

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
HABITAT PROGRAM**

May 11, 2015

TO: Regional Habitat Program Managers
Assistant Regional Habitat Program Managers
Region Habitat Biologists
Regional Environmental Engineers

FROM: Jeff Davis, Assistant Director

SUBJECT: **WDFW SPONSORSHIP OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROJECTS
THAT QUALIFY FOR THE FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROCESS
(FHEP)**

[Chapter 77.55.181 RCW](#) streamlines the permit process for a sub-set of fish habitat enhancement projects. The Conservation Districts (CDs) currently cannot sponsor eligible fish enhancement projects unless they are a sponsor of a watershed restoration plan as provided in [RCW 89.08.470](#). Unfortunately the required interagency agreement with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service that establishes design standards for these projects was never completed. Until the RCW is amended or the interagency agreement is completed, WDFW will sponsor all eligible CD fish enhancement projects. The sponsorship will follow the approval procedures for WDFW to approve (i.e. sponsor) a FHEP under RCW 77.55.181(1)(b) in the [April 17, 2009 Interim Guidance](#).¹

The sponsorship process for the CDs is the same as for other FHEP project proponents that request WDFW sponsorship. If a CD contacts you, the habitat biologist, to request sponsorship, work with them to ensure their fish habitat enhancement project complies with the criteria in the Interim Guidance and help them through the FHEP process to ensure their request for sponsorship is processed in a timely manner. Once you complete your review, forward the plans to the regional environmental engineer for his or her review. Once the engineer approves the design as meeting or exceeding the design criteria in the Aquatic Habitat Guidelines, they will forward the request to the Regional Habitat Program Manager (RHPM). The RHPM will review the recommendations of the HB and the regional environmental engineers and provide a letter of sponsorship to the Habitat Program Assistant Director (AD) for his signature. The CDs can decline WDFW sponsorship at any time prior to the AD signing the sponsorship letter.

By working together, we can get beneficial projects completed as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Randi Thurston or Pat Chapman.

¹ This document is available on the intranet site at http://inside.dfw.wa.gov/programs/habitat/hpa/files/FishHabEnhanceProcessGuidance4_17_09.pdf