

# Northern Boundary and Transboundary Rivers Restoration & Enhancement Fund: Call for Proposals for the 2023 Project Year

*The Northern Fund Committee hereby issues its 2023 Call for Proposals for projects which are consistent with, and necessary for, the implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.*

Private, non-profit, and public sector applicants are eligible and encouraged to apply. Ongoing projects and individual proponents that have received support from the Northern Fund in previous years must be in good standing to be eligible for further support<sup>1</sup>.

The Northern Fund Committee emphasizes that priority will be placed on projects that are located and operate within the Northern Fund's geographic area and/or that concern stocks that contribute significantly to fisheries in that area. The Northern Fund's geographic area of interest is from Cape Suckling, Alaska in the north, to Cape Caution, British Columbia in the south (which encompasses southeast Alaska, northern and central British Columbia and the drainages of the Alsek, Taku, and Stikine Rivers). It is unlikely that funding will be provided to projects that propose activities physically located outside the Northern Fund's geographic area or which concern stocks that do not contribute significantly to fisheries within the Northern Fund's geographic area of interest. Proponents are strongly advised to consider the relevance of their proposed project outcomes to the Northern Fund's goals and objectives. The Northern Fund Committee's review of project proposals will also be guided by the recommendations and objectives set out within the Pacific Salmon Commission's Transboundary Panel Strategic Salmon Plan and the Northern Panel Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup>.

With this initial call comes a three-page Project Concept form. This must be completed by interested parties by midnight (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, August 31, 2022, and submitted to [northfund@psc.org](mailto:northfund@psc.org). During this preliminary phase the Committee is soliciting ideas and concepts only, in the format provided, not fully detailed formal project proposals.

The Committee will meet in September 2022 to review eligible Project Concept submissions. Following this the Committee will initiate the second stage of this process by requesting Detailed Proposals for their chosen shortlist of projects. Proponents invited to move to the second stage will have approximately one month to submit final, detailed applications. These will be subject to a technical review and the Committee will make its final funding decisions in February 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Stage 1 applications will not be considered if (a) the application is for an ongoing project and there are overdue reports associated with the project when the stage 1 application deadline passes, or (b) the lead proponent has previously received support for any project from the Northern Fund and there are outstanding reports associated with those projects when the stage 1 application deadline passes.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.psc.org/download/43/transboundary-technical-committee/12854/tctr-19-4.pdf>

<https://www.psc.org/download/42/northern-boundary-technical-committee/14136/tcnb-21-01.pdf>

The following information is presented to assist proponents in preparing Project Concepts for the first stage review.

### What proposals will be considered?

The Northern Fund Committee operates within the mandate established for it in the 1999 Agreement between Canada and the United States under the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The mandate states that the Northern Fund shall be employed as a long-term and stable monetary base that supports projects that assist stocks and fisheries covered under the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Because income from investments cannot be assured, the actual amount available for projects in 2023 will depend on Fund performance. In 2023 the proceeds from the Northern Fund shall be used to support the following types of activities:

- Development of improved information for resource management, including better stock assessment, data acquisition and improved scientific understanding of limiting factors affecting salmon production in the freshwater and marine environments;
- Rehabilitation and restoration of marine and freshwater fish habitat, and improvement of habitat to enhance productivity and protection of Pacific salmon; and
- Enhancement of wild stock production through low technology techniques rather than through large facilities with high operating costs.

The Northern Fund Committee's review of project proposals will also be guided by the recommendations and objectives set out within the Pacific Salmon Commission's Transboundary Panel Strategic Salmon Plan and the Northern Panel Strategic Plan.

### Goals of the Northern Fund

#### **Goal 1**

Development of improved information for resource management, including better stock assessment, data acquisition and improved scientific understanding of limiting factors affecting salmon production in the freshwater and marine environments.

This goal recognizes the need to obtain accurate annual estimates of catches and escapements for stocks that are crucial to the agreed regimes. Such information is required in order to determine MSY escapement goals, forecast annual runs, and manage the runs to fulfill the terms of the negotiated regimes. It also incorporates the need for better understanding of the factors that determine the annual abundance of the stocks and for development of reliable techniques that accurately assess annual abundance in-season. Acquisition of basic scientific information for salmon populations not directly referenced in the agreed regimes may be appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

Under **Goal 1**, the Northern Fund Committee encourages potential projects that involve data collection, stock assessment, and research concerning fisheries and stocks in the Northern Fund's geographic area. In particular the Committee encourages projects involving:

- a) Catch accounting including both stock identification and harvest enumeration, or
- b) Escapement enumeration of stocks harvested in fisheries of both nations; data needed to estimate optimal escapement, or
- c) Baseline data necessary to forecast returns and determine fishery stock composition for stocks originating in rivers in the geographic area and harvested in the fisheries of both nations, or
- d) Development and/or implementation of techniques to improve stock identification and forecasting, or
- e) Improvements to data systems that provide timely and consistent information on stock assessment and harvests, including bilateral data system integration, or
- f) Projects that improve understanding of production potential, rearing and early ocean survival and limiting factors especially for stocks of interest, or
- g) Integrated planning exercises that will assist in directing restoration and enhancement efforts for stocks of interest.

## **Goal 2**

Rehabilitation and restoration of marine and freshwater fish habitat, and improvement of habitat to enhance (*improve*) productivity and protection of Pacific salmon.

The primary objective of this goal is to focus on increasing the abundance of fish stocks by opening freshwater habitat to salmon spawning and rearing. In specific instances, it will be possible and appropriate to rehabilitate previously productive habitat that has been degraded as a result of human or natural activity. It is very likely that acquisition of relevant scientific information will be required to guide decision-making and evaluation. The Committee believes that large-scale habitat rehabilitation, habitat monitoring, habitat protection and land acquisition are more appropriately addressed by other agencies and organizations.

Under **Goal 2**, the Northern Fund Committee encourages potential projects that involve the rehabilitation and restoration of freshwater and/or marine salmon habitats and/or the improvement of existing natural salmon habitats in the Northern Fund's geographic area to enhance and protect Pacific salmon. In particular the Committee encourages projects that:

- a) Have the potential to increase wild fish production,
- b) Provide new habitat for salmon spawning and rearing,
- c) Restore or rehabilitate historical or existing salmon habitat that has been degraded by human or natural cause,
- d) Assess previous habitat restoration initiatives as to effectiveness over the long term,

- e) *Improve understanding and management of fish habitat,*
- f) *Develop plans that will assist in directing restoration efforts for stocks of interest.*

### **Goal 3**

Enhancement of wild stock production through low technology techniques rather than through construction of large facilities with high operating costs. This includes acceptable refinements to existing enhancement facilities that will increase the productivity of those facilities.

This goal recognizes the desire to enhance salmon populations where specific wild stocks are at levels well below their potential and where opportunities exist to generate returns that will contribute to our fisheries without compromising wild stocks. The intention is to increase total salmon production in the region by developing strategic opportunities that are financially viable over the long term but that do not create long term operational obligations for the Fund.

Proposed enhancement projects must comply with applicable enhancement policies of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and the Government of Yukon as appropriate.

*Under **Goal 3**, the Northern Fund Committee encourages potential projects that involve salmon enhancement in the Northern Fund's geographic area. In particular the Committee encourages projects involving:*

- a) *Development and/or implementation of innovative approaches to low-technology enhancement of wild stock, including exploration of new methods for salmon mark and recapture or other techniques that would allow the census of salmon populations in remote areas or*
- b) *Enhancing habitat to supplement natural production, such as construction of spawning channels, or*
- c) *Projects to operate and evaluate effectiveness of small-scale hatchery program, or,*
- d) *Creating access for sockeye and coho to, or planting sockeye or coho into, lakes, or*
- e) *Assessment of marine and freshwater enhancement potential, or*
- f) *Assess previous enhancement initiatives as to cost benefits, impacts on wild stocks and effectiveness over the long term.*

## Review Criteria

All proposals will be subject to review by the Northern Fund Committee process. In general, successful proposals will be those determined by the Northern Fund Committee to be consistent with the uses for which the fund may be expended and offering the greatest benefit in relation to the associated costs. Successful proposals will demonstrate:

- 1) A clear connection between the proposals' intended outcome and the purposes and objectives of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.
- 2) A description of how and when information or data analysis generated by the project will be made available to both Parties to the Treaty.
- 3) Evidence of a bilateral commitment to achieve project goals.
- 4) The technical merits of the proposal through:
  - Understanding of the problem.
  - Soundness of the technical approach.
  - Feasibility of the methods proposed.
  - Innovation and uniqueness of the proposal.
- 5) The proponent's capabilities, experience and record of past performance, as well as the experience and qualifications of key personnel. Also, the extent to which outside partners and collaborators integral to the proposal's success are available to support the proposal.
- 6) A description of the benefits to be gained from successful completion of the project. Projects that offer long-term benefits will receive favorable consideration.
- 7) The cost effectiveness of the proposal including the balance between project costs associated with labor and site costs as opposed to administration and overhead costs, and the extent to which other sources of funds may be leveraged in support of the proposal.

**Note:** An 'Application Guidelines' document has been published alongside this Call for Project Concepts. It contains information describing some of the requirements of the detailed application process for those Project Concepts selected to proceed to the **second stage review**, and some of the criteria that will be used to make funding decisions. An invitation to proceed to the second stage in no way guarantees final approval.

**Note: guidance relevant to stage 2 proposals involving genetic analysis:**

- Proposals involving genetic analysis should provide details on:
  - the baseline and genetic markers being used,
  - GSI performance for reporting groups/stocks of interest (citation is fine),
  - sample sizes for mixtures and/or target precision and accuracy targets, and

- any collaboration between labs for tissue sharing and marker development to foster development of coastwide baselines for use by both Parties in their respective fisheries.
- Proposals involving genetic mark-recapture should address:
- potential biases in the initial sampling event relative to the escapement (i.e. fishery, fish wheel, etc.),
  - potential uncertainty in stock enumeration in the second sampling event (i.e. sonar, weir, etc.),
  - the relative proportion of the drainage-wide escapement represented by the stock(s) of interest (>15-20% is needed for precise expansions), and
  - genetic identifiability of the stock(s) (does it meet precision and accuracy guidelines).

### Deadlines

Project Concept forms must be in MS Word or PDF format and must be received by e-mail at the following address [northfund@psc.org](mailto:northfund@psc.org) by **midnight (Pacific Daylight Time) on Wednesday, August 31, 2022**. Instructions for completing the concept form can be found within the form itself.

### Contact Information

Questions or points of clarification should be directed to the Grant Program Manager, Sascha Bendt or the Fund Assistant, Victor Keong via email at [bendt@psc.org](mailto:bendt@psc.org) or [keong@psc.org](mailto:keong@psc.org) or via phone at (604) 684-8081.

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