



## Contact Information

# 2026 Upper Columbia Regional Project Pre-Application

\* Pre-applications due March 11, 2026 (COB)

\*Complete SRFB applications due in PRISM April 17, 2026 (COB)

\*Revised SRFB proposals due in PRISM May 27, 2026 (COB)

\*Final revised applications due in PRISM June 22, 2026 (noon)

<b>Project Title</b>	Upper Columbia instream habitat assessment
<b>Sponsor</b>	Cascade Fisheries
<b>Primary Contact</b>	Kristen Kirkby
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## Project Summary

**Please provide a description or summary of the proposed project, including project goals. The goal of the project should be to solve identified problems by addressing the root causes. Then clearly state the desired future condition.**

This assessment will fill a Tier 1 data gap identified by the Monitoring and Data Management Committee and provide data critical to the effective use of UCSRB's prioritization model. Habitat data will be collected in reaches lacking data in priority Assessment Units in the Methow, Entiat, Wenatchee, and Columbia Basins. USFS Level II methodology will be used, enabling the development of Reach-based Ecosystem Indicators (REIs) for these reaches, which may then be used by sponsors in the region to identify habitat limiting factors and develop appropriate restoration concepts. These reaches include spawning and rearing habitat for all three ESA-listed species (spring Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout), and habitat restoration and protection projects developed based on assessment data will benefit all three species.

The goal of this project is to collect Level II habitat data on reaches in priority AUs across the Upper Columbia that currently lack these data, enabling the identification of REIs and Limiting Factors as well as their inclusion in UCSRB's prioritization model to ensure a more comprehensive application of prioritization and to determine the ranking of these reaches for restoration and protection in support of spring Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout recovery. This assessment will enable future restoration and protection projects in these reaches by any interested sponsors, as well as provide immediate benefit to restoration planning, design, and implementation in several specific reaches by CF and other partners already engaged with landowners.

**What are the project objectives? Objectives support and refine biological goals, breaking them down into small steps. Objectives are specific, quantifiable actions the project will complete to achieve the stated goal. Each objective should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).**

**Note: This exact question is included in the PRISM application. Example format: The project seeks to address [specify limiting factor(s)] for [limiting life stage(s)] by [specific actions proposed] to create an estimated [include specific target metrics, as described below] upon implementation in [estimated year].**

The objective of this project is to perform Level II surveys and develop associated Reach-based Ecosystem Indicators to enable inclusion in UCSRB's prioritization model for unsurveyed reaches in the Wenatchee, Methow, Entiat, and Columbia Basins. Survey, review, analysis, and summary will be completed over two years and data will be shared with UCSRB for use in Prioritization and to host for public access. UCSRB and the Monitoring and Data Management Committee have identified nearly 300 miles of reaches lacking any data and have further prioritized these. There are also an additional 220 miles of reaches with survey older than 10 years. CF would work from the prioritized list of unsurveyed reaches (and/or consider old reaches in need of resurvey, as directed by UCSRB and the RTT) to conduct two seasons of field work with a crew of technicians. We anticipate two seasons allowing for roughly 75-100 miles of stream survey.

## **Budget Request**

Values MAY be duplicative and do not have to equal TOTAL anticipated budget in pre-application.

<b>Anticipated Request - SRFB</b>	120000
<b>Tributary Committee - Anticipated or Actual</b>	120000
<b>Anticipated TOTAL Budget</b>	240000

## **Project Location**

**Briefly describe the location of the project** This project will take place in reaches in priority Assessment Units in the Wenatchee, Entiat, Methow, and Columbia Basins.

Latitude (decimal degrees) 47.663097

Longitude (decimal degrees) -120.216774

Project subbasin

Multiple Subbasins

### Please explain why there are multiple subbasins

UCSRB and the Monitoring and Data Management Committee have identified roughly 170 miles of streams in need of habitat surveys in the Wenatchee, Methow, and Entiat basins with 95 miles ranked priority 1-4 (of 7). In addition, 128 miles of streams have been identified in tributaries in the Columbia River basin, which are also a Tier 1 priority from MaDMC. There are also nearly 220 miles of reaches that have survey that is older than 10 years, which could also be considered for resurvey with support from the RTT. Work would focus on reaches that have received a high priority from UCSRB and MaDMC, while also factoring in access feasibility and potential restoration interest from CF and all regional partners.

Does the proposed project span multiple assessment units?

Yes

List the additional assessment units directly impacted by this proposal.

Too many to list. There are reaches on the survey list from 50 assessment units, as well as in the Columbia River, which doesn't have assessment units.

Reach(es) Name

The survey list includes 134 reaches in the Wenatchee, Entiat, and Methow basins, plus additional reach length in the Columbia River tributaries.

Identify the reach(es) priority/ reach ranking. Note: If the project involves work in multiple reaches, select "Multiple" and include details in the text box that will appear below. Please reference the Prioritization Web Map: <https://prioritization.ucsr.org/>.

Multiple reaches (provide details below)

### Please detail the reach-ranking of the reaches below

Reaches in this assessment do not have a priority because of the lack of data that this project will address. This assessment would pull from a long list of reaches in need of survey that has been provided by the UCSRB with direction from MaDMC. UCSRB has prioritized these reaches for survey based on a number of different metrics, and that will guide CF in selection of reaches for survey. With roughly 300 miles within the Wenatchee, Entiat, Methow, and Columbia River basins, as well as an additional 220 miles of outdated habitat survey, two seasons of survey are insufficient to cover the entire data gap. CF would anticipate covering roughly 75-100 miles of the reaches in need of survey, focused on those prioritized by UCSRB.

## Project Information

1. What species will the project benefit?

Spring Chinook

Steelhead

Bull Trout

2. Select the project's objectives and the associated tracking metrics

Design, Monitoring or Assessment

4. Does this project already exist in Salmon Recovery Portal or PRISM?

No

**5. Has this project been submitted previously for funding through the SRFB and/or other process(es)?**

**6. What category is the project?**

**If applicable, what is the secondary project category?**

## Design and Restoration Proposals

### Assessment Proposals

**7. What type of assessment are you proposing?** Level 2 habitat assessments in reaches that are currently lacking data for prioritization.

**8. Is the assessment identified on the MaDMC monitoring and data gaps list?**

**9. Describe how the assessment fills a regional priority and where that priority is identified.**

This project is identified in the MaDMC data gaps list as a Tier 1 data gap. The data gap notes state that "Habitat metrics in key Tier 1 reaches are missing in the Prioritization Tool (Level II attributes and associated REI indicators)". This project will cover as many reaches as possible within two summer seasons, with an estimate of 75-100 miles. Reaches will then receive Habitat Quality scores and a prioritization as well as have Reach-based Ecosystem Indicators and Limiting Factors identified for the development of future project concepts. This assessment will allow a more comprehensive application of the regional prioritization model.

**10. Methods - What methods will you use in your assessment and how will they achieve your stated objective(s)?**

As CF used in the past, USFS level II habitat assessments will be completed on identified reaches throughout the Upper Columbia, as described in the data gap. CF will also reach out to partners such as CTCR to identify whether additional data not collected in level II surveys is needed to support EDT. If this is the case, CF will work to collect additional EDT data wherever feasible. Finally, if CF surveys private land that was not accessible during prior fish-passage barrier surveys, any barriers encountered will be surveyed using WDFW methods.

**11. Will a design result from the project?**

**13. Briefly describe why SRFB funds are necessary, rather than other sources of funding.**

This project has been identified as a Tier 1 data gap by the UC MaDMC and is a critical need for comprehensive application of regional prioritization. Funding opportunities for this type of assessment work are limited in the Upper Columbia, and UCRSB and the RTT have identified SRFB funding as an appropriate funding source for regional data gaps. CF will also pursue match from the Tributary Committees.

## Protection Proposals

## Monitoring Proposals

# Project Risk and Economic Benefits

1. What is the landownership?

2. Have you secured landowner participation in or acceptance for this project?

## Please explain

No. With funding support and a timeline for survey work, we'll move forward initiating private landowner outreach. Some amount of outreach to private landowners will be required in certain reaches. While we anticipate some access refusals based on past experience, prior outreach work should facilitate this effort and CF has extensive experience in landowner outreach.

## 3. Describe any land owner requirements (e.g., design elements, right-of-ways, access agreements, liability waivers, etc.) and if/how they could affect the project

We will request access permission from private landowners, as noted above. If permission is not given, crews will not survey that parcel and data will either be left as incomplete or extrapolated from the remainder of the reach that was surveyed, depending on the recommendation of the RTT and UCSRB.

## 4. Will the project raise potential concerns for interest groups (e.g., recreational users) or the community at large (including upstream/ downstream/ adjacent landowners)?

No, we do not anticipate concerns from interest groups since on-the-ground work would be limited to surveys. Outreach to private landowners will provide a good opportunity to follow up with supportive landowners presenting information on current conditions and limiting factors, and initiating discussion about potential future projects.

## 5. Who will have the responsibility to manage and maintain the project? What is the responsibility of current or future landowners?

After quality checking, data will be passed on to the UCSRB for inclusion in prioritization, long-term storage, and distribution to interested parties.  
There are no maintenance needs for this assessment.

6. Are other projects being proposed immediately upstream or downstream of worksite?

## 7. Please describe the risk of failure associated with this project.

There is minimal risk of failure associated with this project, CF has extensive experience running assessments in our region. Private landowner permissions may impact our ability to comprehensively survey identified reaches, however the majority of surveys will be conducted on public land and necessary outreach to private landowners will allow for conversations about potential future projects. If surveys require more time than anticipated or are delayed for unexpected reasons such as wildfire closures, there is potential need for additional time or funding.

## 8. Is there any public outreach planned during and/or after implementation? Does the project build community support for salmon recovery efforts?

Private landowner outreach will be necessary in several reaches, requiring interaction between CF staff and landowners and allowing for education about current conditions and outreach associated with the project goals and the potential for future restoration. CF will take advantage of these opportunities to engage with landowners, identify concerns, and develop relationships in support of future projects. Similar efforts will be made to identify existing concerns and potential projects on public land, and CF will work with our public landowner partners to move forward with any identified projects.

**9. Does the project represent an opportunity for economic benefit? How much benefit does the project create for the dollars invested?**

This project will support CF staff and seasonal employees in both Okanogan and Chelan Counties. Future projects on private land may provide benefit to landowners, and future projects on public and private land could provide benefit to contractors.

**10. Describe any partnerships, their experience, and types of contributions supporting the project.**

CF has existing partnerships with the USFS, CTCR, and UCSRB that will all be important for the success of this project. The USFS has supported this work in the past and will receive all data from surveys on USFS land; CF will work with CTCR to identify any additional data collection needs in support of EDT; and all data will be provided to UCSRB for use in prioritization. Additional partnerships may develop along the way as CF works with private and public landowners and other sponsors interested in work in these reaches. CF will coordinate with partners to promote efficiency and support projects where possible.

**Optional Section - Preparation for PRISM (SRFB applications only)**

The following questions are identical to the questions RCO requires in the PRISM application for SRFB projects. If desired, sponsors can complete associated questions early and copy responses into PRISM during the "Complete Application" phase due on April x, 2026

**Do you want to review and/or pre-populate PRISM questions?**

**1. Problem Statement: What are the problems your project seeks to address? Include the source and scale of each problem. Describe the site, reach, and watershed conditions. Describe how those conditions impact salmon populations. Include current and historical factors important to understand the problems.**

This project addresses a Tier 1 data gap that was identified by the UCSRB Monitoring and Data Management Committee. Although many of the proposed survey reaches are within Tier 1 Assessment Units for either protection or restoration through Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board's (UCSRB) prioritization process, these reaches currently lack the habitat data necessary for the development of Reach-based Ecosystem Indicators (REIs) and associated Limiting Factors. REIs and Limiting Factors form the foundation for the development of restoration concepts. Survey data also will allow the inclusion of these reaches in the UCSRB prioritization model, ensuring comprehensive modeling of reaches in priority Assessment Units across the region. Without these data we cannot assess the need for and priority of restoration and protection actions in these reaches and so prioritization will not be comprehensive.

**2. Describe the limiting factors, and/or ecological concerns, and limiting life stages (by fish species) that your project expects to address.**

This assessment project will in fact identify those limiting factors for the reaches to be surveyed. The data that informs the identification of limiting factors is currently unavailable for these reaches, limiting our ability to assess the need for and develop restoration and protection projects. Survey data will be collected, REIs and LFs determined, and the data and these findings will be made publicly available through the UCSRB. Data will enable a more comprehensive application of UCSRB's prioritization and the ranking of surveyed reaches for restoration and protection.

**3. What are the project goals? The goal of the project should be to solve identified problems by addressing the root causes. Then clearly state the desired and future condition. Include which species and life stages will benefit from the outcome, and the time of year the benefits will be realized.**

The goal of this project is to collect Level II habitat data on reaches across the Upper Columbia that currently lack these data, enabling the identification of REIs and Limiting Factors as well as their inclusion

in UCSRB's prioritization model to ensure a more comprehensive application of prioritization and to determine the ranking of these reaches for restoration and protection in support of spring Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout recovery. This assessment will enable future restoration and protection projects in these reaches by any interested sponsors, as well as provide immediate benefit to restoration planning, design, and implementation in several specific reaches by CF and other partners already engaged with landowners.

**4. What are the project objectives? Objectives support and refine biological goals, breaking them down into smaller steps. Objectives are specific, quantifiable actions the project will complete to achieve the stated goal. Each objective should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound).**

The objective of this project is to perform Level II surveys and develop associated Limiting Factors and Recommended Actions on as many reaches as possible within two years of survey (2027 and 2028), which CF estimates to be between 75-100 miles. This work will take place in the Wenatchee, Entiat, Methow, and Columbia basins. Survey, review, analysis, and summary will be completed over two years and data will be shared with UCSRB for use in prioritization and to host for public access.

**5. Scope of work and deliverables. Provide a detailed description of each project task/element. With each task/element, identify who will be responsible for each, what the deliverables will be, and the schedule for completion.**

Level II Survey: 75-100 miles of survey (except in the case of private land access denials) will be completed by Cascade Fisheries over a 2-year period. A longer period would be preferred in light of the possibility of fire closures and other unexpected challenges. This task will take place in the months of May-October (depending on the location in the basin, access, flows, etc.) over a two year period.

Data management: The task of data QA/QC and management will initially be completed by Cascade Fisheries over the course of the project; however, final copies of all data will be passed on to UCSRB for long-term storage and sharing. This task will take place throughout the project, with data review concurrent with survey and data management, REI and LF development, and data sharing occurring during the winter and spring months. Depending on funding availability, this could begin during the winter of 2027, and will be completed by December of 2028.

Project identification: CF will pursue the development projects to improve habitat in high-ranking reaches and will identify criteria, options, and a timeline for subsequent projects based on the results of our surveys.

Project administration: Billing and reporting will be completed by Cascade Fisheries over the life of the project. This task will be ongoing throughout the life of the project.

**6. What are the assumptions and physical constraints that could impact whether you achieve your objectives? Assumptions and constraints are external conditions that are not under the direct control of the project, but directly impact the outcome of the project. These may include ecological and geomorphic factors, land use constraints, public acceptance of the project, delays, or other factors. How will you address these issues if they arise?**

Reaches include parcels of private land. Cascade Fisheries will have to connect with private landowners and receive access permission to enable surveys. While we've had generally good success requesting access in the past, it's likely some landowners will deny access, limiting a complete survey. Other factors such as access challenges and fire closures may delay surveys, but no other major challenges are anticipated.

**7. How have lessons learned from completed projects or monitoring studies informed this projects?**

Cascade Fisheries has years of experience completing level 2 surveys and fish passage barrier assessments in all three basins, which provides a strong foundation of equipment, crew management experience, and private landowner outreach experience. We have extensive experience working with private landowners as well as regional partners.

## **8. Describe the alternatives considered and why the preferred was chosen.**

There are no alternatives for filling this Tier 1 data gap.

## **9. How were stakeholders consulted in the development of this project? Identify the stakeholders, their concerns or feedback, and how the concerns were addressed.**

In our first round of this assessment work, CF reached out to a number of interested parties including the USFS, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Trout Unlimited, Cascadia Conservation District, and the Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation to facilitate partnership and efficiencies where possible. CF will continue these conversations to ensure that we're focused on partner needs within the context of regional priorities. Where possible, we'll support other data needs identified by partners, such as for EDT modeling.

## **10. Does your project address or accommodate the anticipated effects of climate change? How will your project be climate resilient given future conditions? How will your project increase species and habitat adaptability?**

Not applicable for this assessment project. This project will identify REIs and LFs in 75-100 miles of reaches in high priority AUs, which will allow for the prioritization of restoration and protection on these reaches. Restoration is critical to improving habitat complexity and increasing ecosystem resilience to anthropogenic pressures like climate change. Protection likewise ensures that intact habitat remains to provide critical high-quality refugia in our basins. A number of the identified reaches are also higher up in our basins, and ensuring that these reaches are restored and protected will become increasingly critical as they provide thermal refugia with warm waters moving upstream in our basins.

## **11. Describe the sponsor's experience managing this type of project. Describe other projects where the sponsors has successfully used a similar approach.**

CF completed a level 2 habitat assessment with SRFB and Tributary Committees funding within the last few years. This project would require the same set of skills and experience, with the only difference in the reaches to be surveyed. Included this year would be Columbia River tributaries, which will require (in some cases) different approaches to access. This project is also very similar in implementation to our four fish passage barrier assessments, which were completed in the Methow, Entiat, Wenatchee, and Okanogan watersheds over 6 years. CF has extensive experience with outreach to private landowners to request access permission, as well as experience managing seasonal crews in support of data collection for assessments across our region. Some of the equipment for Level II surveys will be reused from our last assessment.

## **12. Will veterans (including the veterans conservation corps) be involved in the project? If yes, please describe.**

No.

# Supporting Documents

[Upper Columbia Process Guide 2026](#)

[SRFB Manual 18 \(2026\)](#)

[RCO Application Resources](#)