

July 28, 2023

Subject: Availability of Funds for Aquatic Related Projects in the Lewis River Basin

Dear Interested Party:

PacifiCorp owns the Merwin, Yale, and Swift No. 1 hydroelectric projects on the Lewis River in southwest Washington. Public Utility District No. 1 of Cowlitz County, Washington (Cowlitz PUD) owns the Swift No. 2 hydroelectric project, also located on the Lewis River. These projects are operated as a coordinated system. On November 30, 2004, the Lewis River Settlement Agreement (SA) established the Lewis River Aquatic Fund (Fund). On June 26, 2008, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission acknowledged this fund as a stipulation of project operating licenses. The purpose of the Fund is to support resource protection measures via aquatic related projects (Projects) in the Lewis River basin. To be considered for funding, the Projects must meet each of the following priority objectives as specified in the project operating licenses and the SA:

- (1) Benefit to fish recovery throughout the North Fork Lewis River, with priority to federal ESA-listed species;*
- (2) Support of the reintroduction of anadromous fish throughout the Basin; and*
- (3) Enhancement to fish habitat in the Lewis River Basin, with priority given to the North Fork Lewis River.*

This letter is to provide you the opportunity to submit proposals for Lewis River Aquatic Project funding. The total Fund amount available this year is limited to **\$729,860.97** for Resource Projects and **\$505,018.19** for Bull Trout Projects. Design-only projects will be considered during this 2023/2024 funding cycle and will be evaluated for biological merit. If you know of other entities that may have an interest in seeking funding, please forward this opportunity to them. All Lewis River Aquatic Fund documents, along with a process timeline, are located at the following link: <https://www.pacificorp.com/energy/hydro/lewis-river/aquatic-fund-applications.html>

The Aquatic Fund Subgroup to the Aquatic Coordination Committee (ACC) completed a **Lewis River Aquatic Fund Priority Reaches** document which provides priority rankings for stream reaches within the Lewis River watershed. The Priority Reaches document is aligned with the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) Interactive map which is found on their website at www.lowercolumbiasalmonrecovery.org/mappage. The interactive maps provide a wealth of information that should help project proponents in selecting areas to focus their habitat improvement efforts. For consideration of funding the proponent must demonstrate that they have reviewed both the Priority Reaches and the LCFRB Interactive map and selected appropriate projects/reaches from those two tools. Additionally, proponent must show how proposed project is consistent with fund objectives and priorities. Projects proposed in reaches other than those identified in the Priority Reaches document or high priority reaches in the LCFRB habitat strategy (Tier 1 and Tier 2) need a clear explanation of why they still support Lewis River Aquatic Fund goals.

To be consistent with certain comprehensive plans such as the *Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan* and the *Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife Subbasin Plan (LCFRB 2010)* relating to Lewis River reintroduction efforts and the recovery of ESA listed threatened salmon and steelhead species, higher priority will be given to Resource Projects that provide benefits to Recovery Plan priority fish species and stocks reintroduced to or originating from upstream of Merwin Dam, with emphasis on spring Chinook. Resource Projects must have specific objectives and expected outcome(s) that help attain the objectives of the Aquatic Fund.

Bull Trout Project funding is available this year and we invite you to review the December 2017 Bull Trout project identification assessment. Proposals will be evaluated according to alignment with the assessment.

<https://www.pacificorp.com/energy/hydro/lewis-river/aquatic-fund-applications.html>

To be considered, applicants must submit a completed draft **Full Proposal Form** by close of business **October 20, 2023** and obtain acknowledgement from all owners of land needed to access the proposed Resource Project. Landowner(s) must sign a **Landowner Acknowledgement Form** indicating they are aware that the project is being proposed on their property.

Each applicant will have an opportunity for a project presentation to the ACC on **November 9, 2023** with final full proposals due by **December 29, 2023**. Full proposals will be evaluated and scored based on four primary categories: 1) benefits to fish, 2) scientific validity, 3) feasibility and 4) cost effectiveness. The Utilities and representatives of the Lewis River ACC will finalize a list of selected aquatic projects on **February 16, 2024** and notify applicants shortly thereafter. The Utilities will submit the annual Aquatic Fund Report to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by the submittal deadline of June 30, 2024.

Please give attention to this excellent opportunity. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 503-412-8401 or erik.lesko@pacificorp.com.

Sincerely,



Erik Lesko
Aquatic Program Manager
PacifiCorp – Renewable Resources