

Letter of Interest

Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning Grant

Applicant Identification:

Wild and Scenic Rivers

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Location:

Curry County

Port Orford, Gold Beach, Brookings

South Coast Basin, Lower Rogue Sub Basin

Key Project Partners:

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, South Coast Watershed Council, Curry County Commissioners, City of Brookings, Harbor Water District, Surfrider Foundation, Native Fish Society and Kalmiopsis Audubon.

Executive Summary:

Wild and Scenic Rivers would like to initiate the Place- Based Planning process, as we are a water-rich area located in the South Coast and Lower Rogue Basins. Our area is geographically and socio-economically disconnected from the rest of the state. We have identified significant water-related challenges, have the capacity for long-term planning and are open to an integrative, co-convening approach with various local stakeholders in our community to articulate our needs. Our watershed basin is a key area of significant biological value in the state, a tourism mecca, and is historically overlooked by funders due to various factors.

As mentioned, we have identified key areas of potential project focus due to past and present involvement in our community. Our experience running an emerging non-profit, as well as living and dwelling in the community, has made us aware of potential projects and concerns that have been articulated and initiated, but not completed. These are manageable and actionable projects that could, in turn, point to more long term solutions and invested community problem- solving. We have highlighted these in this document. We would also like to emphasize that we are committed to demonstrating an openness to process and eagerness to articulate the needs of a wide range of local voices as we move forward. We would also welcome state technical assistance as well as support from various state agencies as we progress.

Description of the Convener

Wild and Scenic Rivers is a respected citizen group lead by a passionate Executive Director. Our focus is on collaboration and coalition building through outreach and advocacy. Our group has a strong sense of place for our immediate region as well as our surrounding areas. Our Executive Director is a third generation Oregonian and lifelong Curry County resident. We are regionally perceived as an organization that has a history of success working with diverse parties, resolving conflicts and finding solutions to preserve and protect where we love to live.

The agricultural interests of our area are primarily timber and some gravel-mining operations. We work closely with these interests to make sure that all voices are heard. We are currently working with the founder of a local timber company to create an agricultural easement on prime Chetco River frontage property. Recently, we collaborated closely with representatives from local timber interests on the designation of the Chetco River as a State Scenic Waterway. This process included meeting as an advisory council, coordinating small group meetings and one- on- one dialogues with South Coast Lumber Company representatives. The co-founder of Freeman Rock, a local gravel mining company, is a long-time volunteer with Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Wild and Scenic Rivers often collaborates with local community groups on diverse projects. Currently, we are working with the League of Women Voters of Oregon on a hard rock mining study, in tandem with a statewide movement to withdraw the Smith, Illinois, Rogue and Pistol rivers from the jurisdiction of the 1872 Mining Act.

We are also hosting the inaugural “Gifts of the Chetco” on December 12th: a free public event to highlight and honor our local ecosystems. This event will include salmon spawning viewing, naturalist golf cart tours, entertainment, food and music (all provided by donation).

Integration, Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

Wild and Scenic Rivers will work with a number of public and private entities in order to achieve short and long- term goals of localized water planning.

These partners include: Local governments: Curry County Commissioners, City of Brookings, City of Gold Beach, City of Port Orford. Nonprofit watershed councils: Curry Watersheds, South Coast Watershed Council, Chetco Watershed Council. Private landowners: Salmon Run Golf Course, South Coast Lumber Company (CLR Timber Holdings, LLC). Federal agencies: U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management. State agencies: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). Nonprofit organizations: Surfrider Foundation, Native Fish Society, Kalmiopsis Audubon, Rogue Riverkeeper, Trout Unlimited. Agriculture: South Coast Lumber Company, Freeman

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Rock, Tidewater. Forestry: The National Forest Service, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management. Power Companies: Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative, Pacific Power.

We will also work with self-supplied water users, small businesses, private landowners and special districts.

This effort will be guided by, complement and implement goals from several existing land and resource planning documents and processes. Including: Comprehensive Plans for Curry County, City of Brookings, City of Gold Beach and City of Port Orford. Recovery Plan for Southern Oregon Northern California Coast Coho Salmon, National Marine Fisheries Service. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality - Water Quality Standard.

This effort will hold open discussions and meetings that invite critical stakeholders and the general public. These meetings will take place monthly. If necessary, more meetings will be scheduled based on stakeholder interests.

All meetings will be open to the public and allow for equal time for input and perspectives. Currently, we have a template (see attached documents) that will aid us in establishing objectives as we prepare for the public participation process. We will be working towards actionable water quality goals emerging from the collective community vision, keeping in mind key challenges where research has previously been initiated -as potential completion projects.

Wild and Scenic Rivers has worked with local partners to facilitate the designation of the Chetco River as a State Scenic Waterway. We have lead public meetings on water resources in Curry County in collaboration with the League of Women Voters and have participated in state-wide collaborative efforts to assess the community costs and benefits of hard rock mining in the region.

Statement of Need

Curry County is renowned for its scenic rivers, proximity to old growth redwoods and coastal shoreline with stunning uninterrupted beaches. It is a destination place for visitors from all over the world due to these very unique features. Curry County is indeed, water-rich and beautiful to experience and behold, but not without its water-related challenges. Here are a handful of current water quality, quantity and ecological health challenges we face in this region:

Heal the Bay's 2014-2015 Report Card for Oregon; found that out of the 94 beaches/16 monitored, the BAV (Beach Action Value), 12% exceeded 60 enterococcus bacterial colony forming units per 100 ml. The highest of the 16 was Sunset Beach in Coos County (35%); Harris Beach in Curry County came in second at 25%. Warnings were issued at Mill Beach in Curry County as well. An Americorp volunteer, Austin Dunn was hired by the Brookings city officials (under the direction of then Public Works director,

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Loree Price) in a search for the source of fecal coliforms. Results from testing have attributed the bacteria to dog and other animal feces. (Dog waste bags at trailheads and beach parking lots are currently available). It was thought that DNA testing would add to further clarification. There was mention of a possibility of failing septic and/or a “homeless contribution element” according to Loree Price. Wild and Scenic Rivers found that no official document was filed by Mr. Dunn, nor was DNA testing carried out, due to expense. We would like to continue Mr. Dunn’s work and give the community a clearer picture of sources of pollution.

In addition, beach bacterial thresholds will most probably tighten to more stringent levels (158 MPM to 70 MPN by 2017) under federal water safety standards, according to the Mail Tribune. This will heighten the need for our local Curry County government to locate sources of bacterial counts that threaten water quality along with tourism, which is a critical source of revenue to our area.

In the November 6th, 2015 article in the Curry Pilot (Brookings), the DEQ (The Department of Environmental Quality) advised Curry County commissioners, that under the federal Clean Water Act, the Rogue River, does not meet clean water standards, and they must update the water quality plan along with other waterways having “numerous water quality impairments” such as high bacterial levels, low DO (dissolved oxygen), and higher water temperatures. Curry County’s water plan expired in June 2015, and city officials cite lack of funds. Commissioners are calling this an unfunded mandate and may face fines. Nonpoint source pollution from timber harvesting and agricultural production must be addressed as we look at the wild rivers and tributaries of the Rogue basin which includes the Sixes, North Fork of the Smith, Chetco, Rogue, Elk, Pistil, and Winchuck rivers.

Gold Beach and Port Orford, residents in Curry County, have created bioswales to act as “super sponges” to filter runoff from parking lots utilizing native plants, allowing sediments and pollutants to slowly filter through microorganisms in the soil, breaking them down along the way. These bioswales have signage to educate and inform the public. Port Orford’s Watershed Action Plan was reviewed. Here is a possible community project to undertake in tandem with identifying non point sources of pollution.

Harbor, right next door to Brookings, has brackish (mixture of salt and fresh) water infiltrating the fresh water from the record, low-flowing Chetco River- source of Harbor’s drinking water. Reducing water usage to 500,000-600,000 gallons a day instead of the 3 million gallons, would be helpful according to Dave VanCleave, superintendent for Harbor’s water district. Harbor residents have been encouraged to conserve water. The public will be informed through the local paper and radio stations. Public education is very much needed here, in addition to possibly siting a new well system, or sharing well systems with Brookings.

The Gold Beach community has been affected by aerial spraying on private lands of a cocktail of various herbicides such as triclopyr, imazapar, and 2-4 dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4 D or Agent Orange).

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Some residents were exposed during spraying in 2014, (twenty households) and these aerial sprays often drift with the wind to affect drinking water sources. Pesticide and herbicide residue is not filtered out in the purification process, we found. This drift issue has been going on for years and has not been investigated in an in-depth manner according to residents as well as outside agencies.

Please refer to attached documents.

Approach for Undertaking Place- Based Planning

Our practice and approaches include several steps in Place-Based Planning. The first step is to Listen to Learn. We as stewards of the community must be willing to listen to the community members and particularly must be willing to listen without judging any of the community member's input or opinions. The second step in our approach is to Engage to Mobilize. After listening to the members of the community, we will seek to engage the members around shared values and interest. We will create multiple entry points for residents/stakeholders. The third step in our approach is Utilizing Skills available in our organization as well as those skills available from our partners, and branching out from there. If the skills are not available in our organization, then we learn the skills that are needed or request partners to supply the skills. We will then build the local relationships and networks around our shared values and interests, using the skills provided by our organization and our partners. Step four is Planning Together to Create a Vision. After the shared interests have been identified by the community listening process, a vision or plan is then created based on our shared interests. At that point in time, with additional skills brought to the table, we will then be able to develop plans and strategies as well as seek opportunities for development of critical goals for water resources in our community.

Under this proposal, the convener would be Wild and Scenic Rivers, a nonprofit public 501(c)(3) corporation registered with the Secretary of State of the State of Oregon and located at 517 Chetco Avenue, Brookings, Oregon. Wild and Scenic Rivers has been and is committed to community- based planning for change. This organization has been practicing this principle since its inception. These principles are consistent with the *Place-Based Planning Guidelines*.

The convener/staff of Wild and Scenic Rivers will be available to perform its duties and tasks under this proposal. Wild and Scenic Rivers has the requisite experience in dealing with community- based solutions to environmental and water resource issues. We also have the necessary experience in dealing with public entities, community organizations, public hearings and all facets needed to lead and complete the collaborative process. The convener will assist in coming to agreements for watershed solutions in the South Coast and Lower Rogue basins. The convener possesses advanced technical experience in web page development, email communication, and other social media.

The convener also has extensive experience in conducting public hearings and informal public fact-gathering events. The convener intends to publish opportunities to convene for the various identified

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diverse groups involved in the process and also for the general public. Wild and Scenic Rivers possesses a meeting room at its office which can accommodate approximately 12 individuals. For larger groups, the convener intends to use centrally-located public accommodations and meeting rooms for informal and other meetings of interested community members.

After identifying interested parties and stakeholders, the convener will also bring in other unidentified members of the public which have an interest in the planning process. The convener will communicate with state agencies, as a partner, to facilitate the agencies involvement in the entire process and in specific meetings as well as other events. Entities like cities, water district, fish management, councils, watershed councils, local water districts and sanitary districts and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will be solicited and brought to the table. Representatives from industry, forestry and local businesses from the watershed will also be included. As the process develops, the convener will seek partnership with the Water Resources Department to help facilitate communications between the diverse groups and individuals involved in the process. The convener will solicit comments both informally and formally utilizing various media avenues.

The convener will identify issues and seek additional input regarding these issues during the process. The convener will be able to respect citizen's generated comments and interests during this time.. At the appropriate point after the stakeholders and public have had an opportunity to express their interests and concerns, the convener will initiate an effort to engage the group around shared values and interests. At this juncture, the convener will encourage those involved in the process to become engaged through multiple entry points. Realizing that the plan must include concepts for long term sustainability, the convener will encourage the participants to stay involved over the long term. The convener will seek support in teaching the group the needed skills to address and develop plans and strategies and seek out opportunities for co-development. In particular, technical assistance will be sought to quantify existing and future in-stream and out of stream water needs with the watershed using a 50- year planning horizon. While honoring the pace of the group of community members that will coalesce to create this plan, the convener will keep uppermost, that the goal of the process is to develop collaborative problem- solving agreements for the watershed being addressed.

In summary, conveners create a collaborative mosaic of partners and stakeholders. We, as a group, will characterize ecological issues-existing and future. Stakeholders will develop deep, integrated solutions for our unique long-term water needs and within our three year time-frame, we will seek plan adoption to implement our environmentally -specific vision. The estimated timeframe of each step will be six months.

Anticipated Results

Place-Based Planning will help to solve water challenges in our area as it will provide the funding and technical assistance necessary to build on existing plans and enable the collaborative process to emerge

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as well as anticipate the future area needs. Place- Based Planning, working with a dedicated convener utilizing an integrative approach, will assist stakeholders in this geographically diverse, but isolated, though manageable basin, that receives little to no assistance from traditional funding sources, in the creation of a long term water-resources plan.

As stated, we are open to the critical community process. We have also identified a number of potential short term outcomes for the project including: identifying fecal coliform sources contaminating the beaches, assisting the county with Clean Water act compliance, continuing or extending Bioswale work undertaken in Gold Beach and Port Orford, identifying solutions for Harbor's ongoing brackish water problem as well as conducting an in-depth investigation of aerial spray drift affecting drinking water sources in Gold Beach.

Long term outcomes include strengthening the region's position as an ecotourism center known as "The Wild Rivers Coast" by developing long- term solutions for current and future instream and out of stream water needs in the region. With a long term strategy, the region will be able to concretely express the needs for sustaining the community long-term and will attract future funding sources as well as capacity building necessary for the region's water security.

Request for Department Resources

We are requesting \$187,500.00

Planning Step 1: Build a Collaborative and Integrated process: At this stage, we plan to employ a project manager to create a structure and process that fosters collaboration. The project manager/convener will have a unique position in the community to bring a diverse audience of participants together to ensure a balanced representation of interests. We also plan to employ a part-time program assistant to assist with document preparation, communication, media outreach and scheduling. In addition, we plan to engage a State Planning partner to assist us.

Planning Step 2: Characterize Water Resources, Water Quality and Ecological Issues: At this stage we plan to employ the project manager to oversee the description and assessment of current water supplies, water quality and status of the ecosystem. We will also employ a field investigator, data collector and analyst, as well as water- rights assessor at this stage.

Planning Step 3: Quantifying Existing and Future Needs/Demands: At this stage, we plan to employ the project manager who will convene collaborative sessions with community partners to define existing and future needs and demands. The project manager/convener will work with the program assistant and state planner to organize and assess existing and process-gained information. We will also employ an education coordinator to reach out to the community for analysis of existing needs and exploration of

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future needs. At this stage, we will develop stakeholder polls and surveys and analyze that information for community perception of future needs and demands. In addition, we will also engage the conservation assessment funding.

Planning Step 4: Develop Integrated Solutions For Meeting Long-Term Water Needs: At this stage we plan to employ a project manager/convener to engage the planning group in examining unmet need and demands. We also plan to employ the program assistant and utilize strategic planning and process coordination funds. At this stage we will engage the conservation assessment funding.

Planning Step 5: Adoption & Implementation: At this stage we plan to engage the facilitation and support service funding. We also plan to employ the convener to oversee adoption and implementation. We also plan to employ state assistance at this point.

25 % Match/Cost-Share

We have secured and are seeking substantial matching funds. Wild and Scenic Rivers and the community is committed to finding resources to support this effort. All secured and pending match funding calculations are based on local market rates.

Wild and Scenic Rivers has contributed substantial in-kind secured match funding in the preparation of this application. We estimate this contribution at a value of \$6,000 (see attached summary of match/cost-share). Additionally, we anticipate in-kind contributions from community members in the amount of \$108,000 (see attached summary of match/cost-share).

Total in-kind contributions is \$115,000.00

We would like the Oregon Water Resources Department to support our efforts. We would like the Department to consider serving as a co-convener, assisting with coordination, facilitation, project management and public outreach. We would also like to request technical assistance from the Department in the form of technical studies, water rights analyses, modeling, scenario planning and GIS support. Finally, we would like to request information assistance from the Department on an as-needed basis.