

2020 Supplemental Budget Request: Emergent Operating Funding Need

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Technical Assistance and Targeted Riparian Buffer Incentive Program

CREP is the largest riparian restoration program in the state with over five million trees planted on more than 600 miles of stream that form a buffer between agricultural land and salmon streams. Buffers function as natural filters that keep water clean and cool, improving salmon habitat. CREP is voluntary — farmers are compensated for growing native vegetation along streams, rather than crops.

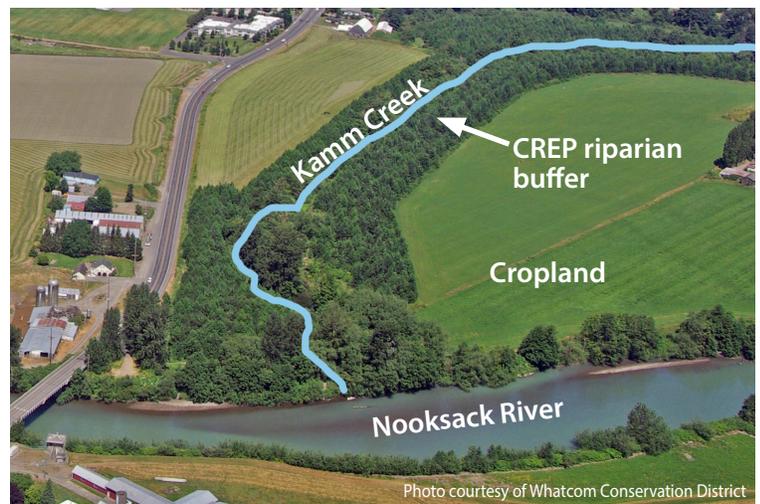
Funding requested: \$750,000

Why this request can't wait:

- ▶ The top recommendation of the Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force is to increase Chinook salmon populations, and degraded riparian habitat is a key limiting factor to salmon recovery.
- ▶ 2019-21 funding for CREP isn't enough to effectively maintain or expand riparian restoration and buffer projects.
- ▶ We need more funding for technical assistance — the relationship-building, coordination, and expertise to develop buffer projects — in order to engage landowners with riparian restoration in targeted areas and quicken progress toward salmon and orca recovery goals.
- ▶ Requested funding will enable us to expand landowner engagement with riparian restoration so we're shovel-ready with buffer projects in high-priority areas when we head into the next biennium.

Why are voluntarily planted riparian buffers important for Washington?

- ▶ Engaging voluntary participation avoids the legal, political, and economic considerations of regulatory buffers, which essentially "take" private land. Landowners who participate in CREP feel pride and ownership in the habitat they helped to create.
- ▶ Conditions have improved in stream reaches with high levels of voluntary participation in CREP, including cooler water and increased salmon returns.
- ▶ Observational data show we can achieve these desired outcomes when buffers are created on at least 70 percent of a riparian corridor.



What are some examples of CREP accomplishments so far?



Summer water temperatures dropped 10 degrees F in the Tucannon River (Columbia Co.) after trees planted through CREP grew tall enough to provide shade.



Average width of a CREP forested buffer is 142 ft, which demonstrates that, when given flexibility and incentives, landowners choose to plant buffers that average almost 3x the federal minimum of 50 ft wide.

What will this request do?

This two-part request supports the technical assistance needed to substantially boost CREP enrollment, maximize both agricultural and non-agricultural landowner participation with riparian restoration, and achieve results.

Part I: CREP Technical Assistance

- ▶ Funds at least part-time staff at selected conservation districts to promote CREP and develop relationships with potential participants.

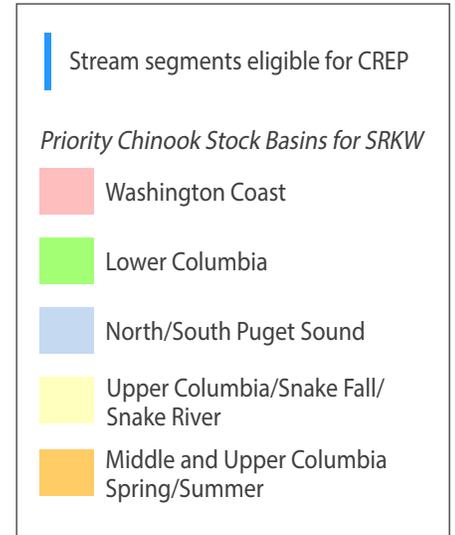
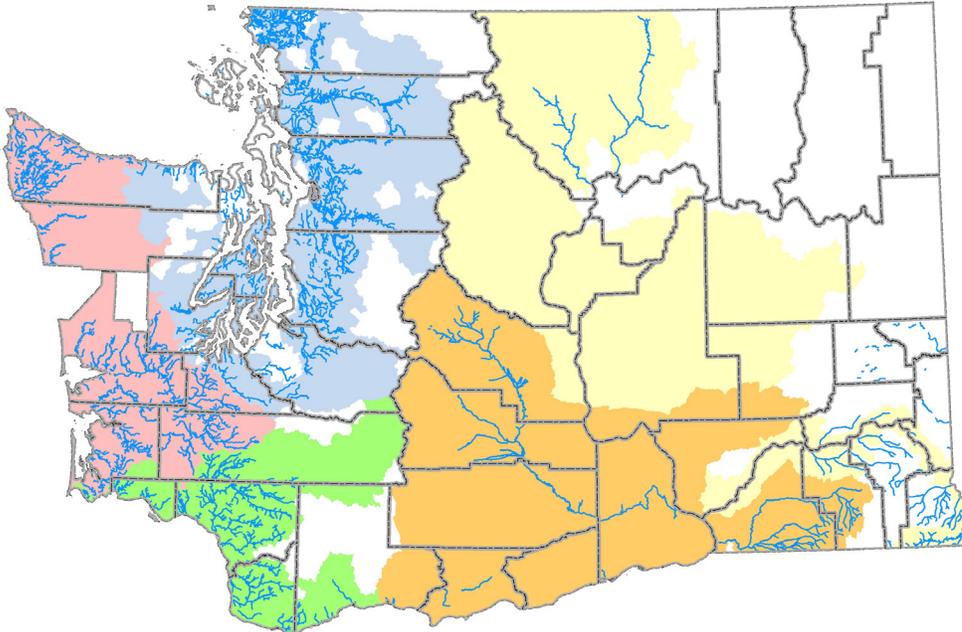
Part II: Pilot Targeted Riparian Buffer Incentive Program

- ▶ Complements and maximizes CREP outcomes by using strategic incentives and providing pathways for non-agricultural landowners — who currently are ineligible for CREP — to participate.
- ▶ Develops projects in four high-priority watersheds for salmon.
- ▶ By using innovative incentive strategies and broadening eligibility in targeted areas, projects more likely will achieve the 70 percent participation threshold within a stream reach that yields results for salmon.



Good for salmon, good for orca

This request will deliver results for orca recovery. Nearly all CREP-eligible streams are within priority Chinook stock basins for our Southern Resident Killer Whales.



¹NOAA and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. (2018) Southern Resident Killer Whale Priority Chinook Stocks Report. Retrieved from: https://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/protected_species/marine_mammals/killer_whales/recovery/srkw_priority_chinook_stocks_conceptual_model_report___list_22june2018.pdf

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