

What are Small-scale Ecosystem Grants?

This program supports small-scale projects that help to improve ecological health and native biodiversity in the Basin

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants include registered non-profits, local governments and First Nations in the Columbia Basin Trust region (ourtrust.org/map).

Applicants operating outside the [Basin](#) must partner with community-based organizations operating within the region and must show that the project benefits the Basin.

When is the application deadline?

November 28, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. PT / 3:00 p.m. MT.

What is the application process?

If you are an eligible applicant interested in applying, contact ecosystems@ourtrust.org to discuss your project idea with us. If your project meets the program criteria, you will be invited to submit an online application.

What types of projects are eligible?

Eligible projects address at least one of the following objectives:

- restore or conserve a terrestrial and/or aquatic ecosystem, such as wetlands, fish habitat, forests or grasslands; or
- conserve a species of conservation concern.

Eligible projects:

- have on-the-ground action on crown land, local government land, First Nations land, or conservation land;
- have a small local scale;
- take less than two years to implement;
- include an effectiveness monitoring component;
- incorporate Indigenous perspectives or partnerships with Indigenous Peoples;
- incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation practices; and
- do not displace or duplicate government efforts or industry responsibility.

What types of projects are not eligible?

Projects are not eligible if they:

- Have the potential to duplicate or displace government or industry responsibility. 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 (e.g. road development, hydroelectric reservoir drawdown zones, etc.).
- Projects that primarily benefit the applicant itself or the members of a membership-based organization.
 - Projects that take place on personally or commercially held private land, BC Hydro or Fortis land, or Provincial/Federal Parks.
 - Are primarily focused on environmental education or research.
 - Take place outside the Columbia Basin.
 - Undertake activities of political parties, advocacy or lobby groups, or organizations that are exclusive or discriminative in nature.

How much will the Trust fund?

Up to 80% of total project costs can be requested from the Trust. The typical maximum amount of Trust funding for any one project is \$80,000.

The application should clearly demonstrate that at least 20% of total project costs will be received from sources other than the Trust.

How does the Trust select projects for funding?

The Trust uses the following selection criteria to prioritize funding.

- The project demonstrates it meets the program eligibility listed above.
- Community support is clearly demonstrated, indicated by activities like fundraising, financial commitments and partnerships.
- The project shows it is ready to move forward in the stated timelines.
- Any required authorizations, permits, prescriptions, etc. required to implement the project can be demonstrated or are in process.
- The project, and the organizations coordinating the project, demonstrate an understanding of the need for long-term maintenance of project outcomes; this can be shown by a long-term budget or management plan.
- The Trust strives to distribute program funds across communities, organizations and project types and will consider this as part of the adjudication process.

When will organizations hear the results?

The review process usually takes up to eight weeks. Trust staff may request additional information during the evaluation phase.

Organizations will be contacted by email, at the address provided on the application form, to confirm if the project application has been approved for funding.

To finalize funding, both parties will sign a Contribution Agreement. Funds will be received after both parties sign the Agreement.

When can a project begin?

Funds can only be used for approved project expenses that occur after Trust approval of funding has been received and the Contribution Agreement has been signed.

What else to keep in mind?

Even if a project meets 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 right to determine project eligibility and the amount of funding allocated to each project; this may be all or part of what was requested.