

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Among them:

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
Department of Ecology (DOE)
Puget Sound Partnership (PSP)
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Washington State Conservation Commission (WSCC)

For the:

Participation in the Align Partnership for the purposes of identifying and implementing administrative improvements in those State voluntary funding programs addressing:

- **salmon protection, recovery, and restoration, and**
 - **watershed recovery, and**
 - **ecosystem recovery, and**
- **water quality protection and restoration**

Background & Rationale

Local project funding is an important part of salmon and watershed recovery in Washington State. This involves leveraging inherently limited public funding into an extremely complex landscape in response to shifting opportunities and risks. State agency funding programs can help maximize the benefits and outcomes achieved by identifying and eliminating administrative barriers to local project implementation.

The Align Partnership has been serving as a state forum for inter-agency coordination and collaboration on administration of State voluntary grant programs. However, emerging opportunities and challenges associated with climate resilience, equity and environmental justice considerations, increased state and federal investment, and the nature of landscape scale restoration efforts require more robust processes to make systematic improvements. While this MOU does not confer any statutory or policy-making authority upon the Align Partnership, the Align Partnership can inform or make recommendations to decision-makers.

This MOU reaffirms our commitment to this work and establishes a shared mission to further improve and enhance State voluntary grant programs. To meet this mission, we are committing to the following: 1) better resourcing and focusing the Align Partnership on improving administrative processes that are within the decision-making authority of our agencies; and 2) exploring processes for developing and advancing shared objectives that will require changes beyond the scope of the Align Partnership.

A more coordinated system of state funding programs will better position local project proponents for collaboration and innovation, maintain connectivity between project proponents

and agency decision-makers, and help mobilize resources and capacity to address timely opportunities.

Desired Future Outcomes

The Align Partnership focuses on the following outcomes:

- Improved grant application processes for applicants
- More streamlined grant management processes for recipients
- Improved connectivity and accountability between project proponents and agencies
- More streamlined and accurate reporting of accomplishments by recipients
- Improved collaboration and information sharing among grant managers

Member agencies hope that achieving these outcomes will contribute to the following impacts beyond the direct control of the agencies:

- Increased leveraging of local, state, and federal funding
- Increased pace and scale of project completion
- Expanded capacity for local project proponents
- Improved return on investment for member agencies
- More equitable and climate resilient project investments

Core Responsibilities

To achieve the mission and support the desired future outcomes, the Align Partnership focuses on the following core responsibilities as capacity allows:

1. Being an active inter-agency forum for grantmaking practitioners to share updates, develop common resources, leverage successes, and consider innovative approaches.
2. Maintaining a sustained, regular dialogue and feedback loop with project proponents to identify administrative challenges, barriers, and gaps.
3. Engaging agency leaders with appropriate decision-making authorities in the prioritization and implementation of potential actions or deliverables that will improve our funding system.
4. Securing and mobilizing the resources needed to develop, maintain, and move forward a clear plan of work as agreed upon by member agencies.

Structure

To support core responsibilities, the Align Partnership may establish working groups whose purpose and composition is established and updated within the biennial work plan as described below. This structure allows member agencies to tailor the conversation and participants to best

accomplish the mission and remain nimble in addressing emerging needs. Working groups may invite people inside or outside of member agencies to join as participants to support discussions, provide additional technical capacity, and improve coordination. The Align Partnership will coordinate and communicate among the working groups, agency representatives, and agency leaders with appropriate decision-making authorities.

Roles & Governance

To support the core responsibilities mentioned above, the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the Align Partnership shall be determined through the development and approval of a biennial work plan agreed upon by member agencies through consensus. Consensus means general accord or collective opinion; it does not require unanimous strong support. It means all people involved support the proposal or can live with it.

Specifically, the biennial work plan will include the following:

- Selection of priority projects and deliverables as capacity allows during the biennia;
- Identification of representatives from member agencies to serve as an operations working group with the responsibility to support coordination and communication between working groups and agency leaders with appropriate decision-making authorities;
- Establishment of additional working groups and associated agency staff to help support priority projects and deliverables;

Substantive changes to the work plan may be made at any time as agreed upon by member agencies through consensus.

Signature Block

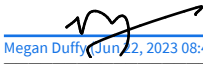


Kelly Susewind
Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Laura L. Blackmore (Jun 22, 2023 07:58 PDT)

Laura Blackmore
Executive Director, Puget Sound Partnership



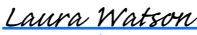
Megan Duffy (Jun 22, 2023 08:40 PDT)

Megan Duffy
Director, Recreation and Conservation Office



Kirk Robinson (Jun 26, 2023 13:59 PDT)

Kirk Robinson
Interim Executive Director, Washington State Conservation Commission



Laura Watson (Jun 26, 2023 15:49 PDT)

Laura Watson
Director, Department of Ecology