

## WHAT IS THE ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM?

The Ecosystem Enhancement Program aims to maintain and improve ecological health and native biodiversity in a variety of ecosystems by supporting large-scale ecosystem restoration, enhancement and conservation projects across the Basin. This Program aligns with the Columbia Basin Management Plan (2020-22) Strategic and Integrated Priorities of Ecosystem Enhancement and Climate Resilience.

This is the fifth year of the current five-year program.

## WHAT ARE THE ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM GRANTS?

This five-year program supports projects focused on restoration, enhancement, and conservation that contribute to healthy, functioning ecosystems into the future. The Trust seeks input on ecological priorities and project ideas from community groups, Indigenous representatives, government and technical experts, and reviews existing regional plans and research. The Trust focused on supporting projects from two sub-regions per year during years one to four of the program. In Year 5 (2022), the Trust is seeking project ideas from any area of the Basin.

The Ecosystem Enhancement Program will have a meaningful and measurable impact in supporting and strengthening ecosystem health in the Basin. Eligible projects support the restoration, conservation and enhancement of a variety of ecotypes, including terrestrial, aquatic and wetland, at a landscape scale.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Eligible applicants include registered non-profits, Indigenous Communities and local governments in the Columbia Basin Trust region. ([ourtrust.org/map](https://ourtrust.org/map)).

Businesses may be considered depending on the Project and its broad community impact.

Business applicants must demonstrate partnerships with community-based organizations in the design and delivery of their proposed project.

The project should demonstrate that it will benefit ecosystems and residents of the Basin and that the primary beneficiary is not the applicant or solely the members of a membership-based organization.

Applicants operating outside the Basin must partner with community-based organizations in the Basin to be eligible and show that the Project benefits the Basin.

## WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

The Ecosystem Enhancement Program has a two-step application process. Applicants must first complete a Project Idea (application) online.

To submit an application you must first contact the Ecosystem Enhancement Program Coordinator at [ecosystems@ourtrust.org](mailto:ecosystems@ourtrust.org) to discuss your project idea and its eligibility. If the idea is eligible the link to the online form will be provided to you. The Project Idea submission is a high-level summary of your proposed project.

Your project idea will be shared and discussed at a community workshop. Community workshops provide an opportunity for community members to review the proposed projects and provide input. Then with input from the Trust's Ecosystem Enhancement Program Advisory Committee, the Trust evaluates and prioritizes project opportunities. Proponents of prioritized projects are then invited to submit a detailed proposal for the Trust to consider funding.

The Project Idea submission deadline is August 13, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. PT / 3:00 p.m. MT. We will not accept applications after this deadline.

If selected to move forward, you will hear from us by November 4, 2021 and your detailed proposal will be due by February 4, 2022.

## WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

The program supports restoration, enhancement and conservation of important ecological values in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Projects supported to date include restoring wetlands, stream habitat, valley-bottom and subalpine forests and grasslands.

The program focuses on projects that:

- implement on-the-ground actions (rather than strictly research or planning) to support ecological health at a landscape-level;
- yield meaningful and measurable benefits for ecological health and biodiversity;
- reflect input received from Indigenous communities, community/non-profit groups and technical experts;
- are ready or almost ready to implement (e.g. project workplans and prescriptions are complete or close to complete);
- help address sub-regional ecological priorities and emerging issues;
- incorporate the perspectives of Indigenous peoples in the Basin;
- incorporate climate change mitigation and/or adaptation considerations;
- are seeking or have other sources of funding secured; and

- do not displace or duplicate government efforts or industry responsibility.

## WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE?

Projects that have the potential to duplicate or displace government or industry responsibility are not deemed eligible for support. This includes any restoration related to habitat fragmentation or other negative ecosystem impacts that have occurred because of identifiable industrial or commercial development or access.

Projects focused on environmental education or research are not eligible to the Ecosystem Enhancement Program. The Trust supports environmental education and research through our Environmental Education initiatives and Environment Grants program.

For projects on private land, the proposed project must be focused on ecological benefit rather than private benefit. Any works on private lands must include collaboration with landowners/managers and may be subject to legal agreements to ensure such works (e.g. habitat improvements) are preserved over the long term.

## HOW MUCH WILL THE TRUST FUND?

Applicants can request up to a maximum of 75 per cent of total project costs from the Trust. The maximum amount of Trust funding for any one project is \$750,000 with a maximum duration of five years for multi-year projects.

Applicants must demonstrate that they are contributing at least 25 per cent of the project costs (in kind excluded) from sources other than the Trust.

Projects that demonstrate broad community support and confirmed cash contributions are more likely to receive funding.

## HOW DOES THE TRUST SELECT PROJECTS FOR FUNDING?

The Trust's Ecosystem Enhancement Program Advisory Committee uses the following criteria to prioritize funding. A project must:

- Demonstrate landscape scale ecological benefits.
- Be self sustaining in the long term.
- Have low likelihood of residual adverse effects to other ecological, cultural or community values.
- Align with Indigenous Peoples, community and expert input.
- Projects that create local employment opportunities/economic benefits.
- Additional consideration may be given to projects that incorporate:

- Indigenous perspectives or partnerships with Indigenous Peoples; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation into enhancement and/or restoration practices that increase ecosystem resilience.

## WHEN WILL I HEAR THE RESULTS?

The community input and advisory committee review process usually takes up to 8 weeks. We will contact you by phone, at the number on your application form, to let you know if your project has been approved for funding.

Prior to approving any projects, Trust staff may contact you during the evaluation phase to request additional information.

If approved, we will also let you know whether there are conditions you will need to address. We will then send a Contribution Agreement for signature and you will receive the funding after both parties sign this.

## WHEN CAN MY PROJECT START?

Trust funding can only be put toward approved project expenses after the Contribution Agreement has been signed.

## WHAT ELSE DO I HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND?

Even if a project meets the eligibility criteria it may not be selected for funding as the Trust often receives requests for more funding than what is available. The Trust retains the discretion to determine project eligibility and the amount of funding it may allocate to each project. The Trust retains the discretion to offer part, or all of the Trust portion of the funding request. It is a requirement for projects to perform effectiveness monitoring and maintenance to ensure stated goals and objectives are achieved. Program funding from the Trust can be used for monitoring and maintenance within the lifespan of the project up to a maximum of five years (i.e. the maximum project duration).

## HOW DO I APPLY?

1. Contact the Program Coordinator at [ecosystems@ourtrust.org](mailto:ecosystems@ourtrust.org).
2. Download the Application Guide and the Worksheet at the link provided by the Program Coordinator.
3. Review the Application Guide for direction and advice on how to complete the application form.
4. Use the worksheet to develop your application offline if you so choose.
5. Complete the application form and submit it online.

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If you have any questions about the application process, please contact Program Coordinator at [ecosystems@ourtrust.org](mailto:ecosystems@ourtrust.org) or 1-800-505-8998.