

Johnson Creek RFQ questions and answers

April 25, 2019

Okanogan Conservation District

What is the upper budget for this project?

The Okanogan CD operates as a government agency for contracting. This is a non-cost RFQ. The budget will be negotiated once the most qualified applicant is selected. This project budget was reviewed by knowledgeable partners when the grant application was submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Information about the grant application is available online.

Will this project require a wetland delineation?

It is up to the consultant to determine whether a wetland delineation will be needed to satisfy the proposed work in the RFQ and develop a permissible restoration design.

When was this property channelized?

Between 1940, and 1950, based on aerial photos available from Okanogan County.

Is the District interested in preserving agriculture as part of the organization's mission?

Yes, the intent of this project is to improve habitat for fish and wildlife, reduce flooding and restore agricultural productivity where feasible.

Is e-mail or hard copy submission required?

Email submission of the RFQ responses is requested in the RFQ.

Who are the project partners?

Development of this project will be closely guided by the needs of the landowner and meetings with the landowner will be facilitated by the Conservation District. BPA HIP III standards are required to accommodate potential funding opportunities through BPA. The Colville Confederated Tribes are a financial partner for the project.

Who attended the site visit on April 18th?

Amy Martin, Okanogan CD; Tony Dubin, Dubin Environmental; and Jason Scott, GeoEngineers, attended the site visit. The landowner greeted the participants but did not join in the site visit.

What work is being done on the site, currently?

The Landowner is working with the County and WDFW to keep the Conconully Highway culvert clear of debris, and plans to remove downed shrubs and bridge wood from the channel. In the past, the landowner planted shrubs on the Creek but survival was challenging because of beavers and then the wildfires. Okanogan CD is keeping the County informed on the progress of this project.

Has someone started developing plans for this project?

No, no one has collected information on the property or developed plans related to this RFQ.

What is the extent of the project area?

Fenced hay field and property lines is the working area, however based on the interest in continuing agricultural activities, it should not be assumed the entire area should be restored to stream/wetland function if opportunities to restore agriculture to some areas are possible.

How was this project initiated?

This project was initiated when the landowner came to the Okanogan Conservation District requesting help with the flooding. Initially we discussed restoring riparian vegetation once the waters receded, however, the ponding and surface water has been so persistent that it is beyond the capacity of basic District programs to restore the site to agriculture or habitat. The hope is to improve the quality of the wetland/stream habitat and gain back some of the residential or agriculture managed parts of the property.

How much of the watershed burned?

A significant portion of the watershed was burned, and some areas the burn severity was high. These watershed changes contribute to the current flooding situation.

What was the historic use here? What is the current use?

The site has been in production (most likely hay) for 70+ years. There aren't cattle on the site and currently no plans for livestock.

Is there an irrigation well on the site?

Yes, there is a small portion of the property that is irrigated from a well near the driveway. There is some relic irrigation pipes that are corroded and non-operational, and an old diversion or well-casing near the stream that does not seem operational. The hay field near the creek was not irrigated in recent years.

Is there groundwater data for this site?

Okanogan CD is not aware of groundwater or soil moisture data at or near this site.

Where is the nearest flow or water quality measurement?

There is a gauging station near the town of Riverside. The Colville Tribes collect data in a few locations and we can likely request this from them. Uncertain which parameters are collected. The closest likely location is the Greenacres Road crossing.

Have the neighboring properties had impacts from the water?

We're unsure whether they've had flooding but they are concerned. Uncertain about the condition of septic systems in the vicinity.

Do other properties above this have recent flooding or saturation problems?

Properties directly above this site have a little more ponding than typical but the project site is the most changed in recent years. Other locations along the creek have management systems that alleviate flood risk, like ditching. Overall in Johnson Creek, the water table seems elevated compared to recent years.

Will steelhead make it to this site and what is the status of fish recovery projects in the watershed?

It is unclear where steelhead will access once the problem culverts and crossings are replaced. The Fish Barrier Removal Board will likely fund replacement projects for several known impediments to fish passage. Okanogan Irrigation District has improved a significant obstacle by replacing the Duck Lake diversion. Only 10% of the fish that enter Johnson Creek get past the Highway 97 culvert, which is planned for replacement by the State. It is expected that some fish will reach the project area.

Where was the majority of the fire-fighting on the property?

Firefighting for the peat under the hay field was in a few locations, and may have produced the ponding.

What is the change in the amount of water in the channel on this site?

Johnson Creek has relatively consistent flow, compared to other streams in the Okanogan, because it is primarily fed by groundwater. Water levels do change a bit during the irrigation season and there are withdrawals upstream of this site, but the creek at this site does not go dry. Johnson Creek will be relatively resilient to climate change impacts because of its connectivity to groundwater.

Is LIDAR available for this site?

No, we are not aware of any LIDAR for this site.

Can submission be by email with a link to a file transfer service?

Yes.

Other comments:

We hope the goals of the project can be accomplished with relatively 'light-handed' techniques.

Potentially improving more natural vegetation on this property is an opportunity to improve downstream water quality.

Upstream land use is ranches and residential areas, as visible on Google Earth.

Drone footage of the property is available by request to amy@okanogancd.org

