



Tucannon River, Columbia Conservation District

Riparian Grant Program Mid-Biennium Application & Prioritization Strategy



Washington State
**Conservation
Commission**

Conservation District Workshop
March 26, 2026



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE

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Today's Workshop

Meeting purpose

- Share the proposed approach for the mid-biennium funding opportunity
- Provide an overview of the timeline and process
- Gather district input to inform implementation decisions
- Guideline revisions will happen starting in September

Agenda

- Brief overview of funding opportunity
- Funding strategy and application structure
- Interactive discussion throughout
- Wrap-up and next steps

Decision Process



SCC is gathering district feedback today, through March 31



Feedback will be evaluated alongside operational considerations



SCC will make final decisions on the funding round approach
Shared prior to application launch



Funding Opportunity

- \$3.2 million available to award for **capital** projects
 - Technical assistance
 - District Implemented Projects (DIP)
 - Cost share
 - Maintenance
- Work must be completed by **June 30, 2027**
- Opportunity to implement projects during the 2026/spring 2027 field season



Why a Mid-Biennium Approach

- Anticipating demand may exceed available funding
- Previous funding round applications were non-competitive
- Co-develop prioritization for this round of applications
- Need to base this process on current RGP Guidelines

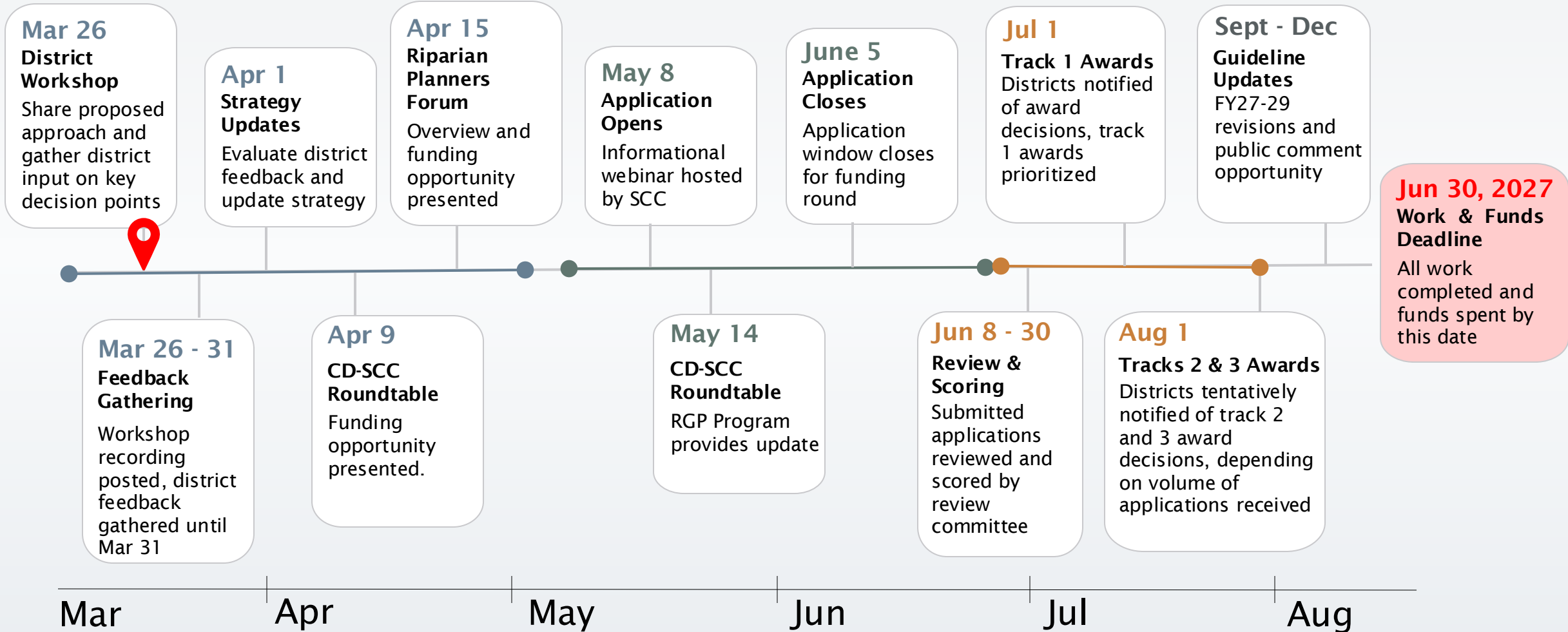
Key Considerations

- Move quickly to fund work starting this summer
- Align with RGP Guidelines
- Minimize risk of unspent funds
- Ensure a mix of different project types across districts

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

APPLICATION WINDOW

REVIEW & AWARD



Strategy Overview

- Application structure - funding tracks
- Orient to the Project Prioritization criteria (Guidelines Section 5)
- Scoring criteria
- Application updates to expect
- Conservation district interest in setting funding limits

Application Structure

Project types will be grouped and reviewed together to:

- Simplify review and scoring
- Compare similar projects
- Enable faster funding decisions



One application per district will be accepted

Proposed Funding Allocation

- Prioritizing on-the-ground restoration
- General technical assistance would fall under 'Project Development'



\$3,200,000 currently available

Which project types do you anticipate including in an application this round?

Project Implementation



Project Maintenance



Project Development (TA)







What challenges or considerations should SCC keep in mind with this approach?

Project 4

Funds 4

Changes 3

Flexible 3

- Allow for project changes within the District.  5
- Have ranking for applications that is efficient  3
- Make sure that any funding caps are clearly outlined in the guidelines or application.  3
- Allowing for changes between similar projects within a watershed without the formal return and reapplication process  5

Project Prioritization & Scoring

5. Project Prioritization

All projects must lead to improved functions within a critical RMZ. Instream projects must be conducted in direct support of a riparian restoration project. See the Definitions section for definitions of the terms **critical riparian management zone**, **riparian ecosystem**, and **instream projects**.

SCC reviews project applications monthly and prepares awards for qualifying projects. Qualifying projects are those that meet the eligibility requirements in these guidelines.

In the case that funding becomes limited, SCC will develop a scoring system to fund the highest priority of competing project applications. SCC may prioritize BMPs that directly result in critical RMZ restoration.

Project Prioritization & Scoring

5.1. Project Criteria

Projects meeting one or more of the following criteria will be prioritized for funding:

- Projects that are included or referenced in, in no particular order or priority as the existence of these references vary across the state:
 - [Watershed plan developed pursuant to RCW 90.82](#) (Watershed or Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) Planning).
 - [Regional salmon recovery plans created under RCW 77.85.090.](#)
 - [The Puget Sound Action Agenda developed under RCW 90.71.260.](#)
 - [The habitat project lists developed pursuant to RCW 77.85.050:](#) Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration.
 - [The prioritization process developed under RCW 27 77.95.160:](#) the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Board.
 - Priority projects identified for salmon recovery through agency grant programs such as Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) or Ecology grant programs.
 - Other local salmon habitat or riparian restoration strategies

Projects that are locally prioritized through coordination with local federally recognized Tribes, private landowners, conservation districts, the local county, WDFW, and Ecology, e.g., a Local Integrating Organization (LIO).

Project Prioritization & Scoring

5.2. Additional Proposed Evaluation Criteria

- Proposals that include written support from one or more Tribes will be prioritized.
- Projects that address environmental justice or emphasize benefit to, support by and/or participation by under-served, vulnerable, or over-burdened populations will be prioritized. See [SCC's Community Engagement Plan](#) for term definitions. The Office of Financial Management provides guidance and a mapping tool to [identify overburdened communities](#) in relation to CCA requirements.
- Projects located adjacent to or within the same watershed as other project(s) funded by SCC or through other conservation programs/funding.
- Projects that group work on multiple adjoining parcels or with multiple landowners, manager or lessees together into a larger contiguous project.
- Located in areas with identified pollution inputs with particular focus on areas with 303(d) listing for temperature or dissolved oxygen, or projects implementing an Ecology TMDL implementation plan.

Scoring Criteria

- Applications will be evaluated based on RGP Guidelines
- Scoring rubric is currently in development

Weight	Criteria	Rationale
50%	Water Quality and Salmon Habitat Improvements	
	Prioritized in existing salmon recovery and other habitat plans	RGP guidelines, section 5 prioritization criterion
	Clearly demonstrates how scope of work directly results in critical RMZ restoration	RGP guidelines, section 5 - SCC may prioritize BMPs that directly result in critical RMZ restoration
	Located in area with identified water pollution concern	RGP guidelines, section 5 prioritization criterion
20%	Budget and Schedule	
	Budget is clear and reasonable for the scope and scale of the project(s)	Ensures projects are cost-effective
	Schedule is realistic and likely to be completed within project period	Ensures projects are clearly planned and minimizes risk of unspent funds
10%	Tribal Support	
	Includes Tribal partners or letter(s) of support	RGP guidelines, section 5 prioritization criterion
10%	Environmental Justice	
	Provides direct and meaningful benefits to under-served, vulnerable, or over-burdened communities	RGP guidelines, section 5 prioritization criterion, aligns with CCA funding
10%	Targeted Projects	
	Located in same watershed as other restoration projects	RGP guidelines, section 5 prioritization criterion
	Occurs on multiple adjoining parcels or with multiple landowners/managers to create a contiguous project	RGP guidelines, section 5 prioritization criterion

Did we weight these areas of scoring criteria reasonably?

Projects 6	Tribal support 5	Water quality 4	Salmon habitat 4	Weight 3	Landowner 3	Tribal
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- Landowner support letters would demonstrate readiness of projects and landowner commitment and interest. I like this idea, although it may take variable time to acquire these for projects
- We should remove the TMDL aspect of this. In some parts of Washington, ecology has given up on TMDL work. Our county hasn't had a new TMDL in over a decade and they don't actively monitor most of our streams. It should be focused on salmon habitat benefit on site and downstream. upper watershed planting is extremely important for overall stream health and it may not even have salmon.

Application Updates

- Formstack platform
- Similar questions, reorganized
- Metric spreadsheet templates for DIP and Maintenance

New this round – Tentatively available to districts on May 1

- Budget and schedule template (Excel)
- Application questions provided in Word template
- Simplified environmental justice questions (CCA)

Maximum Funding Limit Discussion

Potential benefits of an application funding limit (*this round only*):

- Opportunities for more districts to be funded

Approach	Pro	Consideration
No limit	Larger projects possible	Potential fewer districts funded
Limit	More districts funded	Scale apps to fit limit

Do you support a maximum funding limit per application for this mid-biennium funding round? If so, what should the limit be? If not, please provide your reasoning.

Limit 8

Project 7

District 7

Available 5

Funds 5

Applicant 3

- Is 150k to low?
- If use a cap, like the idea that the cap is a percent of total funds available
- Agree with equitable dist. 3.2 mill divided by 250k is only 12 districts
- I think establishing a funding limit can help ensure resources are distributed equitably. It may be beneficial to align the cap with the



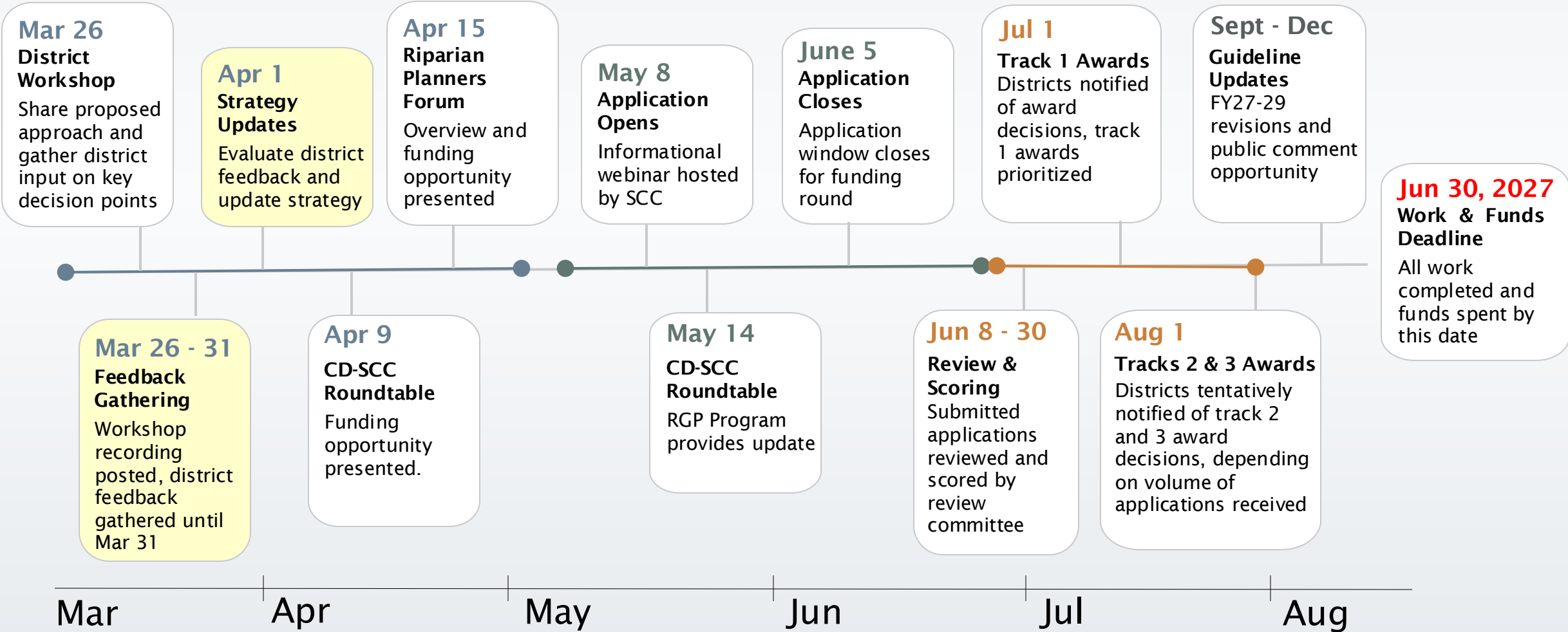
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Next Steps

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APPLICATION WINDOW

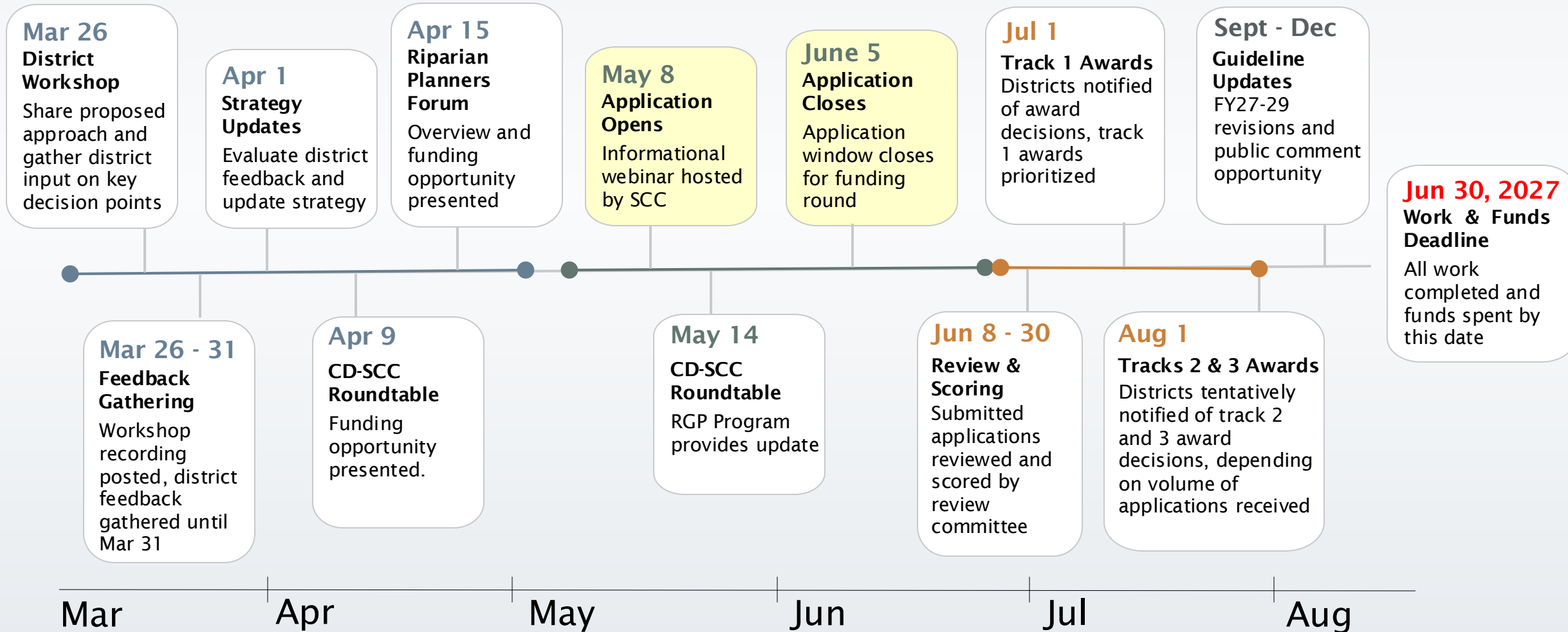
REVIEW & AWARD



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APPLICATION WINDOW

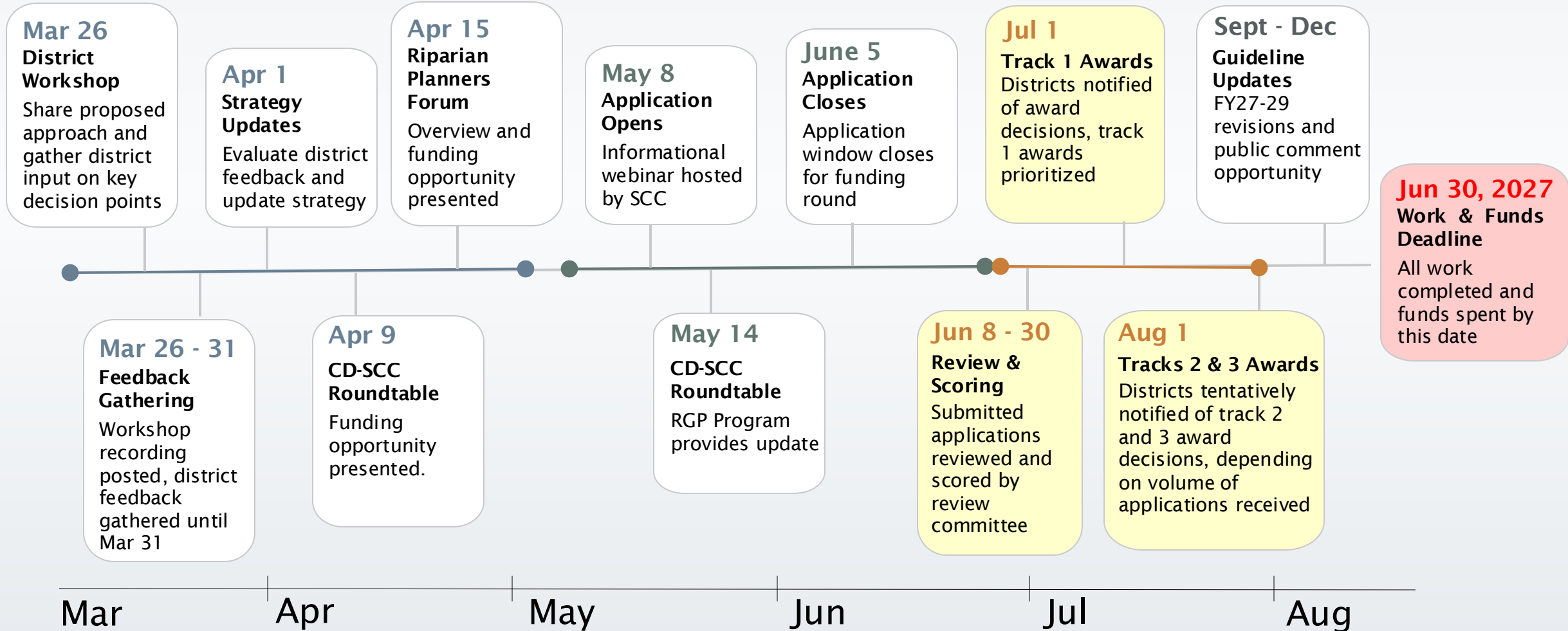
REVIEW & AWARD



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

APPLICATION WINDOW

REVIEW & AWARD



Based on what has been proposed for this funding opportunity, do you have any additional recommendations?

Funds 4

Criteria 4

Project 4

Flexibility 3

TA cap 3

Purpose 3

Rating 3

- Many answers to many of your questions will fall into place when the purpose of the rating/ranking criteria is clarified. My preference is a hybrid approach. Accommodate spreading the love while awarding compelling proposals.
- I also agree with the flexibility statement.
- "Get clear on the purpose for the rating/ranking criteria. Competition vs equity, etc." and communicate that rationale clearly to CDs



Skagit Conservation District

Thank you for your feedback

A recording of today's workshop and the Slido survey will be sent after the meeting.

Feedback will be **accepted until March 31.**

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