

Puget Sound Partnership
Salmon Recovery Council Management Brief
January 28, 2016 – Consent Agenda – Topic 3

TOPIC:

Consent Agenda Decision Items

MEMO STAFF CONTACT:

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PRESENTERS:

David Troutt

TYPE OF PRESENTATION:

- ☒ Oral presentation for a decision
- ☐ Oral presentation for discussion
- ☐ Oral presentation for information only
- ☐ Written briefing only
- ☐ Other: _____

ISSUE/QUESTION:*PIDA Grants*

At the November 19 meeting, the Recovery Council approved requests from four Lead Entities to extend their Project Implementation and Development Award (PIDA) grants through June 2016. As part of that decision, the Recovery Council directed WRIA 13 and WRIA 14 to submit a plan for spending their remaining funds to the Executive Committee at its December meeting. Following the November 19 meeting, two additional Lead Entities submitted requests for PIDA extensions, and it transpired that the WRIA 13 Lead Entity Committee did not plan to meet until January 2016.

In the spirit of the discussions on November 19, the Executive Committee made the following recommendations pending full Recovery Council approval on January 28, 2016:

- Grant the North Olympic Lead Entity an extension until June 30, 2016, for the North Olympic Land Trust PIDA project.
- Grant the Nisqually Lead Entity a 60-day extension (through February 29, 2016) for the Nisqually Land Trust PIDA project.
- Grant WRIA 13 and WRIA 14 a grace period to the Executive Committee's February 12 meeting to provide a plan for spending their remaining funds.

Island Watershed Monitoring Project

In 2015, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) adopted a policy allowing each salmon recovery region to use up to 10% of its Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds (PCSRF) allocation for monitoring projects. In turn, the Recovery Council adopted a policy for the 2015 grant round allowing each Lead Entity to use up to 10% of its SRFB (PCSRF) funds for monitoring projects.

Following that decision, Island Watershed submitted a monitoring proposal to the SRFB Monitoring Panel. The Panel strongly recommended that Island expand the scope of its proposal. This expansion

increased the project budget such that it now exceeds 10% of Island's own allocation. However, Island has enough funds remaining in its SRFB allocation to fund the new scope; it simply needs the Recovery Council to lift the 10% cap.

Even with the increase in the Island project's budget, the four monitoring projects submitted from Puget Sound watersheds do not exceed the SRFB's cap of 10% of the regional allocation. Therefore, Executive Committee recommends that the Recovery Council allow Island Watershed to spend more than 10% of its SRFB allocation on its monitoring project.

ALTERNATIVES: *[[If a decision is requested of the body, provide 2-3 alternative courses of action, and if there is a well-considered staff recommendation, provide that]*

Option 1: No Action. No action would negatively affect two PIDA projects, two Lead Entities, and the ability of Island Watershed to complete a robust monitoring project.

Option 2: Approve the consent agenda items as a package.

Option 3: Amend the consent agenda items. If any Recovery Council member wishes to discuss any of these issues in more detail, we will remove them from the consent agenda package and add them to the regular agenda.

Executive Committee Recommendation: Option 2

BACKGROUND AND KEY CONTEXT:

PIDA Grant Extensions

In September 2013, the Salmon Recovery Council created the PIDA program to provide grant funds to lead entities and project sponsors to assist them with developing shovel-ready projects. The SRC established a deadline of June 30, 2015, for all PIDA projects to ensure the funds were used as quickly as possible.

In September 2014, the SRC adopted a PIDA return funds policy designed to allow Lead Entities some flexibility with PIDA awards while still keeping the focus on spending the funds as quickly as possible. An abridged version of the policy is below; the full text is appended as Attachment 1:

1. If the PIDA return funds are \$50,000 or less, the Lead Entity may put them to use on another project that meets the intent and spirit of the PIDA award program.
2. If the PIDA return funds are greater than \$50,000, the Lead Entity has two choices:
 - a. Use funds up to but not exceeding \$50,000 as described above. The proposed new project and the use of the remaining funds must be approved by the Lead Entity's policy committee. Funds in excess of \$50,000 will be returned to the region to cover PSAR project cost over-run requests.
 - b. Propose a new PIDA project for up to the entire amount remaining to the Salmon Recovery Council.
3. If the return funds are greater than \$50,000 and the Lead Entity is unable to use them by the deadline, or if the Recovery Council rejects the proposed use of the funds, then the funds return to the region to cover PSAR project cost over-run requests.

In March 2015, the Recovery Council granted all project sponsors a time extension to December 31, 2015. In November 2015, the Recovery Council granted specific extensions as follows:

1. Granted extensions to June 30, 2016, to the WRIA 9 and Stillaguamish Lead Entities.
2. Acted on the WRIA 13 and WRIA 14 requests, as follows:
 - a. Approved the use of \$60,000 for the Lower McLane Large Woody Debris project and \$40,000 for the Lower Fish Trap project.
 - b. Extended the deadlines to June 2016 for this \$100K.
 - c. Required WRIA 13 and WRIA 14 to specify how they will spend their additional \$28K and \$60K, respectively. Delegated authority to the Executive Committee to approve or deny these requests, along with a time extension, at its December meeting to allow these watersheds the greatest amount of time possible to spend the funds before June 30, 2016.

Following the November 19 meeting, the Nisqually Lead Entity and the North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity submitted requests for PIDA extensions, and it transpired that the WRIA 13 Lead Entity Committee did not plan to meet until January 2016.

WRIA 6 Island Watershed 10% Monitoring Request

At its February 2015 meeting, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) adopted a new policy allowing each salmon recovery region in Washington State to use up to 10% of its allocated PCSRF funding for monitoring projects. The policy makes eligible proposed monitoring projects that address high priority information needs or data gaps identified within a recovery plan and/or associated regional research, monitoring, and evaluation (RME) plan or lead entity strategy.

At its April 2, 2015, meeting, the Recovery Council adopted a policy to respond to the new SRFB policy, allowing each Lead Entity to use up to 10% of its own PCSRF allocation for monitoring projects. (More detail and the full text of this policy is provided in the memo on proposed new 10% monitoring policies.)

Four Lead Entities submitted monitoring proposals pursuant to this policy, including Island Watershed. The SRFB Monitoring Panel strongly recommended that Island expand the scope of its proposal. This expansion increased the project budget such that it now exceeds 10% of Island's own allocation. However, Island has enough funds remaining in its SRFB allocation to fund the new scope; it simply needs the Recovery Council to lift the 10% cap.

ANALYSIS:

PIDA Extensions

The Recovery Council's intent when setting the original deadline of June 30, 2015, for the PIDA program was to obligate and spend the funds quickly. For the most part, this objective has been met: all PIDA funds are obligated and most will be spent by the amended deadline of December 2015. Granting extensions to Nisqually and the North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity as requested is in line with the decisions the Recovery Council made in November.

Legally, the funds do not expire until June 30, 2017. Ensuring that the funds are completely spent or returned to the region for assisting with PSAR project cost over-run requests by June 30, 2016, will be important to demonstrate to the Legislature during the 2017 session that we have been careful stewards of the 2013-2015 PSAR program funds.

WRIA 6 Island 10% Monitoring

Only four Lead Entities in Puget Sound decided to submit monitoring proposals to the SRFB in 2015. Consequently, overall the Puget Sound region did not come close to using the full ten percent of the PCSRF money it received from the SRFB for the 2015 round for monitoring projects. Because the WRIA 6 Island Lead Entity has one of the smaller allocations of PCSRF funding in Puget Sound, ten percent of that allocation is not that large. WRIA 6 has asked that the Recovery Council grant it an exception to allow them to use more than 10 percent of their PCSRF allocation to fund their monitoring project proposal. They increased the cost and scope of their proposal at the request of the SRFB monitoring panel.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPACTS:

Approving the consent agenda will require the Lead Entities to negotiate contract amendments with RCO.

NEXT STEPS:

If the Recovery Council approves the consent agenda, the Executive Committee will review WRIA 13 and WRIA 14's plans for reallocating their PIDA funds at its February 12 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Letters from the North Olympic Land Trust and the Nisqually Land Trust

Attachment 2 – WRIA 6 Island request