planning effort.

Scoring guide- (40 points possible) - Proposals will be scored on:

- Degree to which the applicant describes a comprehensive strategy to develop a reach-scale plan that lays the groundwork for implementation proposals in Phase II. (10 points)
- Clarity and quality of the landowner engagement strategy and how it describes a process for overcoming potential objections to program. (10 points)
- Degree to which the applicant has outlined a strategy that matches the scale of their proposed focus area. (6 points)
- Degree to which the proposal describes tangible outputs that lead to desired outcomes with associated benchmarks for the planning phase. (6 points)
- Extent to which the strategy will leverage existing or already planned work in the reach. (8 points)

Scope of Work

Provide a detailed scope of work (for the reach-scale planning phase only) that includes descriptions, specific goals and quantifiable outcomes, budget totals, and deliverables for each task. A space is provided in the application for “Task Coordinator” – you do not need to fill this in unless you know at the time of application that you will have different coordinators for different tasks. Include interim deliverables that will allow project managers to evaluate the progress of the project. Include draft and final versions of all deliverables and allow at least 30 days for agency review of draft deliverables in your timeline. (See [Eligibility Requirements](#) section of this document for specific reporting, peer review, and quality assurance elements that should be included in the scope of work).

Scoring Guide – (20 points possible) - Applications will be evaluated on:

- How well the scope describes goals, outcomes and deliverables including those identified for interim steps. (4 points)
- Degree to which the tasks and deliverables described in the scope of work are likely to accomplish stated project objectives. (4 points)
- Degree to which tasks are logically sequenced (8 points)
- Degree to which stated timelines are achievable. (4 points)

Required Tasks

The following language for Task 1 is required for all grant projects and will automatically be included in scopes of work in the online application. Subsequent tasks will follow the same format. Since Task 1 is pre-populated in the application, you will only need to enter the total cost for Task 1 and the deliverable due dates. The deliverables table will include columns for EIM Study Data and Latitude/Longitude. These fields can be ignored as they apply to other grant programs using the EAGL system.

Task Format:

Task Number	1	
Task Title	Project Administration/Management	Task Cost <input type="text"/> *
Task Description	<p>A. The RECIPIENT will administer the project. Responsibilities will include, but not be limited to: maintenance of project records; submittal of requests for reimbursement and corresponding backup documentation, progress reports and recipient closeout report (including photos); compliance with applicable procurement, contracting, and interlocal agreement requirements; application for, receipt of, and compliance with all required permits, licenses, easements, or property rights necessary for the project; and submittal of required performance items.</p> <p>B. The RECIPIENT must manage the project. Efforts will include:</p>	

conducting, coordinating, and scheduling project activities and assuring quality control. Every effort will be made to maintain effective communication with the RECIPIENT's designees; the DEPARTMENT; all affected local, state, or federal jurisdictions; and any interested individuals or groups. The RECIPIENT must carry out this project in accordance with any completion dates outlined in this agreement.

Task Goal Statement Properly managed project that meets agreement and Ecology administrative requirements.

Task Expected Outcomes * Timely and complete submittal of requests for reimbursement, quarterly progress reports and recipient closeout report.
* Properly maintained project documentation

Recipient Task Coordinator

Task 1 Deliverables:

Deliverable No.	Description	Due Date
1.1	Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Waiver Form and, if necessary, QAPP	
1.2	Quarterly progress reports and financial vouchers	
1.3	Recipient close-out report	
1.4	Semi-annual FEATS forms (EPA Financial and Ecosystem Accounting Tracking System)	

In addition to the mandatory Task 1 outlined above, the following should be documented as individual tasks or as part of a task in the scope of work as well:

- o Completion of a reach-scale plan (including review steps for endorsement by Ecology and external stakeholders)
- o Tasks corresponding to elements outlined in the Planning Approach of the application (e.g. landowner outreach)

Partnering and Collaboration

Provide information on who your organization will partner with and briefly describe the roles those partners will play in completing the project. In particular, describe which entities will lead the landowner outreach components of the project and the established relationships that may exist which will lead to successful recruitment of protection and restoration opportunities.

In addition to project partners, describe how other entities (e.g. local salmon recovery lead entity technical committees, TMDL implementation leads, acquisition/easement specialist, or other existing groups tasked with providing strategic/technical direction) will provide assistance for

the project such as serving on technical advisory groups, providing peer review, providing related data or documents, etc. Where possible, provide demonstrated commitment to participate in form of a letter for those listed as a partner on this project.

We highly encourage partnering with the following entities. Where applicable indicate and provide documentation in the form of a letter as to whether any of the following entities endorse and/or commit to work on the project:

- The relevant Local Integrating Organization (LIO)
- The relevant local salmon recovery Lead Entity for the watershed or stream reaches
- Interested tribal governments
- The local Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program or similar group charged with shellfish recovery.
- The local agricultural or shellfish interest groups or stakeholders

Scoring Guide – (50 points possible) - Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Degree to which the appropriate partners have been assembled to conduct the proposed tasks and how those roles will provide the necessary expertise with particular emphasis on the group(s) conducting the landowner outreach component of the project. (20 points)
- The extent to which the project proponent demonstrates a strategy to draw upon existing advisory groups (such as local salmon recovery Lead Entity technical committees) to provide strategic direction, peer review, and technical assistance. (20 points)
- Demonstrated support (ideally, a letter of commitment) from proposed partners in the form of a letter of endorsement. (5 points)
- Demonstrated endorsement (ideally in a letter) from relevant LIO, Salmon Recovery Lead Entity, or tribal government. (5 points)

Programmatic Capability

Provide information on organizational experience and staff expertise with both strategic acquisition planning and riparian protection/restoration projects in agricultural landscapes for both the lead applicant and primary partners. Include any relevant information on managing grants of similar type (list up to 5). Briefly summarize staff qualifications in this section rather than providing separate resumes or curriculum vitae.

As described in the [Eligibility Requirements](#) section above, provide a statement of qualifications and letter of commitment for the partners that will fill the role of acquisition specialist and eligible easement holder advising on the planning phase of the project.

Scoring Guide – (20 points possible) - Proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project, taking into account the following factors:

- Statement of qualifications and letter of commitment for the partners that fill the role of acquisition specialist and eligible easement holder for the planning phase of the project (no points, this is an eligibility requirement)

- Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully delivering a reach-scale protection and restoration strategy. (5 points)
- Summary of staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the objectives of the project. (5 points)
- Demonstrated experience of the primary partner identified to conduct landowner outreach for the reach-scale planning phase. (5 points)
- Experience and qualifications of the partners identified as the primary acquisition/easement specialist and (where different) potential easement holder for the project (e.g. land trust, NGO, local government etc.). (5 points)

Feasibility and Likelihood of Success

Describe how the reach-scale planning effort is likely to lead to or support the development of future opportunities for acquisition of riparian conservation easements. In particular, describe:

- How the landowner composition of the focus planning area (reach or small watershed described previously) may enable successful outreach and planning in a way that will lead to acquisition opportunities.
- Whether there are existing and related programs in place which demonstrate momentum within the agricultural landowner community that will increase likelihood of identifying easement acquisition and restoration opportunities.
- Whether there are existing easement acquisition opportunities in need of implementation funds.
- If there are existing challenges which may currently be inhibiting opportunities for riparian protection and restoration, and how this project approach is designed to overcome those.
- How the NEP Riparian Easement funds will leverage and augment existing programs and opportunities in a tangible way which will lead to acquisition, protection and restoration of riparian corridors.

Scoring Guide – (20 points possible) - Proposals will be scored based upon the following with all three criteria contributing to the 20 possible points for this section of the application:

- Degree to which project proponents can demonstrate successful existing programs that can be leveraged with NEP Riparian Easement funds to provide momentum to the project.
- Degree to which the project proponent can demonstrate specific landowners interested in conservation easements in riparian zones of their property.
- Degree to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of existing opportunities and challenges and has identified strategies to address those to increase probability of successful easement acquisition.

Budget (tables and narrative)

Provide a budget for the planning phase of the proposal only (maximum allowable is \$120,000 including overhead) broken down by task and by element. In addition, provide a narrative explaining and justifying the budget.

Scoring Guide – (10 points possible for tables and budget narrative) - Proposals will be evaluated base on:

- The adequacy of the budget information and whether it is clearly presented. (5 points)
- Whether the budget seems reasonable to pay for the stated tasks and whether it provides a good return on investment. (5 points)

Budget Tables

The budget tables will be provided via the online application. The first table, budget by task, will pre-populate the Total Eligible Cost column based on the task costs you provided when entering the scope of work information. Total Eligible Cost is the amount you are requesting from Ecology per task. There is no required local match for these funds. You will need to enter the required information in the Total Project Cost column, which will differ from eligible cost only if you are providing additional funds/value that reflect the total cost to complete the project. You will also need to complete the table that breaks down the budget by element.

By Task

Task Title	Total Eligible Cost	*Total Project Cost
		<input type="text"/>
Total	\$0	\$0

By Element

Element	*Total Eligible Cost	*Total Project Cost
Salaries	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Benefits	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Salaries and Benefits Combined	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Contracts	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Travel	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Equipment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Goods/services	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Overhead	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total	\$0	\$0

Budget Narrative

Provide a budget narrative that describes how costs were estimated. This section should justify the amount of money you are requesting and should include information on the following categories:

- Salaries – wages for staff implementing project: break down costs by staff type, rates, and hours so it is clear what level of staff will work on each task and for how many hours. Where possible, identify the personnel who will be working on each task.
- Benefits – costs employers incur for providing benefits beyond salary or wages.
- Contracted Services – amount budgeted for contractual work and basis for the estimate.
- Travel – include method used to calculate travel costs (e.g., mileage rate, estimated miles traveled).
- Equipment – tangible property other than land, buildings, improvements other than buildings, or infrastructure, which is used in operations and with a useful life of more than one year. Examples are furnishings, equipment and software.
- Goods/Services – supplies and other material costs that are not equipment.
- Overhead – limited to 25% of salaries and benefits.
- Other – other costs described by the nature of the expense and method of estimation.

Upload Attachments

You will be able to attach relevant supporting documents such as:

- Maps, aerial photos, and other graphics that clarify the proposed location and/or help to illustrate the project purpose or tasks.
- Evidence of support from and coordination with relevant stakeholders, including local integrating organizations (LIOs), local governments, tribal governments, and others.

For each attachment, provide a brief description of the document and then attach by browsing for that document.

Implementation Phase (Phase II) - Protection and Restoration of Riparian Buffers

This section describes the general process, expectations, and requirements for access to the pre-allocated implementation funds after a grantee completes the reach-scale planning phase of the project. A reminder that Phase I applications at this time do not need to address future implementation tasks. Rather, the following is intended to inform potential applicants of what the implementation phase is likely to require of a grantee as they develop “on-the-ground” activities for achieving protection and restoration of riparian buffers.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) offers guidance for easement and acquisition projects that will be adapted by this grant program for the implementation phase of the grants. Ecology is currently working on developing the adapted guidance and will provide it to grantees prior to the initiation of implementation related tasks. Where RCO documents are referenced in this document, there are some elements specified which may not apply to this grant program, and some additional elements not required by RCO. At this point, any reference to RCO requirements and guidance that follow should be considered draft.

The following is a link to the RCO [Acquisition Project Toolkit](#) and [Manual 3](#) (2014) which contain the majority of guidance that would apply to easement acquisition elements of projects. Individual documents within this web page are referenced specifically throughout the following section.

Approval Process for Implementation Funding

Access to the implementation phase funds will generally be contingent upon final approval of the reach-scale plan developed during the planning phase. Ecology may request that grantees present the reach-scale plan in-person to an advisory committee who will assist in the review of the plan. This advisory committee will be comprised of technical experts in riparian restoration as well as representatives of the cross agency Riparian Protection Coordination Team. In some cases, implementation activities as generally described below may be allowable prior to an approved reach-scale plan. These will need to be negotiated with Ecology for approval.

Once a reach-scale plan has been documented and approved by Ecology an applicant will develop and negotiate additional project tasks outlined as a scope of work for implementation. Multiple implementation scopes of work can be developed over the course of the grant (until all \$550,000 of available funds are allocated in the grant agreement) to adjust to the emerging opportunities for protection and restoration work in the focus area. The deadline for submission and approval of implementation related scopes of work will be in November 2017. After that date the pre-allocated funds will no longer be accessible exclusively to the grantee, but they may be made available to other applicants in a future competitive grant solicitation. There is a possibility for additional implementation funds to be added to highly successful projects from this grant solicitation if funds are made available from the EPA.

Developing an implementation phase scope of work

We encourage a grantee to engage Ecology and the Riparian Protection Coordination Team (RPCT) in the conceptual development of implementation scopes of work before actual submission for approval to ensure that proposed tasks are consistent with the funding goals of this grant program. We encourage invitations for site visits so that Ecology and its technical advisors can more effectively assess the potential project outcomes and provide advice on implementation.

In most cases, it will be advisable to develop a conceptual implementation proposal before specific tasks are added to the grant agreement. Among other elements a conceptual scope of work should include the following things:

- Demonstrated landowner interest (requires copy of the [letter](#) to a landowner indicating interest in acquiring land) for parcels that will be subject of implementation efforts.
- Project design at a conceptual level:
 - Proposed buffer widths and composition for each parcel that will be targeted for easement acquisition and restoration (include maps with GPS or desktop GIS level of accuracy). Potential variance requests to buffer width conditions (outlined below) should be outlined here and the likely scientific justification for variance generally captured.
 - Restoration activities that will be pursued (e.g. buffer planting) both on the eased parcel(s) or nearby/associated parcels as part of the reach-scale plan.
 - Estimated value for easement purchases.
 - Draft/likely easement terms that will be negotiated with the landowners. RCO provides a [template](#) in Manual 3, Appendix 3 (2014) that Ecology will adapt as the basis for developing/approving easement terms.
 - Draft Stewardship Plan elements
- Demonstration of commitment from the likely easement holder/acquisition specialist that will work on implementation. Must provide documentation of the legal authority of an entity to hold conservation easements under Washington state law and a demonstrated capability by the entity holding the easement to defend and enforce the terms and conditions of the easement.

As final implementation scopes of work are developed, review steps for Ecology to approve prior to proceeding and for the release of certain funds will be outlined. Recognizing that each project will be different this guidance does not intend to capture all review steps that will be necessary to a final implementation scope of work. However, the following are likely review steps that would be outlined for implementation tasks in a given scope of work:

- Draft monitoring plan as outlined in approved QAPP for monitoring related activities.
- Buffer widths and location to be subject of a baseline survey, appraisal and/or review appraisal for easement acquisition.
- Draft restoration plans (e.g. planting plan) both on and off of eased lands.
- Draft easement terms negotiated with a landowner.
- Appraisal and/or review appraisal determining the market value for individual acquisitions prior negotiating closing with a landowner.
- Draft Stewardship Plans.

The following is a list of deliverables, adapted from RCO guidance, that are likely to be required for easement acquisition tasks in an implementation scope of work. Ecology uses a deliverables-based payment approach. Funds are reimbursed as grant deliverables are submitted and approved. In general, provide the completed deliverables with the corresponding invoice request when it is submitted to Ecology. Unless otherwise negotiated with Ecology, documents may be rejected if they do not follow the requirements generally outlined in RCO [Manual 3](#), Acquisition Policies and Procedures.

Generally required deliverables for easement/acquisition tasks:

- Preliminary title insurance document
- Notice of Voluntary Transaction letter
- Appraisal
- Review Appraisal
- Notice of Just Compensation letter
- Baseline Documentation
- Hazardous Substances Certification
- Environmental Site Assessment
- Relocation Plan, if eligible displaced persons are on the property
- Signed and recorded deed or easement
- Signed and recorded Deed of Right or Assignment of Rights with project boundary map
- Final title insurance policy
- Stewardship Plan
- Final Ecology inspection (may be on site or desk review)
- Final report summarizing outcomes of the project. Specific information on riparian buffer related outcomes should be documented and includes (also applies to any buffer plantings on non-eased lands):
 - Buffer widths
 - Buffer composition
 - Land uses adjacent to buffers
 - Location of the project site, including parcel number, and county
 - Illustrate other relevant BMPs funded by this program at a project site
 - A map of the parcel and site plan

The following requirements may be applicable to your project on a case-by-case basis. Consult with your Ecology grant manager if you are unsure of whether these deliverables are included in your project agreement:

- EZ 1 form and cultural resources survey
- Noxious weed control
- Fencing to exclude existing livestock
- Recorded legal survey
- Boundary line adjustment

Eligible Activities for Riparian Protection and Restoration Implementation

This grant offers significant flexibility to a grantee in determining the types of activities, both easement/acquisition and restoration related, necessary to accomplish the goals of the project. However, the main activity that this grant program intends to fund is the permanent protection of riparian buffers in agricultural landscapes. The evaluation of implementation scope(s) of work will weigh this aspect of a project heavily when determining appropriateness to fund. Activities not directly related to the acquisition of permanent easements will need to be justified by the grantee as necessary for achieving the parcel scale and broader reach-scale goals for salmonid habitat and water quality.

Funding easement acquisition and fee-simple acquisition

The primary activity this grant program intends to fund is the acquisition of conservation easements in riparian zones across agricultural lands to benefit salmonid habitat, shellfish and water quality goals. In some cases fee-simple acquisition may be eligible for funding if/where a high value parcel is located almost entirely within the existing or potential (after buffer restoration) riparian zone. A grantee will need to consult early with Ecology to determine if a fee-simple acquisition is appropriate for use of the grant funding.

RCO offers guidance on acquisition procedures in [Manual 3, Section 4](#) and a useful [Quick Step Guide](#) for sponsors in easement acquisition. This grant program will generally follow similar guidelines and an applicant will work with the grant manager to ensure that all steps are followed accordingly. As noted previously, Ecology is currently working on adapting the RCO guidance to better suit its needs for this program and will make those materials and expectations clear to grantees prior to formal approval of grant agreements for implementation related tasks.

The intent of this grant opportunity is to fund the majority of costs associated with any easement acquisition project. With the exception of specific RCO related reporting requirements the Quick Step guide generally captures eligible costs fundable under this grant program. Major categories of easement acquisition costs considered eligible are:

- Costs related to Due Diligence. Examples:
 - Preliminary title review
 - Cultural resources review
 - Acquisition Procedures (i.e. those captured in RCO Manual 3, Section 4)
 - Appraisal and Review Appraisal (must be performed by an [Ecology Yellow Book](#) certified firm)
 - Boundary Surveys
 - Hazardous substance certification
 - Baseline documentation
- Easement and land acquisition costs
- Closing and post-closing:
 - Escrow related costs
 - Demolition of ineligible structures
 - Fencing, if needed
 - Removal of noxious weeds, if needed
 - Sign installation

- Stewardship Plan development
- Initial stewardship yearly monitoring costs (only for duration of grant agreement)

The section “[Easement terms required for use of NEP funds](#)” section below outlines required terms to be included in any easement acquisition. Easement purchase cost is required to be established by the fair-market value of an appraisal and review appraisal.

Funding riparian restoration

While the primary purpose of this program is to fund and support the acquisition of conservation easements in riparian areas, restoration of riparian areas on eased lands will be considered if it demonstrates value to a protected area. Additionally, some restoration activities off of eased/acquired lands will be considered if these activities add significant value to the reach-scale protection and restoration effort.

Eligible supporting restoration activities for use of NEP funds (not a comprehensive list):

- Buffer plantings
- Livestock exclusion fencing (only when grazing is already present)
- Invasive species removal
- Structure removal/relocation
- Infrastructure removal/relocation (e.g. livestock feeding area moved etc.)
- In-stream habitat work (e.g. constructed log jams)
- Maintenance of plantings and other restoration activities (within the timeframe of the grant agreement)
- Levy and armoring removal
- Drainage system changes

Funding monitoring

Monitoring is an eligible expense under this grant program. Types of monitoring eligible for funding:

- Monitoring to establish baseline conditions (baseline condition as an element of easement acquisition and stewardship is eligible but discussed elsewhere) of riparian habitat and water quality for tracking parcel and reach-scale progress post protection and restoration.
- Monitoring to track implementation of restoration activities (within timeframe of grant agreement)
- Monitoring to track improvements in environmental parameters post restoration (within timeframe of grant agreement)

Funding ongoing stewardship

At this time Ecology is pursuing mechanisms to fund ongoing easement stewardship beyond the timeframe of the grant agreement. The grant program aspires to fund this important aspect of easement acquisition and monitoring but makes no guarantee at this time that it will do so.

Further guidance on funding of ongoing stewardship for the holder of easements will be developed and distributed to grantees prior to any approval of tasks related to this grant element.

Easement Terms Required for use of NEP Funds

Conservation easements funded through this grant program are generally expected to be modeled after those used by the Recreation and Conservation Office. The following link provides guidance for the development of the easement terms as outlined by RCO Manual 3, Appendix D: http://rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/AP_Toolkit/RCO_Conservation_Easement_Requirements.doc

This grant program requires certain elements to be incorporated into any conservation easement funded by the NEP dollars. If the landowner has a lien or mortgage on the property, Ecology will require a subordination agreement from the lender. Ecology also requires a baseline inventory for each conservation easement. Manual 3, cited above, provides guidance and requirements for conservation easements and baseline inventory reports.

Each easement will be unique to the specific circumstances of the parcel and landowner arrangement and be negotiated to assure consistency with the goals of the grant program. The following, adapted from RCO guidance, describes general expectations for individual elements of the easements funded by the grant funds.

Generally required easement terms

Purpose: The easement should include a clearly defined purpose of preserving, protecting, and if appropriate, restoring the conservation values of the property and its riparian buffer width and habitat composition for current and future generations as identified by a baseline assessment at the inception of the easement. Buffers shall be consistent with the buffer width requirements outlined in this guidance unless otherwise approved by Ecology.

Grantee/holders: Easements under the NEP program will be required to be granted to and held by state or local public agencies, tribes, or private land trusts that are qualified under sections 501(c)(3) and 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code and as “nonprofit nature conservancy organizations” under Washington state law.

Permitted uses: Permitted uses will be consistent with the conservation purposes of the easement, which include outdoor recreation, habitat restoration, and scientific study.

Prohibited uses: Prohibited uses are to include all uses that are inconsistent with the conservation purposes of the easement, generally interpreted to include clearing of vegetation, grading, mining, and most constructions of buildings, structures, dikes, or other improvements.

Monitoring and enforcement: The grantee, or legal holder of an easement funded by this program, is to have the right to inspect and monitor compliance with easement terms and take specified actions to enforce terms if needed.

Valuation: The value of the easement is likely to be established by an appraisal (and review appraisal) of the fair market value of the property with and without the easement. Valuation procedures are per RCO policies as outlined in Manual 3.

Assignment: The grantee's/easement holder's interest is to be transferable to another qualifying organization under Washington state and federal law.

The following terms are negotiable for each individual easement

Coverage: Easements will generally apply to all or part of an individual parcel, though most are expected to apply to the riparian zone only (as determined by Riparian Buffer Width Requirements or negotiated variance). When applied to all of a parcel, the area subject to easement provisions will be clearly described and mapped.

Public access: Public access to easements will be negotiated and specified with each easement and assumes that access by the grantee to inspect the property and undertake management responsibilities will be allowed.

Subdivision and development: Generally, easement terms will be expected to prohibit subdivision and development except in unusual circumstances negotiated in specific easements.

Easement terms that may differ from the RCO standards outlined in Manual 3

Duration: The duration of the easement is intended to be perpetual. This means that the easement will run with the property and apply to all subsequent landowners.

Continued agricultural use: Generally, continued agricultural use will be prohibited within eased lands though some exceptions may be negotiated as they are demonstrated to be consistent with the conservation purposes of the easement and ultimately the function of the riparian zone for maintenance of salmonid habitat and water quality parameters.

New agricultural and forestry uses: Easement terms will generally prohibit new agricultural and forestry unless they are demonstrated to be consistent with the conservation purposes of the easement in riparian buffers and other forested areas.

Easement and buffer width: Easement terms will specify that the easement is to be at least as wide as specified in the NOAA buffer standards referenced in this solicitation unless there is existing physical infrastructure in place or a scientifically justifiable alternative approved by Ecology and EPA.

Riparian Buffer Requirements on Agricultural Lands

EPA established a new grant condition for FY 2014 NEP funded projects that requires that NEP funded riparian buffer protection and restoration projects in agricultural areas be consistent with interim riparian buffer recommendations provided to EPA by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) letters of February 4, 2013, and April 9, 2013, or the October 28, 2013 simplified version also commonly called the "NOAA or NMFS buffer table" (http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/docs/grants/2013_riparian_guidance.pdf). To assist in determining likely minimum buffer width requirements for a given stream reach a [web map](#) has been developed by Ecology.

In this context agricultural areas include lands that meet the definition of agricultural lands and activities in the Washington Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58.065). Properties that are zoned as rural residential that include hobby farms or nonrevenue producing farms will also be considered as agricultural land for the purpose of implementing this term and condition.

Buffers for on-the-ground projects:

The riparian buffer width recommendations are intended to apply to on-the-ground projects in agricultural areas that are funded by NEP grants. While we do not expect implementation of buffer projects to occur until Phase II, we are including this information in this solicitation for applicants to consider while developing reach-scale plans and for future reference. See Guidance on Developing a Reach-Scale Plan section for more information.

Exceptions:

Where implementing the NMFS buffer widths is prevented by physical constraints, such as transportation corridors or structures, the buffer implemented could be narrower at the location occupied by the transportation corridor or structure, but must otherwise meet the requirements of the NMFS buffer table.

In addition, exceptions from the recommendations can be obtained through a request to Ecology and EPA and with a scientific rationale demonstrating adequacy of buffers for supporting water quality and salmon recovery. The scientific rationale could be developed from sources such as site-specific assessment data, salmon recovery plans, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and the state nonpoint plan. Exception requests will at a minimum be expected to address:

Project Site Background:

- Existing salmonid presence or use, habitat, and water quality conditions.
- Previous and anticipated habitat/water quality protection/improvement efforts in the watershed.
- Site conditions.
- Infrastructure issues.

Project Design, Function, and Maintenance:

- Project design considerations
- Functions provided by proposed buffer.
- Long-term maintenance plan.

Further guidance on how to gain exceptions to the buffer width requirements and the scientific rationale process is being developed and will be provided to grant recipients prior to any decisions around release of implementation funds.

Evaluation Process for Implementation Proposals

Aside from buffer width requirements stated above, there are no pre-determined thresholds or parcel attributes required for an easement acquisition to be eligible for implementation funding. Proposals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by Ecology under advisement by the cross-agency RPCT for their alignment with the overall goals of the grant program. In many cases it

will be advisable, and even necessary to conduct some sort of site visit (on parcel or roadside) to properly evaluate an implementation proposal.

The following is a description of the some general criteria which Ecology will use to determine if an individual easement proposal should be funded with the allotted implementation funds. Additional evaluation criteria is in development.

Desired acquisition parcel attributes:

- Parcel easement contributes directly and substantially to the overall reach-scale plan developed in the planning phase.
- Adjacent to parcel with an intact riparian zone or proposed buffer easement and restoration project from other source of funding (with good likelihood of implementation).
- Buffer width and composition of the proposed riparian zone protected (note the buffer width requirements outlined above).
- Total acreage of riparian zone protected and/or restored.
- Linear stream miles protected and/or restored.
- Presence (as % of total acreage of land to be put in easement) of already intact and functioning riparian zone.
- Presence of high-quality riparian habitat (complex structure, multiple age classes etc.).
- Documented salmon use (refugia, migratory, spawning etc.).
- Area of substantial groundwater recharge and discharge to the stream-reach.
- Can substantially contribute to mitigating potentially negative impacts of agricultural practices of a landowner on riparian function and water quality and/or can contribute to maintenance of beneficial land use activities.
- Parcel is located in an area draining directly to impaired shellfish beds.
- Number of development rights removed.
- Parcel is in an area subject to increasing or imminent threat of conversion or development.
- Cost effectiveness of the proposed easement acquisition.
- How the parcel acquisition and restoration will contribute to vital signs in the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

Process for Applying and Deadlines

Application Process

Applicants must use the online application process. This is a new process for the NEP Watershed Program and applicants should allow extra time (at least a week) for registering on the online site in addition to completing the application.

To access the application form, applicants must first establish an identity with Secure Access Washington (SAW). If the person completing the application already has a SAW identity, then they may use that user name and password. Follow the instructions to request access to the EAGL system. Also, all staff at your organization that will have a role on the project (e.g., financial manager, grant signatory) must have a SAW identity established before you apply. Caution: It can take several days for the EAGL administrator to validate a new user. **Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to establish SAW identities and request EAGL access at least two weeks prior to the application deadline (users may establish a SAW identity at any time and then return to EAGL to complete the application).** Follow this link for further instructions on establishing a SAW identity: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/funding/EAGL.html>.

Additional detailed instructions on the application process are at our website and are also available in the EAGL system. Find NEP Watershed 2015 Grants Application Instructions at: www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/grants_fed_watershed.html.

Application deadline: All application material must be received via the online process no later than 5:00 pm on January 31st, 2016.

Informational Meeting on Grant Solicitation and Application Process

Ecology will hold an informational meeting that will train potential applicants on the new online application process and provide guidance on focusing proposals for this grant solicitation. We will clarify the requirements for the solicitation and provide more information on the types of projects we hope to fund with this solicitation. The meeting will be held at the following location and will also be available as a live webinar. A recording of the webinar will be made available after the event on the following web page:

www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/grants_fed_watershed.html.

Those not familiar with the EAGL application process are strongly encouraged to attend.

Date/Time: December 11th, 2015 from 9am to 12pm.

Location: Washington State Department of Ecology, Northwest Regional Office, 3190 160th Ave S.E., Bellevue, WA. 98008

Remote participation WebEx information:

1. Go to

<https://wadismetings.webex.com/wadismetings/j.php?MTID=m874a9de3b8cf5f2a205e123fd9f3fab4>

2. If requested, enter your name and email address.

3. If a password is required, enter the meeting password: NEPWorkshop2015

4. Click "Join".

5. Follow the instructions that appear on your screen to access audio conference.

Audio conference information (for those unable to join via WebEx):

Call-in toll-free number (US/Canada): 1-877-668-4493, Access code: 926 199 865

Grant Funding Cycle Schedule

Date	Program milestone
December 1 st , 2015, 5:00 p.m.	Final grant guidelines published and EAGL open for applications
December 11 th , 2015, 9 – 12 p.m.	Workshop for potential applicants
January 31 st , 2016, 5:00 p.m.	Closing of grant solicitation
February 2016	Evaluation period for grant proposals
March, 2016	Pre-award notices sent to successful applicants

To Ask Questions

For more information on this funding opportunity, please email questions to Carrie Byron at carrie.byron@ecy.wa.gov. Answers to these questions will be compiled and posted on our website on a regular basis until January 31th, 2016. Questions and answers from the informational meetings will also be posted there. See Frequently Asked Questions at: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/grants_fed_watershed.html.

Appendix 1. Maps of watersheds which likely contain eligible stream reaches for focus of the grant funding

The maps described below illustrate the watersheds which likely contain eligible stream reaches for focus of the riparian easement grant funding from the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program for Puget Sound. These maps are for guidance purposes only and do not define eligibility as a focus reach for this grant program. Eligibility is defined by the criteria described in the [above](#) section of the grant guidelines. Detailed metadata are available upon request.

Maps

- Likely eligible watersheds for focus - All Puget Sound with commercial shellfish beds
- Likely eligible watersheds for focus - Strait of Juan De Fuca zoom with commercial shellfish beds
- Likely eligible watersheds for focus - North Sound zoom with commercial shellfish beds
- Likely eligible watersheds for focus - South Sound zoom with commercial shellfish beds

Watershed Selection Process

Step 1: Parcels were identified by intersecting the American Farmland Trust Agricultural Parcel Layer (Ag Layer) with streams (20ft buffer applied to capture parcels bordering streams) bearing any salmonid species (FishDist layer from WDFW <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/salmonscape/map.html>).

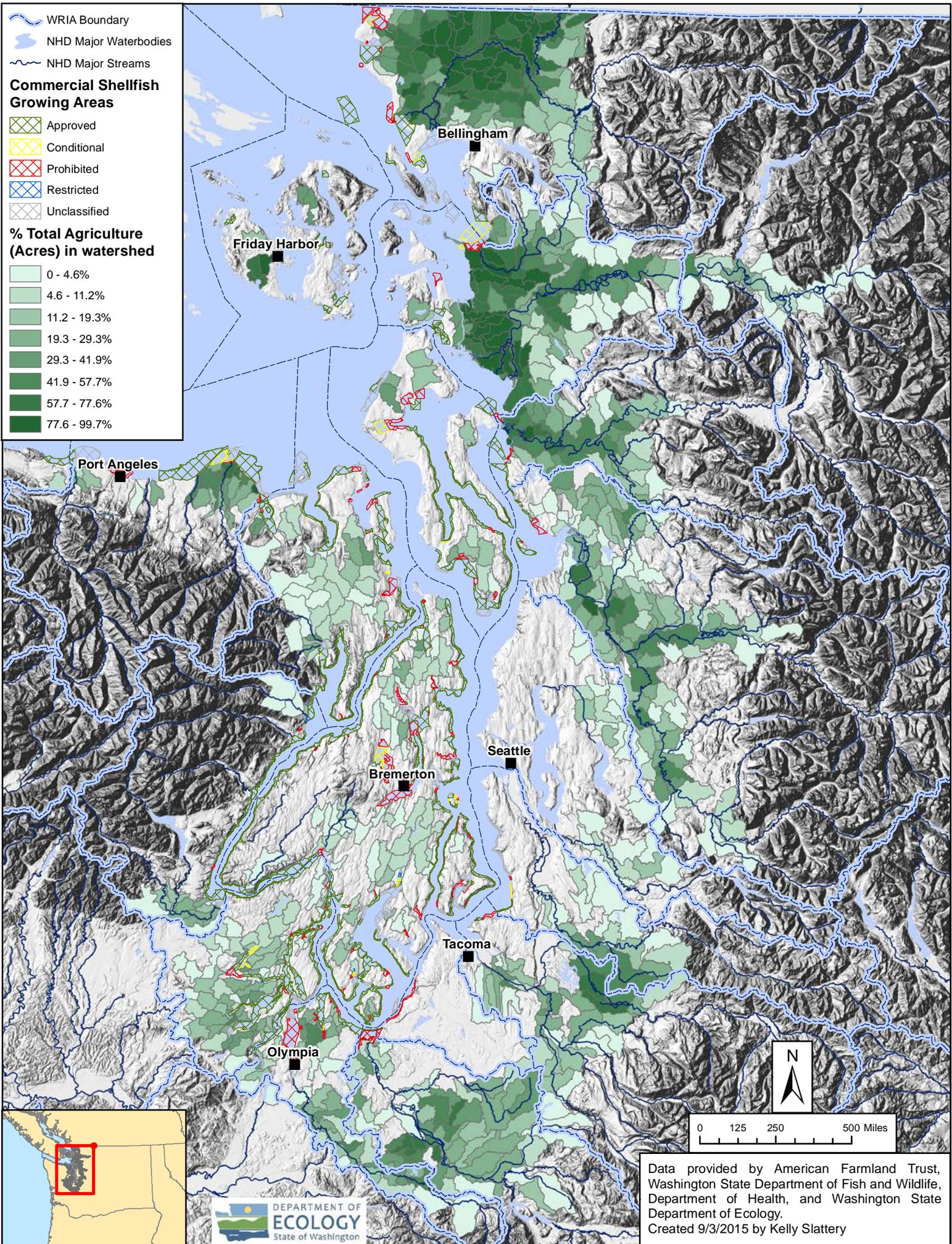
Step 2: Puget Sound Watershed Characterization (<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/coastalatl/wc/landingpage.html>) watersheds (Assessment units or AUs, which generally nest within HUC boundaries but are smaller scale than HUC 12) are intersected with those parcels identified in Step 1. Therefore AUs illustrated in the above maps are any that had some portion of Agricultural Parcel with salmon bearing stream on it.

Step 3: Calculating % total agriculture in the watershed – The following maps illustrate a color gradient determined by the % of total agriculture in the watershed. This allows one to identify which watersheds may present more opportunities for implementing riparian protection and restoration where the beneficial use is predominantly salmonid habitat within agricultural landscapes. *Note: This does not account for riparian condition and existing “protection” in the watersheds which would be an even better metric but such a riparian layer does not exist for all of Puget Sound.*

Overlay of commercial and shellfish beds

To illustrate how implementation of riparian restoration and protection in agricultural Landscapes may impact other beneficial uses, the Washington State Department of Health Shellfish layer (<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/maps/OSWPViewer/index.html>) was overlaid on the “% Total agriculture (acres) in watershed” maps.

For additional information regarding the methods which produced these maps please contact: Colin Hume, Washington State Department of Ecology, colin.hume@ecy.wa.gov



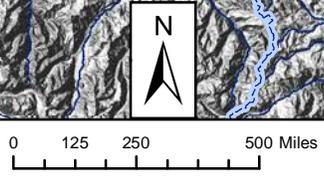
- WRIA Boundary
- NHD Major Waterbodies
- NHD Major Streams

Commercial Shellfish Growing Areas

- Approved
- Conditional
- Prohibited
- Restricted
- Unclassified

% Total Agriculture (Acres) in watershed

- 0 - 4.6%
- 4.6 - 11.2%
- 11.2 - 19.3%
- 19.3 - 29.3%
- 29.3 - 41.9%
- 41.9 - 57.7%
- 57.7 - 77.6%
- 77.6 - 99.7%



Data provided by American Farmland Trust, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Health, and Washington State Department of Ecology.
 Created 9/3/2015 by Kelly Slattery



Friday Harbor



Port Angeles

Seattle

Bremerton

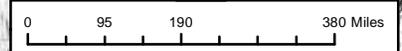
- WRIA Boundary
- NHD Major Waterbodies
- NHD Major Streams

Commercial Shellfish Growing Areas

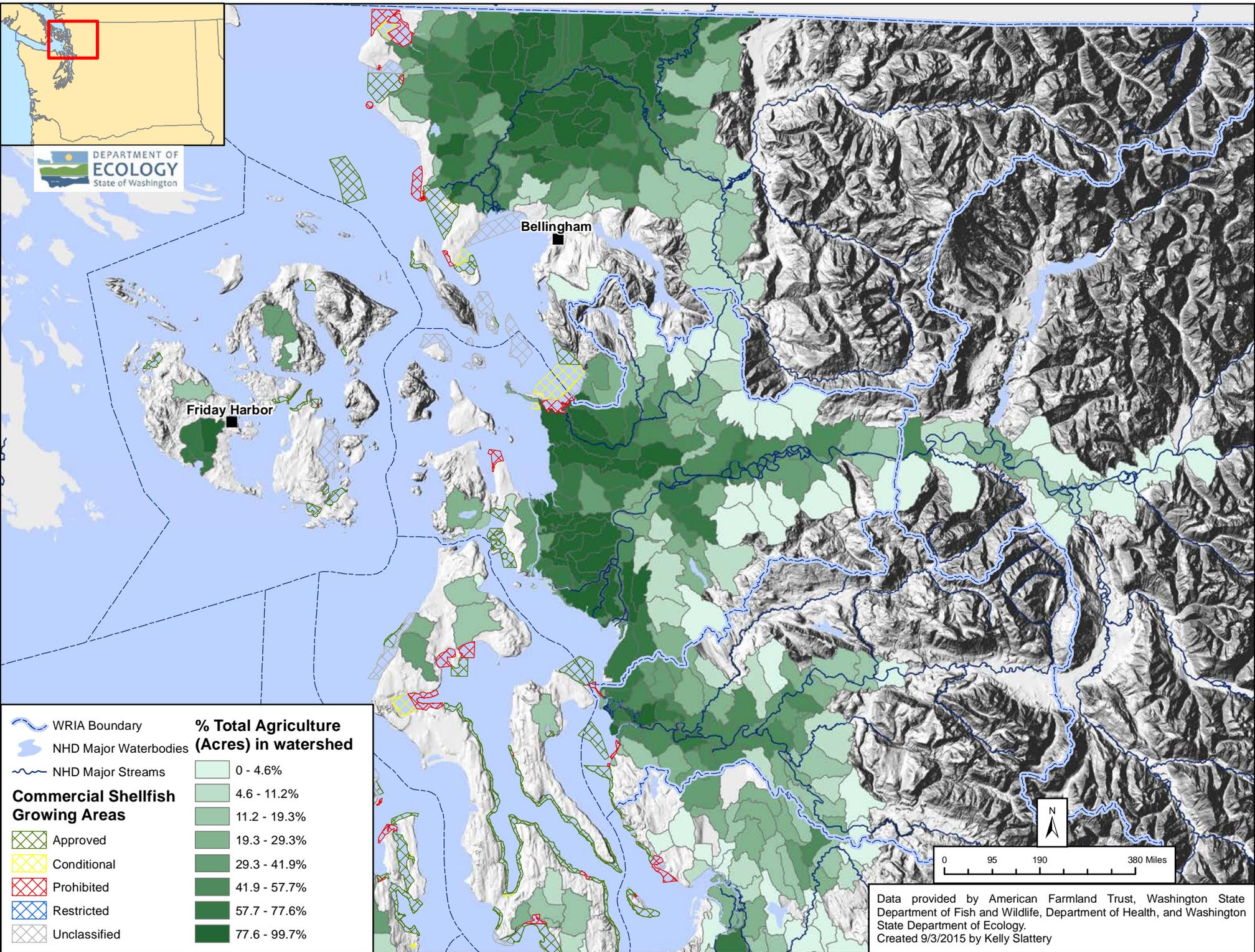
- Approved
- Conditional
- Prohibited
- Restricted
- Unclassified

% Total Agriculture (Acres) in watershed

- 0 - 4.6%
- 4.6 - 11.2%
- 11.2 - 19.3%
- 19.3 - 29.3%
- 29.3 - 41.9%
- 41.9 - 57.7%
- 57.7 - 77.6%
- 77.6 - 99.7%



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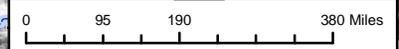
- WRIA Boundary
- NHD Major Waterbodies
- NHD Major Streams

Commercial Shellfish Growing Areas

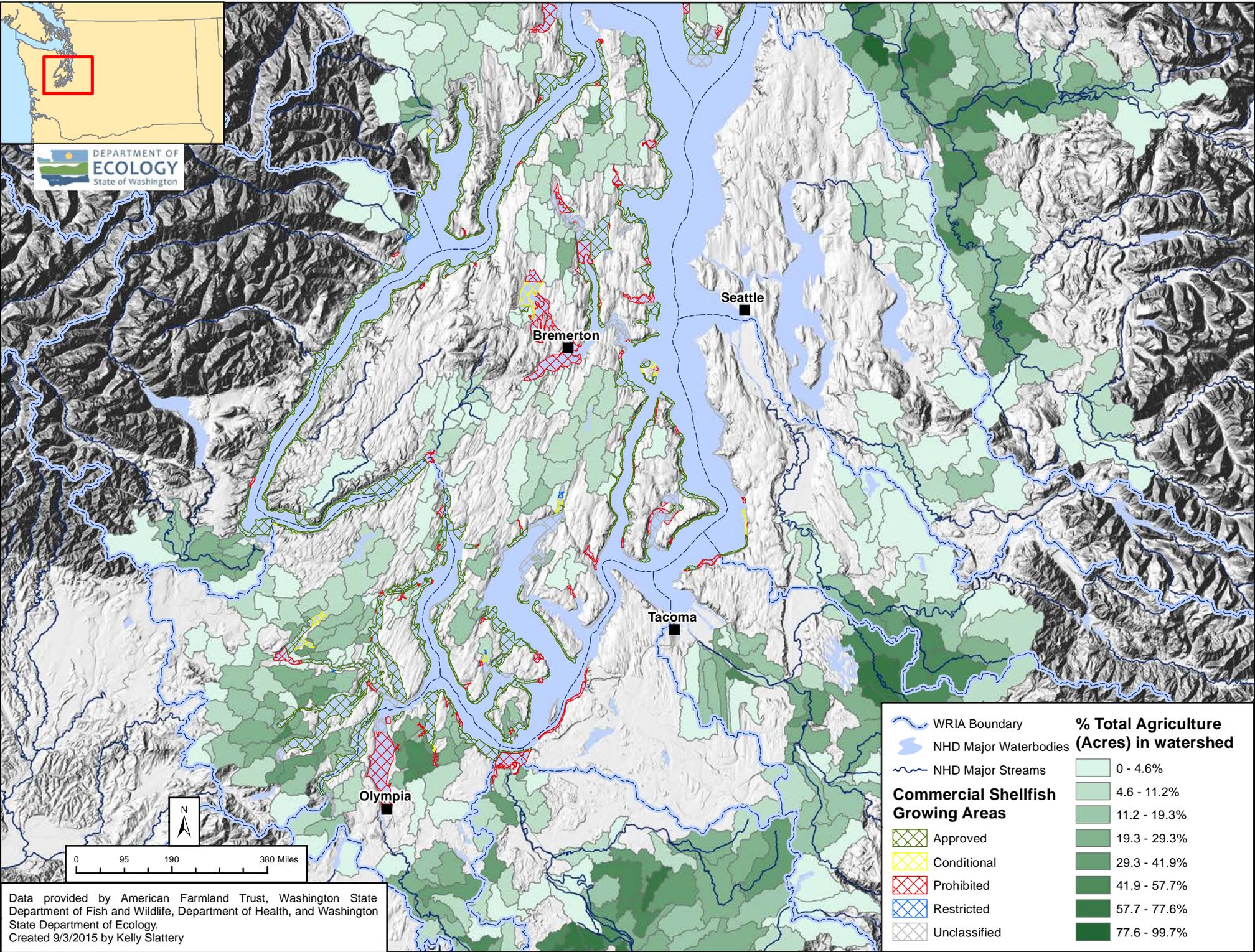
- Approved
- Conditional
- Prohibited
- Restricted
- Unclassified

% Total Agriculture (Acres) in watershed

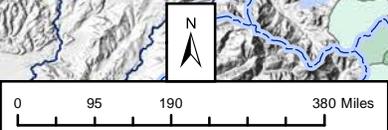
- 0 - 4.6%
- 4.6 - 11.2%
- 11.2 - 19.3%
- 19.3 - 29.3%
- 29.3 - 41.9%
- 41.9 - 57.7%
- 57.7 - 77.6%
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	WRIA Boundary		0 - 4.6%
	NHD Major Waterbodies		4.6 - 11.2%
	NHD Major Streams		11.2 - 19.3%
	Approved		19.3 - 29.3%
	Conditional		29.3 - 41.9%
	Prohibited		41.9 - 57.7%
	Restricted		57.7 - 77.6%
	Unclassified		77.6 - 99.7%



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