

Water Bank Summary Proposal

We are reviewing the water bank grant application under the 2023-2025 Water Banking Pilot Grants funding opportunity. This summary is posted for a 30-day public comment period. To provide comments on this proposal, use the comment form linked below and include the application number.

Application #: WRWBP-2325-OkanPD-00029

Accepting comments: start 1/22/25 — end 2/21/25

Summary:

Okanogan County Office of Planning and Development has been working with the Okanogan Conservation District under an interlocal agreement to establish the Okanogan County Water Bank. The Conservation District previously received grant funding from Ecology to acquire two water rights and establish the water bank to provide mitigation for new agricultural uses.

Okanogan County Office of Planning and Development submitted a grant application to acquire a water right and expand the proposed Okanogan County Water Bank to include mitigation of year-round domestic, municipal, commercial, and industrial uses. The Conservation District side of the bank will provide mitigation for new agricultural uses.

The water bank will provide mitigation for new uses primarily within the Methow Basin (WRIA 48) and Okanogan Basin (49) to meet increasing water demands within city and rural communities in Okanogan County. The water bank will help Okanogan County water right holders protect their water rights from relinquishment, provide mitigation in regulated or over appropriated basins, ensure the water rights remain in the basin of origin, and will also benefit local instream flows and ESA-listed species in upper Columbia River tributaries. Specific areas of mitigation suitability will be dependent upon the water rights acquired within the bank.

- The application includes the due diligence and acquisition costs to purchase approximately 500 acre-feet (consumptive) under a 1975 water right that is senior to instream flows.
- One-third of the acquired water right will be permanently dedicated to instream flows to meet the funding requirements set by the Legislature.
- The acquired water right will be used to mitigate new year-round domestic and municipal uses along the mainstem Okanogan River downstream of Janis Rapids Okanogan (river mile 51).
- The water right has already been conveyed to the State Trust Water Rights Program and has been tentatively determined by Ecology to be in good standing.
- The County will continue working with the Conservation District to establish the county side of the water bank under this grant. These efforts are expected to include: establishing a Rules and Guidance document including policies and procedures for management of the water bank, preparing documentation templates and permitting workflows, developing new County code, and completing internal and external outreach efforts.

[Online Comment Form](#)

Read more about [Water Banking Pilot Grants Program](#)