

2023-2025 Budget Worksheet

Work Element

Acquisition (programmatic funds and reserve fund for multi-benefit acquisition project opportunities)

Summary of 2023-2025 Work

Several Chehalis Basin Strategy programs (e.g., ASRP, CFAR, erosion, local actions) currently do (or plan to do) voluntary acquisitions and/or relocations. This work element focuses on the continued development of centralized acquisition services and procedures to support those existing CBS programs as well as a limited amount of budget for integrated, multi-benefit acquisition projects.

Description of Needs

Floodplain acquisitions help to achieve the Strategy's dual goals of addressing damage from extreme flooding and restoring degraded aquatic species habitat. Voluntary acquisitions provide one of many options Chehalis Basin residents can consider to reduce the risk of flood damage and move structures out of harm's way. Acquisitions also can help restore aquatic and riparian habitat by reconnecting the floodplain. In some cases, acquisitions may have integrated flood damage reduction and habitat restoration benefits, such as when it is necessary to purchase and move a structure affected by repetitive flooding in order to complete a riparian restoration project.

As acquisition and relocation activities increase with implementation of CBS programs, there is expected to be an increased need for a consistent and efficient approach to acquisitions that is also flexible to adapt to the specific needs of individual programs. Acquisitions, especially at the scales being considered under the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative (LAND) process, are often politically sensitive, so there is a need to coordinate acquisition program design with key implementation partners, especially at the local level.

The following needs are expected:

- Develop the policies, procedures, and resources to support acquisitions across the strategy, drawing on existing resources and lessons learned. This long-term acquisition program plan will be designed to be consistent, yet flexible to adapt to the specific needs of CBS programs and to support integrated acquisition projects.
- Build effective partnerships and relationships with local/tribal governments, conservation districts, state agencies, and others to support effective and efficient implementation.
- Implement priority multi-benefit acquisition projects that support flood damage reduction and habitat restoration goals.

Risks of not developing a coordinated approach to acquisitions include inefficient, inconsistent, and/or inequitable implementation of acquisitions, missed opportunities to fund and take advantage of multi-benefit acquisition projects, and missed opportunities for cross-program learning. There could also be project delays that occur from not having processes, services, and partnerships established in advance.

List of Key Tasks & Assumptions

Assumptions:

1. Programmatic funding will focus on developing the policies, procedures, and partnerships needed for centralized acquisition services supporting the Strategy. This work has started and is expected to continue through the rest of the '21-23 biennium and into the '23-25 biennium.
2. OCB expects to form an acquisition workgroup to guide the design of a centralized acquisition function and the development/adaptation of resources to support acquisitions/relocations for the Strategy.
3. Acquisitions and relocations are a major component of the LAND Alternative that is under development and that the Board will consider, but substantial work will remain to flesh out implementation details for an acquisition/relocation program after the LAND process concludes.
 - a. The LAND Alternative is expected to include recommendations for:
 - Criteria communities can use to determine which properties should use acquisition, relocation, or other strategies to reduce risk of flood damage
 - Where, at a neighborhood scale, acquisitions may need to occur and potential relocation or receiving areas
 - The amount and types of structures that may need to be acquired as part of a comprehensive flood-damage reduction strategy for the upper basin
 - b. These recommendations and subsequent input from the Board can frame the scope and potential scale for flood-related acquisitions for the Strategy; however, OCB and its partners will still need to determine the mechanics and implementation details for how the Strategy will acquire properties and provide relocation support at the necessary scale. Given the complexity and political sensitivities associated with acquisitions, this is anticipated to be a substantial effort involving significant coordination.
4. Acquisition project funding will include a reserve fund for multi-benefit acquisition opportunities that may arise during the biennium. Funding for other acquisition projects, such as conservation easements and habitat-related land purchases for ASRP, acquisitions or relocations for CFAR, and acquisitions in the erosion management program, are assumed to be part of those programs.
5. OCB does not intend to become a landowner; acquisition projects will be structured and designed so that another entity (e.g., local government, conservation district) is responsible for the long-term ownership and management of properties after the conclusion of the project.

Key Tasks:

1. **Program Development and Support:** Develop the program framework and supporting materials for centralized acquisition services (e.g., support for title review, cultural resources, appraisals, relocation, closing and escrow, etc.). This will include adapting the RCO Manual 3: Acquisition Projects for the Strategy and for the needs of the LAND Alternative, ASRP, and other programs. Other aspects to be developed include determining the roles for local jurisdictions and land

trusts, the legal and bureaucratic mechanics of acquiring properties, and criteria/process for prioritizing integrated acquisitions. An acquisition workgroup is expected to guide this effort.

OCB staff and consultants will do this work, with input from an acquisition workgroup.

2. **Multi-benefit Acquisition Project Opportunities:** Fund the acquisition, moving, and/or clearing structures at risk of flood damage and/or acquisition of land for habitat restoration/protection. This includes appraisal, title search, relocation, and other due diligence activities, as well as costs for purchasing land or structures in fee title or less than title ownership rights (e.g., conversation easements).

Contracts will be required for structure demolition/moving and/or habitat restoration activities; most expenditures will be direct costs (e.g., fee simple purchase).

All this work should be allocated from Integrated funds.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

Program Development/Support: Estimates for Task 1 include consultant time for providing facilitation and meeting support for an acquisition workgroup, research on acquisition programs, coordination with other CBS programs, development of an acquisition program framework and acquisition policies & procedures based on workgroup and OCB guidance, and helping support implementation of integrated acquisition projects. Estimates are based on Ross Strategic's support time with an allowance for other contracted support needs that may arise associated with research and program development. The estimates also include an allowance for stipends to support the participation of under-resourced groups/individuals in the workgroup meetings. The Low, Medium, and High estimates vary in the number of workgroup meetings supported and the level of effort for research, coordination, and program materials development.

Multi-benefit Acquisition Project Opportunities: Estimates for Task 2 include direct acquisition and construction contracting costs, including due diligence services, fees, and relocation financial assistance. Acquisitions can vary highly in their price based on the value of the property and type of acquisition (e.g., easement/covenant vs. fee simple purchase). If we assume that the acquisitions are of similar size and scope to those under consideration for the CFAR program, the Low, Medium, and High project funding estimates below would allow for 1, 2, and 3 acquisitions, respectively.

None of these estimates include OCB staff time, which is assumed to be included in OCB core costs.

Task	Low	Medium	High
1. Program Development and Support	\$165,000	\$248,000	\$375,000
2. Multi-benefit Acquisition Project Opportunities	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000
Total	\$665,000	\$1,248,000	\$1,875,000

Prioritization

The "medium" category is the minimum recommended level of effort for the acquisition program in the 23-25 biennium. If an even lower level of funding is desired, the Board should eliminate Task 2 (multi-

benefit acquisition projects) and focus on supporting acquisitions occurring through other parts of the Strategy.

Contact Information

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