

# Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program

## Instructions for Completing the Rivers and Habitat Open Space Conservation Easement Application Form.

**APPLICATIONS FOR THIS FUNDING PERIOD WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM  
MAY 1, 2014 TO 5:00 PM, JULY 31, 2014.**

### Program Overview

The Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program (RHOSP) was recently amended from a program that was called the Riparian Open Space Program. The Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program allowed the State to acquire a conservation easement on forest land within unconfined channel migration zones (CMZ). The amendment allows the state to acquire a conservation easement through RHOSP on not only CMZs, but also on forest land containing critical habitat for threatened or endangered species as designated by the Forest Practices Board. RHOSP is funded by the Washington State legislature to purchase or accept donations for permanent conservation easements from private forest landowners. This voluntary program is administered by the Forest Practices Division of the Department of Natural Resources. Refer to Chapter 222-23 WAC and Forest Practices Board Manual 18 for additional language describing the purpose and process of the Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program.

A CMZ is the area where the active channel of a stream is prone to move in the near term. Unconfined CMZs are areas where shifts in stream or river location may occur, resulting in a complex floodplain environment. These areas typically have very high ecological value as spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and other fish species. Under Washington State forest practices rules, no timber harvesting or road construction may occur within CMZs due to their ecological importance. Willing landowners can apply to donate or sell a permanent conservation easement in these areas to the State.

Timber harvest is also restricted in areas containing critical habitat for threatened or endangered species as designated by the Forest Practices Board. A list of these habitats can be found in the rules in WAC 222-16-080. Landowners that own property within these areas can apply to donate or sell a permanent conservation easement as well.

### General Instructions

Application: RHOSP has two applications, one for those areas a landowner wants to voluntarily donate or receive compensation for forest land that is within a CMZ and another for areas containing critical habitat for threatened or endangered species as designated by the Forest Practices Board. For forest land that contains a critical habitat for threatened or endangered species as designated by the Forest Practice Board, the application can be found on [DNR's website](#).

**Eligibility:** To donate or receive compensation for a conservation easement under the Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program your project must meet the following eligibility qualifications:

- The land must be located within one of two areas: 1.) an unconfined channel migration zone and 2.) areas containing critical habitat for threatened or endangered species as designated by the Forest Practices Board.
- County assessor records must identify the land as being “designated forest land” under chapter 84.33 RCW or “current use forest land” under chapter 84.34 RCW.
- Adequate legal access to the property is available to allow DNR to administer the easement terms and conditions.
- All persons having a legal interest in the property are willing to convey or subordinate their interest to the state for the conservation easement.
- There must not be unacceptable liabilities present, such as hazardous substances present on the project area or any other site condition that may jeopardize the preservation of fisheries enhancement or ecological protection of the project area.

For eligible applicants, your project will be placed in order of funding by a selection committee. The ranking criteria are as follows:

- Conservation value of ecological and biological characteristics
- Landowner management options that show manageability and viability

See Forest Practices Board Manual Section 18, Part 3 for more information.

### **Compensation for Conveyances**

RCW 76.09.040(3) specifies the compensation DNR shall pay for purchases of a conservation easement on qualifying lands, unless the landowner chooses to donate the conservation easement. For those projects selected for funding, DNR will determine the compensation value based on the date the application is received, which determines the timber value tables used (see next section), and the volume of timber on the area being conveyed.

### **Easement Valuation Process**

To determine the value of a Rivers and Habitat Open Space easement, the law directs DNR to use the cruised volume and a stumpage value of all the commercial timber on the land to be conveyed. The cruise will be accomplished and paid for by DNR. The stumpage values are based on the stumpage value tables used for timber harvest excise tax under RCW 84.33.091. Hauling Distance Zone and Stumpage Value Area designation for your land is used with the stumpage value tables to determine the timber value component. Stumpage value tables to be applied to your project can be found in WAC 458-40-660(2), available on the Washington State Department of Revenue web site <http://dor.wa.gov> under the section titled “Home” then “Find taxes & rates” then “Other taxes” then the category “Timber (forest)”. Or contact the Department of Revenue’s Forest Tax Section at 1-800-548-3203.

If you wish to convey an interest on both land and trees you can be additionally compensated for the land value based on an average value from the land value tables established by RCW 84.33.140. A separate land value is obtained for land in Western Washington and Eastern Washington. This value is multiplied by the total acreage of land being conveyed. The acreage value will be determined from a survey completed by a licensed surveyor or GPS data using a GPS with mapping grade accuracy. The work from a licensed surveyor must be paid for by the applicant and will be required only for high value easement acquisitions. Lower value easements acreage will be determined with GPS data provided either by the landowner or DNR.

**General Instructions**

Please fill out all portions of the Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program application. Incomplete or illegible applications will not be accepted and will be returned to applicant.

Please attach map(s) indicating the location of the area(s) in the project in relation to your property including parcel lines and other landmarks like road and stream locations.

Attach any reports or documents you would like to include in this application that will assist DNR to consider eligibility or prioritization of your project.

## **Details of Specific Questions in the Application Form**

### **Information About Qualifying Land**

#### **Question #1 – Applicant Name**

Provide the full legal name(s) of the owner(s) of the property the project occupies.

#### **Question #2 – Applicant’s Contact Information**

Provide the information to be used to correspond with the property owner(s)

#### **Question #3 – Primary Contact Person**

Identify one of the applicants or a representative of the owner(s) familiar with the project, can provide access to the property, and is knowledgeable of all the items submitted in the application. Provide the contact information for this person.

#### **Question #4 – List Tax Parcel Identification Number(s)**

List all of the parcels the project occupies using the county’s tax parcel identification number and the corresponding county the parcel occupies. The number(s) can be determined by contacting your County Auditor or will be listed on your property deed or assessor statement.

#### **Question #5 – Verify Parcel Eligibility**

Verify all parcels indicted in Question #4 is classified in county assessor’s records as “forest land” under chapter 84.33 RCW or “current use timber land” under chapter 84.34 RCW. Those parcels not meeting the criteria will be excluded from the project.

#### **Question #6 – Estimated Acreage of the Project**

This acreage number only needs to be an estimate. After the project is found eligible for the program and is prioritized for funding, DNR will determine a more accurate acreage.

#### **Question #7 – Location of Land(s) by Legal Description**

List the Section(s) all the parcels in the project occupy. If multiple parcels are within the same Section, the Section may be listed only once. Enter all the Sections within the same Township and Range on the same line in the table on the application form (example: all four sections, Section 3, 5, 12, & 36 can be listed on one line, of Twp. 13, Rng. 4 East). Attach an additional sheet of paper if necessary.

## **Landowner's Intent and Valuation Information**

### **Question #8 – List of Other Interest Holders**

List all legal names of interest holders in all the parcels included in the project. Attach an additional sheet of paper if necessary. Typical interests in land may include: fee ownership, mineral rights, water rights, mortgages, liens, judgments, easements, encumbrances, transfer of development rights, rights of way, etc. This program requires all parties with a right or an interest in the land agree to participate. Participation may include being a signator on the easement or subordinating an interest to the state for the value of the easement. Contact the Conservation Easement Program Manager at DNR if you are unsure if a subordination agreement is required or for a sample subordination agreement. If a subordination agreement is required, it is advised to begin early in the process to request the document from an interest holder as some large corporations take a while to process those requests. For the funding period your project is selected, a subordination agreement must be received six months prior to the end of the funding period or DNR may forgo your acquisition to a subsequent funding period and proceed with the next project on the prioritization list.

### **Question #9 – Readiness to Proceed**

DNR must have assurance all parties owning an interest in the land within this project is aware of and agrees to proceed to grant to the state a Rivers and Habitat Open Space conservation easement. If the answer is “no, not all holders have been contacted” please indicate a date when all holders will be contacted. DNR may proceed with eligibility determination and prioritization for this project but only when all holders have been contacted and agree to proceed will DNR begin the acquisition process. DNR will expect to see a written document (or email) indicating all holders have been contacted and agree to proceed. Because the acquisition process can take some time to complete and our funding source has a deadline, depending on when the applicant is ready to proceed, DNR may have to postpone the acquisition to a subsequent funding period.

If the answer to this question is “No, all holders have been contacted and not all agree to proceed” it is unlikely DNR will be able to proceed with this acquisition.

### **Question #10 – Access Assurance**

Legal access of the property is required for the purpose of monitoring the site over time for compliance with the terms and conditions of the easement. In addition to the conservation easement transaction, DNR may require to gain a permanent access easement on an access road or trail, only for the purpose of the conservation easement compliance. If access to the entire project is via a public road or trail, note here.

### **Question #11 – Permission to Place Application on Waiting List**

The project(s) with the highest priority will be funded first and with limited funding available for this round of applications the number of projects to be funded in this round is unknown. Should your application not get selected for funding during the current funding cycle, the landowner is given the option here to keep the same application on a waiting list. The unfunded projects will remain on a list and will be eligible to compete

with any subsequent funding available in the future. If your application is not chosen for the current funding period, DNR will return your application if you selected no for this question. At your option you may submit an application for a subsequent funding cycle no matter if you select yes or no for this question.

**Question #12 – Declaration of Hazardous Substances**

Indicate here the presence of hazardous substances located on your property in the project area. Presence of hazardous substances could jeopardize the eligibility and prioritization of your project unless all persons with an interest in the land are willing to provide reasonable indemnification to the state.

**Question #13 – Type of Interest to Convey**

Indicate here what type of interest you wish to convey for the conservation easement. There are two outcomes related to this selection. One outcome is the scope of what the easement conserves in the terms and conditions of the easement document. The other affects the method for determining the compensation for the easement (see Easement Valuation Process above).

**Description of Land Values**

**Question #14 – Importance to Salmon**

Describe the characteristics of your project area relating to the importance to salmon. If relying on reports or documents in your descriptions, please indicate the reference source. It may be useful to relate information such as describing all known fish species at all life stages using the stream reach of your project, etc.

**Question #15 – Water Quality**

Describe the characteristics of your project area relating to the water quality benefits. If relying on reports or documents in your descriptions, please indicate the reference source. It may be useful to relate information such as describing known water quality monitoring data in this stream reach, presence of water intake sites downstream from your project, watershed information, etc.

**Question #16 – Habitat Quality**

Describe the characteristics of your project area relating to the habitat quality of fish and upland species. If relying on reports or documents in your descriptions, please indicate the reference source. It may be useful to relate information such as describing any known habitat of threatened or endangered species on site, species richness, diversity, uniqueness, and age of vegetation (including trees), potential to recruit large down woody debris, etc.

State of Washington  
Department of Natural Resources

**Question #17 – Site Significance**

Describe the characteristics of your project area relating to the relative significance. If relying on reports or documents in your descriptions, please indicate the reference source. It may be useful to relate information such as describing known differences in this site over other similar sites, vicinity to other protected areas (i.e. Federal land, other conservation areas), etc.

**Question #18 – CMZ Designation Process**

Describe the process used to determine the identification and location of the unconfined channel migration zone. List individuals assisting or hired by the landowner for this process and their credentials. List any documents used as references of information.

**Question #19 – Landowner Management Options**

Describe how the landowners management ties in with protection of this habitat. The answer should cover topics such as Long-term viability of the site to provide habitat, proximity and connectivity to existing protected land, on-going stewardship of forest, and any availability of external funding support.

Mail the completed application and any other documents as requested in the application (such as a map) to:

Washington Department of Natural Resources  
Rivers and Habitat Open Space Program  
Forest Practices Division  
P.O. Box 47012  
Olympia, WA 98504-7012

If you have questions about eligibility, the application, or the ranking process, please contact Dan Pomerenk at phone 360-902-1427 or e-mail: [dan.pomerenk@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:dan.pomerenk@dnr.wa.gov).