



Environmental Justice Council

# Environmental Justice Council 2025 Annual Report



**SUBMITTED TO:**

**Environmental  
Justice Council**

**BY:**

**Oregon Department  
of Fish and Wildlife**

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**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Environmental Justice Council  
**2025 Annual Report**

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# AGENCY INTRODUCTION

## AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT

To protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

## AGENCY LEADERSHIP

**Debbie Colbert**  
Director

**Shaun Clements**  
Deputy Director for  
Fish and Wildlife Programs

**Ken Loffink**  
Chief Operating Officer

## GOVERNING BOARD/COMMISSION

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) consists of seven members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. They are responsible for establishing policies in accordance with Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) and the Department's mission.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REPORTING LEADS

**Antonio Salgado**  
Community Engagement Coordinator

**Camilla Kennedy**  
Economist & Human Dimensions Analyst

## LINK TO THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

ODFW's Strategic Plan is made up of four goals, one of which focuses on increasing the diversity of the agency's customers to reflect the gender, age, and ethnic diversity of the state's population. ODFW's Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Program is working on increasing engagement with underrepresented populations by providing workshops, classes, and events that are culturally relevant, in native languages, and offered in readily accessible settings.

### STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

#2

Increase and diversify public participation in the use and enjoyment of Oregon's fish and wildlife resources.

Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan acknowledges that there have been gaps in reaching all Oregonians and sets ODFW on a course to find ways to achieve our mission in service to everyone while encouraging everyone to find their place in Oregon's outdoors. This will involve caring for and celebrating existing relationships with people and organizations, while intentionally building new relationships.

The agency will be updating its strategic plan in 2026



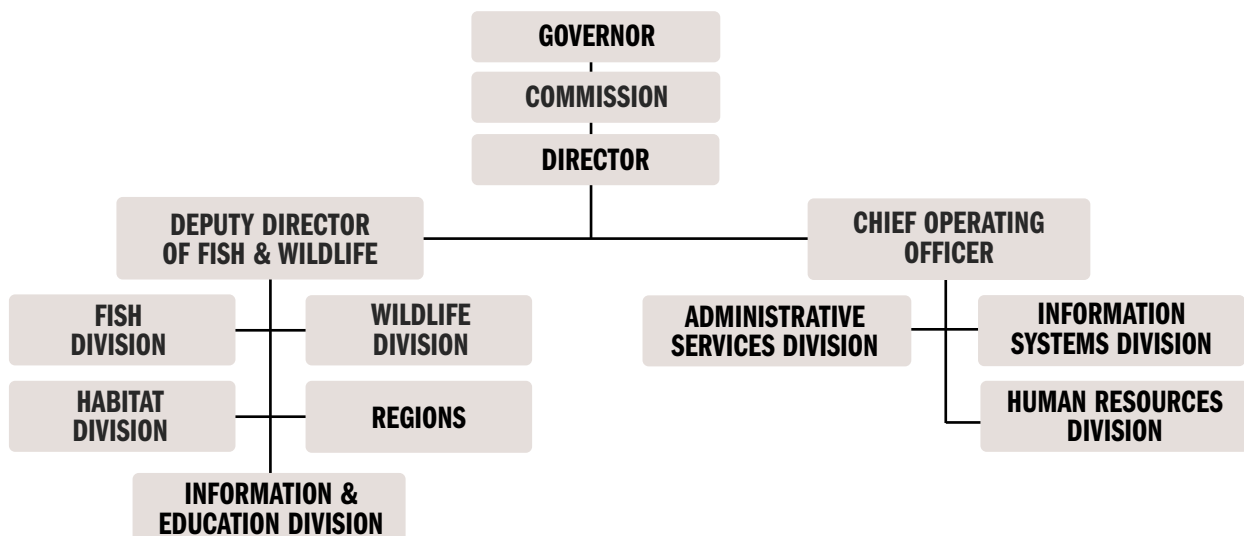


## AGENCY PROGRAMS

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) operates under ORS Chapters 496 through 513 to manage Oregon's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The agency consists of over 1,169 full time employees stationed in communities across the state, including:

- 1. Fish Division:** Recreational Fisheries Program, Native Fish Conservation and Recovery, Marine Resources Program, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program, Fish Restoration and Enhancement Program, Fish Screening and Passage Program, Salmon Trout Enhancement Program, Aquatic and Angler Education, Fish Science and Research, Fish Health Lab, Fish Hatcheries
- 2. Wildlife Division:** Wildlife Management Program, Wildlife Diversity Program, Access and Habitat Program, Wildlife Research, Wildlife Health Lab, Wildlife Management Areas
- 3. Habitat Division:** Land Resources Program, Water Program, Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund Program, Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program, Private Forest Accord Program, Western Oregon Stream Restoration Program
- 4. Information and Education Division:** Public Information Services (Outreach and Communications) and Education Services (Hunter Education and Outdoor Skills Education)
- 5. West Region:** ODFW programs are largely distributed across the state. The West Region includes: 5 Watershed District offices, 4 Fish and Wildlife District Field offices, 1 Research office, 6 Wildlife Areas, and 23 Fish Hatcheries.
- 6. East Region:** ODFW programs are largely distributed across the state. The East Region includes: 4 Watershed District offices, 8 Fish and Wildlife District Field offices, 1 Research offices, 13 Wildlife Areas, and 9 Fish Hatcheries
- 7. Central Services:** Information Services, Financial Services, Human Resources, and Facilities and Property Services

\* Programs out of the Director's Office include Internal Audit, Community Engagement, State and Federal Policy Coordination





## AGENCY BUDGET

ODFW 2025-27 Legislatively Adopted\* (in millions)

| FUND TYPE            | DESCRIPTION                                                                                                                                                                                | Budgeted Revenue | Budgeted Expenditures |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>General Funds</b> | Oregon tax revenue appropriated by the Legislature.                                                                                                                                        | \$80.2           | \$80.2                |
| <b>Lottery Funds</b> | State lottery revenue constitutionally dedicated to specific natural resources functions                                                                                                   | \$9.8            | \$9.8                 |
| <b>Other Funds</b>   | Revenue from the sale of recreational and commercial fishing and hunting licenses/tags/permits. Funding agreements with non-federal government organizations, or other groups/individuals. | \$387.8          | \$311.2               |
| <b>Federal Funds</b> | Funding agreements with federal government organizations. Excise taxes on the purchase of firearms, ammunition, and fishing gear.                                                          | \$209.5          | \$209.5               |
| <b>Total Funds</b>   |                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>\$616.6</b>   | <b>\$555.6</b>        |

\*Funding & Budget Bills

**House Bill 5009 (2025 Regular Session):** This is the core budget bill that appropriates General Fund and Lottery Fund moneys and sets expenditure limits for federal and other funds. **House Bill 2342:** Often referred to as the “Fee Bill,” this legislation adjusts recreational and commercial hunting and fishing license fees to provide additional “Other Fund” revenue for the department.

**House Bill 2345:** Creates the Oregon Hatchery Maintenance and Monitoring Fund to provide dedicated money for state hatchery infrastructure.

**House Bill 5006:** Includes specific one-time funding (roughly **\$1.4 million**) for hatchery production in the Umpqua Basin.

**House Bill 2982:** Generates revenue specifically for the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program.





# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRACTICES

(ORS 182.550)

## a. How does your agency identify environmental justice populations?

The agency defines environmental justice community as provided in ORS 182.535 Section 4: “communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, tribal communities, rural communities, remote communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.”

## b. What types of decisions impact EJ communities?

The agency and its Commission make a variety of decisions that could impact EJ communities – actions ranging from grant awards to administrative rule adoption to cooperative agreements to day-to-day program delivery.

## c. What processes does your agency use to meaningfully involve communities in decision making?

ODFW promotes community participation in decision-making through multiple outreach channels.

The agency keeps a list of interested individuals and organizations and notifies them about upcoming decisions by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. As part of these efforts, ODFW invites individuals from underrepresented communities—including BIPOC, low-income, and other marginalized groups—to complete a [racial equity participation questionnaire](#). This helps the agency understand who is interested in being involved in rulemaking and other processes that impact their communities.

To ensure a wide range of voices are heard, ODFW uses its website, press releases, and social media to reach out and is exploring new ways to connect with more people. Meeting materials are posted to the agency public website two weeks in advance of the public meeting providing balanced and objective information on the issues, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions. Language services for alternate languages are offered.

The Commission rotates its meeting locations across the state with options to provide testimony both in-person or via electronic meeting software. In 2025, the agency also launched a [new consolidated rulemaking webpage](#) to provide greater access and transparency to the Commission’s rulemaking processes.





#### d. What are opportunities for improvement?

Level and quality of public participation in agency decision-making fluctuates due to a number of variables, including topic, issue, and/or degree of impact to members of the public. For example, contentious issues or broad topics that impact more entities typically result in a higher level and quality of public participation. Topics that necessitate an advisory committee or a high level of participation generally attract fewer participants due to the time and effort required. On average, public participation in agency decision-making efforts is good, though dominated by groups with dedicated staff.

The agency is continually working to broaden and diversify entities that engage in the agency's decision-making processes to better represent and incorporate a diversity of communities, views, priorities, and interests into agency decisions, especially those who are interested but unable to participate in the traditional processes laid out in the Administrative Procedures Act. A good example of the agency's efforts to broaden its connection to communities is the Everyone Belongs Outdoors: Portland Pilot Project launched in 2025. With grant funding from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, this pilot project is helping ODFW find ways of connecting with urban populations and learn what their priorities are when it comes to outdoor recreation and relevance to Oregon's fish and wildlife.

#### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### EVERYONE BELONGS OUTDOORS

- Identify and survey key constituencies representing the biggest gaps in ODFW's service footprint and relevance.
- Learn how these communities would prefer to be served by ODFW and lessen the barriers to meeting that need.





# AGENCY SCOPED ENVIRONMENTAL AND/OR HEALTH BURDENS

(ORS 182.535)

## Types of Environmental and Health Burdens

ODFW recognizes climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water, and wastewater as environmental burdens. These environmental burdens can have disproportionate effect on EJ communities.

### Climate Change Impacts

- **Water Insecurity and Drought:** Reduced water availability affecting both human communities and aquatic habitats.
- **Flooding:** Increased flood risks impacting rural and low-income communities.
- **Wildfire and Smoke:** Health risks from smoke inhalation and destruction of habitats and property.
- **Extreme Heat:** Disproportionate effects on vulnerable populations such as seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Ocean Acidification and Sea-Level Rise:** Threats to coastal communities and marine ecosystems.
- **Loss of Traditional Cultural Resources or Foods:** Particularly affecting tribal communities who rely on subsistence and ceremonial harvests.
- **Increases in Infectious Disease:** Climate change contributing to the spread of diseases, especially in communities with limited access to healthcare.



ODFW uses several tools and strategies to identify and mitigate these burdens:

- **ODOT's Climate Hazard Risk Map and Statewide Equity Index Layer:** Maps vulnerabilities and disparities across Oregon.
- **Grant Programs:** Prioritize funding for projects that serve environmental justice communities, such as habitat restoration and water efficiency improvements.
- **Cooperative Agreements with Tribal Governments:** Enhance access to traditional foods and cultural practices.
- **Public Engagement and Outreach:** Efforts to include underrepresented communities in decision-making processes.





## Agency Highlights

ODFW aims to provide services that respect and value diverse communities, including race, culture, disability, gender, and economic status. The agency continues to integrate environmental justice into its rulemaking processes, grants and projects, and program delivery to better serve historically excluded communities.

### **“Everyone Belongs Outdoors” Initiative**

“Everyone Belongs Outdoors” is a statewide initiative for ODFW designed to increase awareness of recreation opportunities, encourage participation, reduce barriers, and expand diversity of participants.

In 2025, there were hundreds of events highlighting this initiative. These events turned ODFW’s Environmental Justice goals into real-world experiences:

- Inclusive Access: Adaptive events for people with disabilities; multiple bilingual and multicultural programs
  - Mid-Coast STEP & C.A.S.T. for Kids hosted fishing event for youth with Spinal Muscular Atrophy provided adaptive fishing opportunities for children with disabilities.
  - Get Outdoors Day/Un Día en el Bosque and Portland Pride, ODFW provided bilingual resources and created welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ and Spanish-speaking communities.
- Healing for Veterans: Programs like Healing Waters Fly-fishing offered therapeutic outdoor experiences for veterans and those in recovery.
- Youth Education: Programs like Salmon Watch and Eggs-to-Fry brought conservation science directly into classrooms, reaching thousands of students from diverse backgrounds.
- Youth & Family Engagement: fishing and hunting events



### Equitable Granting & Economic Accessibility

- Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund (OCRF): The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) specifically target projects that reduce barriers for underserved populations, focusing on those excluded due to ethnicity, language, gender identity, and economic factors. In the 2025-2026 funding cycle, the OCRF has earmarked approximately \$400,000 for projects, specifically prioritizing “smaller, newer organizations arising from underserved, environmental justice communities.”
- Access & Habitat (A&H) Program: To prevent “pay-to-play” exclusivity, the agency maintains Oregon Open Fields and has diversified its grant advisory councils to reflect the demographics of all Oregonians.

### Infrastructure & Educational Access

- Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP): Focuses on educational equity by bringing “Fish Eggs to Fry” programs to diverse urban schools, providing multilingual outreach materials (such as Spanish), and hosting workshops in accessible urban hubs.
- Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program: Prioritizes “infrastructure equity” by funding ADA-accessible fishing docks and trails. It also promotes “Urban Fishing Opportunities” to create low-cost access points near densely populated, underserved areas and encourages grant applications from non-traditional community partners.
- Access and Habitat (A&H) Program: Focuses on transparency and financial accessibility. Efforts include diversifying the advisory councils that review grants, maintaining “Oregon Open Fields” to prevent exclusive “pay-to-play” hunting clubs, and improving digital mapping tools to assist hunters who lack private local connections.
- Volunteerism: Current opportunities (e.g., Hunter/Angler Education) now actively recruit bilingual instructors to better serve Oregon’s growing diverse population.

### Climate Resilience

ODFW utilizes a “climate lens” to manage Oregon’s biodiversity, ensuring that restoration efforts also serve as a defense for vulnerable human and wildlife populations.

- State Wildlife Action Plan: A proactive, non-regulatory roadmap targeting 294 “Strategy Species” and 11 key habitats (e.g., Estuaries, Oak Woodlands). It prioritizes Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) where restoration yields the highest ecological and community returns.
- Climate & Ocean Change Policy (OAR 900): Focuses on “natural infrastructure.” This includes the Beaver Conservation Strategy, which utilizes beavers to create natural water storage—critical for drought-stricken rural and frontline communities—and research into Ocean Acidification to protect coastal food security.
- Water Quality & Quantity: ODFW secures Instream Water Rights and identifies Cold-Water Refugia to ensure salmon and trout survival, which supports Tribal treaty rights and local subsistence fishing.





## Interagency Collaboration

Healthy fish and wildlife populations depend on robust natural landscapes. To protect these ecosystems and preserve equitable access to natural resources, ODFW focuses on interagency collaboration.

ODFW coordinates closely with state partners—including DEQ, DOGAMI, DSL, ODA, ODF, OHA, OMB, OPRD, OWEB, and WRD—to manage and protect the natural systems that provide essential habitats and impact the disproportional environmental impacts to communities.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Bonneville Dam Fish Advisory

ODFW & OHA collaboration to create clear and simple guides and maps for EJ communities fishing for sustainability in polluted water bodies.

| DO NOT EAT       |                                                                                     | HEALTHY TO EAT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Carp             |   | Salmon                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |   |
| Bluegill         |  | Steelhead                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Sucker           |  | American Shad                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| Small mouth bass |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                     |
| Large mouth bass |  | LIMIT: Lamprey                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
| Sturgeon         |  | Lamprey (Limit to 2-4 servings per month)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
| Yellow Perch     |  | Remember: A serving size is about 8 oz. for adults, or the size of your palm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                     |
| Crappie          |  | <div> <div> <b>4 Servings Per Month</b>  Children 6+ years old &amp; teens </div> <div>  Adults </div> <div>  Children under 6 years old </div> <div>  Those who are pregnant or may become pregnant </div> <div>  Those who are nursing a baby </div> <div>  People with thyroid or immune system problems </div> </div> |                                                                                     |
| Walleye          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                     |
| Catfish          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                     |



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EFFORTS

(ORS 182.550 & ORS 182.535)

## What is Included?

Oregon's outdoors are for everyone — yet not all Oregonians and people that live in Oregon feel equally welcome or able to participate.

The agency continues to expand its environmental justice efforts across the state, increasing partnerships, engagements, and coordination with traditionally underrepresented communities, including BIPOC and low-income communities. The agency is implementing these efforts through agency initiatives and plans, community engagement efforts, and cooperative agreements as described below.

### **“Everyone Belongs Outdoors” Initiative**

“Everyone Belongs Outdoors” is a statewide umbrella campaign for ODFW designed to increase awareness of recreation opportunities, encourage participation, reduce barriers, and expand diversity of participants. This efforts ties work under the Community Engagement Plan and Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Plan described below.

### **ODFW Community Engagement Plan**

ODFW's Strategic Plan (2018) identified several goals, including increasing and diversifying public use and enjoyment of Oregon's fish and wildlife resources, and expanding support for fish, wildlife, and their habitats. In 2022, the agency developed the ODFW Community Engagement Plan to serve as a high-level overview of how the agency plans to integrate more diverse and underserved community engagement into ODFW's strategic goals, with particular focus on the agency's budgetary process and R3 efforts (see below). By connecting habitat protection with community engagement, ODFW is ensuring that Oregon's natural beauty is preserved for—and accessible to—everyone.

### **Limited English Proficiency Plan**

ODFW also developed a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan to make important information on agency activities more accessible to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language. When the plan is fully implemented, applications for a number of permits and licenses, fishing and hunting regulations, and other information will be translated into Spanish or made available through other means. This information will also be available in other languages upon request or as needed.





### Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation of Outdoor Recreationists

Outdoor recreation dependent on wildlife and fisheries includes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, education, and interpretation. ODFW's Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) efforts seek to create new participants and diversify participation in fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing in Oregon by expanding access to educational opportunities and training for underserved populations and BIPOC communities using a variety of strategies, including:

- Providing workshops, classes, and events that are culturally relevant, in native languages, and offered in readily accessible settings. Since July 2021, Information and Education Division staff worked with partner organizations to introduce more than 400 members of the BIPOC community to fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing. This effort focused on youth and families and included fishing and archery events, birding and whale watching opportunities, and introductory classes on fishing, hunting, and clamming. Some trainings and workshops were also conducted in Spanish.
- Forming partnerships with community organizations engaged with hunting, trapping, fishing, conservation, and outdoor recreation.
- Recruiting, training, and empowering volunteers from each community who are active in hunting, fishing, wildlife watching and/or conservation to be instructors, ambassadors, and liaisons for ODFW. For example, volunteers from People of Color Outdoors (POCO) were trained as ODFW Angler Education instructors so they can conduct their own fishing events.
- Using ODFW social media to support meetup opportunities for hunting, trapping, fishing, shellfish harvest, and wildlife viewing to build community-based connections and mentorships.
- Developing additional materials and content that incorporate messaging based on each community's input.



## ODFW and Tribal Coordination

One of ODFW's top priorities is supporting Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes. These tribes have deep, longstanding connections to the land, fish, wildlife, and natural resources. Engagement with tribal communities is well-established due to a significant overlap in areas of responsibility in natural resource management and more formal engagement strategies at the state level.

ODFW also consults with federally recognized tribes for the identification of archaeological sites, Traditional Cultural Properties, and Historic Properties of Religious or Cultural Significance that may be impacted by agency activities. ODFW cultural resource staff meet regularly with tribes to discuss issues including the identification and protection of historic properties on agency owned lands, and have developed internal staff trainings to highlight the importance and identification of indigenous and other minority created historic properties. Agency cultural resources staff and wildlife area managers also work with several tribes regarding the facilitation of access for traditional gathering within ODFW Wildlife Areas. In 2025, ODFW hired a second archaeologist position that will allow the agency to expand internal training, as well as outreach and cooperation with tribes throughout the state.

In recent years, the Commission and agency developed several cooperative management agreements with tribal nations in the western portion of the state. These agreements help ensure tribal members can harvest resources in ways that reflect their cultural values, while also strengthening tribal self-determination within ODFW's existing authority. By reconnecting tribes with culturally significant resources and traditional practices—such as access to first foods—ODFW helps address historical losses and supports tribal leadership in conserving fish, wildlife, and habitats for future generations

## Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

ODFW is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which protects qualified applicants and employees with disabilities from unlawful discrimination. The agency will provide accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities when requested using an interactive process to determine if accommodation is reasonable. The agency continually invests resources in upgrading facilities to make them accessible to all Oregonians, including constructing new ADA accessible fishing docks and piers, viewing platforms, and walkways. The webpage [Access the Outdoors](#) was created on the ODFW website to allow easier reporting of ADA complaints to the ODFW ADA Compliance Officer.

## How is Progress Evaluated?

There is currently no formal structure for monitoring progress.

## EJ Mapping Tool

ODFW will continue to be a liaison to state's Environmental Justice Council and the development of the EJ Mapping Tool.



## EJC/EJTF CITED LEGISLATION

**Please share agency impacted legislation from the last legislative session where Environmental Justice Council or Environmental Justice Task Force engagement is cited in the legislation.**

We are not aware of any legislation from the 2025 session naming the Environmental Justice Council or Task Force that involved ODFW.

**Please share agency impacted legislation that includes language regarding meaningful engagement.**

[House Bill 3173](#): ODFW has been asked to participate and be a member of [The Task Force on Tribal Consultation](#) since 2023 when House Bill 3173 was created and signed into law.

## LOOKING AHEAD

### **Future Agency requested EJC Consultation**

ODFW will continue to be a liaison for the EJC and will consult as needed where it determines that is pertinent to the work the agency does and the scope of the EJC

The agency is continually working to broaden and diversify entities that engage in the agency's decision-making processes to better represent and incorporate a diversity of communities, views, priorities, and interests into agency decisions, especially those who are interested but unable to participate in the traditional processes laid out in the Administrative Procedures Act. It would be helpful for the EJC to identify barriers in public engagement that cross multiple state agencies and work toward solutions. Guidance on how agencies have successfully addressed structural barriers within their programs would help as we consider changes at a programmatic level.

### **Agency Need for EJ**

We appreciate opportunities to meet and learn from council members and other state agency liaisons.