

FRGP 2025 Program Updates - Peer Review Committee, May 17, 2024

This document outlines potential FRGP program updates, organized into three components, their purpose(s), and actions to achieve the purpose(s). This document is meant to be a guide for the Peer Review Committee (PRC) to understand the scope of the 2025 updates and provide enough information to give comments, feedback, and advice.

Program Components

To help identify the purpose of the 2025 updates this process was broken down into three components. The three program components are:

1. Public Process
2. Resource Restoration
3. Administrative/Grant Manager workload

The program component definitions are below.

1. The **Public Process** Component: How can we make FRGP application processes more user-friendly? This would include simplifying the application process, becoming more equitable and inclusive for under-represented segments of the potential grantee population, etc.
2. The **Resource Restoration** Component: How can we make FRGP projects more effective in terms of habitat restoration and species recovery? This would include evaluating results of effectiveness and validation monitoring efforts, maximizing benefits of larger, multi-type projects, etc.
3. The **Admin/Grant Manager Workload** Component: How can we streamline FRGP evaluations from an administrative perspective to more easily fund robust projects? This would include overhauling scoresheets and the cost share matrix, creating an easier transfer of info from the application to the grant agreement, developing ways to evaluate multi-type projects, etc.

Components' Purpose

Purpose is defined as the reason for which something is done or created. There is a common FRGP purpose to sustainably improve salmonid habitat and ecological function in service to all those in California. The primary way FRGP does that is through granting funds to state and local government agencies, public entities, Native American Indian Tribes, and nonprofit organizations to carry out ecological restoration.

1. The **Public Process** Component Purpose:
 - a. Improve the application process to make it easier for applicants.
 - b. Increase CDFW/applicant engagement across the state to effectively communicate FRGP priorities and expectations in addition to understanding applicant needs and capacity limitations.

- c. Use the scoresheets to evaluate a project without failing it from funding, make scoring geographically equitable, and allow for multiple project types.
 - d. Projects will be evaluated on their merits as it relates to their benefit to salmonids and ecosystem restoration.
 - e. Increase program equity and inclusion with underserved communities and new applicants.
2. The **Resource Restoration** Component Purpose:
 - a. Address actions from the California Salmon Strategy for Hotter, Drier Future where possible.
 - b. To accelerate salmon conservation and recovery with novel restoration approaches that restore the physical and ecological processes needed to conserve and recover salmonids.
 - c. Recruit and fund projects that maximize the effectiveness of habitat restoration and species recovery actions.
 - d. Accommodate larger, multi-benefit projects of multiple project types (and smaller, more straightforward ones)
 - e. Improve how we assign value to restoration projects, including but not limited to different species, habitat type, and location.
 3. The **Admin/Grant Manager Workload** Component Purpose:
 - a. Simplify the grant writing process (information transfer from application to grant document).
 - b. Improve, simplify, and streamline the review process.

Possible Updates

To accomplish the purpose of this update, three groups have been identified that can address most of the purposes. The three update groups are:

1. Application Group
2. Focus Table Group
3. Scoresheets Group

What the group will focus on is further defined below:

1. The **Application Group** will focus on simplifying the application by reducing redundancies, removing low value-added questions, improving question wording, improving intuitiveness, and improving the question order to match the Watershed Restoration Grant Branch (WRGB) grant agreements. The group will address purposes; 1a, 1d, 2e, 2a, 2d, and 3a.
2. The **Focus Group** will focus on aligning eligible projects with CDFW and NOAA recovery plans, allow FRGP to be responsive to real-time watershed needs, simply the focus table, increase eligible watersheds in less represented geographies, and develop a review timeline and procedure. The group will address purposes; 1b, 1e, 2b, 2c, and 2d.
3. The **Scoresheets Group** will focus on re-envisioning Program scoresheets and scoring criteria to allow for evaluation of multiple treatment types within one proposal, emphasize biological merit, encourage process-based projects where appropriate, address NOAA and CDFW Priorities, and maintain a high bar for

meeting all necessary program requirements. The group will address purposes; 1c, 1d, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, and 3b.

Next Steps

The next steps for the 2025 update will be to consider feedback from the 5/17/2024 PRC meeting and incorporate ideas as best as possible. FRGP plans to have draft documents by fall 2024 ready to share with the PRC and public for another round of comments. We anticipate those drafts will be near final.