

## **THE BONNEVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION MODEL WATERSHED PROGRAM CRITERIA**

The Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) is committed to restoring ecological integrity and native fish populations in watersheds across the Pacific Northwest (OR, WA, ID, MT). To this end, BEF develops and applies rigorous project standards and supports only comprehensive, long-term, and science-based watershed restoration initiatives that offer substantial potential to restore watershed health and conserve or recover depressed stocks of native salmon and trout.

In an effort to directly develop and encourage comprehensive and long-term watershed restoration initiatives, the Bonneville Environmental Foundation employs a Model Watershed restoration approach that strives to maximize restoration success and both demonstrate and document effective restoration methodology across the region. The Foundation's Model Watershed Program provides essential financial and scientific support to structure, develop, and sustain 10-year restoration and monitoring programs in selected priority watersheds. BEF's commitment to provide technical assistance and support scientific monitoring and assessment over the long-term allows the Foundation's Model Watershed partners to implement a systematic and scientific restoration and monitoring strategy and ensures that critical restoration needs are identified, addressed, and monitored at the watershed-scale.

While we recognize that some watershed restoration groups favor approaches inconsistent with our own, we strongly believe that a long-term, science-based, and monitoring-intensive restoration strategy provides the surest means to reestablish the complex physical aquatic habitat systems and linkages critical to natural watershed function and native salmonid lifecycles. Accordingly, BEF strives to support community-endorsed watershed programs that demonstrate both the ability and desire to develop comprehensive and long-term watershed restoration strategies.

### **WATERSHED FUNDING LOGISTICS**

#### **LETTER OF ENQUIRY**

Parties wishing to apply for long-term Model Watershed support must first submit a Letter of Enquiry to the Foundation. A Letter may be submitted at any time, and BEF will solicit full project proposals where Letters demonstrate consistency with BEF's Watershed Program Criteria and correspond with funding and geographic priorities.

Letters of Enquiry should: 1) describe a proposed or existing comprehensive watershed restoration and monitoring strategy that is consistent with BEF's Program Prerequisites and 2) briefly outline the assessment, monitoring, and/or

restoration planning actions required to implement the proposed or existing restoration strategy. Letters should not exceed three pages in length, and in all cases it is advisable to discuss project specifics with the BEF Watershed Program Officer prior to drafting and submitting a Letter of Enquiry. Please call (503) 248-1905 or e-mail us at [watersheds@b-e-f.org](mailto:watersheds@b-e-f.org)

### **FUNDING CYCLE**

BEF's Model Watershed funding cycle is ongoing, and Letters of Enquiry and/or project proposals may be solicited or formally reviewed at any time throughout the year. Ultimately, the Foundation expects to select a limited number of long-term Model Watershed partners and commit to support selected Model Watersheds over a 10-year period. Where ongoing BEF Model Watershed projects exist, grants may be submitted and reviewed annually or in multiple-year blocks, as appropriate. In every case, BEF will only consider grants for programs that propose to undertake—or are currently implementing—a comprehensive, science-based, and long-term restoration and monitoring program.

### **SIZE OF GRANTS**

BEF's annual investments in long-term Model Watershed Programs to date have ranged from \$5,000 to \$40,000. While the Foundation may consider annual support for Model Watersheds outside of this range, BEF's past funding history is indicative of our preferred annual investment.

### **PROJECT MATCHING REQUIREMENTS**

Although BEF does not maintain explicit cash or in-kind matching requirements, in all cases the Foundation expects Model Watershed program partners to specify and contribute valuable cash and/or in-kind resources that will augment BEF's watershed restoration investments.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Any private person, organization, tribe, or local government, within the Pacific Northwest (OR, ID, WA, OR), may submit a Letter of Enquiry. Funding, however, will only be considered where applicants 1) base proposed or existing actions on sound science; 2) exhibit strong community engagement; and 3) demonstrate a comprehensive, watershed-scale approach.

### **REPORTING**

The Bonneville Environmental Foundation expects each Model Watershed Program to serve as a critical test or experiment, through which both local Model Watershed and region-wide restoration actions can be informed, developed, and strengthened. To this end, the Foundation's Board and staff are committed to learning from the achievements and shortfalls of every project we support, and BEF requires grantees to invest a significant amount of time monitoring, evaluating, and reporting the results of each Model Watershed Program. To promote this long-term review, grantees are required to submit financial and narrative reports at least annually to the Foundation.

## **MODEL WATERSHED PROGRAM PREREQUISITES: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT**

**While the Foundation recognizes that few watershed strategies or actions can guarantee specific restoration outcomes, we strongly believe that two parameters, above all others, can provide clear indication of potential long-term restoration success. Accordingly, BEF's Model Watershed Program seeks to both encourage and support comprehensive restoration strategies that develop and embrace the following:**

- **Community Watershed Engagement**

First, we believe that a watershed council or other strong evidence of community watershed engagement is critical to the development and fruition of any watershed restoration activity. As a result, BEF expects to support only projects in which local watershed groups and/or community members are actively employed in designing, implementing, and monitoring long-term watershed restoration programs.

- **A Scientific Basis**

Second, BEF's experience indicates that in-depth scientific assessment is necessary to ensure that watershed restoration efforts confront primary limiting conditions with comprehensive, systematic, and scientific watershed restoration projects and planning. The Bonneville Environmental Foundation, consequently, expects Model Watershed participants to develop and utilize in-depth watershed assessments to orient restoration planning, identify ecological constraints, and prioritize critical restoration actions.

**While BEF's Watershed Program emphasizes the fundamental importance of both community engagement and a science-based approach, the Foundation acknowledges that scientific assessment and community support comprise only the first steps in the long and complex process required to restore damaged watersheds and recover native fish populations. Accordingly, BEF asserts that successful watershed restoration, at a minimum, requires two additional parameters:**

- **Watershed-Scale Approach**

With watershed function and salmonid productivity dependent upon integrated, diverse, and complex physical and biological systems at all scales across a watershed, BEF contends that restoration efforts must address ecosystem function at the watershed-scale and take into account habitat constraints and requirements at every stage of the salmonid lifecycle.

- **Long-term Monitoring and Evaluation**

Finally, BEF asserts that long-term, comprehensive, and statistically valid monitoring systems are crucial to the success of every watershed restoration effort. BEF therefore expects Model Watershed Programs to identify baseline conditions, set measurable restoration objectives, and establish the necessary long-term monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track restoration progress and adjust restoration strategies according to results.

### **MODEL WATERSHED CONTINUUM**

The Foundation expects Model Watershed grantees to develop and implement a strategic work plan that allows community engagement, scientific assessment, and long-term monitoring strategies to guide on-the-ground restoration decisions and actions. While BEF recognizes and embraces the fact that program applicants are at varying stages of watershed assessment, restoration, and monitoring, we expect each Model Watershed applicant to either

- a) **Demonstrate past consistency with the following actions or**
- b) **Propose to implement a comprehensive watershed restoration and monitoring program that will:**
  - Develop strong community support and integrate with a watershed council or other community-endorsed watershed group.
  - Complete a watershed-biological assessment or develop another comprehensive scientific basis to guide long-term restoration and monitoring efforts.
  - Identify environmental constraints to watershed health and salmonid lifecycles and prioritize restoration actions based on the results of completed watershed-biological assessments.
  - Define measurable and community-endorsed restoration objectives and construct a watershed-scale restoration strategy to achieve these objectives.
  - Develop and implement scientifically sound monitoring and evaluation systems that will evaluate baseline conditions, monitor watershed trends, track the effectiveness of restoration actions, and provide feedback to adjust restoration strategies.
  - Implement priority restoration actions, monitor and evaluate outcomes, and adjust restoration strategies according to results.

## **SCOPE OF BEF FUNDING**

**BEF awards grants to develop and implement long-term, comprehensive, and science-based watershed restoration and monitoring programs. Where a comprehensive Model Watershed approach is clearly demonstrated, the Foundation may elect to provide long-term funding and/or technical assistance to:**

- A) Complete scientific watershed-biological assessments and fill critical data gaps;
- B) Identify and prioritize critical restoration needs and develop and institute a comprehensive restoration strategy;
- C) Develop, support, and implement a 10-year watershed monitoring and evaluation program

**The following types of organizations are eligible for BEF's long-term Model Watershed support:**

- Newly created watershed groups that demonstrate strong community engagement and a clear desire to develop and implement a long-term and science-based restoration and monitoring approach; and
- Well-established watershed restoration programs that demonstrate strong community engagement and commit to maintain or initiate a long-term and science-based restoration and monitoring approach.