

### Background

The Northwest Straits Foundation was created in 2002 to augment the ability of the Northwest Straits Initiative to pursue funding for its programs and projects. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Foundation's board mirrors the membership of the Northwest Straits Commission.

The mission of the Northwest Straits Foundation is to protect and restore the marine resources of the Northwest Straits by supporting research, monitoring, restoration, stewardship, conservation and education programs and projects both at the local and regional level. The Foundation seeks funding for research, restoration and education activities in partnership with other organizations, including, but not limited to the Northwest Straits Commission, the seven County Marine Resources Committees, Tribes, federal/state/local agencies, universities, and businesses.

The Foundation is part of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative. The Initiative includes the Foundation, the Northwest Straits Commission and seven County Marine Resources Committees (MRCs) in Clallam, Jefferson, Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Island and Snohomish counties.

### Foundation role

The Commission is supported by an annual federal appropriation, which is used to support Commission and MRC projects. The Foundation, as a non-profit, is eligible for a broader range of funding and is therefore able to effectively leverage the Commission and MRC funds.

The Foundation has several roles:

**Grant applicant:** the Foundation can assist with the writing and development of grant applications in coordination with MRCs and/or the Commission.

**Project management:** the Foundation can also help to carry out the actual project management that needs to occur after funding for a project has been awarded.

**Pass-through financial agent:** the Foundation can legally obtain and hold funds on behalf of an MRC until the MRC is ready to use them.

**Other fundraising and support:** the Foundation can also provide occasional fundraising support such as soliciting sponsorships for the annual MRC conference and selling promotional items.

### Project Fundraising

The Foundation will seek or accept funding for projects that conform to the Northwest Straits Initiative Performance Benchmarks. The board of the Foundation will approve a list of projects and programs that the Foundation may seek or accept funding for on at least an annual basis. This list will include projects and programs of individual MRCs as long as the MRC identifies the project as a priority in its workplan or strategic plan and the MRC commits to support the project with funding or assistance with project oversight or implementation. Before the Foundation may seek or accept funding for any project not on the list, approval of the executive committee must be obtained. On these occasions, the executive committee may choose to seek guidance from the technical committee.

It is expected that funding proposals will be developed by the Foundation Programs Director with regular communication with the Foundation Secretary. The Secretary will approve all proposals. The Treasurer will approve all proposal budgets. The list of approved projects and programs for Foundation Workplan is attached at the end of this document.

The Foundation may also seek general, or non-project related funds. Project proposals will always include at least fifteen per cent of the budget to be used for Foundation administration and project, grants, and contracts management unless a lower per cent is approved by the Foundation Secretary prior to proposal submittal.

### The Funding Strategy

The Foundation will seek to build capacity and to diversify the funding base for on-the-ground projects to protect and restore the Northwest Straits ecosystem. The Foundation will seek to accomplish this while avoiding competition for funding with the seven MRCs and various partner organizations.

The Foundation will pursue diversifying its funding base using approaches approved by the Foundation at least annually. The Foundation is currently not promoting a fundraising strategy that enlists dues-paying members.

Currently, the Foundation will employ the following approaches with various funding sources:

*Corporations and Trade Associations* – The Foundation will seek funding from corporations and trade associations as appropriate. In particular, corporation and associations whose activity is affected by or affects the marine environment may be approached for direct funding or other support.

*Foundations* – The Foundation will pursue funding from private foundations.

*Government* – The Foundation will continue to pursue government grants for its projects. This has been a cornerstone of past project funding.

*Other Organizations* – The Foundation will continue to include partner organizations in its funding proposals and will continue building relationships with the many organizations who share its mission. Where possible, the Foundation will seek to partner with third parties to increase the effectiveness of projects, to obtain or provide matching funds, and to foster positive working relationships.

*Donors* – The Foundation will pursue funding from individual donors. The Foundation will also encourage donations at specific events and will provide an opportunity on its website for online and mail-in donations.

*Special Events* – The Foundation may host fund-raising events of varying sizes when opportunities arise and when the benefits will clearly exceed the costs of such events.

*Earned Income* – The Foundation earns a modest income from selling occasional promotional items and will continue to do this to provide a service to members and raise the awareness of the program

### Summary

The Northwest Straits Foundation was created to build the capacity of the Northwest Straits Initiative to achieve the goal of protecting and restoring the Northwest Straits ecosystem. The Foundation serves as a fund-raising arm of the Initiative, as well as a vehicle to carry out priority projects. The Foundation's fund-raising project priorities and strategies are approved by the Foundation board at least annually. A list of projects approved for fund-raising is approved by the Foundation board at least annually. They may be amended more frequently at the request of the Foundation board.

The Foundation is free to pursue funding for approved projects using the approved strategies. Regular updates will be given to the Foundation board. The Secretary of the Foundation will approve all funding proposals.

### List of approved projects and programs for Foundation fundraising

- Foundation capacity building
- MRC Conference sponsorships
- Derelict fishing gear survey, removal, research, prevention and outreach projects throughout Puget Sound
- Shore Stewards Program in Puget Sound
- Inventory and mapping projects related to the nearshore and marine environments (such as forage fish-spawning beach surveys and eelgrass mapping)

- MRC Projects and programs that are ongoing, part of a current action grant package, or identified as a priority in a workplan or strategic plan as long as the MRC commits to support the project with funding or assistance with project oversight or implementation.
- Projects recommended by the Northwest Straits Commission
- Projects recommended by standing committees of the Northwest Straits Commission