



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

**FROM:** Lauri Aunan, Grant Program Manager  
Wendy Hudson, Willamette Basin Regional Program Representative  
Miriam Hulst, Acquisitions Specialist

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item G: OWEB Grant Award Recommendations  
Region 3, Willamette Basin  
**March 18-19, 2009 OWEB Board Meeting**

### I. Introduction

This staff report describes the Willamette Basin Regional Review Team recommendations, special issues, land acquisition grant applications, and staff recommendations for funding.

### II. Background

Applicants submitted 58 applications for a total request of about \$7.5 million, including \$2.9 million for Acquisitions. The Regional Review Team (RRT) recommended 43 applications for approximately \$3.8 million, and reviewed the two Acquisition applications. Staff recommend 33 applications for a total award of about \$2,839,209. This includes about \$1,936,163 for Restoration; \$206,957 for Education/Outreach; \$403,415 for Monitoring; and \$292,674 for Technical Assistance.

### III. Regional Review Team Recommendations

The Willamette Basin Regional Review Team (RRT) met at the Roth's Hospitality Center in Salem in January 2009 to review the applications received in this grant cycle. All applications were reviewed for technical merit and given a "do fund" or "no fund" recommendation by the RRT. The RRT then prioritized the applications recommended for funding.

The Willamette Basin RRT recommended 18 Restoration applications for funding totaling \$2,606,739. The RRT also recommended seven Education/Outreach applications totaling \$318,422, seven Monitoring applications totaling \$428,435, and 11 Technical Assistance applications totaling \$403,055.

The RRT recommended special conditions for one Monitoring application, three Technical Assistance applications, and two Restoration applications. The RRT also recommended small to medium budget reductions for one Technical Assistance application and one Restoration application.

The RRT recommended more significant budget reductions for two Restoration applications. The budget for 209-3034 (Lomatium Prairie & Floodplain Forest Restoration) is recommended to be reduced by about \$18,000. Reviewers questioned whether heavy equipment should be brought through sensitive plant habitat in order to create a small pond with unclear benefits to the goals of the restoration project. The RRT recommended reducing the budget for 209-3059 (Forest Park Habitat Restoration) by about \$48,000, based on significant questions that arose during the site visit regarding the costs used to develop the budget. Staff concur with the recommendations.

#### **IV. Special Issues**

Staff recommend no funding for the noncapital Education/Outreach component of Restoration application 209-3049 (WREP II: Habitat and Stewardship for Willamette Valley Endangered Species). The application requests \$168,199 to continue a previously funded OWEB grant to reintroduce the threatened Nelson's checker mallow plant. Of this amount, \$42,640 would fund education/outreach personnel to conduct field trips and presentations. Although OWEB sometimes funds small education/outreach components in some Restoration grants (typically a few hundred to several thousand dollars), this level of request should be submitted to OWEB in a separate Education/Outreach grant application, and is not recommended for funding.

Monitoring application 209-3065 (McKenzie River and South Fork McKenzie River Pre-Restoration Monitoring) requests \$46,200 to gather information about watershed conditions and identify restoration opportunities through review of LiDAR and thermal infrared data. Staff recommend reducing the recommended budget by \$17,591 to reflect new LiDAR flight arrangements with DOGAMI.

#### **V. Acquisitions**

Two land acquisition applications were received from Region 3 this grant cycle. Neither is recommended for funding.

##### **A. East Thornton Lake Natural Area (209-111)**

The City of Albany requests \$2.4 million to purchase 24.2 acres of undeveloped land in a residential area of North Albany. The property, rare because it contains populations of both western painted turtles and western pond turtles, is part of a remnant oxbow of the Willamette River. The land is currently owned by a developer who previously received approval from the city to develop a 78-lot residential subdivision. The city's approval was appealed to the state Land Use Board of Appeals and remanded to the city for procedural reasons; a new decision will be made soon by the city. The developer is willing to sell the property to the city for \$3.2 million.

##### **1. Ecological Benefits**

The application states that the property contains 4.25 acres of aquatic beds and freshwater emergent marsh, and 3.7 acres of riparian forest and shrublands (for a total of 33% of the acreage proposal for acquisition). The remainder of the property (16.25 acres) consists of a fallow farm field, which the application characterizes as eventual Western Oregon upland prairie and oak savanna. The application also states that the property contains the following plant communities: Oregon ash/dewey sedge – stinging nettle; black cottonwood – red alder/salmonberry; Pacific willow/stinging nettle; water purslane – waterpepper marsh; dense sedge-tufted hairgrass prairie; and Lobb buttercup aquatic bed. The project aims to restore white oak/poison oak/blue wildrye and tufted hairgrass –

California oatgrass valley prairie. According to the application, the project will benefit acorn woodpecker, short-eared owl, American bittern, chipping sparrow, hooded merganser, white-breasted nuthatch, American kestrel, dusky Canada goose, western meadowlark, western gray squirrel, northern red-legged frog, western painted turtle and western pond turtle.

The application states that the project is consistent with six of OWEB's conservation principles for land acquisition: stabilizing an area on the brink of ecological collapse; securing a transition area; restoring function to an area that requires active restoration to achieve its conservation purpose; protecting a site with exceptional biodiversity; improving connectivity of habitat; and complementing an existing network of sites in the basin.

Historically, juvenile salmonids were present in the oxbow, but do not currently have access. The city plans to explore ways to increase water quality, water quantity, and salmonid use of the channel.

The RRT was of distinctly mixed opinions about the ecological merit of the project. Some members felt that the property constitutes an important opportunity to restore Willamette Valley oak ecosystems and is currently an important area for wintering waterfowl, Western painted turtles, and Western pond turtles. It was pointed out that the USFWS is concerned about the site's native turtles, and is interested in ensuring their protection from further residential development. Another member pointed out that if the site is not purchased for conservation, it has a high chance of being developed.

Other members of the RRT expressed doubt that the protection of such a small piece of property could truly result in significant benefits for sensitive species, especially because the property is surrounded by urban development. Also, it is currently disconnected from the Willamette River and has resultant water quality problems. The city does not yet know if it is feasible to reconnect the property to the Willamette River; urban development might preclude such a project. The RRT also discussed the possibility that the property would become an over-used open space, blurring the line between conservation and recreation, to the detriment of wildlife. One member stated that people would be inclined to use the site as a "city park," and thus managing people and pets would be an ongoing challenge.

## **2. Capacity to Sustain the Ecological Benefits**

The City of Albany Parks and Recreation Department will own and manage the property. The property will be managed for multiple purposes, including wildlife habitat and education-oriented park space. Currently, the Department manages, operates, and maintains more than 700 acres of parks and open space. The Department performs its responsibilities with limited staffing. It anticipates considerable volunteer support for the restoration and management of the site proposed for acquisition.

## **3. Educational Benefits**

The property will be used for research by Oregon State University students and will afford other learning opportunities to grade school, high school, and community college students. A small public area will be located at the west edge of the property, away from

turtle habitat. The area will contain information kiosks and signage. A trail will also be built on the property.

#### **4. Partners, Project Support and Community Effects**

The project will provide numerous education opportunities and is supported by scores of conservation organizations, educational institutions, conservation entities, and residents, including the Trust for Public Land, Greenbelt Land Trust, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Oregon State University, The Turtle Conservancy, Oregon Wildlife Institute, Greater Albany Schools, Oregon Historical Society, Calapooia Watershed Council, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, The Institute of Applied Ecology, Friends of East Thornton Lake, Department of Environmental Quality, Friends of Mature Albany Trees, and The Xerces Society.

Acquisition of the property would remove it from the local tax base. In 2007, \$3,450 in taxes were paid for the property. The city currently has a surplus of residential single-family land; protection of the property would reduce the surplus by 3 percent.

#### **5. Legal and Financial Terms**

The purchase price will be the Fair Market Value as established by an appraisal, subject to a minimum floor price and not to exceed \$3,200,000. Some of the purchase price might be in the form of a land trade worth \$500,000.

The application states that OWEB's conservation easement would not cover the 3-4 acre public area planned for the west edge of the property. There are no known easements or other legal encumbrances on the property.

#### **6. Conclusion**

In November 2008, the Acquisitions Subcommittee decided not to proceed with a due diligence review because it felt that the urban development surrounding the site, the site's small size, the site's majority composition (fallow farm field) and the amount of time that would have to pass before that portion of the site has wildlife value, and the cost of the project all constitute a low-priority investment for OWEB. The RRT's sharply mixed opinions about the project resulted in a final RRT determination of medium ecological value and high educational value. The RRT conclusions were taken into consideration by the Acquisitions Subcommittee, but did not change their opinion of the project. Staff and the Acquisitions Subcommittee do not recommend funding for the East Thornton Lake Natural Area application.

### **B. Carver Caves Land Acquisition (209-115)**

Three Rivers Land Conservancy (TRLC) requests \$500,000 to purchase an 87-acre property southeast of Damascus, in Clackamas County. The property is located in a Metro target area called the Clackamas River Bluffs and Greenway Area. Metro's goals for the area include converting railroad tracks to trails and protecting fish and wildlife habitat. Metro intends to partner with TRLC, contributing \$112,000 to the purchase of the proposed property. Metro will also hold title to, and manage, half of the acreage that would be acquired. TRLC would own and manage the remainder of the acreage.

#### **1. Ecological Benefits**

The application states that the property contains “Westside grass bald or bluff.” It also states that the primary habitat of concern on the property is a 32-acre cliff, cave, and talus system. Most of the rest of the property contains “mixed evergreen hardwood – conifer forest.” None of these descriptions are consistent with OWEB’s priority ecological systems for the Willamette Basin. The application states that the property contains OWEB priority plant communities, including bigleaf maple – red alder/sword fern – fringecup and grand fir - bigleaf maple/vine maple – hazelnut. The site’s ground layer of vegetation contains species typically associated with oak woodlands and rocky outcrops, both identified by the Oregon Conservation Strategy as priority habitats. The application states that the property contained at least a small amount of oak woodland in the past. The application also states that the property supports OWEB priority species such as American kestrel, Townsend’s big-eared bat, and red-legged frog. Although the property is not far from the Clackamas River, it does not contain water resources.

The property is adjacent to a 29-acre conservation easement held by TRLC. Clackamas County Parks, with the assistance of Metro, recently purchased 19 acres immediately south of the property. The Clackamas County Parks land will be used for access to the river and environmental resource protection.

The application states that the proposed acquisition is consistent with four of OWEB’s conservation principles for land acquisition: protecting a large intact area, complementing an existing network of sites, improving connectivity of habitat, and securing a transition area.

The RRT acknowledged that the property does not contain OWEB priority ecosystems or water resources, but nevertheless agreed that the property’s unusual geology and caves make it worthy of protection. The RRT also felt that because Damascus is rapidly urbanizing, protecting the property and thus its connectivity to other conserved areas, is very important.

## **2. Capacity to Sustain the Ecological Benefits**

TRLC holds the above-mentioned adjacent 29-acre conservation easement. The Conservancy’s part-time stewardship coordinator and Americorps intern have successfully conducted weed mapping and invasive species control on that easement property. TRLC also holds a conservation easement on a small parcel near Lake Oswego that contains a bald eagle nest. Metro has almost 30 years of experience with managing natural areas and is recognized regionally as a leader in proactive restoration and management of native ecosystems. Metro’s Science and Stewardship Team manages approximately 12,000 acres of natural areas with a staff of five scientists and four natural resources technicians.

## **3. Educational Benefits**

The application states that the site’s caves and rough terrain pose safety concerns that must be taken into account when conducting educational activities. The RRT agreed that the majority of the site is not fit for extensive public access, and thus direct, on-site educational activities should be limited to small, guided tours. The RRT appreciated TRLC’s work with Oregon Public Broadcasting to indirectly educate the public about the uniqueness of the neighboring site, and agreed that the proposed site has similar opportunities for indirect education. The RRT also agreed that the site’s unusual geology

and plant communities present interesting research opportunities. Educational activities on Metro's parcel will be determined as part of the planning stage for Metro's target area properties. It is expected that Metro's parcel will be open to the public and will possibly eventually contain a trail that links the site to other Metro-owned sites.

#### **4. Partners, Project Support and Community Effects**

TRLIC intends to partner with the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a management plan for the portion of the property that will be held by TRLIC. The Metro-held portion of the property will be managed separately.

#### **5. Legal and Financial Terms**

The property is in forest deferral; the property's tax bill was approximately \$75 for the 2007-2008 tax year. Removing the lots from the county tax roll will be insignificant. The project will increase community enjoyment of open space and understanding of the area's unusual geology. It also will possibly build links among sites in Clackamas River Bluffs and Greenway and beyond.

#### **6. Conclusion**

In November 2008, the Acquisitions Subcommittee decided not to proceed with a due diligence review because it felt that the proposed property's lack of OWEB priority ecosystems made it an inappropriate OWEB investment. The RRT concluded that project has high ecological merit, despite the absence of OWEB priority ecosystems on the property. The RRT deemed the project to have medium educational merit. The RRT's conclusions about the project were taken into consideration by the Acquisitions Subcommittee, but did not change their opinion of the project. Staff and the Acquisitions Subcommittee do not recommend funding for the Carver Caves Land Acquisition application.

### **VI. Staff Recommendations**

Staff recommend funding for 15 of the 18 Restoration applications; four of the seven Education/Outreach applications; six of the seven Monitoring applications; and eight of the 11 RRT recommended Technical Assistance applications. Staff do not recommend funding for the two acquisition applications, as discussed above.

Attachment A shows the applications, funding amounts, conditions (if any), and priority rankings recommended for funding to OWEB staff by the RRT. The table also indicates, by means of shaded entries, the OWEB staff recommendations to the Board. For some projects, the amount shown in the table is the staff funding recommendation rather than the amount applied for.

Attachment B shows those applications not recommended for funding at this time by the RRT or by OWEB staff.

Staff recommend the Board approve the staff funding recommendation as contained in Attachment A to this report.

#### Attachments

- A. Projects Recommended for Funding
- B. Projects Not Recommended for Funding

ATTACHMENT A

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Restoration Applications Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Staff Recommendations to the Board are Highlighted in Gray

Project #	Project Name	Capital Funds	Non-Capital Funds	Total Amount	Priority
209-3085	Middle Fork Willamette Bull Trout Restoration Project	214,600		214,600	1
209-3067	Upper Crystal Springs Enhancement Project	142,520		142,520	2
209-3045	Sandy Basin Anchor Habitat Vegetation Restoration Project	222,214		222,214	3
209-3062	North Fork Gales Creek Large Wood Placement **	39,875		39,875	4
209-3048	Prairie and Oak Habitat Restoration at 2 Regionally Important Sites	315,722		315,722	5
209-3078	Salmon Creek Fish Barrier Correction	218,685		218,685	6
209-3053	Ames Creek Fish Passage	117,969		117,969	7
209-3034	Lomatium Prairie & Floodplain Forest Restoration */Effectiveness Monitoring \$23,450	91,222	1,184	92,406	8
209-3083	Luckiamute Passage Barrier Replacement - Phase I	98,471		98,471	9
209-3077	South Scappoose Creek Enhancement	164,618		164,618	10
209-3031	Potter Creek/Younger Fish Passage Improvement	51,615		51,615	11
209-3063	Crabtree Creek Knotweed Control and Riparian Restoration **	47,147	150	47,297	12
209-3049	WREP II: Habitat & Stewardship Will.Valley Endang. Spec. */Effectiveness Monitoring \$1,760	125,559		125,559	13
209-3052	Courtney Creek Tributary Fish Passage Restoration Project	20,020		20,020	14
209-3035	Deck Fish Passage and Riparian Restoration *	62,495	2,097	64,592	15
209-3084	Willamette River & Johnson Cr. Confluence Salmon Habitat Impvmnt	294,959		294,959	16
209-3038	Blair Creek Fish Passage Project	186,631	2,375	189,006	17
209-3059	Forest Park - Habitat Restoration *	182,217	4,394	186,611	18
<b>Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding to Staff by RRT</b>		<b>\$2,596,539</b>	<b>\$10,200</b>	<b>\$2,606,739</b>	
<b>Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by Staff to Board</b>		<b>\$1,932,732</b>	<b>\$3,431</b>	<b>\$1,936,163</b>	

\* Listed Amount Reflects Recommended Reduction      \*\* Fund with Conditions

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Education Applications Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Staff Recommendations to the Board are Highlighted in Gray			
<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>Priority</b>
209-3044	Salmon Watch - Willamette River Basin	50,000	1
209-3056	Slough School Education Program	49,616	2
209-3037	Teachers as Watershed Researchers: Forest to the Sea	35,168	3
209-3079	Clackamas River Basin Council Outreach and Education	72,173	4
209-3039	MRWC Education & Outreach Program	45,650	5
209-3068	Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Rangers Project	27,591	6
209-3050	Tryon Creek Outreach and Mentoring	38,224	7
<b>Total Education Projects Recommended for Funding to Staff by RRT</b>		<b>\$318,422</b>	
<b>Total Education Projects Recommended for Funding by Staff to Board</b>		<b>\$206,957</b>	

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Monitoring Applications Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Staff Recommendations to the Board are Highlighted in Gray			
<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>Priority</b>
209-3081	Luckiamute Watershed Rapid Bio-Assessment - Phase II	109,914	1
209-3065	McKenzie River and South Fork McKenzie River Pre-Restoration Monitoring *	28,609	2
209-3069	McKenzie and Middle Fork Willamette Bull Trout Monitoring Program	103,697	3
209-3057	Willow Flycatcher Monitoring at Killin Wetlands	19,580	4
209-3072	Long-term Effectiveness of Hydrologic Management of Native and Exotic Plants	28,430	5
209-3033	Marmot Dam Removal Geomorphic Monitoring & Modeling **	113,185	6
209-3060	Camp Creek Basin Study	25,020	7
<b>Total Monitoring Projects Recommended for Funding to Staff by RRT</b>		<b>\$428,435</b>	
<b>Total Monitoring Projects Recommended for Funding by Staff to Board</b>		<b>\$403,415</b>	

\* Listed Amount Reflects Recommended Reduction    \*\* Fund with Conditions

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Technical Assistance Applications Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Staff Recommendations to the Board are Highlighted in Gray

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>Priority</b>
209-3073	Luckiamute Watershed Action Plan	49,304	1
209-3051	Sodom Dam Fish Passage and Flow Management Project	50,000	2
209-3064	Santiam Calapooia Landowner Recruitment for Restoration Project Phase II *	49,500	3
209-3046	Identifying Priority Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Habitat - Final Phase	20,321	4
209-3041	Beaver Creek Subbasin RBA & Landowner Recruitment	20,705	5
209-3066	Jordan Creek Fish Passage and Off-Channel Irrigation Design	19,812	6
209-3040	Starr & Duffy Creek Fish Passage Designs	38,555	7
209-3047	Willamette Floodplain Restoration Project Design **	44,477	8
209-3036	Forestry Creek Fish Passage Restoration **	45,265	9
209-3071	Lower Molalla River Restoration Plan **	50,000	10
209-3043	Beaver Creek Enhancement Project Phase 3	15,116	11
<b>Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding to Staff by RRT</b>		<b>\$403,055</b>	
<b>Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by Staff to Board</b>		<b>\$292,674</b>	

\* Listed Amount Reflects Recommended Reduction    \*\* Fund with Conditions

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Education Applications NOT Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Amount Requested</b>
209-3061	Coast Fork STREAM Stewardship Program	14,870
209-3080	Writing Our Watershed	22,343

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Monitoring Applications NOT Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Amount Requested</b>
209-3032	Monitoring Heavy Metal Exposure in Willamette River Basin Using Freshwater Mussel Shells	191,180
209-3055	Lower Clackamas River Basin Monitoring	47,694

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Technical Assistance Applications NOT Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Total Amount Requested</b>
209-3058	Clackamas Side Channel at Shoe Island	43,171
209-3070	Wagner Creek Fish Passage Project	21,864
209-3074	Sauvie Island Private Land Wetland Restoration	50,000
209-3076	Sturgeon Lake Restoration Action Plan Development	50,000
209-3082	Springfield Mill Race Riparian Design	30,000
209-3086	Building a Foundation to Implement a Willamette Basin Nutria Management Plan	28,659

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Technical Assistance Application Withdrawn by Applicant**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Project #	Project Name	Total Amount Requested
209-3075	Landowner Conservation and Enhancement Recruitment Program	40,603

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Acquisition Applications Receiving a Positive Rating for Ecological Merit by the RRT**  
**And NOT Recommended for Funding by OWEB Staff**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Project #	Project Name	Total Amount Requested
209-111	East Thornton Lake Natural Area <sup>a</sup>	2,400,000
209-115	Carver Caves Land Acquisition <sup>b</sup>	500,000

<sup>a</sup> medium ecological merit

<sup>b</sup> high ecological merit

**Region 3 - Willamette Basin**  
**Restoration Applications NOT Recommended for Funding by the RRT**  
**October 20, 2008 Grant Cycle**

Project #	Project Name	Total Amount Requested
209-3042	Abernathy Creek Restoration Project	121,250
209-3054	Frazier Creek Stream Reconnection	54,184