

PUBLIC LANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PLAC)
Coquille Valley Wildlife Area (ODFW) Acquisition of 528 Acres

Meeting Date: July 23, 2026

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Coquille Wildlife Area Addition 528 Acres

Transaction Type (check one): ☒ Acquisition ☐ Disposal

I. Proposed Real Property Transaction (if the transaction is an acquisition, please include a description of the intended use of the property):

- ODFW proposes to acquire a total of 528 acres of land in Coos County adjacent to the existing Coquille Wildlife area (see attached maps).
- Estimated cost of the acquisition is approximately \$3,168,000 (\$6,000/acre).
 - Final cost will be determined by a yellow book appraisal. An appraisal contract has been issued by ODFW.
- The acquisition will be added to the existing Coquille Valley Wildlife Area (CVWA), expanding CVWA's total acreage from the current 696 acres to 1,224 acres.
- The goals of the acquisition are to:
 1. Protect, enhance and restore tidally influenced wetlands, riparian lands, aquatic habitats and uplands for the benefit of fish and wildlife,
 2. Manage habitat consistent with ODFW's mission and compatible with neighboring land uses,
 3. Provide public fish and wildlife oriented recreational and educational opportunities, and
 4. Promote tribal access to traditional foods and resources.

II. Reason for PLAC Review (include what the agency is requesting from the PLAC):

- In compliance with ORS 270.120 (6), the PLAC shall advise Agency and DAS on the acquisition of this property.

III. Background Information

- The two parcels which comprise this property are adjacent to the existing CVWA (see map below).
- The property was acquired by the Bridges Foundation in 2022 in order to preclude acquisition by private interests for non-conservation purposes. Bridges does not have the capacity for long-term management, and its intent was always to transfer the property to a permanent conservation owner.
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) provided approximately \$1,320,000 as donated funds to assist in the 2022 purchase.
- The balance of the 2022 purchase was financed with a conventional loan.
- ODFW proposes to acquire the land from Bridges.
 - The \$1,320,000 donation from TNC will remain in place.
 - A grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the amount of \$2,123,667 has been authorized and is available. This will fund the balance of acquisition costs, due diligence by ODFW (appraisal/title/environmental assessment/survey), as well as pay off the existing loan and reimburse Bridges for its holding costs.
- Most local and state officials have been supportive of the acquisition. A standing

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concern of local officials has always been loss of agricultural lands, and this property has historically been used for grazing. ODFW intends to continue to manage the property as “working lands” inclusive of a grazing component, which purpose can be accomplished in conjunction with the conservation goals.

- A preliminary title report is attached as part of these review materials.
 - The report contains a number of access easements.
 - ODFW has worked with DOJ and the title company to release as many of these easements as possible, but none are likely to significantly affect ODFW’s ability to manage the property as proposed.
 - The properties are subject to mineral rights reservations (attached to these review materials).
 - The mineral rights holder has proposed a payment of \$400,000 for release of these rights.
 - ODFW believes this amount to be far in excess of market value. In fact, an appraisal of the property valued these rights at essentially zero. (for more information, please see pages 43-47 of the attached appraisal).
 - ODFW has contacted the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) and Department of State Lands (DSL) to determine the likelihood (from a regulatory standpoint) that these rights would ever be exercised.
 - ODFW has concluded that the risk of exercise of the rights is unlikely, though theoretically possible.
 - ODFW has further concluded that even were the rights to be exercised, the covenants in the reservations which prohibit surface exploration and mining, and require protection of freshwater resources and restoration of the property, are sufficiently protective of ODFW interests.
 - There is no funding to make a payment in the amount proposed by the rights holders.
 - ODFW did make an offer to the rights holders at one point to pay \$40,000 for the rights simply to facilitate the transaction, but that offer was rejected, with the rights holders’ attorney indicating that they wanted \$4,000,000.
 - The NOAA grant was issued on the basis of the removal of the mineral rights reservation.
 - However, ODFW has since received confirmation from NOAA that, due to the unlikelihood of future exercise of the rights, the agency will allow the mineral rights reservation to remain in place.
 - Since the mineral rights are not being purchased, and will remain with the current rights holders, those holders should have no basis

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to dispute the transaction since their interest is not affected.

- It is possible though, and perhaps likely, that those rights holders will attempt to hold the transaction hostage by filing a lawsuit.
 - ODFW and DOJ believe that if such a lawsuit is filed, the suit would likely be dismissed on the basis that the rights holders are not parties in interest to the transaction.
 - Nonetheless, such a suit would likely delay closing, possibly significantly.
- The agency is working closely with DOJ on the legal aspects of the transaction (e.g., purchase agreements, title review, etc.). The significant terms of the acquisition are not in question, but ODFW and DOJ are focused on minimizing any and all risks to the State. Aside from the mineral rights, no major issues have arisen to date.
- **Parcels to be acquired shown in RED (West Ranch and East Ranch)**
- **Existing Coquille Valley Wildlife Area shown in BLUE**
- **Closing of the acquisition could occur as early as the last quarter of 2026, but could be delayed (if a lawsuit is filed) by as much as a year.**

IV. Topics for PLAC Consideration.

- General review of the transaction.

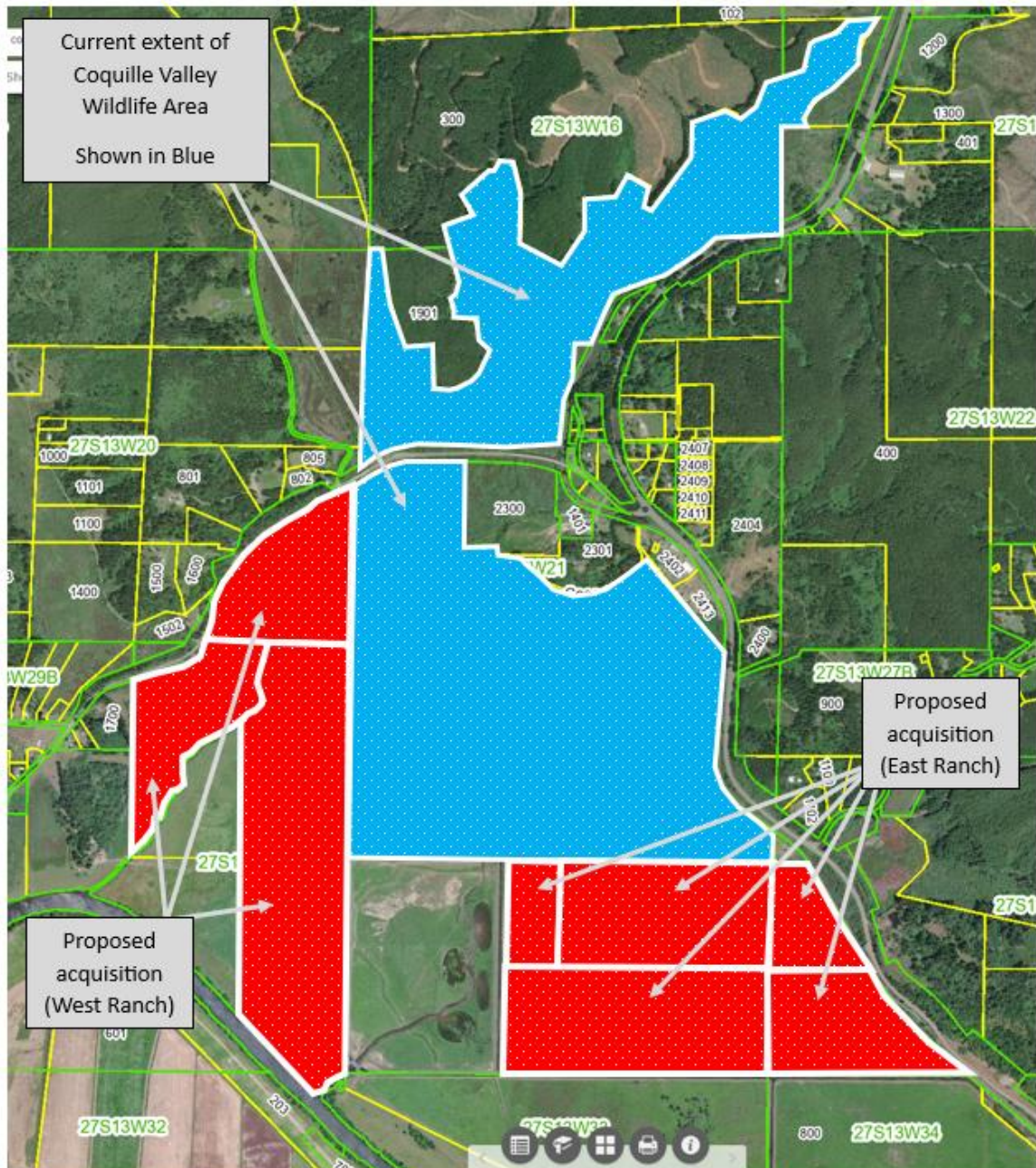
V. Staff Comments (agency comments that are not already included and DAS staff comments):

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VI. PLAC Findings (Summary of Committee findings, to be completed by DAS Staff):

- ODFW requests a PLAC recommendation to proceed with the purchase of the 528-acre parcel with funding provided by TNC and NOAA.

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