



Family Forest Fish Passage Program Guidelines

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE



WASHINGTON STATE
Recreation and
Conservation Office

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Introduction

Small forest landowners own 3.2 million acres of Washington's forests—half of the private forestland in the state. These family forests are important to fish because they include thousands of miles of fish-bearing streams. Over time much many of those streams have been lost to fish because of blockages associated with forest roads and even a single barrier can keep fish from reaching miles of habitat upstream. Removing fish passage barriers is one of the most cost efficient means of restoring fish populations.

Because eliminating fish passage barriers can be costly, especially for the family forest landowner, the 2003 Washington Legislature established the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (Revised Code of Washington 76.13.140)). In general, the law required that:

- The state create a funding program that provides 75 to 100 percent of the cost of correcting small forest landowners' fish barriers.
- Small forest landowners enrolling in the program would be required to fix their barriers only if financial assistance is available from the state.
- Barriers be prioritized and repaired on a worst-first basis.

Program Eligibility

For a fish barrier to be eligible for the program, it must be:

- Located on forestland - Forestland is land that is capable of supporting a merchantable stand of timber and not being actively used for anything incompatible with timber growing.
- Located on fish bearing streams - Streams are generally considered fish-bearing if they are greater than 2 feet wide in Western Washington, or greater than 3 feet wide in Eastern Washington, and have a gradient of less than 20 percent. Although intermittent streams are dry during a portion of the year, they may have fish present during those times when the streams are flowing. A fish bearing determination will be made by program staff during the site review.
- A barrier to fish passage – The Family Forest Fish Passage Program only addresses artificial, or human-caused fish barriers. These structures impede the free passage of fish up- or downstream and include: perched or undersized culverts, puncheons, fords, standpipes, dams, weirs, and spillways.
- Owned by a small forest landowner - A small forest landowner harvests less than 2 million board feet of timber on average per year, from their forestland in Washington.
- Located at a road crossing - A structure must be associated with a road crossing in order to be eligible.

Program Steps

Step One: Landowner applies for an evaluation

Landowners can request the Application for Fish Passage Barrier Evaluation from the Small Forest Landowner Office (SFLO) at DNR or [apply online](#). To receive a hard copy of the application, please call 360-902-1404 or email your request to sflo@dnr.wa.gov. [Applications may be submitted electronically or through the U. S. mail. Our mailing address is:](#)

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Applications are accepted year round. To be considered for funding in the following year, applications must be received by June 30.

Step Two: Barrier is evaluated and prioritized

Once an application is received, you will be contacted to schedule an evaluation of the barrier. If the evaluation determines the structure is not a barrier, is not on a fish bearing stream, or is not on forestland, the landowner will be notified in writing that it is not eligible, and will not be enrolled in the program.

Qualifying projects will be ranked within their watersheds based on the:

- Amount and quality of habitat opened by the project.
- Number of fish species which would benefit.
- Other upstream and downstream barriers.
- Project cost.

Step Three: Project is funded when it is a high priority

Those projects providing the greatest benefit to fish habitat will be funded for construction the following year. Projects considered lower priority during one funding round will be reconsidered during future rounds. Lower priority projects remain in the program until they become high priority.

Step Four: Project Sponsor Manages the Project

A project sponsor is selected from local groups experienced in fish passage projects. Typically a sponsor is a fish enhancement group, conservation district or tribe. Having an experienced sponsor manage the project is strongly recommended to ensure the project gets completed on time and meets all fish passage requirements. Project management includes: engineering, permitting, construction oversight, billing and grant management.

The landowner, if he or she wishes, can manage all aspects of the project.

Frequently Asked Questions

If I sign up for the Program and choose to fix a fish barrier at my own expense, can I still receive technical assistance for the project?

Yes. The Fish Passage Team can provide technical assistance, including guidance on

necessary permits, project design, construction, etc.

If I do not enroll in FFFPP, am I still obligated to fix fish barriers on my property or fix fish barriers associated with a Forest Practices Application (FPA)?

Yes. Forest Practices Rules require that you address fish barriers located on your forestland by 2016. Barriers included in an active FPA for harvest must be addressed before any future FPAs are approved.

How are barriers prioritized for funding?

The Fish Passage Team evaluates and ranks projects based on the following¹:

- Number of salmon and trout species benefiting from correcting the barrier
- Quantity and quality of habitat to be opened by the project
- Location and number of upstream and downstream barriers
- Project cost.

When will I be notified whether my project is considered a high priority and will be funded?

Although applications are accepted year round, there is an annual deadline of June 30 for projects to be considered for funding in the following year. Those projects providing the greatest benefit to public resources will be funded for construction the following year. You will be notified of funding decisions early the following year after the June 30 cut-off date.

How much money can I apply for?

You do not apply for a specific amount of money to fix your barriers. Rather, you apply to have your barriers placed on a ranking list for funding. Once a barrier correction has been funded and the work completed, you or the sponsor will be reimbursed for the project costs minus any required matching amount, if applicable.

Once a barrier has been fixed, who is responsible for maintaining the new structure?

You own the new structure and are responsible for maintenance. This may include: removing debris that accumulates at the culvert inlet and outlet or at the upstream side of a bridge, maintaining roads to prevent sediment delivery at a stream crossing, preventing damage to the structure during normal road maintenance activities, etc.

Can I receive funding for fixing more than one barrier?

Yes, if your projects are ranked high priority after the evaluation process.

If I have a fish barrier on one parcel but am harvesting timber on another parcel I own elsewhere in the state, will I still be required to provide matching funds for my funded projects?

Yes. Anytime you harvest timber on any part of your forest ownership in the state between now and the time the state determines your project is a high priority you will be

¹Note: numerical values, thresholds, or targets have not been established for these criteria. Each project will be compared and contrasted to all projects in the current program cycle and those projects not funded during previous cycles.

required to provide matching funds to fix your fish barrier.