OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Hybrid Board Meeting

Keizer, Oregon

April 25-26, 2023

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Meeting Agenda

April 25 & 26, 2023

Business Meeting:	**Tuesday, Apr 25, 8:00 am**	**Wednesday, Apr 26, 8:00 am**

The public is welcome to listen to the virtual meeting through the following methods:

- **YouTube Streaming**: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0dl-TOwLt4Sp--i1KEa_OA. Please note that there may be a slight delay when streaming the meeting content
- **Phone**:
- **April 25:** Dial 669 900 6833, when prompted, enter ID 891 8212 7210 and passcode: 631142
- **April 26:** Dial 669 900 6833, when prompted, enter ID 826 0760 3574 and passcode: 513270
- The board book (eBook) is available at: https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/about-us/Pages/board/meetings.aspx
- For each agenda item, the time listed is approximate. Anyone interested in a particular agenda item is encouraged to give ample time and listen in to the meeting at least 30 minutes before the approximate agenda item time.

Public comment

OWEB encourages written or verbal public comment on any agenda item. All comment requests should be sent to Nicole.Bettinardi@OWEB.oregon.gov **no later than 4:00 pm Thursday, April 20**.

Written comments will be provided to the board in advance of the meeting.

Verbal comments:

- Limited to three minutes
- Will be heard in the public comment period (**Agenda Items E, F, H, J, K, M, and N**).
- Provide the following information:
  - Your first and last name,
  - The topic of your comment, and
  - The phone number you will use when calling the meeting. Also, note if the phone is a landline and you prefer to be scheduled for public comment early to avoid long-distance phone call charges.

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

A. Board Member Comments (8:05 am)
Board representatives from state and federal agencies will provide updates on issues related to the natural resource agency they represent. This is also an opportunity for public and tribal board members to report on their recent activities and share information and comments on a variety of watershed enhancement and community conservation-related topics. *Information item*.

B. Review and Approval of Minutes (9:35 am)
The minutes of the January 24 & 25, 2023, meeting will be presented for board approval. *Action item*.

C. Directors Updates (9:40 am)
Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson and staff will update the board on agency business. *Information item.*

D. Committee Updates (10:35 am)
Representatives from board committees will provide written updates on committee topics to the full board. *Information item*.

E. General Public Comment (10:35 am)
This time is reserved for the board to hear general public comments and review the written public comment submitted for the meeting. *Information item*.

F. Land Acquisition Grant Awards and Time Extension Request (10:50 am)
NOTE: Verbal public comment specific to this agenda item will be heard at approximately 11:05 am

Staff Presentation
Grant Program Manager Eric Williams and Acquisitions Coordinator Miriam Forney will provide an overview of the September 2022 Land Acquisition grant offering and outline staff recommendations for a grant award.

Public Comment
This time is reserved for public comment on the September 2022 Land Acquisition grant offering. Only comments about this specific item will be accepted during this portion of the meeting. Any written comments about this agenda item must be received by OWEB staff by the **April 20, 2023, deadline** to be provided to the board in advance of the meeting. **Verbal comments should be limited to three minutes.**

Land Acquisition Grant Board Deliberations – September 2022 Awards and Grant #211-9903-19500 Time Extension Request
The board will consider grant applications submitted through the September 2022 Land Acquisition grant offering. Applications, supporting materials, and funding recommendations will be discussed and acted on by the board. In addition, the board will consider an extension request for OWEB Grant # 221-9903-19500. *Action Item.*

G. Climate-Related Evaluation Criteria Rulemaking Update (11:45 am)
Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein and Water and Climate Programs Coordinator Jessi Kershner will update the board on the climate criteria rulemaking process,

including providing an overview of draft climate evaluation criteria, definitions, and guidance. *Information item.*

H. Fall Open Solicitation Grant Offering Board Awards (1:00 pm)

NOTE: Verbal public comment specific to this agenda item will be heard at approximately 2:20 pm

Staff Presentation

Grant Program Manager Eric Williams and Regional Program Representatives will review the Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering and funding recommendations.

Public Comment

This time is reserved for public comment on the Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering and funding recommendations. Only comments about this specific item will be accepted during this portion of the meeting. Any written comments about this agenda item must be received by OWEB staff by the **April 20, 2023, deadline** to be provided to the board in advance of the meeting. **Verbal comments should be limited to three minutes.**

Fall Open Solicitation Grant Offering Board Deliberation and Awards

The board will consider grant applications submitted through the Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering. Applications, supporting materials, and funding recommendations will be discussed and acted on by the board. *Action Item.*

I. Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring Funding Request (3:30 pm)

Monitoring and Reporting Manager Courtney Shaff, Effectiveness Monitoring Coordinator Ken Fetcho, McKenzie Watershed Council Executive Director Jared Weybright, and Upper Deschutes Watershed Council Monitoring Program Manager Lauren Mork will provide an update on the progress made to date and describe further details on monitoring proposals to request continuing effectiveness monitoring for Stage 0 restoration efforts in Whychus Creek and the South Fork McKenzie River. *Action item.*

J. Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Awards (4:15 pm)

NOTE: Verbal public comment specific to this agenda item will be heard at approximately 4:30 pm

Staff Presentation

Monitoring and Reporting Manager Courtney Shaff and Drought Programs Specialist Theresa DeBardelaben will provide an overview of the 2022 Partnership Technical Assistance grant offering and funding recommendations. *Action item.*

Public Comment

This time is reserved for public comment on the 2022 Partnership TA grant offering and funding recommendations. Only comments about this specific item will be accepted during this portion of the meeting. Any written comments about this agenda item must be received by OWEB staff by the **April 20, 2023, deadline** to be provided to the board in advance of the meeting. **Verbal comments should be limited to three minutes.**

Partnership Technical Assistance Grants Board Deliberations and Awards
The board will consider grant applications submitted through the 2022 Partnership TA grant offering. Applications, supporting materials, and funding recommendations will be discussed and acted on by the board. *Action Item.*

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

K. General Public Comment (8:05 am)
This time is reserved for the board to hear general public comments and review the written public comment submitted for the meeting. *Information item*.

L. Approval of Focused Investment Partnerships Carry-Forward Funding (8:20 am)
Grant Program Manager Eric Williams will request board approval to carry over existing Focused Investment Partnership initiative funding to the 2023-2025 biennium.
Action item.

M. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) Grant Awards (8:35 am)
NOTE: Verbal public comment specific to this agenda item will be heard at approximately 9:05 am

Presentation
Grant Program Manager Eric Williams, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Coordinator Taylor Larson, and Conservation Easement Specialist Robin Meacher will provide an overview of the 2022 OAHP grant offerings and funding recommendations. Staff will request the board approve the funding recommendations from the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission outlined in Attachment E to the staff report.

Public Comment
This time is reserved for public comment on the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program grant awards and funding recommendations. Only comments about this specific item will be accepted during this portion of the meeting. Any written comments about this agenda item must be received by OWEB staff by the **April 20, 2023, deadline** to be provided to the board in advance of the meeting. **Verbal comments should be limited to three minutes.**

Board Discussion of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Grant Awards
The board will consider grant applications submitted through the 2022 Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program grant offering. Applications, supporting materials, and funding recommendations will be discussed and acted on by the board. *Action Item.*

N. Spending Plan (10:05 am)
NOTE: Verbal public comment specific to this agenda item will be heard at approximately 10:25 am

Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson and Grant Program Manager Eric Williams will provide updates to the board on OWEB's 2023-2025 Spending Plan. The board will be asked to provide direction for staff moving forward with final options for the July 2023 meeting. *Information item*

O. Other Business (4:05 pm)
This item is reserved for other matters that may come before the board. *Information item.*

Meeting Rules and Procedures

Meeting Procedures
Generally, agenda items will be taken in the order shown. However, in certain circumstances, the board may elect to take an item out of order. To accommodate the scheduling needs of interested parties and the public, the board may also designate a specific time at which an item will be heard. Any such times are indicated on the agenda.

Please be aware that topics not listed on the agenda may be introduced during the Board Comment period, the Executive Director's Update, the Public Comment period, under Other Business, or at other times during the meeting.

Oregon's Public Meetings Law requires disclosure that board members may meet for meals when OWEB meetings convene.

Voting Rules
The OWEB Board has 18 members. Of these, 11 are voting members and 7 are ex-officio. For purposes of conducting business, OWEB's voting requirements are divided into 2 categories – general business and action on grant awards.

General Business
A general business quorum is **6 voting members**. General business requires a majority of **all** voting members to pass a resolution (not just those present), so general business resolutions require affirmative votes of **at least 6 voting members**. Typical resolutions include adopting, amending, or appealing a rule, providing staff direction, etc. These resolutions cannot include a funding decision.

Action on Grant Awards
Per ORS 541.360(4), special requirements apply when OWEB considers action on grant awards. This includes a special **quorum of at least 8 voting members** present to act on grant awards, and affirmative votes of at least six voting members. In addition, regardless of the number of members present, **if 3 or more voting members** object to an award of funds, the proposal will be rejected.

Executive Session
The board may also convene in a confidential executive session where, by law, only press members and OWEB staff may attend. Others will be asked to leave the room during these discussions, which usually deal with current or potential litigation. Before convening such a session, the presiding board member will make a public announcement and explain necessary procedures.

More Information
If you have any questions about this agenda or the Board's procedures, please call Nicole Bettinardi, OWEB Board Assistant, at 503-428-1804 or send an e-mail to Nicole.Bettinardi @OWEB.oregon.gov. If special physical, language or other accommodations are needed for this meeting, please advise Nicole Bettinardi as soon as possible, and at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Membership

Voting Members
Barbara Boyer, *Board Co-Chair, Board of Agriculture*
Bruce Buckmaster, *Public*
Elizabeth Agpaoa, *Board of Forestry*
Gary Marshall, *Public*
Molly Kile, *Environmental Quality Commission*
Jamie McLeod-Skinner, *Public*
Kelly Coates, *Public (Tribal)*
Lindsay McClary, *Public*
Liza Jane McAlister, *Board Co-Chair, Public*
Mark Labhart, *Fish and Wildlife Commission*
Meg Reeves, W*ater Resources Commission*

Non-voting Members
Aaron Curtis, *U.S. Bureau of Land Management*
Chris Allen, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*
Cory Owens, *U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service*
Dan Brown, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
Dan Shively, *U.S Forest Service*
Eric Murray, *National Marine Fisheries Service*
Stephen Brandt, *Oregon State University Extension Service*

Contact Information
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Lisa.Charpilloz.Hanson@OWEB.oregon.gov

OWEB Assistant to Executive Director and Board – Nicole Bettinardi
Nicole.Bettinardi@OWEB.oregon.gov
503-428-1804

2023 Board Meeting Schedule
July 25 & 26 – Sisters/Hybrid
October 24 & 25 – Klamath Falls/Hybrid

For online access to staff reports and other OWEB publications, visit our website: www.oregon.gov/OWEB.

The Approach We Take

We believe that every endeavor is guided by a set of commitments not just about the "why" and the "what," but also the "how." These are the ways we are committed to engaging in our work. This is our approach. These principles modify everything we do.

Our work is characterized by…

Involving stakeholders broadly and in partnership

- Involving the community members at all levels
- Promoting community ownership of watershed health
- Collaborating and authentically communicating
- Bringing together diverse interests
- Building and mobilizing partnerships

Using best available science supported by local knowledge

- Basing approaches on the best available science
- Advancing efficient, science driven operations
- Addressing root sources and causes
- Incorporating local knowledge, experience, and culture
- Catalyzing local energy and investment

Investing collaboratively with long-term outcomes in mind

- Aligning investments with current and potential funding partners
- Maintaining progress into the future
- Stewarding for the long term
- Taking the long view on projects and interventions

Demonstrating impact through meaningful monitoring and evaluation

- Providing evidence of watershed change
- Measuring and communicating community impact
- Increasing appropriate accountability
- Incorporating flexibility, adaptive management – when we see something that's not working, we do something about it

Reaching and involving underrepresented populations

- Seeking to include the voice and perspectives that are not typically at the table
- Specific, targeted engagement
- Ensuring information is available and accessible to diverse audiences

OWEB Staff Culture Statement

We are dedicated to OWEB's mission and take great pride that our programs support watershed health and empower local communities. Our work is deeply rewarding and we are passionate about what we do. Our team is nimble, adaptable, and forward-thinking, while remaining grounded in the grassroots history of watershed work in Oregon. With a strong understanding of our past, we are strategic about our future. We believe in working hard while keeping our work environment innovative, productive, and fun. We are collaborative, both with each other and with outside partners and organizations, and place great value in continually improving what we do and how we do it.

2021- 2023 SPENDING PLAN FOR MEASURE 76 (LOTTERY), GENERAL FUNDS AND PCSRF FUNDS

April 2023 Board Meeting

	GRANTS	2022 Spending Plan	April 2023 Changes	2022 Spending Plan	TOTAL Awards To-Date	April 2023 Proposed Board Awards	TOTAL Awards To-Date & Proposed Awards	Remaining Spending Plan after Awards To-Date
1	**Open Solicitation:**							
2	Restoration	33.500	0.621	34.121	22.939	11.182	34.121	-
3	Technical Assistance							
4	Restoration TA	5.500	(0.621)	4.879	3.175	1.314	4.489	0.390
5	CREP TA	1.200		1.200	1.200		1.200	-
6	Stakeholder Engagement	2.750		2.750	1.236	0.531	1.767	0.983
7	Monitoring grants	4.750		4.750	4.579		4.579	0.171
8	Land and Water Acquisition	8.500		8.500	3.079	2.875	5.954	2.546
9	Weed Grants	3.250		3.250	3.250		3.250	-
10	Small Grants	2.800		2.800	2.800		2.800	-
11	Quantifying Outputs and Outcomes	1.250		1.250	0.513	0.470	0.983	0.267
12	**TOTAL**	**63.500**	**-**	**63.500**	**42.771**	**16.372**	**59.143**	**4.357**
13	**% of Total Core Programs**	**51.42%**		**51.42%**				
14	**% of OWEB Spending Plan total**	**37.56%**		**37.56%**				
15	**Focused Investments:**							
16	Deschutes	1.915		1.915	1.915		1.915	-
17	Willamette Mainstem Anchor Habitat	1.400		1.400	1.400		1.400	-
18	Harney Basin Wetlands	0.100		0.100	0.100		0.100	-
19	Upper Grande Ronde	0.466		0.466	0.466		0.466	-
20	John Day Partnership	4.000		4.000	4.000		4.000	-
21	Baker Sage Grouse	2.435		2.435	2.435		2.435	-
22	Warner Aquatic Habitat	2.293		2.293	2.293		2.293	-
23	Rogue Forest Rest. Ptnrshp	2.700		2.700	2.700		2.700	-
24	Clackamas Partnership	3.082		3.082	3.082		3.082	-
25	New FIP Solicitation	13.000		13.000	12.910		12.910	0.090
26	FI Effectiveness Monitoring	1.000		1.000	0.750		0.750	0.250
27	**TOTAL**	**32.391**	**-**	**32.391**	**32.051**	**-**	**32.051**	**0.340**
28	**% of Total Core Programs**	**26.23%**		**26.23%**				
29	**% of OWEB Spending Plan total**	**19.16%**		**19.16%**				
30	**Operating Capacity:**							
31	Capacity grants (WC/SWCD)	17.021		17.021	15.121		15.121	1.900
32	Statewide org partnership support	0.450		0.450	0.450		0.450	-
33	Organizational Collaboration	0.700		0.700	0.442		0.442	0.258
34	Partnership Technical Assistance	1.500		1.500	0.797	0.639	1.436	0.064
35	**TOTAL**	**19.671**	**-**	**19.671**	**16.810**	**0.639**	**17.449**	**2.222**
36	**% of Total Core Programs**	**15.93%**		**15.93%**				
37	**% of OWEB Spending Plan total**	**11.63%**		**11.63%**				
38	**Other:**							
39	CREP	0.750		0.750	0.750		0.750	-
40	Governor's Priorities	0.947		0.947	0.947		0.947	-
41	Klamath Post Dam Removal Watershed Restoration/KRRC-Contingency	4.053		4.053	4.053		4.053	-
42	Strategic Implementation Areas	1.500		1.500	1.500		1.500	-
43	Gov. directed-Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership	0.330		0.330	0.330		0.330	-
44	Gov. directed-Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership	0.350		0.350	0.350		0.350	-
45	**TOTAL**	**7.930**	**-**	**7.930**	**7.930**	**-**	**7.930**	**0.000**
46	**% of Total Core Programs**	**6.42%**		**6.42%**				
47	**% of OWEB Spending Plan total**	**4.69%**		**4.69%**				
48	**TOTAL Core Programs**	**123.492**	**-**	**123.492**	**99.562**	**17.011**	**116.573**	**6.919**
49	**General or Other Funds:**							
50	2020 Fire Recovery & Restoration							
51	Riparian/upland rest. & water quality	10.750		10.750	10.750		10.750	-
52	Floodplain restoration & reconnection	5.000		5.000	5.000		5.000	-
53	2021 Fire Recovery & Restoration	5.000		5.000	5.000		5.000	-
54	2021 Drought Resiliency						-	
55	Irrigation District Grants	1.551		1.551	1.551		1.551	-
56	Irrigation District Grants - N Unit	1.906		1.906	1.906		1.906	-
57	Jefferson Co Resiliency Grants	0.852		0.852	0.852		0.852	-
58	Klamath Livestock Wells & off channel const grants	2.733		2.733	2.733		2.733	-
59	Klamath Co Resiliency Grants	0.731		0.731	0.731		0.731	-
60	Jefferson SWCD Soil Conservation Grants	3.000		3.000	3.000		3.000	-
61	Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)							
62	OAHP Conservation Easements*	4.315		4.315	-	4.134	4.134	0.181
63	OAHP Conservation Management Plans*	0.150		0.150	-	0.066	0.066	0.084
64	Water Acquisitions	9.596		9.596	-		-	9.596
65	**TOTAL**	**45.584**	**-**	**45.584**	**31.523**	**4.200**	**35.723**	**9.861**
66	**% of OWEB Spending Plan total**	**26.96%**		**26.96%**				
67	**TOTAL OWEB Spending Plan**	**169.076**	**-**	**169.076**	**131.085**	**21.211**	**152.296**	**16.780**
68	**Funds transferred from/to other agencies**							
69	Transfer to ODFW - PCSRF	12.884		12.884	12.884		12.884	-
70	Transfer to Eugene Water & Electric Board - GF	4.000		4.000	4.000		4.000	-
71	Transfer from ODF for Forest Health Collaboratives-OF	0.500		0.500			-	0.500
72	Transfer from PSMFC - IMW - OF	0.600		0.600			-	0.600
73	Transfer from NRCS - Farm Bill technical support - FF	-		-	-		-	-
74	**TOTAL**	**17.984**	**-**	**17.984**	**16.884**	**-**	**16.884**	**1.100**
75	**OWEB Spending Plan & Other Directed Funds**	**187.060**	**-**	**187.060**	**147.969**	**21.211**	**169.180**	**17.880**

Agenda Item A

Board Member Comments

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

PLACEHOLDER

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item B

Board Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

MINUTES ARE NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)
January 24 & 25, 2023, Board Meeting

Virtual Board Meeting

(Audio time stamps reference recording at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0dl-TOwLt4Sp--i1KEa_OA.

OWEB MEMBERS PRESENT

Addington, Greg
Agpaoa, Elizabeth
Allen, Chris
Boyer, Barbara
Brandt, Stephen
Brown, Dan (1/25 only)
Buckmaster, Bruce
Coates, Kelly
Curtis, Aaron
Labhart, Mark
Marshall, Gary
McAlister, Liza Jane
McClary, Lindsay
McLeod-Skinner, Jamie
Murray, Eric
Owens, Cory
Reeves, Meg
Shively, Dan

OWEB STAFF PRESENT

Charpilloz Hanson, Lisa
Davis, Renee
Duzik, Katie
Fetcho, Ken
Hartstein, Eric
Hatch, Audrey
Hoffert, Denise
Larson, Taylor
Mack, April
McCarthy, Jillian
Page, Stephanie
Redon, Liz
Repplinger, Linda
Shaff, Courtney
Williams, Eric

OTHER

Beckman, Nathan
Bey Marko
Brandt, Troy
Fairbanks, Terry
Gordon, Ryan
Kelly, Stefan
Latzo, Hannah
McGinnis, Cheryl
Monzyk, Fred
Mukumoto, Cal
Neider, Brandi
Newberry, Daniel
Solomon, Morgan
Tattam, Ian
Tyrrell, Emmy
Walz, Kristen
Winters, Herb
Zettle, Shanda

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m. by Liza Jane McAlister

A. Board Member Comments (Audio = 0:13:25)

Board representatives from state and federal agencies provided updates on issues related to the natural resource agency they represent. Public and tribal board members also reported on their recent activities, shared information, and commented on various watershed enhancement and community conservation-related topics. *Information item*.

B. Review and Approval of Minutes (Audio = 1:41:56)

The minutes of the October 25 & 26, 2022 meeting was presented for board approval. *Action item*.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner moved the board to approve the minutes from the October 25 & 26, 2022 hybrid meeting. Meg Reeves seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Directors Updates (Audio = 1:42:52)

Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson and staff updated the board on agency business. *Information item.*

D. Committee Updates (Audio = 2:59:38)

Representatives from board committees provided updates on committee topics to the full board. *Information item*.

E. General Public Comment (Audio = 2:19:17)

This time was reserved for the board to hear general public comments and review the written public comment submitted for the meeting. *Information item*.

- Oregon Association of Conservation Districts – Jan Lee
- Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts – Kelley Beamer
- Network of Oregon Watershed Councils - Vanessa Green
- Oregon Conservation and Education Assistance Network - Cynthia Warnock
- Luckiamute Watershed Council - Kristen Larson
- Lower Rogue Watershed Council – Kelly Timchak
- Written public comments available on the OWEB public comments page

F. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC) Appointments (Audio = 3:10:21)

Grant Program Manager Eric Williams and Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Coordinator Taylor Larson recommended the OWEB Board appoint Laura Masterson, Eduardo Contreras, and Russ Hoeflich to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission. *Action item*

Bruce Buckmaster moved the board appoint Laura Masterson, Eduardo Contreras, and Russ Hoeflich to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission. Mark Labhart seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Budget and Legislative Update (Audio = 3:25:11)

Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson, Deputy Director Stephanie Page, and Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein provided an update on the agency budget and the 2023 legislative session. *Information item.*

H. OWEB 101 – Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) and Council Capacity (Audio = 4:48:52)

Grant Program Manager Eric Williams, Monitoring and Reporting Manager Courtney Shaff, North Coast Program Representative Katie Duzik, Willamette Valley Program Representative Liz Redon, Partnerships Coordinator Denise Hoffert, Partnerships Coordinator Jillian McCarthy, and Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein provided an 'OWEB 101' presentation highlighting the Focused Investment Partnership and Council Capacity grant programs. *Information Item.*

I. Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes Funding Requests (Audio = 6:28:21)

Conservation Outcomes Coordination Audrey Hatch and Effectiveness Monitoring Coordinator Ken Fetcho requested the board provide funding for the 'Telling the Restoration Story' grant program and a Carbon and Riparian Condition Monitoring Project. *Action Item.*

Telling the Restoration Story – ongoing funding support request

Jamie McLeod-Skinner moved the board allocate up to $150,000 in support of Telling the Restoration Story with funds from the Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes line item of the OWEB spending plan, and delegate to the Executive Director the authority to distribute the funds through appropriate agreements with an award date of January 24, 2023. Meg Reeves seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Riparian Reforestation Carbon Monitoring Funding Request

Meg Reeves moved the board award up to $100,000 for monitoring of carbon and riparian conditions associated with riparian planting restoration projects with funds from the Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes line item of the OWEB spending plan, and delegate to the Executive Director the authority to distribute the funds through appropriate agreements with an award date of January 24, 2023. Elizabeth Agpaoa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:39 by co-chair Barbara Boyer.

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 by Barbara Boyer

J. General Public Comment (Audio = 0:04:30)

This time was reserved for the board to hear general public comments. *Information item*.

- South Santiam Watershed Council – Shannon Richardson
- Mary's River Watershed Council – Holly Purpura
- Oregon State University – Alex Dye
- Pacific Forest Trust – Arian Dehnow

K. FIP 2021-2023 Reporting (Audio = 0:23:27)

Grant Program Manager Eric Williams, Partnership Coordinators Jillian McCarthy and Denise Hoffert, Conservation Outcomes Coordinator Audrey Hatch, and Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein provided an update on Cohorts 2 and 3 Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) initiatives' progress. Representatives from each of the five Cohort 2 initiatives then updated the board on progress made in the 2021-2023 biennium. *Information item*.

L. OWEB Grant Program Rulemaking (Audio = 00:5:39)

Grant Program Manager Eric Williams and Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein requested the board approve proposed administrative rule revisions for the Grant Program. *Action Item.*

Barbara Boyer moved the board approve the OWEB Grant Program administrative rules found in Attachment D. Mark Labhart seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Amended Motion:

Barbara Boyer moved the board approve the OWEB Grant Program administrative rules found in Attachment D, as revised at this meeting replacing the word "complete" with the word "final" in ORA 695-005-0040 Subsection 4. Meg Reeves seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

M. Revisit In-Person vs. Virtual Board Meetings (Audio = 2:52:16)

Board and Legislative Coordinator Eric Hartstein provided an update about in-person and virtual options for future meetings. The board indicated three hybrid meetings and one virtual meeting in 2023. *Information Item.*

N. Shared Stewardship and the 20-Year Strategic Plan (Audio = 1:10:22)

OWEB Fire, Klamath, and Drought Programs Manager Renee Davis, Oregon Department of Forestry State Forester Cal Mukumoto, Strategic Planning Coordinator Nathan Beckman, and Planning Branch Director Ryan Gordon presented information about Oregon's 20-year strategic plan as outlined in the state-federal Memorandum of Understanding on Shared Stewardship and Senate Bill 762 (2021). *Information Item.*

O. 2023-2025 Spending Plan (Audio = 2:08:50)

Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson and Grant Program Manager Eric Williams updated the OWEB Board on the 2023-2025 spending plan timeline and presented recommendations for major spending plan category percentages. *Information Item.*

P. Other Business (Audio = 2:48:43)

This item is reserved for other matters that may come before the board. *Information item.*

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 by co-chair Liza Jane McAlister.

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item C

Director's Updates

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

April 25-26, 2023 OWEB Board Meeting
Executive Director Update C-2: Budget and Legislative

This report provides the board an update about the legislative budgeting process and the 2023 Legislative Session.

Background

The Oregon Legislature approves budgets for state agencies on a biennial basis. First, each agency submits a requested budget. The Governor then releases a recommended budget, and the Oregon Legislature approves a final budget.

Agencies must specifically request additions to the base budget and justify the need for each addition. The requested additions to an agency's base budget are called Policy Option Packages (POPs).

The board approved OWEB's POPs in July of 2022 and these were included in OWEB's Agency Request Budget that was submitted in August 2022. The Governor's Budget (GB) was released in February 2023 and the full document was submitted by OWEB in late March.

The Legislative Budgeting Process

The GB is the starting point for agency budget discussions at legislative hearings. During the legislative session, agencies must support the Governor's Budget. OWEB's current service level did not take any reductions in the GB. The budget includes provisions for reclassifying certain positions to partially establish the necessary organization structure at the agency.

The GB provides for position authority and existing funds for staff to continue administration of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) but does not include new investments in the program. The GB includes modest new investment in drought resiliency ($2 million). It does not include continued funding to meet our obligations to Drought and Fire Disaster relief grantees awarded in this biennium but not expected to have fully expended grant funds. However, OWEB has been advised this issue will be addressed through the agency's budget bill when it is considered by the legislature. For more details on the 2023-2025 GRB, see Attachment A.

OWEB's budget was heard by the Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means on April 12-13. Day 1 was a presentation of the agency's budget by OWEB leadership, and Day 2 was reserved for public comment. Work sessions with the Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee may occur any time after agency budget hearings are completed.

Policy Legislation

In addition to the agency budget, staff are tracking other legislation that may affect OWEB or its partners. Nearly 3,000 bills have been introduced during the session thus far. Currently, OWEB is tracking ~30 bills in the agency's top two tiers of priorities. Examples of Priority 1 bills that OWEB is tracking include (but are not limited to):

- HB 3366, which would appropriate funding to OWEB for OAHP.
- HB 2998, which would create the Oregon Soil Health Initiative to promote and support farming and ranching systems, and to improve soil health by collaborating on voluntary incentive-based soil health strategies. The bill includes an appropriation to OWEB to fund voluntary soil health practices, and associated technical assistance, through OAHP.

- HB 2813, which directs OWEB to establish a grant program to provide grants to water suppliers to protect sources of drinking water.
- HB 3124, which includes the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package, with several potential appropriations of funding to OWEB.
- SB 530, which establishes state policy regarding natural climate solutions, and designates OWEB as the fiscal agent for distributing funds to state agencies to implement programs related to natural climate solutions, as directed by the Oregon Global Warming Commission.

At the April board meeting, staff will update the board about any changes that have the potential to affect OWEB.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Stephanie Page, Deputy Director at stephanie.page@oweb.oregon.gov /971-345-7004 or Eric Hartstein, Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator at eric.hartstein@oweb.oregon.gov /503-910-6201.

Attachment

A. OWEB 2023-2025 Governor's Budget – 2 Page Summary

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

2023-25 Governor's Budget

	2021-23 Legislatively Adopted Budget	2023-25 Current Service Level	2023-25 Governor's Budget
Lottery Fund	$94,776,334	$106,626,707	$106,674,689
Federal Funds	$48,251,444	$34,812,700	$53,398,495
Other Funds	$29,863,984	$2,359,071	$23,992,654
General Fund	$52,526,718	--	$2,000,000
Total Funds	$225,418,480	$143,798,478	$186,065,838
Positions	46	30	39
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	42.57	30.00	39.00

2023-25 Significant Changes

Overview

- OWEB's recommended policy packages add to the agency's organizational structure to partially fulfill OWEB's needs.
- The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program packages provide position authority and existing funds for staff to continue administration of previously allocated farm and ranch land protection grants. They do not include new investments.
- The recommended budget includes additional modest drought resiliency investments. The recommended budget does not provide all the necessary funding to complete the allocation of the Drought and Fire Disaster relief grants, but OWEB has been advised this issue will be addressed in the agency's budget bill.
- The recommended packages allow OWEB to accept federal funds to comply with federal historic and cultural resource requirements and provide technical support for tide gate replacement planning, and accept other funds to administer grants to support water quality and salmon habitat improvements.
- The recommended budget assumes a change in Measure 76 lottery funds allocation from 65% grants/35% operations to 70% grants/30% operations, consistent with constitutional direction when lottery revenue transfers reach 150% of the 2009-2011 amounts.

Additional Analyst Adjustments – Package 091

- Emergency response programs (GF): Recommends modest new general funds allocated to grant programs for off-channel livestock water facilities ($304,121) and irrigation modernization grants ($1,000,000) in areas affected by the 2021 drought, plus $695,879 in operating funds to support ongoing work. $2,000,000. The GRB does not provide all the necessary funding to complete the allocation of the Drought and Fire Disaster relief grants. OWEB has been working closely with the Governor's Office, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services Budget and Management section, and the Legislative Fiscal Office to assure program continuity into the next biennium and has been advised that the issue will be addressed in the agency's budget bill.

Recommended Policy Packages - Grants Budget

200 - Standard Grant Program Continuity (FF/OF): This package allows OWEB to spend non-lottery fund grants that have been awarded and continue to be active (FF $18M, OF $572,864) as carry-forward. $18,572,864

215 - Oregon Ag Heritage Program (OF): Allows OWEB to award and spend existing grant funds allocated to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund during the February 2022 special legislative session. No new funds are included. $3,664,553

245 – Water Acquisition grant funds continuity (OF): Allows OWEB to continue spending existing grant funds appropriated through the GF in 2021-23 biennium and deposited into the Flexible Incentive Account (OF). $9,214,020

280 - Additional Other Funds (OF): Recommends $7M additional OF limitation to be able to receive and expend OF grant funds beyond OWEB's current service level budget. This includes potential OF from PacifiCorp to support water quality improvements in the Upper Klamath Basin as part of the upcoming dam removal process and from Idaho Power for water quality and salmon habitat improvements related to the relicensing of the Hells Canyon Dam complex. $7,000,000

Recommended Policy Packages - Operations Budget

100 - Agency reorganization and capacity building: Re-classifies 2 existing management positions and re-classifies 1 staff position to a management position to partially establish the necessary organization structure for OWEB. Funding recommended: $102,665 ($6,253 FF, $96,412 LF).

115 – Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Continuation: Extends position authority for 3 FTE (limited duration) positions to administer the OAHP. $800,000 in funding for the operational costs was reclassified from existing grant funds appropriated in the 2022 regular legislative session. No new funds were added (100% OF).

145 - Water Acquisitions Continuation: Extends 1 limited duration position to operate the water acquisitions program. Funding recommended: $382,146 (100% OF).

160 - Program continuity: Recommends extending 1 limited duration Federal Fund position to support tide gate work. Funding recommended: $327,864 (100% FF).

165 - National Historic Preservation Act compliance: Recommends a new limited duration Federal Fund position to assure compliance with new National Historic Preservation Act requirements associated with Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery funding. Funding recommended: $251,678 (100% FF).

Fund Source key:
LF = Lottery Funds
FF = Federal Funds
GF = General Funds
OF = Other Funds

April, 25-26 2023, OWEB Board Meeting

Executive Director Update C-3 Strategic Plan Update

This report provides the board updates on the implementation progress of the 2018-2028 strategic plan. In addition, this report shares OWEB's current thinking on a timeline and process for an update to the strategic plan, in accordance with Governor Kotek's expectations of state agencies.

Background

In June 2018, the board approved a new, ten-year strategic plan. Beginning with the July 2022 board meeting, staff developed a new template to track quarterly progress on strategic plan priorities and report out to the board and stakeholders.

Attached is the latest update of actions related to the strategic plan between January 2023 and April 2023.

During this quarter, OWEB met with additional new groups to discuss watershed health throughout Oregon. The Drought program helped to leverage significant federal funds into Oregon for irrigation modernization projects, and recipients of Drought grants engaged in public outreach about the benefits of the program. The Post-fire Recovery program aided working agriculture, timber lands, and communities. OWEB made grant-making more accessible for Oregonians by adopting general grant program rules that eliminate some barriers to prospective applicants. OWEB also put out the annual Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI) Call for Data and has over 20,000 total restoration projects reported in Oregon to date.

Upon taking office in January 2023, Governor Kotek shared a list of expectations for state agencies related to operational excellence. One of the expectations is that agencies with strategic plans older than 36 months will update those plans by June 1, 2024.

OWEB is exploring options for a facilitator to lead the agency and board through an update and refresh to the strategic plan. We anticipate this update will occur over approximately the next year.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Courtney Shaff, Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager, at **Courtney.Shaff@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-345-7012**

Attachments

A. OWEB Strategic Plan Report April 2023

OREGON Watershed Enhancement Board

Wildflowers, Columbia Gorge: Linda Repplinger

2018-2028 Strategic Plan

Quarterly Report to the Board | April, 2023

Mission: To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

Priority 1

Broad awareness of the relationship between people and watersheds

Follow the Water is an outreach program of Clean Rivers Coalition.

Off-Channel Livestock and Soil Conservation grant handouts.

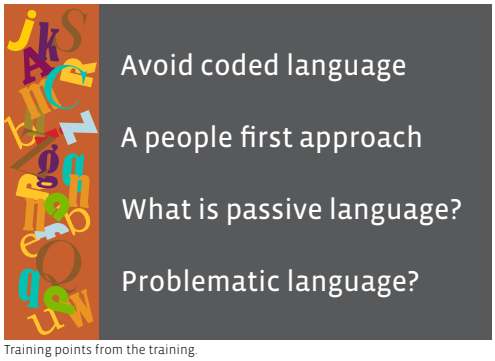
OWEB leadership **met with three organizations** active in building coalitions to foster watershed health.

- The Clean Rivers Coalition focuses on community engagement around water and includes representatives from watershed councils, SWCDs and local city/regional governments.
- Columbia Riverkeeper works to restore and protect the water quality of the Columbia River.
- The Intertwine Alliance focus on preserving and nurturing a healthy regional system of parks, trails, and natural areas.
- OWEB leadership continues regular meetings with other partner organizations and groups, including the Oregon Conservation Partnership, organic agriculture organizations, agriculture and conservation organizations.

The recipients of the Jefferson County Soil Conservation grant **highlighted the community and watershed benefit of the program.** Informational sheets describing community successes were distributed for Klamath Off-Channel Livestock Watering and Jefferson County Soil Conservation grant offerings. These fact sheets were also distributed at the Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation Board meeting.

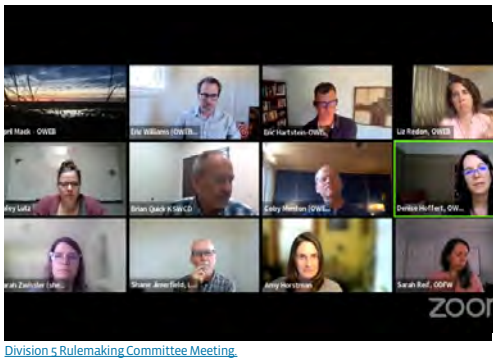
Priority 2

Leaders at all levels of watershed work reflect the diversity of Oregonians



Training points from the training.

All OWEB staff continue to **participate in dynamic sessions** led by EcoNorthwest to reflect **on diversity, equity and inclusion values** in the work of the agency. 2023 discussions explored the importance of language and communications.



Division 5 Rulemaking Committee Meeting.

OWEB **conducted Division 5 rulemaking** for OWEB grant program's over-arching rules. The rulemaking will:

- Provide better clarity for OWEB applicants and grantees.
- Remove blanket match requirements that have been noted as an equity concern.
- Make OWEB grant-making more accessible.

Rules were approved by the board at their January 2023 meeting, and are now in effect.

Priority 3

Community capacity and strategic partnerships achieve healthy watersheds

Continued compliance items include areas to be restored, cleaned up, and management plan approvals. BLM photo.

As part of OWEB's responsibility as a land acquisition funder, the agency **continued working with land trust partners to ensure that habitat values are sustained** on properties acquired with OWEB funding. OWEB either holds an easement or retains a third party right of enforcement on all acquisitions that OWEB funds. Continued stewardship is part of this responsibility.

Post-2020 Fire Riparian Restoration project on the North Santiam River, August 2022.

Post-fire Recovery grant programs provide assistance for restoration implementation, technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement activities related to fire recovery in eligible areas.

- **2020 Post-Fire Recovery grants** closed a fourth cycle in January. Initial funding decisions were determined later that month.
- **2021 Post-Fire Recovery grants** opened a second offering in January 2023 and closed in February 2023.
- **2022 Wildfire Recovery Immediate Response grants** opened and are ongoing.

Priority 4

Watershed organizations have access to a diverse and stable funding portfolio

Restoration and ecological opportunities to provide avian habitat after post-fire logging.

The post-fire recovery and drought-relief programs **utilized general funds from the Oregon Legislature to support locally driven projects.** These projects complement investments made under OWEB's traditional Measure 76, PCSRF, and other investments.

Headworks diversion gates to be updated at Sheirbon Hill Water Conservation Project.

The Drought Program **helped to leverage significant federal funds**—such as those available through Natural Resources Conservation Service's Public Law 566 program—by providing non-federal match to support irrigation modernization projects.

Priority 5

The value of working lands is fully integrated into watershed health

The OSU Extension Small Farms Program includes farming recourses for dry farming, organic farming, farm tourism, beginner farmers, and farm management.

OWEB leadership continued meetings with agricultural stakeholders. In February 2023, leadership **met with the Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Small Farms Program** and discussed opportunities for small farms to benefit from some of the grant programs recently funded at OWEB, including drought resiliency grants and Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program grants.

Salvage logging underway on industrial timberland affected by the Riverside fire. Photo by Samuel Leininger, Clackamas SWCD.

The Post-fire Recovery program provided grants to **support on-the-ground natural resource recovery of working agricultural and timber lands** following the 2020 and 2021 wildfire seasons. OWEB staff's continued work to operate these grant programs and project-managing the grants includes:

- Convene technical review team
- Prepare grant award documents and grant agreements
- Review and approve requests for reimbursement
- Review project status reports and completion reports
- Issue payments

Priority 6

Coordinated monitoring and shared learning to advance watershed restoration effectiveness

Call for Data announcement. OWRI now has over 20,000 projects reported.

In early 2023, OWEB opened the annual **Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI) Call for Data**. OWEB also completed the annual export of OWRI data to the Oregon Explorer online platform.

Stories of on-the-ground watershed restoration projects are continuously updated and synthesized. This information informs policymakers about the economics, measurable outcomes, and community successes of restoration.

Middle Fork John Day River Intensively Monitored Watershed.

OWEB continues to **participate in the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership** (PNAMP)–a forum for tribal, state and federal agency partners who work throughout the Columbia Basin to coordinate science-based, aquatic monitoring and identify areas of shared learning.

In the first quarter of 2023, OWEB participated in the PNAMP Steering Committee meeting. The meeting outlined PNAMP priorities for the year, including continued progress on Intensively Monitored Watersheds and updated monitoring resources online.

Priority 7
Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds

Aslhand Dry-type Forest Priority FIP.

Staff are actively engaged in opportunities for **continuous improvement with the Focused Investment Partnerships** (FIPs) grant program. The program is now entering its 4th biennium.

In early 2023, OWEB leadership and staff re-engaged with the Bonneville Environmental Foundation for a full-day retreat to reflect on the evolution of FIPs. This discussion–and public input from recent board and committee meetings–identified many short-and-long-term opportunities to adapt the program.

Brochure about the Emerald Ash Borer from ODA. Additional ODA resources.

The Water/Climate committee invited the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODA) to give a presentation about the recent discovery of the **Emerald Ash Borer in Oregon**. This invasive species damages and destroys ash trees, which threatens wetland and riparian habitats throughout the state. The committee discussed the potential impacts, policy considerations, and next steps.

Strategies Chart July 2022 - April 2023

accomplishments
highlighted in quarterly update

		July	October	January	April
1	**Broad awareness of the relationship between people and watersheds**				
1.1	Develop and implement broad awareness campaigns and highlight personal stories to tell the economic, restoration, and community successes of watershed investments.	●	●	●	●
1.2	Increase involvement of non-traditional partners in strategic watershed approaches.		●	●	●
2	**Leaders at all levels of watershed work reflect the diversity of Oregonians**				
2.1	Listen, learn and gather information about diverse populations.	●	●	●	●
2.2	Create new opportunities to expand the conservation table.	●		●	
2.3	Develop funding strategies with a lens toward diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)		●	●	●
3	**Community capacity and strategic partnerships achieve healthy watersheds**				
3.1	Evaluate and identify lessons learned from OWEB's past capacity funding.	●	●	●	
3.2	Champion best approaches to build organizational, community and partnership capacity.		●	●	●
3.3	Accelerate state/federal agency participation in partnerships.	●		●	●
4	**Watershed organizations have access to a diverse and stable funding portfolio**				
4.1	Increase coordination of public restoration investments and develop funding vision.	●	●	●	●
4.2	Align common investment areas with private foundations.	●	●		●
4.3	Explore creative funding opportunities and partnerships with the private sector.			●	
4.4	Partner to design strategies for complex conservation issues that can only be solved by seeking new and creative funding sources.	●	●	●	
5	**The value of working lands is fully integrated into watershed health**				
5.1	Implement the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program.	●	●	●	
5.2	Strengthen engagement with a broad base of working landowners.	●	●	●	●
5.3	Enhance the work of partners to increase working lands projects on farm, ranch and forestlands.		●	●	●
5.4	Support technical assistance to work with owners/managers of working lands.				
5.5	Develop engagement strategies for owners and managers of working lands who may not currently work with local organizations.			●	●
6	**Coordinated monitoring and shared learning to advance watershed restoration effectiveness**				
6.1	Broadly communicate restoration outcomes and impacts.		●	●	●
6.2	Invest in monitoring over the long term.	●		●	
6.3	Develop guidance and technical support for monitoring.	●	●	●	●
6.4	Increase communication between and among scientists and practitioners.			●	●
6.5	Define monitoring priorities.	●	●		
6.6	Develop and promote a monitoring framework.		●	●	
7	**Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds**				
7.1	Invest in landscape restoration over the long term.	●	●	●	●
7.2	Develop investment approaches in conservation that support healthy communities and strong economics.	●	●	●	●
7.3	Foster experimentation that aligns with OWEB's mission.	●	●	●	●

Executive Director Update C-4, Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Watershed Restoration Update

This report provides the board with an update on the status of OWEB's investment in Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Watershed Restoration costs associated with work by the Klamath River Renewal Corporation.

Background

The states of Oregon and California have been working together with PacifiCorp and federal regulatory agencies to plan and implement the removal of four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River. PacifiCorp previously owned and operated these dams, three in California and one in Oregon (J.C. Boyle dam). PacifiCorp determined that it is in the best interest of the company and its customers to stop operating the dams rather than spending substantial amounts on improvements needed if they were to continue generating power.

The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) is a private, independent nonprofit organization formed by signatories of the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA). Signatories of the amended KHSA, including the States of Oregon and California, local governments, Tribal nations, PacifiCorp, irrigators, and several conservation and fishing groups, appointed KRRC to take ownership and oversee the removal of the four Klamath River dams.

PacifiCorp agreed to transfer ownership of the dams to KRRC, which is working with multiple contractors to remove the dams and restore the river to a free-flowing condition. Funding in the amount of $450 million for removal and watershed restoration is committed.

As KRRC implements the dam removal, former reservoir areas will become exposed and require restoration and stabilization of bare sediment deposits for long-term water quality, long-term ecological benefits, and restoration of natural river functions and processes. Additional restoration work will be needed at upland sites (where dredged material generated by regrading of slopes will be deposited) and at the mouths of creeks entering the former reservoir pools. KRRC submitted a Reservoir Area Management Plan (RAMP) to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the responsible entity for principal federal regulatory review of the project. The RAMP describes measures for restoration, monitoring, and adaptive management of the former reservoir areas and high-priority tributaries, including actions specifically planned for the former reservoir area upstream of J.C. Boyle dam, the section of the project located in Oregon.

During the FERC review, a question was raised about whether existing contingencies and risk tools provide a high enough level of certainty that the work will be completed on time and within budget. In response to this concern, the states and PacifiCorp agreed to provide up to $45 million in additional financial support for the project, divided equally among the three entities.

On August 26, 2022, FERC released a Final Environmental Impact Statement and recommended approval of the proposed license surrender, decommissioning, and removal of the four Klamath River dams.

On October 26, 2022, the OWEB Board committed $15 million over a period of 3-5 years for Klamath River post-dam removal restoration watershed restoration contingency costs incurred by KRRC. The funding is consistent with OWEB's constitutional and statutory authority to fund projects that address habitat needs for native fish and wildlife, along with water quality. Multiple funding sources administered by OWEB will be utilized for this commitment. The initial grant award made by the board is $4.053 million, which was delegated to the OWEB Executive

Director for distribution. The remaining $10.947 million will be included in the OWEB Board's spending plans for future biennia, beginning in 2023-2025.

Status Update

The final License Surrender Order from FERC approving the decommissioning and removal of the dams was issued on November 17, 2022. Ownership of the four dams on the mainstem Klamath River previously owned by PacifiCorp was transferred to KRRC effective December 1, 2022. The removal of the J.C. Boyle facility located in Oregon is expected to occur in 2024. Following the October 2022 board meeting, OWEB and KRRC finalized a partnership agreement that affirms the intent of OWEB's investment in Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration and describes the framework, scope, tasks, and timeline for the overarching $15 million in funding. In addition, the States of Oregon and California, PacifiCorp, and KRRC finalized a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Supplemental Contingency Funding Implementation.

Since the January 2023 board meeting, OWEB opened a grant cycle for this KRRC-specific grant offering that includes a project-level grant application and associated guidance documents for use by KRRC to propose specific activities that would utilize the OWEB's post-dam removal watershed restoration funding. Grant applications submitted by KRRC will mirror the restoration actions for the J.C. Boyle area as outlined in the RAMP and will adhere to minor additional requirements included in FERC's final order. KRRC expects to submit a grant application for OWEB funding in September 2023. Actions that are likely to be proposed to OWEB for funding include but are not limited to, tributary restoration, floodplain reconnection, fish-passage barrier removal, instream large-wood placement, revegetation, and treatment of invasive species.

Regarding the anticipated timeline for dam removal and subsequent watershed restoration, pre-drawdown activities, such as road improvements, building removal, and pre-deconstruction monitoring, have begun. In June, KRRC expects to construct improvements at two of the dams in preparation for drawdown and deconstruction work. Beginning in September 2023, Copco No. 2 Dam in California will be removed. In 2024, the remaining three dams—including J.C. Boyle—will be removed, and restoration activities, which will continue for several years, will begin.

OWEB staff stay in regular communication with KRRC about implementation progress for post-dam removal restoration. Quarterly reports will be provided to the board at each meeting.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Renee Davis, Fire, Klamath, and Drought Programs Manager, at renee.davis@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-345-7231.

This report provides the board with an update on the status of OWEB's Post-Fire Recovery and Drought Relief grant programs.

Background

During the 2021 and 2022 Legislative sessions, OWEB received General Fund support for post-fire recovery grant-making. Allocations included $19.75 million in grant funding to address impacts of the 2020 wildfire season and $5 million in grant funding to address impacts of the 2021 wildfire season (in addition to program administration funding to OWEB). During the 2nd Special Session in December of 2021, OWEB received $11.627 million in General Funds to support drought relief grants and grant program administration.

Post-Fire Recovery Grants

Following is a status update for each of the 2020 post-fire recovery allocations:

- $10.75 million for riparian and upland replanting: Four grant cycles have been completed. More than $9.6 million have been awarded or are pending in 17 grants. These grants address priority post-fire recovery needs in 10 2020 fire areas: 242, Almeda, Beachie Creek, Brattain, Echo Mountain, Holiday Farm, Riverside, Slater, South Obenchain, and White River. As an example of progress made under this program, in one project, over 3,000 acres of upland area have been reseeded since receiving grant funding in the Fall of 2022. An additional 500 acres of reseeding is planned for the Spring of 2023, following very beneficial winter precipitation conditions that have allowed for increased natural regeneration and successful plant establishment.
- $5 million for floodplain restoration and reconnection: Four grant cycles have been completed. Approximately $3.9 million have been awarded or are pending in seven grants. These grants address priority post-fire recovery needs in five 2020 fire areas: Almeda, Beachie Creek, Brattain, Holiday Farm, and Indian Creek. As an example of progress made under this grant funding, in one project, riparian site preparation is currently underway to allow for equipment staging and post-implementation replanting. Following completion of final design and permitting, which is expected to occur in the Fall of 2023, instream work to add large wood on over 3 miles of stream is planned for implementation in spring 2024.
- $4 million for restoration and targeted land acquisition to Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB): OWEB staff are working with EWEB and local partners such as McKenzie Watershed Council and McKenzie River Trust (MRT), for post-fire restoration and acquisition grant applications, respectively, in the Holiday Farm fire area. One restoration grant cycle has been completed and a $3 million grant awarded. EWEB and MRT currently are completing due diligence for one land acquisition project to reduce post-fire impacts on riparian and floodplain areas.

For the 2021 post-fire recovery funding, two grant cycles have been completed. Just over $4 million have been awarded or are pending in two grants. These grants address priority post-fire recovery needs in three 2021 fire areas: Bootleg, Cougar Peak, and Patton Meadow. Both projects are still in the planning and design phase due to uncertainty in funding extension into the 2023-25 biennium; however, plans for implementation are to occur during the Spring-Summer of 2023.

Drought Relief Grants

General funds provided to OWEB support six categories of drought relief funding. These categories, the total grant funding allocated to each program, and status updates about the programs follow.

- Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received $3,000,000 in grant funding to support stewardship practices on irrigated land that is at high risk for erosion and soil degradation, and to limit proliferation of noxious and invasive weeds. The SWCD held an open application cycle for agricultural producers to apply to receive reimbursement for soil conservation practices that were implemented during July 2021-June 2022. This funding enabled the SWCD to assist agricultural producers who were forced to fallow irrigated agricultural fields due to drought. In September 2022, $2,870,649 was reimbursed to 87 producers; the remainder of the funds went to the Jefferson SWCD for program support. The grant is complete. As a landowner-specific example of program outputs, one producer implemented soil conservation practices such as fallowing, conservation cover, and herbaceous weed treatment on 501 acres. Because this landowner was proactive in implementing soil conservation practices, that producer was reimbursed $71,157.
- The Klamath off-channel livestock watering grant program makes available $2,733,500 to support grants for livestock watering wells and the construction of off-channel water facilities in Klamath County. Three grant cycles are complete, and four grants totaling $2.07 million have been awarded. Access to well drillers continue to be a limiting factor for local partners utilizing this grant program. As an example of how the program supports drought relief, in some of the projects, completing off-channel livestock watering wells is a first step by landowners in addressing additional restoration actions, such as improving irrigation management that will promote drought relief, as well as improving instream and riparian habitat conditions. This funding also complements grants under the Klamath County drought resilience program (see below), through which local stakeholders are hosting quarterly outreach events to inform landowners on potential opportunities to assist with natural resource needs.
- A $1,906,325 grant to North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) supports investments in irrigation modernization projects within the NUID boundary in Jefferson County. This state funding provides non-federal match funding for the longer-term watershed plan developed by NUID for the federal PL 83-566 funding program with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). As an example of progress under this grant, final approval by the NRCS Chief of NUID's watershed plan is imminent. Canal lining and piping for the three locations subject to this project are in the planning/design phases and materials are being purchased.
- The Statewide Irrigation Modernization (IM) grant program makes available $1,550,752 to irrigation districts for matching grants to support IM investments. Three grants—two to the Arnold Irrigation District in the Deschutes Basin and one to the East Fork Irrigation District (EFID) in the Hood River Valley—have been awarded, utilizing the full funding allocation. As an example of progress under these grants, the majority of the EFID IM project is completed; installation of pressurized pipe and flow meter has been implemented, and design for the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system is anticipated to be installed in March.
- Three grants totaling $850,984 have been awarded under this targeted offering for Drought Resilience Technical Assistance Projects in Jefferson County. The grants support work by NUID, Deschutes River Conservancy, and Jefferson SWCD. Under this funding,

OWEB also developed an agreement with Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council to support coordination and technical activities for the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative. As an example of progress under these grants, Jefferson SWCD has facilitated five meetings of the project working group in support of developing the long-range plan for drought resiliency. The working group comprises 50+ members including agricultural producers, landowners, irrigation districts, and local, state, and federal agencies. Thus far, more than 30 actions to help lessen drought impacts have been identified, and web-based and video resources are being developed to describe opportunities for agricultural stewardship actions.

- OWEB created two grant offerings for Drought Resiliency Projects in Klamath County: one focusing on Technical Assistance (TA) and Stakeholder Engagement, and a second focusing on on-the-ground "Restoration" activities for drought resilience and water-use reduction. The full funding allocation of $930,770 has been awarded in six grants—three TA and stakeholder engagement and three on-the-ground restoration projects. As two examples of progress under these grants: 1) the Upper Klamath Basin Ag Collaborative (UKBAC) has met with numerous landowners to discuss challenges they have faced under drought conditions. There is an ongoing dialogue between the UKBAC and the Klamath Tribes about how to move forward in unison with restoration projects. Although specific projects have yet to be agreed upon, groundwork for a positive relationship and potential collaboration is being established. 2) The Duncan Hay & Livestock Irrigation Infrastructure project has enabled purchase of two LEPA/LESA pivots and a flowmeter from a local retailer to replace existing wheel lines, and installation is underway. Their grant is serving as a demonstration project at the local Upper Klamath Basin producer listening sessions—hosted by Sustainable Northwest—to inform other producers that support for irrigation efficiency projects is available. In addition, the Energy Trust of Oregon showcased the project as a model of energy and water efficiency in an online article.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Renee Davis, Fire, Klamath, and Drought Programs Manager, at Renee.DAVIS@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-345-7231.

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item D

Committee Updates

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

April 25-26, 2023, OWEB Board Meeting

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Environmental Justice Committee Update

Committee Members

Kelly Coates and Dan Shively (co-chairs), Bruce Buckmaster, Liza Jane McAlister, Chris Allen, Aaron Curtis

Meeting Summary

OWEB staff updated the committee on its efforts to reach out to non-traditional partners. Staff has committed to engaging with three new non-traditional partners each quarter.

During the last quarter, OWEB staff have connected with the following organizations:

- The Intertwine
- Clean Rivers Collation
- Columbia Riverkeeper
- OSU Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems
- Albina Vision Trust

Board members discussed the keywords and definitions to be used in the equity statement. OWEB staff will revise the equity statement based on the discussion and share a revised statement with the committee at its next meeting.

OWEB staff updated the committee on the agency's efforts to make the language in OWEB's communication and resources accessible to all Oregonians. Activities include:

- Training for all staff on language from EcoNW
- Plain language document developed by OWEB's Publications Specialist and provided to OWEB staff
- Highlighting definitions and plain language through social media posts
- Regular review of our website and other documents to improve language accessibility

No written or public comment was submitted to the committee.

To Be Presented at the April 2023 Board Meeting by:

Dan Shively

Staff Contact

Courtney Shaff, Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager
courtney.shaff@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-345-7012

April 25-26, 2023, OWEB Board Meeting
Water and Climate Committee Update

Committee Members

Bruce Buckmaster and Jamie McLeod-Skinner (Co-Chairs), Dan Brown, Stephen Brandt, Kelly Coates, Gary Marshall, Lindsay McClary, Eric Murray, Corey Owens, Meg Reeves, Dan Shively

Meeting Summary

The Water and Climate Committee met on March 15, 2023. Committee co-chair Bruce Buckmaster presented to the committee on voluntary carbon markets. The presentation included an overview of the voluntary carbon market concept and the process of enrolling property in a carbon market, examples of project types, and a summary of program standards, credibility issues and abuses, and emerging developments. Committee members had many questions (e.g., about voluntary carbon markets in general as well as the agency's approach to engagement in these markets) and agreed to continue the discussion on this topic at the next committee meeting.

Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein updated the committee on the 2023 Legislative Session, including providing an overview of several bills that have implications for OWEB. Deputy Director Stephanie Page provided an overview of where the agency is at in the budgeting process, including OWEB's planned budget hearing in mid-April.

Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein and Water and Climate Programs Coordinator Jessi Kershner updated the committee on the rulemaking process to implement the climate resolution. The rules advisory committee consists of 12 members representing applicants, grantees, review team members, and non-traditional partners. The third rules advisory committee meeting convened on February 10th to review draft climate evaluation criteria, definitions, and grant application guidance. A fourth rules advisory committee meeting was held on April 11th.

Committee members briefly discussed cross-cutting topics from other board committees. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Environmental Justice Committee discussed the importance of accessibility, and Water and Climate Committee members agreed to add an agenda item to an upcoming meeting on this topic.

Two public comments were received and sent to committee members prior to the meeting; one verbal public comment was shared during the committee meeting.

To Be Presented at the April 2023 Board Meeting by:

Bruce Buckmaster and Jamie McLeod-Skinner

Staff Contact

Stephanie Page, Deputy Director
Stephanie.Page@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-345-7004

Grants Committee Update

Committee Members

Barbara Boyer and Dan Brown (co-chairs), Molly Kile, Liz Agpaoa, Chris Allen, Mark Labhart, Liza Jane McAllister, Lindsay McClary

Meeting Summary

The Grants Committee met on February 6, 2023, and March 21, 2023.

The February 6 meeting was dedicated to addressing the approach to land acquisition grant projects within Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) initiatives. Previous board discussions and outreach with the land trust community focused on addressing land acquisition project reviews for projects that are not included in approved FIP work plans. The land trust community would like the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities for land acquisition that arise unexpectedly within FIP geographies. Like any proposed FIP project, OWEB staff need to confirm that the project aligns with the approved FIP actions within the FIP geography. OWEB also needs to plan for adequate staff and contractor resources to service all applications in a timely manner.

Based on a suggestion from the land trust community, the committee recommended that any proposed land acquisition projects that were not included in approved biennial work plans be vetted by the FIP initiatives technical review team (TRT) to determine whether the proposed project aligns with FIP actions in the approved geography. If the TRT affirms the consistency of the proposed project with FIP actions and geography, then the application would be processed in the same manner as all land acquisition applications. Staff will develop guidance for this process and incorporate the guidance in the Cohort 4 FIP solicitation planned for April 2023.

The March 21 meeting previewed grant programs and awards proposed for discussion at the April board meeting, including:

- Council and District Operating Capacity Funding
- Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring
- Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program grants
- Open Solicitation grants

To Be Presented at the October 2022 Board Meeting by:

Dan Brown and Barbara Boyer

Staff Contact

Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager
eric.williams@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-345-7014

Agenda Item E

Public Comment

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

PLACEHOLDER

OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item F

Land Acquisition Grant Awards

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360
Salem OR 97301-1290
www.oregon.gov/oweb
(503) 986-0178

Agenda Item F-1 supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #7: Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager
Miriam Forney, Acquisitions Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item F-1 September 2022 Land Acquisition Grant Offering
April 25-26 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of the September 2022 land acquisition grant offering and outlines staff recommendations for a grant award.

II. Land Acquisitions – September 2022 Offering Background and Summary

A. Applications Submitted

The September 2022 grant offering is the second of two land acquisition grant cycles for the 2021-2023 biennium. The solicitation opened in June 2022 instead of autumn 2022 because of efforts to move evenly-spaced offerings earlier in the biennium after delays caused by lottery-revenue reductions in 2020.

The land and water acquisition spending plan includes $8.5 million for the biennium. The board awarded $3,079,073 in the first grant cycle of the biennium. One land acquisition application was received in September 2022 requesting $2,875,000. The application evaluation is included in Attachment A.

Following technical reviews, land acquisition application 223-9900-22451 is recommended for funding with conditions.

B. Review Process

The land acquisition application was reviewed in accordance with administrative rules for the program, most recently revised in 2019. The process utilizes technical experts to evaluate ecological outcomes, project soundness, organizational capacity, and community benefits and impacts. It also includes a public hearing and submission of public comments by interested parties.

At the request of an advisory group of members of the Oregon Coalition of Land

Trusts, the application evaluation process was lengthened to account for the following:

- Pre-application consultations occur no less than one month before the application deadline. This allows applicants time to include consultation discussion items in their application. Exceptions to the consultation deadline may be granted if time-sensitive changes, such as a loss of other funding, occur.
- Reviewers may seek clarification of ecological outcomes and project soundness; however, they may not seek new information. OWEB gathers and provides reviewers' questions to the applicant to maintain reviewer confidentiality. Applicants may, but are not required to, provide answers to the reviewers' questions.
- Applicants may provide OWEB with written responses to questions from public hearings.

Each ecological reviewer completed a project evaluation form, and staff summarized the input of all ecological reviewers.

A team consisting of staff, the land acquisition program's due-diligence technical assistance contractor, and the Oregon Department of Justice conducted a project soundness review. The review included identifying project soundness concerns, and whether reviewers think situations are resolvable in the 18-month timeframe allowed for closing transactions after the board awards funding.

Staff reviewed organizational capacity and community benefits and impacts. Public comment was solicited through notices and a public hearing held by staff.

Staff summarized the review outcomes for the project. After the evaluation was completed, it was provided to the applicant.

III. Staff Funding Recommendation

Staff recommends that the board award funding for the land acquisition grant as specified in Attachment A, with the project-specific conditions detailed in Attachment B. The land acquisition grant funding recommendation totals $2,875,000.

Attachments

A. Land Acquisition Project Evaluation
B. Project-specific Funding Conditions

2022 OWEB Grant Offering
LAND ACQUISITION APPLICATION

Application No.:	223-9900-22451		
Project Name:	Trout Creek Meadows		
Applicant:	Oregon Desert Land Trust	**Region:**	Eastern Oregon
Basin:	Closed Lakes	**County:**	Harney
OWEB Request:	$2,875,000		
Total Cost:	$3,636,899		

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The Oregon Desert Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy have partnered to acquire the 16,645-acre Trout Creek Ranch near the unincorporated community of Fields in southeast Oregon. Among other things, the property lies in the SONEC project area, one of the most important landscapes in western North America for waterbird migration. The proposed OWEB investment area also includes more than five miles of Trout Creek, an important habitat for the state-sensitive Alvord chub.

The project's need is to permanently protect and establish conservation management on the property's wet meadows. We will accomplish this by developing a conservation easement with OWEB that makes wildlife habitat the driving consideration in management planning. At the same time, we plan to use working lands practices, including livestock grazing and haying, as appropriate to achieve habitat goals.

Our primary project partner is The Nature Conservancy, which has dedicated significant planning and stewardship capacity to the project. We will also rely on our local ranch partners to help us develop, monitor, and implement appropriate agricultural practices.

REVIEW

ECOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

Priority Location and Habitat

Closed Lakes Basin wetland habitat is an ecological priority for OWEB. Additionally, the project is within the SONEC (Southern Oregon Northeast California) focus area, and the project seeks to protect and restore mesic and flood-irrigated wetland habitats in the Pacific flyway through acquisition. While not listed as an OWEB priority fish species, Alvord Chub is an Oregon Conservation Strategy species that will benefit from this acquisition.

Restoration Opportunity

The proposal narrative provides an accurate assessment of the property's current conditions, and the applicant is aware of the need for input, guidance, and cooperation from experts in wet meadow, migratory bird, riparian, and fish management disciplines.

In addition to the applicant's restoration goals, this project will implement needed adjustments to irrigation infrastructure and grazing management to prevent further habitat degradation. Implementing the proposed conservation actions described in the application will provide habitat for migratory birds, and the

amount of benefit will vary annually depending on winter and spring precipitation. Improving grazing management, and re-establishing a more holistic manner of water management, will maximize migrating bird forage resources and improve ecological resources for other wildlife, such as the Alvord chub and sage-grouse. The project will use targeted protection and restoration interventions to protect and enhance mesic habitats. Improved water management will contribute to greater watershed resilience, ultimately ensuring fish and wildlife resources are available even during drought years.

Benefits to Fish, Wildlife, and Watershed Function

While specific actions related to management and restoration are not well presented, the applicant's intent is consistent with Oregon's conservation priorities. The project provides a significant opportunity to demonstrate to the local community that conservation and agriculture can co-exist and provide the needed habitats for the species that depend on them. Trout Creek meadows encompass nearly all of the lower Trout Creek floodplain and are a rare conservation opportunity.

PROJECT SOUNDNESS

ODLT purchased the property proposed for OWEB funding (the "Property"), as part of the larger Trout Creek Ranch (the "Ranch") in July 2021. The chain of title is unclear because of variations and errors in legal descriptions. ODLT should clarify the chain of title to confirm that all intended lands were included in its purchase.

ODLT's purchase and sale agreement for the Ranch required the seller to complete lot line adjustments. ODLT should provide documentation of Harney County's approval of the lot line adjustments to confirm that the Ranch is a lawful unit of land under state law.

The appraisal submitted with the application was prepared for ODLT's lender. ODLT needs to hire the original appraiser, or a new appraiser, to consult with OWEB's review appraiser and then prepare an appraisal of the Ranch that is consistent with OWEB's appraisal guidelines and includes an allocation of value for the deeded land that makes up the portion of the Ranch proposed for OWEB reimbursement. While the federal grazing permit land could be considered an element of value by a potential buyer for the whole Ranch in the open market, it is nonetheless a separate value component, as well as a different type of property right, a non-deeded revokable grazing permit, and cannot be included in the Property's allocated value.

The primary access route to the Ranch headquarters and the Property is a driveway that crosses BLM land. It is unclear whether the driveway is an established right of way. ODLT should seek a formal right of way from BLM if one does not exist. If ODLT is unable to obtain appurtenant access from BLM before OWEB's closing deadline, the conservation easement will need to include a requirement for establishing alternate access if BLM precludes access across its property.

The Property's title includes mineral reservations that would be most soundly addressed by extinguishment. If ODLT is unsuccessful in its attempts to extinguish the mineral reservations, a mineral remoteness assessment may be acceptable.

The deed of trust and assignment of rents for the loan ODLT took to purchase the Ranch must be paid off in full for the Property at the time of, or prior to, the release of OWEB's funds. Other title work is likely to be limited to minor items such as ODLT explaining its risk assessment and removing any exceptions that do not pertain to the Property.

An environmental site assessment determined the presence of hazardous materials at the Ranch. ODLT hired a contractor to clean up the affected areas. ODLT should confirm that the clean-up was adequate for environmental liability purposes.

The status of the Property's water rights, and ODLT's intentions for the rights, are not clear. ODLT needs to contact the Oregon Water Resources Department to determine available options, if any, for protecting water instream or changing the beneficial use to wildlife habitat or wetland formation if the fields are no longer irrigated for agricultural uses as part of the project.

To demonstrate that sound project outcomes can be expected, ODLT should describe the extent and conditions to which the Property will be restored in a management plan outline and description of restored conditions. To ensure that the use of the Property is consistent with the purpose of OWEB's land acquisition funding, ODLT should agree that grazing on the Property will be for the purpose of producing high-quality vegetation and other important habitat conditions for priority fish and wildlife species.

The application states that ODLT has not decided how it will insure its conservation properties. More information is needed to document a sound conservation defense insurance plan for the Property.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

The application describes four types of community benefits resulting from the project:

1. Carrying out the ecological objectives of the project in a manner that benefits the local community.
2. Partnering with local ranchers to make the property and associated grazing allotments more resistant to wildfire and more resilient to a warming climate.
3. Increasing science capacity by providing access to tools and data to local ranchers.
4. Creating demand for services in the local economy, including rebuilding fences, renovating buildings, and restoring streams.

The above benefits can be summarily described as being a good neighbor. Applicant staff has extensive experience building relations with neighbors in ranching communities.

While the application does not include specific plans for public use, it acknowledges long-standing public use by birders in the area. With a full-time, on-site ranch manager, it is likely that the applicant can accommodate such public use without jeopardizing wildlife habitat or neighboring ranches.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A public hearing was held on November 22, 2022, to provide an opportunity for public comment on the funding application. The hearing location was at the Fields Elementary School in Fields, Oregon. Fifteen members of the public attended and stated community benefits and challenges associated with the project. Community benefits stated are that wildlife habitat will be enhanced and property taxes will continue to be paid to Harney County. A variety of challenges were voiced at the hearing including:

- Increased tourism may result from the project adversely impacting roads, traffic, roadside trash, and public safety.
- The community feels they were not properly notified.
- Habitat improvements on the Trout Creek Ranch will be duplicative of what exists on the Malheur Wildlife Refuge.
- Concern regarding water rights and water availability, distribution, and the potential for increased irrigation water management and measurement.
- Altered ranch management like management at the Malheur Wildlife Refuge.

- The Oregon Desert Land trust does not have a management plan for the Trout Creek Ranch, and it is difficult to understand how ranch management will change under new management.
- If the ranch is conveyed to public ownership property tax revenue may be lost to Harney County.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

ODLT is a relatively new land trust, started in 2017. The grant application states that ODLT is a 501(c)(3) public charity that is seeking accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). ODLT should provide additional information about itself, including its strategic plan, bylaws, recent financial statements, annual budget, and the status of its application to LTA.

Prior to ODLT's purchase of the Ranch, it had a modest portfolio consisting of approximately 3,500 acres of conservation lands and assets totaling $1.7 million. The $13.5 million acquisition of the Ranch was a significant step for ODLT. ODLT has demonstrated momentum in fundraising to pay off the loan it took to purchase the Ranch, but the organization's track record of fundraising for large-scale restoration, which the Property needs, is unclear. Some of the ODLT staff have been successful with such fundraising at other organizations.

ODLT's staff consists of an executive director, deputy director, Ranch manager, and outreach coordinator. The application states that ODLT is hiring a regional stewardship lead that will be centered in Burns and dedicate 75 percent of their time to the Ranch. Concerns about ODLT staffing being stretched thin are somewhat mitigated by the involvement of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in the stewardship of the Ranch. To understand the scope and timeframe of TNC's commitment and potentially alleviate concerns about ODLT's capacity to restore the Property, OWEB should review a copy of the ODLT-TNC partnership agreement.

The annual stewardship costs included in the application are unclear. It is also unclear how ODLT will secure stewardship funds for the Property, which the application states are not secured. ODLT should provide a complete accounting of annual stewardship costs and a plan to raise the necessary funds.

SUMMARY

The application offers an opportunity to protect with an OWEB conservation easement the most ecologically significant portion (2,365 acres) of a 16,645-acre parcel recently acquired by the applicant in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The Trout Creek Meadows link high-elevation sites from the Trout Creek Mountains to the east and the Pueblo Mountains to the west and support a wide variety of the Pacific Flyway's migrating birds. The Property offers significant wet meadow and sagebrush-steppe habitat, some of which require restoration. The project also provides an opportunity to demonstrate conservation in a working land setting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board award $2,875,000 for the project in accordance with OWEB's standard grant agreement for land acquisition, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement. Staff will consult with ODLT to finalize project-specific conditions, which will be provided to the Board at its April 2023 meeting.

Trout Creek Meadows 223-9900-22451
Funding conditions

Initial Conditions

1(A)(i) and 1(A)(ii): grant agreement boilerplate for regular project meetings with OWEB.

1(A)(iii) Grantee provides its bylaws and strategic plan.

1(A)(iv) Grantee provides an explanation of its relationship with its parent organization, including any operable agreement with the parent organization for how donations are received and apportioned between the two organizations.

1(A)(v) Grantee provides its 2021 audited financial statement, most recent quarterly financial statement, and current annual budget.

1(A)(vi) Grantee: (i) explains the reason for its varying level of confidence in its ability to restore the Property; and (ii) affirms its commitment to restoring the entire Property to the highest quality fish and wildlife habitat feasible.

1(A)(vii) Grantee provides its partnership agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and commits to amending the agreement in accordance with Secondary Condition 1(B)(i) if requested by OWEB.

1(A)(viii) Grantee provides a written plan for securing adequate stewardship funds for the Property (the "Stewardship Funds"), including: (a) the acreage of weed treatments, frequency of weed treatments, and cost; (b) an itemized list of all necessary stewardship activities, frequencies, and costs that will be paid from the Stewardship Funds; (c) the amount of Stewardship Funds that will be secured, accounting for the information in items (a) and (b) of this section; (d) the source of the Stewardship Funds; (e) documentation establishing that the Stewardship Funds will generate adequate interest to pay for annual stewardship costs; (f) the rationale for the expected rate of return on the Stewardship Funds; (g) the date by which the Stewardship Funds will be secured; and (h) a written agreement that the Stewardship Funds will be allocated to the Property.

1(A)(ix) Grantee agrees in writing that grazing on the Property will be the result of a management planning process that determines that the grazing is necessary for improving the Property's vegetation and other habitat elements for native fish and wildlife including OWEB's priority species for the basin ("Conservation Values"); (ii) be informed by goals for protecting and enhancing the Property's Conservation Values and not by unrelated considerations; (iii) include measurable ecological performance goals for fish and wildlife habitat developed with the assistance of fish and wildlife professionals with expertise in the habitat requirements of priority species; (iv) include ecological monitoring prescriptions that relate specifically to tracking achievement of the ecological performance goals; and (v) include specific actions and timelines for analyzing and interpreting ecological monitoring data and revising Property management actions as necessary to achieve the ecological performance goals.

1(A)(x) Grantee provides documentation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge model of haying and grazing referenced in the Property's grazing lease (the "Lease"), in sufficient detail to describe the model's principles and practices as they relate to the Property.

1(A)(xi) Grantee agrees not to amend the Lease or enter any new leases for the Property without prior written approval from OWEB.

Secondary Conditions

1(B)(i) Grantee amends its partnership agreement with TNC if OWEB determines that additional information is necessary to describe the roles and requirements of the respective parties and demonstrate that the partnership will successfully manage and restore the Property.

1(B)(ii) Grantee submits initial Management Plan content included in OWEB's current management plan guidance, and agrees that the complete Management Plan, due after Closing in accordance with the Project Schedule, will include but not be limited to:

1. A grazing plan that is consistent with Initial Condition 1(A)(x).
2. A plan for any public use of the Property, including but not limited to:
    a. Plans that minimize built infrastructure, ground disturbance, and other impacts to the Property's Conservation Values.
    b. An adequate monitoring plan, including but not necessarily limited to staffing, funding, and actions to detect and respond to impacts to the Property's Conservation Values resulting from recreational use of the Property.
    c. An adaptive plan for responding to recreational impacts to the Property's Conservation Values, including but not limited to restricting recreational access to the Property as necessary to protect the Conservation Values.
    d. A communications plan for ensuring that the public is aware of recreational use restrictions on the Property.
3. Actions for: (i) consulting with the Oregon Water Resources Department ("OWRD") regarding the lease or transfer of the Property's water rights to instream use, or changing the beneficial use of appropriated water to wildlife habitat or wetland formation if agricultural irrigation ceases on all or a portion of the Property; and (ii) completion of these or any other water right preservation measures that OWRD determines are feasible, and are consistent with OWEB-approved restoration and management objectives for the Property.

1(B)(iii) Grantee: (i) obtains Terrafirma conservation defense insurance for the Property at or before Closing; and (ii) provides documentation of commercial liability insurance on the Property in an amount equal to or greater than the industry standard for comparable ranch properties and in no case less than OWEB's established insurance requirements for grant recipients.

1(B)(iv) Grantee: (i) obtains all revisions necessary for OWEB to approve the appraisal prepared by Colliers International, with an effective date of April 28, 2021; or (ii) obtains a new appraisal of the subject property, as of the same effective date, prepared in accordance with OWEB's established appraisal guidance.

1(B)(v) Grantee confirms in writing that any changes in grazing required under Initial Condition 1(A)(x) will not affect any of Grantee's agreements or obligations pertaining to grazing allotments associated with any land owned by Grantee.

1(B)(vi) Grantee confirms that it took title to all property it intended to acquire by: (i) providing a copy of the recorded Sherburn to PMLC deed; and (ii) annotating or color coding the legal description in the PMLC to Grantee deed (#2021-1143) in a manner that

demonstrates that all lands in the Sherburn to PMLC deed and the Stafford Ranches to PMLC deed intended to be conveyed to Grantee, are included in the PMLC to Grantee deed.

1(B)(vii) Grantee seeks a quitclaim deed from Harney County for the mineral reservations included in Exceptions 34, 36, and 53 in Grantee's policy of title insurance dated July 16, 2021 (the "Title Policy").

1(B)(viii) If Grantee is not successful in obtaining the quitclaim deed sought for Secondary Condition 1(B)(vii), Grantee obtains a mineral resource assessment consistent with the objectives and requirements in OWEB's title guidance document and including an analysis of whether Harney County has any form of legal access to the land subject to the mineral reservations.

1(B)(ix) Grantee obtains the Bureau of Land Management's ("BLM") determination of whether there is a formal ROW to Grantee's larger parcel ("Trout Creek Ranch") in the location of the existing driveway in Section 30 of Township 39 South, Range 36 East. Grantee shall seek a formal ROW from BLM if one does not exist.

1(B)(x) If Grantee is unable to obtain a formal ROW from BLM under Secondary Condition 1(B)(ix) by Closing, Grantee agrees that OWEB's conservation easement will include an obligation of Grantee to construct a driveway from Whitehorse Ranch Road to Trout Creek Ranch generally along the eastern boundary of Section 25 of Township 39 South, Range 35 East, if Grantee becomes unable to use the existing driveway.

1(B)(xi) Grantee agrees that OWEB's conservation easement will include all provisions OWEB determines are necessary to ensure that it can proceed to and across Trout Creek Ranch to access the Property.

1(B)(xii) Grantee explains why Exception 16 in the Title Policy was determined to pose a higher risk than other ROW encumbrances affecting the Property.

1(B)(xiii) Grantee removes Exception 20 (dam and canal), Exception 55 (deed of trust), and Exception 56 (assignment of rents) from the Property's title and provides OWEB with an updated title report confirming removal of the items, at or before Closing.

1(B)(xiv) Grantee provides documentation that demonstrates Harney County's approval of all lot line adjustments that resulted from the requirement included in Sale Agreement No. 2021.01.19 PMLC, Addendum No. 1, Section 1(iv), which required the Property seller to complete all lot line adjustments prior to closing.

1(B)(xv) Grantee hires a surveyor to prepare: (i) a legal description for the Property; and (ii) a map that will enable OWEB to verify the accuracy of the legal description.

1(B)(xvi) Grantee provides a complete copy of the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Wallace Group and dated May 20, 2021 (the "ESA"), including all appendices.

1(B)(xvii) Grantee confirms that the work described in Wallace Group's letter dated July 26, 2021 is adequate for ensuring that Grantee will not incur any liability from the recognized environmental conditions (RECs) identified in the ESA.

1(B)(xviii) Grantee confirms that it has implemented all best management practices and housekeeping described in the ESA.

1(B)(xix) Grantee agrees that if it demolishes or renovates any structure on Trout Creek Ranch, it will complete the actions recommended in the ESA for asbestos, lead-based paint, and septic structures to the extent such actions are applicable.

1(B)(xx) Grantee confirms that it is prepared to enroll the Property in the statewide conservation easement special assessment if necessary for maintaining a comparable assessment.

1(B)(xxi) Grantee provides copies of all water rights applications, permits, certificates, transfers, and claims affecting the Property; the Trout Creek Water Rights Decree; and an updated water rights map that includes the Property boundary and a table of water rights and irrigated acres that are within the boundary.

1(B)(xxii) Grantee describes the status of the water rights transfers under Certificate 51251 and confirms that there are no other pending water rights transfers affecting the Property. If any water rights transfers are still pending, the updated map required in Secondary Condition 1(B)(xxi) should reflect that status.

1(B)(xxiii) Grantee confirms to OWEB's satisfaction that the continued use of groundwater on Trout Creek Ranch, completed water rights transfers, and any pending water rights transfers, will not negatively impact the Property's Conservation Values.

1(B)(xxiv) Grantee prepares baseline inventory documentation that includes, among other items required by OWEB, a description of future conditions on the Property that reflect the restoration of the Property's Conservation Values to the maximum extent feasible ("Description of Restored Conditions").

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Tina Kotek, Governor

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Agenda Item F-2 supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #7: Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
FROM: Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager
SUBJECT: Agenda Item F-2 Land Acquisition Grant Program - Time Extension
April 25-26, 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

Staff requests the board extend the closing date for the Siuslaw land acquisition project.

II. Background

Every land acquisition grant awarded by the board is conditioned on general and project-specific due diligence requirements, which must be met before funds are released for the land transaction.

If a grantee does not satisfy the conditions of a board funding award, including closing the transaction within 18 months of the award, the board may authorize continued encumbrance of all or part of the awarded funds, or rescind the award in accordance with OAR 695-045-0200.

The Siuslaw project was funded by the board at its October 2021 meeting and has a closing deadline of April 27, 2023. For the reasons explained below, the grantee will not close the transaction by the deadline and has requested a closing extension.

III. Extension Request

Funds for the Siuslaw project (Grant No. 221-9903-19500) were awarded to The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The funds will be used for the fee-simple purchase of an approximately 245-acre property in Lane County.

TNC has completed a portion of the due diligence required by OWEB's funding conditions. TNC's accomplishments include an appraisal and submission of the land use application that is necessary to complete the project. Project activities have been slowed by several factors, including county requirements for submitting the land use application.

IV. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the board extend the closing deadline to April 27, 2024, for the Siuslaw land acquisition project (Grant No. 221-9903-19500) with all other conditions of the project remaining unchanged.

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item G

Climate Change Rulemaking

Process Update

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

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Agenda Item G supports all OWEB's Strategic Plan priorities.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Eric Hartstein, Board and Legislative Policy Coordinator
Jessi Kershner, Water and Climate Programs Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item G. Climate Criteria Rulemaking Process Update
April 25-26, 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

Staff will update the board on the climate criteria rulemaking process, including providing an overview of draft climate evaluation criteria, definitions, and guidance.

II. Background

In January 2022, the board passed Resolution 01-2022 ("Climate Resolution"), which commits OWEB to integrate climate mitigation and adaptation into funding and policy decisions through an inclusive and equitable process. Following the adoption of the Climate Resolution, OWEB staff led a public engagement process to gather feedback on how potential challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the resolution. At the July 2022 board meeting, the OWEB Board authorized staff to begin rulemaking to add climate evaluation criteria across OWEB's grant programs.

III. Climate Criteria Rulemaking Process

The climate criteria rules advisory committee consists of 12 members representing applicants, grantees, review team members, and non-traditional partners. Three rulemaking meetings have been held to date: (1) December 5, 2022; (2) January 6, 2023; and (3) February 10, 2023. Four draft climate evaluation criteria were presented to the committee at the first meeting, which has since been revised and condensed to three draft criteria. At the third rulemaking meeting, OWEB staff also shared draft guidance intended to illustrate how the climate criteria could be applied in OWEB grant programs. A fourth rulemaking meeting was scheduled for April 11, 2023, where committee members reviewed the latest draft of climate criteria and associated definitions. All rulemaking meeting materials and agendas can be found here. OWEB staff plans to bring the final climate criteria to the board for their approval at the July 2023 board meeting.

IV. Recommendation

This is an informational item only.

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item H

Open Solicitation Grant Awards

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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Agenda Item H supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 5: The value of working lands is fully integrated into watershed health.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item H. Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering
April 25-26, 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This staff report describes the Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering and funding recommendations. Staff request the board approve the funding recommendations outlined in Attachment D to the staff report, including funding for 44 restoration grants, 21 technical assistance grants, and 7 stakeholder engagement grants.

II. Fall 2022 Grant Offering Background and Summary

A total of 106 applications were received requesting almost $18 million. Attachment A shows applications submitted by region, project type, and funding request.

III. Review Process

Staff facilitated a review process where all eligible grant applications were evaluated by the agency's six Regional Review Teams (RRTs). Staff scheduled site visits for as many proposed projects as possible, with all RRT members invited to the visits.

OWEB then facilitated RRT meetings in each region for all grant types offered. Reviewers considered the likelihood of success of the proposed project based on evaluation criteria in rule, which are provided in Attachment B. After classifying applications as "Recommended," "Recommended with Conditions," or "Not Recommended," the RRTs then prioritized the projects recommended for funding by application type.

The RRT evaluations and recommendations, along with staff recommendations, were distributed to all applicants. Attachment C includes the number of applications recommended by RRTs and staff for each region by project type, as well as staff-recommended award totals by application type and region. Prior to the board meeting, staff will forward to the board any written comments received from applicants regarding the RRT and staff recommendations.

IV. Sage-grouse Projects

At its April 2015 meeting, the board adopted a policy to make available at least $10 million through its granting programs over the next ten years in support of projects located in Oregon's

sage steppe ecosystem that improve greater sage-grouse habitat. The recommended Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant awards include four projects that meet the criteria:

- 223-4000, **"**North Warner Rangeland Health Project," requesting $496,571.
- 223-4002, "Lake County All Lands Restoration Initiative Mini FIP Phase II," requesting $397,432.
- 223-4012, "Crooked River Watershed Sage-Grouse Conservation IV," requesting $74,987.
- 223-5000, "So Many Juniper, So Little Time," requesting $61,322.

If awarded, total funding for sage-grouse projects since 2015 will be $14,033,017.

V. Funding Recommendation

Staff considered the RRT recommendations and funding availability in developing the staff funding recommendations provided in Attachment D, which includes the number of applications recommended for funding by RRTs and staff by region and grant type. The funding recommendations for the Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering are summarized in Table 1. This will be the final Open Solicitation grant award for the 2021-2023 biennium. Since there are funds remaining in the spending plan for the Technical Assistance, Stakeholder Engagement, and Monitoring grant types, staff is recommending a spending plan adjustment to award additional Restoration grant awards summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Spending Plan and Funding Recommendations for Fall 2022 Grant Offering

Grant Type	Current Spending Plan	Recommended Spending Plan Adjustment	Revised Spending Plan	Awards to Date	Staff Recommend-ation	Remaining Spending Plan Balance
Restoration	$33,500,000	$620,876	$34,120,876	$22,938,223	$11,182,653	$0
Technical Assistance	$5,500,000	(-$620,876)	$4,879,124	$3,174,776	$1,314,447	$389,901
Monitoring	$4,750,000		$4,750,000	$4,579,200	N/A	$170,800
Stakeholder Engagement	$2,750,000		$2,750,000	$1,235,942	$530,897	$983,161
TOTAL	$46,500,000	$0	$46,500,000	$31,928,141	$13,027,997	$1,543,862

Staff recommend the board adjust the spending plan and award funds for the staff-recommended projects listed in Attachment D.

Attachments

A. Grant Applications Submitted
B. Evaluation Criteria
C. RRT and Staff Funding Recommendations
D. Regions 1-6 Funding Recommendations

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering

Applications Received by Type

	Stakeholder Engagement	Technical Assistance	Restoration	Totals
Region 1	3	5	7	15
Region 2	0	4	9	13
Region 3	5	5	13	23
Region 4	1	4	10	15
Region 5	2	6	17	25
Region 6	1	5	9	15
Totals	12	29	65	106

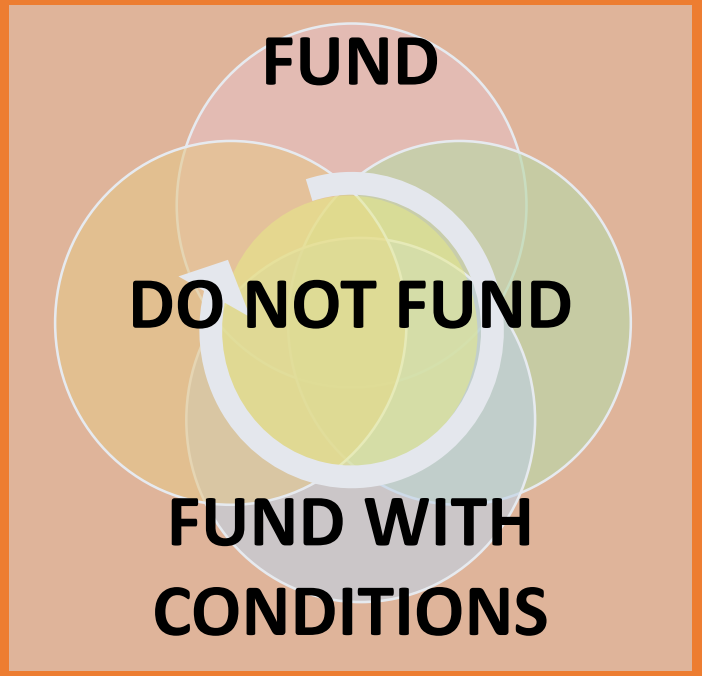
Dollar Amounts by Application Type

	Stakeholder Engagement	Technical Assistance	Restoration	Totals
Region 1	138,305	354,347	1,912,724	$2,405,376
Region 2	0	226,589	2,780,541	$3,007,130
Region 3	299,758	314,342	3,247,195	$3,861,295
Region 4	81,318	265,339	3,174,376	$3,521,033
Region 5	255,951	393,818	2,738,748	$3,388,517
Region 6	101,598	239,928	1,191,771	$1,533,297
Totals	$876,930	$1,794,363	$15,045,355	$17,716,648

Open Solicitation – Restoration Grants

PROVIDE PUBLIC BENEFIT FOR WATER QUALITY, NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, OR WATERSHED/ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

Recommend



Regional team reviews & evaluates each project individually based on how well project meets criteria

Prioritize

CRITERIA
How well project meets criteria for project evaluation & preferences, including:
- Causes over symptoms of disturbance
- Whole watershed approach over site-specific
- Collaboration over single-party

CERTAINTY OF SUCCESS
Certainty of success, based on the organizational capacity of the applicant & the likelihood the project will meet its ecological objectives

BENEFIT TO OREGON PLAN
Benefit to the Oregon Plan for Salmon & Watersheds, as evidenced by its expected benefits to watershed functions, fish habitat or water quality

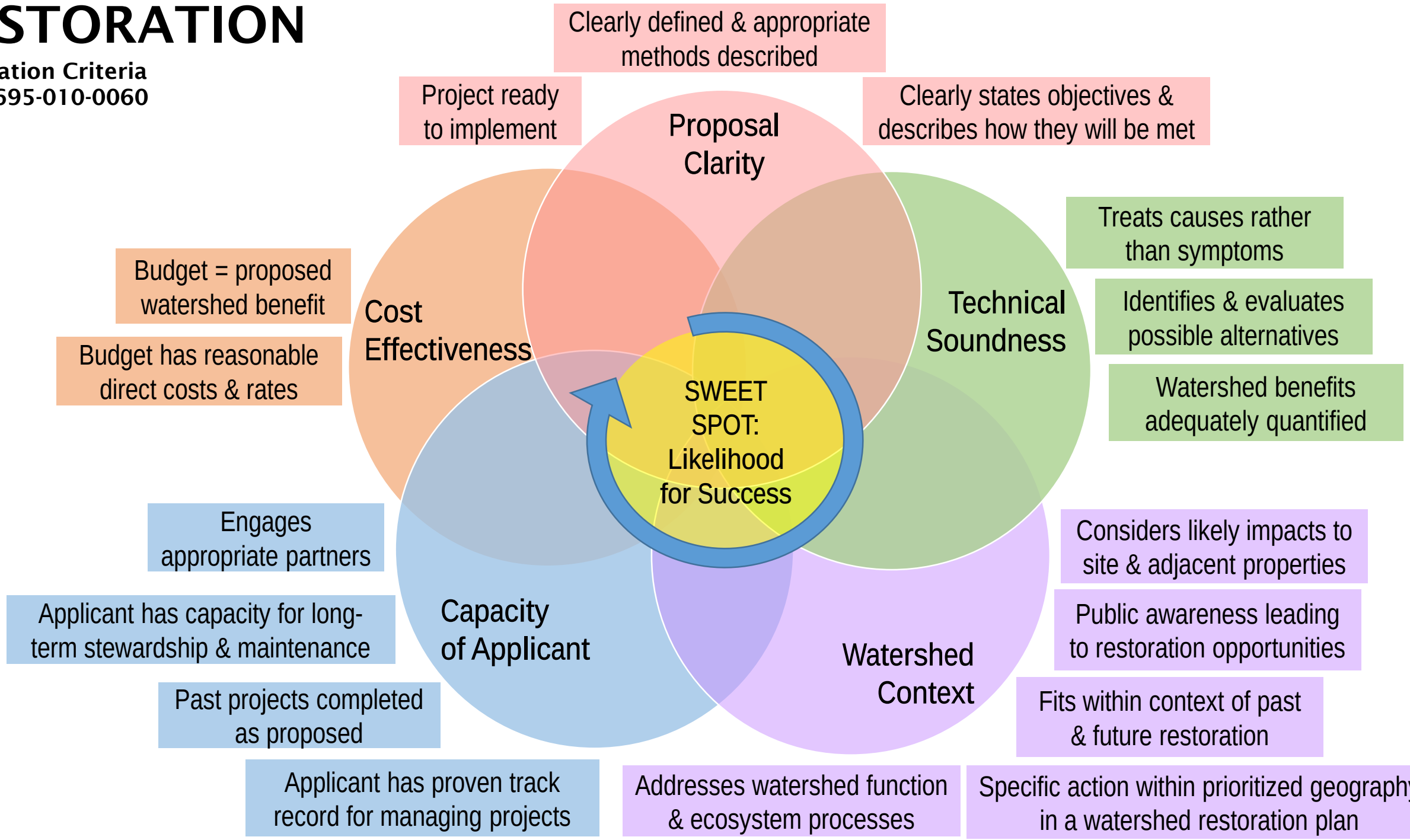
COST BENEFIT
Project costs relative to the anticipated watershed health benefits

Recommendation to Staff

Staff review recommendations from each regional review team & make a statewide funding recommendation to the Board based on available resources for the grant period & type.

RESTORATION

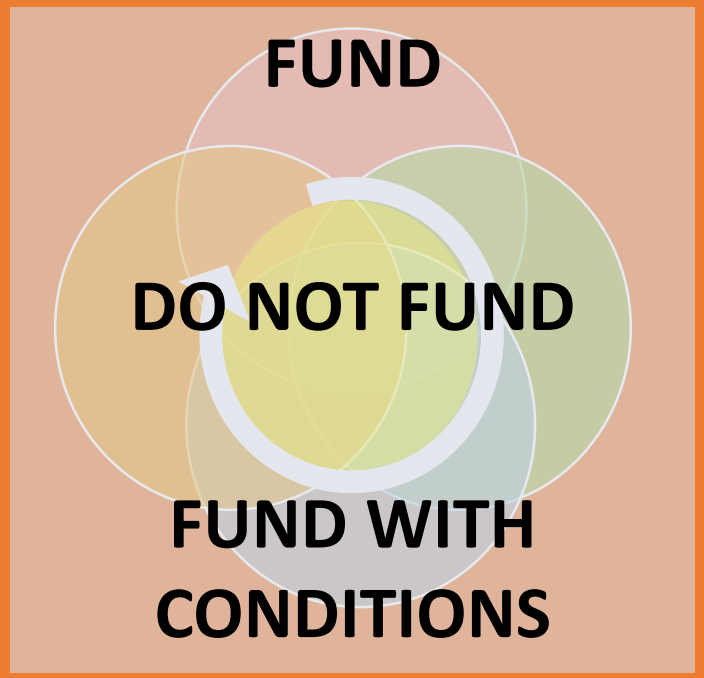
Evaluation Criteria
OAR 695-010-0060



Open Solicitation – Technical Assistance Grants

PROVIDE PUBLIC BENEFIT FOR WATER QUALITY, NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, OR WATERSHED/ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

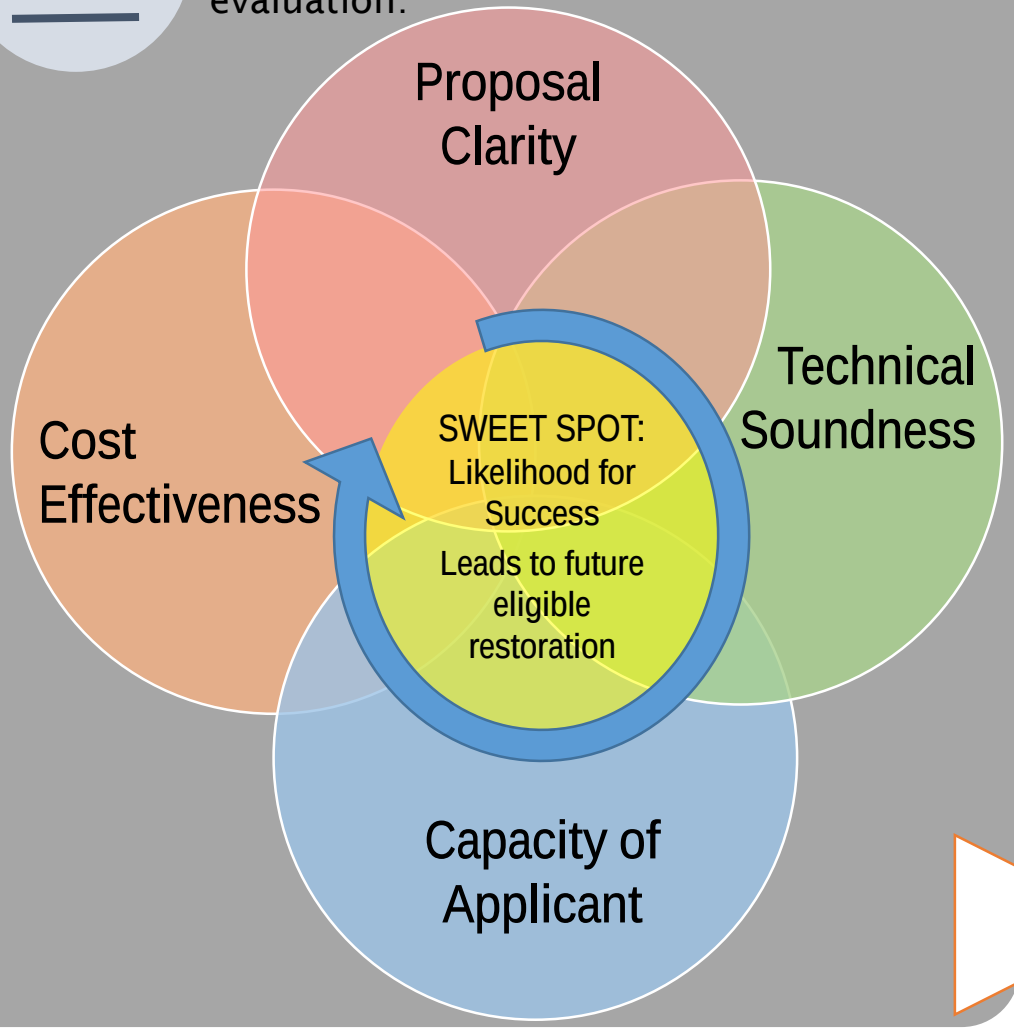
Recommend



Regional team reviews & evaluates each project individually based on how well project meets criteria

Prioritize

CRITERIA
How well project meets criteria for project evaluation:



Recommendation to Staff

Staff review recommendations from each regional review team & make a statewide funding recommendation to the Board based on available resources for the grant period & type.

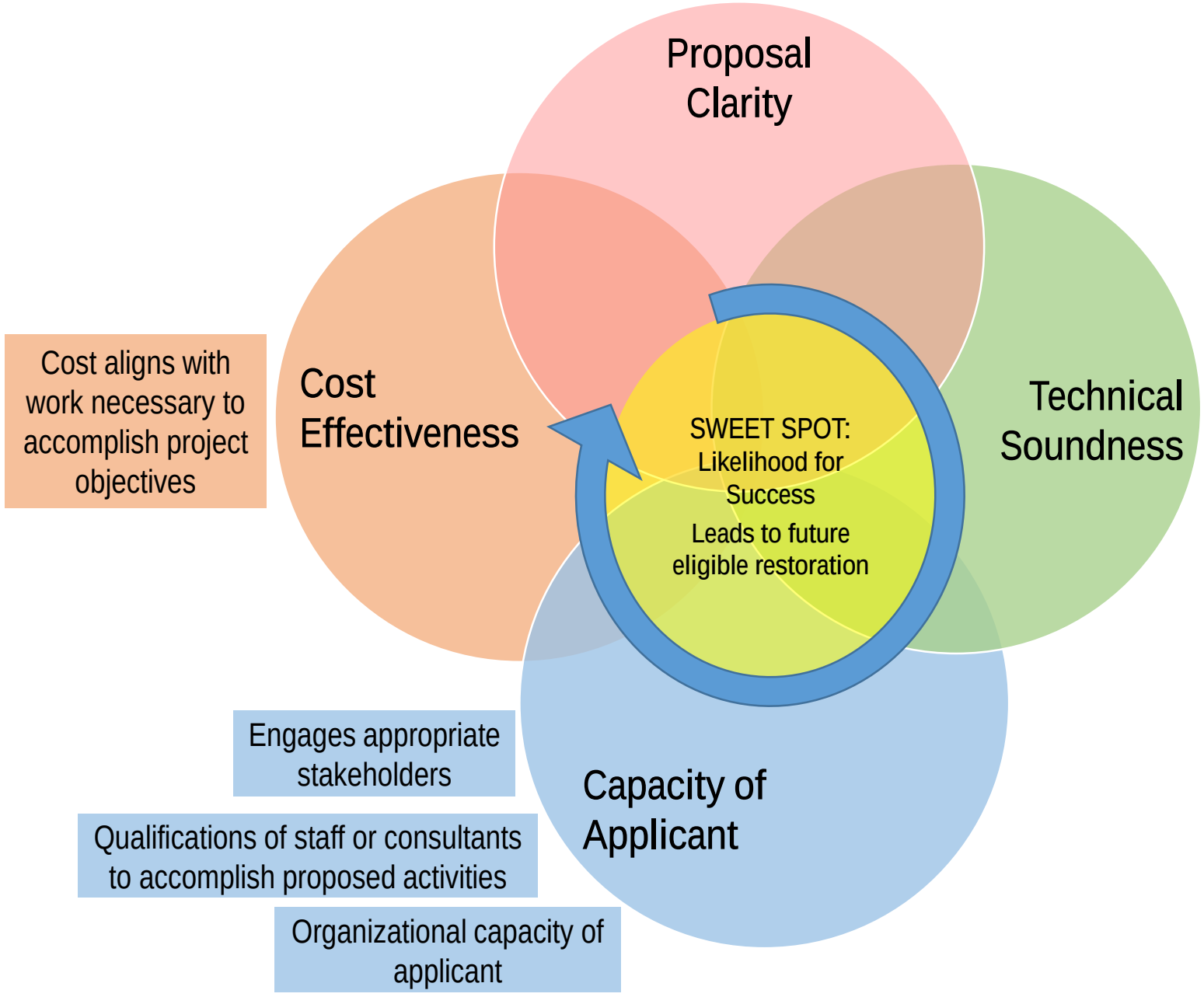
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Evaluation Criteria
OAR 695-030-0045

Technical Design & Engineering = project feasibility reports, designs, or engineering materials that directly lead to site-specific restoration or acquisition projects within a specified timeframe

Resource Assessment & Planning = information about existing water quality or habitat conditions and processes at an identified scale, and relates those conditions and processes to actions that will directly lead to desired future conditions within a specified timeframe

Describes a clear need



Cost aligns with work necessary to accomplish project objectives

Engages appropriate stakeholders

Qualifications of staff or consultants to accomplish proposed activities

Organizational capacity of applicant

Technical Design & Engineering

- Addresses limiting factors in existing conservation or recovery plan
- Describes alternative analysis that demonstrates a range of options were considered
- Appropriate data will be collected to inform designs
- Professionally accepted technical or engineering approaches will be used

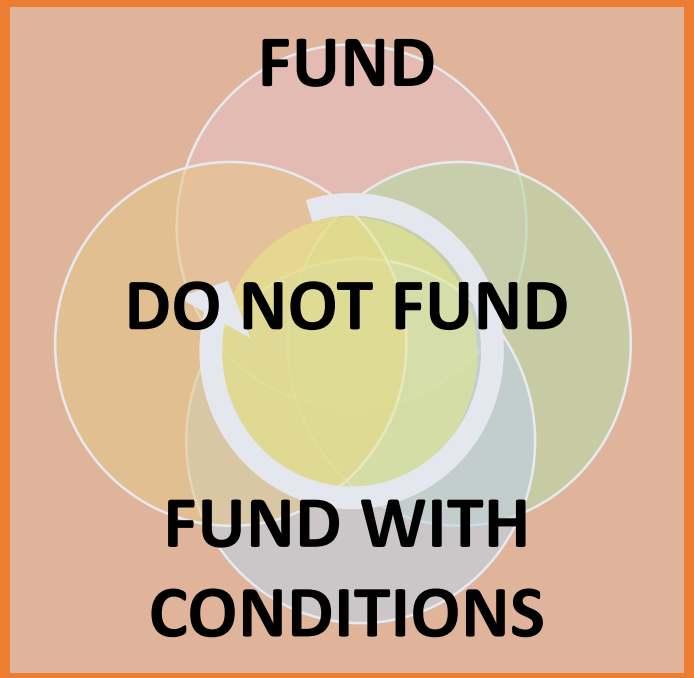
Resource Assessment & Planning

- Scope & scale is feasible, & partners have demonstrated ability in collaborative work at this scale
- Process by which data will be managed & shared with partners
- Professionally accepted methods & parameters will be used

Open Solicitation – Stakeholder Engagement Grants

PROVIDE PUBLIC BENEFIT FOR WATER QUALITY, NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, OR WATERSHED/ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

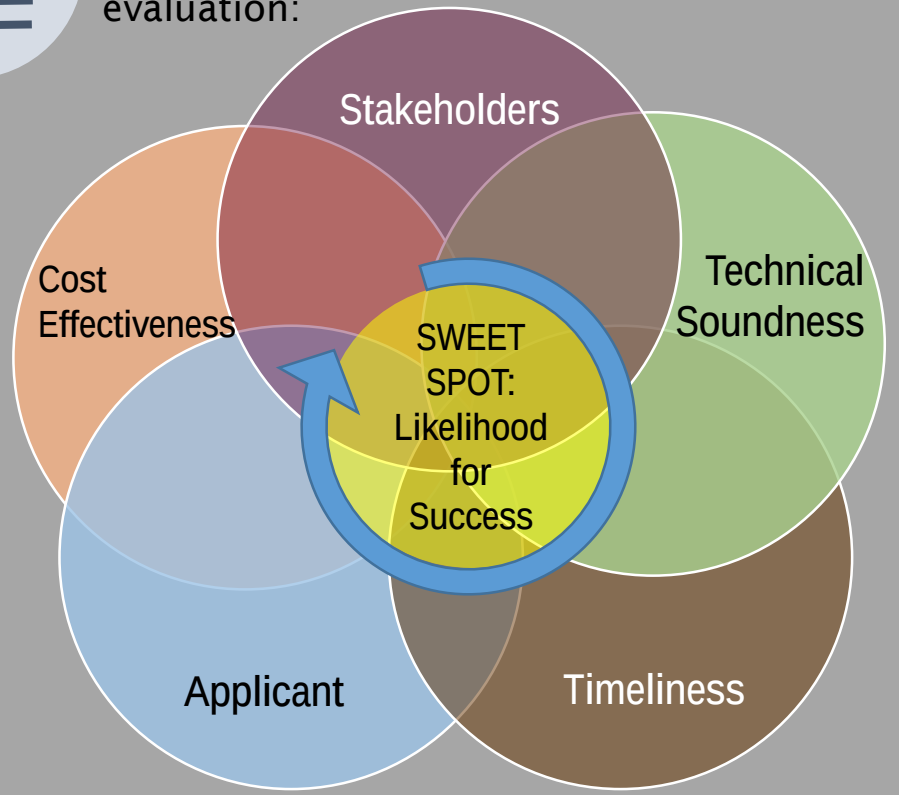
Recommend



Regional team reviews & evaluates each project individually based on how well project meets criteria

Prioritize

CRITERIA
How well project meets criteria for project evaluation:



CERTAINTY OF SUCCESS
Based on the organizational capacity of the applicant & likelihood the project will meet its stakeholder engagement objectives

Recommendation to Staff

Staff review recommendations from each regional review team & make a statewide funding recommendation to the Board based on available resources for the grant period & type.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

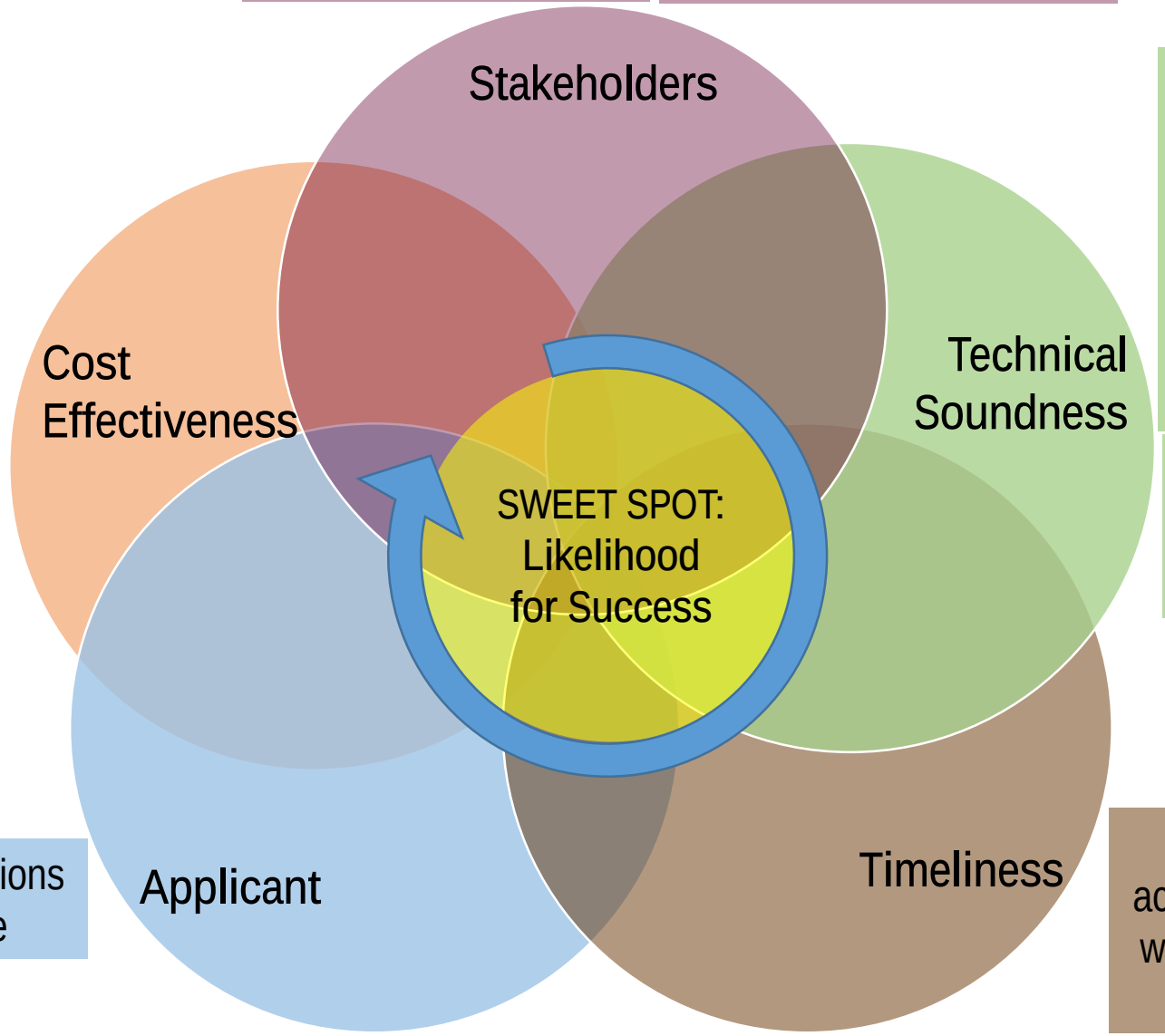
Evaluation Criteria
OAR 695-015-0070

"Stakeholder Engagement Project" means a project whose purpose is to communicate and engage with landowners, organizations and the community about the need for, feasibility, and benefit of a specific eligible restoration or acquisitions project or program that leads to development of eligible projects within an identified geography.

Projects whose primary purpose is education are NOT ELIGIBLE

Applicants engage with appropriate stakeholders in the appropriate geography

Likely effectiveness of multidirectional communication among the applicant & stakeholder



Expected outcomes of resulting restoration or acquisitions include protecting or restoring fish or wildlife habitat, watershed function, and or water quality or quantity

Evidence base linking engagement to eligible project types

Shows qualifications & experience

Resulting restoration or acquisition projects, or program will lead to timely development of eligible projects

RRT and Staff Funding Recommendations for the Fall 2022 Open Solicitation Grant Offering

Restoration

Region	RRT	Staff	%
1	4	4	100%
2	7	7	100%
3	11	10	91%
4	6	4	67%
5	15	13	87%
6	6	6	100%
Total	**49**	**44**	**90%**

Technical Assistance

Region	RRT	Staff	%
1	4	4	100%
2	3	3	100%
3	3	3	100%
4	2	2	100%
5	6	6	100%
6	3	3	100%
Total	**21**	**21**	**100%**

Stakeholder Engagement

Region	RRT	Staff	%
1	1	1	100%
2	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	3	3	100%
4	1	1	100%
5	2	2	100%
6	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	**7**	**7**	**100%**

Region	Restoration	Technical Assistance	Stakeholder Engagement	Total
1	$1,521,690	$279,932	$27,431	$1,829,053
2	$2,326,180	$188,831	N/A	$2,515,011
3	$2,550,441	$207,809	$166,197	$2,924,447
4	$1,829,086	$149,800	$81,318	$2,060,204
5	$2,336,838	$393,818	$255,951	$2,986,607
6	$618,418	$94,257	N/A	$712,675
Total	**$11,182,653**	**$1,314,447**	**$530,897**	**$13,027,997**

OWEB Open Solicitation Regions

Region 1: North Coast

Region 2: Southwest

Region 3: Willamette Basin

Region 4: Central Oregon

Region 5: Eastern Oregon

Region 6: Mid-Columbia

All Regions
Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations

Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations

Status
- Staff Recommended Funding
- Below Funding Line

OWEB Regions
- Region 1
- Region 2
- Region 3
- Region 4
- Region 5
- Region 6

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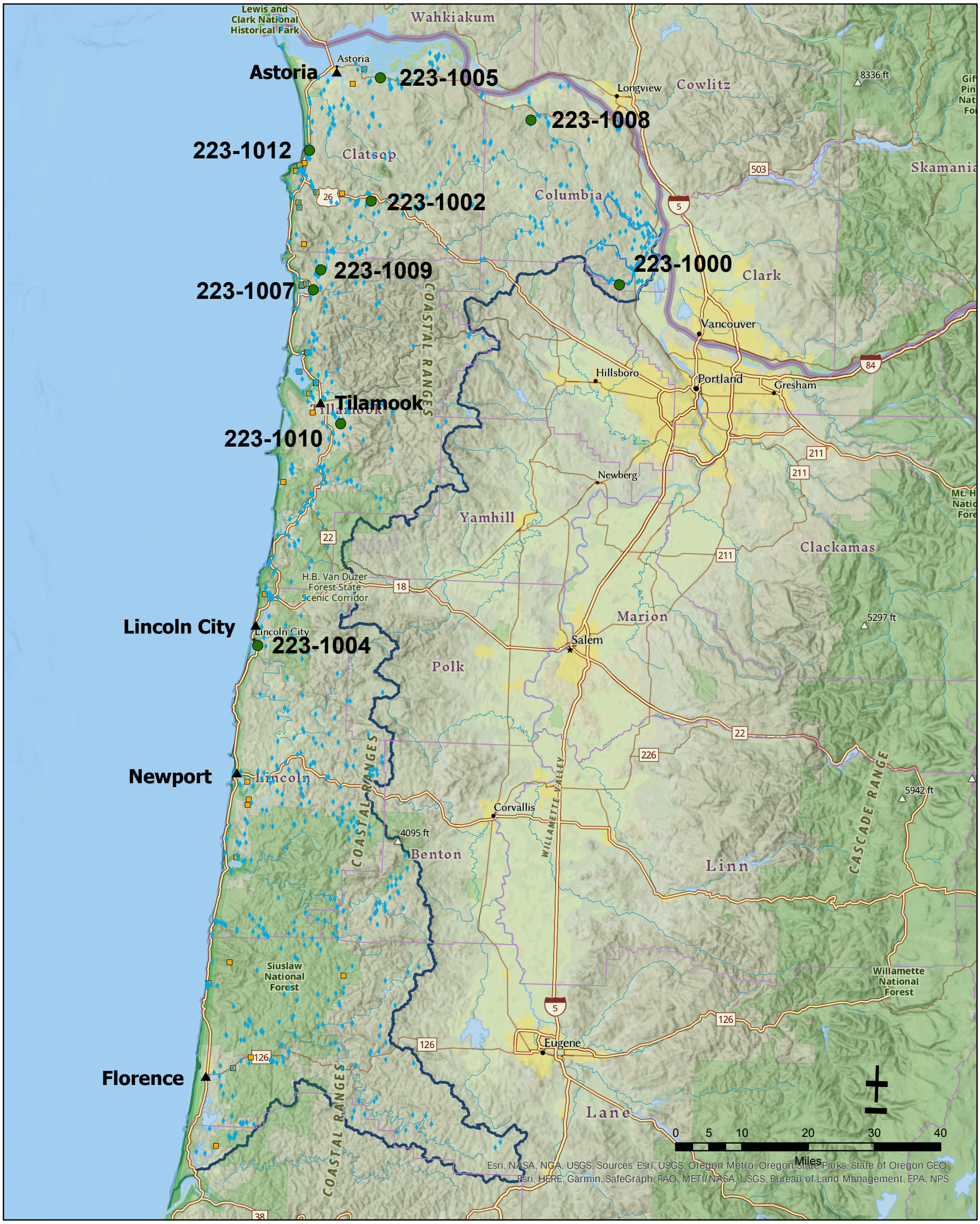
Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Sources: Esri, USGS, County of Crook, Oregon State Parks, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS

Region 1: North Coast

North Coast - Region 1 Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations



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Funding Recommendation

- Staff Recommendation For Funding (SRF)
- Below Funding Line (BFL)

Previous Grants 1998 - Spring 2022

- Land Acquisition
- Restoration
- Region 1 Cities
- Region 1 Streams
- OWEB Region 1 Boundary

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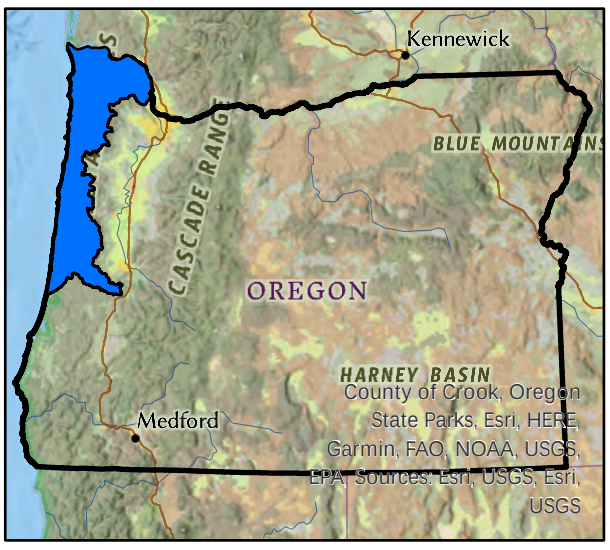

Region 1 - North Coast Restoration

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-1004	MidCoast WC	Lower Drift Creek (Siletz) Tidal Restoration	Tidal wetlands will be restored within the Siletz Bay estuary. Dikes will be removed and tidal channels constructed to restore the site's natural hydrology. Large wood will be placed in the wetlands to improve habitat diversity. Native marsh plant species will be planted and invasive species controlled.	573,724	Columbia
223-1002	Lower Nehalem WC	Little North Fork Large Wood Enhancement	Large wood structures will be placed along a stream reach on the Little North Fork Nehalem River to improve habitat complexity for salmon and steelhead. The project location is a priority for Oregon coast coho salmon.	73,706	Clatsop
223-1005	CREST	Nicolai-Wickiup Watershed Connectivity and Tidal Restoration	Two new fish passage crossings will be constructed under the railroad on the Lower Columbia River. These crossings will restore fish passage and habitat quality. Several existing openings will be expanded and new openings created to provide critical access for salmon and steelhead to the lower river.	629,650	Clatsop
223-1000	Scappoose Bay WC	Upper Raymond Creek Large Wood Enhancement	Large wood structures will be placed and streamside habitat restored along Raymond Creek, a tributary to South Scappoose Creek. This project will improve habitat for Lower Columbia River salmon.	244,610	Columbia
Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				1,521,690	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-1001	Trout Unlimited Inc	Esther Creek Priority Fish Passage	289,093	Tillamook
223-1003	Worthy Garden Club	Worthy Tenmile Phase III- Upland Restoration	42,901	Lane
223-1006	North Coast WS Assn	Ecola Creek Forest Reserve Beaver Habitat Restoration	59,040	Clatsop

Region 1 - North Coast Technical Assistance

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-1007	Lower Nehalem WC	Coal Creek Riparian and Tidal Wetland Enhancement	Tidal wetland habitat will be restored on Coal Creek, a tributary of the Nehalem River. Technical assistance work will explore alternatives and produce designs to restore streamside vegetation, improve tidal connections, and address a failing tide gate.	73,625	Tillamook
223-1009	Lower Nehalem Community Trust	McCoy Dike Breach Technical Assistance Project	Tidal wetland habitat will be restored on a property within the Nehalem estuary. Restoration in the wetland will provide new rearing habitat for fish in Nehalem Bay. Technical assistance will aid in a site assessment, alternatives, and preliminary designs to reconnect the site to the estuary.	74,888	Tillamook
223-1010	Tillamook Estuaries Partnership	Mill Creek Trib B Culvert Replacements & Habitat Enhancement	Undersized road crossings will be replaced at two locations on an unnamed tributary in the Mill Creek basin, in the Tillamook Bay watershed. Technical assistance will aid to finalize designs for the new crossings. The crossings will restore passage to nearly two miles of habitat for salmon and steelhead.	67,650	Tillamook

223-1008	Columbia SWCD	Conyers Creek Habitat Diversification and Enhancement	Habitat for Columbia River salmon will be restored on Conyers Creek, a major tributary to the Clatskanie River. Technical assistance will help complete site assessments and develop permit ready designs. The restoration project will improve habitat complexity and restore native vegetation along a priority steam.	63,769	Columbia
Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				279,932	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-1011	Tillamook Estuaries Partnership	Mary's Culvert Replacement- Engineering & Design	74,415	Tillamook

Region 1 - North Coast Stakeholder Engagement

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-1012	North Coast Land Conservancy	Conservation Planning Outreach	Stakeholder engagement activities will aid to complete a conservation plan to identify priority conservation areas on the north coast.	27,431	Clatsop
Total Stakeholder Engagement Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				27,431	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-1013	Tillamook Estuaries Partnership	Sitka Sedge Tidal Wetlands Restoration Stakeholder Engagement	52,087	Tillamook
223-1014	Environment for the Americas Inc	Salmon Saving Shorebirds	58,787	Lincoln

Region 1 Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**1,829,053**

Region 1 - 6 Grand Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**13,027,997**

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1000-22535
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Upper Raymond Creek Large Wood Enhancement
Applicant: Scappoose Bay WC
Region: North Coast
County: Columbia
OWEB Request: $244,610
Total Cost: $305,860

Application Description This project is located in Raymond Creek, a tributary to South Scappoose Creek in the southern quarter of Columbia County. The project includes a reach in northeast Washington County. Raymond Creek flows into South Scappoose Creek, which flows into Scappoose Bay, the Multnomah Channel and the lower Columbia River. The project addresses key salmon-production limiting factors identified in the Lower Columbia River Conservation and Recovery Plan (ODFW, 2011) and the Scappoose Creek Limiting Factor Analysis (SBWC, 2012): 1) lack of physical habitat quality and complexity, including low quantity of instream large wood and loss of pools and refuge habitat, and loss of floodplain connectivity; 2) low numbers of riparian conifers for future wood recruitment and poor riparian vegetation; and 3) temperature limitations in mainstem South Scappoose. The project originated from the Scappoose Bay Watershed Strategic Action Plan (SBWC, 2018), which identified restoration actions that address areas with high potential for ecological benefits. The project will install 150 log pieces along 1.5 mile of creek in summer 2023 and plant approximately 6000 native vegetation, including confers, small trees, and shrubs, during winter 2023-2024.

Project partners include a private landowner, Weyerhaeuser Corporation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the US Bureau of Land Management

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposed work addresses limiting factors in the Raymond Creek watershed by increasing instream complexity through placement of instream large wood structures.
- Raymond Creek is a priority stream to restore habitat for ESA-listed fish, including Columbia River coho salmon. The Scappoose population of coho is a priority for restoration under the Lower Columbia River Conservation and Recovery Plan for Oregon Populations of Salmon and Steelhead.
- The applicant has extensive experience and a proven track record implementing similar restoration projects.
- There is a committed project team of both public and private ownership and agency technical experts behind the project. BLM and ODFW is providing technical expertise and a private landowner will assist with monitoring and planting as well as a contribution of materials for the large wood structures.
- The proposed approach for ground-based wood placement is appropriate for the site and equipment will be able to access the creek throughout the project stream reach.

- The project design is technically sound and considers stream morphology and downstream infrastructure in the placement of the structures. The large wood placement will meet both ODFW and NOAA benchmarks.
- The applicant manages their own plant nursery that will provide genetically appropriate plant stock to the project.
- The project is ready to implement with materials sourced, locations of structures sites identified on the ground, and technical partners prepared to complete preparation and permitting for a summer 2023 construction.

Concerns

- There are limited details in the application about the proposed planting such as the size of the riparian buffers, the proposed species composition, and the plan for site preparation. Additionally, the application lacks the vegetation planting map referenced in objective 3 in the application narrative. The planting, however, is a small component of the much larger instream restoration.
- More information describing the ongoing monitoring effort in the basin and how resulting data was used to identify the proposed restoration would be helpful in understanding how the project was prioritized.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed restoration work on Raymond Creek in the Scappoose Bay watershed directly addresses a primary limiting factor for ESA-listed Columbia River fish by increasing the diversity and complexity of aquatic habitat. The approach to large wood placements, the primary project element, is technically sound and likely to succeed in achieving the desired ecological objectives with the riparian revegetation providing additional habitat benefits.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
4 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount
$244,610

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$244,610

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1001-22536
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Esther Creek Priority Fish Passage
Applicant: Trout Unlimited Inc
Region: North Coast
County: Tillamook
OWEB Request: $289,093
Total Cost: $689,593

Application Description Esther Creek Tide Gate is part of a privately owned dike creating pastureland for the landowner. The project is located near Tillamook on private farmland. Esther Creek is a tributary to the Tillamook River, providing approximately 0.38 linear miles of spawning and rearing habitat for ESA listed coho salmon, chum salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and resident brook and/or Pacific lamprey. Esther Creek drains an area of just over 1.28 square miles from headwaters in privet timber lands. A new tide gate at this site will increase fish passage, maintain water levels for landowner agricultural needs, and prevent a catastophic failure of the current deteriorated culvert.
The current tide gate is a Nehalem Marine NSG5-5mo (aluminum top hinge w/ Mitigator) with a circular corrugated metal pipe, 60 feet long and 5 feet in diameter. In the summer of 2022 Waterways determined the active channel width of Esther Creek to be 12 feet. Under certain tidal conditions the current tide gate creates a passage barrier for adult and juvenile salmon to one of the three most productive subbasins on the western side of the Tillamook Basin for coho salmon.
We are proposing to replace this with a tide gate including a Muted Tidal Regulator (MTR), and a pipe sized appropriatly for fish passage standards. Along with the designs a management plan coordinated with the landowner will improve fish passage. In addition, the inclusion of habitat logs downstream from the structure will improve overall habitat.
Project partners include: Trout Unlimited (TU), US Forest Service (USFS), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and landowners. Bridge designs, hydraulic and tidal analysis, and geotechnical report were provided by a private engineering firm in cooperation and consultation with Trout Unlimited. The USFS is covering Section 106/ SHPO cultural consultation. Trout Unlimited will submit the joint permit application, ODFW fish passage approval, fish salvage permit, and County permits.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Esther Creek contains populations of cutthroat, lamprey, steelhead, and Oregon coast coho salmon. The creek also has quality habitat for juvenile rearing.
- The project site is highly visible and could be a catalyst for future restoration in the area.
- State and federal natural resources agencies are involved in the project to provide fish salvage and effectiveness monitoring support.

- The project will reduce water velocity through the stream crossing to an appropriate level that will allow for volitional fish passage.
- The applicant and project team has a proven track record of success.

Concerns

- The project is unlikely to benefit Chinook salmon given the evidence to date on fish passage through tide gate structures with a similar design as the proposed approach. Tide gate monitoring at similar sites has demonstrated that Chinook utilize these types of structures less frequently than other fish.
- A water management plan is not included with the application, making it difficult to evaluate ecological benefit. A water management plan would indicate the proposed water elevations that the tide gate would be set for, providing a better understanding of the quality of fish habitat and expected salinity achieved with the level of inundation possible with the new structure.
- The cost of the two wood structures that will be installed downstream of the tide gate seems high compared to similar projects and the ecological goals of the structures are not clearly stated in the application.
- The agricultural influenced area directly upstream of the proposed tide gate structure could benefit from riparian planting or other habitat enhancements, but none are proposed. There is limited shade on the 0.4-mile stream reach upstream.
- While improving passage at the project site will improve fish access to 0.4 miles of habitat, the watershed benefits for the project cost is limited by restricted fish passage through a tide gate structure and the lack of quality habitat immediately upstream.
- The additional funding necessary to implement the project is pending at time of application, and the likelihood of securing sufficient funds for implementation is unknown.
- It is unclear how the tide gate structure will be monitored over time and who will be responsible for monitoring the duration the gate is opened, the water velocities through the structure, and the water elevations upstream of the gate.

Concluding Analysis

A tide gate located on an agricultural road on Esther Creek will be replaced with a newly designed muted-tidal-regulator (MTR) structure that is projected to improve fish passage at the site. The structure itself provides access to less than a mile of habitat, but there are other ongoing projects upstream that will eventually open additional habitat for fish. The ecological benefit of a tide gate replacement project is contingent on a water management plan and how the MTR structure will be stewarded over time. Without this water management plan, it is unclear how much ecological benefit can be achieved from the work. The inclusion of additional riparian habitat work on Esther Creek and a more detailed understanding of how the MTR structure will change water elevations and provide for a longer duration of fish passage would strengthen the application.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

n/a

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1002-22550

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Little North Fork Large Wood Enhancement

Applicant: Lower Nehalem WC

Region: North Coast

County: Clatsop

OWEB Request: $73,706

Total Cost: $100,306

Application Description The project is located in Clatsop County on the Little North Fork Nehalem River, 4.9 river miles from the confluence with the North Fork Nehalem River. The project reach is on 0.5 miles of privately owned timber land. This project proposes to place large wood structures in the Little North Fork Nehalem River channel to increase stream complexity. The project area includes an anchor habitat prioritized in the Nehalem Strategic Action Plan for Coho. Equipment staged for an adjacent timber harvest will be used to place ten large wood structures composed of seven logs each, including two intact rootwads per structure. Trees from the timber harvest will be donated by Weyerhaeuser for the project.

This project will restore spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead and stream restoration will benefit ESA threatened coho salmon, winter steelhead, coastal cutthroat and Pacific lamprey. Project partners include Wild Salmon Center, Weyerhaeuser and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project addresses limiting factors for fish in a priority stream identified as anchor habitat by the Nehalem Coho Strategic Action Plan.
- The Little North Fork Nehalem is a very productive stream that is lacking habitat complexity, which this project will address. The spawning habitat that will be made available through the project reach has the potential to be very high quality. Adding large wood structures to the stream will slow water velocity and aggrade gravel for spawning.
- The industrial timber landowner is an engaged partner on the work and will be contributing materials and technical support.
- The project is cost-effective due to the approach of collaborating with the landowner’s timber sale plans. This approach will allow for cost efficiencies with contracting and access as well as provide a handy source of material for the large wood structures.
- The applicant and project partners have a proven track record of success with implementing similar instream large wood projects.
- The application has clearly stated goals and objectives.
- The proposed technical approach for ground-based instream large wood placement is appropriate for the site conditions and practical given there is site access for equipment.

- The amount of wood proposed for the stream reach is appropriate and will result in meeting ODFW and NOAA benchmarks.

Concerns

- No significant concerns are identified.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed instream large wood placement in the Nehalem watershed will improve instream habitat complexity in a priority reach of the Little North Fork. The stream is low gradient through the project area and should immediately respond to the proposed increase of habitat structures. The technical approach is creative by using the material from an old log bridge to provide some of the key pieces for the structures. There is a possibility for restoring additional floodplain function by removing old roadbed fill that bisects the stream's floodplain, and the applicant indicated on site that they may have additional funding for this work. This will further increase ecological benefit of this collaborative effort between the applicant, the landowner, and natural resource agencies that has a high likelihood of success.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount
$73,706

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$73,706

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1003-22554

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Worthy Tenmile Phase III- Upland Restoration

Applicant: Worthy Garden Club

Region: North Coast

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $42,901

Total Cost: $57,460

Application Description

IN August 2022, Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Worthy Garden Club (WGC) agreed to spend $286,851.20 on the first phases of a riparian restoration project in Tenmile valley, near Yachats, OR. In this phase, roughly 10-15 acres of legacy meadows will be converted to an early seral phase of a developing riparian forest. The meadow sites have been cleared of invasive species and mowed. Large woody debris (LWD) and whole downed red alder trees will be placed throughout the planting area to discourage elk browsing and bedding. Additionally, during the fall/winter of 2023, CWD will be placed via helicopter throughout 3 miles of the active channel.

In late fall/early winter of this year, both organizations will help plant the 10-15 acre portions of prepared riparian land. We intend to replicate two plant communities commonly associated with coastal Oregon riparian forests. 1) western hemlock/oxalis. 2) western hemlock/salmonberry/vine maple. Both organizations have pledged/agreed to fund site maintenance for this portion of the project.

Moving forward, WGC is seeking funding for additional restorative activities at Tenmile Creek. Specifically, WGC wants to treat/manage an additional 10-15 acres of adjacent upland forest. This project phase would include an understory release, a limited overstory release/thin, and conifer tree planting with associated maintenance. This would foster additional habitat/ecological connectivity between a coastal marine reserve, a restored fresh water salmon run, the Audubon sanctuary, and WGC's riparian/upland restoration project.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project area in Tenmile Creek contains high quality habitat for juvenile fish and is a productive stream for salmon and steelhead.
- The landowner has a strong stewardship ethic and is committed to improving habitat on the property.
- The site is connected to other conservation areas, being surrounded by National Forest land that is managed as a Late Successional Reserve.

Concerns

- The project will transition habitat from hardwood to conifer forest with a goal of late successional habitat. Early seral pockets like the one on this property are uncommon in this watershed and hardwood forests have a high value to wildlife including amphibians, migratory birds, and deer and elk.
- The project design would benefit from consultation with a forester and a terrestrial ecologist, rather than the arborist services proposed in the application. A diversity of technical expertise will ensure that the designs are informed by a watershed-level perspective that considers a range of species needs. The benefit of girdling alders by an arborist is unclear.
- The need for the work is not well described in the application. Some of the sites proposed for treatment already appear to be on a healthy ecological trajectory.
- The ecological benefits of the proposed actions are unclear. The project is unlikely to benefit water quality, temperature, or aquatic habitat.
- The capacity of the applicant to conduct the work is unknown. It is unclear if the applicant and project manager has experience with similar types of restoration work.
- Long term management strategies for the property are unclear. The landowner does not have a forest management plan guiding the work.

Concluding Analysis

Forest health actions are proposed for an upland forest on a private property along Tenmile Creek to accelerate the conversion of forest habitat to late successional characteristics. The application proposes to hire an arborist to tackle some of the forestry work. Given the goals and condition of the property, it may be more beneficial to engage with other types of natural resource professionals to develop a forest management plan before engaging in forest restoration on the site. The proposed restorations treatments to restore late successional conifer habitat may not align with the watershed context and is likely to provide uncertain watershed benefit by impacting functional hardwood and early seral habitats important to wildlife and biodiversity.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

n/a

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1004-22572

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Lower Drift Creek (Siletz) Tidal Restoration

Applicant: MidCoast WC

Region: North Coast

County: Lincoln

OWEB Request: $573,724

Total Cost: $1,097,424

Application Description This project occurs primarily within the Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge on the south end of Lincoln City, Oregon. It was designed, in consultation with local landowners, to restore 80 acres of tidal wetlands (marshes and swamps). This work, in combination with the 86 acres subject to prior restoration, will result in eventual recovery of 75% of the 222 acres of this habitat that had been lost historically. Due to the importance of estuaries and their tidal wetlands to threatened coho salmon and other salmonids, Federal and State recovery plans call for estuary restoration. This proposal involves dike removal, initiation of primary and secondary channels, placement of wood habitat structures, removing channel obstructions, creating topographic diversity, control of invasive grasses, and planting and seeding to help restore native marsh, shrub swamp and spruce swamp vegetation. The restored hydrological connections are designed to promote native plant growth and sediment retention that build the marsh surface, making it more resilient to climate change, storing carbon in the soils, and absorbing flood waters. Project partners are US Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, The US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, private landowners, the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District, the Wild Salmon Center, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project will restore 80 acres of tidal wetland to the Drift Creek watershed and is a component of a larger restoration effort in the Siletz Bay estuary that will help restore a significant portion of the historic estuarine habitat.
- The proposed work will support diverse life history characteristics of the Oregon coast coho salmon population in the watershed and the project is consistent with recommendations in the Oregon Coast Coho Recovery Plan.
- The technical approach is sound and built on data from the landward migration study, lessons learned from past similar projects in nearby estuaries, and historic work in the Siletz estuary.
- The project has a partnership of technical experts and the applicant has experience implementing other successful estuarine habitat projects. The team has invested in a considerable amount of stakeholder engagement to arrive at the selected restoration design.
- The proposal has clearly stated objectives and detailed actions describing how the objectives will be met.

- Tidal wetland habitats are sensitive to pollution. The proposed restoration will have a significant benefit to water quality by reducing sedimentation and runoff from the road.
- The methodology used in the restoration design is innovative and utilizes new practices for estuarine restoration that have been shown to be successful. Techniques planned include burying wood into the floodplain to create topographic diversity for plant establishment and filling ditches with excavated reed canary grass to achieve the desired elevation while disposing safely of the invasive plants.

Concerns

- No significant concerns noted during review.

Concluding Analysis

The project targets a priority habitat type for restoration and will result in 80 additional acres of tidally influenced wetlands within the Siletz Bay estuary. The restoration will have a significant ecological benefit to a myriad of fish and wildlife species as well as improve water quality and mitigate the effects of sea level rise. The project designs consider climate change projections, are technically sound, and employ professionally accepted restoration approaches that are likely to be successful.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount
$573,724

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$573,724

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1005-22573

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Nicolai-Wickiup Watershed Connectivity and Tidal Restoration

Applicant: CREST

Region: North Coast

County: Clatsop

OWEB Request: $629,650

Total Cost: $2,252,065

Application Description Located between River Mile (RM) 20 and 30 of the Columbia River in Clatsop County Oregon, four geographically distinct but functionally similar sites comprise the Nicolai-Wickiup Watershed Connectivity and Tidal Restoration Project: Wolf Bay at Columbia RM 20 (46.169558, -123.695282), Agency Creek at RM 25 (46.186919, -123.607724), Warren Slough at RM 26 (46.192721, -123.575337), and E. Aldrich Point at RM 30 (46.232615, -123.496397).

This proposal only seeks funds to complete Wolf Bay and E. Aldrich projects in summer of 2023. Agency Cr. and Warren will seek grant funding in 2023, for 2024 construction.

The project area is located directly adjacent to the Lewis & Clark National Wildlife Refuge on the OR shoreline of the Columbia River (CR) within the Big Creek- Frontal CR (HUC 10). This project is a partnership between CREST, North Coast Land Conservancy (NCLC), Columbia Land Trust (CLT), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), and three private landowners (Connie and Bob Hunt, Hampton Lumber, and ODOT/PNWR Rail). All landowners strongly support project implementation and have been key advocates throughout the design process.

In the project area, foraging and rearing habitat for all local and upriver stocks of juvenile salmonids are limited by past land use (rail/hwy, and agriculture) developments. Restoration efforts will focus on the enhancement of CR mainstem-adjacent habitat at the base of the Nicolai-Wickiup watershed bisected by the railroad, reestablishing juvenile salmonid access to rearing habitats. The projects will expand several existing openings and create new openings in the railroad prism providing access to over 110 acres (67 of which from Wolf and Aldrich) of rearing habitat for salmonids. New railroad breaches, reducing velocities at existing openings, and channel excavation will significantly reduce the distances between existing available habitat patches, increase wetland capacity, and restore natural hydrologic connectivity.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project will result in the restoration of 67 acres of tidal habitat, which will address a critical need for fish within the Columbia River estuary.

- Fish passage barriers from the railroad lines running along the Columbia River are impeding access to historically important habitats and have changed watershed hydrology. High water velocities at railroad crossings can prevent juvenile fish from accessing tidal rearing habitat and fish can be entrained in the bisected embayments created by the railroad line cutting through the river corridor.
- The applicant brought together appropriate partners to the project. The entities involved have a proven track record of success and experience implementing other similar restoration projects.
- The work will positively benefit several conservation properties by increasing tidal exchange and restoring hydrology. The landownership includes several land trusts and a state agency. The proposed restoration will increase tidal exchange across these properties, which will provide over 110 acres of rearing habitat for salmonids.
- Expected benefits to fish are very high. In particular, young Chinook will benefit from having more access to habitat refuges along the lower Columbia River.
- The application has clearly stated objectives and the design approach is well defined.
- A thorough alternatives analysis was conducted to identify the best locations for the new railroad crossings.
- The applicant has done extensive due diligence to successfully develop this phased project that will restore additional sites when entirely complete. Working on railroad crossings is complex and the myriad of landowners involved creates additional requirements for project planning and implementation.
- The project is ready to implement with permitting underway and designs nearly finished. The project was reviewed and ranked highly by BPA during their grant evaluation process.

Concerns

- The project has a relatively high cost for the habitat benefit due to the higher costs associated with designing the crossings to the standards of the railroad.

Concluding Analysis

The presence of the railroad line along the lower Columbia River has long served as a barrier for fish needing to access slower-moving estuarine habitat. This project, in partnership with the railroad, will improve access for fish to several priority areas along an extensive reach of the river. This application is the first phase of that effort, with other projects expected to follow in subsequent phases. Collectively these projects will have a significant benefit to fish by widening the openings of the crossings under the railroad, creating new openings, and subsequently slowing the velocities of the water moving under the railroad so that fish will be able to access optimum rearing habitat during critical times of their life histories. This provides an excellent opportunity to work with the railroad to address a long-standing problem for fish in the lower Columbia estuary.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount
$629,650

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$629,650

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1006-22623
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Ecola Creek Forest Reserve Beaver Habitat Restoration
Applicant: North Coast WS Assn
Region: North Coast
County: Clatsop
OWEB Request: $59,040
Total Cost: $87,971

Application Description The Ecola Creek Forest Reserve (ECFR) is comprised of 1,040 acres within the Ecola Creek watershed. Ecola Creek flows from steep mountainous headwaters through commercial timberland and into the Pacific Ocean at Cannon Beach. Restoring beaver habitat will create low-velocity pools and high-quality off-channel habitat for ESA listed coho salmon, chinook salmon, chum salmon, steelhead, coastal cutthroat trout and Pacific lamprey.

The goal of the project is to support, expand, and retain beaver populations in the watershed as a natural promotor of habitat complexity. Beavers are a keystone species and recovering beaver habitats in the ECFR will improve habitat conditions for several species of amphibians, birds and mammals listed in the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy.

In 2021, the North Coast Watershed Association (NCWA) partnered with the City of Canon Beach to implement an OWEB funded TA grant to assess existing and potential beaver habitat using the Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool (BRAT). Findings were reviewed by a technical team comprised of ODFW, USFWS, Greenwood Resources and the City of Cannon Beach. Assessments were conducted throughout the Ecola Creek Watershed to implement a whole watershed approach and six sites were identified and prioritized for this project.

The primary project objective will be to plant sitka willow (Salix sitchensis), twinberry (Lonicera involucrata), and vine maple (Acer circinatum) at GPS located planting sites on 1.1 acres of the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve. Secondary objectives will be invasive plant removal and alder release to coincide with planting and effectiveness monitoring. Restoration efforts will expand on the OWEB funded Ecola Creek Forest Reserve Large Wood Mobilization project (213-1040).

Project partners will provide technical review of project designs. Partners include US Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Greenwood Resources and the City of Cannon Beach.

Review Team Evaluation
Strengths

- The project builds off a technical assistance effort that used a scientifically sound approach to identify

and characterize beaver habitat in the Ecola Creek watershed.

- The proposed restoration work considers the needs of the City of Cannon Beach and surrounding infrastructure.
- Appropriate partners are engaged in the project, including City staff, volunteers, and natural resource professionals.
- There is an opportunity for public outreach and engagement with the work to raise awareness about watershed restoration.
- The effectiveness monitoring tools developed as part of the technical assistance work will be helpful in tracking the project's successes over time.

Concerns

- There does not seem to be sufficient funds allocated to accomplish the labor-intensive invasive species removal and planting work proposed. The project relies primarily on a volunteer work force that has not been identified.
- Some of the proposed approaches for site preparation and controlling invasive species, such as the plan to mechanically remove Canada thistle, are not technically sound.
- The project proposes a large-scale plant community conversion in relatively stable habitat that is in good ecological condition. There are species proposed for planting which are not geographically or ecologically appropriate.
- The project goal is to increase native floodplain plant communities to provide beaver forage and dam building material. The rationale for the restoration method is to address the lack of forage for beaver in Ecola Creek, which is why beaver are not currently present in the watershed. Beavers do, however, have food in the Ecola Creek watershed. Additionally, other coastal watersheds with similar plant species composition as Ecola Creek have healthy populations of beaver. It is unclear why beaver are not currently present in Ecola Creek and whether the proposed actions will result in habitat benefit for beaver.
- A substantial cost of the project is for "branding" of beaver for stakeholder engagement purposes. The justification and need for a marketing campaign around beaver is unclear in the application and may be better suited in a stakeholder engagement project.
- Information on restoration alternatives that may have been considered is lacking in the application.
- Girdling alders to encourage them to fall into the stream channel will reduce canopy cover in riparian areas and may have unintended effects on stream temperature. This action combined with an intensive outreach effort may send the wrong message to the public.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed restoration aims to improve beaver habitat within the Ecola Creek watershed in the City of Cannon Beach through a combination of planting forage for beavers, controlling invasive species, and girdling hardwood trees. The scope of work, the extent of the six planting sites, and the rugged terrain is a big task for the volunteer labor proposed for implementing the project, and likelihood of project success is uncertain. This project could have excellent benefits to stakeholder engagement with the goal of using volunteer labor and promoting beaver habitat through a marketing campaign, but the details of how that will be accomplished and the justification for the methods proposed is not clear in the application.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
n/a

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1007-22512

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Coal Creek Riparian and Tidal Wetland Enhancement

Applicant: Lower Nehalem WC

Region: North Coast

County: Tillamook

OWEB Request: $73,625

Total Cost: $111,046

Application Description The project is located in the city of Nehalem at the approximate head of tide for Coal Creek near where Northfork Road crosses Coal Creek. It extends downstream on both sides of the creek for 0.3 miles, includes a 0.1 mile ditched and tidegated tributary, and several fields (10 acres approximately). This location is a high priority for restoration improving tidal wetland habitat availability and creek shading to support juvenile salmonid rearing. The availability of tidal wetland habitats like this are a key limiting factor for salmonids in the Nehalem watershed. The fields in the project area are also leased for grazing by local dairies, a use which is threatened by erosion and a significant undercut.

To protect the agricultural use and improve salmonid habitat, this project will produce permit ready designs to restore riparian vegetation, improve the tidal wetlands, and possibly remove or improve the tide gate located on the 0.1 mile ditched tributary. Some of the potential activities include:
1: Bank laybacks and large wood enhancement to manage erosion by presenting a vegetated surface and lower angle of incidence to high winter flows.
2: Tide gate removal, replacement, or repair to improve fish passage and maintain the productivity of the upstream field.
3: Creation of new tidal channels to increase tidal wetland area.
4: Placement of nurse logs to promote spruce swamp characteristics.
5: Riparian planting to provide shade, nutrient exchange, manage invasive plants, provide future large wood recruitment, and bank stabilization.

This project is a partnership between the LNWC and Tillamook Estuaries Partnership, Wild Salmon Center, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposal is clear and the methodology described for accomplishing the technical assistance work is appropriate and strategic for restoring salmon spawning and rearing habitat in Coal Creek.
- The site has a high value for restoration potential with the opportunity to restore and enhance spawning and rearing habitat for fish, including Oregon coast coho salmon.

- The landowner engagement in the project and interest in improving habitat on their property is documented by a letter of support.
- The current tide gate on the channel running across the site controls the water level of the ditch but does not appear to be functionally necessary. The proposed technical assistance work will look at alternatives for the structure, and there may be an opportunity to remove the tide gate. This option could natural hydrology to the site without impacting current land use.
- The banks of Coal Creek through the project area will benefit from riparian planting, which will improve water quality and address erosional concerns of the landowner.
- Partners around the region are engaged in data collection to inform the restoration design and will assist with the water quality monitoring effort.
- The project location has excellent visibility and could be a catalyst for future work on similar sites.
- The applicant is experienced and has a proven track record implementing similar projects.
- The budget is appropriately detailed and the line items are reasonable.

Concerns

- The site is currently grazed intermittently throughout the year, which could impact the potential benefits of the project if cattle are able to access the creek and future plantings. The plan for protecting the restoration investment is unclear.
- The presence of powerlines in a portion of the project area will limit the possibility of establishing conifers on the site.
- Details are lacking on the possibility of the restoration of tidal channels on the site and where that might occur. Additional details about alternatives that might include this project element along with proposed locations would be helpful for better understanding the potential ecological benefits from the future restoration.

Concluding Analysis

The technical assistance work proposed for this site on Coal Creek in the lower Nehalem watershed is a necessary and prudent step to achieving future restoration. The site has high potential to provide additional habitat for fish and wildlife and the complex site conditions need to be evaluated by a technical professional to generate alternatives for action. The property connects to a pristine tidal swamp in conservation ownership, which will further expand the potential ecological benefits that can be achieved from a resulting restoration project.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

1 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount

$73,625

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$73,625

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1008-22514

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Conyers Creek Habitat Diversification and Enhancement

Applicant: Columbia SWCD

Region: North Coast

County: Columbia

OWEB Request: $63,769

Total Cost: $79,997

Application Description 1) The project location is on Conyers Creek, a major tributary to the Clatskanie River, and is situated in the mid to upper Conyers watershed. This is located within the larger hydrologic unit of the Lower Columbia – Clatskanie River watershed. GPS location: (46.088408, -123.218575)

2) Conyers Creek is habitat for ESA listed Coho, Chinook, and Steelhead salmon as well as Coastal cutthroat trout, Pacific lamprey and other sensitive species. eDNA testing in the summer of 2021 confirmed the presence of Pacific lamprey and even a weak presence of Chinook at a sampling location off of Himple Road (about center of the project reach). Over time Conyers, like so many other streams and rivers, has been greatly simplified and degraded by human settlement and activity. Road building, residential development, farming and forestry practices have all contributed to its present day degraded condition. However, there is still a lot of good habitat potential in Conyers Creek if restoration activities can be applied. The native wildlife that uses this watershed will benefit from actions that encourage greater planform diversity, floodplain connection, in-stream channel complexity, and fully functional wetlands.

3) The SWCD will hire Waterways Consulting Inc to conduct a topographic survey, hydraulic and hydrologic analysis, develop design alternatives, draft a design technical memorandum, and produce permit ready designs for the chosen plan. A private contractor will produce aerial imagery of the project area so that changes to the planform and habitat features, as a result of future restoration activities, can be monitored over time. The SWCD will consult with the engineer, ODFW, the local watershed council, and participating landowners in deciding on a design for restoration.

4) Project partners include Waterways Consulting Inc., ODFW, Lower Columbia River Watershed Council, Air Insight Consulting LLC, and private landowners.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Restoration on Conyers Creek will improve habitat for three ESA-listed Columbia River species of fish, including coho, steelhead, and Chinook.
- The application demonstrates the need for additional rearing habitat for salmon in the Clatskanie watershed and increasing the diversity of stream habitat in Conyers Creek will also have benefits for other wildlife such as birds and amphibians.
- The project partners are experienced in working in Clatskanie watershed with similar projects and have a proven track record of success. There is a range of technical advisors participating who will help guide the design work.
- The landowners involved are engaged and supportive of restoration on their properties.
- Material needed for the future restoration project may be partially sourced from another upstream landowner partnering on the project, which will result in cost savings.
- The project is cost-effective for the amount of work proposed and the potential ecological benefit from the expected future restoration.

Concerns

- Details on the potential restoration actions that may be achievable through the designs are not provided in the application.
- The extent of the proposed topographic surveys is not described in the application narrative. Extensive topographic surveys may not be necessary to achieve the project goals and these surveys may have inaccurate results due to the presence of abundant reed canary grass at the site locations.
- Beavers were not considered in the design approach, encouraging their presence on the site may be a cost-effective method to achieve the restoration goal of increased in stream complexity.

Concluding Analysis

The project involves multiple contiguous landowners along a stream reach on Conyers Creek, a tributary of the Clatskanie River. The watershed is a priority place in which to work to improve aquatic habitat for fish. This project will address limiting factors by developing alternatives that will increase instream complexity. There is a clear need described for the technical assistance work, which will provide the landowners with a range of alternatives to consider.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

4 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount

$63,769

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$63,769

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1009-22525

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: McCoy Dike Breach Technical Assistance Project

Applicant: Lower Nehalem Community Trust

Region: North Coast

County: Tillamook

OWEB Request: $74,888

Total Cost: $95,094

Application Description 1) LOCATION: The McCoy wetland property is in Tillamook County, between the Coast Highway and the Nehalem River, approximately 1 mile north of Wheeler. It is immediately north, and adjacent to, Bott's Marsh, but is separated from the River and from Bott's Marsh by dikes.

2) NEED: This property was once part of a much larger tidal wetland, but is now isolated from tidal influence except at highest high tides. This project will explore options to restore natural tidal cycles to the property through one or more breach(es) of the surrounding dike, to restore access to over four acres of tidal wetland and surrounding scrub-shrub habitat for native fish.

Restored tidal connectivity will significantly improve the wetland's currently altered hydrology, and improve water and habitat quality in the wetland for rearing salmonids as well as salmon prey species that are critical for juvenile salmonid growth and survival.

This project will contribute to the goals of the Nehalem Strategic Action Plan for Coho, to increase “the quality and extent of tidal rearing habitats and associated freshwater habitats” in the focal area of Nehalem Bay.

3) PROPOSED WORK: This stage of the project will include a Site Assessment, Alternatives Analysis, and development of preliminary designs to procure project permits. The Site Assessment will examine topography and conduct hydrology and hydraulic analysis, existing and proposed conditions modeling, and more. The Alternatives Analysis will examine options to breach the dikes surrounding the property, with the goal to reconnect the central wetland to Bott’s Marsh, and/or directly to the Nehalem River. The preliminary design will be sufficient for the fill/removal permits, fish passage approval, a no-rise certification, and any other permit necessary for implementation.

4) Partners include: the Wild Salmon Center, Lower Nehalem Watershed Council, Tillamook Estuaries Partnership, and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The technical assistance work will focus on a design that restores tidal hydrology and ecologically valuable estuarine habitat to the McCoy wetlands.
- The goals and objectives for the project are described clearly in the application.
- The project location is directly adjacent to another conservation property funded with an OWEB Acquisition grant, Botts Marsh. The two properties could both benefit from hydrologic reconnection.
- The application demonstrates a clear need for the technical assistance to understand the challenging site hydrology caused by the relict levees and ditches on the property.
- Restoration of natural hydrology will have significant benefits to water quality as well as wildlife. In its current condition, the site could be a stranding site for fish.
- The site is located on the west side of highway 101 and is highly visible to the public, which will provide an opportunity for outreach and public engagement.
- The partnership includes the appropriate level of technical expertise.
- The land trust applicant is the landowner, has been proactive in pursuing restoration on the site, and has demonstrated a commitment to site stewardship.
- The applicant has a stated commitment to engaging with local tribes in the restoration design and implementation.

Concerns

- The applicant does not have extensive experience managing estuarine restoration projects.
- The technical assistance work may end up being substantially more complex than originally conceived, given the unanswered questions about site hydrology and alternatives to address the levee system. It is currently unclear how water is moving around the site and this technical assistance work may uncover new site constraints and challenges.
- The budgeted amount for cultural resource work may be low for the work proposed.

Concluding Analysis

Technical assistance work is a needed step to achieve high value estuarine restoration on the McCoy conservation property in the lower Nehalem watershed. The subject property is relatively small in size, but the project will have a larger watershed benefit by improving hydrologic connections with an adjacent tidally influenced site. The application indicates a commitment to restoration and an understanding of the scope and scale of information needed to achieve a successful design. The review team recommends that the applicant confirm that there are no levees/easements in place that will inhibit restoration prior to embarking on technical assistance work. Outreach should be conducted early on to the Army Corps of Engineers now and planning for the additional capacity to address permitting for this project will ensure a high likelihood of success.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount
$74,888

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$74,888

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1010-22607

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Mill Creek Trib B Culvert Replacements & Habitat Enhancement

Applicant: Tillamook Estuaries Partnership

Region: North Coast

County: Tillamook

OWEB Request: $67,650

Total Cost: $117,006

Application Description This project proposes to replace two undersized road crossings and enhance riparian habitat on an unnamed tributary, Tributary B, of Mill Creek in the Trask River basin, Tillamook Bay watershed. The project site is 5 miles from the town of Tillamook in Tillamook County. The road crossings are in close proximity (200 yards) and both have been identified as high priorities for replacement in order to: 1) restore passage to 1.9 miles of spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook, coho, Pacific lamprey, steelhead and cutthroat trout; 2) restore watershed function and natural channel processes, and 3) improve County road infrastructure by reducing local flooding. The lower crossing is on County owned Brickyard Road and sits on two undersized and perched concrete culverts with trash- racks that clog with debris and can temporarily block the stream. The upstream crossing is a private driveway with two undersized culverts. Bridge installations are proposed for both sites. These projects address the only road/stream barriers in Tributary B. Riparian enhancement is proposed for both banks on a quarter-mile stream reach and along the shoreline of Christie Pond. Christie Pond is a historic impoundment pond on Joan Christie's property that was created with an earthen dam and low weir. This earthen dam has self-breached recently, allowing for Tributary B to freely flow until the first set of culverts at the private driveway.
Project partners include US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tillamook County Public Works Department, the Christie family, Salmon Super Highway and Pelican Brewing.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Restoring fish passage at the Mill Creek tributary site in the Trask River basin will result in access to 1.9 miles of aquatic habitat suitable for spawning and rearing for fish species, including Oregon coast coho salmon.
- Mill Creek is a priority basin for restoration work in the Trask River watershed. This creek has notable riparian vegetation complexity, a high incidence of beaver activity, and a range of flow conditions that provide a diversity of aquatic habitat types.
- The habitat present on the property immediately upstream of the road crossings is of low gradient and has potential for effectively restoring stream function.
- The long-term family landowners are invested in the ecological health of their property and are supportive of riparian restoration.

- The project is supported by a broad partnership of nonprofits and local, state, and federal agencies. Restoring fish passage at this location is a designated priority of the Salmon SuperHwy.
- The project approach will build on previously collected data, resulting in an efficient effort to achieve final designs.
- There could be potential to conduct additional restoration upstream if this project is successful.

Concerns

- More details explaining how previously collected data will be utilized in the design rework would be helpful for understanding whether appropriate data will be used to inform restoration design.
- There is a remnant pond that was originally created by an earthen dam. Fish passage at this dam was not previously assessed. This dam has recently self-breached, which has allowed upstream fish passage. Fish are now rearing in the remnant pond that is similar to the habitat conditions in the downstream beaver ponds. The long-term plans for this remnant pond are unclear in the application. Additional information is needed to understand whether the earthen dam will be replaced to maintain the manmade pond, which would likely affect future fish passage.
- The restoration project that will result from this technical assistance work could be prohibitively expensive given the geomorphology of the site. Previous technical assistance work revealed that the depth to bedrock at the site of the proposed crossing replacement is extensive, requiring an upgraded approach.

Concluding Analysis

This project in the Trask River watershed was last reviewed as a restoration project that was not recommended for funding due to the presence of a dam at the outlet of the manmade pond. Since the time of that application the earthen dam has blown out and the site conditions have changed, eliminating that fish passage concern and elevating the expected ecological benefit of the project. Due to the lapse in time from the previous designs, an engineering update is needed prior to pursuing restoration funding.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 4

Review Team Recommended Amount

$67,650

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$67,650

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1011-22619
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Mary's Creek Culvert Replacement - Engineering & Design
Applicant: Tillamook Estuaries Partnership
Region: North Coast
County: Tillamook
OWEB Request: $74,415
Total Cost: $105,766

Application Description This technical assistance application is to fund engineering and design work for two culvert replacements on Mary's Creek, a tributary of Fawcett Creek in the Tillamook Bay Watershed of Tillamook County. Anadromous salmonid fish species occurring on the Tillamook watershed include spring and fall chinook salmon, coho salmon, summer and winter steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout. These two culverts are the two lowest fish passage barriers in Mary's creek before it joins Fawcett creek. Each culvert exists on a separate private property, owned by Robert Phillips and Bradley Pierce respectively.
Mary's creek was surveyed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) biologists in the summer of 2022. Cutthroat trout and coho salmon fry were found present at the time of survey. The survey identified 1.19 miles of coho habitat upstream from the lowest fish passage barrier, and 1.78 miles of fish habitat upstream of the lowest barrier total.
The goal of this project is to secure complete engineering designs for replacement of both culverts with adequately sized structures and streambed simulation design.
Engineering designs will be contracted out to a private engineering firm. TEP will prepare and release an RFP for engineering designs, manage the engineering contract, and convene the technical team for design review.
Project partners include Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Trout Unlimited (TU), USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Tillamook County Public Works (TCPW).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Mary's Creek is a priority location in the Tillamook Bay Watershed to restore habitat for Chinook, coho, steelhead, lamprey, and potentially chum.
- The application describes a clear need for the proposed design engineering plans for replacing two undersized culverts, with the downstream crossing in an imminent stage of failure and the upstream crossing providing access to a community water source.
- There is a broad project partnership behind the work, including local, state, and federal agencies. The applicant has a proven track record of success with similar projects.

Concerns

- Replacing the downstream structure will likely be costly with the gradient of the stream and the substantial fill that will be required to maintain the road. Additionally, road use at the downstream crossing is limited to occasional ATV use. A highly engineered culvert replacement may not be necessary or warrant the cost when removing the crossing would provide greater habitat benefit.
- Construction access to the sites may be challenging due to the current road conditions, particularly the downstream crossing. The plan for equipment access is unclear.
- Limited detail is provided in the application about potential alternatives to replacing the culverts that were considered for restoring fish passage.

Concluding Analysis

Marys Creek is a tributary of Fawcett Creek in the Tillamook Bay watershed. The creek is prime habitat for a full suite of fish species, including Oregon coast coho salmon. Replacing the two road crossings will improve fish access to 1.8 miles of quality habitat for spawning and rearing. The need for the technical assistance for the upstream crossing is clear given the site conditions that need to be considered, including community use of the road to access a water source and the water lines that run under the creek. There are missing details in the application about why other alternatives were not considered for the downstream crossing. More information about the need for replacing the downstream crossing, the landowner’s tolerance for different options for the site, and the expected cost-benefit of a resulting restoration project would strengthen the application.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
n/a

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1012-22510
Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement
Project Name: Conservation Planning Outreach
Applicant: North Coast Land Conservancy
Region: North Coast
County: Clatsop
OWEB Request: $27,431
Total Cost: $34,791

Application Description This stakeholder engagement project will take place throughout North Coast Land Conservancy's service area, which runs from the Columbia River down to Siletz Bay and from the nearshore ocean east to the crest of the Coast Range. It will benefit the streams, rivers and watersheds of this territory.
Important natural habitat throughout our service area is threatened by land conversion, fragmentation and climate change, which together impact a wide range of species whose life cycles are dependent upon the availability and condition of the forests, streams, wetlands, rivers and estuaries that comprise their habitats.
While there are a number of agencies and organizations implementing conservation and restoration efforts at different scales in our region, there is not a comprehensive plan to guide acquisition of lands for conservation and restoration purposes across our service area.
We have begun the process of updating our conservation plan to reflect strategic priorities of habitat connectivity, climate resilience, and community conservation, and we're evaluating our entire service area to identify priority areas to better address these issues. We wish to meet with stakeholders whose work overlaps with ours to hear perspectives on our conservation plan and obtain input regarding our conservation priorities and criteria that have been used to prioritize land within our service area, as well as ways our land conservation efforts can complement their work. The input we gather will then be reflected in a conservation plan that will guide our land acquisition efforts for the next 20 years.
The stakeholders NCLC will engage include federal and state natural resource agencies, such as USFWS and ODF; local and regional nonprofit organizations, such as watershed councils and land trusts; tribal entities whose traditional homelands lie within NCLC's service area; and local public agencies, such as municipalities, county parks departments, and planning departments.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposal is thorough by describing a clear path from the proposed objectives to potential future acquisition projects. It is evident that a lot of thought has been put into the stakeholder engagement strategy.
- There is a broad partnership engaged in the work with the applicant and the project is an opportunity to strategically bring new stakeholders into conservation work on the north coast.

- The comprehensive conservation plan developed as part of this project will result in a prioritized list of acquisition projects that will help the applicant plan and strategize into the future.
- The timing for strategic conservation planning is appropriate, with the applicant having just finished a decades-long landscape level acquisition project.
- The project team is experienced with engaging community members in land acquisition conversations and has a proven track record of success.
- The work is cost-effective for the amount requested and expected quality of the work proposed.

Concerns

- No significant concerns identified during review.

Concluding Analysis

The applicant is uniquely positioned in the region to accomplish conservation work into the future, and this project is well-timed to help designate the next direction of the land trust. With a large, flagship conservation project recently completed, there are a host of engaged stakeholders that can be convened to help prioritize the future of the organization and identify strategic projects to pursue. The application clearly explains the need to bring additional stakeholders into the conversation, including tribal entities. The applicant's staff have done a thorough job laying a strong foundation for the project, and this stakeholder engagement effort will provide the necessary capacity to bring new voices to the table and result in a successful strategic plan that will benefit fish, wildlife, and coastal communities for years to come.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 1

Review Team Recommended Amount
$27,431

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$27,431

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1013-22527

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Sitka Sedge Tidal Wetlands Restoration Stakeholder Engagement

Applicant: Tillamook Estuaries Partnership

Region: North Coast

County: Tillamook

OWEB Request: $52,087

Total Cost: $65,906

Application Description Sitka Sedge Tidal Wetland Restoration (SSTW) is a significant opportunity to improve tidal wetland function, habitat complexity, species diversity, and water quality in the Sand Lake Estuary (SLE). TEP, in partnership with Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD) and the Nestucca Neskowin Sand Lake Watersheds Council (NNSLWC), has initiated a project to evaluate dike breach and setback flood protection alternatives key to restoration of Beltz Marsh and improve community resilience for Tierra Del Mar (TDM), Oregon. OWEB has already contributed $75,000 in a Technical Assistance grant to fund 30% engineering designs for this project. This request is to bolster Stakeholder Engagement associated with the larger restoration project.

SSTW, is a unincorporated portion of Tillamook County on Oregon's north coast. SSTW comprises the southern extent of SLE nested within the 357-acre Sitka Sedge State Natural Area (SSSNA). The project is located immediately North of the community of TDM, the residents of which understandably have concerns about the hydrologic impact of this project on their community. Transparent and frequent communication with the public stakeholders will be critical in moving the larger restoration project forward smoothly.

Establishing a dike alternative that provides uninhibited tidal connectivity to Beltz Marsh, including comprehensive tidal wetland design, is the first step in a larger project that includes upstream fish passage improvements on 3 salmon streams, floodplain wetland restoration, and large wood placement on Beltz and Reneke Creeks. Additionally, SSTW evaluates setback flood protection alternatives for the Tierra Del Mar community to mitigate impacts of localized flooding, king tides, and sea level rise while making much-needed improvements to local infrastructure. Other project partners include Tillamook County Public Works, USFS, OFD, USFW, ODFW, and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project builds on a previously funded OWEB Technical Assistance project to develop designs for restoring tidal hydrology to the site.
- The applicant has experience with stakeholder engagement in the Sand Lake watershed and has a proven track record of success.

- The project team, including the technical consultant, has established respect within the community and will be an asset to the development of a successful project.
- Restoration of tidal hydrology at the project site will have a significant ecological benefit to the estuary.

Concerns

- A substantial amount of time, resources, and effort has already been invested in the Sitka Sedge Tidal Wetland restoration project. It is unclear whether additional stakeholder engagement is what is necessary to prevent further delays in the restoration project.
- Details on what has been accomplished with the previously funded Technical Assistance grant are not included in the application and it is unclear what progress has been made.
- More information in the application about prior investments in technical engineering and hydrologic modeling, and how the data is being utilized by the project team would clarify the need for the work.
- The plan for stakeholder engagement meetings is not well-described. More details on the specific goals of each meeting and how the project objectives will be accomplished would strengthen the application.
- Utilizing an outside facilitator may be a more effective strategy in building community support.

Concluding Analysis

Restoration at Sitka Sedge State Natural Area remains a high priority in the watershed with the return of tidal hydrology slated to have a myriad of benefits to fish and wildlife species. OWEB has recently funded a Technical Assistance grant for the design work and there has been nearly a decade of public involvement, technical work, and planning efforts funded by several different entities. It is unclear if the proposed stakeholder engagement work described in the application is what is needed to bring the restoration project to fruition. More details on the strategy for engagement and the expected deliverables would have strengthened the application.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
n/a

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
North Coast (Region 1)

Application Number: 223-1014-22601
Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement
Project Name: Salmon Saving Shorebirds
Applicant: Environment for the Americas Inc
Region: North Coast
County: Lincoln
OWEB Request: $58,787
Total Cost: $81,727

Application Description Coastal wetlands, estuaries, and beaches across the Oregon coastline provide important stopover habitats for long-distance migratory and breeding shorebirds. Shorebirds use wetlands and estuaries to refuel and rest during their pole-to-pole migration. According to the 2022 State of the Birds Report, shorebird populations have decreased by 33% in the last 40 years. A third of the species are at risk of losing half of their remaining population over the next 50 years. The main threats to shorebirds in Oregon are disturbance and loss of stopover habitat along coastal beaches and estuaries and the draining of shallow wetlands. Plans to restore coastal watersheds for salmon habitat management are already in action but do not currently incorporate the needs of shorebirds. By working with existing broad community partnerships, we can support not only the protection of salmon but also of shorebirds. The Salmon Saving Shorebirds (SSS) project is a collaboration between Environment for the Americas, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Bird Conservancy, and Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture. SSS will 1) develop shorebird Best Management Practices for restoration in coastal habitats, 2) inform and make recommendations to natural resource specialists, conservationists, regulatory land management agencies, and restoration planners, 3) seek to integrate these recommendations into the actions of salmon conservation efforts, and 4) lead coordination efforts to ensure that important areas for shorebirds are being protected and shorebird monitoring is established at key restoration sites. Through active engagement with watershed restoration stakeholders, the SSS project aims to incorporate practices into current and future salmon restoration plans that will improve shorebird welfare.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The partners on the project bring strong technical expertise to inform the work. Natural resource experts from USFS, USFWS, American Bird Conservancy, and Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture are all involved.
- Shorebird conservation is an important component of estuary restoration projects and a priority in the coastal region.

Concerns

- It is unclear what data was utilized to determine shorebirds are not accounted for in current restoration projects in Oregon. Most estuary restoration projects within the region are not specific to salmon and strive to incorporate habitat benefits for all fish and wildlife. The application does not contain evidence that shorebirds are not considered in project planning on the Oregon coast.
- The need for shorebird conservation within estuarine projects is described in the application needed to improve practices in Oregon, but the description of the practices within the application is not consistent with common practices employed in the project area. It is unclear if this stakeholder engagement work is necessary.
- Capacity of the applicant to implement the project is unknown and details about the stakeholder engagement strategy are unclear.
- The project is not cost-effective for the expected ecological benefit, since there is no evidence that supports the idea that shorebirds are not currently accounted for in restoration practices in the project geography.

Concluding Analysis

Estuary restoration on the Oregon coast is a complex endeavor fueled by the best available science, practitioner experience, and ongoing adaptive management. Projects have certainly benefited salmon by restoring tidal hydrology and habitats critical for fish survival. Past and current estuarine projects funded by OWEB are not species specific and include pertinent information from sea-level rise and landward migration research to achieve restoration on a holistic landscape level, and do not tend to be solely focused on aquatic species. The assumption that the project designers did not consider the needs of shorebirds may not be an accurate assessment, making the need for the stakeholder engagement work unclear. The application would benefit from details describing the justification for the work and the data that was considered to arrive at the conclusion that present day estuarine projects are not inclusive of shorebirds.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
n/a

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Region 2: Southwest

South Coast - Region 2 Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations

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Funding Recommendation

- Staff Recommendation For Funding (SRF)
- Below Funding Line (BFL)

Previous Grants 1998 - Spring 2022

- Land Acquisition
- Restoration
- Region 2 Cities
- Region 2 Streams
- OWEB Region 2 Boundary

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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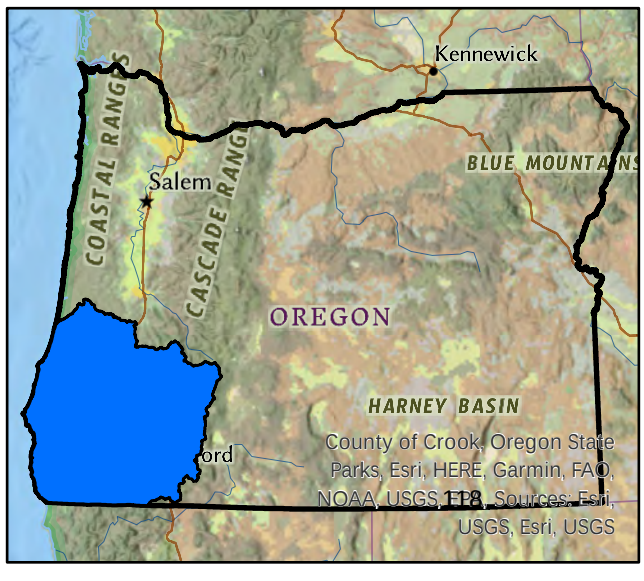


Region 2 - Southwest Oregon Restoration

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-2001	Rogue River WC	South Fork Little Butte Creek River Mile (RM) 4.5, RM 5.5, and RM 6.2 Riparian Rehabilitation	Streamside habitat will be improved in a stream near Lake Creek. Restoration includes reconnecting a historic side-channel, removing invasive weeds, and encouraging native plant establishment.	221,225	Jackson
223-2009	Curry SWCD	Elk River Coho SAP Riparian Restoration	Trees will be planted and invasive weeds removed in the lower watershed, from the head of the tide, upstream on the Elk River.	483,184	Curry
223-2002	WaterWatch of Oregon	Lovelace Dam Removal and Restoration Project	Lovelace Dam on Slate Creek near Grants Pass will be removed. The restoration project will improve access for salmon to over twenty-five miles of spawning and rearing habitat.	159,180	Josephine
223-2007	Coos SWCD	North Bank Working Landscape & Tidal Channel Restoration: Phase II	The installation of a new culvert and Muted Tidal Regulator tide gate will improve salmon access to tidal habitat. Muted Tidal Regulated tide gates stay open on default instead of closed, which allows more time for fish passage.	497,129	Coos
223-2008	Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers	Rock Creek Tributaries Instream Enhancement	Rock Creek, located in the North Fork Umpqua River watershed, will have whole trees and logs placed across one and a half miles of streams. The instream trees and logs will improve fish habitat and trap sediment runoff from the recent Archie Fire.	275,878	Douglas
223-2000	Cascade Pacific RC&D	Benson Creek Wetland Restoration	Land near Lakeside will be restored to a functioning wetland. The project will improve habitat for native salmon, trout, and wildlife species along with stream and lake water quality.	521,943	Coos

223-2005	National Forest Foundation	Copeland Creek Priority Watershed Protection	A section of road along the North Umpqua River in the Copeland Creek Watershed will be hydrologically closed off to remove sediment inputs into the stream.	167,641	Douglas
Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				2,326,180	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-2003	WaterWatch of Oregon	Parrott Creek Barrier Removal Project	308,448	Douglas
223-2006	Illinois Valley SWCD	IV Collective Fuels Reduction	145,913	Josephine

Region 2 - Southwest Oregon Technical Assistance

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-2010	Curry Watersheds Nonprofit	Greene Creek Habitat Restoration Design	Conceptual design alternatives will be developed for channel restoration, floodplain restoration, and livestock management around Greene Creek, a tributary to the lower Sixes River.	74,525	Curry

223-2011	Coos SWCD	Cunningham Creek Fish Passage and Riparian Improvement Technical Assistance	Designs to address fish passage concerns and improve streamside health will be developed for sites along one mile of Cunningham Creek, a tributary of the Coquille River.	74,924	Coos
223-2012	Willamette Partnership	Needs & Gaps Assessment to Update Tenmile Lakes Restoration Plan	Project Partners will create an assessment of Tenmile Lakes to guide future restoration plans.	39,382	Coos
Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				188,831	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-2013	Applegate Partnership Inc.	Williams Creek Floodplain Review	37,758	Josephine

Region 2 - Southwest Oregon Stakeholder Engagement

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					
Total Stakeholder Engagement Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff					

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
None				

Region 2 Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**2,515,011**

Region 1 - 6 Grand Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**13,027,997**

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2000-22482
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Benson Creek Wetland Restoration
Applicant: Cascade Pacific RC&D
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Coos
OWEB Request: $521,943
Total Cost: $821,434

Application Description The Tenmile Lakes, a chain of freshwater lakes on the southern Oregon coast identified as one of the premiere habitats for that supports one of the few fisheries for wild Coho salmon and coastal cutthroat trout. These populations decimated over the past several decades due to loss of habitat and poor water quality from 90% loss of the wetlands that buffer the lake and provide important habitat for juvenile fish. Benson Creek which flows into Coleman Arm, South Tenmile Lake, is the third largest tributary (10.3miles) in the Tenmile Lakes Watershed. The Tenmile Lakes TMDL and Tenmile Lakes Native Fisheries and Water Quality Restoration Plan, identified the Benson Subbasin as a high priority for wetland restoration. Benson Creek is an example of a managed stream which has been channelized and the wetlands removed for agricultural use. Benson Creek is confined to its channel for a longer period of time and transports more sediment to the lakes than do streams with improved connectivity to adjoining wetlands. Restoring a permanent wetland in this Subbasin will dramatically improve the water quality as well as fish and wildlife habitat in the Benson Creek Subbasin. With our Project Partners that include Coos County, Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw (CTCLUSI), ODFW, ODEQ, Porior Engineering, and Lone Rock Timber, The Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership (TLBP) is going to restore 16 acres of agricultural land to a functioning wetland, engineered and permitted to improve habitat for native fish and wildlife species while also improving stream and lake water quality. Construction of the wetland will be completed by September 2023. Wetland Plantings will take place November through March of 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. This project is shovel ready with needed OWEB funding to be matched with secured ODEQ and ODFW grant funding and in-kind donations for project management, construction, supplies, and administration.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project addresses sediment and nutrient loads issues identified in the Tenmile Lakes Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study and associated Tenmile Lakes Water Quality Management Plans.
- The Tenmile Lakes system has been identified as one of the premier habitats that support cutthroat and ESA- listed coho. Habitat degradation and poor water quality due to the loss of wetlands has been a major factor in population decline of these fish.
- The TMDL identifies the project location as a high priority for restoration.

- A detailed planting plan for the site is provided in the application that includes opportunities for tribes to re-establish first food plant species.
- The signed agreement with the landowner is for 25 years, demonstrating a long-term commitment to the project.
- The project is ready for implementation with $2.9 million in additional funding secured for the this and another related wetland restoration project. The OWEB funding will allow the project to be fully implemented.
- A diversity of partners supports the project, including Coos County, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Environmental Quality, Porior Engineering, and Lone Rock Timber. A long-term goal is to give CTCLUSI a leadership role in future management of restoration and monitoring efforts.

Concerns

- The design in the application has a straight channel construction that would lack the configuration of a more natural meandering channel network. The design engineer clarified during the site visit that due to the low stream gradient, sinuosity will be added based on-site conditions and elevation measures during construction.
- There may be a missed opportunity for the planting approach to achieve the greatest ecological uplift; the applicant is encouraged to have the local CREP technician review plans for the planting density, species composition, and plant protection strategies.

Concluding Analysis

Sixteen acres of agricultural land will be restored to a functioning wetland, improving water quality and habitat for native fish and wildlife species. Wetland ecosystems are now exceedingly rare in the Tenmile watershed with less than 1% remaining. Restoring wetland habitat in places like Benson Creek is a high priority for achieving TMDL and Watershed Restoration plan goals in Tenmile basin.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

6 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount

$521,943

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2001-22508

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: South Fork Little Butte Creek River Mile (RM) 4.5, RM 5.5, and RM 6.2 Riparian Rehabilitation

Applicant: Rogue River WC

Region: Southwest Oregon

County: Jackson

OWEB Request: $221,225

Total Cost: $414,424

Application Description The project at South Fork Little Butte Creek River Mile (RM) 4.5, RM 5.5, and RM 6.2 is Phase 4 of multi-year actions throughout the sub- basin. With a drainage area of 140 square miles, South Fork joins North Fork near the town of Lake Creek to form Little Butte Creek, which flows into the Rogue River at Eagle Point. South Fork has degraded water quality, stream processes, and aquatic and terrestrial habitats that negatively affect ecosystems. Riparian forests are reduced, grazed, and infiltrated with noxious weeds, unimpeded livestock access to the creek increases sedimentation and nutrient loading, simplified channels and large wood removal eliminate channel complexity, aquatic habitat, and floodplain interactions, and irrigation practices decrease water quantity. These cumulative impacts also elevate summer water temperatures, threatening cold water fish populations. We propose a riparian rehabilitation ecological restoration action on 46.9 acres to recover the native plant community through noxious weed control, natural recruitment of native species, and native nursery stock planting, covering 2.7 miles of creek, including a reactivated 0.76 miles of winter secondary channel. Part of the 46.9 acres is to continue rehabilitating 35.1 acres of floodplain at RM 6.2, which involves converting 12.7 acres of historic pasture into riparian forest. These actions will restore critical stream processes and improve water quality and habitat conditions by increasing floodplain function. Public awareness is also an essential component to promote restoration efforts and generate interest through media outlets and project tours. The project area is identified in the Upper Rogue Coho Salmon Strategic Action Plan, developed with partners to address limiting factors and stressors. This project is in partnership with private landowners, Wild Salmon Center/ NOAA Restoration Center, and Bureau of Land Management.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly stated objectives and detailed actions describing how the objectives will be met to address the watershed problem.
- The videos links included in the application provides a visual explanation of the restoration planned for South Fork Little Butte Creek, why the proposed actions are needed, and the locations for the proposed work.
- The project will be highly visible to the public during implementation because it is in close proximity to a main road. The applicant uses an aggressive outreach campaign, which includes social media platforms.

- The native vegetation that will be released by removing blackberry will not require watering, which will be cost effective in a very dry area.
- The applicant has a proven track record implementing similar projects and has clearly put in a lot of groundwork to establish a partnership with the landowners.
- The project approach builds off lessons learned from previous riparian vegetation project phases by encouraging native species to regenerate from seed banks that have been suppressed by invasive blackberries. This has resulted in costs savings over traditional approaches and has proved to be very effective.
- South Fork Little Butte Creek River has been simplified and impacted by land management resulting in degraded habitat and impaired water quality. The system supports steelhead, chinook, cutthroat, Pacific lamprey, and ESA-listed coho. Rehabilitating the riparian forest will address critical limiting factors impacting these species and their habitats.

Concerns

- The budget includes detail from the ongoing project phases that are outside the currently proposed phase of restoration. While this helps capture the complete restoration picture, costs specific to the proposed restoration actions are unclear.

Concluding Analysis

A riparian rehabilitation restoration strategy will be completed on almost 47 acres over nearly 3 miles on South Fork Little Butte Creek River to recover the native plant community through noxious weed control, natural recruitment of native species, and native nursery stock planting. The project will build on previous restoration phases, which will expand the positive cumulative impacts to the stream's health. The project is technically sound and has a high likelihood of achieving its objectives.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount
$221,225

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$221,225

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2002-22516
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Lovelace Dam Removal and Restoration Project
Applicant: WaterWatch of Oregon
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Josephine
OWEB Request: $159,180
Total Cost: $355,691

Application Description 1) This project is located on private property near Wilderville, in Josephine County, on Slate Creek, within the Applegate River subbasin of the Rogue River Basin.

2) One stream-spanning concrete dam blocks or impedes adult and juvenile fish passage to over 25 miles of spawning habitat. Impacted species include Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, summer and winter Steelhead, Pacific Lamprey, Cutthroat Trout, and Suckers. Lovelace Dam on Slate Creek is ranked in Group 2 of ODFW's 2019 Statewide Fish Passage Priority List. Lovelace Dam serves no water supply, flood control, or hydropower purpose and does not comply with NOAA and ODFW fish passage criteria. This project complements salmon restoration efforts ongoing throughout the Rogue Basin.

3) This project would remove the dam noted above and significantly improve access to over 25 miles of spawning and rearing habitat.

4) WaterWatch's project partners include the landowner, ODFW, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, BLM, Rogue River Watershed Council, River Design Group, and Rogue Basin Partnership.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly stated objectives and detailed actions describing how the objectives will be met.
- The design is complete, and the permitting process is on schedule for implementation during the 2023 in water work window.
- The dam proposed for removal is ranked number 2 in the Rogue basin by the ODFW statewide priority list.
- The project budget is reflective of similar dam removal projects and costs are reasonable for the work proposed.
- The applicant has experience with removing dams in the Rogue River region and has assembled an experienced team to design and implement the removal of Lovelace Dam.
- Appropriate partners necessary for successful dam removal are engaged in the project, including the landowner, ODFW, USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, BLM, Rogue River Watershed Council, River Design Group, and Rogue Basin Partnership.

- The stream has high intrinsic potential habitat for ESA-listed fish. Removing Lovelace Dam implements recommendations from the coho recovery plan by addressing fish passage, a key limiting factor for coho populations.

Concerns

- Information on the planting plan to revegetate areas disturbed by construction would be helpful for understanding how the project approach will address impacts to the site.

Concluding Analysis

Removing Lovelace Dam will improve access to over 25 miles of spawning and rearing habitat for multiple species, including chinook, ESA-listed coho, winter steelhead, cutthroat, and lamprey. The project is likely to succeed in improving habitat and water quality conditions on Slate Creek at a reasonable cost.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
3 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount
$159,180

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$159,180

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2003-22520
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Parrott Creek Barrier Removal Project
Applicant: WaterWatch of Oregon
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Douglas
OWEB Request: $308,448
Total Cost: $404,448

Application Description 1) This project is located on private property in Roseburg, in Douglas County, on Parrott Creek, within the South Umpqua River subbasin of the Umpqua River Basin.

2) One stream-spanning concrete dam and two culverts block adult and juvenile fish passage to 2 miles of spawning habitat. Impacted species include winter steelhead and Cutthroat Trout. Parrott Creek Dam serves no water supply, flood control, or hydropower purpose and does not comply with NOAA and ODFW fish passage criteria. This project complements salmon restoration efforts ongoing throughout the Rogue Basin.

3) This project would remove the dam noted above, modify the 2 existing culverts to improve fish passage, and significantly improve access to 2 miles of spawning and rearing habitat.

4) WaterWatch's project partners include the landowner, ODFW, USFWS, and River Design Group.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Removing the dam at Parrot Creek's confluence with the South Umpqua River and modifying culverts directly upstream will restore passage for winter steelhead, cutthroat trout, ESA-listed coho, and lamprey to two miles of spawning habitat.
- The landowner is engaged in project design and committed to the success of the project as evidenced through his participation at the project site visit.
- The applicant has a great deal of dam removal experience and the capacity to see the project successfully through completion.
- The applicant has engaged an experienced and qualified contractor to develop the design and oversee the dam removal.
- The approach for removing the dam and modifying the two existing culverts is reasonable for the location at the confluence of Parrott Creek with the South Umpqua River.

Concerns

- The watershed above the culvert covers approximately two square miles and is urbanized with many road crossings. The application lacks information describing the water quality and habitat conditions

upstream of the project site. Additionally, there is no formal assessment of barriers located above the project site that could provide information about how much habitat will be made available from the proposed restoration.

- The application provides a design overview that lack details needed to understand the project and evaluate whether the methods are technically sound and likely to succeed. The more in-depth design detail provided during the review team site visit should be incorporated into any future applications.
- The budget has costs grouped into lump sums. Budget details broken into the individual tasks and associated costs would be helpful to better understand whether costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed project.
- The project cost is high for the unknown quantified habitat benefit compared to similar projects.
- The application lacks information describing a planting plan.
- It is unclear from the application whether all appropriate partners necessary to make this urban project successful, such as the railroad and City of Roseburg, are involved in the project.

Concluding Analysis

Restoring fish passage on Parrott Creek by removing man-made barriers is important for improving native fish access to spawning habitat. Without information describing watershed conditions above the project site, the ecological benefit of the project is unknown.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2005-22534
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Copeland Creek Priority Watershed Protection
Applicant: National Forest Foundation
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Douglas
OWEB Request: $167,641
Total Cost: $453,727

Application Description The National Forest Foundation (NFF) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Umpqua National Forest are working together to protect water quality and aquatic habitat in the Copeland Creek Priority Watershed and North Umpqua River. Copeland Creek provides critical habitat to Oregon Coast coho salmon (federally threatened), spring Chinook (state sensitive species), summer steelhead (federal species of concern), winter steelhead, cutthroat trout, Pacific lamprey (federal species of concern), and other native fish and aquatic species. The North Umpqua provides drinking water to Glide, Roseburg, and many other smaller drinking water providers and rural residents. Copeland Creek Watershed contains 87 miles of forest road which amounts to a road density of 2.41 miles per square mile. Approximately 12% of the watershed is occupied by roads, and 22 miles of roads are within Riparian Reserves. Many of these aging roads and culverts are at significant risk of failure. If road and culvert failure occur, large amounts of sediment could enter Copeland Creek and the North Umpqua resulting in clogged spawning gravels and increased turbidity. This would negatively impact threatened and sensitive fish species as well as human communities. To protect critical fish habitat and source water, the NFF and the USFS will hydrologically store and close 12.28 miles of road in Copeland Creek Watershed by removing 27 culverts and associated fill, installing water bars and armored stream crossings, partially recontouring problematic road sections, restoring proper drainage, barricading roads with berms, and seeding disturbed areas with native grasses and forbs. This work will be implemented in two phases and builds upon a first phase of the project in which project partners decommissioned 1.70 miles of Copeland Creek Road. NFF will lead contracting and community engagement; the USFS will lead design and project inspection. The two partners will work collaboratively to oversee project implementation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposed restoration builds on a previous project phase where 1.7 miles of roads in the upper Copeland Creek watershed were decommissioned.
- The Copeland Creek watershed is a United States Forest Service priority for restoring forest health to build wildfire resiliency and habitat restoration for cutthroat and lamprey.
- ESA-listed coho use the lower 1.5 miles of the system and will benefit from any water quality benefits that occur upstream.

- The project objectives are consistent with Department of Environmental Quality's water quality plan for the basin.
- The applicant takes a hands-on approach to implement road decommissioning projects by assigning a project manager that is on site during implementation to help guide project activities and ensure there are no miscommunications about the design.
- The approach to treating and placing the removed fill material from the decommissioned roads offsite will reduce the potential for it re-entering the stream system and causing impacts to the project site or downstream locations.
- The application includes a description of four alternative design approaches that were evaluated and an explanation for how the selected alternative was chosen.
- The costs are reasonable for the project approach and the expected ecological benefit.
- The budget is detailed and clearly divides out the current project phase.
- The before and after photos provided in the application clearly illustrated how wildlife habitat will be improved.

Concerns

- No significant concerns identified.

Concluding Analysis

Decommissioning roads and removing stream crossings and the associated road fill will protect aquatic habitat and drinking water sources by decreasing sediment loading in Copeland Creek and the North Umpqua River. The project location is above areas of fish usage which are restricted by natural barriers and natural water chemistry higher in the system. The project will provide secondary benefits for ESA-listed fish located downstream of the project site by improving water quality and preventing the risk of sediment loading events that can impact spawning gravels. The project is likely to succeed in improving hydrologic function in the upper reaches of Copeland Creek at a reasonable cost.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
7 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount
$167,641

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2006-22565
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: IV Collective Fuels Reduction
Applicant: Illinois Valley SWCD
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Josephine
OWEB Request: $145,913
Total Cost: $484,636

Application Description 1) Location: This project, located within the Illinois Valley (IV) in Josephine County, proposes 332 acres of fuels reduction activities on high-priority private lands currently at high-risk for catastrophic fire. Project work will occur on strategic properties within Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) regions immediately east of Selma, south and east of Cave Junction, south of O'Brien, and within the triangle of Cave Junction, O'Brien and Takilma. All work is within the project area of the applicants current/open stakeholder engagement program agreement with OWEB: The Illinois Valley Collective Mobilization for Fire and Fish Project (IVCMFFP, OWEB proj#221-2058).

2) Need: The threat of severe fire due to an overly dense and dry-forest with associated risks to human and natural resources, in the context of rapidly changing climate conditions in an extremely unique salmon stronghold, drives this project. The applicant's IVCMFFP and IVFROG's Takilma Phase 1 NRCS/ODF CIS assistance (TA & FA) projects are generating considerable landowner activity in the Takilma and O'Brien areas directly related this proposal.

3) Work: Ecological surface and ladder (S&L) restoration treatments will be implemented on 332 acres of private property in 10 project areas at different treatment levels (L1-L3). OWEB funds are proposed to fund treatments on 100 acres of the 332 total project acres as follows:
L2 10 acres (Takilma, OR)
L2 5 acres (Cave Junction, OR)
L1 30 acres (Takilma, OR)
L2 5 acres (Takilma, OR)
L1 20 acres (Takilma, OR)
L2 10 acres (Selma, OR)
L2 5 acres (Cave Junction, OR)
L2 5 acres (Cave Junction, OR)
L2 5 acres (Holland, OR)
L3 5 acres (Holland, OR)

4) Project Partners: Key members of the IVCMFFP's fire cohort, the Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group (IVFROG), and numerous committed landowners are also core partners of this proposal. Please refer to the "Partners" attachment in the upload section for a

full list of project partners.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Fuel reduction treatments will be completed on 100 acres of privately owned forested properties following site specific prescriptions.
- The project is the result of a concentrated community engagement and awareness effort that was funded through an OWEB Stakeholder Engagement grant. The landowners are engaged and highly motivated to thin overly dense forests after the Slater Fire. Landowner and project partner commitments are evident through secured match contributions and letters of support in the application.
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service and Oregon Department of Forestry are engaged in the project by providing critical technical assistance and project guidance support.

Concerns

- The connection between the proposed actions for preventing catastrophic wildfire and restoring watershed functions is unclear in the proposal. Additional information explaining the quantified watershed benefits to wildlife and aquatic habitats as well as water quality and quantity expected from the proposed treatments would be helpful for understanding the project cost-benefit.
- There is no long-term plan described in the proposal for maintaining the properties after the treatments, it is unclear what strategies will be used to maintain the restoration investment.
- The treatments proposed are not likely to stop catastrophic fire for individual properties and it was not clear what the long-term benefits to watershed health would be.
- Including additional habitat expertise on the technical planning team, such as a wildlife and fisheries biologists, could provide an opportunity to include aquatic and terrestrial habitat considerations into the forest treatment approach. The Rogue Forest Collaborative would be a useful resource for developing a comprehensive approach to improving forest health that integrates watershed health outcomes.

Concluding Analysis

Strategically thinning overly dense forests will reduce fuels within the Wildland Urban Interface in the Illinois Valley. The proposed treatments focus more on the human factor and protecting properties and it is unclear from the application how watershed processes or the health of terrestrial and aquatic habitats will benefit from the project.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2007-22589

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: North Bank Working Landscape & Tidal Channel Restoration: Phase II

Applicant: Coos SWCD

Region: Southwest Oregon

County: Coos

OWEB Request: $497,129

Total Cost: $1,524,941

Application Description

The North Bank Working Landscapes (NBWL) project encompasses 32.87 acres of pasture located at River Mile (RM) 7.5 on the Coquille River, near Bandon, Coos County. The site was historically tidal saltmarsh prairie (Benner, 1992). Diking and draining to convert the site for agricultural use occurred in the early 1900s through construction of a 0.5mi berm along the river, and installation of linear drainage channel network with 1ft diameter culvert and tide gate. Tidal influence in channels is near zero as the single tide gate servicing the property is a top-hinged “flapper” gate. The dike has suffered from erosion in multiple locations. Site conditions currently result in poor water quality, little or no fish access to channels, and both ecological and agricultural productivity has been reduced. OWEB awarded TA funds facilitated development of a fully refined restoration proposal for this site. Restoration project actions include installation of a new culvert and Muted Tidal Regulator (MTR) tide gate to restore and maximize fish passage; reconstruction of 4,466 ft of sinuous, on-grade, tidal channel network to provide greatly improved tidal floodplain habitat and hay production; riparian fencing along both sides of the primary reconstructed channel; re-establishment of native riparian vegetation along the banks of the primary channel for direct improvements to water quality over current conditions; installation of large woody debris to increase hiding cover and complexity; and repair to damaged segments of the dike. This project is led by Coos SWCD in partnership with the Stalley/Young families and the ODFW and invaluable technical contributions from the Coquille Indian Tribe. In 2022 due to inflationary issues the project was partitioned into two Phases. Phase I actions were confined to installation of the culvert, tidegate, and MTR, all completed in summer 2022. Phase II includes the majority proportion of project components, which are slated for 2023.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly stated objectives and detailed actions describing how the objectives will be met, demonstrating a well thought out project.
- Contingencies tied to different funding levels are outlined in the application that explain how the applicant plans to prioritize project actions if there is reduced funding secured and how different funding levels will impact ecological outcomes.
- The project builds on phase one work, which focused on tide gate installation and addressing a failing levee.

- The applicant is experienced working in tidally influenced agricultural areas and has adapted lessons learned from earlier efforts into the project development.
- Appropriate partners are engaged in the project.
- Tidally influenced habitat will be restored on 33 acres, which will address a critical habitat limiting factor for ESA-listed coho by creating winter rearing opportunities. The proposed actions are consistent with recommendations in the coho recovery plans.
- The riparian area adjacent to the Coquille River will be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) as a wildlife buffer.
- The project will build on similar restoration efforts on properties with tidally influenced habitat areas both below and upstream of the project site.
- Riparian buffers will be planted on both sides of the main constructed channels and the buffer width is likely to be sufficient to achieve the riparian habitat objectives.
- The landowners are engaged and committed to the project, which is demonstrated by their active engagement in the project development and implementation.

Concerns

- The application lacks information about fencing treatments for the pond areas that function as hydrologic bulbs to help manage water levels; however, the applicant clarified during the site that the ponds will be fenced off to exclude livestock.
- Three strand barbed wire will be used for fencing along the tidal channels to exclude livestock. Selecting a more wildlife-friendly fencing design would facilitate passage of wildlife moving through the wildlife buffer that will be established through CREP.

Concluding Analysis

Restoring historic tidal salt marsh prairie is important to the recovery of critical habitats supporting ESA-listed coho. Implementing this second phase of a two-phased project planned for 33 acres on the Coquille River will provide the complete ecological uplift to coho refugia and overwinter rearing habitat expected from the long-term, phased investment at the project site.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

4 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount

$497,129

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$497,129

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2008-22598
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Rock Creek Tributaries Instream Enhancement
Applicant: Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Douglas
OWEB Request: $275,878
Total Cost: $410,878

Application Description The catastrophic Archie Creek Fire began in September 2020 and severely burned 60% of the Rock Creek Watershed. Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers (PUR) and Roseburg Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are working together to implement a four-phase project to recover fish habitat in Rock Creek. The third phase of work further expands our restoration efforts to three Rock Creek tributaries: North Fork East Fork, Wapiti, and Upper North Fork East Fork Rock Creek. These stream reaches are all within the Archie Creek fire area and have experienced 80-100% riparian tree mortality. BLM Aquatic Staff have identified fire-killed roadside hazard and riparian trees to utilize for stream restoration in the above reaches. The urgency of this project is great because if the riparian hazard trees are not utilized for restoration in the next two years, then they will be felled and sold through Reciprocal Right-of-Way agreements, or the trees will rot and be unusable for instream habitat recovery. The first two phases of work occurred in 2021 and 2022 and resulted in the placement of 1,400 trees into 6.1 miles of mainstem Rock Creek, 1.9 miles of new side channel habitat restored and reconnected, 51 acres of floodplain habitat restored, 18 large, legacy logs jams created and 87 complex pools excavated. The Phase III project will result in the placement of 150 trees and logs into 30 sites across 1.5 miles of tributary streams and is planned for implementation in 2023. BLM is donating staff time, trees and logs to the project, ODFW is donating staff time and Western Oregon RAC funds have been sought as cash match.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project approach designed for the stream size and expected higher sediment transport is technically sound and has a strong likelihood of success.
- The project is designed and permitted, making it ready for implementation during the 2023 instream work window.
- The project is in direct response to severe impacts to the watershed from the Archie Fire. Instream wood placement will be designed to capture sediment coming from the post-fire areas and locations with salvage logging activities.
- The proposed actions will restore instream habitat conditions necessary to support ESA-listed coho, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and lamprey.

- The project is timely with the large amount of fire killed trees immediately available for placement. Fire killed logs will be utilized that need to be placed instream within the next couple of years or they will lose their usefulness due to deterioration. Placing these logs in a wetted environment will arrest this degradation while providing long-term instream habitat.
- The design approach will incorporate the entire tree, including the rootwad, into the instream habitat structures.
- The project builds directly on previous instream and channel habitat restoration work, expanding ecological uplift to other stream reaches.
- A qualified design and implementation team will provide project oversight.

Concerns

- No significant concerns identified.

Concluding Analysis

The Rock Creek system suffered a watershed level catastrophic fire that destroyed 85%-95% of the riparian trees and burned most of the upland areas as well. A huge influx of large wood and sediment will likely move into the project reach because the upstream area impacted by the fire has potential for contributing significant material load into the Rock Creek system during a storm event. Without the proposed placement of instream wood structures in advance of these events, this material load could further destabilize the stream system and allow material to move out of the stream instead of holding it in place to enhance fish habitat. This timely project will restore instream habitat and improve stream function over a one-and-a-half-mile section of stream, expanding on work accomplished last year.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
5 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount
$275,878

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$275,878

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2009-22620
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Elk River Coho SAP Riparian Restoration
Applicant: Curry SWCD
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Curry
OWEB Request: $483,184
Total Cost: $1,131,344

Application Description This project is located in the Elk River Watershed, which is located on the southern Oregon coast to the north of the town of Port Orford. Project activities will take place in the lower watershed, from the head of tide upstream 4.22 miles on the Elk River mainstem, and on tributary channels that cross the Elk River floodplain within the project reach. The project will restore 181.74 acres of self-sustaining, native riparian forest, which are needed to address key limiting factors that threaten the existence of Coho salmon and the viability of wild fall Chinook in the watershed. To restore riparian habitat, we will replace stands of contiguous mature gorse and other invasive species with a diverse assemblage of native riparian conifers, hardwood trees, and shrubs; and we will maintain those seedlings until they are Free-to-Grow. This project is part of Phase II Implementation of the Elk River Coho Recovery Strategic Action Plan (SAP). Other SAP partners include the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Wild Salmon Center, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries, the Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, and the Wild Rivers Land Trust.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project team has experience successfully implementing similar projects and has established a working relationship with the landowners.
- Native riparian forest will be restored across 182 acres on Elk Creek, which will address priority habitat limiting factors to ESA-listed coho and chinook recovery, including loss of instream complexity and elevated summer stream temperatures.
- The project will implement site specific actions identified in the Elk River Coho Strategic Action Plan.
- The application presented a well thought out and detailed planting approach. There are experienced crews in place for installing the plantings and the applicant is coordinating with local nurseries to secure disease resistant Port Orford cedar.
- The approach to treating invasive plant species, such as gorse, is based on lessons learned from previous projects that had positive results in difficult treatment areas.
- The fence setbacks will provide a generous buffer that is likely to allow the necessary room for functioning riparian areas to become established. There are long-term plant establishment plans in place for the planting.

Concerns

- Plans for long-term fencing maintenance are unclear in the application; however, the applicant clarified during the site visit that they will hold primary responsibility.
- Utilizing tree protectors within the average high-water mark may result in loss during higher flows.
- More detail on how the sites will be incorporated into long-term effectiveness monitoring would be helpful for understanding how the applicant will determine completed restoration is contributing to the overall success of the Coho Strategic Action Plan.

Concluding Analysis

Native riparian forest will be reestablished on approximately 182 acres in the Elk Creek watershed. High functioning riparian habitat provides multiple ecosystem functions for the aquatic environment, including stream shading, reduced bank erosion, future large wood recruitment for instream habitat complexity, and flood attenuation. The project is likely to succeed in achieving restoration objectives as a result of a technically sound approach and commitments to long-term maintenance.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 7

Review Team Recommended Amount
$483,184

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$483,184

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2010-22551
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Greene Creek Habitat Restoration Design
Applicant: Curry Watersheds Nonprofit
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Curry
OWEB Request: $74,525
Total Cost: $94,125

Application Description The proposed project site is located on a floodplain on the north side of the lower Sixes River in Curry County, on a privately-owned cattle ranch. Fish rearing habitat is naturally limited in the Sixes River watershed, and nearly all of the bottomland habitat that naturally existed in the lower Sixes watershed was converted to farmland and pasture because it was the most fertile and accessible land. Currently, approximately 45 acres of Greene Creek and adjacent low gradient bottomland are fenced out from cattle and represent under-functioning, potential rearing and wetland habitat. Meanwhile, nearly 15 acres within cattle rotation are seasonally inundated and contribute to degraded water quality and management challenges. The goal of this project is to collaboratively develop conceptual restoration design alternatives for channel and floodplain restoration and livestock management in and around Greene Creek. Alternative scenarios will allow CWP, subject-matter experts, and the landowners to evaluate short-term effects on site hydraulics (water depths, velocities, and erosional forces) to create more rearing habitat, improve water quality through surface water retention and surface/groundwater interaction, and improve pasture management. Selection of a preferred alternative will be taken to the approximate 60% level of design. Project partners include the Curry Watersheds Partnership (CWP; including the South Coast Watershed Council, Lower Rogue Watershed Council, and the Curry SWCD), the landowners and the ranch manager, USGS, ODFW, BLM, USFS, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposal is comprehensive and site selection is based on pre-project monitoring data including water level and fish use sampling. The objectives are appropriate for developing conceptual design alternatives for stream channel and floodplain restoration in and around Greene Creek.
- The resulting restoration work will benefit habitats important for Chinook, ESA-listed coho, steelhead, and lamprey.
- The applicant is working with a qualified engineering firm to collect data.
- An array of project partners is engaged in the project, including the Coquille Indian Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. The applicant has experience in collecting baseline water quality and quantity data necessary for a thorough and impactful project.

- The array of partners assembled for the project demonstrates the applicant's ability to collaboratively collect baseline water quality and quantity data necessary for a thorough and impactful project.
- The design approach considers future sea level rise.

Concerns

- The application lacks letters of support describing partner commitments, which would provide helpful information about the level of priority agencies have placed on the project.

Concluding Analysis

The future restoration project will compliment similar restoration activities completed in the lower Sixes River area. The proposed technical assistance is likely to succeed in addressing critical habitat limiting factors for ESA-listed coho by opening rearing habitat and improving water quality on Greene Creek.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount
$74,525

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$74,525

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2011-22585

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Cunningham Creek Fish Passage and Riparian Improvement Technical Assistance

Applicant: Coos SWCD

Region: Southwest Oregon

County: Coos

OWEB Request: $74,924

Total Cost: $167,023

Application Description The Cunningham Creek Fish Passage and Riparian Improvement Project will improve fish access to 2.2 miles of coho salmon habitat and 2.7 miles of winter steelhead habitat and improve riparian habitat along 1 mile of Cunningham Creek, a tributary of the Coquille River in Coos County, OR. Currently, fish passage is partially impeded by two undersized culverts. One culvert that poses a partial fish barrier is a concrete box culvert underneath a county road. This culvert has a 2ft perch and spills onto a concrete slab. Another culvert is an old boiler that has been repurposed as a culvert on a farm road. The culvert is undersized and has an 18in perch at the outflow during summer low flows. The stream has been eroding underneath and around the culvert. Both culverts are narrower than the active channel of Cunningham Creek, concentrating the flow of water. Coho salmon are present above both culverts, although the culverts do not meet fish passage guidelines and are likely complete barriers to juvenile salmonids, partial barriers to adult salmonids, and complete barriers to Pacific lamprey. The highest quality spawning habitat on Cunningham Creek is upstream of the culverts. Currently, riparian condition in the floodplain valley of Cunningham Creek is poor, with significant shade only present in the uplands. The Coos Soil and Water Conservation District (Coos SWCD) proposes to contract the design of new stream crossings to address the fish passage issue in Cunningham Creek. Coos SWCD will also design a riparian restoration plan to remove invasive vegetation and plant native trees along 1 mile of Cunningham Creek. Partners of Coos SWCD include Leatherman Land and Timber Company, the Coos County Public Works Department, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The photos provided in the application are helpful for supporting the application narrative and demonstrating the need for the proposed technical assistance.
- The applicant successfully incorporates restoration opportunities on public and private lands by designing a road crossing with the county to address fish passage and working with a landowner to plan voluntary conservation actions that will improve water quality by excluding livestock from the stream and replant the riparian area.
- The applicant will leverage partner experience and capacity by engaging the county to design the road crossing while the applicant will work with the landowner on a restoration plan for the riparian area.

- Fencing and riparian plantings will be incorporated into the project design and will be vital for addressing factors, such as E. coli and reduced dissolved oxygen, impairing water quality in Cunningham Creek.
- The project will address fish passage, stream complexity, and water quality, which are primary and secondary limiting factors for ESA-listed coho.
- The landowner is engaged in the project development.
- Archaeological surveys will be conducted in cooperation with the local tribes.
- Project partners have local experience in the Coquille watershed area and a proven track record with bringing projects through the design phase and into implementation.

Concerns

- It is not clear how the project deliverables will be impacted if some of the match funding is not secured.
- The application lacks information indicating a range of design alternatives will be considered. For example, it is not clear why large wood is not incorporated into the design approach to improve stream complexity.

Concluding Analysis

Cunningham Creek is a priority location for restoration because it provides critical habitat for ESA-listed coho as well as steelhead and lamprey. The proposed project is likely to succeed in leading to restoration that will improve fish access to almost three miles of salmon and steelhead habitat and improve riparian habitat along one mile of this tributary to the Coquille River.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

2 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount

$74,924

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$74,924

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2012-22606
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Needs & Gaps Assessment to Update Tenmile Lakes Restoration Plan
Applicant: Willamette Partnership
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Coos
OWEB Request: $39,382
Total Cost: $49,384

Application Description Location: The Tenmile Lakes basin (HUC 1710030111) is located on the Oregon South Coast between the Umpqua River and Coos Bay and encompasses approximately 98 square miles. There are ten named lakes within the watershed with a combined surface area of 4.7 square miles. The City of Lakeside is adjacent to North Tenmile Lake. The watershed spans Coos and Douglas Counties.

Project Need: The Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership (TLBP) has been convening the Tenmile Lakes watershed group for several years with the goal of restoring water quality in this premiere Coho fisheries habit. The Partnership completed the Tenmile Lakes Native Fisheries and Water Quality Restoration Plan (Plan). However, the Plan lacks key components to facilitate coordinated implementation including governance and operationalization documentation. These gaps have been identified by funders as key barriers to the watershed group securing the funding needed to implement the Plan. The Plan therefore needs to be updated to facilitate coordinated implementation among partners and to secure multi-year funding from state and federal grant programs.

Proposed Work: Willamette Partnership will perform a Needs & Gaps Assessment (Assessment) of the current Plan to identify issues and areas for improvement of the current Plan and produce recommendations to follow when updating the Plan. A Partnership TA grant application will be submitted to fund the Plan Update.

Project Partners: Applicant is Willamette Partnership. The following watershed group partners will lead the Plan's implementation and will participate in interviews and meetings as needed to perform the Assessment: Coos County, City of Lakeside, CTCLUSI, and Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership. Additional watershed group partners to participate in meetings to inform the Assessment include OR DSL, OR DFW, OR DEQ, Wild Rivers Land Trust, Tenmile Lake Association, and Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application clearly presents the rationale for and importance of conducting a needs and gaps assessment for the Tenmile Lakes Restoration Plan to update the plan. This will lead to securing funding to address high priority issues such as water quality and restoring instream habitat for native coho salmon, steelhead, pacific lamprey, and cutthroat trout.
- The application captures the need for this project. The approach to developing capacity in the watershed is thoughtful and well described. The needs and gaps assessment will lead to capacity for restoration by providing partners direction for prioritizing and implementing their watershed restoration and monitoring efforts.
- There is a clear plan for managing and sharing data.
- An appropriate array of partners is involved in the effort that are needed to achieve the project objectives. The work will build on decades of successful collaboration on restoration and monitoring activities.
- The applicant has worked effectively with other watershed restoration partnerships to build capacity through planning prioritized restoration strategies such as the Tenmile Lakes Native Fisheries and Water Quality Restoration Plan.

Concerns

- The budget has costs grouped into lump sums. Budget details broken into individual tasks and associated costs would be helpful to better understand whether the costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed technical assistance.

Concluding Analysis

The existing Tenmile Lakes Native Fisheries and Water Quality Restoration Plan has become outdated and lacks key components and information needed to support the current strategic, governance, and operational needs of the partners. A needs and gaps assessment will be completed to guide an update to this plan. The assessment will identify local capacity constraints and issues in the current plan that are barriers to its implementation and the restoration of the Tenmile Lakes watershed.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
3 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount
$39,382

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$39,382

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Southwest Oregon (Region 2)

Application Number: 223-2013-22608
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Williams Creek Floodplain Review
Applicant: Applegate Partnership, Inc.
Region: Southwest Oregon
County: Josephine
OWEB Request: $37,758
Total Cost: $53,820

Application Description

Williams Creek, a major tributary to the Applegate River is within the FEMA Flood Hazard Zone. We have recently prepared and received grants through the OWEB Small Grant Program to complete instream habitat restoration work but were surprised when Josephine County started a new policy to require a floodplain "no-rise" for all projects that involve riparian and instream work for salmon habitat. As a result, we are required to obtain an engineering report that reviews and resolves the "no-rise" FEMA requirements. We are applying for Technical Assistance to hire an engineering group that can survey and calculate the work needed to provide this requirement. We seek this funding to complete a study of the mapped FEMA Flood Hazard Zone area on Williams Creek to continue our work in developing instream salmon habitat projects and riparian restoration projects. This will provide us with an engineering report that will help us continue developing broad restoration project across Williams Creek. We will work with Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and local landowners to develop these projects.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Floodplain restoration is important for ESA-listed coho recovery efforts in the Williams Creek watershed. The project focuses on a reach of Williams Creek where ESA-listed coho, steelhead, lamprey, and chinook will all benefit from habitat restoration.
- Engineering analysis for the mapped FEMA Floodplain Hazard Zone permitting requirements will be completed, which can be very time consuming and costly. Getting ahead of the curve to secure permits for stream and riparian restoration implementation is important, especially when working with private landowners who like to see on-the-ground project results as soon as possible.

Concerns

- The application provides a list of participating landowners involved in stream restoration projects; however, there are no details regarding the watershed issues and opportunities on their properties that would demonstrate the need for the proposed technical assistance.

- Engineering tasks will be completed for a “no-rise” analysis for a suite of restoration projects that are not described in the application. The work proposed is not tied to a specific project engineering design. It is unclear whether this approach to floodplain permitting is likely to succeed and lead to restoration implementation. It is possible the County will ask for the proposed engineering tasks to be redone when each site-specific design is submitted for review, or some projects may not require the additional engineering. Information from the County indicating the proposed approach and products is necessary and sufficient for securing permits will provide evidence that the project is likely to lead to restoration implementation.
- The budget lacks details needed to evaluate costs related to specific project activities.
- It was unclear if the no-rise certification work for the future projects that have not been defined yet would be accepted by the County.
- It is unclear if engineering design and permitting costs is included in the original budgets of the funded projects. If so, additional information is needed to understand how the additional technical assistance funding will leverage that work.
- The application presents one objective. Breaking the objective into two or more objectives would provide an opportunity to incorporate more detail on the details and activities needed for both projects already funded and potential future projects.

Concluding Analysis

The application lacks clarity describing the future restoration outcomes that will result from the proposed technical assistance. Developing specific projects and identifying ways to permit and license them on a project-by-project bases may be more effective in meeting regulatory requirements and restoration implementation.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

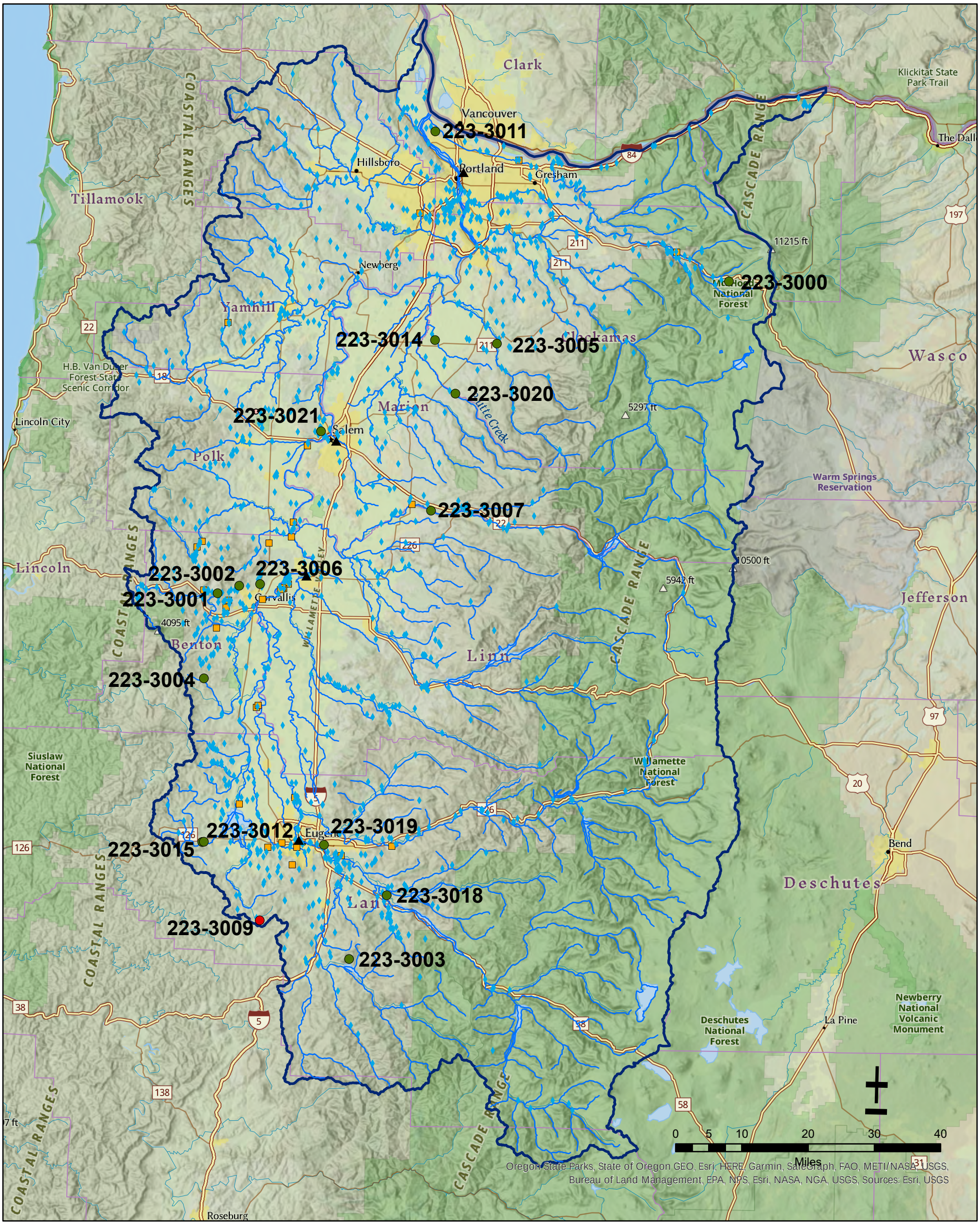
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Region 3: Willamette Basin

Willamette Basin - Region 3 Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations



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Funding Recommendation

- Staff Recommendation For Funding (SRF)
- Below Funding Line (BFL)

Previous Grants 1998 - Spring 2022

- Land Acquisition
- Restoration
- Region 3 Cities
- Region 3 Streams
- OWEB Region 3 Boundary

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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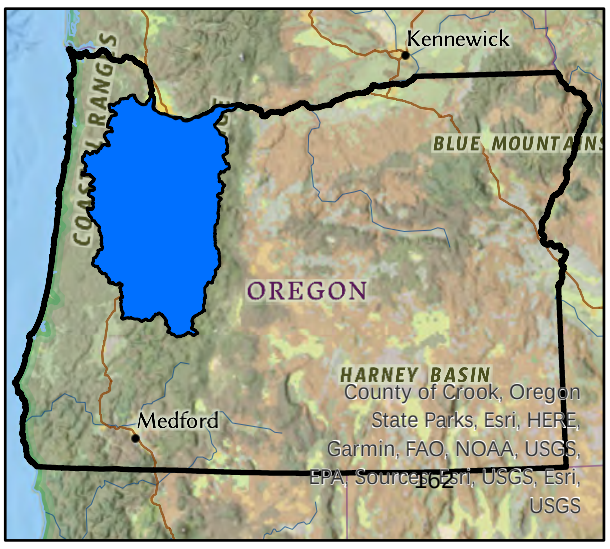

Region 3 - Willamette Basin Restoration

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-3007	Greenbelt Land Trust	Kingston Prairie & Santiam Kingston Hills Restoration Phase 1	Oak woodland, upland prairie, and wet prairie habitats will be restored. The habitats will support native bird and wildlife populations in the North Santiam Watershed.	314,133	Linn
223-3001	Institute for Applied Ecology	Restoring Taylor's checkerspot butterfly in Oregon	Upland prairie habitat will be restored for the endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly. There are only two remaining populations of Taylor's checkerspots in Benton County, Oregon.	510,622	Benton
223-3000	The Freshwater Trust	Upper Sandy-Zigzag River Tributaries Restoration Project	A fish passage barrier will be replaced in a tributary to the Zig-Zag River to allow salmon and steelhead access to an additional three miles of stream habitat and floodplain habtat. The restoration project will increase the abundance and productivity of Sandy basin fish populations.	393,967	Clackamas
223-3004	Marys River WC	Recovering System Process in Reese Creek	The health and function of Reese Creek will be improved by restoring instream conditions and habitat for native aquatic species. Streamside native vegetation will be established to create diversity of wildlife habitat.	196,710	Benton
223-3005	Molalla River Watch Inc	Molalla Side Channel Restoration	Side-channel habitat important to winter steelhead and spring Chinook, coho, and cutthroat trout will be enhanced and protected by installing large wood instream structures in the Molalla River watershed.	156,382	Clackamas
223-3006	Greenbelt Land Trust	Building Resilience of Mid-Willamette Valley Habitats	Oak woodland, wetlands, grasslands, and mixed deciduous forest will be restored across two sites in the Willamette Valley that will provide habitat for native species such as acorn woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, Nelson's checkermallow and Willamette daisy, along with other rare plants, birds, and wildlife.	229,872	Benton

223-3011	Metro	Prairie in Portland St. Johns Prairie Phase 4	Upland prairie habitat will be restored on a former landfill in North Portland. The site will provide habitat to grassland birds, insects and pollinators, nesting turtles, and other wildlife.	141,150	Multnomah
223-3002	Institute for Applied Ecology	Oak prairie restoration at Live Oak Drive	Oak woodland, streamside forest, and upland prairie habitat will be restored north of Corvallis. The project will reduce nonnative and invasive plants, and reintroduce native plants and First Foods plants that are important to Tribes. Restoration will also help prevent old-growth Oregon white oaks from being overtopped by Douglas fir trees, and increase fire resiliency of the woodland.	109,036	Benton
223-3012	Long Tom WC	Lower Upper Long Tom Oak-Prairie Ecocultural Restoration	A fish passage barrier will be replaced to allow fish access to two miles of headwater stream habitat on a private property along the Long Tom River just upstream of Fern Ridge Reservoir. Oak, prairie, and streamside plant communities will also be restored on the property.	238,257	Lane
223-3003	Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy	Cerro Gordo Prairie and Oak Restoration Phase 1	A diverse native habitat will be restored and maintained on a threatened remnant of Willamette Valley prairie, oak savanna, and oak woodlands in the Row River watershed. The project will reverse conifer tree encroachment and inhibit the spread of non-native plant species.	260,312	Lane
Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				2,550,441	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-3009	Long Tom WC	Cassidy Ranch Oak Restoration and Stream Enhancement	Oak woodland habitat will be restored on 40 acres, grazing will be used to manage invasive plant species, and a stream, channel will be restored to control streambank erosion in the Long Tom Watershed.	185,025	Lane

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Amount Requested	County
223-3008	Coast Fork Willamette WC	Creswell Butte: Oak Woodland Restoration	334,568	Lane
223-3010	Calapooia WC	Oak Creek - Oak Woodland Restoration	177,161	Linn

Region 3 - Willamette Basin Technical Assistance

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-3018	Middle Fork Willamette WC	Finalizing Floodplain Restoration Designs & Permitting for Elijah Bristow State Park - Phase 1	Final designs will be completed for a floodplain restoration project on the Middle Fork Willamette River that will result in habitat for native species such as Oregon chub, western pond turtle, spring Chinook salmon, and beaver. The designs will be process-based–they will focus on restoring the natural, physical processes that occur to create healthy river habitat over time.	75,000	Lane
223-3015	Long Tom WC	Long Tom River and Wilson Creek Floodplain Restoration Design	Designs will be completed to restore, create, and maintain habitat for important native fish and wildlife species in Wilson Creek, a tributary to the Long Tom River.	73,330	Lane
223-3014	Pudding River WC	Aamodt Dam Alternatives Analysis and Preliminary Design	Designs will be developed to remove a splash dam that spans a stream channel. Dam removal will restore natural streamflow, improve water quality, and provide summer migratory fish access to cold-water habitat in the Pudding River Watershed.	59,479	Clackamas
Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				207,809	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-3013	Friends of West Salem Watersheds	Salem Area Natural Floodplain Functions Plan	32,750	Polk
223-3017	Human Access Project	Ross Island Lagoon HAB Treatment	73,383	Multnomah

Region 3 - Willamette Basin Stakeholder Engagement

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-3021	Oregon Agricultural Trust	Protecting Habitat and Water Resources on Willamette Valley Farmland	The Oregon Agricultural Trust will build landowner interest to implement conservation easements that will preserve the Willamette Valley's unique mix of agriculture, native oak, forest, and streamside habitats.	63,552	Polk
223-3020	Pudding River WC	Scotts Mills Dam Removal Stakeholder Engagement	The Pudding River Watershed Council will engage local residents in the City of Scotts Mills to build support for the removal of Scotts Mills Daml Dam removal will open thirteen miles of spawning and rearing habitat to Endangered Species Act-listed steelhead and Chinook salmon.	41,457	Marion

223-3019	Middle Fork Willamette WC	Island Park Slough Stakeholder Engagement	Springfield community members around Island Park Slough will be engaged to raise awareness about water quality concerns and generate support for stormwater infrastructure improvements and streamside restoration. These enhancements will improve the communities' social, economic, and environmental health.	61,188	Lane
Total Stakeholder Engagement Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				166,197	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-3022	Oswego Lake Watershed Council	Uniting Stakeholders to Protect and Enhance Oregon White Oak Habitat in Lake Oswego	75,961	Clackamas
223-3023	Social Good Fund	PHCC Stakeholder Engagement	57,600	Multnomah

Region 3 Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**2,924,447**

Region 1 - 6 Grand Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**13,027,997**

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3000-22511

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Upper Sandy-Zigzag River Tributaries Restoration Project

Applicant: The Freshwater Trust

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Clackamas

OWEB Request: $393,967

Total Cost: $1,556,058

Application Description The Freshwater Trust (TFT) and US Forest Service (USFS) are taking the lead on the Upper Sandy-Zigzag River Tributaries Restoration Project on behalf of the Sandy River Basin Partners (the Partners). The Sandy River originates on Mt. Hood and flows 56 miles northwest before entering the Columbia River near Portland, Oregon. Sandy River salmon and steelhead populations have declined over the last century due to degradation of habitat and other factors. The Partners have identified the upper Sandy sub-watershed among the top areas providing high quality habitat for the basin's native fish. The Partners are aligned on a near term goal of restoring this priority watershed to advance Sandy basin-scale restoration.

The proposed project will address primary limiting factors by increasing off channel habitat/floodplain connectivity and large wood abundance on Still Creek and by restoring fish passage at a road crossing on Henry Creek. Both project sites are on prioritized tributaries of the Zigzag River in the upper Sandy River basin. Proposed work on Still Creek is on public land managed by the USFS and proposed work on Henry Creek is on land managed by Clackamas County. Both project sites are near Zigzag, Oregon in Clackamas County.

Restoration actions to be undertaken as part of the proposed project include large wood placement and tree tipping on Still Creek and replacement of a culvert road-stream crossing with a bridge on Henry Creek. This project is part of a larger, multi-year, watershed-scale restoration effort and builds on similar successful projects completed in the basin by TFT and the Partners since 2008. OWEB funding will support TFT staff time for project design/permitting, project management, construction, travel, administration, and reporting.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The applicant will use clearly defined restoration methods that have been applied in the Upper Sandy Basin for over a decade.
- The proposed restoration actions will address watershed limiting factors to Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish recovery by reconnecting 57 acres of floodplain habitat for coho, chinook, and steelhead.

- Replacing the culvert on Henry Creek with a bridge will improve fluvial processes that will resonate through the entire stream system while also opening fish passage to 2.5 miles of stream habitat.
- The proposed work is part of a large-scale restoration strategy that builds on momentum from and leverages investments in previously successful restoration. The proposed instream large wood placement will add five miles to an existing eight stream miles already treated, collectively providing thirteen contiguous miles of restored stream habitat.
- The project is ready for implementation with a supply of large wood located nearby and it is time-sensitive due to match dollars that must be spent in 2023.
- The project team has a consistent track record for implementing similar high-quality projects.
- The applicant engaged design engineers and equipment operators to evaluate the feasibility of the bridge design and estimate the costs.
- The project will provide high watershed benefit for the cost.

Concerns

- The large wood placement proposed for Still Creek may not be as high of a restoration priority since it was not prioritized in the Sandy Basin strategic action plan.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed project builds on a phased stream restoration strategy that has been implemented since 2012 and has a record of producing a quantified fish response to habitat improvements. The Sandy River watershed provides habitat to numerous ESA-listed fish species, making it a priority area for instream habitat restoration. The project has a high ecological benefit-cost ratio and certainty of success, which is guided by a multi-year strategic action plan and documented by monitoring data from previous phases of restoration.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount

$393,967

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$393,967

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3001-22513
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Restoring Taylor's checkerspot butterfly in Oregon
Applicant: Institute for Applied Ecology
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Benton
OWEB Request: $510,622
Total Cost: $802,806

Application Description Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly (TCB), a federally listed endangered species was once abundant in the Pacific Northwest. Currently there are only two extant populations in Oregon, both located in Benton County. Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly are threatened by loss of habitat from agricultural development, fire suppression, urbanization, forest succession, the spread of invasive species, and genetic drift.

The goals of this project are to bolster ongoing restoration activities at sites currently occupied by TCB, expand restoration efforts to high-priority lands near occupied sites, increase the availability of host plant materials and captive-bred larvae, and release larvae at new sites prepared to support TCB. 276 acres across nine sites in Benton County, OR have been selected for restoration. The sites include Cardwell Hill, Rung Meadows, Fitton Green Natural Area, Bald Hill Farm, Echo Hills Farm, Pearcy-Schoener, Crisp-Lidell, Harris, and Beazell Memorial Forest.

Management actions include herbicide applications, hand weeding, mowing, felling and limbing trees, flame weeding, and planting TCB nectar and host plant species. Monitoring will occur at all project sites and include photo points and regular site assessments. Seed increase fields of TCB host plants, English plantain, and the endangered golden paintbrush, will be established and produced seed will be sown at all sites. To increase the number and distribution of TCB populations, a captive rearing program will be formed at Oregon State’s Mid-Columbia Agriculture Research Station.

This proposal builds on previous restoration projects funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and OWEB. It draws upon a highly functioning network of partners who are working together to restore prairie habitat and recover TCB. Partners include the USFWS, Benton County Natural Areas and Parks, Greenbelt Land Trust, OSU, TCB experts in the fields of husbandry and entomology, and private landowners.

Review Team Evaluation
Strengths

- The application has a clearly defined project goal to support Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (TCB) species recovery and appropriate objectives to achieve this goal.
- The proposed restoration will benefit TCB, which is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Only two TCB populations remain in Oregon. The project sites identified for restoring plant populations that support TCB are near the locations of these two populations. The proposed planting actions will build habitat corridors for this species.
- The project builds on previous OWEB and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) investments in prairie habitat restoration at the project sites and other locations in the surrounding area.
- The applicant will use a similar approach used for restoring habitat to support Fender's blue butterfly populations, which was recently downlisted from endangered to threatened. The applicant also has previous experience working with golden paintbrush, a host plant for the TCB.
- The applicant is taking a reasonable approach by incorporating English plantain into the restoration plan. While this plant species is not native, it has proven to be an effective surrogate as a host plant for TCB. While the native golden paintbrush is also included in the restoration approach, it is a difficult plant to establish. Plantain provides an alternative to ensure TCB will have options for building their populations.
- Some of the project sites are protected by conservation easements, which will protect restoration investments and increase the likelihood for ensuring long-term stewardship of those habitat investments.
- The applicant has experience working with partners and landowners to restore habitats for threatened and endangered species.
- A highly functioning network of partners are involved in the project, including Oregon State University, USFWS, Benton County, Greenbelt Land Trust, and landowners.
- While the overall project cost is significant, the expenses are clearly described in the application budget and are comprehensive to effectively implement the strategies necessary for restoring TCB populations and the habitat this species relies on.

Concerns

- Some of the project sites overlap with sites associated with previously funded OWEB restoration grants that focus on different species, including Kincaid's lupine, Willamette daisy, and Fender's blue butterfly. A map and additional information that describes how the proposed work relates to these previous investments would be helpful for understanding how the efforts are leveraged to achieve overlapping prairie restoration goals.

Concluding Analysis

While the proposed project is a significant investment, the actions are comprehensive and necessary for preventing species extinction. The applicant has the technical experience working with species that are on the brink and moving them towards recovery. This investment could be the last opportunity for TCB survival in Oregon.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

2 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount
$510,622

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$510,622

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3002-22515
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Oak prairie restoration at Live Oak Drive
Applicant: Institute for Applied Ecology
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Benton
OWEB Request: $109,036
Total Cost: $138,054

Application Description The goal of this project is to enhance 40 acres of remnant oak woodland and prairie in northwest Corvallis to improve diversity and increase fire resiliency. The acreage is at the end of Live Oak drive, on a steep southern slope of Dimple Hill. The land was purchased in 2021 by a private citizen with the intent to restore native habitat. Live Oak's location between the Chip Ross Natural Area to the east, Beazell Memorial Forest to the west, and OSU's McDonald Dunn forest to the north, magnifies its value for ongoing efforts to preserve and protect the Willamette Valley's threatened ecology.

In consultation with the owner, ecologists at the Institute for Applied Ecology (hereafter IAE) have drafted a multi-year restoration plan that encompasses Live Oak's upland forest, meadow, and riparian forest habitats. The first stage of the project, begun in 2022, is the removal of invasive species through mowing and targeted herbicide application. In 2023 and 2024, the focus will be on thinning the conifers to afford the oaks, madrones, and ash more light, and to boost fire resiliency. Once the invasive species are minimized, the plan is to forgo further herbicide applications in favor of hand management so that First Foods can be introduced for eventual harvest.

The Live Oak restoration project will complement IAE's Plants for People restoration project, where culturally important plant species and traditional ecological knowledge of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) resulted in restoration of Willamette Valley sites. The owner has contacted CTGR about the introduction of First Foods, and is interested in making the site available for harvesting and for teaching others. Taken together, the Live Oak restoration endeavor unifies the owner's longstanding interests in history, education, and foodways, with a newfound passion for the unique and precious oak woodlands and prairies of the Willamette Valley.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives for restoring 40 acres of oak woodland, riparian forest, and upland prairie habitats. The applicant and landowner have created a multi-year restoration plan for reducing nonnative and invasive species, increasing fire resiliency,

thinning conifers, and restoring native plant understory.

- The proposed work builds on restoration that has already occurred on the project site.
- The planting plan includes reintroducing Tribal First Foods plant species and utilizing resources developed with the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde in part from OWEB Plants for People grant investments.
- The project is located near a few conservation sites in the area, including Chip Ross Natural Area to the east, Beazell Memorial Forest to the west, and OSU's McDonald Dunn Forest to the north. The project has potential for restoring a stepping stone habitat that will connect these sites.
- Landowner project support is demonstrated by match and a letter of support. The landowner indicated a commitment to maintaining habitat gains resulting from the proposed restoration and is potentially interested in a long-term conservation easement.
- The applicant has the capacity and relevant experience for implementing the project.
- Project costs are reasonable for the proposed work.

Concerns

- A letter of support from the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde related to the First Foods project elements would strengthen the application by incorporating traditional ecological knowledge.
- The McDonald Dunn Forest is a source of False brome, an aggressive invasive species. It will be challenging to maintain the site to prevent continuous infestation.
- Benefits from a restoration investment may be somewhat limited by the surrounding urban development isolating the site.

Concluding Analysis

The project is likely to succeed in achieving the expected habitat outcomes with the proposed methods, budget, and timeline. While the site is surrounded by urban areas, it could provide a habitat stepping stone among other large acreage conservation sites. This will provide more benefit for the increasingly scarce oak habitat compared to the development that would likely occur on the site without the restoration partnership between the landowner and applicant.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

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Review Team Recommended Amount

$109,036

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$109,036

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3003-22519

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Cerro Gordo Prairie and Oak Restoration Phase 1

Applicant: Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $260,312

Total Cost: $497,832

Application Description The project encompasses 157 acres in the Row River watershed, 5 miles east of Cottage Grove in Lane County. This oak and prairie project is situated on 532 acres protected by a WWMP easement held by McKenzie River Trust (MRT) and owned by Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy (CGLC). An additional 447 acres of forest land abuts the property and is permanently protected by an NRCS HFRP easement.

The project will restore a matrix of high-quality upland and wet prairie, herbaceous bald, riparian forest, oak savanna, and oak woodland habitat types that have been negatively impacted by habitat fragmentation and the absence of indigenous fire. These impacts have resulted in conifer and invasive species encroachment into the native prairies and woodlands. Unchecked competition has threatened the 111 documented native prairie and oak-associated species found at Cerro Gordo, including several species of rare plants and two Federal Species of Concern.

Encroaching conifers and invasive species will be manually and mechanically removed from ±110 acres of prairie and ±43.3 acres of oak woodlands. Historic prairie connectivity will be restored on ±3.4 acres, while invasive species will be removed from 1,728’ of stream banks and ±3.9 acres of associated riparian forest, including a small fish-bearing tributary of Dorena Lake. Native herbaceous species will be reintroduced throughout the treatment areas, and the prairies will be further prepared for the reintroduction of fire. Secured WWMP easement stewardship operation and maintenance funds will annually fund post-project maintenance. Trout Mountain Forestry (TMF) will design and implement this project on behalf of CGLC with the support of MRT, NRCS, ODFW, USFWS, BLM, USACE, and the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council (CFWWC).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives for restoring and maintaining structure, function, connectivity, and native species diversity on 157 acres of threatened remnant Willamette Valley prairie, oak savanna, and oak woodlands in the Row River watershed.

- The proposed project builds on previously completed meadow restoration.
- There is a long-term management plan for the property that describes a phased approach to restoration and includes prescribed fire in partnership with US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The project site is protected by a conservation easement that has operations and maintenance funds associated with it that will ensure investments in habitat restoration will be protected and maintained long term.
- A diversity of native plants has been documented on the site, including some rare plants.
- The project is located in close proximity to other prairie and oak restoration sites, creating broader habitat connectivity.
- The application budget is detailed and includes an explanation describing how costs were estimated.
- The project is ready to implement with a qualified contractor that has relevant experience with upland oak habitats selected to design and implement the proposed restoration.
- Partnership support is demonstrated by match and support letters.

Concerns

- The primary strategy for controlling invasive plants will be mechanical treatments. It will be challenging to get ahead of the invasive plant population and maintain the site to prevent future infestations. While the application indicates that herbicides can be used as a last resort, it is unclear how that decision will be made and what will trigger a shift to using herbicides if mechanical treatments are not effective.
- Project management and personnel costs are high for a four-year project, almost double to similar projects submitted in the same review cycle. Higher costs may be related to using a higher portion of hand labor.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed actions will restore and expand historic prairie habitat at a location that already has a highly diverse plant community to build from. The project is also timely to protect the oak habitat from deteriorating due to conifer encroachment and long-term fire suppression.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

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Review Team Recommended Amount

$260,312

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$260,312

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3004-22526

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Recovering System Process in Reese Creek

Applicant: Marys River WC

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Benton

OWEB Request: $196,710

Total Cost: $443,127

Application Description Marys River Watershed Council (MRWC) proposes to undertake a riparian restoration project on Reese Creek (tributary to Muddy Creek, tributary to the Marys River) in cooperation with private landowners, the BLM, USFS and Xerces Society. Over the last three years, MRWC has worked with BLM, USFWS, ODFW and Xerces Society to conduct sampling and physical surveys to determine presence and distribution of Pacific Lamprey (Entosphenus tridentatus) and freshwater mussels (Western ridged mussels [Gonidea angulata], which were recently petitioned for listing, are present in the Muddy Creek sub-watershed and Western pearlshell mussels [Margaritifera falcata] are found in Reese Creek). This project will benefit these species as well as Cutthroat Trout (Oncorhynchus clarkii), Willamette Winter Steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss) and Spring Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) which are present in the Muddy Creek watershed, by improving the health and function of Reese Creek in a number of important ways.

MRWC is requesting OWEB funding to cover the planting and plant establishment of native riparian species over 13.75 acres. This request is part of a larger restoration project at the site with secured funding from BLM RAC and Siuslaw National Forest Stewardship Fund to implement a number of actions slated for implementation in 2023, which will increase floodplain connection and habitat complexity, improve water quality, provide fish passage and improved hydrological function. This OWEB funding request complements these other project elements by supporting the cost of extensive riparian planting to further achieve project goals over the long term, including improved riparian plant diversity and forest structure, providing and expanding riparian buffers for stream shading and a future source of large woody debris.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposed actions will improve the health and function of Reese Creek by increasing floodplain connection and habitat complexity, improving water quality, and improving riparian vegetation diversity and width for wildlife habitat, stream shading, and long-term source of large wood contribution to the stream.

- The project is located on a low-gradient meandering stream that is well-suited for the proposed restoration approach. The site is a former agricultural field that has not been highly impacted and still has foundational structure for restoring watershed function.
- The proposed restoration will improve habitat for native aquatic species, including cutthroat trout, lamprey, and freshwater mussels.
- A modified Rapid Riparian Restoration method will be used for restoring the native plant community and is appropriate for the site.
- The applicant will be working in a new part of the Marys River watershed for the first time; the proposed project could raise public awareness and lead to future restoration.
- The landowner is actively involved in the project and will help to maintain restoration investments through weed control. The landowner has experience with a variety of weed control methods and has effectively maintain invasives plants on the property.
- Project costs are reasonable.
- The project is part of a larger project in partnership with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (USFS) that is funded through the Resource Advisory Council and Forest Stewardship Program.
- The project is ready for implementation and timely; it will be important to follow the instream work funded by BLM and USFS with riparian revegetation work to prevent erosion in disturbed areas.
- The applicant has capacity and relevant experience to implement the project.

Concerns

- The application lacks design information for instream restoration components that will be funded through match dollars. This information would be helpful for better understanding the project goals and objectives. The instream component will, however, require National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programmatic review to ensure the design is technically sound.
- Including letters of support from the landowner and partners would strengthen the application.

Concluding Analysis

Timing revegetation of riparian areas after the instream work is important for achieving stream health and function restoration goals and objectives. The project is likely to succeed in providing the expected watershed benefits at a reasonable cost.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

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Review Team Recommended Amount

$196,710

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$196,710

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3005-22579
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Molalla Side Channel Restoration
Applicant: Molalla River Watch Inc
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Clackamas
OWEB Request: $156,382
Total Cost: $311,632

Application Description Side channel habitats between RM 14 and 26 along the Molalla River, in Clackamas County Oregon, are highly productive thermal refugia for rearing salmonids. The Molalla River, located directly upstream of Willamette Falls, is the Willamette River's longest undammed tributary and provides habitat for ESA threatened winter steelhead and spring Chinook, coho, and cutthroat. Side channels contained 61% of all juvenile coho and 21% of all juvenile Chinook rearing in the watershed and were therefore identified in the 2012 Rapid Bio-Assessment as key rearing habitat. Side channel habitats are critical to protect and enhance because they provide summer thermal refugia by connecting with hyporheic flows when the Molalla River mainstem dries down and is 303d listed for temperature. A lack of large wood recruitment and channel confinement has left side channels vulnerable to amplified winter flood flows and making them ephemeral habitats. Side channel habitat key characteristics that differentiate it from mainstem habitats include: cooler summer water, more canopy cover, and lower winter flows. The proposed solution is to protect and enhance four unique side channels by installing stable point bar log jams at inlets to keep the side channel protected from avulsion by the mainstem during high winter flows. Also, logs will be placed in side channels to scour deep pools down to bedrock to access cold hyporheic flow disconnected from summer warm flows of the mainstem Molalla River and thereby enhancing summer thermal refugia for rearing salmonids. Partners include Molalla River Watch, ODFW, Native Fish Society, landowners, and contractors. Site selection, landowner outreach, and preliminary project design have been completed by an OWEB funded TA grant. Recent work includes two side channel restoration projects completed, and temperature and snorkel data collected for two restored and four proposed side channels. OWEB funds will be used for final design and implementation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has a clearly defined project goal and objective to protect and enhance 0.9 mile of side-channel in the Molalla Watershed.
- Side-channel habitat is a high priority restoration target for the Molalla River that is important for steelhead, Chinook, coho, and cutthroat trout.
- The project is ready for implementation with a supply of large wood that is available for use.

- A novel design approach will be used to address the lack of large wood in the Molalla River system, which is a limiting factor that has prevented natural side-channel formation. Previously completed side-channel projects using the same design approach are functioning as expected and monitoring data indicates they are providing habitat for fish. The method has potential for also creating cool water habitat in a reach of the Molalla River that is temperature limited and offers few opportunities for fish rearing.
- A qualified contractor that has relevant experience will implement the stream work.
- The applicant plans to continue monitoring side-channels to document the effectiveness of the design approach over time.
- Partner support for the project is demonstrated by match and letters of support from the Native Fish Society, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the landowners.
- The project costs are reasonable and appropriate for the proposed work and the scale of the project.

Concerns

- The temperature and fish data used to demonstrate effectiveness of the completed side-channel may have been collected over too short of a timeframe to definitively prove the design approach is causing reduced stream temperatures. The data was also not collected at enough locations to capture the variability that can occur across a side-channel. Since the fish data indicates there was a modest increase in fish presence at the restored side-channel, this early data demonstrates the concept has potential. Further data collection could provide more insights on the efficacy of the approach for providing side-channel habitat for fish in a river system that has lost side-channel functionality.
- It is unclear from the application why a somewhat counter-intuitive design approach was selected and will address the site conditions limiting side-channel formation. For example, human caused stream confinement was identified as a constraint; however, the project reach shows considerable natural bed rock confinement instead. The design rationale was clarified during the site visit and the previously completed side-channel project indicates the approach has potential to achieve ecological objectives that will provide needed habitat for fish.
- There could be a missed opportunity to explore a broader range of design alternatives by not engaging a broader team of technical experts to weigh in on approaches to restore Molalla River side-channel function.

Concluding Analysis

Side-channels were historically formed by large wood transported from upstream forested areas that would form wood jams on gravel point bars in the stream. These wood jams over their lifespan would protect the side-channel from closing through avulsion so that the side-channel could provide off-channel habitat for fish. Long-term harvesting of conifer forests in the upper Mollala watershed has mostly eliminated a sustainable source of large wood recruitment needed to build and sustain side-channel habitat. The project provides an opportunity to test a novel approach for protecting and enhancing high priority side-channel stream function that provides important cold water refugia habitat for ESA-listed fish.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

5 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount
$156,382

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$156,382

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3006-22588

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Building Resilience of Mid-Willamette Valley Habitats

Applicant: Greenbelt Land Trust

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Benton

OWEB Request: $229,872

Total Cost: $293,464

Application Description Owens Farm (95 ac, Benton County) and Willamette Bluffs (120 ac, Polk County) were some of the earliest OWEB and BPA conservation easements that focused primarily on oak and prairie habitat in the mid-Willamette Valley (2002 and 2009). Both sites support significant oak woodlands, upland prairie, wetlands and mixed deciduous forest teaming with wildlife. The geographic location of these sites is phenomenal for wildlife connectivity as they collectively intersect three Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) Conservation Opportunity Areas: Luckiamute River & Tributaries, Middle Willamette River Floodplain, and Corvallis Area Forests and Balds.

A primary feature of these properties is the Conservation Easements that ensure permanent protection and sustained habitat management. While phase one of restoration (conversion of agriculture to natural habitats) is mostly complete, both sites are not meeting their full ecological potential, as they are threatened by the destabilizing threats of ecological succession and invasive species. By pairing freshly updated management plans with 20 years of adaptive management experience, additional investments will elevate the significance of these sites and ensure greater ecological resilience for the future.

We will restore 154 acres following newly updated management plans. We will enhance and control invasive species on 34 acres of wetlands, 63 acres of grasslands, 32 acres of oak woodland, and 25 acres of mixed forest, focusing on establishing species resilient to disturbance and invasion by non-natives, benefitting rare plants and stabilizing resources for pollinators. Work will promote Acorn Woodpecker, White Breasted Nuthatch, Nelson’s checkermallow and Willamette daisy, along with other rare plants, birds and wildlife.

A key to Greenbelt's success is our cooperative approach with partners including OWEB, ODFW, BPA-WWMP, USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Recovery Programs, and Institute for Applied Ecology.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives for collectively restoring 32 acres of oak woodlands, 34 acres of wetlands, 63 acres of grasslands, and 25 acres of mixed deciduous forest at two locations in the Mid-Willamette Valley.
- The restoration approach is technically sound and will focus on establishing native plant species, including Willamette daisy. Additionally, pairing two restoration sites will provide an economy of scales in restoration costs associated with mobilizing equipment.
- Restoring diverse habitats at the two project sites will provide benefits for wildlife movement because they collectively intersect three Oregon Conservation Strategy Conservation Opportunity Areas, including the Luckiamute River and Tributaries, Middle Willamette River Floodplain, and Corvallis Area Forests and Balds.
- The project sites are both protected by conservation easements that will ensure investments in habitat restoration will be protected and maintained long term. Restoration treatments and maintenance are guided by management plans for the properties that are associated with the conservation easements.
- Appropriate partners are engaged in the project that will provide additional resources and relevant expertise, including US Fish and Wildlife Service and Institute for Applied Ecology.
- The applicant has the capacity and relevant experience for implementing the project.
- The project costs are reasonable for the proposed treatments.

Concerns

- The Willamette Bluff site is surrounded by agricultural land that has potential for being an ongoing source of invasive plant species encroachment; however, treatment strategies are included in the project methods to address this challenge to the greatest extent possible.

Concluding Analysis

While previous phases of restoration have been completed on the project sites, both sites cannot reach their full habitat potential without additional funding. The net benefit of the project will be more resilient ecological conditions in these upland habitats.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

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Review Team Recommended Amount

$229,872

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$229,872

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3007-22590
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Kingston Prairie & Santiam Kingston Hills Restoration Phase 1
Applicant: Greenbelt Land Trust
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Linn
OWEB Request: $314,133
Total Cost: $427,805

Application Description This project occurs across two adjacent properties owned and managed by Greenbelt: Santiam Kingston Hills (SKH) and Kingston Prairie Preserve (KPP), both located in Linn County, west of Stayton, within two Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) Conservation Opportunity Areas: Santiam Confluences and Kingston Prairie-Scio Oak Pine Savanna. They are also within the USFWS mapped critical habitat for Willamette daisy and Salem-East Recovery Zone for endangered plants, and The Nature Conservancy's Resilient Lands Map area of recognized biodiversity value. Encompassing over 550 acres, SKH and KPP are key among the few conservation lands on the east rim of the Willamette Valley and within these high priority areas. A regionally recognized biodiversity hotspot, KPP includes high quality upland and wet prairie remnants, and supports significant populations of multiple rare and OCS strategy species including Bradshaw's lomatium, Willamette daisy and western meadowlark. In addition to oak woodlands, SKH has 225 acres of agriculture to be converted to native habitats.

Native prairie and oak habitats are extremely rare, with remaining examples often in degraded and fragmented condition and threatened by invasive species and woody species encroachment. This loss of habitat quality, quantity and connectivity has left many species in peril.

This project includes the first phase of restoration at SKH: it will enhance 40 acres of oak woodlands, convert 78 acres of agricultural fields to wet and upland prairie, remove unneeded agricultural infrastructure, and control invasive species. At KPP this project will restore and enhance 56 acres of prairie for rare species, and control invasive plants and woody encroachment.

In addition to OWEB funding, Greenbelt will complete the project with the support of the WWMP stewardship funds and the NRCS EQIP program, and in collaboration with the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Recovery Programs and Institute for Applied Ecology.

Review Team Evaluation
Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives to restore and enhance

approximately 182 acres of oak woodland, upland prairie, and wet prairie habitats.

- The project is part of a larger restoration plan to strategically convert 550 acres of agricultural lands to habitat. The applicant is using a phased approach to break restoration into smaller, manageable portions while continuing to farm the remaining areas to control weeds until they are able to move to the next restoration phase.
- The project approach focuses restoration on rare plant and bird species using a variety of methods, including prescribed fire, to restore a habitat mosaic.
- The project site is protected by a conservation easement with dedicated stewardship funds that will ensure long-term protection and maintenance of investments in habitat restoration will be protected and maintained long term.
- The project site is located in close proximity to a number of conservation and restoration sites in the North Santiam Watershed that are a result of significant investments by a diversity of funders. These include two OWEB funded restoration projects, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) easements, and two acquisition sites owned by the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde.
- The applicant has the capacity and relevant experience and knowledge for implementing the project. The applicant has a history of long-term maintenance of habitat restoration investments.
- The applicant has engaged neighbors and secured their support for the project. There is potential for the restoration investment to lead to future restoration on adjacent properties.
- The budget detail indicates the applicant has carefully considered what is needed to effectively accomplish the expected ecological outcomes. For example, a third of the costs will be for native seed, which is necessary for achieving the restoration goals for the site.
- The project will leverage a Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program investment.

Concerns

- No concerns identified.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed project will rebuild the ecological web of three interconnected Oregon Conservation Strategy habitats that supports priority upland species, including Western Meadowlark, Oregon Vesper Sparrow, Willamette daisy, and Bradshaw's lomatium. Kingston Prairie Preserve and Santiam Kingston Hills, in combination with two adjacent private properties enrolled in the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program along with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's 425-acre Chankawan site immediately upstream and the downstream 338-acre Chahalpam property will form a habitat anchor of over 1700 acres. This scale of diverse oak, prairie, and riparian habitats managed for conservation can sustain a broad array of wildlife and act as resilient refugia to preserve biodiversity into the future, particularly in the face of climate change. The resulting habitat connectivity will provide significant benefit for the investment.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

1 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount
$314,133

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$314,133

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3008-22593

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Creswell Butte: Oak Woodland Restoration

Applicant: Coast Fork Willamette WC

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $334,568

Total Cost: $459,503

Application Description The 74.21-acre project is in Lane County along the southern border of the City of Creswell's urban growth boundary at Creswell Butte. Creswell Butte itself can be seen from the I-5 corridor and is within the City of Creswell's viewscape. The property is currently owned by private landowners who enrolled their property into a Conservation Easement (CE) held by McKenzie River Trust (MRT). The easement did not come with operations and maintenance (O&M) funds. Years of limited management have left the legacy oaks and open meadow habitats overgrown with shrubs, cherry, and conifers. The risk of losing the legacy oaks that remain is imminent and with no action key habitat values will be lost forever. The project seeks to leverage Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) fuels reduction and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) Oregon Recreation & Conservation Funding with OWEB restoration funding in order to restore the degraded upland prairie and oak habitats. Project partners include Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council, MRT, ODF, ODFW, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Larry H Weaver & Sheila J Hale Living Trust and the Creswell Butte Technical Advisory Team which includes the previously mention organizations in addition to US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the City of Creswell.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals to restore and improve upland prairie, oak savanna, and oak woodland habitats and native species diversity on Creswell Butte located within the lower Coast Fork Willamette watershed.
- The project builds on an OWEB Technical Assistance Grant investment and previously completed restoration.
- The project has potential for raising awareness about habitat restoration because it is located on the edge of the City of Creswell and is highly visible.
- The target quantified habitat benefits expected from the project are reasonable. Restoring habitat on a hardwood butte will be valuable for migratory birds.
- Prescribed burns will be implemented in partnership with the Willamette Valley Fire Collaboration, which will provide the capacity and experience needed for using fire as a restoration treatment.
- The project site is protected by a conservation easement that will ensure long-term protection and maintenance of investments in habitat restoration.
- The applicant has the capacity and relevant experience for implementing the project.

- A diversity of partners and technical experts are engaged in the project and the Creswell Butte Technical Advisory Team.
- Project support from partners and the landowners is demonstrated by letters of support included in the application.
- The project is time-sensitive due to match dollars that must be spent in 2023.

Concerns

- There are significant populations of invasive plant species on the site. It could be challenging to control these populations and maintain habitat gains from restoration.
- It is unclear from the application and site visit whether there is a clear plan or strategy for identifying the trees that need to be thinned and removed from the property.
- The project site is steep and has only one road providing access for implementing restoration; however, this road cannot provide access to all the areas that may be treated. It is unclear how equipment will be able to access treatment sites on a steep slope and are located further away from the road. There are also significantly large trees that will be removed to restore the oak habitat and it is unclear how this material will be handled with limited road infrastructure needed to feasibly remove the trees from the site. Without a clear solution for removing this material, slash could be left on the site and pose a fire risk. Without these logistics described in the application, it is difficult to determine whether the budget is adequate for achieving the proposed 68 acres of oak woodland and savannah habitat restoration. The project may not be ready for implementation without these logistics planned.
- More detail is needed to understand the honoraria costs included in the budget. While honoraria are an effective method to remove financial barriers to participation and ensure diverse voices are participating in the conversation, it is unclear if there is a focused purpose for engaging native people and a plan for how feedback will be incorporated into the project design. Also, it is unclear how these honoraria will be managed, including how the applicant plans to offer them, engage potential recipients, and select who shall receive them.
- Project costs are provided as lumped sums, it is difficult to evaluate whether costs are reasonable, necessary, and adequate for achieving the proposed restoration actions.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed restoration could contribute to addressing the degradation, loss, and fragmentation of upland prairie and oak habitats that has resulted in an overall significant decline of these habitats in the Willamette Valley. It is, however, unclear if the proposed treatments are feasible for the site conditions and limited road infrastructure needed for equipment access and wood material removal. While the applicant is likely able to determine a solution, the plans are not currently developed. Without additional implementation logistic details, such as a logging plan, it is unclear if the cost estimates are accurate and adequate for achieving the proposed restoration objectives. If the application is resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to address the concerns described above.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3009-22594

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Cassidy Ranch Oak Restoration and Stream Enhancement

Applicant: Long Tom WC

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $185,025

Total Cost: $402,815

Application Description The proposed "Cassidy Ranch Oak Restoration and Stream Enhancement" project proposes innovative and low-tech strategies to restore ecosystem functions from a headwater tributary channel to uplands habitat in the farthest southern portion of the Long Tom Watershed in the Coyote Creek subbasin south of Eugene. The Giudici property, totaling 256 acres, is located within the Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative's (WVOPC) proposed Opportunity-Based Conservation Area (OCA) which emphasizes habitat connectivity and integration of oak-prairie ecosystem functions with farm and forest activities on private land. The proposal includes restoration of habitat structure and composition to 40 acres of mixed oak-hardwood-conifer woodland. Targeted grazing by a mixed herd of livestock (goats, sheep, and camelids) will be employed to maintain blackberry and other woody species regrowth in the oak woodland understory following an initial mastication of the understory, in consultation with numerous technical consultants including OSU Extension, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Resilience Permaculture Design, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council Working Lands Program. Beaver Dam Analogues and Post-Assisted Log Structures will be installed in the degraded, incised channel of Jackson Creek, a headwaters tributary of Coyote Creek to restore hydrologic function and stream channel complexity. The project pairs funding from NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program for livestock exclusion fencing, associated infrastructure, and oak woodland restoration, as well as landowner match, in-kind technical assistance, and a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant focused on targeted grazing for vegetation management in Willamette Valley oak-prairie habitats. Restoration actions will provide critical habitat connectivity for oak-prairie dependent species, restore currently missing habitat niches for a diversity of aquatic life.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- A holistic restoration approach will be used to restore upland mixed oak woodland and stream channel complexity on a property located on Jackson Creek in the Long Tom Watershed.

- Alternative approaches for habitat restoration will be tested as part of the project. For example, grazing will be used as a tool to manage blackberry. If this is not effective, there is a “Plan B” to mow blackberry so regrowth can more easily be grazed. This strategy could deplete energy in the blackberry root ball, which will prevent or reduce future regrowth. The landowner will also mulch instead of using burn piles to reduce carbon dioxide release from restoration activities.
- Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA) will be installed in Jackson Creek to restore stream complexity, slow water velocity, and capture sediment to aggrade the stream channel where there is channel incision. The applicant is encouraged to limit BDA installation to areas with less incision. BDAs located where there are six-foot banks are unlikely to remain in place during a high flow event. BDAs installed at locations with less incision are likely to succeed in restoring stream function.
- The project will leverage a Natural Resource Conservation Service Conservation Innovation Grant investment.
- Partner and landowner project support is demonstrated by letters of support provided in the application.
- The landowner is committed to the project, has capacity to implement some of the work, and has already completed a considerable amount of work contributing to ecological preservation on the property.

Concerns

- It is unclear what the ecological endpoint will be for the proposed blackberry management using grazing and mowing. These alternatives treatments are not considered Best Management Practices that will lead to quantifiable habitat restoration.
- It is unclear how some of the research citations provided in the application support the rationale for not using herbicides to treat invasive plant species. For example, one cited research article did not look at the impacts of glyphosate on the aquatic species identified in the application as described in the problem statement.
- No design alternatives were considered for the upland and invasive species control project elements.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed project provides an opportunity to test alternative restoration approaches that could be helpful in determining whether these alternatives can be effective in controlling invasive plant species without using herbicides. Some landowners are concerned about the potential negative impact of herbicides. There may need to be space provided to test ideas for restoration so that voluntary conservation work in priority habitats can continue with all interested landowners.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

11 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount

$185,025

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3010-22596
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Oak Creek - Oak Woodland Restoration
Applicant: Calapooia WC
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Linn
OWEB Request: $177,161
Total Cost: $230,248

Application Description The Oak Creek - Oak Woodland Restoration project seeks to establish an Oregon White Oak woodland plant community on 23.8 acres within the City of Albany's Oak Creek Open Space. The project is positioned near the confluence of the Calapooia River and Oak Creek within the Calapooia River Conservation Opportunity Area as identified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy. Oak woodlands once covered close to 400,000 acres within the low-lying portions of the Willamette Valley. However, today, after over a century of clearing for agricultural and residential needs and encroachment due to the removal of fire from the landscape, only 5% of these valuable woodlands remain. The restoration of these Oregon White Oak dominated habitats offer an abundance of ecological benefits for over 200 known species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects not found in surrounding habitats. The project will create a climate-resilient oak woodland on 23.8 acres by eliminating the non-native species currently present at the site and later planting Oregon White Oaks, scattered understory shrubs, and native grasses. The site will then be maintained through selective removal of non-native plants and extensive mowing to create an open landscape for the plants to thrive with minimal plant competition. The project involves collaboration between city and federal partners including Bonneville Power Administration and the City of Albany's Parks and Recreation Department who will be committing a significant amount of staff time and equipment during the site prep and plant establishment phases, as well as long-term maintenance of the site.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project site is permanently protected by City of Albany ownership and has some connectivity to nearby City-owned open space park properties that connect to the confluence of the Calapooia River with the Willamette River. There is potential for investments in habitat restoration to be protected and maintained long-term throughout this corridor if there was a management plan guiding a broader approach for these important green space areas.
- There are not many restoration projects in the area and the proposed project provides an opportunity to raise awareness about watershed restoration.

Concerns

- The restoration approach may not match the site conditions. The restoration goal focuses on establishing an oak woodland dominated by Oregon White Oak with a mosaic of native shrubs and grasses. There is a considerable standing water on the project site, which does not match conditions ideal for oak habitat. The site appears better suited for floodplain riparian forest restoration. Historic aerials could potentially provide evidence of what the historic vegetation community looked like on the project site and assist with planning a restoration strategy the best suits site conditions.
- Some of the treatments proposed may not be effective. For example, planting oak from acorn has shown to be more effective than planting bare root oak as proposed.
- Restoring an oak plant community at the project site will provide minimal habitat benefit compared to other oak habitat restoration opportunities in the Willamette. The site is surrounded by urban development, which will isolate any restored habitat and limit the ecological uplift for the cost.
- The plan for long-term maintenance that will be required to control invasive plant species is unclear from the application.
- The applicant may not have relevant experience for restoring oak type habitats.
- The site is highly visible and actively used by the community; however, the application indicates raising public awareness is not included in the project. Due to the visibility of the project site, the potential for building public buy-in for restoration is one of the greatest opportunities for the project. While the oversight regarding the public awareness opportunity was clarified during the site visit and the applicant indicated outreach is part of the project, the application lacks details describing how the applicant plans to utilize the site to raise awareness.

Concluding Analysis

Creating green space and raising awareness about habitat restoration investments is important in Oregon's communities. The habitat benefit, however, for the restoration approach may be limited if the proposed oak dominant plant community is not appropriate for the site conditions. Further, there are plenty of oak restoration opportunities ready for implementation that will likely have greater habitat gains.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3011-22603
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Prairie in Portland - St. Johns Prairie Phase 4
Applicant: Metro
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Multnomah
OWEB Request: $141,150
Total Cost: $330,750

Application Description Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area is popularly known for extensive wetlands that stretch across almost 2,000 acres in industrial north Portland. In the south portion of the natural area is a former landfill that is in the process of being converted to upland prairie habitat through successive phases of restoration. Three phases of restoration on 133 acres have begun and have succeeded in boosting native plant cover and diversity, supporting a wide variety of native pollinators (providing cascading food chain benefits), and attracting breeding Western meadowlark and stopover habitat for streaked horned lark. Vegetation, pollinator and bird monitoring is documenting these gains. This work has succeeded in converting an otherwise industrial site (a former landfill) dominated by invasive weeds into a diverse and lush blooming prairie habitat.

The proposed project seeks funding to support contracted site preparation and purchase of native plant materials for the fourth and final phase of upland prairie restoration at St Johns Prairie. Phase 4 will restore the final 80 acres of the site to upland prairie habitat. Other work planned for the site includes a new public trail and overlook that will provide a rare opportunity for residents of north Portland to learn about and spend time in native prairie habitat (no OWEB funding is requested for the trail project). North Portland community organizations have expressed their support for the prairie work (see letter).

Although situated in urban north Portland, the St Johns Prairie is surprisingly close to, and provides habitat connectivity with, grasslands and oak habitats on Government Island, the Sandy River Delta, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Sauvie Island, and smaller nearby sites managed by the Port of Portland. St Johns Prairie is a growing central anchor habitat. Once restored, St Johns Prairie will be the largest prairie site in Metro’s portfolio and one of the largest in the Willamette Valley.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives that will result in the following watershed benefits: (1) established anchor habitat for common and rare species of grassland birds, insects and pollinators, and nesting turtles; (2) a large, regionally significant block of prairie that is a climate-resilient ecosystem; and (3) healthy habitats people can immerse themselves in and learn

about rather than the site becoming another abandoned brownfield.

- St. Johns Prairie is located in the southern portion of the Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area, a 2,000-acre site in the industrial area of north Portland. Restoration benefits will be leveraged by habitat connectivity with grasslands and oak habitats on Government Island, the Sandy River Delta, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Sauvie Island, and smaller nearby sites managed by the Port of Portland.
- The proposed actions will build on previously completed restoration.
- The project site has existing habitat structure in place that is used by at-risk prairie-dependent bird species, including streaked horned lark and Western meadowlark. This provides a starting point for building and leveraging restoration investments that will lead to greater ecological uplift in priority habitat types.
- The project will provide opportunity for raising public awareness about prairie habitat restoration because there will be recreational access in the future. There is also an environmental justice benefit because the project is located in an area of Portland where healthy habitat has historically not been available to and accessible by the predominantly underserved community surrounding the site.
- Restoring prairie habitat in an urban area is likely to provide climate benefits because prairies are important carbon sequestering habitats and can provide a cool space in an urban setting that has a warming affect.
- The applicant has the capacity and relevant experience and knowledge for implementing the project. The applicant has a history of maintaining habitat restoration investments long term.
- Project costs are reasonable for the proposed restoration.

Concerns

- No concerns identified.

Concluding Analysis

St. Johns Prairie is a large anchor habitat that provides a key habitat corridor link connecting prairie, oak, and other open habitats in the north-south Willamette Valley to the Puget Trough transition zone and an east-west corridor of natural and human-made Columbia River islands. It is also the largest prairie site in Metro's natural area portfolio. The site is a capped landfill and services as an example of how a brownfield can be effectively transformed into valuable habitat. The proposed project has an innovative approach to create habitat from a highly impacted site.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
7 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount
$141,150

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$141,150

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3012-22625
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Lower Upper Long Tom Oak-Prairie Ecocultural Restoration
Applicant: Long Tom WC
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Lane
OWEB Request: $238,257
Total Cost: $328,532

Application Description The project is located on private property along the Long Tom River just upstream of Fern Ridge Reservoir, west of Veneta in Lane County. Fish passage is blocked to 1.9 miles of headwater spawning habitat in Tyler Creek, a tributary to Wilson Creek, which enters the Long Tom River on the property, by a passage barrier culvert. 4.5 acres of historic floodplain forest has been converted to pasture and lacks native tree and shrub cover. 52 acres of historic bottomland oak-prairie habitat has been encroached on by woody vegetation and non-native pasture grasses. Hybrid poplars were planted on 8.5 acres within the oak savanna area 20 years ago.
The barrier culvert on Tyler Creek will be replaced with a stream-simulation pipe-arch culvert. 4.5 acres of riparian area along the Long Tom River will be reforested and livestock exclusion fencing installed. The hybrid poplars will be removed. Woody vegetation and ladder fuels will be reduced. Two rounds of prescribed fire will be brought back to the oak savanna area. Native grasses and forbs will be planted. An organic pasture-to-prairie trial will be conducted on a one-acre plot in the oak savanna. Partners include the landowner, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Ecostudies Institute, and neighboring ranchers and farmers offering technical assistance. A companion technical assistance proposal being submitted concurrently will develop designs to address another fish passage barrier on the property and for floodplain reconnection and revegetation on 25 acres along the Long Tom River and Wilson Creek on the property.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Previous application evaluation concerns are addressed.
- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives to restore natural ecosystem functions on a private property along the Long Tom River just upstream of Fern Ridge Reservoir.
- The proposed project will restore a mosaic of habitats and habitat connectivity that will benefit multiple native species, including fish, wildlife, and pollinator species.
- The proposed restoration investment will leverage and expand habitat corridors that will connect with previous restoration projects near the project site.
- Specific actions identified in local and regional plans will be implemented.

- Blackberry control is planned for the entire project area with integrated methods that include spot spraying, mowing, and prescribed burns. The project team will be flexible while considering treatment methods and plan to adapt if non-herbicide treatments are not effective in removing the invasives plants. The applicant and landowner would like the site to be available for indigenous people to gather plants and this will not be feasible if herbicides are used.
- Replacing the culvert will open access to almost two miles of stream habitat for native fish and other aquatic species.
- A cultural resource survey is incorporated into the project objectives and budget.
- The project provides opportunities for raising public awareness about watershed restoration. One neighbor is already involved in the project and there is opportunity for continued outreach that could lead to additional restoration projects.
- The landowner is actively engaged in restoration planning and implementation. The applicant has a history of building long-term relationships with landowners that result in effective restoration projects.
- Partners are invested in the project for the long term.
- The applicant has the capacity and relevant experience and knowledge for implementing the project.

Concerns

- It will be challenging to successfully control invasive plant species and restore native plant communities at the scale of the project site without herbicides. A potential alternative to consider is to use herbicides to get the invasive weeds under control and manageable to maintain, then rest the site for a number of years to allow the space to be used for tribal gathering. Habitat impacts from invasive plants resulted from an industrial land management approach and may require an industrial solution in the short term before returning to indigenous land management approaches.
- A portion of the project will be used to test organic pasture-to-prairie alternative restoration methods. These methods do not include Best Management Practice (BMPs) known to be effective in restoring habitats at large scales. While it is uncertain whether the organic approaches can be as effective as BMPs, the investment is a minimal part of the overall project and could potentially serve as a demonstration site if successful.
- The potential efficacy of fire alone to manage invasive plants and establish native seed may be overstated in the application. For example, fire alone is unlikely to effectively remove pasture grasses and could even make pasture grasses more prolific.

Concluding Analysis

Upland and instream habitat restoration will be paired to address limiting factors affecting these habitats, including altered fire regimes and suppression, invasive species, land use conversion, and habitat loss. As a result, a mosaic of habitats will be restored that will support native fish and wildlife in an Oregon Conservation Strategy Conservation Opportunity Area.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

9 of 11

Review Team Recommended Amount
$238,257

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$238,257

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3013-22518

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Salem Area Natural Floodplain Functions Plan

Applicant: Friends of West Salem Watersheds

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Polk

OWEB Request: $32,750

Total Cost: $45,750

Application Description As the capitol city and the second largest city in the state, Salem can provide an a model approach to providing advance protection to floodplain species. This pilot can show other communities a way to address the apparent conflicts between the Endangered Species Act and the National Flood Insurance Program. Current management of floodplain development in Salem does not consider ecological impacts of that proposed development. This project will provide the City of Salem a tool to identify and take measures to protect floodplain functions that are critical to riparian and aquatic species. The project includes the floodplains of the Willamette River, Mill Creek, Pringle Creek, Glenn Creek and all and flood prone areas within the urban growth boundary of the City of Salem. Currently the City of Salem reviews floodplain development projects only for compliance with engineering standards.

The project will develop a Floodplain Species Assessment and Natural Floodplain Functions Plan (see https://floodsciencecenter.org/products/crs-community-resilience/element-profiles/512-c-natural-floodplain-functions-plan/) for the City of Salem. The Assessment and Plan will be to the standards of FEMA (Section 510 of the CRS Coordinator's Manual) (see https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_community-rating-system_coordinator-manual_addendum-2021.pdf) . A Natural Floodplain Functions Plan will provide tools for the City to improve the protection of floodplain resources. The City of Salem is the primary partner, however the project will coordinate with NMFS, USF&WS, ODFW, and the Oregon Natural Heritage Program to ensure the assessment is complete.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- A collaborative approach will be used to create a Floodplain Species Assessment and a Natural Floodplain Functions Plan to protect floodplain areas used by threatened and endangered species. The applicant is using FEMA guidance for the National Flood Insurance Program to proactively create a potentially replicable approach for meeting the program requirements while demonstrating that better information about ecological considerations can be incorporated into floodplain development programs at the local level.
- The applicant will coordinate with a diversity of agencies and non-profits, including Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Oregon Natural Heritage Program, and City of Salem to collect habitat data and form a plan that could lead to long-term protection of floodplain functions that will benefit endangered species.

- The expected product will compile information about each listed species, their habitat needs, and the management considerations necessary to protect them into the form of an assessment. This assessment could be used by the City of Salem as a planning resource to ensure ecological conditions of floodplains are considered when making floodplain development decisions.
- The example plan for the City of Monroe included in the application provides helpful context for understanding the expected product that will result from the proposed technical assistance.
- Information collected through the project will be made publicly available.
- Partner support for the project is demonstrated by letters of support from the City of Salem, Salem Audubon Society, and West Salem Neighborhood Association.

Concerns

- It is unclear whether the entire costs associated with GIS are necessary and whether 180 hours is needed to compile the data. Many of the data layers are readily available and it would not require a lot of time to bring them together. Additional information describing how GIS costs were determined and whether there are unique circumstances related to the proposed planning process that requires the number of GIS hours.
- It is unclear what data will be included from ODFW, ODA, NMFS, USFWS, and Oregon Natural Heritage Program. There are additional data resources that may provide more current and detailed information, including the Oregon Conservation Strategy, iNaturalist, and Ebird.
- It is uncertain that the Floodplain Species Assessment and Natural Floodplain Functions Plan will be adopted and used by the City of Salem. While creating the plan could create the momentum needed for the City to incorporate habitat protection in land use planning decisions, it is unclear how long the plan will remain relevant or whether it could become outdated for use if it takes a long time for the City to adopt it.
- It is unclear what the process will be for the City of Salem to review the assessment and incorporate it into planning decisions that protect floodplain species.

Concluding Analysis

Protecting floodplain habitat for threatened and endangered species is important for species recovery, and floodplain development is a major threat to their survival. The proposed Floodplain Species Assessment and Natural Floodplain Functions Plan has potential for serving as a model for providing information needed for future floodplain development decisions to incorporate and protect ecological functions. Since it is uncertain if or when the City of Salem could approve the plan and use it, it is unclear if the product can lead to habitat protection or restoration outcomes.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3014-22566
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Aamodt Dam Alternatives Analysis and Preliminary Design
Applicant: Pudding River WC
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Clackamas
OWEB Request: $59,479
Total Cost: $74,428

Application Description Aamodt Dam is a seasonal, channel-spanning flash board dam in Rock Cr used for agricultural irrigation storage within the Molalla-Pudding subbasin of the Willamette Basin. The dam is approximately six miles above the confluence with the Pudding River in the Willamette Valley Ecoregion, and is a barrier to more than twenty miles of Western Cascade tributary habitat . The project site is in rural Clackamas County between the communities of Molalla and Hubbard on property zoned Exclusive Farm Use.
Funding is needed to develop a plan/design for restoration implementation. According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) 2019 Fish Passage Barrier Priority List, Aamodt Dam (#18582) impacts federally-listed Upper Willamette Winter Steelhead and Spring Chinook Salmon (UWRStCh) . Removing the dam will restore natural streamflow improving water quality and migratory access for sensitive juveniles to upstream cold-water refugia. In addition to benefits for UWRStCh, stream restoration at this site benefits ODFW Conservation Strategy aquatic species, such as Western Brook Lamprey.
Funding will be used to develop the technical details needed to assess the preferred alternative for year-round fish passage. Waterways Consulting and GSI Water Solutions will investigate the feasibility of switching to groundwater or developing an off-channel storage system. The product that will result from this project will provide the documentation needed to proceed to the next steps for restoration implementation. Partners participating in the project are working collaboratively: Ernst Irrigation will develop a plan for modernized irrigation equipment, the landowner/operator is volunteering his time and equipment, ODFW and Clackamas SWCD are providing technical assistance to consult with the engineers, review the design and help PRWC develop a strategy for restoration implementation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposed project provides an opportunity to address a priority fish passage barrier on Rock Creek, a primary habitat limiting factor for fish in the Pudding River watershed.
- The application describes a clear need for the technical assistance and the scope of work identifies appropriate data that will be collected to inform the project design.
- The project objectives indicate the applicant is carefully considering the water right components related to the project.

- A number of partners are engaged in the project, including Ernst Irrigation, the landowner, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District.
- The project team includes qualified professionals with relevant experience on similar projects.
- The applicant has the capacity to engage appropriate stakeholders and qualified contractors to implement the proposed technical assistance.
- Alternatives will be identified and analyzed as part of the technical assistance project.
- Project cost aligns with the proposed scope of work.

Concerns

- Summer benefit for fish may be limited because Rock Creek dries up. Removing the dam will, however, provide fish habitat benefits during the shoulder seasons around summer.
- Potential viable options for irrigation without the dam may be cost prohibitive because it may not be feasible to draw enough water from a well needed to replace the current water withdraw from the stream. It has proven difficult to achieve the kind of groundwater connection in the Willamette Valley needed to get an amount of water out of the ground equivalent to surface water rights. A pond or some similar storage will likely need to be constructed to meet irrigation needs, which will increase the costs for the future implementation project.
- Additional background information to understand whether design options under consideration are feasible and within a reasonable cost benefit would provide helpful context. For example, documentation of feedback from Oregon Water Resources Department or a well driller, or information about any related groundwater analysis or mapping for the area, could provide helpful context.

Concluding Analysis

Removing Aamodt Dam will restore natural streamflow, improve water quality, and provide migratory fish seasonal access to upstream cold-water refugia on Rock Creek in the Pudding River watershed. The future removal of the dam could lead to additional fish passage projects in collaboration with other landowners in the same area.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount

$59,479

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$59,479

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3015-22592

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Long Tom River and Wilson Creek Floodplain Restoration Design

Applicant: Long Tom WC

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $73,330

Total Cost: $103,057

Application Description The project is located on private property along the Long Tom River just upstream of Fern Ridge Reservoir, west of Veneta in Lane County. Fish passage is blocked to 4.1 miles of headwater spawning habitat in Wilson Creek, a tributary that enters the Long Tom River on the property, and its tributary Tyler Creek, by a barrier culvert. Wilson Creek is also disconnected from 20 acres of floodplain and its lower 0.5-mile of historic, meandering channel, as a previous landowner re-routed it into a 900-foot long straight channel, which subsequently caused it to downcut and further disconnect it from the floodplain. A 5-acre historic mill pond complex only connects to the Long Tom River during high flows, and then when flows recede fish get stranded by its constructed berm.

The project will develop hydraulic and hydrologic models for the site, two restoration concepts for reconnecting the Wilson Creek floodplain, and 30% designs for the chosen concept. This will include a 30% design for a replacement stream crossing on Wilson Creek to remove the passage barrier culvert. We will also do a feasibility and benefit-cost assessment of improving connectivity of the mill ponds to the Long Tom River. We will explore and outline an approach to acquiring all required regulatory permits for the chosen concepts.

Partners include the landowner, technical advisors, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposed technical assistance project addresses previous evaluation concerns.
- Twenty acres of floodplain habitat will be restored and will benefit native cutthroat and lamprey.
- Technically sound solutions will be incorporated in the project design. For example, moving the stream crossing upstream, higher up in the valley, will provide more opportunity to restore stream and floodplain function in the stream valley floor. The applicant is encouraged to carefully consider the design approach for reconnecting Wilson Creek with the Long Tom River to ensure it addresses the current ten-foot elevation difference between these stream systems.
- Alternatives will be identified and analyzed as part of the technical assistance project.
- The landowner is actively engaged in project planning and future restoration implementation.
- Qualified contractors have been identified to design the project.

- The applicant has capacity to implement the project and relevant experience with similar projects.
- Costs are reasonable for the work proposed.

Concerns

- Potentially connecting the historic mill pond as described in objective 4 of the application could impact water quality if contaminants remain on the site. The applicant is encouraged to consider testing for contaminants to determine the potential risks of reconnecting the pond.
- There is a ditch that drains the valley and then appears to stop at a berm. As part of the design work, the applicant is encouraged to investigate where the ditch ends. For example, there may be a culvert at the bottom of the berm that has been covered. If not thoroughly investigated, this site constraint could impact the effectiveness of a restoration project.

Concluding Analysis

The project property offers a significant opportunity to restore ecological and fluvial processes that create and maintain habitat for important native fish and wildlife species. The proposed technical assistance has a high likelihood for success in leading to habitat restoration outcomes.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount
$73,330

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$73,330

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3017-22621
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Ross Island Lagoon HAB treatment
Applicant: Human Access Project
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Multnomah
OWEB Request: $73,783
Total Cost: $194,361

Application Description A Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) in Ross Island Lagoon (RIL) on the Willamette River near Portland, OR threatens environmental and human health. Manipulation of the lagoon over the last century has contributed to the HAB, which has been occurring with increasing frequency and intensity, and has led to the recent ODEQ listing of the lagoon as impaired for cyanobacteria.?Since 2018, Human Access Project has partnered with Oregon State University to 1) lead analysis and design and 2) support a very diverse and engaged group of stakeholders, towards identifying a feasible and effect solution for suppressing the HAB. Through this process, two key solutions have emerged as most promising: a) mixing the lagoon to cool and destratify it; & b) installing a gated channel on the upstream end of the lagoon to reintroduce flow to the lagoon and flush the surface. Preliminary design for the mixing system is underway. This technical assistance request would fund developing the gated channel. The gated channel is viewed as the most promising, long-term, low energy, and low risk option, but involves more complex modeling & design. Tasks to be funded under this technical assistance award involve experimenting with channel dimensions and locations within and existing hydrodynamic/water quality model, estimating the effect of channel configurations on algae biomass, design of additional cap material for the embankment, rough cost estimate, and development of a monitoring and evaluation plan. In addition, the final report will summarize and compare the two alternatives (mixing vs. gated channel) and make a recommendation on which design to pursue. Finally, this project would support public outreach, including meetings with stakeholders, development of infographics with a graphic designer to illustrate RIL ecology and the impacts of the two alternatives, and development of a project StoryMap that will include a library of links to the many historical and current documents about the lagoon.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application describes a clear need for the technical assistance and the project objectives and associated actions necessary to achieve those objectives.
- Data was collected that demonstrates the Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) are affecting water quality, and a solution that reduces or prevents future HABs will address a priority identified in the 303(d) list of water quality impaired waterbodies.
- Costs in the budget align with the proposed work.
- Potential alternatives were considered for addressing the HABs.

- The applicant and technical partner are qualified to complete the proposed technical assistance. The partnership blends the appropriate technical expertise with community engagement experience that will result in the capacity necessary to implement the project.

Concerns

- It is unclear from the application whether the landowner supports the project. A letter of support from the landowner would be helpful for demonstrating that the project design will result in restoration implementation.
- The selected design alternative is likely to release warm water into the Willamette River during the summer, which will further impact water quality that is already temperature limited.
- There may be a missed opportunity to consider a broader range of alternatives that could provide greater watershed and habitat benefits. For example, notching either side of the Ross Island Lagoon to allow the river to run through the lagoon could potentially provide more habitat benefits.
- The project could benefit from engaging additional technical expertise, such as Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Geological Survey, and Oregon Department of State Lands, to vet the project design and consider other potential alternatives.
- It is unclear how likely the preferred design alternative will not require maintenance long-term as described by the applicant.

Concluding Analysis

Harmful Algal Blooms in Ross Island Lagoon are impacting water quality and human health. The proposed project will integrate a high level of community engagement with a focus on collaboration to address an issue greatly affecting watershed health and community access to the river. The design approach, however, may be missing an opportunity to consider alternatives that could lead to additional habitat uplift and instead focuses more on human recreational access.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3018-22624

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Finalizing Floodplain Restoration Designs & Permitting for Elijah Bristow State Park - Phase 1

Applicant: Middle Fork Willamette WC

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $75,000

Total Cost: $107,580

Application Description The 437-acre project area within Elijah Bristow State Park (EBSP) is at the confluence of the Middle Fork Willamette River with Lost Creek, below Dexter Dam, and between the Lane County towns of Jasper and Lowell. Historically, a dynamic floodplain existed with multiple, braided channels and sloughs, ephemeral gravel bars and islands, and extensive cottonwood gallery forests. Due to its location below three large dams that have modified flows and altered the natural sediment regime, the dynamism of this floodplain has been lost. Activities such as gravel mining and building berms have also led to a more static environment. After the completion of a feasibility analysis, modeling and alternative analysis, and the creation of initial conceptual designs, the MFWWC conducted a Stakeholder Engagement process to foster tribal and community input and involvement in Elijah Bristow Floodplain Restoration. The Stakeholder Engagement process included public events, tours, extensive landowner outreach, communication with federally recognized Tribes, and culminated in the creation of the Community Advisory Committee to represent community interests and provide input on the final design processes. The MFWWC and the Technical Team of collaborating partners from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, US Forest Service, and US Army Corps of Engineers seek funding to contract Wolf Water Resources finalize engineered designs, complete project permitting.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposed project builds on previous technical assistance and stakeholder engagement OWEB investments on a large-scale, complex river restoration project that will require a long-term approach to both design and implementation.
- The scope of work in the proposed solution section of the application has clear objectives and activities for achieving the objectives.
- The application provides a clear explanation describing the need to finalize stage eight process-based floodplain restoration designs and initiate permitting processes.
- The stage eight restoration approach is reasonable for addressing limiting factors affecting stream habitat that resulted from loss of floodplain function in the Middle Fork Willamette River. While the stage eight concept is relatively new, it is becoming more widely accepted for restoring watershed process and function.
- Appropriate data and analysis will be used to inform the design.

- The applicant has a technical team of qualified experts to help guide the project.
- A qualified contractor is implementing the design work.
- The proposal has a description of the alternatives that will be considered.
- Partner support for the project is documented in letters of support included in the application from the Army Corps of Engineers, Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and US Forest Service.
- Project costs are reasonable for the proposed contracted services.
- The project will leverage the Army Corps section 408 program to implement a long-term, phased restoration strategy.

Concerns

- Implementing a stage eight restoration approach below a flood control dam may have uncertain results due to the influence of the dam on stream flows and supply of large wood.
- There is a conceptual design diagram included in the application that has a boat passage component that is likely to affect the outcomes of a stage eight restoration approach. The applicant is encouraged to reconsider this design element.

Concluding Analysis

Utilizing a process-based restoration approach at Elijah Bristow State Park will restore a portion of the Middle Fork Willamette River back to a dynamic, braided multi-channel meandering river through a cottonwood gallery floodplain forest. This will provide habitat benefits for key indicator species such as Oregon chub, western pond turtle, spring Chinook salmon, and beaver. The site provides opportunity to be highly visible to the public and serve as an example of process-based floodplain restoration strategies for areas between headwaters and downstream zones.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

1 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount

$75,000

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$75,000

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3019-22549

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Island Park Slough Stakeholder Engagement

Applicant: Middle Fork Willamette WC

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Lane

OWEB Request: $61,188

Total Cost: $135,981

Application Description Island Park Slough (IPS) is a .48 mile, highly urban impacted waterway that, in its current configuration starts as a diversion of the Springfield Millrace just before it enters the Upper Willamette River (UWR), within a mile downstream of the Coast and Middle Fork Willamette confluence. The IPS runs north then northwest, forming a 15-acre developed island before IPS's confluence with the UWR. IPS is additionally fed by four City stormwater drain pipes from 330 acres of Springfield including the downtown core. Multiple private stormwater drains also connect directly to the ISP. The vast majority of this stormwater is untreated, contributing to the urban complex of pollutants including sediment that silts in the ISP where it harbors pollutants, reduces flood storage capacity and habitat while posing a potential safety hazard for park visitors.

By forming a partnership of interests and experts, a holistic approach to restoring and maintaining the slough can be developed and supported by the community if proper stakeholder engagement is performed. Traditional river restoration techniques will be paired with upstream green stormwater infrastructure and hard stormwater management structures, providing flood attenuation and filtration before stormwater enters the IPS.

Engagement will begin with identified project partners and outreach to nearby residential and commercial landowners. Project partners will coordinate through regular planning meetings to identify future collaborative project phases. Adjacent residential and business landowners will be engaged to extend restoration onto private lands, increasing ownership and impact. A broader public engagement effort to raise awareness of stormwater issues and solutions and the future of restoration at IPS will also be implemented under this proposal. The MFWWC will work closely with the LTWC, Willamalane (WPRD), the City of Springfield, UWWP, WAAC, throughout the stakeholder engagement process and future project phases.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Island Park Slough enters the Upper Willamette River downstream of the Coast Fork and Middle Fork Willamette confluence. Multiple untreated public and private stormwater sources drain into Island Park Slough, impacting water quality and fish habitat. Restoration that could result from the proposed stakeholder engagement is likely to improve stream conditions for salmon, Oregon chub, Pacific lamprey, and Western pond turtles.

- Appropriate community members representative of the geography will be engaged to develop a holistic approach for restoring and maintaining Island Park Slough. Future projects will likely include using river restoration techniques that will be paired with upstream green stormwater infrastructure and hard stormwater management structures.
- Appropriate communication techniques will be used to raise awareness about water quality concerns and generate support for stormwater infrastructure improvements and riparian restoration that can positively impact the communities' social, economic, and environmental health.
- The stakeholder engagement is designed to form collaborative partnerships across public and private community members to plan, fundraise, and implement future restoration efforts.
- The applicant will leverage skills of staff from nearby watershed councils and partners that have experience implementing stormwater related projects.

Concerns

- Future restoration to reduce pollutant load and attenuate floods will require multiple sizeable investments in large projects to achieve the watershed benefits envisioned for Island Park Slough.
- Since the community and businesses will be integral to initiating momentum and interest, a letter of support from a private business or community member would strengthen the application by demonstrating early supporters already exist.

Concluding Analysis

The holistic approach that will be taken to plan restoration at Island Park Slough is likely to succeed in leading to habitat benefits, addressing water quality concerns, and improving a community green space resource. The proposed community engagement and planning is necessary for any restoration solution to move forward.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount

$61,188

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$61,188

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3020-22575
Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement
Project Name: Scotts Mills Dam Removal Stakeholder Engagement
Applicant: Pudding River WC
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Marion
OWEB Request: $41,457
Total Cost: $61,532

Application Description

Project Location: Stakeholder engagement will be led by the Pudding River Watershed Council (PRWC) and take place primarily within the city of Scotts Mills. PRWC will engage residents of the City of Scotts Mills as well as residents in the surrounding rural area that have a Scotts Mills address.

Project Need: Scotts Mills Dam removal progress stalled in early 2020 because only one of three Marion County Commissioners expressed support for the project. Approval from one more Commissioner is needed in order to proceed with removal. Commissioners have often heard from the minority of residents who oppose removal because supporters have assumed that PRWC and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) would handle all necessary steps to secure removal. PRWC needs this stakeholder engagement grant to have the staff, travel, and materials resources necessary to engage supporters of removal like the City of Scotts Mills and many local residents. These local leaders, once organized and energized, can convince Marion County to allow PRWC and ODFW to move forward with dam removal.

Proposed Work: PRWC’s stakeholder engagement plan is to galvanize and mobilize dam removal supporters, educate and engage neutral and undecided residents, and listen and respond to the concerns raised by opponents. The result of this stakeholder engagement will be a powerful and united group of supporters who will effectively advocate for dam removal. Additionally, neutral residents will be well informed about plans for removal, and opponents of removal will have their concerns addressed and have a hand in crafting a historical monument to commemorate the dam.

Project Partners: PRWC’s primary partner in this engagement work is the City of Scotts Mills. Mayor Paul Brakeman, City Manager Robin Fornier, and the Scotts Mills City Council are all supportive of dam removal. PRWC will also work with Dave Stewart & the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), as well as the Clackamas SWCD.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application provides a clear description of the parties that need to be engaged and strategies that will be used to build support for removing Scotts Mills Dam.
- The proposed community engagement is needed to move a funded restoration project to implementation.
- Removing Scotts Mills Dam located on Butte Creek in the Pudding River Watershed will address a priority fish passage barrier and open 13 miles of spawning and rearing habitat to Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead and Chinook salmon.
- Future dam removal is already supported by members of the community, including the Scotts Mills' City manager, council, and mayor. This will provide a foundation for building broader support across the community needed for the project to move forward.
- Letters of support included in the application indicate project support from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Native Fish Society, and community members.
- The applicant has capacity to implement the proposed project with staff that has experience in grassroots community engagement.

Concerns

- A success indicator for objectives two and three in the application is receiving feedback from the community to determine whether outreach materials are effectively communicating facts about the project. It is unclear how the applicant will collect this feedback.
- While working with community members actively opposing dam removal is an identified outcome described in the application, it is unclear whether it is a priority compared to working with other target audiences. The applicant is encouraged to work with opponents to understand social barriers to removing the dam.

Concluding Analysis

Dam removal will improve needed fish passage upstream to habitat with cooler water temperatures. The extent of stream habitat that will be made more accessible to ESA-listed fish will provide significant ecological uplift. The proposed community engagement is necessary for the future removal of Scotts Mills Dam even though implementation funds are already secured for project.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

2 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount

$41,457

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$41,457

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3021-22604

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Protecting Habitat and Water Resources on Willamette Valley Farmland

Applicant: Oregon Agricultural Trust

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Polk

OWEB Request: $63,552

Total Cost: $85,512

Application Description 1) Oregon Agricultural Trust's (OAT's) stakeholder engagement project will partner with farmers and ranchers for conservation on privately owned agricultural (ag) lands in our Mid/South Willamette focus region encompassing parts of Washington, Clackamas, Yamhill, Polk, Marion, Benton, Linn, and Lane counties (see map) and all or part of 17 watershed councils.
2) This project will focus on three habitat types commonly found on Willamette Valley ag land: a) oak woodland and savannah, b) wildfire-prone forests, and c) anadromous fish habitat. Funding will enable OAT to build existing and new relationships with ag landowners to permanently protect their land with working land easements and participate in conservation activities funded by OWEB and/or NRCS.
Willamette Valley farmland is more at risk of fragmentation and development than any other region of Oregon. When farmland and its associated habitat is developed, any public investments in wildlife and watersheds are irrevocably lost. Moreover, landscape-scale conservation is much more efficient on land that is not fragmented. Therefore, using working land conservation easements to prevent development and fragmentation in the Willamette Valley will enable effective implementation of regional conservation efforts.
3) Project activities are: a) 8 outreach events (one per county) to a total of at least 80 ag landowners on how to use conservation tools to meet their business/succession planning goals, using outreach materials we developed in our 2021 OWEB Stakeholder grant; b) one-on-one meetings with 20 existing and new landowner partners; c) apply with partner organizations for a Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP) grant focusing on oak conservation on agricultural lands.
4) This project will lay the groundwork for an RCPP with: Willamette Partnership, Long Tom Watershed Council, Greenbelt Land Trust, Benton SWCD, Institute for Applied Ecology, US FWS and/or Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application describes strategies for engaging landowners to build interest in conservation easements that will contribute to preserving the Willamette Valley's native oak, forest, and riparian habitats located on agricultural lands.

- The proposed engagement with the Willamette agricultural community is modeled on a project that effectively used the same outreach approach in Southeast Oregon.
- Ninety percent of the Willamette is privately owned lands; recovering native species that rely on oak and riparian habitats will require working on private lands. Species recovery plans typically prioritize protecting habitat over restoration and conservation easements are a tool for accomplishing this protection.
- The landowner engagement will likely lead to opportunities for landowners to utilize programs such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and Regional Conservation Partnership Program, OWEB's Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetland Conservation Act Grant.
- The applicant is incorporating succession planning as part of the conversation with agricultural landowners. Succession plans are a tool for preventing farms from being converted to other uses and there currently is a lack of succession plans in place.
- There is a clear path from the proposed landowner engagement to potential on-the-ground protection and restoration projects.
- The applicant has relevant experience for implementing the proposed landowner engagement and a track record implementing similar work in other Oregon geographies.
- The project cost is reasonable in relation to the habitat protection benefits that will result from the expected conservation easements.

Concerns

- It is unclear from the application how the applicant plans to reach out to landowners to advertise the events and recruit attendance and whether the applicant has relationships in place to effectively engage target landowners in the Willamette.
- It is uncertain whether there is capacity in place and readily available funding if more landowners than expected express interest in pursuing easement projects.
- The prioritized geographies may be missing areas in the Willamette Valley with stronger land use pressure that could lead to agricultural lands being converted to development. The applicant clarified that interested landowners outside the priorities would not be excluded from pursuing a conservation easement project.

Concluding Analysis

Most priority habitats in the Willamette basin, including riparian, oak woodland, forest, wetland, and prairie, are located on private lands. Meaningful recovery of threatened and endangered species will rely on protection and restoration on private lands in addition to public lands. Conservation Easements provide a path to protect habitat first and establish locations for future restoration to build further ecological uplift.

The proposed engagement provides an opportunity to establish new options for agricultural landowners to participate in conservation and could serve as a model for working with landowners more broadly across the state.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount
$63,552

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$63,552

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering

Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3022-22617

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Uniting Stakeholders to Protect and Enhance Oregon White Oak Habitat in Lake Oswego

Applicant: Oswego Lake Watershed Council

Region: Willamette Basin

County: Clackamas

OWEB Request: $75,961

Total Cost: $125,761

Application Description

This project will take place in Lake Oswego, Oregon which contains remnant patches of historic Oregon white oak habitat. Need for this project stems from the imperiled status of Oregon white oak ecosystems, in which only a small fraction of historic oak habitat remains in our region. Among the biologically richest ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest, Oregon white oak prairie and woodlands support diverse plant and animal communities, and play a significant role in the culture and living heritage of Northwest Tribes. In spite of their ecological and cultural importance, oak habitat patches found in our watershed are generally poorly managed and often overgrown with competing plant species. In addition, many of these habitat patches are in close proximity to the urban-wildland interface where risk of catastrophic wildfire is of growing concern.

We have identified need for a cohesive management strategy of urban oak habitat in Lake Oswego. To engage regional stakeholders in this effort, we are proposing a rigorous community outreach project that includes a number of engagement strategies, such as landowner/HOA member surveys, presentations, community events and tours of successful restoration and hazardous fuel reduction sites.

Ultimately, our goal is to create a Lake Oswego Urban Oaks Action Plan to guide the preservation, restoration and management of our regional oak habitat on both public and private lands. Measures to protect against catestrophic wildfires will also be addressed. This Action Plan will be designed based on input from stakeholders and serve as a template for other urban communities in need of best practices to manage fragile urban/suburban oak habitat.

Numerous stakeholders are identified for this project, including private landowners, business owners, HOA members, the City of Lake Oswego Parks and Rec, LO School District, LO Fire Department, Clackamas SWCD and Metro.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- A large number of community members, including homeowners' associations, businesses, city planners, fire department, and schools, will be engaged to promote stewardship of oak habitat and fire resilient landscapes.
- A variety of communication strategies will be used.
- The Intertwine map of Oregon white oak data points was used to prioritize work.
- The applicant has worked with a homeowners' association on a hazardous fuels reduction project.

Concerns

- The communication strategies appear to focus on raising general awareness about oak issues; the expected path from this social effort to the urban oaks action plan and future restoration is unclear.
- There is a limited amount of oak habitat in urban areas and it is not quantified, so it is challenging to determine if an investment can lead to meaningful restoration with measurable ecological uplift.
- It is unclear from the application how the Indigenous Community will be engaged to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into the oak action plan. TEK is a placed-based knowledge; it is important to ensure people connected to the place are providing this information. Additional information explaining what the purpose is for engaging Native People or Tribes to incorporate TEK and how this will be done would be helpful for understanding the project success indicators related to TEK.
- Oak habitat restoration and fuels reduction to minimize wildfire risks seem conflated in the application. While the two actions can be compatible and utilizing the common concern for wildfire can effectively engage community involvement, it is important to ensure restoration goals remain a primary driver for the project. Additional clarity describing plans for maintaining oak habitat as the project focus while using messaging related to wildfire prevention to recruit community involvement would be helpful for understanding how the proposed engagement will lead to oak focused restoration.
- Information in the application proposed solution section does not align with the budget. For example, the narrative indicates surveys will be sent to 500 households and only 100 surveys are included in the budget. Also, significant costs are included in the budget for major outreach events; however, there is limited information in the narrative that describes these events and how they are designed to lead to an oak action plan and identifying future restoration. Finally, it is unclear how the urban oak action plan is part of the project because there does not appear to be corresponding costs in the budget.
- The project will engage private landowners with backyards that have only a few oaks. Working an "oak-by-oak" approach with urban landowners will likely contribute limited ecological uplift for oak habitat compared with working on larger acreage with oak.

Concluding Analysis

Oregon white oak ecosystems are highly imperiled in the Willamette Valley and promoting a community appreciation and stewardship for oak habitat and fire resilient landscapes through the proposed engagement is likely to provide a social benefit. Oak is sparse in urban areas and the path to ecologically significant restoration outcomes that could potentially result from the project is uncertain.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Willamette Basin (Region 3)

Application Number: 223-3023-22626
Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement
Project Name: PHCC Stakeholder Engagement
Applicant: Social Good Fund
Region: Willamette Basin
County: Multnomah
OWEB Request: $57,600
Total Cost: $79,579

Application Description The Portland Harbor Community Coalition is requesting funding to support a community engagement process to engage stakeholders in the cleanup and restoration of Willamette Cove located between river miles 6 and 7 on the Willamette River. The upland portions of the site cover approximately 24 acres and include approximately 3,000 acres of waterfront. Willamette Cove is part of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site which extends from river mile 1 to river mile 11 on the Willamette River and encompasses more than 2,000 acres. This stretch of river is the most polluted and degraded stretch of river in Oregon. In addition to industrial contamination, this stretch of river has been steepened, deepened, hardened, shallow water, riparian and floodplain habitat has been largely eliminated. The community has largely been cut off from the river for cultural and recreational activities. The degradation of Portland Harbor undermines recovery of all salmon utilizing the 187-mile-long Willamette River system as well as other fish, bird, mammal and invertebrate species.

Willamette Cove represents one of only a few publicly owned sites in the Portland Harbor Superfund Area and one of the best opportunities to restore fish and wild habitat, reconnect the community to the ecology of the river and honor tribal connections to the river that date back to time immemorial. Responsible parties including the State of Oregon, Port of Portland, City of Portland and Metro are current working with EPA and DEQ on remedial design plans for the river and upland area. Metro, which owns the uplands, is currently initiating a community-based planning process for the natural area. All public agencies involved in this project have agreed to a community-based public involvement process led by the Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC). The PHCC was founded in 2012 to elevate the voices of historically marginalize communities in the Superfund cleanup and restoration process.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- There is a clear need for restoration in the Portland Harbor and Willamette Cove provides an opportunity for improving habitat connectivity.
- The applicant has established trust with the community and has experience implementing outreach with diverse communities and helping marginalized community voices be heard.

- The timeline for the proposed community engagement is reasonable and this project will ensure the community is able to participate in setting priorities for the future Willamette Cove nature park.

Concerns

- The application lacks details needed to understand the project scope of work, how each objective will be executed, and how the proposed community engagement will lead to future restoration.
- A broad spectrum of community members will be engaged; however, the target messages for these audiences and how this messaging is expected to tie into potential restoration are unclear.
- It is unclear how target audiences will be contacted, there are no costs associated with outreach materials in the budget.
- Superfund cleanup projects are complex and unpredictable; unexpected roadblocks can slow progress. There is potential that any possible future restoration will not occur in the near term.
- The application lacks support letters indicating the parties responsible for the site, including City of Portland, Metro, Environmental Protection Agency, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, support the proposed stakeholder engagement. For example, a support letter from Metro describing how the proposed stakeholder engagement will help with their future work on the site would provide evidence for how this work can lead to future restoration.
- More detail is needed to understand the “Honorariums to Community Participants” included in the budget. While honorariums are an effective method to remove financial barriers to participation and ensure diverse voices are participating in the conversation, it is unclear how these honorariums will be managed. Additional detail describing the expectations from these honorariums and how the applicant plans to decide to offer them and select who shall receive them would be helpful for understanding the outcomes for this cost.

Concluding Analysis

Willamette Cove has potential for providing migration corridor habitat benefits for native fish migrating from streams such as the McKenzie and Clackamas Rivers on their way out to the ocean. It is unclear from the application what types of restoration might be considered and could result from the proposed community engagement conversations. Additional information is needed to understand the potential for the project to lead to a watershed benefit.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Region 4: Central Oregon

Central Oregon - Region 4 Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations

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Funding Recommendation

- Staff Recommendation For Funding (SRF)
- Below Funding Line (BFL)

Previous Grants 1998 - Spring 2022

- Land Acquisition
- Restoration
- Region 4 Cities
- Region 4 Streams
- OWEB Region 4 Boundary

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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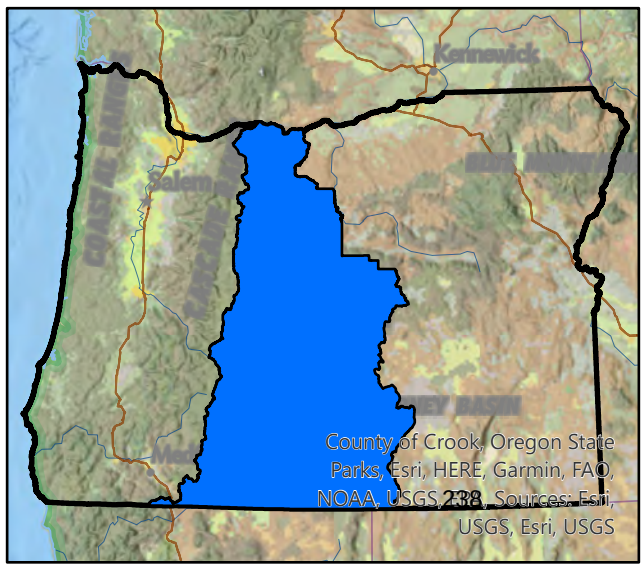


Region 4 - Central Oregon Restoration

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-4006	Deschutes Land Trust	Ochoco Preserve Restoration - Phase 2	Stream and floodplain restoration will continue along private property on the Crooked River downstream of Prineville. Restoration will enhance fish and wildlife habitat.	689,365	Crook
223-4007	Trout Unlimited Inc	Annie Creek Non-Native Fish Barrier and Screening	A dam on Annie Creek will be installed keep invasive brook trout from moving upstream and support future bull trout reintroduction.	245,718	Klamath
223-4000	Lakeview SWCD	North Warner Rangeland Health Project	Rangeland conservation will be implemented across a large landscape to restore core sage steppe habitat for sage-grouse.	496,571	Lake
223-4002	Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council	Lake County All Lands Restoration Initiative Mini FIP Phase II	Private forests adjacent to public lands will be thinned, and thinning debris piles burned to restore wildlife habitat and connectivity in the North Warner and Thomas Creek project areas.	397,432	Lake

Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff	1,829,086

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-4003	Crooked River WC	Foley Butte Holistic Restoration	Stream and upland conservation actions will be implemented to improve habitat for fish and wildlife in the Upper McKay Creek drainage in Crook County. The project will remove encroaching western juniper, protect aspen stands, install livestock exclusion fencing, develop springs for better grazing management, and treat weeds.	185,420	Crook

223-4001	Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council	Summer Lake All Lands Restoration	Private landowners adjacent to Winter Rim and Summer Lake will be engaged to implement forest thinning and juniper removal along forest that is flanked by three recent mega wildfires. The project will improve wildlife habitat and build future wildfire resilience.	259,368	Lake

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-4004	Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council	Upper Drews Creek Fish Passage	259,578	Lake
223-4005	Trout Unlimited Inc	South Fork Sprague Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration	191,689	Lake
223-4008	Crooked River WC	Silva Ranch In-Stream Restoration Phase I	203,609	Crook
223-4009	Hood River WC	Tony Creek Fish Passage Restoration Project	245,356	Hood River

Region 4 - Central Oregon Technical Assistance

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-4010	Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation	Restoring Ecological Connectivity via Wildlife Overcrossings in Southwest Oregon	Project designs will be developed for two Interstate 5 overpasses south of Ashland that will provide safe wildlife passage.	74,813	Jackson

223-4012	Crook SWCD	Crooked River Watershed Sage-Grouse Conservation IV	Private landowners will be engaged to develop Site Specific Plans (SSP) for blueprints to restore high-priority sage-grouse habitat.	74,987	Crook
Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				149,800	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-4011	OSU Office of Sponsored Research & Award Admin	Armstrong OWEB 2022	73,282	Klamath
223-4013	Hood River WS Group	Hood Reiver Basin Partnership Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring Plan	42,257	Hood River

Region 4 - Central Oregon Stakeholder Engagement

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-4014	Deschutes River Conservancy	Trout Creek Stakeholder Engagement Project	Landowners in the Trout Creek watershed will be engaged to facilitate future land and water acquisitions and on-the-ground restoration.	81,318	Jefferson
Total Stakeholder Engagement Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				81,318	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
None				

Region 4 Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**2,060,204**

Region 1 - 6 Grand Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**13,027,997**

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4000-22499

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: North Warner Rangeland Health Project

Applicant: Lakeview SWCD

Region: Central Oregon

County: Lake

OWEB Request: $496,571

Total Cost: $1,021,834

Application Description The North Warner high desert is home to a variety of critical habitats and a multitude of wildlife species, such as sage grouse, mule deer and the Warner Sucker. Located within the Twelvemile Creek, Fish Creek and McDowell Creek Watersheds are the Fitzgerald Partner's Inc. and the Taylor Ranch Inc. landowners, both highly valued properties by both wildlife and rangeland species.

The proposed project area is on private lands that are covered under a Sage Grouse CCAA in which the Lakeview SWCD engages private landowners in 30-year voluntary conservation actions in exchange for certain assurances should sage grouse be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Lakeview SWCD, Lakeview BLM, Fitzgerald Partner's Inc. and Taylor Ranch Inc. proposes to initiate a project that continues their efforts to implement identified conservation actions under their CCAA Site Specific Plans that will improve sage grouse habitat as well as rangeland health and increasing resistant and resilient landscapes.

OWEB's financial assistance will help remove 1768.2 acres of juniper, 552.4 acres invasive annual grass treatments, 10 spring developments, one additional trough, 11 wildlife escape ramps, 5280 feet of fence construction and 30,543 feet of fence marking as part of a larger landscape scale project with the Lakeview BLM to improve sage grouse habitat and sage-steppe ecosystem health. OWEB funds will be used for juniper treatment, invasive annual grass treatments, wildlife escape ramps, fence construction and fence marking, spring developments, post monitoring, project management and travel expenses.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application provides sufficient detail regarding proposed conservation activities that will address high priority ecological threats impacting sage grouse habitat. It is clear how each restoration treatment will be implemented, which will include juniper removal, invasive annual grass control, wildlife-friendly spring developments, and fence installation.
- The actions identified are included in Site Specific Plans (SSP) developed for the two project properties as part of the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) program approved by USFWS.

- The fencing and spring developments will improve livestock distribution thus allowing native vegetation vigor to recover, which will increase forage for a plethora of wildlife species utilizing the sagebrush steppe habitat.
- The proposed conservation actions will provide habitat benefits for mule deer in an area that is identified as a high priority by ODFW's mule deer initiative.
- The project area is adjacent to other conservation work implemented by BLM and other private landowners that improved habitat for fish and wildlife species. The proposed restoration will provide improved connectivity of enhanced habitat with these previously restored sites.
- The applicant, landowner, and partners have relevant experience with implementing the conservation actions proposed.
- The landowners' commitment to conservation is demonstrated by the previous restoration accomplished on their properties.
- The project costs are appropriate, especially the per acre rate for juniper removal.

Concerns

- It is unclear why there are different rates for fencing costs associated with spring exclusion and cross fencing.
- The proposed herbicide application rate of 8 ounces per acre seems a little high and potential overspray could cause detriment and harm to native forbs. Additional information is needed to understand why this herbicide application rate is preferred and precautions that will be made to protect existing native forbs.

Concluding Analysis

A landscape scale approach is proposed to address key limiting factors affecting sage grouse conservation in Lake County's Warner Valley. The entire project area is considered core or low-density sage grouse habitat, and at least five known 'leks' or strutting grounds are located within a mile of the proposed treatment sites. There is a high likelihood of success for the proposed restoration actions to provide habitat benefits for sage grouse and other native wildlife. The applicant is encouraged to revisit the herbicide application rate for annual invasive grasses to consider potential negative impacts to native forbs.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount

$496,571

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

NA

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$496,571

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4001-22531
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Summer Lake All Lands Restoration
Applicant: Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council
Region: Central Oregon
County: Lake
OWEB Request: $259,638
Total Cost: $520,879

Application Description 1) The Summer Lake All Lands project area will focus on an approximately 300 acres within an overall 8,000 acre area with multiple ownerships. The project area is flanked by three megafire scars and the US Forest Service has been focused on conducting thinning treatments to the boundaries.
2) These areas are the last forested stands at risk of wildfire. Juniper encroachment as a result of previous fires would contribute to fuel loading that could lead wildfires to multiple permanent and temporary residences. The area has been surveyed for pre-wildfire roads and contingency lines within a grant agreement between the USFS and the High Desert Rangeland Fire Protection Association (HDRFPA).
3) The implementation of a thinning project could successfully complete a wildfire contingency line between the USFS/BLM and the private lands, Additionally, the treatment would improve watershed function in five sub-watersheds of the region.
4) Partners would include Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council, BLM, USFS, ODF, ODFW, HDRFPA and private landowners

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Some of the last remaining green forests around Summer Lake not impacted by previous wildfires will be thinned to create and protect a healthy, resilient, and functional forest landscape.
- The map included in the application displays previous scars in the area caused by high severity wildfire, which indicates there is a timely need for addressing dense fuel stands in these last remaining forest habitats.
- The applicant and partners have a long history of working together implementing similar forest health projects.
- The private landowners in Summer Lake are receptive to the type of tree thinning work proposed and support forest health practices on their land.
- Numerous species of wildlife will benefit from the restored forest habitat that is less likely to be impacted by severe wildfires in the future.

Concerns

- The application lacks a description of the quantified watershed benefit expected from the proposed forest health thinning treatments. For example, the application lacks details describing how the

project will benefit various wildlife species, which was clarified during the site visit.

- The ecological benefits from using brush mastication as proposed in objective 2 in the application is unclear. Specific information describing the habitat that will be improved and species that will benefit would provide helpful context for understanding the technical soundness of this approach for removing fuel.
- There are no maps included in the application that show exactly where the forest health treatments will occur, the maps provided are at a coarse scale and do not identify specific treatment areas. It is difficult to evaluate the ecological value of the restoration investment without knowing where the 300 acres of proposed treatments will occur in the 8,000-acre project area.

Concluding Analysis

Forest health treatments will be completed on some of the last remaining green forests near Summer Lake, an area that has been plagued by previous wildfires. The project approach of engaging private landowners to complete small tree thinning has proven to be effective. The current project builds off previous restoration accomplished by the applicant and partners. For future applications, the applicant is encouraged to demonstrate in greater detail the ecological value of these types of forest health projects using maps and text describing wildlife ranges and providing fine scale maps of proposed treatment areas targeted for OWEB investment.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
6 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$259,638

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4002-22532

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Lake County All Lands Restoration Initiative Mini FIP Phase II

Applicant: Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council

Region: Central Oregon

County: Lake

OWEB Request: $397,432

Total Cost: $3,010,437

Application Description 1) The Lake County All Lands Restoration Initiative Mini Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) Phase II project will continue to focus on the North Warner and Thomas Creek areas located adjacent to each other. These projects combined are referred to as the Lake County All Lands Restoration Initiative. In lieu of not being awarded our full FIP application in 2022 due to falling below the funding recommendation line, we are decreasing our original geographic range while still hoping to maintain the forward momentum of forest health improvements through a second phase of a mini FIP which will echo all the same goals and objectives as the FIP but at a much smaller scale. The original FIP total area covers 402,400 acres, this mini FIP will cover about 278,633 acres (see Map 6, Zone 1 and 2) near the communities of Lakeview and Valley Falls. This project area includes high concentrations of old legacy ponderosa pine forests; and habitat for priority species.
2) Within the last year alone we have lost over 100,000 acres within this project area to wildfires (Patton Meadow and Cougar Peak). Past and current management practices, including fire exclusion, have left forests in dry regions stressed from drought, overcrowding, and uncharacteristic insect and disease outbreaks. The increase in size and severity of wildland fires is causing ecological, social, and economic damage. The departure from historic fire patterns is also having an impact on water, wildlife habitat, stream function, large and old tree structure, and soil integrity.
3) We plan to continue the thinning treatments of dry ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests in the North Warner project area and expand thinning efforts in Thomas Creek project area (333 acres on private land, 2666 acres on USFS). Additionally we will perform conifer encroachment in aspen and meadows (258 acres of private land and 633 acres of USFS land).
4) LCUWC, KLFHP, USFS, ODF, NRCS, OSU, ODFW, LCCWMA

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project builds off previous OWEB investments in the Lake County geography that targeted forest health treatments on private lands adjacent to public lands in a cross boundary landscape scale restoration effort. This included a previously awarded OWEB technical assistance grant to develop treatment prescriptions on private lands.

- The focus on enhancing aspen and meadow habitats in conjunction with forested habitats will benefit a wide variety of wildlife species.
- The application provides a clear description of the potential ecological value expected from the project and includes citations demonstrating how the proposed restoration efforts are identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy to restore habitat for multiple wildlife species.
- The applicant and partners have a long history of working together implementing similar type forest health projects.
- The private landowners in North Warner and Thomas Creek are receptive to the type of tree thinning work proposed and support forest health practices on their land.
- The applicant and partners have a strategic action plan that identifies and prioritizes the proposed thinning work to create a healthy, resilient, and functional forest landscape.
- The forest health treatments sites are adjacent to areas targeted for projects that will address fish passage concerns, which together will build connectivity across ridgetop to ridgetop conservation efforts.

Concerns

- It is unclear where forest health treatments will occur across the large North Warners and Thomas Creek geography. The maps provided in the application are at too coarse of a scale and do not identify specific treatment areas within the 278,633-acre project area.

Concluding Analysis

The project will continue forest health restoration in Lake County's Thomas Creek and Warner Mountain focus areas. Large severe wildfires have plagued Lake County in recent years, which has elevated the need for thinning green forests to protect functional forest landscapes for native fish and wildlife species. For future applications, the applicant is encouraged to demonstrate in greater detail the ecological value of these types of forest health projects using maps and text describing wildlife ranges and providing fine scale maps of proposed treatment areas targeted for OWEB investment.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

4 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount

$397,432

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$397,432

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4003-22540
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Foley Butte Holistic Restoration
Applicant: Crooked River WC
Region: Central Oregon
County: Crook
OWEB Request: $185,420
Total Cost: $360,357

Application Description Foley Butte Ranch, located in the northwest corner of Crook County, Oregon, encompasses 30,655 acres of timberland, creeks, meadows, and mountains. This property is known for its abundant wildlife species, including Mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, Cougars, Black bears, Bobcats, coyotes, grouse, chukar, and native fish species in the creeks. Within the Foley Butte property, there are several different HUC-6 watersheds, for this grant the focus will be on the Allen Creek Watershed. Working on a large property of this size offers a unique chance for large scale watershed restoration work throughout the uplands, and several different headwaters of tributaries to McKay creek, with McKay creek being a main tributary to the Crooked River. This application will address several limiting factors identified in this area by working with the partners to address habitat needs on a holistic landscape scale.
2. This specific project area has suffered from past grazing management regimes that have allowed cattle to overgraze the riparian corridors along streams throughout this property, causing native vegetation to be nearly void along the riparian areas. Grazing management has also led to the encroachment of western juniper, and the decline of forbs, shrubs, and quaking aspen.
3. Project elements include cutting 88.2 acres of encroached Western Junipers, protecting and enhancing 5 acres of sensitive aspen stands by removing encroaching conifers and 4-strand wildlife-friendly fencing. Six springs will be developed with one spring including an above ground cistern for emergency wildfire water storage. 17.84 acres of CREP will be enrolled along Allen Creek, with VerticalPost Structures and large wood, enhancing the riparian corridor, an additional 4 acres of non-CREP riparian fence will be installed in the uplands, lastly 7 acres of weed treatment.
4. Project partners include the following: CRWC, Nuveen Natural Capital, Crooked River Weed Management Area, and Crook County SWCD.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has a clear description of the proposed restoration actions and how the areas proposed for implementation were chosen.
- The landowner is new to the area, has a strong interest in conservation, and is actively engaging local partners to develop restoration plans to improve fish and wildlife habitat.

- The wildlife friendly exclusion fence along the riparian areas and aspen stands will serve as an effective tool for managing livestock while promoting native plant protection and vigor.
- The upland spring developments will facilitate improved livestock distribution and remove their dependence on riparian areas to access water.
- The instream habitat structures proposed for Allen Creek are likely to improve aquatic habitat conditions for juvenile and adult fish. This stream is designated as critical habitat for Mid-Columbia Steelhead.
- The applicant is engaging appropriate partners to assist with implementation of the conservation actions. The application includes support letters documenting how partners plan to engage in this project.

Concerns

- There is no grazing management plan attached to the application and the application narrative does not indicate the landowner has established such plans. Without information describing how grazing will be managed throughout the property, it is unclear how restoration investments will be protected.
- The CREP component described in objective 3 of the application could add a lot of value for enhancing habitat; however, there are currently no contracts in place. According to the application, CREP enrollment is planned for fall of 2024. It is unclear why it will not be pursued earlier. CREP is critical to the project's success and is a large part of the overall match contribution, integrating it early into project planning and implementation will increase the likelihood for the project to succeed.
- The application budget includes funds for plant establishment. If a property is enrolled in CREP, OWEB funds cannot be used for plant establishment activities for CREP funded plantings.
- It is unclear how the lump sum match from the Crook County CWMA aligns with the project objectives and actions. Noxious weed treatments are planned for only seven acres, which will not require the $78,000 listed in the budget from the CWMA.
- Installing vertical post structures and large wood debris to increase stream sinuosity and lateral migration may not be effective in the high gradient transport stream reaches targeted for restoration in Allen Creek. Additional information describing the site's hydrologic context and how the restoration approach was selected for the site conditions is needed to evaluate technical soundness and better understand whether the objective can be met as proposed.

Concluding Analysis

A new landowner with a strong interest in fish and wildlife conservation that recently purchased a 30,000-acre ranch on Allen Creek in the Crooked River watershed will be engaged to restore 115 acres of upland, aspen, and riparian habitats. The actions outlined in the application present a holistic suite of restoration activities that are likely to improve habitat for upland species and aquatic species, including Rocky Mountain elk, Mule deer, steelhead, and Redband trout. The applicant is encouraged to work with the landowner to develop a grazing management plan and pursue CREP enrollment as soon as possible to ensure all conservation actions proposed are aligned with one another.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

5 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$185,420

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4004-22553
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Upper Drews Creek Fish Passage
Applicant: Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council
Region: Central Oregon
County: Lake
OWEB Request: $259,578
Total Cost: $326,078

Application Description Drews Valley Ranch is located 21 miles west of Lakeview in Lake County, Oregon. The 11,400-acre ranch is surrounded by the Fremont-Winema National Forest and includes nine miles of streams, eight tributary creeks, a reservoir, and grassy wet meadows. The ranch is home to more than 185 species of birds, fish, and mammals, including the bald eagle and red-band trout.

The Upper Drews Creek Fish Passage Project was initiated in the summer of 2020 as the Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council secured an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Technical Assistance grant to survey the project sites and develop a 60% design plan to address fish passage, stream function, and aspen die off. The lower diversion is a fish passage barrier when boards are in place, which is a critical time fish migrate upstream to spawn.

A design plan has been developed and cost estimates have been retained from a local engineering firm. The Council is seeking construction funds to implement work to restore fish passage at an irrigation diversion on Drews Creek to provide access upstream, while maintaining flood irrigation to the wet meadows. The project will compliment and build upon several conservation actions that have been executed on the ranch over the last three decades, including a conservation easement, four fish screens, improved fish passage, crossing fencing, and off-site water developments.

Project Partners involve Drews Valley Ranch, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Anderson Engineering and Surveying.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Previous project evaluations concerns were addressed in this resubmitted project application by removing the instream treatments associated with the aspen stand.
- The fish passage solution will support volitional movement of fish and lamprey, which are of high importance in Drews Creek. This project will make available an additional 1.5 stream miles of stream habitat.

- The applicant is working with a private landowner that has implemented previous fish passage solutions on other parts of the ranch as well as enrolled a portion of the property in a conservation easement.
- The ditch associated with the water diversion proposed for modification is already screened to ensure no fish are entrained in irrigation ditches.
- The applicant has successfully implemented similar type fish passage projects.

Concerns

- There is a known fish passage barrier 1.5 miles upstream of the project location, and downstream there is no fish passage on Drews Reservoir. These barriers are limiting movement of aquatic species, which limits their ability to access habitat and for populations to exchange genetic diversity that may be important to population viability. This limits the potential benefit that could be gained from the investment.
- It is unclear how the hardened stream crossing described in objective 4 of the application will effectively protect the stream when there are no plans to install associated fencing. Without fencing to exclude livestock from the stream, the riparian plantings will likely be browsed on and other parts of the stream channel will be utilized by livestock. It is unclear how the overall grazing management approach will ensure restoration investments will be protected.
- The design plan for the bank reshaping and large wood placement incorporates bank armoring that seem aggressive and unnecessary. Treating only 110 feet of streambank on one side of the stream will likely address localized symptoms and not root causes leading to streambank failure. The application lacks information describing how the proposed treatment approaches for restoring a segment of streambank along one side of Drews Creek will enhance habitat.

Concluding Analysis

The project seeks to address fish passage and streambank failure along Drews Creek in Lake County. Due to passage barriers located both upstream and downstream of the project site and restoration methods that are not clearly defined, it is likely limited fish and wildlife habitat will result from this project for the cost.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

NA

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4005-22555

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: South Fork Sprague Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration

Applicant: Trout Unlimited Inc

Region: Central Oregon

County: Lake

OWEB Request: $191,689

Total Cost: $241,873

Application Description The Sprague River watershed in the Upper Klamath Basin once supported thriving riparian ecosystems and abundant native fish populations in the arid high desert of the eastern Cascades. However, land use change post-European settlement has reduced instream flows, incised stream channels, removed riparian vegetation, and decreased instream and riparian habitat resulting in precipitous population declines of native fish including ESA-listed endangered C'waam (Lost River Sucker, Deltistes luxatus) and Koptu (Shortnose Sucker, Chasmistes brevirostris) and threatened Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus). Further, climate change and high-severity wildfires are adding additional pressure to this already fragile system. Recognizing the importance of the South Fork Sprague River to the long-term recovery of native fish species, a diverse group of partners (e.g., Trout Unlimited, USFWS, ODFW, Green Diamond Resource Company) is undergoing an ambitious effort to restore fluvial processes and vast riparian corridors using Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration (LTPBR) techniques. LTPBR, which utilizes hand-built non-permanent structures to increase surface water residence time, groundwater storage, floodplain connectivity, in-channel habitat complexity, and ecosystem resilience, implemented at a watershed-scale will greatly improve habitat conditions for aquatic species and improve resiliency to drought and wildfire. Further, LTPBR efforts will help reduce suspended sediment and nutrient concentrations that contribute to algae blooms and associated poor water quality in Upper Klamath Lake and the Klamath River. Project activities will occur in two reaches of the South Fork Sprague Basin (i.e., South Fork Sprague mainstem and Whitworth Creek) which has been identified as a high priority restoration area by the Upper Klamath Basin Watershed Action Plan (UKBWAP) and the Klamath Basin Integrated Fisheries Restoration and Monitoring Plan (IFRMP).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Installing beaver dam analogues (BDA) and post assisted log structures (PALS) is an appropriate restoration approach for the project area located along the South Fork Sprague River. Historically the low gradient stretch of river would be full of beaver complexes.
- There is evidence of existing beaver populations adjacent to the project area, suggesting they could move into this area and build upon installed restoration structures.

- The project area is downstream of the Bootleg fire complex. The instream structures will aid in trapping and storing sediment, which is important to improving water quality by limiting the mobility of phosphorus laden sediments downstream.
- The applicant and consultant have experience implementing similar types of instream projects in nearby streams.
- The landowner support for the project is demonstrated by a letter of support. The landowner will also identify and provide tree material for use in the instream habitat structures.

Concerns

- Livestock utilize the project area; however, the application lacks a grazing management plan describing how restoration investments will be protected from future livestock use. Livestock could negatively impact the restoration potential, more information is needed to understand how the land will be utilized by livestock to evaluate whether this project can successfully achieve expected ecological outcomes.
- The application lacks project designs needed to evaluate technical soundness of the restoration approach. Design information is needed to determine whether the instream structures will be built for the site-specific conditions to achieve the intended ecological output.
- The project budget is comprised of lump sums with no explanation as to how costs were developed. Without site specific designs indicating what the structures will look like and where they will be installed on the landscape, it difficult to understand whether the costs are reasonable and appropriate for the proposed work and evaluate cost effectiveness.

Concluding Analysis

The proposed project concept of improving instream habitat complexity and floodplain connectivity along the South Fork Sprague River utilizing BDAs and PALS is likely appropriate for this location. The application, however, lacks details and specifics relating to designs, grazing management, and budget development needed to evaluate the project likelihood for success. If the application is resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to address these concerns.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

NA

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4006-22564
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Ochoco Preserve Restoration - Phase 2
Applicant: Deschutes Land Trust
Region: Central Oregon
County: Crook
OWEB Request: $689,365
Total Cost: $3,364,365

Application Description Ochoco Preserve (Preserve) Restoration – Phase 2 near Prineville, Oregon is the second step in a multi-year, multi-phased restoration effort that supports the reintroduction of spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead and helps to achieve the restoration of self-sustaining upland, wetland, floodplain, and stream ecological processes. Over the past 150 years, landscape changes have occurred on the Preserve in order to facilitate agricultural practices. Common land manipulations such as stream relocation, straightening, armoring, and diking have transpired. Further, most oxbows and wetlands were filled and leveled. The ecological value of the Preserve has been drastically reduced. This project is designed in order to allow Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River to access floodplains to the maximum extent possible with consideration for risk and constructibility. This will allow for a more sustainable project over time, where dynamic stream processes occur, the floodplain is frequently accessed, and variable habitats form that are able to support all life stages of anadromous and resident fish.

Significant land manipulation must occur in order to reset the current channelized conditions on both systems . Therefore, heavy equipment will be used to construct stream channels, off-channel habitats, wetlands, floodplains, and uplands across about 86 acres of the Preserve. The length of Ochoco Creek and the Crooked River will nearly double. Much of the increased length will include complex habitats suitable for Chinook and steelhead rearing. For example, the newly created Ochoco Creek will contain 3,390 feet of side channels, 34 pools, and 35 riffles.

Our primary partners include the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland General Electric, City of Prineville, Crook County, U.S. Forest Service, Crooked River Watershed Council, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application provides detailed objectives tied directly to ecological outcomes.

- The project is a second phase of a multi-year, multi-phased effort that will support the reintroduction of spring Chinook salmon and summer steelhead in Ochoco Creek by restoring self-sustaining upland, wetland, floodplain, and stream ecological processes. Previously completed restoration will provide insight and lessons learned moving forward that can be used to inform phase two restoration actions.
- The project is addressing key limiting factors affecting native fish, including the lack of juvenile rearing and adult spawning habitat. Restoration actions planned are specifically geared towards supporting the reintroduction of salmon and steelhead, which will have access to the newly created habitat resulting from the proposed investment.
- The applicant owns the land and will protect it in perpetuity for the purpose of conservation of fish and wildlife habitat.
- The project is ready for implementation with construction level designs, secured permits, and a contractor selected to do the work that is familiar with the site and its constraints after constructing the phase one project.
- The landowner has staff dedicated towards project implementation in addition to a dedicated pool of volunteers that can help with planting and stewardship.
- The planting plan was developed by a local botanist that has worked on similar type projects with the applicant on other conservation properties in Central Oregon.

Concerns

- With phase one of the project just completed, the applicant and partners have not yet assessed whether this phase is effectively achieving the desired ecological outputs. There may be a missed opportunity to learn more from how the restored habitat is performing as a result of the previously completed phase.
- Alternative restoration strategies that were considered are not described in the application. Additional information is needed to better understand how and why the selected high cost, highly engineered approach was selected over potential lower cost, low tech approaches to achieve the expected ecological outcomes.

Concluding Analysis

The project will continue the applicant’s strategy to restore floodplain connectivity and aquatic habitat along McKay and Ochoco Creeks as well as along the mainstem Crooked River. The approach, technique, and anticipated outcomes associated with this project is deemed necessary and essential by project partners for the reintroduction of salmon and steelhead past the Pelton dam complex to be successful.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

1 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount

$689,365

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

NA

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$689,365

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4007-22581
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Annie Creek Non-Native Fish Barrier and Screening
Applicant: Trout Unlimited Inc
Region: Central Oregon
County: Klamath
OWEB Request: $245,718
Total Cost: $552,396

Application Description 1) The proposed project will occur on Annie Creek, a tributary of the Wood River in Klamath County, Oregon. 2) The project will assist in preparing the Annie Creek watershed for reintroduction of Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus). 3) Bull Trout historically occupied the Annie Creek watershed, but have been extirpated since the 1980s, at the latest. The Klamath Recovery Unit Implementation Plan for Bull Trout calls for the establishment of additional local populations in historically occupied streams or those that have suitable cold-water habitats. Therefore, Annie Creek has been identified by management agencies in the Upper Klamath Basin as a priority location for reintroduction of Bull Trout. One of the first steps in preparing a watershed for Bull Trout reintroduction is the construction of a non-native fish barrier. The purpose of such a barrier is to prevent non-native fish from accessing a specific river reach upstream of the barrier. This creates a refuge for Bull Trout, in which hybridization and competition risks from non-native fish are eliminated. A similar strategy has been implemented in nearby Sun Creek, which has resulted in an increase in Bull Trout abundance. Project partners have identified an appropriate site on Annie Creek to construct this barrier. This application requests funding to construct and install a barrier. Importantly, the barrier will include a fish trap which will allow management agencies to selectively pass native fish upstream of the barrier. Additionally, funding will be used to install a fish screen at the project site to eliminate entrainment risks to native fish in the irrigation infrastructure. 4) Project partners include Crater Lake National Park, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and private water users.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project focuses on setting the stage for Bull trout reintroduction to Annie Creek, where historically the species was present but is no longer. Annie Creek is the highest priority for Bull trout reintroduction given its habitat abundance and cool water.
- The project is targeting the biggest threat to Bull trout recovery by working methodically to reduce and ultimately remove Brook trout that compete and hybridize with Bull trout. The technique that will be employed to remove and keep Brook trout out of the stream has been successfully used along the adjacent Sun Creek.
- The applicant and its long list of dedicated partners have an effective working relationship and have the appropriate experience to design and monitor the effectiveness of the project.

- The Klamath Recovery Unit for the threatened Bull trout was severely impacted by recent wildfires, including the 2021 Bootleg fire. Recent surveys suggest six of the eight Bull trout streams no longer have Bull trout present. There is urgency for investing in this project to support recovery of Bull trout populations.
- Annie Creek has potential for seeing anadromous steelhead fish return once the mainstem Klamath River dams are removed. Designs for the dam that will be installed to prevent Brook trout from affecting Bull trout populations will include a fish ladder should steelhead begin to arrive at the project location and require passage.
- Project costs seem reasonable and were estimated based on the nearby Sun Creek project as a proxy for developing project costs and monitoring needed to evaluate project effectiveness.

Concerns

- There are no concerns with this project.

Concluding Analysis

The project resulted from previous efforts on Annie Creek to restore volitional fish passage. The opportunity for Bull trout reintroduction is the highest priority due to the limited opportunities for recovery of this native fish population. For the reintroduction to be successful, the proposed dam must be built to remove and keep out Brook trout who are predatory and detrimental to Bull trout. The project presents a methodical approach and timeline to reintroduce Bull trout to one of its historical stream habitats in the Upper Klamath Basin.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$245,718

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$245,718

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4008-22610
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Silva Ranch In-Stream Restoration Phase 1
Applicant: Crooked River WC
Region: Central Oregon
County: Crook
OWEB Request: $203,609
Total Cost: $328,589

Application Description 1)The proposed work takes place on the Silva Ranch, located within the LCRSR area, approximately 4.5 miles northwest of Prineville. The Project reach extends from approximately River Mile (RM) 43 to RM 44.3.

2) The Crooked River Watershed Council and Natural Resources Conservation Service, through a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), are working with private landowners between the City of Prineville and Smith Rocks State Park to implement the Lower Crooked River Strategic Restoration (LCRSR). The LCRSR is a comprehensive project intended to address key watershed deficiencies as recognized by the Mid-C Steelhead Recovery Plan (ODFW 2010), NRCS Hydrology Study (NRCS 2010), Lower Crooked River Watershed Assessment (CRWC 2008), and Deschutes Sub basin Plan (DBWG 2008) which all include an element of degraded fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and riparian plant communities within the 17-mile reach of the Mainstem Crooked River in Central Oregon.

3) A multi-phased approach is being used to implement smaller sections of the sprawling property, which will be fully designed and permitted through NRCS RCPP Funds. The Silva Ranch Improvements Phase 1 will include 1,200' linear feet of restoration treatments, Large Wood Structures, Bank Sloping/Planting, Existing Side Channel Connection at Base Flow, Habitat Promoting Features inside Channel. The proposed project will aid in Steelhead and Chinook Salmon reintroduction efforts in the Greater Deschutes Basin, specifically for water quality, Juvenile out-migrating habitat, and potential for adult holdover structure and water quality.

4) Specific project partners include Portland General Electric, Crooked River Ditch Company, Crooked River Weed Management Area, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, City of Prineville, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Sloping back streambanks, using large wood structure, and restoring riparian vegetation to stabilize

the bank can be a sound approach for arresting erosion.

- The project engineer has relevant experience designing bank stabilization solutions.
- The proposed restoration actions will tie directly into work just completed by the neighboring Deschutes Land Trust, building connectivity among restoration investments.
- The activation of the side channel at ordinary high water will provide much needed rearing habitat for juvenile fish.
- The large wood and rootwads will likely provide some cover and refugia habitat for fish.
- Bank sloping will provide a better soil medium for establishing riparian vegetation, as opposed to direct planting into an incised streambank.
- The project is part of a larger focus by the applicant and partners through the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The match funding provided by NRCS is secured and will support final design development and permitting.

Concerns

- Only one side of the Crooked River will be treated. There may be a potential missed opportunity by not engaging the neighboring landowner to also participate in the project. This could maximize the potential watershed benefit and mitigate any potential lateral stream migration onto the neighboring property that could result from the proposed restoration.
- The application indicates the proposed project is phase one of a larger conservation effort on the property. It is unclear what future phases will entail and exactly how this project will complement future efforts.
- The application lacks a grazing management plan. Without such a plan that includes utilizing riparian fencing to prevent livestock from having access to the stream, it is unclear how restoration investments will be protected.
- The stream temperature benefits from the project may be overstated in the application, given the small footprint of proposed riparian revegetation.
- The application indicates the landowner plans to enroll into CREP; however, no timeline is provided for when this will occur.
- The application lacks details needed to evaluate whether revegetation plans are likely to succeed. It is unclear how the proposed seeding will be implemented, more detail on the seeding mechanism and rate per specie would be helpful. The list of woody species seems appropriate; however, the application lacks visuals or other information describing how and where plants will be installed along the reshaped streambank. It is also unclear who will install plants and seed.
- Plant stewardship is not included in the planting plan. There is a significant amount of invasive vegetation currently present on the project site that will likely outcompete new seed and plantings, especially after the soil disturbance that will occur associated with the proposed bank stabilization installation. Plant stewardship actions, including watering and invasive species treatment, will likely be needed for plants to reach a free to grow status.
- It is unclear whether the budget has enough funding to procure and install plant material because the plant budget is provided as a lump sum.

Concluding Analysis

The project is phase one of a larger conservation effort on agricultural land along the Lower Crooked River downstream of Prineville. The project benefits from having an associated RCCP that will bring much needed technical expertise and design resources. The application lacks details describing critical

elements needed to evaluate whether the project is likely to succeed in achieving expected ecological outcomes. If the application is resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to finish the design process and provide completed design plans for the bank stabilization, revegetation, and plant stewardship.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
NA

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4009-22615

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Tony Creek Fish Passage Restoration Project

Applicant: Hood River WS Group

Region: Central Oregon

County: Hood River

OWEB Request: $245,356

Total Cost: $478,756

Application Description This project will create fish passage at a hydro diversion on Tony Creek, a tributary to the Middle Fork Hood River. Tony Creek is an important clearwater tributary to the glacial Middle Fork Hood River, with documented populations of spring Chinook, winter steelhead, coho, bull trout, and resident cutthroat trout. All of these species except cutthroat trout are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The bull trout population in the Middle Fork Hood River Subbasin is the only known population in the Mt. Hood National Forest and the Hood River Watershed. Fish passage is a primary limiting factor to the recovery of these listed species in the watershed.

Without passage barriers, Tony Creek would provide more than five miles of fish habitat, but fish access is currently limited by a zero to 2.5 cfs low head diversion dam located at RM 0.5. Fish may be delayed or blocked from migrating to upstream habitat because of a variable 0 - 18-inch-high step barrier.

This project will provide up and downstream fish passage for fish at all life stages at all flows to approximately 5 miles of upstream habitat on Tony Creek by constructing a combination of engineered riffles and cascade pools downstream of the existing diversion. The constructed riffle would provide passage over the dam without impacting the diversion or associated infrastructure. OWEB funds will be used for contracted services, project management, project monitoring, travel, plant establishment, and fiscal administration.

Project partners include the Hood River Watershed Group, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Bonneville Power Administration, Green Diamond Management Company, and the hydro water right holder.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project is identified as the second highest priority for restoring fish passage in the Hood River Basin, which is a key limiting factor affecting known anadromous fish use in the area.

- Landowner support and engagement in the project is demonstrated by a letter of support. The applicant currently has an agreement with the landowner to facilitate the fish passage designs.
- Tony Creek supports one of the last populations of Bull trout in the Hood River Basin, this project would make available additional high-quality habitat for the species.
- The applicant and partners have relevant experience implementing similar type fish passage projects.
- The chosen engineering firm tasked with developing project designs has relevant experience implementing similar projects.

Concerns

- The application includes a design concept suggesting cascade pools will be installed as the preferred fish passage solution. No additional designs, technical detail, or description of alternatives that were considered are provided in that application that could be used to evaluate if cascade pools are the best option to achieve the desired ecological outcomes.
- The landowner has made clear the diversion weir cannot be manipulated as part of the fish passage solution. This requirement adds complication and constraints to the design process. As a result, project ready design plans need to be included with the application to effectively evaluate whether the project is likely to succeed in achieving a cost-effective habitat benefit.
- With limited information describing the chosen design, it is challenging to discern whether the budget is accurate and aligns with implementing the proposed actions.

Concluding Analysis

The fish passage barrier has been known for a long time, and up until recently the landowner expressed no interest in collaborating on allowing fish passage at the irrigation diversion weir. That has changed and ODFW awarded the applicant funds to develop project designs, which are currently in process. Unfortunately, at time of application, the designs were only at a concept level. If the application is resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to provide completed designs that address the concerns above.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

NA

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4010-22506

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Restoring Ecological Connectivity via Wildlife Overcrossings in Southwest Oregon

Applicant: Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation

Region: Central Oregon

County: Jackson

OWEB Request: $74,813

Total Cost: $1,132,711

Application Description The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southwest Oregon is the only monument set aside specifically for its biodiversity. The Monument contains over 300 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Interstate-5 is a major impediment to wildlife movement and fragments the east-west ecological connectivity needed to support the region's high biodiversity. As a result, rare species such as Pacific fisher and ringtail, and more abundant species like black bear, elk, and black-tailed deer are hindered in accessing important habitats as ecological conditions change by season or due to drought or wildfire disturbance. To restore ecological connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, the Oregon Wildlife Foundation (OWF) is requesting funds to assist the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in the design and engineering of two wildlife overcrossings; one north of the Siskiyou Summit near milepoint 8.7 identified as Barron Creek, and another south of the Summit near milepoint 1.6 and designated as Mariposa Preserve. A recently completed analysis of wildlife crossing needs between the City of Ashland and the California border found the Barron Creek and Mariposa Preserve sites to be the highest priority locations for wildlife crossing structures within the 14-mile project area. As resources allow, eight crossing projects are proposed within the project area. ODOT has secured $1.0MM in state funding and has applied for $0.5MM in federal funding to complete design and engineering for the first two overcrossings. Requested OWEB funding will augment State funds and make this project more competitive for Federal funding awards. BLM and Southern Oregon University (SOU) continue to monitor wildlife use at all sites. OWF is serving as the fiscal agent for the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition, which includes ODOT, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service, SOU, and more than a dozen nonprofit organizations.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project builds off work by the applicant and its partners to evaluate multiple locations for safe wildlife passage along the I-5 corridor. This resulted in identifying the two highest priority locations needing wildlife passage restoration that are the focus of the proposed technical assistance.
- The application demonstrates a clear need for providing passage by articulating the habitat availability and quality on either side of the highway and identifying the variety of species that will benefit.

- The future habitat connectivity will protect and preserve biodiversity and allow for greater genetic diversity amongst wildlife species.
- The applicant is involving appropriate partners, including local college students, and is utilizing social media platforms to engage the local community.
- The project could serve as a demonstration site for showing how safe wildlife passage can be successfully restored throughout Oregon.
- The proposed solution using over-crossings will not require extensive permitting or highway traffic control. This increases the viability for future restoration implementation.
- The project will potentially leverage federal funds that will be pursued for implementation.
- The maps provided in the application are helpful in discerning wildlife movement and behavior and further demonstrate the need for safe passage at the prioritized locations.

Concerns

- There have been uncertain results from recently completed highway fencing intended to protect wildlife species. Moving forward, the partnership is encouraged to continue engaging with ODFW to learn and adapt fencing strategies as necessary based on animal use and behavior.

Concluding Analysis

Designs will be developed for two overcrossings to allow for safe wildlife passage over Interstate 5 south of Ashland. There are no highway overcrossings in Oregon for safe wildlife passage, these two will be the first in the state. The approach provides an opportunity to test a more feasible, cost-effective design that could be utilized at other locations across the state.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

1 of 2

Review Team Recommended Amount

$74,813

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

NA

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$74,813

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4011-22524
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Armstrong OWEB 2022
Applicant: OSU Office of Sponsored Research & Award Admin
Region: Central Oregon
County: Klamath
OWEB Request: $73,282
Total Cost: $91,607

Application Description The Upper Klamath Basin is slated for one of the largest restoration acts in US history, the removal of four mainstem dams that have blocked anadromous salmonids for over a century. Huge investments in habitat restoration will accompany this dam removal, targeting the > 400 miles of newly accessible stream that could rear juvenile salmon and steelhead. In stark contrast to the magnitude of this conservation effort, there is virtually no empirical fish data available to guide conservation planning. Such data are especially valuable because the Upper Klamath Basin is hydrologically unique and defies common assumptions about fish-habitat relationships (Hahlbeck et al. 2022), so existing information from other basins may not be informative. Since 2018, our research team (including OSU, ODFW, The Klamath Tribes, and others) has conducted intensive field studies to close this knowledge gap, using juvenile and adult Klamath redband trout as proxies for salmon and steelhead. We have collected data that elucidates (1) spawning sites across the entire Upper Klamath Basin, (2) juvenile rearing habitat in the mainstem Sprague River, (3) thermal refuges used by juveniles across the Sprague River Floodplain, and (4) riverscape patterns of hypoxia risk across the Sprague River Basin. These data are fundamentally important for recovering future runs of steelhead and salmon. We will process, analyze, georeference, and upload these datasets to the Klamath Watershed Action Plan's web application, the Interactive Reach Prioritization Tool. This will allow any practitioner in the basin to use this information for planning, including our partners at Trout Unlimited and the Klamath Tribes, who work on restoration throughout the basin.

Hahlbeck, N., Tinniswood, W. R., Sloat, M. R., Ortega, J. D., Wyatt, M. A., Hereford, M. E., ... & Armstrong, J. B. (2022). Contribution of warm habitat to cold-water fisheries. Conservation Biology, 36(3), e13857.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The applicant has extensive knowledge of Redband trout habitat use in the Upper Klamath Basin.

- There is a high likelihood that fish use data collected for Redband trout will serve as an effective proxy for understanding potential anadromous salmonid use in the Upper Klamath Basin once the Klamath River dams are removed and volitional fish passage to the Upper basin is restored.
- The fish use data that will be shared through an online mapping tool is important for local conservation partners to consider as they plan future restoration projects.
- The online mapping tool developed for the Upper Klamath Basin Watershed Action Plan is an appropriate location to house the data.

Concerns

- It is unclear whether the project incorporates considerations for how large wildfires that burned in the Upper Klamath Basin since 2021 have changed the watershed.
- The applicant has one year of juvenile data and four years of spawning data. It is unclear whether this amount of data will require a year's worth of work as reflected in the budget to process and upload these datasets to the online mapping.
- It is unclear if spawning data collected by ODFW will be uploaded along with the data collected by the applicant and how those data sets will complement one another.
- It is unclear from the application whether the dataset for dissolved oxygen is spatially complete to characterize dissolved oxygen levels throughout the Sprague River Basin.
- It is unclear how the data will assist in identifying priority areas for restoration. The data could be useful in providing additional watershed context, but the path from the data leading to future on-the-ground restoration is not clear.
- There is only one letter of support included in the application. Additional letters documenting that conservation partners plan to use the data would demonstrate the benefit from this data being made available in the online mapping tool.
- The data quality assurance and quality control plans are unclear from the application, and it is unclear whether the budget includes these costs.

Concluding Analysis

The applicant has collected important fish use data for Redband trout in the Upper Klamath Basin. This data, along with data from other partners in the basin, will help tell the story of fish use and could potentially indicate areas anadromous fish may seek once the Klamath River dams are removed. The pathway connecting the proposed technical assistance to restoration is unclear without more evidence demonstrating intent from conservation partners to use the information.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

NA

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

NA

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4012-22587

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Crooked River Watershed Sage-Grouse Conservation IV

Applicant: Crook SWCD

Region: Central Oregon

County: Crook

OWEB Request: $74,987

Total Cost: $250,151

Application Description The project is located on private rangelands within the Crook and Deschutes Counties CCAA, where ranching operations are occurring on greater sage-grouse (hereafter sage-grouse) habitat.

This work is important because we are engaging private landowners in a coordinated conservation program that prioritizes the most critical sage-grouse habitat for restoration. In Crook and Deschutes Counties we are at the edge of the range of sage-grouse and therefore our work is insulating the larger statewide population so that it can grow and protect core areas.

These OWEB funds will pay our CCAA specialists to continue developing Site Specific Plans, which are designed to improve and protect sage steppe habitat throughout the range of sage-grouse in Crook and Deschutes counties. Our ecological inventory is used as the foundation of the tailored management plans and provides a guiding document for ranch managers over the next 30 years. This funding will also be used to manage existing plans, which require continuous grant writing and landowner interaction to implement. This phase of planning will inventory upland and riparian habitat covering approximately 86,293 acres. In the next 3 years we will also maintain completed plans by repeating the ecological monitoring on two ranches (21,560 acres), provide annual reports to USFWS, write 3 grants to implement the restoration actions that are called for in the plans and maintain our database. As a part of this CCAA project, we will also spend time implementing restoration actions that were planned in the approved SSPs using funds we have secured elsewhere.

The core partners are the landowners, Crook County SWCD and USFWS. SageCon Partnership, NRCS, Crooked River Weed Management and ODFW are involved as technical partners.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project is a continuation of the applicant's work with private landowners signed up with the USFWS Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) program to develop Site Specific Plans (SSP) and improve sage-steppe habitat for sage-grouse and other desert-adapted

species.

- The applicant has a track record and relevant expertise with developing the SSPs that will identify and prioritize restoration projects to address threats to sage grouse habitat.
- The average ranch size in Crook County is large with ranches covering 20,000 or more acres. This provides an opportunity to develop landscape scale treatment plans that could result in a wide range of habitat enhancements for a variety of species dependent on intact sage steppe habitat.
- The applicant serves as the database manager for all five counties involved in sage grouse conservation, this facilitates a consistent data collection and analysis.

Concerns

- The application includes objectives associated with on-the-ground restoration that are not appropriate for technical assistance applications.
- Little detail is provided in the application describing the type of data that will be collected and analyzed and scale of acres where data collection will occur. Including a previously completed SSP as a sample and a detailed description of the data sets used would provide helpful context for evaluating the technical soundness of the planning product.
- Information describing how previously completed SSPs are used towards implementation of on-the-ground actions would be helpful to understand what conservation measures are being achieved.

Concluding Analysis

The project will continue SSP development on two new ranches and include ecological monitoring on sites where previous SSP's were developed. For future applications working on SSPs and properties with CCAAs, the applicant is encouraged to include additional information to articulate site conditions, such as maps and ground photos, along with a list of data that will be collected to develop SSPs and description of potential habitat enhancement opportunities, to the extent possible. Landowners enrolled in the CCAA program, a 30-year agreement between landowners and SWCD, demonstrate commitment to sage steppe conservation.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 2

Review Team Recommended Amount
$74,987

Review Team Conditions

Remove objectives #3 and #6 from the application that are associated with on-the-ground restoration activities.

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

OWEB staff will have the applicant remove objectives #3 and #6 from the application.

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$74,987

Staff Conditions

These objectives are related to on-the-ground restoration activities that are not appropriate for Technical Assistance grants.

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4013-22618

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Hood River Basin Partnership Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring Plan

Applicant: Hood River WS Group

Region: Central Oregon

County: Hood River

OWEB Request: $42,257

Total Cost: $53,261

Application Description This project will develop a restoration and conservation effectiveness monitoring plan for the Hood River Watershed. The plan will guide watershed partners in evaluating the effectiveness of Hood River Basin Partnership Strategic Action Plan projects in meeting short and intermediate-term ecological objectives. The monitoring plan will include objectives for effectiveness monitoring for each project type, a description of survey protocols that are robust, repeatable, and focus upon ecologically relevant outcomes, and programming electronic survey applications that can be used to collect data in the field. Project partners are the Hood River Watershed Group, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, US Forest Service Hood River Ranger District, the Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District, East Fork Irrigation District, Middle Fork Irrigation District, and Farmers Irrigation District.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application clearly articulates a need for developing a comprehensive effectiveness monitoring plan that is basin wide and encapsulates the variety of conservation work being implemented.
- The applicant and partners have a long history of implementing restoration and collecting monitoring data.
- The contractor assisting with the development of the plan appears to have relevant experience with similar type plans.
- The data management and quality assurance and quality control methods are well described in the application, indicating data will be appropriately managed.

Concerns

- It is unclear what types of data will likely be collected and how the applicant expects the data to provide information about the effectiveness of restoration and conservation efforts across various habitats. This additional detail would clarify whether the approach described is likely to succeed in evaluating whether restoration and conservation actions are leading to the intended ecological outcomes.
- Additional details regarding possible metrics that will be considered to evaluate success and how these will be used across different habitat types to inform future on-the-ground restoration would be helpful for understanding the project.
- The application lacks letters of support from partners indicating a need for this project.

- Without details describing different types and amounts of datasets that will be incorporated, it is unclear whether the contractor costs are reflective of the effort needed.
- Including in the application a previous example of a monitoring plan developed by the consultant would serve as a helpful reference to understand what a plan would entail.

Concluding Analysis

An effectiveness monitoring plan will be developed for collecting data to evaluate whether restoration and conservation actions are meeting expected ecological benchmarks in the Hood River Basin. Such a plan could be very useful in calibrating partners' understanding of how well restoration projects are performing while providing tools that could inform the partners on how to adjust restoration strategies. The application lacks details needed to understand if the types of data under consideration is likely to provide the information that will indicate whether restoration strategies across diverse habitats are effectively meeting expected outcomes. If resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to address concerns above.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
NA

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
NA

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

NA

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Central Oregon (Region 4)

Application Number: 223-4014-22560

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Trout Creek Stakeholder Engagement Project

Applicant: Deschutes River Conservancy

Region: Central Oregon

County: Jefferson

OWEB Request: $81,318

Total Cost: $108,318

Application Description The Trout Creek Stakeholder Engagement Project is located in the Trout Creek drainage - part of the Lower Deschutes River Watershed. The Trout Creek Watershed encompasses 692 square miles. Elevations range from 1,280 feet at the confluence with the Deschutes River to almost 6,000 feet in the Ochoco Mountains. Most of the watershed (88%) is privately owned. This drainage is critical for restoring and preserving, as the Trout Creek Watershed plays a critical role in maintaining fish populations in the Deschutes River Basin. Biologists estimate Trout Creek provides up to 25% of the entire Deschutes River's steelhead production. Historically, large numbers of wild summer steelhead trout used the Trout Creek Watershed. The system still supports a significant population of steelhead trout (particularly east-side warm water adapted trout) with most of the production and rearing in the upper areas of the watershed.

The need for this project is evident in the number of groups involved in/with landowners within the Trout Creek drainage, and the ambitious goals of all for restoration, preservation, and habitat improvements. By encouraging cooperation and stakeholder engagement, efforts can be coordinated and amplified to reach as many of the ambitious goals as possible. These groups include: Deschutes River Conservancy, Deschutes Land Trust, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, BPA, Portland General Electric, US Forest Service, ODF&W, and OWRD, as well as the property owners and irrigators. A Stakeholder Engagement grant will allow for specific actions to be taken by the groups, working together to accomplish the shared goals.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The applicant is engaging appropriate partners to assist in the proposed landowner engagement effort. Each partner identified works within a unique niche and collectively represent a wide range of expertise to engage landowners in on-the-ground conservation and acquisition of land and water.

- The applicant is currently working on a water conservation project with one landowner in the target geography. This will provide lessons learned and hopefully build a foundation for future landowner engagement in the Trout Creek basin.
- The Trout Creek basin is 88% privately owned with a large percentage of landownership in large land holdings. These large land holdings present opportunities for landscape-scale restoration and acquisition projects.
- The Trout Creek basin is a stronghold for mid-Columbia steelhead, this project could lead to beneficial restoration and land and water acquisition in and along critical habitats for Steelhead.

Concerns

- It is unclear from the application what social barriers to future restoration and land and water acquisition will be addressed by the proposed stakeholder engagement.
- Information describing potential opportunities for future streamflow restoration would be helpful for understanding the expected watershed benefits from the project. For example, opportunities identified to conserve water with senior water rights and the viability of resulting conserved water to protect instream flow as opposed to those rights being used by a downstream user.
- The project budget lacks details needed to evaluate costs. Information describing the roles and actions each partner will be responsible for would provide details needed to determine whether costs are reasonable to achieve the proposed work.

Concluding Analysis

Private landowners will be engaged to recruit potential land and water acquisition and on-the-ground restoration in the Trout Creek watershed. The applicant is encouraged to develop a specific strategy with each partner to outline their approach, technique, and anticipated deliverables that will result from the landowner engagement. The project provides an opportunity to build water and land acquisition projects that will benefit steelhead habitat in an area that has not had significant landowner interest.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

1 of 1

Review Team Recommended Amount

$81,318

Review Team Conditions

NA

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

NA

Staff Recommendation
Fund

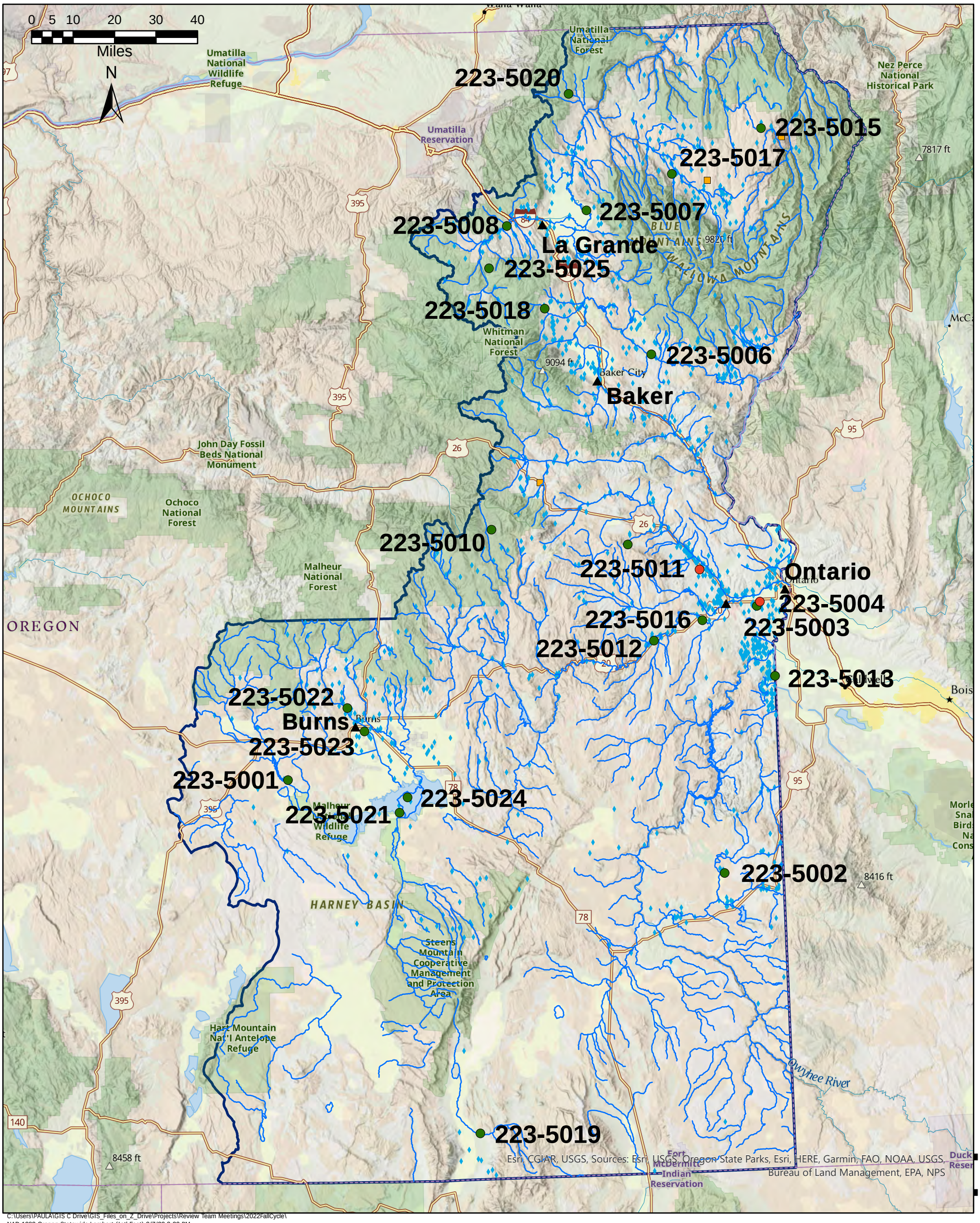
Staff Recommended Amount
$81,318

Staff Conditions

NA

Region 5: Eastern Oregon

Eastern Oregon - Region 5 Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations



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Funding Recommendation

- Staff Recommendation For Funding (SRF)
- Below Funding Line (BFL)

Previous Grants 1998 - Spring 2022

- Land Acquisition
- Restoration
- Region 5 Cities
- Region 5 Streams
- OWEB Region 5 Boundary

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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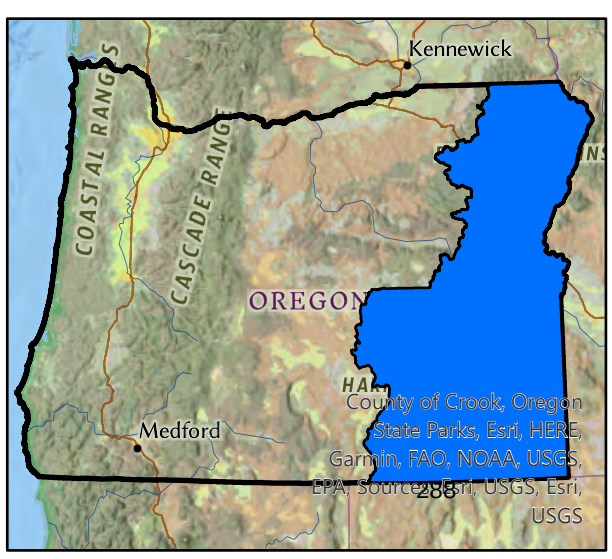

Region 5 - Eastern Oregon Restoration

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-5017	Nez Perce Tribe	Lostine River Mile 5.7 Floodplain and Side Channel Enhancement Project	Instream, floodplain, and streamside vegetation on the Lostine River, near Lostine, will be restored to improve water quality and habitat conditions for native fish.	396,381	Wallowa
223-5007	Union SWCD	Elmer Dam Fish Passage and Flow Improvement Construction	An irrigation diversion, fish ladder, and irrigation infrastructure on Catherine Creek, near La Grande, will be replaced to improve water quality, fish passage, and habitat conditions for native fish.	521,001	Union
223-5006	Keating SWCD	Restoring The Powder Phase II	Native tree planting, streambank stabilization, and streamside fencing will be installed along the Powder River, near Keating, to improve water quality and stream habitat.	100,400	Baker
223-5000	Malheur WC	So Many Juniper, So Little Time	Juniper will be removed on a privately owned property, near Brogan. The project will build on prior sage-grouse conservation, improve water quality, and enhance wet meadow function.	61,322	Malheur
223-5008	Tri-County CWMA	Upper Grande Ronde Invasive Weed Control Phase VII	A variety of non-native weeds will be contained and controlled in the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed, west of La Grande. Several local, state, and federal partners, as well as private landowners, will collaborate to build upon achievements realized since 2016.	37,102	Union
223-5010	Malheur WC	Fiercely Fighting for Fopian Crk and the NF Malheur with Off-stream Water II	Forest and rangeland health, wildlife habitat, and water quality will be improved in the Fopian Creek watershed, a tributary to the north fork of the Malheur River. Habitat for redband and bull trout will be improved by fencing livestock away from Fopian Creek and developing off-stream livestock watering systems.	96,038	Baker

223-5015	Wallowa Resources	Defend & Grow Core Grassland Vegetation in Wallowa County	Improvement for rangeland and native perennial vegetation on Wallowa County's Zumwalt Prairie will include stakeholder engagement and the development of ranch management plans with private landowners. Plans will include treating invasive annual grasses.	167,537	Wallowa
223-5016	Malheur WC	Improving Wildlife & Riparian Habitat Along the Malheur River	Instream, floodplain, and streamside vegetation on the Malheur River near Vale will be restored to improve water quality and habitat conditions for native fish and wildlife.	199,989	Malheur
223-5012	Malheur WC	Mockingbird 3	Located near Harper, flood-irrigated land will be converted to sprinkler irrigation. The conversion will reduce irrigation wastewater, sediment, nutrients, and bacteria contribution to the nearby Malheur River.	115,280	Malheur
223-5003	Malheur SWCD	KWV LITE FM	Located near Ontario in the Morgan Bench area, flood-irrigated land will be converted to sprinkler irrigation. The conversion will reduce irrigation wastewater, sediment, nutrients, and bacteria contribution to the nearby Malheur River.	53,145	Malheur
223-5002	Owyhee WC	Oliver Phase I - South	Located near Jordan Valley, flood-irrigated land will be converted to corrugate irrigation. The conversion will improve flood irrigation management, and reduce irrigation wastewater, sediment, nutrients, and bacteria contribution to the nearby Owyhee River.	139,159	Malheur
223-5013	Owyhee WC	Small But Mighty Water Quality Improvement	Located near Adrian in the Big Bend Area, nine flood-irrigated acres will be converted to sprinkler irrigation. The conversion will reduce irrigation wastewater, sediment, nutrients, and bacteria contribution to the nearby Snake River.	56,384	Malheur

223-5001	High Desert Partnership	Cote In-stream Irrigation Diversion Structure Replacement - Fish Passage and Wet Meadow Restoration	An irrigation diversion and fish ladder on Silver Creek near Burns will be replaced to improve water quality, fish passage, and wet meadow habitat for Pacific Flyway migratory birds.	393,100	Harney
Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				2,336,838	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-5011	Malheur WC	Pivoting on South Road G	Located near the town of Willow Creek in the Willow Creek focus area, flood-irrigated land will be converted to sprinkler irrigation. The conversion will reduce irrigation wastewater, reduce sediment, nutrients, and bacteria contribution to Willow Creek, a tributary to the Malheur River.	101,360	Malheur
223-5004	Malheur SWCD	Pounds of Efficiency	Located near Ontario in the Morgan Bench priority area, wheel-line-irrigation will be converted to pivot irrigation and a leaking pipeline will be replaced. The conversion may reduce irrigation wastewater, sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from contributing to the nearby Malheur River.	112,939	Malheur

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
223-5009	Harney SWCD	Upper Hanley Canal Restoration	24,749	Harney
223-5014	Wallowa Resources	Instream and Riparian Area Habitat Protection on Wallowa Whitman Range Allotments	162,862	Wallowa

Region 5 - Eastern Oregon Technical Assistance

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-5018	Powder Basin WC	Uplifting Anthony Creek for Sensitive Trout and Beaver: Alternatives Assessment and Design	Designs will be created to improve instream habitat, streamside vegetation, and water quality. Improvements will benefit bull trout, redband trout, and beaver in Anthony Creek near Baker City.	74,666	Baker
223-5022	Harney County Watershed Council	Five Mile Dam Replacement Design	Designs will be created to improve fish passage and flood irrigation practices at the Five Mile Irrigation Dam. Improvements will benefit redband trout and Pacific Flyway migratory birds on the Silvies River near Burns.	64,550	Harney
223-5020	Tri-State Steelheaders	Mottet Creek Valley Restoration	Designs that address fish passage at a road crossing will be created to increase bull trout and Snake River steelhead productivity in Mottet Creek in the Grande Ronde Basin.	49,738	Union
223-5023	High Desert Partnership	RELATIONSHIP OF FLOOD MEADOW VEGETATION TO HABITAT VALUE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE	Bird species diversity and use of wet meadows will be evaluated to determine the effects of varying water flow and irrigation. This work will inform improved management practices that will benefit habitat for migratory waterfowl in the face of climate change.	74,996	Harney
223-5019	Harney SWCD	Trout Creek Diversion	Designs will be created to improve fish passage and flood irrigation practices at the Trout Creek irrigation diversion near Fields. Improvements will benefit water quality and habitat for fish and Pacific Flyway migratory birds.	75,000	Harney

223-5021	High Desert Partnership	Watershed Synthesis Model	Stream flow, irrigation diversion rates, and water quality data will be combined with existing data to develop a model that improves water management decisions for aquatic habitat on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.	54,868	Harney
Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				393,818	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
None				

Region 5 - Eastern Oregon Stakeholder Engagement

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-5025	Wallowa Resources	Creating Healthy and Resilient Forest in NE Oregon Through Local Engagement	Forest land managers and the public will be engaged to develop tools and resources needed to create healthy forests in northeast Oregon that are resilient to fire, insects, disease, and climate change.	116,143	Union

223-5024	High Desert Partnership	Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement	Agricultural landowners and public land managers will be engaged to develop restoration methods to control invasive plants and non-native carp in the Harney Basin. The project is necessary to restore migratory bird habitat in the Pacific Flyway.	139,808	Harney
Total Stakeholder Engagement Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				255,951	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	**Amount Requested**	County
None				

Region 5 Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**2,986,607**

Region 1 - 6 Grand Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**13,027,997**

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5000-22576
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: So Many Juniper, So Little Time
Applicant: Malheur WC
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Malheur
OWEB Request: $61,322
Total Cost: $77,203

Application Description

1) The project is 11 air miles to Brogan, OR, and 12 air miles to Ironside, OR.

2)Juniper is shading out native vegetation on 350 acres which includes around 4.7 acres of wet meadows and 1.7 miles of ephemeral draw riparian area. The project area is in core sage-grouse habitat. Juniper out-compete native bunchgrass, forbs and shrub necessary habitats for sage grouse life cycle. And juniper provide perches for avian species predating on young sage-grouse. Riparian areas and wet meadows are critical for late-season, brood-rearing. Reduction of native vegetation not only negatively affects sage-grouse habitat and but also local hydrology. Several recent studies have shown that dense stands of juniper negatively affect infiltration of water to the ground, which affects wet-meadow function.

3) We are proposing to:
Remove juniper from 350 acres.
-- 21.5 acres are "medium" density (early Stage II -- concentrated in wet meadow areas and an un-named ephemeral draw)
    -- Slash to be piled and burned at an appropriate time
-- 328.5 acres are 'light" density (Stage I)
    -- Slash to be lop and scattered and limbs cut to keep the slash below 4-feet
Chainsaws will be used to cut the trees.

Post-Project Maintenance
On a yearly basis, the treated area will be inspected to determine if action needs to be taken. Criteria include counts of juniper trees per-acre. Action will be needed if there are 10 or more trees per acre. These actions could
include mechanical treatment of small or large areas with loppers and/or chainsaws. This monitoring will occur for a minimum of 10 years.

This project complements nearby juniper removal and riparian restoration projects and continues to implement a CCAA site specific plan.

4) Partners include the Juniper Mountain Ranch and the Malheur WSC

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project objectives are clearly stated, and a post project maintenance plan is provided with the application.
- The site description, photos, and overview map provided in the application are clear and demonstrate site conditions sufficient to understand the conservation benefits of the project.
- The selected methods are appropriate to treat juniper expansion in the project area. The landowner is enrolled in a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) that has a site-specific management plan that includes the proposed work.
- Treatment alternatives are considered in the application and careful thought is given to techniques proposed in the different habitat types to minimize impacts on sensitive areas.
- The proposed work is in core sage-grouse habitat, is adjacent to similar sage-grouse conservation work, implements actions prioritized in several sage-grouse recovery plans, and builds on a watershed scale effort to improve sage-steppe habitat conditions.
- The applicant has a successful track record of implementing and monitoring juniper removal projects.
- The landowner manages grazing on the property appropriately to minimize ecological impacts and is dedicated to proper land management.
- The budget is informed by a contractor estimate and is realistic based on location, access, and juniper density considerations.

Concerns

- In the budget the same cutting rate is identified for both light and medium density juniper removal. More information is needed to explain how costs were determined for each density type, providing more budget clarity and context.

Concluding Analysis

The Malheur Watershed Council proposes to treat 350-acres of stage 1 and stage 2 juniper encroachment in sage-grouse habitat near Brogan. Treatments are site-specific by location and take into consideration upland, mesic, and riparian habitats, and impacts to those areas from juniper removal activities. The applicant is experienced, the landowner maintains prior projects effectively, and a monitoring plan is included, indicating a high likelihood of long-term success.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

4 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$61,322

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$61,322

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5001-22582

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Cote In-stream Irrigation Diversion Structure Replacement - Fish Passage and Wet Meadow Restoration

Applicant: High Desert Partnership

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Harney

OWEB Request: $393,100

Total Cost: $504,880

Application Description The Cote In-stream Irrigation Diversion Structure Replacement is located immediately downstream of Moon Reservoir on Silver Creek in the Harney Basin of Harney County, Oregon, a priority subbasin of the Southern Oregon - Northeast California (SONEC) waterfowl priority landscape (Map Figures 1-4). The existing structure is in need of replacement and no longer adequately distributes surface water across the historical floodplain of Silver Creek. Replacement of the structure will restore floodplain hydrology, enhance wet meadow habitat, increase hyporheic exchange and subsequent cooler, late season flows. The existing structure also serves as an ODFW identified priority fish passage barrier where Redband Trout were historically present (Figure 5). The requested funds will be paired with awarded funds through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant and Ducks Unlimited in-kind service to implement the nearly completed design for a new Cote structure that will be compliant with OWRD statutes, provide fish passage, and will restore floodplain hydrology and more than 3,000 acres of wet meadow habitat. Implementation of the proposed structure is scheduled for Fall 2023. Project partners include Ducks Unlimited, High Desert Partnership, respective water users and landowners, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Harney County Watershed Council, Oregon Water Resources Department, and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly stated objectives, compelling photos, and designs that are nearly complete, which indicates a project ready for implementation.
- The existing diversion has reached the end of its useful lifespan and does not allow for efficient and controlled flood irrigation management. The replacement diversion structure will address the cause of poor flood irrigation management and contribute to the restoration of 3000 acres of wet meadow habitat.
- Alternatives are addressed in the application and the selected alternative is the only feasible method to improve flood irrigation in the area without negatively impacting neighboring irrigation systems. The preferred alternative, a roughened chute, is not feasible due to the potential flooding of an upstream pivot irrigation system.
- A new diversion dam will restore hydrologic connection to the adjacent floodplain, include an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) approved fish ladder, and improve habitat conditions for native fish and wildlife, specifically Pacific Flyway migratory birds and redband trout.

- The dam replacement and fish ladder are a priority for ODFW.
- The proposed work is prioritized in many regional planning documents that identify flood irrigated wet meadow habitat restoration, is similar to other diversion structure replacement projects both completed and planned in the basin, and is located in a prioritized area for migratory waterfowl habitat restoration.
- The project team has the experience and capacity to manage and implement the work as proposed.

Concerns

- A mobilization cost of $75,000 is very high for a single project and it is questioned how this cost was determined.
- A revegetation plan for the construction area is not included, which is uncommon for a project of this type, and is important for the project to achieve its habitat restoration goals.
- It is unclear how the project will address erosion and channel incision downstream of the dam and whether the cause of this condition is addressed by the project.

Concluding Analysis

The High Desert Partnership proposes to replace the Cote irrigation diversion dam near Burns with a diversion structure that will facilitate effective wet meadow irrigation and provide fish passage. Improved wet meadow irrigation will improve habitat for Pacific Flyway migratory birds and is a restoration priority for the Harney Basin. The proposed work has a high likelihood to improve this habitat.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

13 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$393,100

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$393,100

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5002-22599
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Oliver Phase I - South
Applicant: Owyhee WC
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Malheur
OWEB Request: $139,159
Total Cost: $198,413

Application Description The Oliver Phase One South project is located 15 miles NW of Jordan Valley near Cow Lakes and along Lower Cow Creek Road. The project area consists of 104 acres of hay/pastureland flood irrigated with a series of earthen ditches. This project will address water quality, irrigation efficiency, invasive noxious weeds, and Sage Grouse habitat watershed concerns in the Jordan Subbasin. The proposed work includes installation of 4,048 feet of mainline pipeline, 4,292 feet of gated pipe, control structures, and corrugates across the 104 acre project area. Project partners include the landowner, Owyhee Watershed Council and Agrilines Irrigation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application has clearly defined project goals and objectives.
- Maps included in the application provide ample detail for understanding the project vicinity and proposed restoration components, along with its proximity to prior implemented projects.
- Corrugation irrigation, a form of controlled flood irrigation, is appropriate for the topography in the project area.
- When managed properly, corrugation irrigation is an effective water conservation method that uses less water and reduces wastewater runoff. The irrigation system will serve as a demonstration to other landowners in the area and may encourage future water conservation projects.
- The proposed conversion to corrugation irrigation, which does not require electricity to operate, is appropriate for the Jordan Valley area where power to operate electric irrigation systems is limited.
- The project is in sage-grouse habitat. The irrigation improvements will reduce standing water and mosquito breeding habitat, thus limiting the transmission of West Nile Virus that can cause sage-grouse mortality.
- The new irrigation system will reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacteria runoff from the project site, and improve water quality in Cow Creek, Jordan Creek, and the Upper Owyhee River.
- The applicant has a proven track record implementing similar irrigation water management projects and the landowner has the ability to do the proposed work.

Concerns

- No concerns are identified.

Concluding Analysis

Converting 104 flood irrigated acres to corrugation irrigation will reduce irrigation wastewater in the project area and reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacteria runoff. The project is likely to succeed in continuing work in the Jordan Valley area that implements Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) water quality improvement objectives for the Upper Owyhee River.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
11 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$139,159

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$139,159

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5003-22605
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: KWV LITE FM
Applicant: Malheur SWCD
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Malheur
OWEB Request: $53,145
Total Cost: $123,080

Application Description 1) Nine miles southwest of Ontario, located in the Morgan Bench Focus Area between Ontario and Vale.
2) Runoff from the 21 acre project site is flood irrigation with a small cow/calf operation. Runoff from this farm is contributing to the sediment loads and e. coli in the Lee Road Drain where the SWCD has a sample site 389 to document sediment loads, that spills into the Nevada Ditch, Blanton Drain, then the Malheur River which is known to be the second dirtiest river in the state, ending in the Snake River, which both the Malheur and the Snake River has a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load).
3) Proposed Work:
• OID – Connect to Previously installed OID Delivery Pipe (OID will pipe Arabian Pipelin II project and install flow meter per the funded grant# 222-5010.
• Project On Farm Components:
o Remove current failing gated pipe system and bubbler
o Using a reducer Connect 620 ft of 8” 80# pipe from the main to the proposed pump station/phase converter site
o Install 1,230ft. of wire and conduit from power pole and Idaho power hookup to converter/ pump station.
o bury 720 ft of 6” 100# Pipe to deliver irrigation water for Wheel Lines and Irripods.
o Install and Bury 560 ft of 4” pipe for irropod sets on outer pasture edges
o Install irripod packs to service 7acres on outer field acres with a total of 33 pods.
o Install 2 wheel lines 920’ and 1,200ft on two fields 14 acres total
o Possible New Power Pole with Transformer on Morgan
o 3 Phase Converter
o Cornell 3WHA-15 3 Phase pump

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project objectives are clearly stated, irrigation conversion methods are defined and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.

- The project is in the Morgan Bench Priority Area, which is a focus area for Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve water quality in the Malheur River.
- Converting 21 flood irrigated acres to sprinkler application will address water conservation priorities in the Morgan Bench priority area.
- Reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria laden runoff from the property will contribute to water quality benefits to the Malheur River, and flood to sprinkler irrigation conversion is a DEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan priority.
- Ongoing water quality monitoring will document water quality trends in the watershed.
- The application describes how the project is near previous and future on-farm irrigation improvements and will connect to the recently completed Arabian Pipeline Project, OWEB grant #222-5010, which demonstrates the strategic nature of the proposed work.
- The project team has relevant experience and a proven track record implementing irrigation water management projects.
- The application budget is informed by an irrigation company bid and reflects current costs and rates necessary to implement the project.

Concerns

- The application narrative lacks clarity due to the apparent lack of proof reading, reviewing, and editing prior to application submission.
- Applications submitted by the Malheur SWCD that are capable of being implemented according to the application schedule will improve application review recommendation, efficiency, and conservation success.
- The application budget is overly detailed and will benefit by compiling similar small components into single line items.

Concluding Analysis

Converting 21 irrigated acres from flood to sprinkler application will reduce irrigation wastewater at the project site. The proposed irrigation conversion in the Morgan Bench Priority Area will further efforts to implement ODA and DEQ water quality improvement objectives by reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria delivery to the Malheur River. The project is likely to succeed in achieving the proposed water quality improvements.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

10 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$53,145

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$53,145

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5004-22609
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Pounds of Efficiency
Applicant: Malheur SWCD
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Malheur
OWEB Request: $112,939
Total Cost: $276,578

Application Description 1. The Pounds of Efficiency project is located about 8 miles southwest of Ontario, Oregon and consists of approximately 40 acres of irrigable cropland. It lies within the NRCS 'Valley View Priority Area'. The Pounds of Efficiency project eventually drains into the Nevada Ditch to be used by other farmers or spilled into the Blanton Drain and into the Malheur River and into the Snake River. Sediments and nutrients that wash off fields are passed onto the downstream users and contribute to overall water quality impairments.

The NRCS 'Valley View Priority Area' is located from about 4 miles southwest of Ontario, Oregon, south of OR Highway 20-26 stretching from Cairo Junction 6.5 miles west and approximately 1 mile south. The NRCS 'Valley View Priority Area' consists of approximately 3275 acres with approximately 2000 acres of irrigable cropland. The entire area is in Malheur County.

2. Most of the sediment, nutrients, and bacteria in The Blanton Drain come from polluted irrigation return flows or livestock access to surface water. Historically farmers in the area fertilize their land and a residual amount of chemicals, e-coli and nutrients can be carried off the field with the runoff from flood irrigation. This farm is not typical and currently using 80% sprinkler irrigation.

3. By installing two partial swipe center pivots with the accompanying pipeline, pump and flowmeter, the landowner will be able to achieve a zero water runoff practice that will enhance the downstream water quality. 1320 feet of leaking irrigation lateral will be replaced.

4. The partners for this project are the landowner, Malheur County SWCD, NRCS and Owyhee Irrigation District.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Converting 40 wheel line irrigated acres to a pivot application system and replacing a 1,320-foot leaking irrigation lateral pipeline will address water conservation priorities in the area.

- The project is in the Morgan Bench Priority Area, which is a focus area for Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve water quality in the Malheur River.
- Reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria laden runoff from the property will result in water quality benefits to the Malheur River and flood to sprinkler irrigation conversion is a DEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan priority.
- Ongoing water quality monitoring will document water quality trends in the watershed.
- The project is near previous and future on-farm irrigation improvements demonstrating the strategic nature of the proposed work.
- The project team has relevant experience and a proven track record implementing irrigation water management projects.
- The application budget is informed by an irrigation company bid and reflects current costs and rates necessary to successfully implement the project.

Concerns

- The application narrative lacks clarity due to the apparent lack of proof reading, reviewing, and editing prior to application submission.
- Applications submitted by the Malheur SWCD that are capable of being implemented according to the application schedule will improve application review recommendation, efficiency, and conservation success.
- Water quality monitoring is mentioned in the application, but a summary of past water quality data is not present in the application, making unclear the extent to which project will address water quality impairments.
- A letter of support from the landowner expressing support for the proposed work is not included in the application.
- The application does not describe alternatives to the proposed work.
- A conversion from the existing sprinkler irrigation to a pivot will not result in a significant reduction in irrigation wastewater, making unclear whether the project will provide watershed benefits.

Concluding Analysis

Converting 40 irrigated acres from wheel line to pivot application will improve irrigation efficiency by a maximum of only 15%. The proposed irrigation conversion in the Morgan Bench Priority Area may further efforts to implement ODA and DEQ water quality improvement objectives by nominally reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria delivery to the Malheur River. Alternatives are not considered, and the magnitude of watershed benefit is unclear.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

15 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$112,939

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5006-22492
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Restoring The Powder Phase II
Applicant: Keating SWCD
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Baker
OWEB Request: $100,400
Total Cost: $145,450

Application Description Located near Keating, Oregon, the Restoring the Powder Phase II will address the ongoing erosion and de-vegetation concerns along a section of the Powder River (a tributary to the Snake River) restoring two sections of severely eroding streambanks, a 500ft section and a 900ft section totalling 1,400ft by installing large root wads, logs, boulders and plant willow whips. Data shows significant bank movement has occurred at the project site, making it difficult for riparian vegetation to become established. Erosion has left the banks unstable, contributing large amounts of sediment, causing water quality and habitat concerns through increased embeddedness, rising water temperatures, and Dissolved Oxygen.
This project is a continuation of large grant #221-5010, Restoring the Powder Phase I, which was submitted for funding in 2020. But due to the rapidly rising costs of material and fuel, the first phase had funds to obtain all the required permits and 100% construction-ready design provided by an engineer for the entire project. Phase II will complete the remaining work outlined in Phase I by restoring 1,400 linear feet of eroding banks using large root wads, boulders, and newly planted willow whips and planting 400 trees and 1,000 shrubs throughout the riparian areas outlined in the project design. Idaho Power Company, using SRSP funding will install 11,466 ft. of fencing along 1.5 miles of the Powder, as well as establish two water gaps for livestock access. Phase II will improve the water gaps by enhancing them with gravel/rock to protect the impacted areas by livestock. Idaho Power Company will partner with SWCD and the landowner in Phase II to improve road access to the site and provide construction oversite.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project objectives are clearly stated, restoration methods are defined and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.
- The landowner is actively working to improve watershed conditions and has converted several fields from flood to pivot irrigation, which conserves water and reduces contaminant laden irrigations wastewater influx to the Powder River.
- Fencing and planting actions described in the application treat the cause of streambank erosion by excluding livestock and replanting riparian vegetation, which will reduce erosion and sedimentation in the project reach.

- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is developing a bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Keating Valley and the proposed work will reduce bacteria contribution to the Powder River.
- The project is directly upstream of an Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) and the proposed work contributes to sediment reduction, and an ODA SIA water quality improvement priority.
- The landowner and several others in the project reach are working to improve water quality, conserve irrigation water, and install infrastructure to facilitate improved livestock management. These efforts demonstrate positive momentum for conservation in this ODA and DEQ water quality improvement priority area.
- The project team, including the landowner, have the capacity to implement and maintain the project as proposed.
- The Keating SWCD has a proven track record of managing and completing projects as proposed and according to the project schedule.

Concerns

- Restoration alternatives considered in phase one of the project are not included in the application. This information would add helpful context to understand project development during review.
- Riparian planting at the streambank toe and on a river regulated by reservoirs with periodic high flows is locally untested, and the near-stream plantings may wash away.
- The project site visit demonstrated the project proximity to other projects in the Keating Valley, but the application did not articulate the strategic nature of conservation work in the area.

Concluding Analysis

The Powder River in the project reach has extreme erosion and very little vegetation, leading to high levels of sediment in the river. The project, with a new landowner, offers an opportunity to advance similar projects that will multiply the ecological benefits from increased riparian vegetation and improved water quality.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$100,400

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$100,400

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5007-22502
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Elmer Dam Fish Passage and Flow Improvement Construction
Applicant: Union SWCD
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Union
OWEB Request: $521,001
Total Cost: $3,179,329

Application Description Elmer Dam is located on Catherine Creek (RM 13.1), Union County, Oregon. The dam significantly effects the creek's water quality, hydraulics, habitat complexity, and fish passage. The goal of this work at Elmer Dam is to improve fish passage for all native fishes at all water levels (with a focus on Chinook and steelhead), decrease the negative hydrologic effects associated with the dam in its current state, and increase the efficiency of the landowner's agricultural systems. Lengthy data collection and alternatives analysis concluded that the current fishway at Elmer Dam was no longer suitable for current fish passage standards and should be replaced.

The project team will construct new a new fishway structure around Elmer Dam that meets ODFW and NOAA fish passage standards. Improving the passage structure around Elmer Dam will allow for more suitable attractive flow, while also allowing for different passage options throughout many flow scenarios. The fishway and dam improvements coupled with on farm updates to off channel reservoirs and intakes will create more natural hydrologic scenarios through a key migration corridor for listed Catherine Creek Salmonids. All permitting is being completed under the ongoing TA project. The only exception is the construction contractor will be responsible for the DEQ 1200-C

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The proposal is well written with clearly stated objectives and 95% complete designs, which indicate a project that is ready for implementation.
- A reconstructed Elmer Dam, new vertical slot fishway, and improved reservoir infrastructure will address the cause of degraded fish passage, entrainment of fish in irrigation reservoirs, and reduced juvenile fish outmigration in a 14.5-mile reach of Catherine Creek.
- The project design has gone through an extensive review process with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as well as local review through the Upper Grande Ronde Atlas prioritization and vetting process.
- Fish passage, entrainment, and juvenile outmigration are high priority restoration actions in the Grande Ronde Basin (GRB) where anadromous fisheries restoration is identified in many local and regional habitat restoration plans.

- The proposed work fits within the context of aquatic restoration completed in the GRB over the past 25-years and compliments similar completed and planned work in Catherine Creek.
- Catherine Creek is identified as impaired by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for flow modification, elevated stream temperature, and aquatic habitat modification and the proposed work will improve these water quality parameters.
- The Union Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and landowners have the capacity to implement and maintain the project as proposed.
- The Union SWCD has a proven track record of managing and completing projects as proposed and according to the project schedule.
- Many partners are engaged with this project and overall costs are leveraged from several funding sources, which demonstrates the high functioning capacity of the applicant.

Concerns

- No concerns are identified.

Concluding Analysis

The Union SWCD proposes to improve fish passage to 120-miles of Catherine Creek and reduce juvenile fish mortality in the 14.5-mile project reach. The restoration work presented in the proposal has been in design for several years, the actions are a high priority for restoration in the basin, and the project has broad support. At completion the project is likely to improve the survival and productivity of Snake River steelhead and Snake River Chinook salmon in the Grande Ronde Basin.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$521,001

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$521,001

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5008-22503

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Upper Grande Ronde Invasive Weed Control Phase VII

Applicant: Tri-County CWMA

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Union

OWEB Request: $37,102

Total Cost: $55,102

Application Description Located within the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed, approximately 10 miles west of La Grande, the Upper Grande Ronde Invasive Weed Control Phase VII project seeks to contain and control leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, and diffuse knapweed. Since 2016, OWEB has continuously supported Tri-County's efforts to inventory, treat, and monitor leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, and diffuse knapweed in this watershed. Leafy spurge is the primary target of this project and due to its longevity, consistent herbicide treatments are necessary for effective control. Historic anthropogenic disturbances in this area have negatively impacted many fish and wildlife species, including Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Many of these disturbances have introduced invasive species, such as leafy spurge, and have promoted the spread of these species throughout the watershed. This project began treating high priority areas, such as the Grand Ronde River, in Phase I, and has worked outwards towards the larger infestations by Phase V. The goal of Phase VII is to treat all known leafy spurge sites along the Grande Ronde River and provide follow-up treatments of leafy spurge in the Phase V project area. Tri-County is already contracted with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Oregon Parks Dept. to treat all noxious weeds within their project areas along the Grande Ronde River in 2023, and coordinates treatment efforts with the US Forest Service. Given the aggressive nature of leafy spurge, this project is more important than ever to continue given the recent large-scale efforts to restore native fish habitat in the Upper Grande Ronde Watershed.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application is well written with clearly stated objectives, a systematic approach, and motivated landowners, indicating a project that is ready for implementation.
- The applicant continues to monitor past work, helping to inform upcoming work and measure program success.
- The selected approach is repeated over years with each phase having an inventory component, setting the stage for the next phase of treatments.
- The strategy of treating weed infestations from the outside perimeter towards the center over consecutive years is a sound approach to reducing weed extent and density on the landscape.
- Staff and hired contractors assess adjacent lands as well as the treatment areas, improving the effectiveness of the program.

- The proposed work is a priority for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the US Forest Service (USFS), and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) who are actively restoring aquatic habitats in the project area.
- The applicant has successfully built relationships with private landowners through a systematic approach to developing and implementing projects.
- The project is cost-effective and has many components for the price including weed treatment, inventory, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.
- The project team has the capacity to implement and maintain the project as proposed.
- The Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) has a proven track record of managing and completing projects as proposed and according to the proposed schedule.

Concerns

- The photos in the application are labelled by year only and do not have captions describing what each photo is conveying. Captions describing habitat condition and treatment progress will add to proposal clarity.
- The project approach is sound, but the applicant should consider planning more than one year of work with OWEB funding. A multi-year funding approach will provide project continuity and security.

Concluding Analysis

Tri-County CWMA proposes to continue treatment of several invasive weeds in the Upper Grande Ronde River Basin near La Grande. This is phase seven, and the prior six phases demonstrate effective inventory, treatment, and monitoring techniques, all leading to a successful and high functioning program. There are many relevant project partners working towards the success of the project including CTUIR, state and federal agencies, and private landowners.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

5 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$37,102

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$37,102

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5009-22517
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Upper Hanley Canal Restoration
Applicant: Harney SWCD
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Harney
OWEB Request: $24,749
Total Cost: $34,140

Application Description 1) The project area is located in Harney County, 3 miles east of Burns, Oregon, on the Bell A Grazing Cooperative property.

2) An ecological uplift is needed to the Upper Hanley Canal which is experiencing bankside erosion and increased wind erosion from exposed bed during low water years.

3) The work is to: 1) fence off the Upper Hanley Canal along the south shoreline from cattle to allow for riparian bank and nearshore emergent plant uplift during the growing season and canal downdraw to protect and improve sedimentation and bank stabilization. 2) Plant willows on the leading wind side of the canal to provide a wind break and lead to lower wind erosion and soil evaporation while improving the riparian habitat. 3) In combination with fencing off the Upper Hanley Canal, construct two offsite water troughs in southeastern field, to better distribute cattle to prevent erosion around the existing water trough. Water source for troughs will be an existing waterline 200 ft east of the fence line.

4) The partners include Harney County Soil and Water Conservation District and Casey and Dean Shelman of the Bell A Grazing Cooperative.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application includes photos that help portray the past success of similar work on the property.
- If the willow plantings and improved livestock management infrastructure elements are successful the project may reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat in the project area.
- The project cost is low for the potential watershed benefit and the proposed actions are less expensive than alternatives such as canal lining or piping to reduce soil erosion.

Concerns

- Watershed benefits are not clearly articulated in the proposal, especially how the proposed work will improve water quality and wet meadow hydrology, both important to improving Malheur Lake clarity and Pacific Flyway bird habitat.

- The uploaded maps do not show where planting is planned, which reduces proposal clarity and the ability to assess technical soundness.
- Fencing is described as barbed wire and is not designed as wildlife friendly. This could prove harmful to antelope and other wildlife that frequent the area.
- Other than examples of similar past restoration efforts on this property, it is unclear how the proposed work is strategic and fits in the context of past and planned watershed restoration in the project area.
- The application does not identify how the proposed work will implement actions identified within a specific geography or prioritized in a watershed restoration plan.
- Identified project partners include the landowner and the Harney SWCD. However, the project could benefit from support and guidance provided by water quality and wildlife management agencies.

Concluding Analysis

The Harney SWCD proposes to reduce erosion on the Upper Hanley Canal near Burns. Proposed methods include fencing, willow planting, installation of watering troughs, and improved livestock management. It is unclear how the project is strategic in the Harney Basin and if the application is resubmitted the applicant is encouraged to address the concerns identified in this evaluation, including the watershed context for the proposed work, how project addresses watershed functions and processes, and the strategic priority of the proposed work.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority
N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5010-22528
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Fiercely Fighting for Fopian Crk and the NF Malheur with Off-stream Water II
Applicant: Malheur WC
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Baker
OWEB Request: $96,038
Total Cost: $160,738

Application Description

1) The project is located in the North Fork Grazing Allotment on USFS managed public land. The allotment covers 31,000 acres in the headwaters of the North Fork Malheur River, Little Malheur River, Bear Creek, and Swamp Creek. The center of the allotment is 15 air miles from Unity, Oregon.

2) Riparian and aquatic habitat in the allotment is substandard, which is affecting bull trout, redband trout, and water quality in the NF Malheur, and Fopian Creek. Part of the cause of the degraded riparian habitat is the poor/non-existing infrastructure available to properly manage grazing. In places riparian fencing and off-stream watering facilities have disappeared. Troughs have rotted out, pipelines are cracked, and spring boxes are broken. Without this infrastructure, cattle will continue to negatively impact riparian areas.

NF Malheur is a Priority for Bull Trout Recovery. Gunickel and Allen (2018) developed a model to prioritize areas for bull trout recovery efforts. The NF Malheur River was the number one priority core area.

3) We propose to improve grazing management by:

-- Installing 17,500 feet of fence along Fopian Creek to exclude cattle from 1.5 miles of creek and protect 14 acres of riparian area

--- Rehabilitating 6 off-stream watering facilities that will help draw cattle away from 21 miles of stream that impact bull trout spawning areas. This will entail installing:

-- 6 troughs
-- 720 feet of heavy fence to protect the springs
-- 380 feet of pipe to supply water to the troughs
-- Install 6 new spring boxes

4) The partners are the USFS, Permittee Rob Elder, RSI engineering, and the Malheur WSC.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project objectives are clearly stated, fencing and watering trough construction methods are defined and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.
- The applicant addressed concerns from the last application by narrowing the project focus, improving the design clarity, and demonstrating support for the work by the US Forest Service (USFS).
- The applicant contracted an engineer to develop designs for the spring developments and watering troughs, indicating that the watering systems will function properly when the allotment is in use.
- Fencing Fopian Creek, spring protection, and watering trough installation will treat the cause of degraded riparian conditions, fish habitat, and water quality in this section of the North Fork Grazing Allotment.
- The proposed work will implement restoration actions identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Oregon Conservation Strategy to benefit bull trout and redband trout.
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) lists tributary streams to the North Fork of the Malheur River as impaired for temperature, E. coli, and biological criteria, and the project actions will address these water quality concerns.
- The project team has the experience and capacity to manage and implement the work as proposed.
- The Malheur Watershed Council has a proven track record of managing and completing similar projects as proposed and according to the project schedule.
- Significant match is provided by the permittee and the USFS demonstrating an engaged partnership dedicated to completing the project.
- The budget is developed from an engineer’s estimate and reflects current costs necessary to implement the project.
- Spring protection cost is higher than normal, but materials specified are more robust and will last longer than other methods, which improves cost effectiveness.

Concerns

- The application does not include a maintenance plan for the spring developments, watering troughs, or the fence.

Concluding Analysis

The Malheur Watershed Council will improve domestic livestock management infrastructure around Fopian Creek near Unity. Fopian Creek provides habitat for bull trout and redband trout and both are priority species for conservation in the project area. The work described in the application is likely to improve riparian and aquatic habitats for native fish and wildlife.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund with Conditions

Review Team Priority

6 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$96,038

Review Team Conditions

Prior to first payment the Malheur Watershed Council will provide OWEB with a plan that articulates how the fencing and watering systems will be managed and maintained by the permittee and the USFS.

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund with Conditions

Staff Recommended Amount
$96,038

Staff Conditions

Prior to first payment the Malheur Watershed Council will provide OWEB with a plan that articulates how the fencing and watering systems will be managed and maintained by the permittee and the USFS.

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5011-22530
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Pivoting on South Road G
Applicant: Malheur WC
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Malheur
OWEB Request: $101,360
Total Cost: $228,781

Application Description 1) The project in the Willow Creek Focus Area. It is 0.9 miles from the town of Willow Creek.

2. Water quality improvement in the Malheur Basin is one of the top restoration priorities for the Malheur Watershed Council. Willow Creek has been a focus area for the Council and other agencies since the late 1990s. Improved water quality is achieved through on-farm irrigation infrastructure improvements and management. The Council in cooperation with irrigation districts and private landowners has been systematically improving water quality through irrigation system conversions over the past 20 plus years across the Malheur Basin. This project complements several recently completed and on-going water quality improvement projects in the area.

3. The proposed project will convert 122 acres of flood irrigated fields to sprinklers by installing:

-- One pivot
-- One Cornell 3 phase pump
-- 1,520 feet of 10 inch 100# PIP pipe
-- 1,540 feet Cable Wire
-- Connection to pipeline
-- Electrical Panel
-- Flow Meter and
-- Apply for a water right transfer if needed.

4. Partners are the landowner, Vale Irr. Dist, and the Malheur WSC.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project objectives are clearly stated, the pivot installation methods are defined and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.

- The application includes information on work accomplished over the past 25 years in the Willow Creek area. This provides watershed context and demonstrates how this project will build upon a long standing and successful water quality improvement effort in the area.
- The new pivot irrigation system will connect to a piped lateral that replaced an open ditch delivery system, which demonstrates the strategic nature of the proposed work.
- Converting 122 flood irrigated acres to sprinklers will address water conservation priorities in the Willow Creek focus area.
- The project location is a focus area for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve water quality in the Malheur River basin.
- Reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria laden runoff from the property will contribute to water quality benefits to the Malheur River, and flood to sprinkler irrigation conversion is a DEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan priority.
- Ongoing water quality monitoring will document water quality trends in the watershed.
- The project team has relevant experience and a proven track record implementing irrigation water management projects.
- The application budget is informed by an irrigation company bid and reflects current costs and rates necessary to implement the project.

Concerns

- The pivot is nearly one quarter of a mile long and pivots longer than one thousand feet can result in over irrigation and runoff problems. The pivot design does not include a dry wheel package that will eliminate any water application to the pivot wheel tracks. The addition of a dry wheel package will further reduce irrigation runoff and contaminant laden water to Willow Creek.

Concluding Analysis

Converting 122 irrigated acres from flood to sprinklers may reduce irrigation wastewater if appropriately designed. Irrigation conversions in the Willow Creek focus area help to implement ODA and DEQ water quality improvement objectives by reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria delivery to Willow Creek and the Malheur River. The project could succeed in achieving water quality improvements with design modifications.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund with Conditions

Review Team Priority

14 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$103,360

Review Team Conditions

The applicant will install a dry-wheel package on the pivot which is estimated to cost $400-500 per tower. Increase OWEB award by $2,000.

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5012-22538
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Mockingbird 3
Applicant: Malheur WC
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Malheur
OWEB Request: $115,280
Total Cost: $288,543

Application Description The Mockingbird 3 project is located in Harper along the Malheur River. Water quality improvement in the Malheur Basin a top restoration priority and is achieved through on-farm irrigation infrastructure improvements and management. The Mockingbird 3 project is the third phase in a four-phase whole farm approach to convert 193 acres from flood to sprinkler irrigation. This proposal (phase III) will convert 46 acres from flood to sprinkler irrigation through the installation of 2 pivot systems, 5 solid set sprinklers and related water conveyance/electrical infrastructure. Project partners include: The private landowner, Harper South Side Ditch Company, Romans Irrigation and Malheur Watershed Council

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Project objectives are clearly stated, the irrigation methods are defined and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.
- The irrigation conversion on this farm follows a logical and phased approach, irrigation alternatives are considered in the application, and this phase 3 project will convert 46 acres from flood to sprinkler irrigation.
- Irrigation water management in the Harper area is a priority for the Malheur Watershed Council because of the adjacent Malheur River and direct irrigation runoff impacts to water quality. This prioritization demonstrates the strategic nature of the proposed work.
- Converting 46 flood irrigated acres to sprinklers will address water conservation priorities in the Harper area.
- The project location is a priority for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to improve water quality in the Malheur River basin.
- Reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria laden runoff from the property will contribute to water quality benefits to the Malheur River, and flood to sprinkler irrigation conversion is a DEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan priority.
- Ongoing water quality monitoring will document water quality trends in the watershed.
- The project team has relevant experience and a proven track record implementing irrigation water management projects.
- The application budget is informed by an irrigation company bid and reflects current costs and rates necessary to implement the project.

Concerns

- No concerns are identified.

Concluding Analysis

Converting 46 irrigated acres from flood to sprinkler application will reduce irrigation wastewater. The proposed irrigation conversion in the Harper area will further efforts to implement ODA and DEQ water quality improvement objectives by reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria delivery to the Malheur River. The project is likely to succeed in achieving water quality improvements.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
9 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$115,280

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$115,280

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5013-22542

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Small But Mighty Water Quality Improvement

Applicant: Owyhee WC

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Malheur

OWEB Request: $56,384

Total Cost: $73,376

Application Description The Small But Mighty Water Quality Improvement project is located across the Snake River just East of Adrian in the Big Bend Area. The project area consists of 9 acres of pasture/hay/row crop land currently flood irrigated with earthen ditches. Tailwater containing sediment, nutrients, and bacteria flow off the project area into the Imbler Drain, South Alkali Drain, then into the Snake River approximately 1.5 miles from the project site. The proposed work includes converting 9 acres from flood to sprinkler irrigation through the installation of 58 solid set mag pie sprinklers and all required pressurized conveyance infrastructure. Project partners include: The landowner, Riverside Irrigation District, Owyhee Watershed Council, and Agrillines Irrigation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Project objectives are clearly stated, the irrigation methods are defined and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.
- Irrigation alternatives are considered in the application and the selected approach will accommodate the irregular shaped field and reduce irrigation wastewater.
- Irrigation water management in the Big Bend area is a priority for the Owyhee Watershed Council (OWC) because of the adjacent Snake River and direct irrigation runoff impacts to water quality. This prioritization demonstrates the strategic nature of the proposed work.
- Converting nine flood irrigated acres to sprinklers will address water conservation priorities in the Big Bend area.
- The project location is a priority for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to improve water quality in the Snake River basin.
- Reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria laden runoff from the property will contribute to water quality benefits to the Malheur River, and flood to sprinkler irrigation conversion is a DEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan priority.
- The OWC and the landowner have relevant experience and a proven track record implementing irrigation water management projects.
- The application budget is informed by an irrigation company bid and reflects current costs and rates necessary to implement the project.

Concerns

- The irrigation company bid uploaded with the application shows the new sprinkler system irrigating the Riverside Canal embankment and this will contribute sediment to the canal and the Snake River.

Concluding Analysis

Converting nine irrigated acres from flood to sprinklers will reduce irrigation wastewater. The proposed irrigation conversion near Adrian will further efforts to implement ODA and DEQ water quality improvement objectives by reducing sediment, nutrient, and bacteria delivery to the Snake River. If the project addresses the concern above, it is likely to succeed in achieving water quality improvements.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
12 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$56,384

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund with Conditions

Staff Recommended Amount
$56,384

Staff Conditions

The solid set irrigation system will be installed and operated to avoid irrigation of the adjacent Riverside Canal bank, which will further reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacteria delivery to the Snake River.

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5014-22545
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Instream and Riparian Area Habitat Protection on Wallowa Whitman Range Allotments
Applicant: Wallowa Resources
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Wallowa
OWEB Request: $162,862
Total Cost: $355,422

Application Description Buck, Peavine, and Swamp Creek riparian fencing projects are located on the Wallowa Valley Ranger District, Wallowa Whitman National Forest inside the boundary of three allotments known as the Buck, Teepee Elk, and Swamp Creek. While maintaining working landscapes is a high priority for the National Forest, so is the management of streams and riparian areas. These allotments and specific stream reaches were selected as priority projects to protect valuable habitat for T&E listed species (Snake River steelhead, and Region 6 Sensitive species Redband trout), to protect riparian areas that contain sensitive plant species like (Trifolium douglasii), and to further compliment the Upper Joseph Creek Restoration project that focuses on enhancing forest health conditions and rangeland resiliency to natural disturbance. While management practices to reduce livestock impacts to riparian areas has been practiced for a number of years, spawning “redd’s” and sensitive riparian areas have continued to be affected by livestock use. To address concerns, project partners have determined that riparian area exclusion fencing is the best solution to restore, maintain and enhance these important areas

Project objectives are to reduce impacts to aquatic species, improve streambank vegetative cover, reduce grazing of streamside deciduous hardwoods, & limit livestock trampling of wetlands soil/features adjacent to stream channel. This project will control livestock access to 9.2 miles of stream and 626 acres of wet meadow and wetlands. The following will be constructed: 3.5 miles of fencing on Sled, Mud, Evans Creeks, 2) 3.5 miles of fencing on Peavine Creek., and 3) 2.2 miles of fencing on Swamp Creek.

Project partners include: Wallowa Valley Ranger District, 5 private landowners, Wallowa Resources, Title II

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The riparian improvement objectives are clearly stated, fencing methods described in the application are appropriate, and the photos add to the proposal’s clarity.

- Excluding domestic livestock from sections of Buck, Peavine, and Swamp Creeks will treat the cause of degraded riparian conditions, fish habitat, and water quality in Northern Wallowa County.
- The proposed work will implement restoration actions identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to benefit Snake River Basin steelhead.
- Redband trout, Columbia Spotted frog, and several rare plants, all priority species for conservation, will benefit from the proposed work.
- These tributary streams to the Lower Grande Ronde River are listed as impaired by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for temperature, bacteria, flow, channel condition, and erosion, and the project actions will address these water quality concerns.
- The project team has the experience and capacity to manage and implement the proposed work.
- Wallowa Resources has a proven track record of managing and completing projects as proposed and according to the project schedule.
- Significant match is provided by the permittee and the USFS demonstrating an engaged partnership dedicated to completing the project.
- Many partners are engaged with this project and costs are leveraged from several funding sources, which demonstrates the capacity of the applicant to meaningfully engage appropriate partners.

Concerns

- Livestock water gaps are discussed in the application; however, their locations, maintenance, and monitoring methods are not clearly defined in the narrative or the maps.
- Regulatory permitting is identified in the application as not needed; however, the proposed work is subject to the Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinion environmental compliance requirements. The status of this requirement is not described in the application.
- The budget requests eight miles of fence construction and the application narrative describes 9.2 miles of fence construction. It is unclear how many miles of fence will be built, or if the necessary costs are accurately reflected in the budget.

Concluding Analysis

Wallowa Resources proposes to improve domestic livestock management infrastructure in the Upper Joseph Creek watershed in Wallowa County. The watershed provides habitat for a variety of fish, wildlife, and plant species that are a priority for conservation as identified in regional planning documents; however, the application lacks necessary detail needed to fully evaluate the proposal. If the application is resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to address the concerns identified in this evaluation.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5015-22546
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Defend & Grow Core Grassland Vegetation in Wallowa County
Applicant: Wallowa Resources
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Wallowa
OWEB Request: $167,537
Total Cost: $252,537

Application Description 1) The Wallowa County Invasive Annual Grass Partnership, managed by Wallowa Resources is focused on cooperatively initiating our recently completed Invasive Annual Grass Strategic Action Plan. This project will shift our management paradigm from focusing on undesirable vegetation to desirable vegetation. The plan embraces the regional strategy of defending and growing core vegetation in our prairie grasslands, which has been identified as our priority focal area. The Zumwalt Prairie, and surrounding area is rich in ecological diversity, known for its robust bunchgrass communities, and is home to a plethora of wildlife, insects, and bird species. It also happens to be a historical working landscape, which economically benefits the ranching community. This project emphasizes proactive and preventative management of large-scale threats within otherwise intact landscapes comprised mostly of native plant communities.

2) OWEB has identified invasive grasses as a limiting factor for terrestrial and riparian habitats in these areas. Invasive grasses reduce range resiliency, threaten fish and wildlife habitat by contributing to increased sedimentation rates, diminishing riparian structure and function, and by reducing forage quality and quantity.

3) Defending core perennial ecosystems is a priority for the Partnership. Our goal is to work adjacent to the core areas into the transition zones, containing intermediate levels of annual grass invasion, to strategically increase the amount of core across the prairie landscape. Aggressive management will be needed in transitional areas to halt spread into the cores. On-going management in the highly invaded areas will also be required to mitigate the most severe impacts of IAGs. OWEB funds will be used for aerial survey, aerial herbicide application, and monitoring.

4) Partners include: 20 landowners, TNC, NRCS, ODA, SWCD, Wallowa County, OSU Extension, USFS, Wallowa Resources

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Project objectives are clearly stated, the invasive annual grass (IAG) treatment methods are defined

and appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.

- The proposed work is a technically sound approach to engage landowners and treat the root cause of invasive annual grass spread in Wallowa County.
- The project objectives are comprehensive and include project planning, stakeholder engagement, inventory, assessment, IAG treatment, improved livestock management, and monitoring.
- The engagement approach is the result of stakeholder coordination between local, state, and federal rangeland management agencies and will be replicated across the landscape.
- The proposed work is identified in many watershed planning documents and the application explains how project objectives will address issues identified in those plans.
- Weed and IAG treatment in Wallowa County has a history of being reactive to invasive plants yet not addressing all the factors causing the decline of native perennial vegetation. The proposed approach will address the causes of the watershed management problems by creating range management plans that will holistically address the decline of perennial vegetation.
- The applicant and partners have a long history of successful weed and IAG control work in Wallowa County and have the capacity to implement the project as proposed.
- The partnership has long standing relationships with many landowners in the target area who are willing to make land management changes and are eager to start the work.
- Many partners are engaged with this project and project costs are leveraged with several funding sources, demonstrating the capacity of the applicant to meaningfully engage appropriate partners.
- The budget reflects costs necessary to achieve the expected watershed benefits.

Concerns

- It is unclear how this restoration project developed as a result of the stakeholder engagement grant 222-5051.

Concluding Analysis

After many years of agency coordination, landowner cooperation, and stakeholder engagement, Wallowa Resources and partners are proposing continued treatment of invasive annual grasses on the Zumwalt Prairie of Wallowa County. IAG control efforts over the past 25-years has focused on vegetation control rather than improved land management. This project focuses on engaging landowners to improve rangeland management and ranching practices combined with conventional IAG treatment, resulting in a higher likelihood of restoring native perennial vegetation over previous approaches that were limited to simply treating invasive plants.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

7 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$167,537

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$167,537

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5016-22547

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Improving Wildlife & Riparian Habitat Along the Malheur River

Applicant: Malheur WC

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Malheur

OWEB Request: $199,989

Total Cost: $280,170

Application Description

1. The project is located approximately 6 miles west of Vale and south of Highway 20 on 980 acres.

2. This 2.6-mile section of the Malheur River was adversely affected by historic flooding and significant high-flow events in the 1980's and 2017. A large section of the bank is eroding from high-flow events and a berm constricting flow on the opposite bank. As a result, water quality, riparian habitat and streambank conditions are negatively impacted. The federally funded 500-foot berm was constructed during the 1980s to address multiple high-water years. The berm restricts channel migration, redirects flow to the opposite eroding bank, adversely affects downstream conditions and contributes to poor water quality.

3. OWEB funds are targeted for riparian and streambank enhancement. The berm will be removed to allow the Malheur River to reconnect with the floodplain. A 510-foot section on the south bank will have 10 revetments installed. These will be comprised of 21 whole trees, 29 willow clumps, 167 rocks, 4 extra-large, 13 large and 48 small rootwads, 4 large logs and 650 cubic yards of material from the berm to bind the components together. Revetments will enhance streambank and riparian conditions and provide aquatic habitat. The 3.75-acre berm area will be site prepped and seeded with tall wheatgrass, Great Basin wildrye, thickspike wheatgrass, birds-foot trefoil and alfalfa. In addition, milkweed will be added to seed to provide a food source for the Monarch butterfly. After successful milkweed germination and establishment, the area will be registered as a Monarch Waystation.

4. Project partners are Bully Creek LLC, Malheur Watershed Council and ODFW.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application addresses concerns from the previous application evaluation by narrowing the project focus, providing additional information regarding the use of Russian Olive logs as an effective material for instream habitat restoration, and including rationale for the incorporation of existing rock

structures in the project design.

- The project design and proposed work are the result of a previously funded OWEB technical assistance grant.
- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) will monitor fish population, density, and diversity in the project area post construction.
- The project area has limited wetland habitat and the proposed work will restore this habitat to benefit native fish and wildlife, including Pacific Flyway migratory birds.
- Reducing erosion on the property will have water quality benefits to the Malheur River and this is a DEQ Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) action plan priority.
- The project team, consisting of the watershed council, landowner, and ODFW, are experienced and have a proven track record in partnering on similar projects.
- The engineer that developed the project design has appropriate experience with similar projects.
- The application budget is informed by the engineer's estimate and reflects current costs and rates necessary to implement the project.
- Russian Olive, a non-native tree species, is present on the property and the use of this tree to build instream habitat may be a cost-effective approach.

Concerns

- No concerns are identified.

Concluding Analysis

The Malheur Watershed Council is proposing to restore 1000 feet of the Malheur River near Vale on a farm managed for agricultural production and wildlife. The instream, floodplain, and riparian restoration work is informed by a diverse project team and experienced project engineer. The project is likely to improve aquatic, riparian, and floodplain habitats on the property.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

8 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount

$199,989

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$199,989

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5017-22558

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Lostine River Mile 5.7 Floodplain and Side Channel Enhancement Project

Applicant: Nez Perce Tribe

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Wallowa

OWEB Request: $396,381

Total Cost: $834,111

Application Description The Lostine River Mile (RM) 5.7 project area is located on the Lostine River immediately west of the town of Lostine in Wallowa County, Oregon. The project reach includes approximately 0.4 miles of Lostine River main channel and associated floodplain, which is exclusively on private land located upstream (south) of the Caudle Lane bridge.

Habitat conditions within the project reach have been negatively impacted by floodplain development, levee construction, and bank armoring, which have led to simplified channel conditions and floodplain disconnection over time. Additionally, a steep bluff is located midway along the project reach on river right, has been contributing fine sediment to the river, one of several documented limiting habitat factors to a multitude of fish and other aquatic species present in the Lostine River.

The goals of the project are to improve floodplain and instream habitat conditions for ESA-listed Chinook Salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha), steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss), Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus), and potentially re-introduced Coho Salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch) and Pacific Lamprey (Entosphenus tridentatus). Specifically, the project design intends to restore the Lostine River to a more natural condition by constructing a new, multi-threaded channel network in the floodplain, filling portions of the existing main channel, and adding large wood structures and riparian plantings. The manipulation of the sediment dynamics from the existing transport reach to that of a response reach is key to achieving and maintaining sustained change and channel dynamics over time. The proposed design would more closely resemble the historic channel and floodplain, and is expected to improve channel function and aquatic habitat quality.

Project partners include the Grande Ronde Model Watershed (GRMW) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Project objectives are clearly stated, instream and floodplain restoration methods are defined and

appropriate for the location, and the project is ready to implement.

- The project design and proposed work are the result of a previously funded OWEB technical assistance grant.
- The final designs and photos uploaded with the application are descriptive, demonstrate the project scope and scale, and add to proposal clarity.
- Providing river access to the adjacent floodplain, constructing instream habitat, and restoring the riparian forest addresses aquatic habitat limiting factors and focuses on the cause rather than symptoms of disturbance.
- The restored habitat will benefit Lower Columbia River coho salmon, Snake River steelhead, Snake River Chinook salmon, Pacific lamprey, and other resident native aquatic species.
- Restoration alternatives are considered in the design and the chosen alternative will result in the largest project footprint with the most restored instream, floodplain, and riparian habitat.
- The project team, including the design consultant, are experienced with this type of restoration, and have successfully implemented similar projects in the Wallowa subbasin.
- The project design has gone through an extensive review process with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as well as local review through the Wallowa Atlas prioritization and vetting process.
- Fish habitat and riparian restoration are high priority actions in the Wallowa Subbasin where anadromous fisheries restoration is identified in many local and regional habitat plans.
- The proposed work fits within the context of aquatic restoration completed in Wallowa County over the past 25 years and complements similar completed and planned work on the Lostine River.
- The Lostine River is a tributary to the Wallowa River which the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) lists as limited by flow, habitat modification, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and sediment. This project will address these multiple water quality concerns.
- The project team, including the landowners, have the capacity to implement and maintain the project as proposed.
- The Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) has a proven track record of managing and completing projects as proposed and according to the project schedule.
- Match is leveraged from the Bonneville Power Administration and the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, demonstrating the capacity of the applicant to meaningfully engage appropriate partners.
- The budget is developed from an engineer estimate and reflects current costs necessary to implement the project.

Concerns

- No concerns are identified.

Concluding Analysis

The NPT proposes to improve fish habitat, floodplain connection, and riparian conditions on the Lostine River near the town of Lostine. The restoration work has been in design for several years, the actions are a high priority for restoration in the basin, and the project has broad support. At completion the project is likely to improve the survival and productivity of Snake River steelhead, Snake River Chinook salmon, and other priority aquatic species in the Wallowa Subbasin.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 15

Review Team Recommended Amount
$396,381

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$396,381

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5018-22501

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Uplifting Anthony Creek for Sensitive Trout and Beaver: Alternatives Assessment and Design

Applicant: Powder Basin WC

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Baker

OWEB Request: $74,666

Total Cost: $96,666

Application Description The proposed project is located on a 1.5-mile reach of Anthony Creek, a tributary to the North Powder River within the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Elkhorn Wildlife Area, approximately 7.5 miles west of the community of North Powder, Oregon. Anthony Creek is occupied by several species of trout including native Bull Trout and Columbia Basin Redband Trout (CBRT)and non-native Brook Trout. The project reach is primarily utilized by CBRT and bull trout are documented to occupy Anthony Creek approximately two miles upstream from the project site. It is likely beaver occupied the reach historically, but their presence is not currently evident. Implementation of this project has potential to extend Bull Trout occupancy downstream to the project reach, which will be a focus of the design. Documented water quality impairments include 303 (d) listings for temperature and E. coli bacteria in summer months. Habitat impairments for native trout include lack of instream habitat quantity and diversity and impaired fish passage. We propose to address water quality and aquatic habitat deficiencies in Anthony Creek by designing actions to improve livestock grazing management and in-channel restoration actions to: reconnect the incised stream with the historic floodplain; increase the number of quality pools; increase the loading of large wood material in the channel and encourage beaver recolonization . We will expand the existing riparian buffer fence based the designed project footprint. We will assess opportunities for accomplishing our goals and objectives through collection of geomorphic/hydrologic/habitat data, development/assessment of alternatives, selection of preferred alternative(s) and design of the preferred alternative for accomplishing all objectives. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has committed to both in-kind and cash support of the project.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application describes a clear need to design a restoration project that will improve riparian, floodplain, and instream habitats for bull trout, redband trout, and beaver in Anthony Creek on property managed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).
- The proposal is clearly written with sequential objectives and has descriptive photos.
- The proposed design approach is appropriate and includes a site investigation, an alternatives analysis, design review intervals at 30%, 60%, and 90%, and the acquisition of necessary construction permits.

- The level of survey, design, and engineering described in the proposal is necessary to substantiate and obtain all permits required for restoration work in Anthony Creek and the adjacent floodplain.
- The resulting design will lead to a restoration project that addresses elevated stream temperature and bacteria concentrations in Anthony Creek, which are identified as limiting factors in the Powder Basin TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load).
- An experienced team, including the Powder Basin Watershed Council, ODFW wildlife area management staff, ODFW habitat restoration staff, and contractual engineering assistance, have the capacity to manage and implement the design and permitting work as proposed.
- Two engineering quotes and one wetland assessment quote are included in the application demonstrating that costs align with the work necessary to accomplish project objectives.

Concerns

- The photos in the application are labelled by location but do not have captions describing what each photo is conveying. Captions describing habitat condition and reasons for restoration need will add to the proposal's clarity.

Concluding Analysis

The Powder Basin Watershed Council proposes to complete 90% design and all permitting requirements for a project addressing degraded aquatic, floodplain, and riparian habitat on Anthony Creek near North Powder. The resulting restoration guided by this design work will occur in bull trout and redband trout habitat, restore habitat necessary for beaver colonization, and guide future restoration that addresses identified TMDL concerns.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$74,666

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$74,666

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5019-22541
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Trout Creek Diversion
Applicant: Harney SWCD
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Harney
OWEB Request: $75,000
Total Cost: $94,441

Application Description 1) The Trout Creek diversion structure is located on Trout Creek just north of mile marker 5 of the Whitehorse Ranch Road in southern Harney County southeast of Fields, Oregon.

2) The existing structure needs replacement due to its (a) inability to adequately distribute surface water to historical wet meadow floodplains; (b) the structure's continuous adverse impacts to streambank stability and associated contributions to turbidity; (c) and to meet fish passage standards.

3) The requested funds will support survey and design for a replacement structure. Funding will support a topographic survey and development of a digital elevation model, draft engineering design sufficient for permitting and cost estimating, and initiation of regulatory compliance.

4) Project partners include Ducks Unlimited, Harney Soil and Water Conservation District and the landowners/irrigators.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application describes a clear need to design a restoration project to replace the Trout Creek diversion structure with a diversion that distributes water to the adjacent wet meadow floodplain, reduces streambank erosion, and meets the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) fish passage standards.
- The application is clearly written with sequential objectives and has descriptive photos and relevant maps of the work area.
- The design work proposed in the application is supported by several assessments stating that flood irrigated wet meadow restoration is critical in this area for Pacific Flyway migratory birds.
- The proposed design approach is appropriate and includes a topographic survey and the development of a digital elevation model, design elements necessary for an accurate construction cost estimate and initiation of regulatory permits.
- An experienced team, including Ducks Unlimited, Harney Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the landowners, have the capacity to manage and implement the design work as proposed.

Concerns

- Trout Creek is a small stream, design costs appear high, and it is unclear how costs align with the work necessary to accomplish the project objectives for this small irrigation diversion structure.

Concluding Analysis

The Harney SWCD proposes to complete designs sufficient to inform a restoration project budget and initiate regulatory compliance for an irrigation diversion replacement on Trout Creek near Fields. Trout Creek provides habitat for Alvord Chub and beaver and flood irrigation hydrates nearby wet meadows that are critical in the survival of migrating waterfowl. The proposed technical assistance has a high likelihood to inform improved fish passage in Trout Creek and effective wet meadow hydrology restoration.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
5 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$75,000

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$75,000

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5020-22544
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Mottet Creek Valley Restoration
Applicant: Tri-State Steelheaders
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Union
OWEB Request: $49,738
Total Cost: $70,542

Application Description Mottet Creek flows under Forest Road 63 in Union County, about 16 miles by road east of Tollgate. It is a tributary of the Little Lookingglass Creek, which flows to the Lookingglass Creek, a tributary of the Grande Ronde River. Mottet Creek at a high elevation provides cold temperature spawning and rearing habitat for bull trout, and the National Marine Fisheries Service has identified Mottet Creek as critical spawning habitat for Snake River Steelhead. The culvert at Forest Road 63 and Mottet Creek is undersized and over-steepened, leading to passage problems for steelhead and bull trout. There are seven step-logs below the culvert presenting additional low-flow passage barriers. The stream is incised and lacks its historic floodplain connectivity. The culvert is also being undermined by scouring, which will eventually lead to road failure. This correction is identified as an essential project in The USFS Little Lookingglass Creek Watershed Restoration Action Plan.
The Tri-State Steelheaders propose to partner with the US Forest Service, Walla Walla Ranger District, to complete a conceptual design project to restore valley's physical, biological, and chemical processes associated with a depositional valley that promotes and sustain river and floodplain habitats as described in the 2021 Mottet Creek Restoration Assistance Team Review (RAT) attached. This project will complete an alternative analysis of road crossing options to determine the best crossing to facilitate the valley restoration. The project will deliver a conceptual design report and drawings as well as construction quantities and cost estimate of a preferred alternative agreed upon by a select committee of local stakeholders.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application describes a need to restore fish passage at a culvert on Forest Road 63 on Mottet Creek, east of Tollgate in the Grande Ronde Basin. Mottet Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for bull trout and critical spawning habitat for Snake River Steelhead.
- Located on US Forest Service (USFS) managed lands, the Walla Walla Ranger District invited their Restoration Assistance Team (RAT) to review the project concept, and the project is vetted through the Forest Service approval process as well.
- The application is clearly written with sequential objectives and has descriptive photos, relevant maps of the work area, and an uploaded summary of recommendations provided by the RAT.

- The design approach is technically sound, will result in a conceptual design report, alternatives analysis, drawings, construction quantities, and a cost estimate of the preferred alternative.
- An experienced team, including Tri-State Steelheaders, US Forest Service personnel from the Walla Walla Ranger District, the US Forest Service RAT, and a qualified design consultant, have the capacity to manage and complete the design work as proposed.

Concerns

- The application indicates stage 0 restoration is a desired objective in the project area. It is unclear how restoring fish passage in Mottet Creek at the 63 Road crossing will complement stage 0 restoration and the two methods may not be compatible.

Concluding Analysis

The Tri-State Steelheaders propose to complete a preliminary design to restore fish passage in upper Mottet Creek. The preliminary design results will inform final passage design and how the work may complement future stage 0 restoration. Led by US Forest Service personnel, the proposed technical assistance has a high likelihood to inform aquatic restoration in upper Mottet Creek.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
3 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$49,738

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$49,738

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5021-22557
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Watershed Synthesis Model
Applicant: High Desert Partnership
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Harney
OWEB Request: $54,868
Total Cost: $68,868

Application Description 1) Malheur Lake watershed in southeast Oregon
2) Currently, it is unclear how water management decisions on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge are affecting aquatic habitat types and habitat quality. The various bird guilds that utilize the refuge for breeding and migration have different habitat needs, including water depths. How water is managed on the refuge determines the water depths available for birds in wet meadows and in Malheur Lake. Over the past few years, the drought in this semi-arid region has limited the amount of water available, emphasizing the importance of informed water management.
3) This technical assistance grant would support a Watershed Synthesis Model that identifies how water management actions are affecting habitat types and quality on the refuge. The model will integrate multiple existing datasets and models from past studies. In addition, this model will incorporate new data collected by the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge staff that measures the water quantity being diverted from the Donner und Blitzen River. The Watershed Synthesis Model will include datasets from the headwaters (Steens Mountain) to the terminus (Malheur Lake).
4) Key project partners include High Desert Partnership, USGS, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application is concise, the project objectives are clearly stated, and the application narrative describes the need to develop a model that informs tributary water management to Malheur Lake.
- The High Desert Partnership (HDP), United States Geological Survey (USGS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have demonstrated the ability for collaborative work at this scale, as demonstrated by past OWEB Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) technical assistance grants with similar scope.
- The technical assistance focus is to develop a model that identifies how water management actions affect migratory bird habitat types on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR). Stream flow, irrigation diversion amounts, and water quality data will be collected and combined with existing data collection efforts using accepted methods to develop the model.
- Led by USGS with support from USFWS and HDP, the project team has the experience and capacity to develop, manage, and implement the model as proposed.

Concerns

- The application does not articulate how the database will be used to manage water resources; how the database will be managed; or how data will be gathered beyond the proposed schedule.

Concluding Analysis

HDP proposes to develop a model to inform how water management actions affect Pacific Flyway bird habitat types on the MNWR. The project team has the experience and capacity to develop the model as proposed.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
6 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$54,868

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$54,868

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5022-22578
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: Five Mile Dam Replacement Design
Applicant: Harney County Watershed Council
Region: Eastern Oregon
County: Harney
OWEB Request: $64,550
Total Cost: $82,398

Application Description The Five Mile Dam is the first major irrigation diversion on the Silvies River as the river enters the Harney Valley. The dam is failing and does not provide for fish passage. It is listed as a high priority fish passage barrier as identified by ODFW on their statewide fish passage priority list. This project would develop a 60% design for a replacement after working with OWRD and the irrigators served by the diversion to select an alternative design for a structure that provides for the diversion and provides for the potential for fish passage. The diverted irrigation water provides some 1,600 acres of flood irrigated wet meadow habitat for migratory waterbirds. This project is an important keystone for maintaining wet meadows and managing water in the Harney Valley and allowing fish passage into the lower Silvies River.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application describes a clear need to design a restoration project that will replace the Five Mile Dam diversion structure with one that distributes water to the adjacent wet meadow floodplain, reduces streambank erosion, and meets Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) fish passage standards.
- The proposal is clearly written with sequential objectives, has descriptive photos, and a letter of support from Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD).
- Restoring fish passage is an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) priority at the Five Mile Dam.
- The design work proposed in the application is supported by several assessments stating that flood irrigated wet meadow restoration is critical in this area for Pacific Flyway migratory birds.
- The proposed design approach is appropriate and will result in a 60% design set that is sufficient for an accurate construction cost estimate and initiation of regulatory permits.
- An experienced team, including Harney County Watershed Council (HCWC), Bierly & Assoc., LLC, OWRD, ODFW, and an engineering firm, have the capacity to manage and complete the design work as proposed.
- The proposed design and resultant diversion structure replacement will complement past diversion structure replacement work on the Silvies River that improved flood irrigated wet meadow hydrology, restored fish passage, and improved Pacific Flyway migratory bird habitat.
- OWRD will install a continuous stream flow gauge at the project site as part of the project that will assist in improved irrigation water management capability.
- Project costs align with the work necessary to complete a 60% design and to initiate regulatory permits.

Concerns

- While the Five Mile Dam is located on public land, the diversion serves 1,600 irrigated acres and landowner support for the work is not apparent in the proposal.

Concluding Analysis

The HCWC proposes to complete a 60% design sufficient to inform a restoration project budget and initiate regulatory compliance for an irrigation diversion replacement on the Silvies River near Burns. The Silvies River provides habitat for redband trout and flood irrigation hydrates nearby flood irrigated wet meadows important for the survival of migrating waterfowl. The proposed technical assistance has a high likelihood to inform improved fish passage in the Silvies River and effective wet meadow hydrology restoration.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$64,550

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$64,550

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5023-22591

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: RELATIONSHIP OF FLOOD MEADOW VEGETATION TO HABITAT VALUE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Applicant: High Desert Partnership

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Harney

OWEB Request: $74,996

Total Cost: $99,402

Application Description The effects of spring water flow variability and corresponding irrigation management on wet meadow conditions and plant community composition in the Harney Basin has never been thoroughly evaluated. As focus on water management becomes more critical with changing snowpack, flood timing, and flood regimes, the ability to manage flood water will become paramount. Recent efforts to document water regime-plant community relationships have built base knowledge to address the management of water to benefit plant communities that support wet meadow hay production and spring migrant bird populations. The unfolding impacts of climate change and annual weather conditions on water availability for wet meadow flood irrigation is of grave concern to private land agricultural producers and public land wildlife managers. The need to address water scarcity and to understand the changing hydrologic regime across these habitats is vital for sustainable resource management for both socioeconomics and for the diverse species of wildlife in the Harney Basin. Furthermore, known water resource issues in other areas of the Southern Oregon North Eastern California (SONEC) a region of the Pacific Flyway, such as the Klamath Basin lend added urgency to the importance of conservation efforts for Harney Basin's water resources.
Coordinated sampling to allow better assessments of how water and vegetation impact individual bird species use and overall species diversity will be conducted at three Harney Basin sites. These sites represent diverse surface water inputs, elevation variations, mosaic of wetland and riparian habitat type and quality and past management strategies and actions. (see map). Wet Meadow Partners, Portland Audubon, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, High Desert Partnership, Mitch Baker and Bell A Ranch and the Burns High School Biology Class will work together to develop vegetation and water management recommendations to enhance flood irrigated wet meadow habitat

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The High Desert Partnership (HDP), Wet Meadow Partners, Audubon Society of Portland, and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have demonstrated the ability for collaborative work at this scale, as demonstrated by past OWEB Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) technical assistance grants with similar scope.

- The USFWS has many years of bird use and vegetation data independent of each other and the application proposes to collect vegetation data at the same time and location as bird use data. The resulting information will be used to develop management concepts and strategies that promote native wet meadow vegetation.
- The technical assistance results will help land managers reduce non-native meadow foxtail and Reed Canary grass through improved flood irrigation water management and altered grass hay harvest timing.
- The project team, including Burns High School, has the experience and capacity to manage and implement the work as proposed.
- Project costs align with the work necessary to accomplish the project objectives and methods are transferable to other locations, which improves cost effectiveness.

Concerns

- The application is unclear whether one or two years of data will be collected, and a single year of data collection is not enough information to understand results.
- The contracted services budget identifies names rather than skill sets or roles, and it is unknown what task each person will perform.

Concluding Analysis

HDP proposes to collect bird use and wet meadow vegetation data to determine management strategies that promote native wet meadow vegetation in the Harney Basin. The study results will help build community understanding and support for managing wet meadow water and vegetation for both wildlife and agriculture. The project team is comprised of wet meadow and migratory bird experts and the technical assistance results are likely to inform adjusted wet meadow management as climate changes.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
4 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$74,996

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$74,996

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5024-22543

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement

Applicant: High Desert Partnership

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Harney

OWEB Request: $139,808

Total Cost: $200,008

Application Description Project location. The Harney Basin Wetland Collaborative (HBWC) partners work throughout the closed lake basin of Malheur Lake; this project location includes mixed (public and private) land ownership and management, including Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, where many members of the general public come to view wildlife. The sister communities of Burns and Hines is the main population base of Harney County with 4,300 residents. The entire county has approx. 7,400 residents including just over 200 members of the Burns Paiute Tribe.

Project need. Engaging diverse stakeholders in this significant and large landscape is necessary to gain consensus to implement innovative solutions to control invasive species - both plants and fish in order to restore migratory bird habitat on the Pacific Flyway. This is the work of the Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative.

Proposed work. This stakeholder engagement project takes a number of actions that are designed to strategically bring together and build relationships to help restore this large landscape. Activities include field tours, workshops, an information stewardship website, a migratory bird festival, a film created to capture a virtual bird festival tour, management guides for changing conditions in the flood wet meadows, series of informational articles and photography. Each of these activities are part of Harney Basin Wetland Collaborative's comprehensive communication plan that follows their stakeholder engagement results chain.

Project partners. HBWC partners include a variety of community organizations and government agencies. Supported by High Desert Partnership specific partners are Harney County Court, US Fish and Wildlife, USDA Agricultural Research Services, Portland Audubon, Ducks Unlimited, Harney Soil and Water Conservation District, Wet Meadows Partners, Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center at OSU, many private landowners, and more.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The High Desert Partnership (HDP) will engage appropriate stakeholders in the Harney Basin through a variety of methods including local events, print media, social media, the HDP website, videography, and photography.
- Stakeholder engagement methods are designed to reach local, state, and federal agencies, private landowners, and public land managers, as well as interested parties outside of the Harney Basin.
- The engagement methods described in the application encourage multi-directional communication between HDP and stakeholders. The proposed work builds on work ongoing since 2011, when the Partnership was established.
- The Partnership studies the Harney Basin hydrology, flood irrigated wet meadow habitat, and Malheur Lake conditions and conveys this information to the local community, which leads to OWEB-eligible restoration projects to improve native fish and wildlife habitats, specifically Pacific Flyway migratory bird habitats.
- The application is clearly written, the objectives describe the proposed work, and a broad array of specific actions are identified to be implemented to engage the Harney Basin community.
- The proposed work is a continuation of stakeholder engagement momentum realized from the Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative FIP (Focused Investment Partnership) and will lead to additional restoration work.
- HDP has the necessary experience and a proven track record of implementing the proposed stakeholder engagement activities.

Concerns

- The application does not describe the past success of similar stakeholder engagement work; however, knowledge of this success came from reviewers familiar with the HDP and their stakeholder engagement results.
- The contracted services portion of the budget does not provide sufficient detail to determine if costs are reasonable and necessary to complete the proposed work. The line-item descriptions do not articulate each task and lump sums do not describe the amount of work to be accomplished.

Concluding Analysis

The High Desert Partnership proposes to continue stakeholder engagement efforts in Harney County regarding the restoration of Malheur Lake and flood irrigated wet meadow habitats. The proposed work will highlight habitat restoration benefits to Pacific Flyway migratory water birds, explain why these habitats are essential to the flyway, and how private landowners and public land managers can facilitate these habitat improvements. The Partnership has ample experience conducting this work and likelihood of success is high.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

2 of 2

Review Team Recommended Amount

$139,808

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$139,808

Staff Conditions

N/A

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Eastern Oregon (Region 5)

Application Number: 223-5025-22574

Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement

Project Name: Creating Healthy and Resilient Forest in NE Oregon Through Local Engagement

Applicant: Wallowa Resources

Region: Eastern Oregon

County: Union

OWEB Request: $116,143

Total Cost: $231,143

Application Description Healthy forests provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife species, provide recreational opportunities, support local economies, and help to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Northeastern Oregon relies heavily on our two national forests (Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman), that make up more than 50% of the ownership of several counties, for essential watershed health and function. Forest management is a complex system that requires the engagement of numerous stakeholders in addition to support from the public. The Northern Blues Forest Collaborative (NBFC) is a group of diverse stakeholders committed to developing and implementing a shared vision of forest resilience and community vitality across the Northern Blue Mountains in Oregon. Funding for this Stakeholder Engagement project has two key target audiences: land managers (current and potential stakeholders) and the general public, which influences local politics, NEPA actions, and are impacted forest management decisions. The overarching goal for this project is to work with a diverse group of stakeholders at the landscape and community level to develop the tools and resources needed to create healthy forested ecosystems in the Northern Blues that support native fish and wildlife habitat and are resilient to fire, insects/disease, and climate change. This will be accomplished through public engagement strategies, working with District Rangers to identify local needs and projects, completion of Climate Change Zones of Agreement project, and development of a NBFC Strategic Plan. Outcomes from this Stakeholder Engagement project will directly impact current and upcoming forest restoration projects and increase the pace and scale of future projects. The NBFC is part of a much larger effort across the Northern Blues to implement landscape scale restoration projects that build healthy watersheds and create more resilient forests.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Wallowa Resources will work with the Blue Mountain Forest Partners (BMFP) to engage the Umatilla and Wallowa Whitman Malheur National Forests to finalize a climate change zone of agreement, develop a strategic action plan, expand engagement across ranger districts, increase engagement with researchers, and develop additional methods to engage local communities, to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration.
- The Partnership will develop and hold eight workshops to engage the ranger districts, including those who have not engaged in past efforts, to facilitate multi-directional communication amongst the Partnership, public land managers, and the public.

- The Partnership was awarded the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) award in 2020 with funds eligible for work on federal lands. This award leveraged additional funds to restore forests across property boundaries on private lands leading to landscape scale forest treatments.
- The proposed work to coordinate with ranger districts and the public will lead to forest restoration work that improves native fish and wildlife habitat, watershed function, and water quality as well as watershed resiliency in the face of climate change.
- Staff turnover has been high amongst the BMFP making this application timely to maintain collaborative momentum, achieve collaborative objectives, and facilitate the development of forest restoration work.
- BMFP stakeholder engagement and collaboration efforts facilitate timely forest restoration work in the Umatilla and Wallowa Whitman National Forests.
- The applicant and partners have a long history of successful forest collaboration work in Northeast Oregon and have the capacity to implement the project as proposed.

Concerns

- No significant concerns were identified.

Concluding Analysis

Wallowa Resources proposes to continue stakeholder engagement with the Northern Blues Forest Collaborative in Northeast Oregon. The proposed work will facilitate collaboration between diverse forest stakeholders and encourage timely forest restoration at an increased scale and across property ownership boundaries. The Partnership is experienced and the likelihood of achieving project objectives is high.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 2

Review Team Recommended Amount
$116,143

Review Team Conditions

N/A

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
N/A

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$116,143

Staff Conditions

N/A

Region 6: Mid-Columbia

Mid-Columbia - Region 6 Fall 2022 Funding Recommendations

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Funding Recommendation

- Staff Recommendation For Funding (SRF)
- Below Funding Line (BFL)

Previous Grants 1998 - Spring 2022

- Land Acquisition
- Restoration
- Region 6 Cities
- Region 6 Streams
- OWEB Region 6 Boundary

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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Region 6 - Mid-Columbia Basin Restoration

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order

Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-6003	Gillam SWCD	Wet Fork Hat Creek Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration	Low-tech log structures and beaver dam analogs (man-made) will be installed along six miles of the Wet Fork of Hay Creek. The structures will help sustain streamflow, expand the floodplain, and encourage streamside vegetation to create better living conditions for fish and wildlife in the area.	78,344	Gilliam
223-6000	Confederated Tribes Umatilla Indian Reservation	South Fork Walla Walla River RM5 Post Flood Adaptive Management	Banks eroded from a 100-year flood event in 2020, that nearly took out a county road, will be fixed to improve stream conditions for fish and wildlife in the South Fork Walla Walla River corridor.	60,000	Umatilla
223-6001	South Fork John Day WC	Lewis Creek Headwaters Restoration	Rangeland health and conditions for wildlife, including redband trout, will be improved in the Lewis Creek watershed, a tributary of the South Fork John Day River. An upland water source will be developed for both wildlife and livestock in this semi-arid landscape. To help struggling aspen communities, buck and pole fencing will be added and encroaching juniper removed.	67,187	Grant
223-6002	Wheeler SWCD	Headwaters of Keyes Creek	Wildlife living conditions will be improved in the headwater area of Keyes Creek. Improvements include encroaching juniper removed, clean water sources at two sites provided, and one aspen grove protected.	80,886	Wheeler
223-6006	Bridge Creek WC	Mac Creek Watershed Improvement	Forest and rangeland health will be improved by removing acres of encroaching juniper and thinning crowded and diseased timber along Mac Creek in southeast Wheeler County.	223,284	Wheeler

223-6008	North Fork John Day WC	Hughes Water Development	Installing three solar-powered units to fill off-channel livestock watering troughs will reduce the carbon footprint by removing the need to use generators to power pumps. This project will aid to improve grazing management and increase the protection of streamside vegetation along Pine Creek, a tributary of Camas Creek, home to native steelhead.	108,717	Umatilla
Total Restoration Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				618,418	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Amount Recommended	County
223-6004	Wheeler SWCD	Quant Rant Upland Restoration	148,721	Wheeler
223-6005	Grant SWCD	Belshaw Creek Passage Improvement Phase I	318,202	Grant
223-6007	Morrow SWCD	Canyon Farm II Biodiversity Enhancement Project	106,430	Morrow

Region 6 - Mid-Columbia Basin Technical Assistance

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
223-6009	Monument SWCD	Vardanega Conservation Assessment	Multiple inventory tools will contribute to a whole-ranch conservation assessment, and prioritize restoration in the uplands, wet meadows, and on multiple streams located in the Lower Fox Creek & Upper Cottonwood Creek watersheds.	17,833	Grant

223-6010	Oregon Natural Desert Association	Pine Creek Conservation Area Robinson Creek Riparian Restoration Plan	An assessment will result in a restoration plan and conceptual designs to help increase year-round stream flows, improve streamside vegetation, and benefit living conditions for both fish and wildlife along Robinson Creek in Wheeler County.	30,243	Wheeler
223-6012	Walla Walla Basin Watershed Foundation	Cup Gulch Assessment and Action Plan	Assessing the Cup Gulch watershed will help identify and prioritize future restoration opportunities, including strategies to remove a fish passage barrier where Cup Gulch enters the North Fork Walla Walla River.	46,181	Umatilla
Total Technical Assistance Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				94,257	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Amount Requested	County
223-6011	Umatilla SWCD	McKay Creek Restoration Phase II	70,671	Umatilla
223-6013	City of Pendleton	Umatilla River Riparian Area Restoration Assessment	75,000	Umatilla

Region 6 - Mid-Columbia Basin Stakeholder Engagement

Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					
Total Stakeholder Engagement Projects Recommended for Funding by RRT and OWEB Staff				0	

Projects Recommended but Not Funded in Priority Order					
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Brief Description	Amount Recommended	County
None					

Projects *Not Recommended* for Funding by RRT				
Project #	Grantee	Project Title	Amount Requested	County
223-6014	Walla Walla Basin Watershed Foundation	Watershed Stewardship Workshops	101,598	Umatilla

Region 6 Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board Award	**712,675**

Region 1 - 6 Grand Total OWEB Staff Recommended Board	**13,027,997**

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6000-22507

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: South Fork Walla Walla River RM5 Post Flood Adaptive Management

Applicant: Confederated Tribes Umatilla Indian Reservation

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Umatilla

OWEB Request: $60,000

Total Cost: $77,950

Application Description The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) has developed a design to adaptively manage a previously constructed project site on the South Fork Walla Walla River in response to changes that occurred during the February 2020 flood event. This grant application is to fund adaptive management actions at the South Fork Walla Walla River RM 5.0 - 6.0 Project constructed in 2015 (2015 Project). The adaptive management action is located at located on the South Fork Walla Walla River at the upstream end of the 2015 Project, in Umatilla County, Oregon.

A large flood event that occurred in February 2020 caused the channel to migrate towards the road. The outside of the meander is a near vertical bank and the channel is now within 5.5 feet of the South Fork Walla Walla Road. This triggers action in accordance with the adaptive management plan developed for the 2015 Project (GeoEngineers 2015). The adaptive management plan identifies the proximity of the river to the roadway as a risk that needs to be actively monitored and immediately addressed if the river were to encroach too close to the road, as the road is the only access to the homes upstream of the project site. The adaptive management plan identifies a 4O-foot minimum buffer distance between the edge of the channel and the edge of the roadway. The channel's proximity to the roadway and risk of further bank erosion triggers immediate adaptive management actions to protect this infrastructure. Direct bank stabilization is not a goal, but in order to ensure the success of the 2015 Project we are proposing actions to encourage the thalweg away from the roadway. The intent of this adaptive management action is to increase habitat complexity and pool habitat availability while also protecting the roadway from being impacted from future channel migration. This will be achieved by strategic placement of large wood to encourage sedimentation behind the structures on the outside of the bend.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application provides a clear and concise description of the proposed project objectives.
- Instream wood structures will be installed to encourage the river to move away from the county road and back into the available floodplain, pre-empting a more aggressive action by the county such as bank armoring with boulders.

- The 2020 100-year floods resulted in channel migration of the South Fork Walla Walla River toward a county road, within the reach of a previous restoration project completed in 2015. The adaptive management plan, a component of the original project, triggered restoration actions in this proposal to reverse that potentially damaging stream trajectory.
- The restoration method is appropriate for the site, and the costs outlined in the budget are reasonable for the actions described.
- Partner support is demonstrated by the forest service providing logs and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) contributing match funding and technical oversite.
- The proposed restoration is ready for implementation and urgent due to the erosional forces impacting the county road stability and the potential of future high-water events causing more severe damage, including increased sediment loading to the river.
- Allowing natural riverine processes to occur while at the same time protecting infrastructure on the Walla Walla River may prove to be a valuable restoration outreach tool.
- The applicant has a successful track record of implementing large-scale, complex instream restoration that require permitting, sourcing materials, and implementation oversite.
- Construction-ready designs are included in the application.

Concerns

- The application lacks a comprehensive discussion on alternative restoration techniques that were considered to address the problem. Also, an explanation of lessons learned from the original 2015 project implementation would provide important context for understanding the proposed adaptive fix. For example, a description of what worked and what the applicant would have done differently.
- The structures that will be located directly in the river bend may create undue scour. This may be mitigated by adding one more log structure upstream of the start of the bend to increase the likelihood of moving stream flows away from the roadway and into the floodplain.

Concluding Analysis

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) completed an extensive dike removal and floodplain reconnection project back in 2015 funded primarily by BPA. Floods in 2020 resulted in the river severely eroding the bank and migrating within 5½ feet of the county road. The project adaptive management plan identifies stream proximity to the road as a risk that needs to be actively monitored and immediately addressed. This proposed project addresses those concerns by using strategic placement of large wood to encourage sedimentation behind the structures and protect the roadway from further erosion without heavy armoring of the bank. With BPA's technical oversite during implementation, the project is likely to succeed in achieving habitat restoration goals while protecting the roadway.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

2 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$60,000

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$60,000

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6001-22537

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Lewis Creek Headwaters Restoration

Applicant: South Fork John Day WC

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Grant

OWEB Request: $67,187

Total Cost: $123,206

Application Description The Lewis Creek Headwaters Restoration project is located at the headwaters of Lewis creek, on the Double R Ranch, in Izee, Oregon. Lewis Creek drains into the headwaters of the South Fork John Day River. Lewis Creek is listed as a redband bearing stream, and within the Murderers Creek Mule Deer Initiative Area, as well as the South Fork John Day River Conservation Opportunity Area. Lewis Creek is on the DEQ's 303d list for temperature and sedimentation. This project will compliment watershed wide treatments throughout the entire Lewis Creek Watershed.

The Ranch has been working on their own to improve the uplands of this watershed through removing Juniper, Forestry Pre-Commercial Thinning, upland water developments, and constructing pasture fencing as well as Aspen protective fencing. They have partnered with multiple entities as well, beginning with forest health thinning through NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the South Fork John Day Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

They have also partnered with the South Fork John Day Watershed Council to complete Juniper removal through OWEB grant #: 221-6005, and the SFJDWC secured Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation funding for installation of 1 upland water development in conjunction with this OWEB project. SFJDWC secured an OWEB small grant #25-18-004 to provide Aspen protection using a buck and pole fence for an aspen stand located between the 221-6005 project. SFJDWC also secured OWEB funding, grant #: 213-6057, for aspen caging and Juniper removal at the headwaters of Lewis creek.

We are proposing to compliment previous work, increase water availability and improve mule deer habitat through mulching, or cutting and piling 80 acres of Juniper, developing 1 upland water source, and buck and pole fencing 600 feet of Aspen. Project partners include Double R Ranch, SFJDWC, and NRCS.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application provides comprehensive, detailed information needed to understand the project

objectives, including easy to understand maps, a grazing management plan, and a long-term juniper management plan.

- The landowner and land manager have a history of implementing a sustainable, ecologically focused grazing program, which is evident by existing healthy rangeland ecosystems across the ranch.
- Removing junipers from the floodplain will benefit the willow communities by taking away competition for moisture and nutrients.
- The upland water developments are an important element of the holistic restoration approach and will improve livestock distribution in the uplands as well as water availability to wildlife in a semi-arid landscape.
- The application includes lessons learned from previous work done to eradicate juniper, develop off-channel water supply, and protect and encourage aspen to proliferate.
- The budget is appropriate for the proposed work.
- Partner support is demonstrated by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding secured for the project.

Concerns

- The application lacks photos of the proposed sites that would be helpful for understanding existing conditions.
- Although the application includes descriptions about the water development in the abstract, budget, and metrics, it is not included as an element in the list of objectives.

Concluding Analysis

The project builds on previous restoration implemented in the Lewis Creek watershed as well as other locations on the ranch property. The ranch manager continues to prevent junipers from re-establishing on previously treated ground, which indicates that habitat restoration maintenance is an on-going priority. Many aspen clones on the ranch have been restored and protected and have been used as examples to help other landowners better understand how to save aspen on their property and the multiple benefits of doing so. The project is located on a large-scale livestock operation that is a model for showing how grazing can be managed to benefit wildlife and improve the watershed functions of the landscape.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount

$67,187

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$67,187

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6002-22552
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Headwaters of Keyes Creek
Applicant: Wheeler SWCD
Region: Mid Columbia
County: Wheeler
OWEB Request: $80,886
Total Cost: $116,311

Application Description 1.)This project is located on one landowners private property in the Bridge Creek Watershed at the headwaters of Keyes Creek, approximately 5 miles east of the town of Mitchell, OR in southern Wheeler County. Keyes Creek is a direct tributary to Bridge Creek, which is listed as a high priority watershed by the Mid C Recovery Plan and the John Day Basin Partnership Atlas for restoration efforts to improve fish habitat, specifically O. mykiss. 2.) Increased invasive species and unlimited access for livestock in the riparian corridor has led to a loss of native vegetation resulting in disconnected floodplains and unstabilized banks increasing sediment inputs into the stream systems. The lack of upland stockwater developments on the property has resulted in Keyes Creek being the main water source for wildlife habitat, which has lead to heavy browse on the limited riparian woody species currently there and creating gullies, rills, and headcuts along the stream. Additionally, the uplands have been compromised as historic fire suppression have increased Western Juniper encroachment creating a decline in upland habitat, bunchgrass communities, Quaking Aspen stands, and ultimately reducing water quality and quantity in the Bridge Creek Watershed. 3.)This project proposes to address the negative impacts Western Juniper imposes by mechanically cutting and piling 115 acres, hand cutting 20 acres on slopes greater than 20%, develop 3 springs (2 of which will be combined to feed one trough) to provide stockwater sources, protect one declining Quaking Aspen stand, and apply weed treatment on disturbed areas within the mechanical treatment of Western Juniper. Additionally, Keyes Creeks that runs all the way through the property will be enrolled into the USDA FSA CREP program in 2023. 4.) Project partners include OWEB, USDA FSA, Wheeler SWCD , and the landowner.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Keyes Creek, a perennial stream that flows through the project area, provides habitat for redband trout.
- The riparian area along Keyes Creek will be protected by a USDA Conservation Riparian Enhancement Program (CREP).
- The prioritized sites selected for juniper removal are appropriate for the largest ecological benefit, factoring in aspect, soils, and slope to maximize the investment return.
- The landowner is new to both the property and to restoration. They are working with a qualified natural resource consultant and the applicant to identify the best locations and methods to restore the property for wildlife using a phased, whole-ranch restoration approach.

- The portion of Keyes Creek located in the project area is near its properly functioning condition with minimal incision and diverse riparian vegetation, making it a key location for protection.
- The Keyes Creek watershed has been identified by the applicant as a focus area for future restoration. Removing juniper in the headwater area may help both water quality and potentially water quantity downstream.
- The applicant plans to complete a whole watershed barrier assessment to identify and prioritize potential downstream fish passage barriers for future restoration that will allow steelhead to access this improved habitat.

Concerns

- It is unclear from the application whether project sites will be grazed. However, the landowner clarified during the site visit that restoring wildlife habitat is the goal and the restoration project area will not be grazed in order to achieve that goal.
- Using Rejuvra© to combat invasive annual grasses will require careful attention to make sure the herbicide stays where it is applied and does not wash or drift to other sites.
- The project approach misses an opportunity to blend proposed treatments with instream habitat enhancement, such as installing juniper carcasses or beaver dam analogs (BDAs) in the stream to help catch sediment and aggrade the channel in locations where it is minimally incised.

Concluding Analysis

A new landowner located in the headwaters of Keyes Creek brings new opportunities to plan and implement restoration in the entire headwater area of this creek. The proposed upland improvements will serve as a beginning phase for a whole watershed focus.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

4 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount

$80,886

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$80,886

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6003-22556

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Wet Fork Hay Creek Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration

Applicant: Gilliam SWCD

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Gilliam

OWEB Request: $78,344

Total Cost: $129,514

Application Description The project is located on Hay Creek, approximately 11 miles from the mouth. Hay Creek is a tributary to the John Day River and the John Day River is drains into the Columbia River. It is approximately 9 miles north of Condon in Gilliam County. The major watershed issue for this reach is intermittent flow during the summer months. The project will seek to create beaver habitat, expand the floodplain, initiate incision recovery, promote existing vegetation, and increase physical complexity. This will be done by installing Beaver Dam Analogs and Post-Assisted Log Structures. Half of the structures will be funded by NRCS through the Lower John Canyon Restoration Initiative Regional Conservation Partnership Program. Once perennial flow is established, riparian plantings will begin. A portion of the reach is currently protected by a riparian fence, and the remaining portions will have riparian fencing installed using a federal program. Project partners include NRCS, CTWS, ODFW, USACE, and DSL.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The clear and concise application describes a well-developed project that will result in installing beaver dam analogs (BDAs) and post assisted log structures (PALs).
- Including an Oregon State University hydrologist as a technical advisor increases the likelihood the BDA and PAL structures will be installed in appropriate locations and result in maximum floodplain benefit.
- The project focuses on the inset floodplain, with the ultimate goal of extending perennial flow in this steelhead stream and benefit both aquatic species and encourage a more robust riparian vegetation component.
- LiDAR and hydrologic modeling were used to design the restoration project to ensure each BDA and PAL structure placement is site appropriate and likely to succeed in restoring stream functions.
- Structures will be installed utilizing some materials found onsite, such as willows and big sagebrush found in the historic riparian zones, resulting in cost savings from having to haul into this remote location.
- The project will expand ecological benefits realized by the numerous projects completed nearby and planned future restoration within the same watershed.
- The applicant has successfully implemented similar type projects, installing over 1,000 low-tech, process-based structures in the county on priority streams.
- The contractor working with the applicant has experience implementing similar projects. This previous

- experience will be used to integrate adaptive learning to ensure instream structures are installed using techniques that have worked best in lower elevation streams in the John Day Basin like Hay Creek.
- NRCS funds will be leveraged to increase the scope of the project to cover this Hay Creek tributary and include significant exclusion fencing to protect riparian vegetation.
- Low-tech, process-based restoration techniques are appropriate and cost effective on low elevation stream systems like Hay Creek.

Concerns

- The application does not include photos that show site conditions.
- While there are beaver colonies in the Hay Creek system down in the lower stream sections, encouraging beaver establishment through the creation of habitat may prove difficult due to the distance between the project site and existing downstream beaver colonies on Hay Creek.

Concluding Analysis

Low-tech, process-based structures will be installed at locations on Hay Creek that will maximize floodplain connectivity. This will soak up and store high flows and slow down and catch sediment to aggrade the stream channel, which will help address stream incision that has occurred. This will restore ecological function by increasing perennial flows, improving riparian vegetation, and creating suitable habitat for beavers. The proposed project will build on extensive restoration already completed on the Hay Creek system in Gilliam County, which will leverage the watershed benefits from this investment.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$78,344

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$78,344

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6004-22571
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Quant Ranch Upland Restoration
Applicant: Wheeler SWCD
Region: Mid Columbia
County: Wheeler
OWEB Request: $148,721
Total Cost: $211,375

Application Description 1.) Located in central Wheeler County, the project is located on privately property approximately 17 miles north of the town of Mitchell, Oregon. This projected lies within the Service Creek Watershed, along Girds Creek, a south tributary to the John Day River. This tributary is very critical as it is one of the few main water courses found in the watershed. 2.) Historical wildfire suppression and reduced precipitation infiltration has lead to Juniper encroachment, which has a negative effect on water resources for both upland and riparian habitat. Juniper encroachment, with an effect of reduced precipitation infiltration, has increased over the years due to historical wildfire suppression. This has created a limitation on stream and aquifer availability resulting in water quality and quantity issues, as well as a loss of native vegetation with increasing annual grass invasions that degrade wildlife habitat and their food source. In addition, riparian habitats lack protection which has resulted in the limited riparian woody species suffering from browse and the lack of root structure/establish has contributed to degraded and unstabilized banks leading to additional sediments inputs into the stream. 3.) This project seeks to address the negative impacts that Western Juniper imposes on watershed functions and enhance wildlife habitat in the upland and riparian zones. There will be a total of 475 acres of Western Juniper removed, 320 acres of mechanical treatment and 155 acres of hand cuts, 5 spring developments (2 of which will be combined to feed one trough) for livestock and wildlife use, and enroll a portion of Girds Creek into the USDA Farm Service Agency CREP Program for wildlife habitat. 4.) Project partners include OWEB, CTWS, FSA, Wheeler SWCD, and the landowner.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Using a feller buncher to cut and pile the juniper is a technically sound and proven approach to economically mechanically remove juniper on the appropriately selected sites.
- The application includes a basic grazing management plan and has matching funds in the budget to train SWCD staff so they are able to prepare more comprehensive plans in the future.
- Objectives of the proposed work are appropriately wildlife centric with maps showing the sites are both mule deer and elk critical winter habitat.
- The land manager has gained the capacity and experience to implement successful OWEB funded restoration from projects done on other ranch properties he manages.

Concerns

- The application lacks specific detail describing plans for each water development. For example, the design for the pond, which will be the source for one of the water developments, is missing. The design provided in the application is generic and not specific to each water development location. Details such as elevation change between the spring source and the trough, method of water collection and conveyance, and water source protection are especially important to determine overall technical feasibility of water developments.
- Using hog panels to isolate the spring sources to protect them from livestock is not known to be wildlife friendly. Additional information describing the alternative methods that were considered and why the chosen method was selected would be helpful for understanding the project design approach.
- The proposed phasing for removing juniper in dry drainages and installing water developments in locations scheduled for a later juniper treatment may not result in the highest ecological benefit. Amore technically sound approach would be to focus treating juniper in the headwater basins where spring developments are located, resulting in a positive impact to increased groundwater and spring outputs.
- While Girds Creek may have redband trout that would benefit from restoration efforts, there are multiple barriers below the project site that restrict steelhead from accessing any upstream habitat. The distance of the project location to known steelhead habitat may limit potential benefits to fish from the improved water quality or quantity expected from this project.
- To better understand the water quality potential of the project, more information describing influxes of sediment from Girds Creek into the John Day River would be helpful for understanding the scale of the problem and the potential for the proposed restoration actions to improve water quality.
- The application budget is unclear because there appears to be duplicate line items related to the spring developments. Identifying components in the budget description, such as spring #1 and #2, could clarify costs that look like duplication instead of separate project components.

Concluding Analysis

The application improved from the first submittal by providing a higher level of prioritization of restoration sites, including a grazing management plan and long-term juniper maintenance plan, however, still lacks enough detail needed to determine the likelihood for the project to succeed in improving water quality and quantity.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6005-22580

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Belshaw Creek Passage Improvement Phase I

Applicant: Grant SWCD

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Grant

OWEB Request: $318,202

Total Cost: $670,197

Application Description

Belshaw Creek is a tributary to the Upper John Day River located approximately 9.5 miles west (downstream) of Mt Vernon, OR.

The majority of the creek runs through a narrow canyon until the last 0.7 mile where it enters an alluvial fan; all active irrigation in the drainage occurs in this lower section. There are currently four active irrigation diversions on Belshaw Creek consisting of gravel, tarps, and plywood; these structures impede migration of ESA-listed summer steelhead for some life stages certain times of the year. Based on GIS information obtained via ODFW, summer steelhead use this reach for spawning and rearing as well as by resident redband trout. The associated ditches are extensive; losses create supply issues for all landowners and require additional maintenance for proper operation.

The proposed project will combine the five active and inactive diversions into two. New low head structures consisting of engineered rock riffles and submerged inlet boxes will create consistent fish passage opportunities of all life stages through the structure and remove the annual channel disturbance required by push-up dam operations. The ditches will be individually piped with a headgate and measurement device to improve delivery and isolate water for each landowner; wild flood irrigation will be replaced by irrigation through risers from the pipe.

Due to the recent rise in material and contracting costs, the project will occur in two phases. This request solicits funding to address passage at the upper diversion as well as address efficiencies on lands east of the creek. A map of the locations of the areas included in each phase is attached to this proposal.

The project partners include landowners Tirico Ranch Inc., Tim Nodine, Rick & Cindi Hufstader (land managed by Mike Martin), the Bureau of Reclamation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- Belshaw Creek is a perennial stream that provides habitat for steelhead, west slope cutthroat, and juvenile Chinook.
- Land management recently changed to second generation owners that are more interested in pursuing restoration, this support increases the likelihood the project will succeed.
- The applicant is engaging appropriate partners by coordinating with three landowners, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partners Program (RCPP).
- The proposed project will result in consolidating five irrigation diversions into two, reducing the number of barriers fish currently have to pass.

Concerns

- The quantifiable ecological benefit expected from the proposed investment is difficult to determine without information describing any ditch loss or water savings studies that may have been conducted. This information would be helpful for understanding the potential for increased instream flow likely to result from the project.
- It is unclear from the application whether Oregon's Conserved Water Program was considered by project partners or is a feasible option to protect instream flow benefits that will result from the project.
- There is a deep headcut located right below the highest irrigation diversion that significantly limits fish passage for juveniles. The headcut was a distinct stream feature seen during the application site visit; however, it is not addressed in the application narrative or project designs. Addressing the headcut to ensure effective fish passage for juvenile fish could impact permitting requirements and increase the project budget. This may limit the likelihood of success for the project as proposed in the application.
- The proposed project strategy will address fish passage on Belshaw Creek starting with the two highest irrigation diversions. This strategy will have limited ecological benefits because it does not readily address fish passage lower in the system. A more technically sound approach would be to begin correcting passage at barriers located at the confluence of Belshaw Creek with the John Day River, and then work upstream to the last and highest diversion.
- The application lacks information describing how grazing management will be structured to improve existing degraded riparian areas or how the adjacent fields watered with the new irrigation diversion and pipeline system will be managed. Improper management practices may negate any potential water quality or quantity improvements likely to result from the proposed restoration actions. Additional information is needed to evaluate whether the project is likely to succeed in achieving the expected ecological benefits.
- While the application indicates design comments from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will be incorporated into design revisions, itis not clear if BPA and NOAA have already reviewed the designs. If not, the 60% design supplied with the application could significantly change as a result of their review.
- The application lacks an irrigation water management plan or information about the irrigation use. Without this information, it is difficult to assess the overall ecological benefits expected from the project because it is unclear how much water will be used, when water will be used, and how much water will be left in stream.
- Because of the significant impact of fish barriers below the project site, more detail about the phase two schedule would add significant context to the overall benefit.
- The application lacked detail on how the timing of the RCPP funding could impact the timeline for phase two.

Concluding Analysis

Consolidating multiple irrigation diversions can be a technically sound approach to mitigating fish passage if the ecological benefits can be quantified. Without more information on actual water use, it is difficult to determine if Belshaw Creek will sustain adequate flow during the time of critical fish use as a result of the proposed irrigation infrastructure improvements. The riparian area around the top two diversions is severely degraded; however, addressing this declining function is not included in the project scope of work. The application lacks information needed to determine whether the proposed project is likely to provide significant ecological benefits for the cost.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6006-22583
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Mac Creek Watershed Improvement
Applicant: Bridge Creek WC
Region: Mid Columbia
County: Wheeler
OWEB Request: $223,284
Total Cost: $350,908

Application Description This project is located in the Mac Creek watershed in southeast Wheeler County. Mac Creek flows into Mountain Creek, an important tributary in the Rock Creek watershed, meeting the John Day River near Picture Gorge.
Western Juniper encroachment and overstocked forests have contributed to degraded watershed health and pose a risk factor for high intensity wildfires. Overabundance of western juniper decreases the effective precipitation that reaches the soil, impacting hydrologic function and cover of shrubs and grasses. Bark beetles, mistletoe, fir engraver beetle, and drought are further impacting forest health in the watershed. Much work has been completed on stream restoration in the Mountain Creek Watershed, including fish passage projects, riparian buffers, and replacement of irrigation diversions. Previous upland projects , instream and riparian projects, converting open ditch to pipe and replacing undersized or failing culverts have all been completed on this and adjacent properties. The long-term lessee has enrolled approximately 1200 meters of Mac Creek and 3500 meters of Mountain Creek in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.
This project will cut and pile western juniper on 132 acres and implement 363 acres of pre-commercial thinning. In addition this application includes 32 acres of noxious weed treatment including medusahead and diffuse knapweed and 32 acres for reseeding treated and disturbed areas.
Project partners are OWEB, the landowner, and NRCS.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- All the concerns summarized in the previous application evaluation are addressed by taking a more holistic approach that addresses multiple resource concerns, including juniper removal out of the riparian zone, and combining timber thinning with juniper removal to maximize the investment.
- The project builds on similar timber thinning and juniper removal projects on adjacent private lands along the Ochoco National Forest border as well as pre-commercial thinning completed near the project area that was funded by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Mac Creek is identified as steelhead habitat. Removing juniper and overstocked conifers may add critical flows and improve water quality to the lower reaches that will provide benefits for these fish.
- The treatment sites selected for this project currently suffer from overstocked stands as well as disease and insect damage.

- The landowner currently has a careful grazing management approach that is reflected in the existing healthy understory of native shrub, grass, and forb communities.
- The budget is appropriate based on the current density of both timber and juniper stands.
- Oregon Department of Forestry provided technical assistance for the timber thinning prescription and a letter of support for the project is included in the application.

Concerns

- The application has some metrics that do not align with the current proposed work and may have been left over from a previous application that was cloned.

Concluding Analysis

The project focuses on timber health and treating invasive juniper to open up the overstory canopy, minimize the negative impacts of potential wildfire, and reduce competition from invasive and dominant conifers. This project builds on restoration completed on the project property and neighboring ranches. In times of extreme weather events, mitigating catastrophic wildfire impacts and improving precipitation infiltration are key to maintaining a healthy functioning forest landscape.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
5 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$223,284

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$223,284

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6007-22584

Project Type: Restoration

Project Name: Canyon Farm II Biodiversity Enhancement Project

Applicant: Morrow SWCD

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Morrow

OWEB Request: $106,430

Total Cost: $174,498

Application Description This project will take place on Canyon Farm II, which is owned by Canyon Farm II LLC since March of 2019. The property was formerly owned by Easterday Farms and Lost Valley Dairy, and Greenwood Resources before that. The storied tenure of the previous ownership was tenuous after acquisition from the tree farm. The trees were removed, and now dairy buildings and irrigated circles are the predominate features of the landscape. Canyon Farm II is 6,552.9 acres of irrigated circles and associated corners. Canyon Farm II does not own the adjacent unoccupied dairy.

The new owners have experienced a lot of erosion, both wind and water, in the field corners and would like to seed a wildlife friendly grass mix, as well as plant trees and shrubs to shore up the sandy/loamy soils on the property and sequester carbon as well. They are also concerned about noxious and invasive weed encroachment on the property. There are low-lying areas where irrigation water runoff is heavier than they would like. The hope is to avoid any potential leaching of nutrients through the porous soils into the sensitive groundwater.

This project looks to restore circle pivot field corners, planting 30 acres of trees and shrubs and seeding 500 acres to grass. This perennial and diverse grass stand with trees and shrubs will serve as filter strips to reduce or remove organic material and other pollutants from potential irrigation runoff, by slowing the velocity of water, allowing the adsorption of pollutants on soil and plant surfaces, and uptake of soluble pollutants by plants. These plantings should reduce concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through photosynthesis, fixing it into organic forms in the soil thus increasing carbon sequestration. This project will also provide essential food and cover for wildlife and could enhance connectivity of habitat corridors. The site capable mix of grasses and woody plants will hold the soil to lessen erosion and suppress noxious weeds.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The grass species that will be seeded aligns with the precipitation zone for the project location.

- New landowners and managers on the property are engaged in addressing wind and water erosion by creating grass borders that will also support the local wildlife.
- The budget is appropriate for the identified project components. Estimates from contractors and local seed companies were sought to develop accurate costs.
- Innovative monitoring of insects and birds is described in the application and will be done by a company focused on enhancing biodiversity.
- If successful, the project may be a showcase for local farms dealing with similar erosion issues.

Concerns

- Although claiming to benefit steelhead, the impact will be minimal because the project location does not appear to be anywhere near a stream identified as steelhead habitat.
- While the application does provide detailed information on the farm's numerous irrigation and nutrient management systems, it lacks monitoring data analysis that show how current irrigation run-off and nitrate issues are reduced as a result of these systems. This information would add context for understanding the overall ecological benefits of the project.
- Establishment of riparian species in low-lying areas may rely on irrigation run-off, which will differ depending on the crops grown and may limit overall planting viability.
- The soils in the project area are porous, fast draining, and located above a high nitrate groundwater zone. The source of nitrogen at the project site will likely come off the adjacent crop fields. The application lacks necessary detail describing the types of crops grown, crop rotation, and fertilizer application within the project area, all needed to better understand the sources and amounts of nitrogen in this critical Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA) where groundwater nitrate levels are extreme.
- Improving habitat for wildlife in an area of high-dollar crops may create a conflict with farmers. The application does not address how those issues will be handled and could impact the project's likelihood to succeed in creating wildlife habitat.
- Treating weeds by spraying adjacent crop fields will likely jeopardize the success of planting pollinator species, reducing the level of biodiversity benefits that could be gained by the project.
- Treating and controlling the weeds prior to seeding native grass will improve the likelihood of success. However, the application notes that field corners are currently annual grasses and noxious weeds, and continued herbicide treatment could be detrimental to the success of the proposed seeded native grass stands.

Concluding Analysis

The project is an innovative approach to help reduce wind erosion, weed monocultures, and nitrate issues in a large farm located in the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA). New landowners are working to farm in an environmentally sensitive manner; however, the proposed seeding of native grasses may be premature. The density of the weed communities in the project sites and on adjacent fields have not been treated and will remain a seed source that will impact the success of native grass stands. Weed treatments are never a one and done type practice and will require long term action to successfully achieve restoration objectives for establishing native plant communities.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6008-22586
Project Type: Restoration
Project Name: Hughes Water Development
Applicant: North Fork John Day WC
Region: Mid Columbia
County: Umatilla
OWEB Request: $108,717
Total Cost: $174,627

Application Description 1) This project is located on private property (Hughes Ranch) in Umatilla County, just outside of Ukiah, Oregon. This 4,000 acres property takes in 1 mile of Pine Creek (HUC #170702020605), a tributary of Camas Creek (HUC # 1707020206). Pine Creek provides critical spawning, rearing, and migratory habitat for ESA listed Mid-C summer steelhead. The North Fork John Day River is 1 of 8 salmon strongholds in the state of Oregon.

2) Productive streams provide refugia for native salmonids from warming water temperatures in the summer and protection from harsh winter conditions. On the Hughes Ranch, the ability to water cattle is dependent on Pine Creek, a handful of ephemeral ponds, and a single well running off of a diesel generator. This limits the ability of the landowner to manage grazing beyond shifting livestock between a few large pastures and has resulted in cattle spending disproportionate time in sensitive riparian areas. The limiting factors this project addresses are (1) degraded riparian area (2) water temperature and (3) increased sedimentation.

3) This project proposes the development of 3 solar powered pump stations (wells are already drilled and registered with OWRD). Each station would include a solar powered pump, solar array, a 2,000 or 3,000 gallon cistern, and 2-1,200 gallon troughs.

The ultimate goal of this project is to pull cattle off of Pine Creek. The establishment of these new grazing locations with alternative water sources will allow the landowner to split existing pastures into smaller units and provide reliable alternative water sources within those pastures. Restoration efforts aim to help the landowner manage grazing more effectively and preserve water quality and quantity.

4) This will be a cooperative effort between the North Fork John Day Watershed Council and the private landowners.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The applicant and landowner are working with both a qualified contractor and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technicians to determine best solutions for off-channel water developments that increases the technical feasibility of the project.

- By developing the existing wells into sustainable water sources for livestock, the riparian areas of Pine Creek can be safely excluded from grazing.
- Including cisterns as components of these water developments is an ancillary benefit as sources of water to fight wildfire, which during these times of severe drought could negatively impact ecological health on both these sites and on neighboring properties.
- Pine Creek is identified as steelhead habitat and will benefit from the proposed restoration and protection.
- The budget uses NRCS rates and design standards and reflects current market values for the project components.

Concerns

- Additional photos and narrative that describes the existing riparian area condition would provide helpful context for understanding the extent of potential benefits that could be gained from the project. Including a riparian planting component to the project would provide a more holistic approach and increase the ecological benefits that could be achieved.

Concluding Analysis

The project is located near Ukiah where the landowner's family has been on the property since 1956. Livestock only use the property in the summer and early fall. Then livestock are moved offsite to a ranch in Heppner. This allows for the rangeland in the project area to rest and regrowth to occur, which is evident from the photos included in the application. Currently, the gates to Pine Creek must be left open during drier times so livestock are not stranded without access to water. Utilizing solar technology and storing significant amounts of water in cisterns will allow the landowner to keep the gates closed to Pine Creek and exclude livestock from the riparian areas, allowing vegetation to re-establish and water quality to improve. By developing existing wells using solar pumps and cisterns, systems can be maintained without using generators and extensive travel, lowering the carbon footprint while assuring livestock always have water.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
6 of 6

Review Team Recommended Amount
$108,717

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$108,717

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6009-22509

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Vardanega Conservation Assessment

Applicant: Monument SWCD

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Grant

OWEB Request: $17,833

Total Cost: $28,071

Application Description 1) This project will take place in the Lower Fox Creek & Upper Cottonwood Creek Subwatersheds (HUC 12 - 170702020904 & 170702020905). Fox/Cottonwood Creek is a tributary of the North Fork John Day River with an arbitrary name change near Fox Valley, OR. The confluence is near the town of Monument, OR.
2) The Circle V ranch was purchased late in 2021 as a portion of Vaughan Ranches in Fox Valley. The 8,800 acre parcel was managed with high intensity grazing and little rotational grazing due to a lack of resources by the previous land owner. Range, riparian and boundary fencing, irrigation diversions, forestry, and in-stream habitat have been impacted. The ranch is situated in an area of Fox/Cottonwood that supports ESA listed Mid-Columbia steelhead at high enough elevations that populations are more resilient to late-season high water temperatures and smallmouth bass encroachment. A property conservation assessment is needed to evaluate and prioritize cattle related infrastructure, in-stream habitat condition, diversion passage and function, noxious weed distributions, upland watering sources, upland and forestry related resources.
3) The proposed project would conduct a conservation assessment using the following tools: 1) the North Fork John Day Watershed Council's Stewardship Planning Framework, 2) A physical geographic survey of natural resource and infrastructure location and condition, 3) A Rapid Geomorphic Assessment and 4) Aquatic prioritization from the John Day Basin Partnership's ATLAS program. The project would result in a property wide assessment that would assist the landowner and conservation partners in prioritizing resource management projects.
4) Partners for this project include: The North Fork John Day Watershed Council - Stewardship Plan guidance and assessment assembly. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs - Fiscal support and consultation. Grant Soil and Water Conservation District - Consultation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application is well thought out and clearly describes the project approach, how the property conservation assessment tools will be used, and the expected deliverables that will result from the project.
- The budget is appropriate for the proposed technical assistance and is based on the applicant’s previous experience using these tools on other properties.

- One half of the large ranch property where the project will occur is within the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Focus Area.
- The assessment will result in an action plan that identifies and prioritizes restoration that builds on significant aquatic and terrestrial habitat restoration already completed both up and downstream of the property.
- Cottonwood and Fox Creeks are home to numerous priority native aquatic species, including steelhead and freshwater mussels.
- A new landowner on the property provides fresh opportunities for restoration. The phased approach of first doing an assessment on the ranch and then prioritizing actions is technically sound and will likely lead to successful restoration.
- Besides the assessment document, the landowner will be provided with interactive Avenza© map layers to use as they navigate and document infrastructure and restoration projects on their property.
- Appropriate technical partnerships support the project.
- The applicant has experience using the same proposed protocols on other ranches in the area and has the capacity to complete the tasks as outlined in the application.

Concerns

- The application does not include a letter of support from the landowner, which would lend clear indication the project is likely to succeed in leading to future restoration implementation.

Concluding Analysis

New landowners often provide opportunities for restoration. When approached by the landowner for assistance in improving habitat conditions on their ranch, the applicant suggested this phased approach, by first creating a conservation assessment across the 8,800-acre ranch. This is technically sound by first inventorying the multiple types of ecosystem conditions and infrastructure on the ranch, and then prioritizing restoration actions to holistically improve the watershed functions across the entire landscape. The project uses several different accepted protocols to gather and analyze the information, and results in user-friendly tools to both restoration partners and the landowner as they begin to plan and implement projects.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
1 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount
$17,833

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$17,833

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6010-22548

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Pine Creek Conservation Area Robinson Creek Riparian Restoration Plan

Applicant: Oregon Natural Desert Association

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Wheeler

OWEB Request: $30,243

Total Cost: $56,742

Application Description Robinson Creek is located within the Pine Creek Conservation Area (PCCA), a 34,012 acre property in Wheeler County owned and managed by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Robinson Creek, one of the largest tributaries of Pine Creek and the Lower John Day River, contains designated Critical Habitat for Mid-Columbia steelhead trout and essential salmonid habitat, and serves as a connective corridor for fish and wildlife moving from the lower elevations of the John Day Basin to the higher elevation ponderosa pine forest. Historic livestock grazing and other agricultural activities coupled with climate change impacts have severely degraded natural processes and habitat function on Robinson Creek, leaving it deeply incised with poor instream and riparian habitat and reduced instream flow.

In partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, ONDA will develop a restoration plan and design restoration treatments for approximately three miles of high priority stream on Robinson Creek to improve hydrological function, increase year-round flows, increase vegetation abundance and diversity, improve habitat conditions for Mid-Columbia steelhead and other native fish and wildlife.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- There is a clear need for the proposed assessment to understand existing conditions on Robinson Creek and to develop a comprehensive stream and riparian restoration project design.
- Robinson Creek is an appropriate location for using low-tech, process-based restoration techniques to extend wetted reaches and maximize spring inputs. Resulting restoration will benefit wildlife and potentially improve the water quality and flow into Pine Creek.
- The project is located on a tribal conservation property, which provides an opportunity for restoration and long-term management that focuses entirely on fish and wildlife habitat and water quality improvements.
- The budget aligns with the work necessary to accomplish the project objectives.
- The applicant has the capacity to implement the proposed project actions and has implemented similar project types.
- Mapping spring inputs and minimally incised channels is a technically sound approach to identify future restoration locations for riparian plantings, beaver dam analogs (BDAs) and post assisted log structures (PALS).

Concerns

- The application lacks information describing other restoration activities completed in the Robinson drainage, specifically how much juniper has been and will be removed upslope and in the headwaters of Robinson Creek. Heavy infestation of juniper could be reducing the groundwater inputs into the intermittent reaches of the creek. Including this additional information in the application would provide important context for understanding the project benefits long-term.
- Although listed as critical habitat, steelhead use at the confluence of Robinson Creek and Pine Creek is uncertain without data verifying their presence, and steelhead use is highly unlikely in the upper reaches of Robinson Creek because of low or no flow. Consequently, stream improvements may provide limited habitat benefits for steelhead.

Concluding Analysis

The Pine Creek Conservation Area is a large tribal holding specifically purchased for fish and wildlife habitat. Other than juniper removal, not a lot of restoration has been completed up Robinson Canyon. Robinson is the largest tributary to Pine Creek, an identified steelhead stream that also is home to large communities of beavers. Assessing existing conditions on Robinson Creek is a reasonable first step to determine ideal locations for restoration to occur and site-appropriate designs. The applicant is encouraged to work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) fish biologist to determine what restoration treatments are appropriate based on potential fish use in Robinson Creek.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Fund

Review Team Priority
2 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount
$30,243

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$30,243

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6011-22577
Project Type: Technical Assistance
Project Name: McKay Creek Restoration Phase II
Applicant: Umatilla SWCD
Region: Mid Columbia
County: Umatilla
OWEB Request: $70,671
Total Cost: $88,371

Application Description The McKay Creek Habitat Restoration Phase II project seeks to continue the process of restoring habitat that was severely damaged by the major flooding events that occurred in spring of 2019 on lower McKay Creek.

The project is located directly south and southwest of the city of Pendleton, and encompasses the reach from the base of the McKay Creek Reservoir to the mouth where McKay Creek connects into the Umatilla River. This reach
of McKay Creek flows through a rapidly developing small farm community, and eventually passes into the City of Pendleton's Urban Growth Boundary before flowing back into more agricultural ground. The highly-developed
nature of the riparian area creates a challenge for floodplain re-connectivity, as the stream is constrained to protect the infrastructure that lines its banks.

The unexpected rains in 2019 caused an unprecedented flow of water into McKay reservoir. To prevent compromising the structural integrity of the dam, Bureau of Reclamation was forced to release high flows for over
two weeks. The amount of sedimentation and erosion that occurred was significant. Existing riparian vegetation was ripped away, leaving bare and cut banks that promised additional erosion. Phase I of this project identified the locations that are in need of restoration, and set forth a trajectory that this project hopes to capitalize on.

This project proposes to build on the report and design data on project sites that was collected in the previous grant phase, bringing them to 100% design. The majority of funds for this phase will go towards contracting with Anderson and Perry to bring the identified sites to design and permit completion.

Partners include City of Pendleton, Umatilla County, Bureau of Reclamation, and Lower McKay Creek Water Control District.

Review Team Evaluation
Strengths

- The application presents a clear need for the proposed technical assistance with a concise narrative

and photos that demonstrate the extent of the Spring 2019 flooding events.

- The proposed restoration design approach is a logical next step following the previous technical assistance grant that funded outreach and an assessment.
- There is a high rate of landowner project participation in a populated area of Pendleton.
- The application presents a proactive attempt to find workable solutions in an area presenting erosion problems exacerbated by high flows released from the dam.
- The previously completed conceptual design includes using logs and bioengineering to stabilize banks rather than traditional armoring with boulders and rip rap.
- Support from multiple stakeholders in the area are indicated by letters of support and match.

Concerns

- Reservoir management appears to be key in the issues on McKay Creek and seems to be a significant factor contributing to impacts of flooding below the dam. If not resolved, it is uncertain whether the proposed bank stabilization actions will effectively provide a long-term solution. The next large release of water from the reservoir could undermine or destroy any bank stabilization investment.
- There are multiple ongoing assessments associated with the McKay Dam and flooding issues across the Umatilla Basin. It is unclear from the application whether the proposed project fits into a timely, collaborative solution connecting these various efforts or how the resulting restoration projects will fit into the overall goals of the multiple studies.
- Although the proposed side channel design element is a technically sound restoration alternative, the application indicates it will not be designed to offset high flows, reduce flooding, or reduce erosional forces. This would likely limit the benefits of the side channel in addressing the watershed problem impacting the project site. More information about the intent and objective of each design element within the application narrative would add helpful context needed to determine whether design approaches are site appropriate.

Concluding Analysis

McKay Creek is a known contributor of high sediment loads into the Umatilla River, especially after destabilizing events such as the 2019 and 2020 floods. However, there could be a missed opportunity to participate in a sustainable and collaborative pathway that integrates the various ongoing efforts to assess conditions and determine solutions that address the limiting factors affecting McKay Creek, specifically the issues of large erosive releases from McKay dam. This broader approach is more likely to succeed in restoring stream function and addressing the cause of watershed degradation rather than the symptoms.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

Review Team Recommended Amount

$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount

$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6012-22614

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Cup Gulch Assessment and Action Plan

Applicant: Walla Walla Basin Watershed Foundation

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Umatilla

OWEB Request: $46,181

Total Cost: $90,427

Application Description Cup Gulch is located approximately six miles southeast of Milton-Freewater in Umatilla County, Oregon. Cup Gulch is a tributary of the North Fork Walla Walla River, which flows into the mainstem Walla Walla River three miles downstream of its confluence with Cup Gulch. The assessment area encompasses 3.3 square miles from the confluence with the North Fork Walla Walla River up to the top of the dividing ridge with Cottonwood Creek (see Cup Gulch Location attachment).

The Cup Gulch Assessment will complement other water quality and habitat improvement efforts in the basin. Several floodplain and habitat restoration, spring reconnection, fish passage, and riparian restoration projects upstream and downstream of this assessment area have been completed or are in the design stage, including the North Fork Sam's Rea five-mile restoration project.

Cup Gulch has the potential to provide off-channel rearing habitat for ESA-listed steelhead and redband trout and deliver additional spring and summer flow to the North Fork Walla Walla River. A culvert is identified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a barrier to "some fish some of the time." The culvert is located on the North Fork River Road, less than 500' from the confluence with the North Fork Walla Walla River (see culvert location map attachment). This assessment will develop a strategy to remedy the passage barrier and assess the potential habitat upstream of the passage barrier. This assessment area is also located in a Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) designated by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, which focuses on implementing projects that improve water quality in local watersheds.
Bonneville Power Administration will be assisting in funding this work and will be a project partner.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The application clearly identifies the need to assess Cup Gulch and identify future restoration opportunities, including opening passage to three miles of potential steelhead habitat, increasing cold

water inputs to the North Fork Walla Walla River, and restoring riparian vegetation that has been scoured out by high flows.

- The project site is located within one of Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Strategic Implementation Areas (SIA).
- Water quality information gleaned from the assessment will be uploaded to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) database and be available to the public.
- The budget is reasonable for the identified work elements.
- The application includes letters of support from restoration partners, indicating appropriate stakeholders are involved in the project.
- The assessment and resulting prioritized restoration will build on other stream restoration projects along the North Fork Walla Walla River, extending the overall positive ecological impact.
- The applicant has successfully implemented stream assessments and complex restoration projects and has the necessary capacity and technical expertise on staff.

Concerns

- Irrigation use in Cup Gulch is not described in the application. Over allocation could impact potential ecological benefits from future habitat restoration efforts if flow diverted for agricultural use dries up the stream.
- The application does not include information on the current land use, specifically grazing management within the drainage. Heavy livestock use will likely impact future efforts to re-establish riparian vegetation and improve water quality inputs to the North Fork Walla Walla River.

Concluding Analysis

The watershed council continues to focus restoration and monitoring on the South and North Fork Walla Walla Rivers and their significant tributaries. By first completing an assessment and identifying priorities, restoration opportunities can lead to more successful projects on the ground. The councils history ineffectively working with private landowners to implement stream restoration indicates the project is likely to succeed.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund

Review Team Priority

3 of 3

Review Team Recommended Amount

$46,181

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Fund with Conditions

Staff Recommended Amount

$46,181

Staff Conditions

Final Project Completion Report shall include information on grazing management within the Cup Gulch drainage and details relating to water rights from Cup Gulch Creek, if any.

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6013-22622

Project Type: Technical Assistance

Project Name: Umatilla River Riparian Area Restoration Assessment

Applicant: City of Pendleton

Region: Mid Columbia

County: Umatilla

OWEB Request: $75,000

Total Cost: $100,000

Application Description 1) The project scope includes the North shore of the Umatilla River from the Main Street Bridge downstream to the Bedford Bridge within the City of Pendleton corporate boundaries. The project area is approximately 2 miles in length.
2) The riparian area along the north bank of the Umatilla River is inundated with invasive plants negatively impacting native plant life and animal habitat. OWEB funds would be used to procure a team of environmental scientists to assess current riparian conditions and make recommendations for removal invasive species for restoration and replanting.
3) City of Pendleton, Blue Mountain Land Trust, & Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project reach located in the Umatilla River is a migratory corridor for steelhead and Chinook.

Concerns

- The project scope of work is unclear in the application. For example, the application narrative indicates the project will occur over a two mile stretch of the Umatilla River; however, maps provided with the application indicate the reach is only one mile long. Also, it is unclear what specific technical assistance tasks will be completed or where that work will be done.
- The project will focus on a reach of the Umatilla River that flows through downtown Pendleton without considering what invasive plant species are occurring upstream. Many riparian weeds use the river as a vector to populate downstream sites. If the objective of future restoration is weed abatement, upstream sources of invasive plant species will likely reduce the likelihood of success.
- The application lacks photos showing current site characteristics that would provide helpful context for understanding the need for the proposed technical assistance. Photos were included as a part of the virtual site visit, which did provide some perspective.
- It is unclear if qualified experts will be involved in the project. For example, the assessment surveys will focus on vegetation to plan restoration that will address invasive plant species in the riparian area; however, it is unclear whether the Umatilla County Weed Department had been contacted for technical input or as a collaborative partner.
- It is unclear if appropriate stakeholders will be engaged in the project. For example, the Umatilla SWCD is listed as the only member of the technical advisory committee in the Project Management section of the application; however, there is no letter of support included in the application nor any in-kind match from the SWCD in the budget to indicate their commitment to participate in the project.

- The budget only provides a lump sum for contracted services and lacks detail needed to evaluate whether costs are reasonable and necessary for achieving the proposed goals and outcomes of this project. The application indicates that budget estimates are based on work done in McKay Creek; however, McKay Creek is a six-mile reach of a much different riverine system that may not be comparable to the more shorter proposed project reach on the Umatilla River.

Concluding Analysis

The proposal lacks sufficient detail needed to understand and evaluate the proposed project. If resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to work with technical experts in watershed restoration from the region to address the concerns noted in this evaluation.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff
Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation
Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

Open Solicitation-2022 Fall Offering
Mid Columbia (Region 6)

Application Number: 223-6014-22613
Project Type: Stakeholder Engagement
Project Name: Watershed Stewardship Workshops
Applicant: Walla Walla Basin Watershed Foundation
Region: Mid Columbia
County: Umatilla
OWEB Request: $101,598
Total Cost: $159,310

Application Description For over 28 years the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council (WWBWC) has partnered with funders, state and local organizations, water districts, and landowners to address critical water issues within the basin. However, despite the success of these projects, the WWBWC recognizes the need to diversify our engagement in the community in order to holistically address the basin's water issues. In an effort to reach underserved communities, the WWBWC seeks funding to provide a series of monthly workshops addressing a wide-range of water topics affecting the health of the Walla Walla River basin in and around the city of Milton-Freewater, in Umatilla County, Oregon.

Inadequate stream flow, high summer water temperatures, high sediment loads, limited instream habitat complexity, groundwater declines, insufficient riparian vegetation, and fish passage obstructions limit the basin's healthy populations of ESA-listed summer steelhead, bull trout and reintroduced spring Chinook salmon. The proposed workshops will not only inform the community on these commonly overlooked issues, but also provide landowners and area residents with opportunities to engage with WWBWC staff and partnering organizations who can help them identify ways of enhancing the watershed through future projects, volunteerism, and ecologically safe practices.

The WWBWC will partner with local, state, and tribal organizations who will present on topics that will include water trusts and transactions, water rights, river habitat restoration, basin groundwater, working with beavers, urban water conservation through water wise landscaping, pesticide stewardship, and living in a changing climate.

The City of Milton-Freewater, Umatilla County, and local businesses will be providing funding support. Workshops will be free of cost to the attendee, cover topics of concern, and be held in both English and Spanish.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths

- The project focuses on outreach to an underserved community in Milton-Freewater that makes up a

large percentage of the population.

- The application has clear and concise objectives and provides detail on how communication will occur among the applicant, restoration stakeholders, and target audiences.
- Workshops are designed to encourage multi-directional communications with stakeholders. A bilingual staff person will be hired to aid in communication with the largely Hispanic population and isa critical component for the workshops to be successful.
- The applicant has a history of successful outreach, is respected in the community as restoration experts, and has implemented a variety of restoration and monitoring projects.
- The watershed council has the capacity to implement the project with its existing staff and the recently hired community engagement specialist.
- Eight letters of support and a mix of in-kind and cash match from a wide array of stakeholders in the area indicate the project is important to the community.
- The budget is reasonable for the proposed work elements and detail is provided in the budget development section of the application that explains how costs were determined.

Concerns

- Twenty-two monthly workshops may be more than is needed to effectively work in a small community like Milton-Freewater. Also, there may not be sufficient time allotted to develop and host these 22 monthly workshops, which could impact the success of the project. It may be more cost effective to host fewer workshops and allow for more development time.
- Surveys will be completed; however, it would be useful to add information on successful surveys completed in the past to provide context for understanding how this method has been an effective mode of communication in this community.
- The application lacks information on how the stakeholder engagement approach will differentiate between landowners versus renter audiences and the potential paths from outreach to future restoration or water acquisition projects for each.
- More explanation about the restoration approaches within an urban setting is needed to better understand the likelihood that restoration will result from the workshops and events.
- The map included in the application lacks detail, such as the streams noted in the application, distribution of urban versus rural residential land use, and locations that may have potential for floodplain reconnection or barriers to fish passage removed.
- Nine staff positions are included in the budget; however, only three staff are listed under Project Management in the Wrap-Up section of the application. It is unclear how each position will be involved in the project and whether these costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed work without additional information explaining the roles of each staff.

Concluding Analysis

Incorporating efforts to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion outreach is an admirable goal of this proposal. However, the timing and number of the proposed events appear overly ambitious for the size of the community and project timeline, which could limit the likelihood of the project to succeed. If resubmitted, the applicant is encouraged to address the concerns noted above and reduce the number of workshops.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Do Not Fund

Review Team Priority

Review Team Recommended Amount
$0

Review Team Conditions

n/a

Staff Recommendation

Staff Follow-Up to Review Team
n/a

Staff Recommendation
Do Not Fund

Staff Recommended Amount
$0

Staff Conditions

n/a

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item I

Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring Funding

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360
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Agenda Item I supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #6: Coordinated monitoring and shared learning to advance watershed restoration effectiveness.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Ken Fetcho, Effectiveness Monitoring Coordinator
Courtney Shaff, Monitoring and Reporting Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item I. Stage 0 Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring Funding Request
April 25-26, 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

Staff and partners from the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council and the McKenzie Watershed Council will provide a progress update and describe monitoring proposals to continue effectiveness monitoring Stage 0 restoration in Whychus Creek and the South Fork McKenzie River.

II. Background

There has been increased interest in approaches that create complex river channels and floodplains. One approach for wide alluvial valleys is referred to as Stage 0 restoration, which restores fluvial processes at the valley scale. The intent of this approach is to restore geomorphic processes that encourage and maintain deposition and habitat development over time rather than designing and dictating a channel pattern, profile, and dimension.

Restoring stream reaches to a Stage 0 condition have recently taken place in western and central Oregon, including several large-scale, multi-phased restoration projects in Whychus Creek and the South Fork McKenzie River sub-basins that have been supported with OWEB funding. This is a relatively new practice, and the evaluation of long-term responses including riparian vegetation, aquatic species habitat availability, and the dynamic geomorphic responses over time, need to be assessed. For more information on Stage 0 and the benefits of restoring to this condition please visit the Stage Zero Information Hub.

At the July 2019 meeting, the board approved a staff request for up to $360,000 for monitoring and information sharing associated with restoring a stream channel to a Stage 0 condition. This award was framed as a staged funding request for these work items, with initial funding requested during the 2019-21 biennium and subsequent funding to be provided to continue monitoring in the 2021-2023 biennium, based on progress reporting to the board. Three grants were awarded in the initial grant offering:

1. A monitoring grant to the McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC) for effectiveness monitoring of a multi-phased restoration project in the South Fork McKenzie River (Upper Willamette Basin) and data compilation and synthesis of existing data about restoring to a Stage 0 condition;

2. A monitoring grant to the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC) for effectiveness monitoring—including developing and implementing remote sensing approaches—of a multi-phased restoration project in Whychus Creek (Upper Deschutes Basin); and

3. A stakeholder engagement grant to the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University to plan and convene a workshop to bring together a range of partners to share knowledge, describe concerns and considerations about this restoration approach, identify monitoring and information needs, and articulate best practices for restoration to a Stage 0 condition.

At the July 2021 meeting, the board received a progress report presentation from OWEB staff, the MWC, and the UDWC. Both restoration and monitoring efforts were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the restoration timing was significantly delayed in the SF McKenzie

III. Overview of the Funding Request

OWEB staff has continued to work with the grantees to discuss the need for a second phase of funding for effectiveness monitoring during the 2021-23 biennium. Staff provided the summary below of the two funding proposals at the March 21, 2023, Grants Committee meeting and members expressed support for bringing this funding request to the full board for consideration.

Whychus Creek

OWEB proposes to provide $295,000 to the UDWC to continue this monitoring effort from November 2023 to December 2026. OWEB funding will support the UDWC to assess the effects of restoration on up to four reaches along Whychus Creek. This monitoring proposal will directly build on information gained through monitoring efforts co-funded by OWEB in 2020 and by interim funding provided by The Nature Conservancy and Portland General Electric in 2022.

The proposed work will support effectiveness monitoring project development, contracting, imagery acquisition and processing, ground-based field measurements and analysis, and reporting for up to 3.2 miles of Whychus Creek. It also includes two years of macroinvertebrate monitoring to support the evaluation of the biological response to post-restoration conditions in these reaches. See Attachment A for more information.

South Fork McKenzie River

OWEB proposes to provide $175,000 to the MWC to continue this monitoring effort from July 2023 to September 2025. OWEB funding will support MWC to assess the effects of restoration on three reaches along the SF McKenzie River. This monitoring proposal will provide support to continue monitoring before a third phase of habitat restoration is anticipated to be completed in 2025. The proposed work will continue ODFW's monitoring of juvenile Chinook salmon, remote sensing and ground-based monitoring activities and ensure long-term public availability

of remote sensing data collected during the initial monitoring phase as well as those data collected during this proposed work. See Attachment B for more information.

The September 2020 Holiday Farm Fire (HFF) dramatically altered short- and long-term planning for restoration and associated effectiveness monitoring on the SF McKenzie River. The HFF has caused a delay in a future phase of restoration that is to be monitored with OWEB funds and is likely to be implemented in 2025. Due to this delay, there is a need to maintain key datasets by continuing monitoring and applying lessons learned during the initial phase of effectiveness monitoring so that long-term responses to the restoration can be better evaluated. After restoration is completed in 2025, we envision that there will be an additional monitoring grant provided to the MWC to support a final phase of effectiveness monitoring in 2026 to measure the effects of that subsequent phase of restoration to maintain the original monitoring design that was initially funded in 2020.

The results from both of these effectiveness monitoring projects will 1) build on the geospatial monitoring and analysis methods piloted from 2020 - 2022 and advance their utility for monitoring Stage 0 stream restoration projects across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, 2) incorporate ground-based physical and biological data with low elevation imagery to document valley scale changes, and 3) continue to advance the state of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of restoration designed to achieve a Stage 0 condition and the resulting benefits.

IV. Recommendation

Staff recommends the board award up to $470,000 for effectiveness monitoring of large-scale restoration projects in Whychus Creek and the SF McKenzie River with funds from the Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes line item of the OWEB spending plan, and delegate to the Executive Director the authority to distribute the funds through appropriate agreements with an award date of April 25, 2023.

Attachments

A. Whychus Creek Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring Proposal
B. South Fork McKenzie Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring Proposal

UPPER DESCHUTES WATERSHED COUNCIL

Whychus Creek Phase 2 Stage 0 Restoration Geomorphic and Habitat Analysis Study

Submitted by Upper Deschutes Watershed Council
Bend, Oregon
January 26, 2023

Problem Statement

Stream habitat along Whychus Creek, a tributary to the Deschutes River, has been degraded and simplified by more than a century of flow diversions for irrigation along with channel and floodplain modification for homesteading, agriculture, and flood control. The Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC) has worked with non-profit and agency partners, including the Deschutes Land Trust and USFS, for over a decade to restore stream habitat on Whychus Creek in key ecologically important, low-gradient, historically depositional valley reaches.

In 2016, UDWC, in partnership with USFS and Deschutes Land Trust, implemented our first restoration project designed to re-activate the valley bottom, re-establish geomorphic processes, and ultimately promote evolution of a Stage 0 condition, in Reach 4 of Deschutes Land Trust's Whychus Canyon Preserve. Process-based restoration toward Stage 0 aims to improve the outcomes of stream restoration projects by restoring reach- and watershed-scale stream processes to create abundant, complex, self-sustaining stream habitat. Stage 0 refers to an anastomosing stage of stream evolution proposed by Cluer and Thorne (2013) as a precursor to the sinuous, single-thread Stage 1 channel described in Simon and Hupp's (1986) Channel Evolution Model. Cluer and Thorne's analyses of habitat and ecosystem benefits in nine stages of stream evolution suggest that anastomosing Stage 0 streams provide far greater habitat and ecosystem benefits and are more resilient to climate change and disturbances such as floods and droughts when compared to the sinuous single-thread Stage 1 channel which in past decades has often represented the desired outcome of stream restoration projects.

Practitioners across the Pacific Northwest have started using an active, high-tech Geomorphic Gradeline design approach (Powers et al 2019) to restore stream and floodplain function in depositional valleys, with over 20 projects implemented to date throughout Oregon. The Geomorphic Gradeline approach determines the historic valley slope and elevation and identifies areas within a project reach to be graded (lowered) or filled relative to that historic, now target, elevation for the purpose of constructing a new, connected floodplain surface. In contrast to other habitat restoration methods that focus on restoring form through construction of single-thread channels with specific channel geometry and habitat features, process-based restoration projects that aim to restore a Stage 0 condition are designed to address root causes of channel and ecological degradation and rely on re-establishing stream processes such as floodplain connectivity, floodplain-wide riparian cover, erosion, deposition, and avulsion to create and maintain resilient riparian and aquatic habitat that can support all life stages of fish and wildlife species over time. This approach promotes channel, bedform and geomorphic unit evolution by allowing the river system to easily access and dynamically move across its floodplain. The goal of this method is to restore the underlying natural processes necessary for sustained evolution of a dynamic, complex network of anastomosing channels. A building body of evidence from projects throughout the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountains suggests this type of restoration approach can lead to increased quantity, diversity, and quality of aquatic and riparian habitat at an equivalent or lower cost per acre of stream and floodplain habitat restored compared to form-based restoration approaches.

The complexity and large, typically valley-wide spatial extent of resulting habitat presents challenges for monitoring geomorphic, fish habitat, and biological outcomes of this restoration approach. Additionally, researchers and practitioners hypothesize that traditional stream habitat monitoring metrics (e.g. deep pools per mile, LWD per mile, % fines in riffles), which were developed from simplified, degraded, single-channel streams, likely describe an impoverished, minimum set of habitat features (forms) that provide

the physical conditions necessary for fish life stages, and conversely do not describe the diversity of habitat features and functioning processes (e.g. hyporheic exchange) that anadromous and native resident fish utilize at various life-history stages (e.g. spawning and rearing) in remnant or restored anastomosing systems. As more large-scale Stage 0 projects continue to be implemented across the Pacific Northwest, monitoring methods that incorporate remote sensing and geospatial analysis to quantify key hydrogeomorphic conditions across large spatial extents are proving to be essential to learning about the geomorphic and habitat conditions and biological responses resulting from this restoration approach.

Proposed Solution

In 2019, to advance learning about the geomorphic, habitat and biological outcomes of Stage 0 restoration in depositional valleys, UDWC submitted a successful grant proposal and application to OWEB to further development of methods for using geospatial analysis of remotely sensed data to quantify hydrogeomorphic and habitat conditions in Stage 0 stream restoration projects. The proposed project aimed to:

1) Recruit the expertise of remote sensing and geospatial analysts to identify key geomorphic and habitat metrics characterizing Stage 0 restoration for which preliminary remote sensing methods existed;
2) Through development and application of those methods, determine which methods were well-suited for quantifying key Stage 0 metrics while accelerating learning about design and monitoring of Stage 0 restoration;
3) Produce data to support longer-term analysis of fish habitat and ecosystem benefits of Whychus Creek and other Stage 0 projects; and, in so doing, to
4) Increase the pace, scale, and effectiveness of stream habitat restoration that will benefit salmon, steelhead, and native resident fish populations throughout the Pacific Northwest.

During the spring of 2020, UDWC convened and met with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of remote sensing experts and consulted with our restoration design team to identify a set of highest-priority geomorphic and habitat metrics that showed promise for analysis from imagery based on published methods. The TAC included, among others, Steve Wondzell, research riparian ecologist and Jon Burnett, research forester with the USFS PNW Research Station, and Matt Barker, a graduate student in the OSU Aerial Information Systems lab collaborating with Willamette National Forest on remote sensing, to allow for shared learning across Stage 0 restoration projects east and west of the Cascades and to create efficiencies and consistency in development and application of imagery acquisition and analysis methods. Through this process we identified 6 metrics for analysis from imagery that represent key characteristics of Stage 0 systems. These included wetted area, wood, riparian vegetation, geomorphic units, velocity, and sediment grain size. UDWC worked with TAC members and contractors in summer 2020 to acquire multi-spectral imagery and true-color video, conduct ground-based surveys to complement and inform metrics to be analyzed from imagery, and guide development of an analysis approach for the selected metrics. Five metrics (wetted area, wood, riparian vegetation, geomorphic units, and velocity) were analyzed successfully from imagery; methods for riparian vegetation and velocity especially warrant continued development. Geomorphic unit and wood survey data from ground-based surveys were used to complement data from imagery where tree canopy obscured active channels and the floodplain surface. Analysis of sediment grain size from imagery using the methods employed was found to be less accurate and effective than conducting pebble counts. A final report from UDWC's 2020, Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project on Whychus Creek is forthcoming in April 2023.

UDWC secured external funding to refine imagery and video acquisition, riparian vegetation classification, and velocity analysis methods in 2022 in Whychus Canyon Phase IIa, where a GGL Stage 0 restoration project had been implemented in 2021 subsequent to pre-restoration imagery acquisition and data collection during the 2020 Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project. We worked with Wolf Water Resources to acquire multi-spectral and Red-Green-Blue (RGB) imagery, and in consultation with USGS to acquire overlapping video frames and ground-based velocity and flow direction measurements to support velocity analysis. This 2022 effort allowed UDWC and partners to acquire imagery and video and collect ground-based measurements to capture and describe geomorphic and habitat conditions in this project reach one year post-restoration. The 2022 project also further advanced 2020 methods for analyzing metrics, including piloting a new analysis approach to classify riparian vegetation communities; using classification instead of manual digitization to map and quantify wood in this newly restored reach; and achieving preliminary spatially continuous mapping of velocity and flow direction from video.

The Phase 2 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring (EM) project we are proposing for summer 2024 will allow UDWC to acquire and analyze post-restoration imagery for up to four restoration reaches along Whychus Creek (Figure 1; Table 1). These include Camp Polk Reaches 1 and 2, implemented following a modified Natural Channel Design but where a Stage 0 condition has evolved, and Whychus Canyon Phases I and IIa, where restoration was implemented following a GGL Stage 0 restoration design in 2016 and in 2021, respectively. The fourth reach, Whychus Canyon Phase IIb, is slated to be restored in 2023 or 2024 pending permitting, and we will tailor 2024 Stage 0 effectiveness monitoring under this project for this reach in response to the restoration status of the reach and need for monitoring data as of summer 2024; one option could be to collect imagery and perform analysis for reaches restored as of 2024, and defer imagery acquisition and analysis for Phase IIb only until 2025 if the reach remains unrestored as of 2024. A fifth Whychus Creek restoration reach included in UDWC's Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project, Willow Springs, was implemented in 2022 using a Low-Tech Process Based Restoration Design. This project experienced high flows (> 600 cfs) in November 2022, triggering monitoring of medium-term project response in summer 2023 for physical indicator metrics. This monitoring effort, to be led by Anabranch Solutions in consultation with UDWC, will produce geomorphic metrics consistent with those produced through Phase 1 Stage 0 effectiveness monitoring and support a change detection analysis for metrics including wetted area, riparian vegetation, wood and wood aggregate density, and geomorphic units. This reach will not be included in this proposal unless restoration of Phase IIb has not been implemented as of 2024, in which case contracted services funding for imagery acquisition, processing, and analysis may be re-allocated to highest-priority information needs in Phase IIb, Willow Springs, or restoration reaches already included in the Phase 2 Stage 0 EM project.

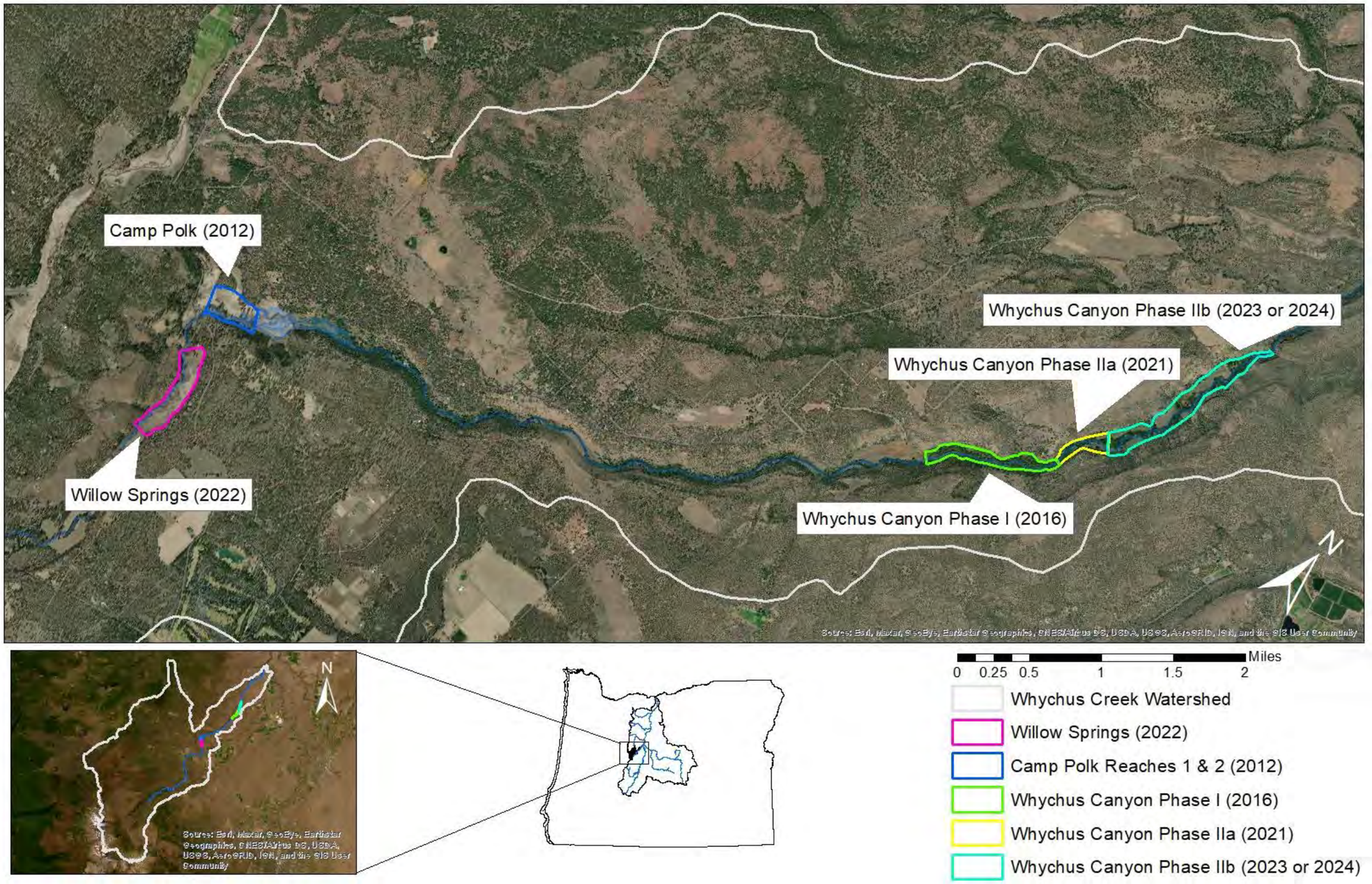

Figure 1. Five Whychus Creek restoration reaches included in Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring. Imagery acquisition and data analysis will be completed in the four downstream reaches in 2024 or 2025. Imagery acquisition will occur at Willow Springs in 2023 to evaluate effects of a November 2022 high flow event; analysis from imagery for this reach will occur in 2023 and 2024.

Table 1. Restoration reaches, miles, acres, year restored or to be restored, and phases of Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring in which each reach was or will be included in imagery acquisition and data analysis.

Restoration Reach	Miles	Acres	Year Restored	2020 Stage 0 EM Phase 1	2022 Stage 0 EM Interim	2023 Willow Springs EM	2024 Stage 0 EM Phase 2
Camp Polk Reaches 1-2	0.2	16	2012	x			x
Whychus Canyon R4 Phase I	1	68	2016	x	x		x
Whychus Canyon Phase IIa	0.5	26	2021	x	x		x
Willow Springs	1	59	2022	x		x	
Whychus Canyon Phase IIb	1.5	100	2023 or 2024	x			tbd

Through the proposed project, we will build on information gained through 2020 and 2022 imagery and video acquisition and analysis to continue to refine specifications for acquisition to better support analysis from imagery; especially so for velocity analysis from video, for which methods and software packages available have been dramatically improved since 2020. We will also build on 2020 and 2022 analysis methods and products for wetted area, wood, vegetation (with a focus on differentiation of riparian from upland communities), geomorphic units, and velocity. For velocity, the proposed project will apply analysis methods developed since 2020 to 2020 and 2022 videos to complete analysis and assess accuracy for these years and refine specifications for 2024 video and imagery acquisition and ground-based measurements, but will not include velocity analysis from 2024 video, pending funding not requested under this proposal. For all other metrics, we will evaluate change in metrics since 2020 and since 2022 for the reaches monitored using these methods in these years under our Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project and our 2022 interim effort.

Collection and analysis of macroinvertebrate community data in 2024 and 2025 will add to a long-term dataset and support continued evaluation of the biological response to the geomorphic and habitat conditions that are evolving in Stage 0 restoration projects on Whychus Creek as documented through Stage 0 effectiveness monitoring in 2020, 2022, and 2024. Similarly, continuous stream temperature monitoring at 11 established sites along Whychus, to be funded through matching grants for 2024 and 2025, will contribute to that long-term dataset, and provide data to evaluate rate of change in stream temperature through Whychus Creek restoration project reaches, a metric that supports programmatic Biological Opinion compliance with UDWC's bull trout adaptive management plan for Whychus Canyon Phase I and IIa restoration projects.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the proposed project is to repeat and continue to refine imagery and video acquisition and analysis and complementary ground-based sampling design and measurements to better characterize and quantify pre- and post-project hydrogeomorphic and habitat conditions in Whychus Creek Stage 0 stream restoration reaches, and to evaluate the biological response to those conditions using macroinvertebrate and other available biological data. Hydrogeomorphic, habitat, and biological data

will also be evaluated in the context of data produced through ongoing monitoring of additional metrics (see Complementary Monitoring Efforts below).

This project represents Phase 2 of UDWC's Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project and builds on UDWC's and the SFMR's Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring projects concurrently funded by OWEB and developed and implemented beginning in 2020. The current effort is also informed by a refined definition of and measures for characterizing a Stage 0 condition, developed in collaboration with Stage 0 researchers and practitioners through the parallel Stage 0 Practitioners Workshops also funded by OWEB and hosted by USFS's PNW Research Station in late 2019 and early 2020. Metrics to be analyzed under UDWC's Phase 2 project are aligned with those identified in the Structured Decision Model produced through the Practitioners Workshops. The proposed Phase 2 project presents a valuable opportunity to repeat the remote sensing methods developed in Phase 1 to compare pre- and post-restoration conditions at Camp Polk Reaches 1 & 2, Whychus Canyon Phase I and IIa, and possibly in Whychus Canyon Phase IIb depending on restoration status as of 2024.

Specific Phase 2 project objectives and monitoring tasks are as follows:

Objective 1. Apply findings from Phase 1 (2020) and interim, 2022 project implementation (i.e. metrics to be analyzed from imagery; flight planning, imagery and video acquisition and processing; ground-based measurements to provide complementary data and for training and validation as needed; and data analysis) to Phase 2 Stage 0 imagery and video acquisition and remote sensing analysis at Camp Polk Reaches 1 & 2 (~0.2 mi), Whychus Canyon Phase I (1 mi), IIa (0.5 mi), and possibly IIb (1.5 mi) depending on restoration status as of 2024.

Monitoring task 1.1. Identify and recruit or re-engage 2024 Stage 0 EM technical experts to serve as 2024 monitoring technical team including consulting and advising on final 2024 imagery acquisition specifications, ground-based sampling design, and ground-based survey methods to train and validate data as needed (November 2023 – January 2024).

Monitoring task 1.2. Review 2020 and 2022 Stage 0 EM findings and recommendations and discuss with technical experts to incorporate and build on Phase 1 findings and recommendations (November 2023 – January 2024).

Monitoring task 1.3. With monitoring team, finalize imagery and video specifications, ground-based sampling design, and ground-based survey methods for 2024 Stage 0 EM (January - June 2024).

Monitoring task 1.4. Refine scopes of work and establish contracts with contractors (January - June 2024).

Monitoring task 1.5. Develop imagery acquisition and ground-based survey schedule with contractors and UDWC staff (March - April 2024).

Monitoring task 1.6. Communicate and work with contractors to acquire imagery along up to 3.2 miles of Whychus Creek restoration reaches at base flow (July 2024)

Monitoring task 1.7. Collect ground-based measurements to complement analysis from imagery and as needed train and validate classification and other analyses from imagery (June – August 2024).

Monitoring task 1.8. Transfer and manage imagery, data, and data products (August 2024 – September 2025).

Monitoring task 1.9. Consult with contractors and provide guidance on classification and analysis specifications and progress, data summarization, and reporting (August 2024 – September 2025).

Monitoring task 1.10. Analyze ground-based data from 2020, 2022, and 2024 and summarize findings in technical memo (October 2024 – September 2025).

Monitoring task 1.11. Compile reports from individual geomorphic and habitat analyses, synthesize and integrate with macroinvertebrate, stream temperature, and other complementary monitoring data, and interpret results in final project report (October 2025 – March 2026).

Monitoring task 1.12. Final project and grant reporting (January 2026 – June 2026).

Objective 2. Collect up to nineteen macroinvertebrate samples in August 2024 and 2025 in established and as needed new restoration reach and Whychus Creek index sites to support comparison of macroinvertebrate community metrics pre- and post-restoration, in untreated restoration reaches, and in Whychus Creek index sites, and inform biological response to restoration.

Monitoring task 2.1. Contract with CASM Environmental, LLC in 2024 and 2025 to: plan and prepare for two-day macroinvertebrate sampling event in each of two years; manage samples and sample identification by sub-contractor Cole Ecological; manage and analyze data; and report on macroinvertebrate community metrics in the context of restoration projects along Whychus Creek.

Monitoring task 2.2. Identify macroinvertebrate sampling reaches, recruit agency and non-profit partner staff and community volunteers, and create sampling teams for two-day macroinvertebrate sampling event in each of two years.

Monitoring task 2.3. With UDWC monitoring staff, flag up to nineteen sampling reaches along Whychus Creek, record and manage reach location data, prepare sampling reach maps and Google Maps location links for each sampling reach, and provide to volunteers.

Monitoring task 2.4. With CASM Environmental, LLC, volunteers, and UDWC staff, collect macroinvertebrate samples from up to nineteen sampling reaches over two-day sampling event in each of two years.

Monitoring task 2.5. Consult with CASM Environmental, LLC during report preparation as needed and provide review of draft and final macroinvertebrate reports (1 per year in 2024 and 2025).

Monitoring task 2.6. Format macroinvertebrate data for submittal to DEQ, submit macroinvertebrate data to DEQ, and request confirmation of data submittal.

Objective 3. Monitor continuous stream temperature at 11 established monitoring stations from Whychus Creek River Mile 0.25 to 38.00 in 2024 and 2025 to support evaluation of rate of stream temperature change through Stage 0 restoration project reaches and comparison to stream temperature at index monitoring stations. *This objective will be completed with match funding and will not be funded under the OWEB dollar amount requested in this proposal.*

Monitoring task 3.1. Prepare continuous temperature monitoring equipment and deployment assemblies, including managing datalogger inventory, returning NIST-certified equipment to DEQ for certification, and as needed fabricating new deployment assemblies.

Monitoring task 3.2. Perform pre-deployment audits and initialize dataloggers for continuous temperature monitoring.

Monitoring task 3.3. Deploy dataloggers at 11 monitoring stations along Whychus Creek and perform deployment audit.

Monitoring task 3.4. Perform field audits monthly, and bi-weekly at key stations in key months.

Monitoring task 3.5. Retrieve dataloggers and perform retrieval audit.

Monitoring task 3.6. Download data, perform post-deployment audits, and complete QC for dataloggers and data.

Monitoring task 3.7. Manage datalogger inventory, including decommissioning and returning to DEQ loggers that do not meet QA/QC criteria and requesting and receiving loggers for subsequent monitoring, and store deployment assemblies for winter.

Monitoring task 3.8. Manage data, including populating DEQ continuous temperature data submittal form, submitting data to DEQ, and requesting confirmation of data submittal.

Monitoring task 3.9. Analyze 2024 and 2025 data and summarize monitoring methods and results in one technical report for both years.

Products for Phase 2 are projected to include:

1) Multi-spectral and RGB imagery; videos to support velocity analysis; ground-based measurements for training and validation of remote sensing analysis and to complement metrics analyzed from imagery; and analysis data products for up to ~3.2 miles of Stage 0 restoration project reaches;
2) Technical memos summarizing:
    a. Imagery and video acquisition, imagery processing, semi-automated classification of wetted area and vegetation, and wood where methods are well-suited, and results;
    b. Video processing and LSPIV velocity analysis and results;
    c. Geomorphic unit digitization and wood digitization where semi-automated classification of wood is less well-suited (restoration reaches older than 5 years); and
    d. Sampling design, data collection and analysis methods and results for sediment grain size and associated geomorphic and habitat ground-based measurements;
3) A final project report compiling technical memos and integrating and interpreting monitoring findings in the context of information from complementary monitoring efforts to describe how habitat, geomorphic, and biological conditions as measured by these datasets differ before and after restoration;
4) Macroinvertebrate community data and reports for 2024 and 2025 detailing monitoring methods, data analysis, and findings with a focus on macroinvertebrate community response in Whychus Creek Stage 0 restoration project reaches (two reports).

Continuous stream temperature monitoring in 2024 and 2025 will be funded through matching grants. Stream temperature monitoring products will include:

1) Continuous stream temperature data from 11 monitoring stations from Whychus Creek, including from stations upstream and downstream of restoration reaches that support evaluation of rate of temperature change through restoration project reaches;
2) A 2024-2025 stream temperature report summarizing monitoring methods and discussing stream temperature status, trends, and restoration needs on Whychus Creek; and
3) An analysis of change in rate of warming pre- and post-restoration for reaches restored as of 2024, including Camp Polk, Whychus Canyon Phases I and IIa and possibly IIb, and Willow Springs.

A potential additional product, to be funded through a separate, future grant, could be a 2-4 page fact sheet or story map to communicate project findings.

Complementary Monitoring Efforts

The proposed project will leverage macroinvertebrate, fish, continuous stream temperature, ODFW AIP stream habitat survey, and other physical and biological data collected through completed and ongoing monitoring efforts described below to provide additional information about the habitat and ecosystem benefits associated with remote sensing results (Table 2).

Macroinvertebrate and fish sampling

UDWC has contracted with consultants in 2005, 2009, and every year from 2011 to present to collect macroinvertebrate samples from sites along Whychus Creek using a targeted riffle sampling protocol. Beginning in 2017 UDWC added a multi-habitat sampling protocol to support description of the macroinvertebrate community in the diverse habitats created by Stage 0 restoration projects. Since 2017 macroinvertebrate community data analysis has included a focus on describing and quantifying changes in key macroinvertebrate community metrics in restored reaches compared to before restoration and compared to index sites.

ODFW and USFS and other basin partners continue to collaborate to conduct pre- and post-restoration fish sampling in restoration project reaches along Whychus Creek, and have produced juvenile densities and length distributions for steelhead and redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and spring Chinook salmon in project reaches. PGE, ODFW, and USFS compile data from redd counts conducted annually at up to 18 sites along Whychus Creek. PGE additionally tracks returning adult Chinook salmon and steelhead using radio telemetry, providing valuable data about fish movement to and through restoration project reaches.

Pre- and post-restoration macroinvertebrate and fish data provide information about the habitat benefits associated with the geomorphic attributes of Stage 0 projects that will be quantified through the proposed remote sensing project.

Water quality

UDWC has conducted continuous stream temperature monitoring at 11 sites along Whychus Creek since 2009. Data from these sites support evaluation of rate of temperature change through restoration project reaches pre- and post-project and provide information about suitability and quality of stream temperatures for native fish including reintroduced salmon and steelhead and resident redband and bull trout.

Macroinvertebrate community data, specifically the temperature and amount of fine sediment preferred by macroinvertebrate taxa present in the community, provide information about the stream temperature and amount of fine suspended sediment experienced by the macroinvertebrate community.

Stream habitat surveys

As co-licensee of the Portland Round Butte Hydroelectric Project, Portland General Electric (PGE) contracts with ODFW to conduct stream habitat surveys using ODFW's Aquatic Inventory Project (AIP) methods. The resulting data provide information about channel length and complexity, wetted area, and geomorphic or habitat units including pool and wood metrics.

Metrics derived from remotely sensed imagery, such as wetted area, woody vegetation, and wood on the floodplain and in active channels, can be used in place of AIP stream habitat survey data when these data are not available, and provide more detailed spatially referenced information than is provided by

AIP data. AIP survey data were last collected in Whychus Canyon and Camp Polk reaches in 2022 (but not in Willow Springs). In Whychus Canyon Phase IIa especially we expect to see dynamic evolution between 2022 and 2024 as geomorphic and biological processes build a network of stream channels, geomorphic units, bars, and vegetated islands. AIP survey data can also be used to provide measures UDWC is not analyzing from imagery, such as depth and wood volume.

Groundwater monitoring

Groundwater wells installed in restoration project reaches provide continuous depth to groundwater data pre- and post-restoration in Whychus Canyon Phase I and IIb and in Willow Springs. Depth to groundwater is an indicator of vertical hydrologic connectivity, a hallmark of a Stage 0 stream condition.

Riparian vegetation monitoring

The proposed project will continue to build on 2017, 2020, and 2022 efforts on Whychus Creek to map and measure riparian vegetation communities from imagery.

In 2017, under OWEB grant (216-8200-15458), UDWC contracted with Earth Designs Consultants, Inc. (EDC), to acquire high-resolution true-color (Red-Green-Blue) aerial imagery and produce a cover classification from the resulting orthomosaic images using heads-up digitization to manually delineate cover classes. Aerial imagery was flown in 2017 and a cover classification was completed during 2017 and 2018, as well as a historic cover classification and riparian vegetation change analysis for restoration projects implemented prior to 2017 totaling ~4.5 miles valley length. Vegetation plot survey data to validate the classification from 2017 imagery were collected in 2019 with a focus on herbaceous vegetation, perceived to present the greatest challenge and uncertainty for accurately classifying the community as riparian or upland. Although analysis of these data showed relatively good accuracy (71-78%) in some restored reaches, in a third, unrestored reach, accuracy was low (47%); classification of trees as riparian versus upland from pre- to post-restoration imagery also showed some discrepancies in consistency. For the 2017 project a decision had been made to acquire more cost-effective true color imagery for the large target spatial extent (~16 mi), even though this imagery would not support an automated or semi-automated classification approach that requires spectral bands included in multi-spectral imagery. As a result the classification process relied on human interpretation of classification rules, introducing subjectivity and a need for local knowledge into the classification and limiting the repeatability of the approach.

For the 2020, Phase 1 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project, UDWC worked with the USFS Geospatial Technology and Applications Center (GTAC) to create a workflow for semi-automated classification of vegetation classes as well as wetted area from imagery. Vegetation classes included riparian tree and shrub, upland tree and shrub, herbaceous, and other. GTAC used elevation bands provided by UDWC, representing height above the target floodplain elevation or the water surface depending on reach, to differentiate riparian from upland vegetation, and used vegetation rapid assessment survey data to assess the accuracy of the classification. The accuracy assessment showed wide variation in accurately assigning vegetation to cover classes, with average accuracy for riparian tree and shrub at 68%. Misclassification was attributed in part to use of height and elevation thresholds for differentiating between shrubs and herbaceous vegetation and between riparian and upland vegetation. GTAC recommended revising elevation bands to better define riparian zones, but also recognized dynamically changing vegetation conditions in response to restoration as a potential factor in misclassification using elevation bands.

In 2022 UDWC worked with Wolf Water Resources to acquire imagery in Whychus Canyon Phase IIa and pilot a work flow to use data from individual riparian and upland indicator tree species identified and spatially referenced in the field concurrent with imagery acquisition to inform classification of riparian and upland communities from imagery. The initial model showed promising results with 90% accuracy with the training dataset and 60% accuracy with the validation dataset. The small size of the training and validation dataset from field (ground-based) measurements limited the ability to improve the model.

Riparian vegetation monitoring proposed under this project will incorporate information from 2020 and 2022 efforts to continue to advance a cost-effective, semi-automated approach to differentiating riparian woody vegetation from upland woody vegetation from multi-spectral data. Spatial extent (proportion of valley bottom) of riparian vegetation is a key attribute of a Stage 0 condition; in combination with a network of channels and shallow groundwater, riparian vegetation indicates continued vertical hydrologic connectivity. Although upland trees and shrubs are less likely than riparian trees and shrubs to be present or abundant in post-restoration reaches, it is important to be able to differentiate between riparian and upland trees and shrubs in a vegetation classification to be able to compare change in vegetation communities after restoration.

Ground-based survey data (vegetation transects) from Whychus Canyon Phases I and IIa and from Camp Polk pre- and post-restoration, as well as from Whychus Canyon Phase IIb and Willow Springs pre-restoration, describe or will support description of changes in native riparian and wetland species abundance and richness as well as any change in non-native species.

2022 Topographic-bathymetric LiDAR and thermal imagery

In 2022, USFS acquired topographic and bathymetric ("topo-bathy") LiDAR and thermal imagery along Whychus Creek restoration reaches including Whychus Canyon Phases I, IIa, and IIb. There may be opportunities to leverage this imagery to better inform or improve 2024 analyses from imagery, recognizing that topo-bathy LiDAR and thermal imagery currently remain expensive to acquire and are not expected to be available on a regular basis. Data products from thermal imagery will include a color ramp that visualizes spatial variability of stream temperatures, longitudinal temperature profiles, significant thermal features, and temperature statistics including mean, median, maximum, minimum, and standard deviation. LiDAR data products remain to be determined. Examples of applications for measuring Stage 0 restoration outcomes include: using canopy heights from LiDAR to inform riparian vegetation classification; using bathymetric LiDAR to analyze depths; and using significant thermal features from imagery to identify and further investigate areas that are cooler and warmer.

Table 2. Summary of existing monitoring data from Whychus Creek Stage 0 restoration reaches. “X” indicates pre- and/or post-restoration data have been collected in the specified reach. Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring data from imagery and from ground-based measurements are from the Phase 1 Stage 0 EM project and were collected in 2020; ODFW AIP stream habitat survey data were collected in 2022 for all reaches except for Willow Springs, where they were collected in 2020. Data from complementary UDWC and partner monitoring have been collected in multiple years and include pre- and post-restoration data, except for adult fish access data which were only collected post-restoration.

Monitoring	What it tells us about	Camp Polk	Whychus Canyon Phase I	Whychus Canyon Phase IIa	Willow Springs	Whychus Canyon Phase IIb
Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring: Metrics from imagery						
Wetted area	Lateral and vertical connectivity and amount of aquatic habitat at low flow	x	x	x	x	x
Woody riparian vegetation	Area of woody riparian vegetation; topographic roughness; wood supply	x	x	x	x	x
Wood (area)	Topographic roughness on floodplain, structure in active channels, and aquatic habitat complexity	x	x	x	x	x
Velocity	Geomorphic and hydrologic complexity, diversity of velocity and flow direction	x	x	x	x	x
Geomorphic units	Bedform evolution, structural complexity, fish habitat diversity	x	x	x	x	x
Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring: Ground-based measurements						
Sediment size	Sediment sizes for spawning and rearing, stream energy, geomorphic and hydrologic heterogeneity	x	x	x	x	x
Depth	Depth distribution	x	x	x	x	x
Unit	Provides additional information about habitat and stream energy associated with sediment size	x	x	x	x	x
Wood (presence in plot)	Provides additional information about habitat and stream energy associated with sediment size	x	x	x	x	x
Velocity & flow direction	Velocity measurements to provide complementary dataset and train and validate velocity analysis from imagery	x	x	x	x	x
Vegetation surveys	Used to train and validate classification from imagery	x	x	x	x	x
Metrics from ODFW AIP stream habitat survey data						
Sediment size	Sediment sizes for spawning and rearing, stream energy, geomorphic and hydrologic heterogeneity	x	x	x	x	x
Depth distribution at baseflow	Depth distribution	x	x	x	x	x
Geomorphic units	Bedform evolution, structural complexity, fish habitat diversity	x	x	x	x	x
Secondary channel to primary channel ratio	Channel network complexity, velocity diversity, habitat diversity	x	x	x	x	x
Wood (key pieces & volume)	Wood as fish habitat and structure in active channels	x	x	x	x	x
Metrics from complementary UDWC & partner monitoring						
Deposition and erosion	Channel elevations relative to GGL and/or floodplain, vertical hydrologic connectivity, access to floodplain	x	x			
Groundwater	Vertical hydrologic connectivity, ability to support riparian species	x	x		x	x
Stream temperature	Rate of change in stream temperature through project reach, suitability for native fish	x	x	x	x	x
Riparian plant community	Species richness, proportions of native and wetland indicator, community structure	x	x	x	x	x
Benthic macroinvertebrate community	Biological response to stream conditions e.g. temperature and sediment, taxa richness, biological integrity	x	x	x	x	x
Adult fish access	Total length along a continuous flow path through project reach that does not provide sufficient depth for steelhead and bull trout migration		x	x		
Adult fish spawning	Chinook spawning	x	x		x	x
Fish density	Fish density, habitat use, natural production of brown trout and Chinook		x			

Project Success Measures and Benefits

This project aims to build on the progress made through 2020 and interim 2022 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring on Whychus Creek to continue to advance the state of knowledge and practice regarding monitoring the complex geomorphic and habitat conditions resulting from large-scale Stage 0 stream restoration projects. We will do this by continuing to test and refine applications of remotely sensed data, including: acquiring imagery and video using specifications refined through 2020 and 2022 acquisitions and analysis in post-restoration reaches; repeating classifications of wetted area and vegetation, and wood in reaches where restoration was implemented within five years; repeating manual digitization of geomorphic units, and wood in reaches where restoration was implemented more than five years prior; collecting ground-based measurements needed to train and validate analysis from imagery (velocity, vegetation, possibly wood) and supplemental ground-based measurements in dynamically evolving reaches where change is expected to have occurred since these measurements were last collected (sediment size, depth, unit, and wood presence and influence); and comparing metrics pre- and post- restoration and over time since restoration using 2020 and 2022 data products. We will also summarize available biological data including macroinvertebrate community data in the context of Stage 0 geomorphic and habitat metrics produced in 2020, 2022, and 2024 to evaluate biological response to the conditions described. Individual technical memos and reports summarizing components of this effort will be compiled into a final report that will be submitted to OWEB and available on the UDWC website. The project will be considered successful when these items have been completed.

The results of this Phase 2 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project will 1) provide new information about the geospatial analysis methods piloted in 2020 and 2022 and advance their utility for monitoring Stage 0 stream restoration projects across the Pacific Northwest region, 2) provide methods for acquiring imagery and performing these analyses, and 3) continue to advance the state of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of restoration designed to achieve a Stage 0 condition and benefits.

Cost Estimate

UDWC proposes to complete Phase 2 at a cost of $374,620 over 3 years from November 2023 to December 2026, with the work largely concentrated within 2.5 years from January 2024 to June 2026, including $295,000 in OWEB funding and $79,620 (27%) in match funding. This estimate allocates OWEB funding for Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project development, contracting, imagery acquisition and processing, ground-based field measurements for training and validation of remote sensing analysis, and analysis and reporting for up to 3.2 miles of Whychus Creek restored or to be restored toward a Stage 0 condition. It also fully funds two years of macroinvertebrate monitoring including staff time and contracting, with a focus on the reaches to be monitored under the Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring project and additional Whychus Creek restoration reaches and index sites, to support evaluation of the biological response to post-restoration conditions in these reaches. Matching grants will fund continuous stream temperature monitoring at 11 Whychus Creek monitoring stations over two years as well as analysis and reporting. The OWEB amount includes indirect costs associated with grant administration expenses.

We based our cost estimate for Phase 2 project implementation on UDWC staff time expended during Phase 1 project implementation and for annual macroinvertebrate and continuous stream temperature monitoring, and on estimates from contractors with whom we have worked previously and who are familiar with Whychus Creek restoration reaches and planned analyses. There is potential for UDWC to work with a PGE Project Zero intern or with a student intern from institutions with which we have

established relationships (e.g., OSU Cascades) in summer 2024 to support collection of field measurements required to train and validate remote sensing analyses.

Phase 2 Budget

	External Amount	OWEB Amount	Project Total
Salaries, Wages and Benefits			
[1]UDWC monitoring program manager	$49,700	$137,500	$187,200
[2]UDWC monitoring technician	$14,400	$0	$14,400
[3]UDWC habitat restoration manager	$6,400	$0	$6,400
[4]UDWC restoration program manager	$6,000	$0	$6,000
[5]UDWC executive director	$3,120	$0	$3,120
Contracted Services			
RGB & multi-spectral imagery acquisition and processing; video acquisition (3.2 mi)	$0	$6,750	$6,750
Imagery analysis: Wetted area, vegetation; wood - reaches < 5 years old)	$0	$25,172	$25,172
Technical report preparation	$0	$11,600	$11,600
USGS video processing & velocity analysis	$0	$21,000	$21,000
Imagery analysis: Geomorphic units; wood - reaches > 5 years old	$0	$12,000	$12,000
Macroinvertebrate sampling, analysis & reporting 2024 & 2025	$0	$40,000	$40,000
Contracted Services TOTAL		$116,522	
Materials and Supplies			
Field measurement supplies	$0	$500	$500
Travel			
[6]Mileage for site visits	$0	$2,000	$2,000
Sub-total	$79,620	$256,522	$336,142
Indirect Costs			
OWEB Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate: Cost Allocation	$0	$38,478	$38,478
Total	$79,620	**$295,000**	**$374,620**

[1]UDWC monitoring program manager hours calculated as 0.6 FTE over 30 months for Stage 0 Effectiveness, macroinvertebrate, and continuous temperature monitoring, including: grant and contract management; project development; preparing for, scheduling, and meeting with staff, contractors and technical experts; supervising water quality equipment and data management and continuous temperature monitoring schedule; daily project implementation over two months including consulting with and supporting contractors and training and supervising field staff (flight planning, imagery acquisition, ground-based measurements); actively recruiting and managing volunteers over 6 months; preparing maps, directions, and datasheets for sampling and surveying; preparing for and supervising macroinvertebrate sampling (10 field days over 2 years); consulting with contractors and advising on and reviewing analyses and reports; data management; analysis and reporting for Stage 0 Effectiveness monitoring ground-based measurements and continuous temperature and associated data; synthesis, interpretation, and reporting of geomorphic and habitat conditions and biological responses; compilation of technical memos and reports for various project elements; and project completion reporting.

[2]UDWC monitoring technician hours calculated as 300 hours per year over two years including: water quality equipment management, performing water quality QA/QC, deploying stream temperature dataloggers, auditing dataloggers monthly over 7 months per year over two years, retrieving dataloggers, downloading and managing data; assisting with all macroinvertebrate sampling field preparation and sampling; and participating in all ground-based data collection for Stage 0 Effectiveness monitoring in summer 2024.

[3]UDWC restoration project manager hours calculated as ten, 8-hour field days per year over two years to assist with data collection for Stage 0 Effectiveness and macroinvertebrate monitoring.

[4]UDWC restoration program manager hours calculated as four, 8-hour field days per year over two years for site visits to evaluate and discuss conditions on the ground in light of monitoring findings; and 18 hours per year over two years to consult with monitoring program manager on Stage 0 Effectiveness monitoring, monitoring results, and implications for restoration design and adaptive management.

[5]UDWC executive director hours calculated as 20 hours per year over 2 years including: oversight and management;

[6]Mileage for site visits calculated as 40, 70-mile trips from Bend to Whychus Canyon over 2 years at $0.655 per mile.

Phase 2 Timeline

Task	Q4 2023	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026
Phase 2 Stage 0 Effectiveness Monitoring													
Identify and recruit or re-engage 2024 Stage 0 EM monitoring team													
Review 2020 and 2022 Stage 0 EM findings and recommendations													
With monitoring team, finalize imagery acquisition specifications, ground-based sampling design, and ground-based survey methods for 2024 Stage 0 EM													
Refine scope of work and establish contracts with contractors													
Develop imagery acquisition and ground-based survey schedule with contractors and UDWC staff													
Work with contractors to acquire imagery along 7.2 miles of Whychus Creek restoration reaches at base flow													
Collect ground-based measurements to complement analysis from imagery and as needed train classification													
Transfer and manage imagery, data, and data products													
Consult with contractors and provide guidance on classification and analysis specifications and progress, data summarization, and reporting													
Analyze ground-based data from 2020, 2022, and 2024 and summarize findings in technical memo													
Compile reports from individual analyses and integrate and interpret results in final project report													
Final project and grant reporting													
Macroinvertebrate and Stream Temperature Monitoring													
Macroinvertebrate monitoring year 1													
Macroinvertebrate sample identification, data delivery, management and analysis, and reporting year 1													
Macroinvertebrate report review year 1													
Macroinvertebrate monitoring year 2													
Macroinvertebrate sample identification, data delivery, management and analysis, and reporting year 2													
Macroinvertebrate report review year 2													
Stream temperature monitoring year 1													
Stream temperature equipment and data management year 1													
Stream temperature monitoring year 2													
Stream temperature equipment and data management year 2; data analysis and reporting (2024 and 2025 data)													

References

Cluer, B., and C. Thorne. 2014. A stream evolution model integrating habitat and ecosystem benefits. River Research and Applications 30(2): 135-154.

Powers, P., M. Helstab, S .L. Niezgoda. 2019. A process-based approach to restoring depositional river valleys to Stage 0, an anastomosing channel network. River Research and Applications 35(1):3-13

Simon, A. and C. R. Hupp. 1986. Geomorphic and vegetative recovery processes along modified Tennessee streams: an interdisciplinary approach to disturbed fluvial systems. Forest Hydrology and Watershed Management, IAHS-AISH Publ.167.

Evaluating Ecological and Geomorphic Responses to Stage 0 Restoration Monitoring Project
2023-2025 Interim Funding Request
March 6, 2023

1.0 Background and Watershed Context

Over the past several decades, stream habitat restoration practitioners throughout the Pacific Northwest have developed and implemented numerous valley-scale projects focusing on restoring natural processes. The intent of this design approach is to restore geomorphic processes that encourage and maintain deposition and habitat development over time rather than designing and dictating a channel pattern, profile, and dimension. The desired outcome is well described in the literature by Cluer and Thorne (2014) as Stage 0 of the Stream Evolution Model (Figure 1). Powers et al. (2018) describe the development and application of Stage 0 design methodology. Much of this work has taken place in Western and Central Oregon, including several large-scale projects in the McKenzie River sub-basin.

In early 2020, OWEB funded a project to monitor the effectiveness of the largest Stage 0 restoration project completed to date on the lower South Fork McKenzie River (SFMR). The *Evaluating Ecological and Geomorphic Responses to Stage 0 Restoration Monitoring Project* (220-7000-17342) is a multi-disciplinary study to examine the linked physical and ecological responses to the multi-phase Stage 0 SFMR restoration project (Figure 2). Partners include the US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNWRS), US Forest Service (USFS) Willamette National Forest (WNF), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon State University (OSU), and the McKenzie Watershed Alliance (MWA). The MWA is the fiscal sponsor of the McKenzie Watershed Council.

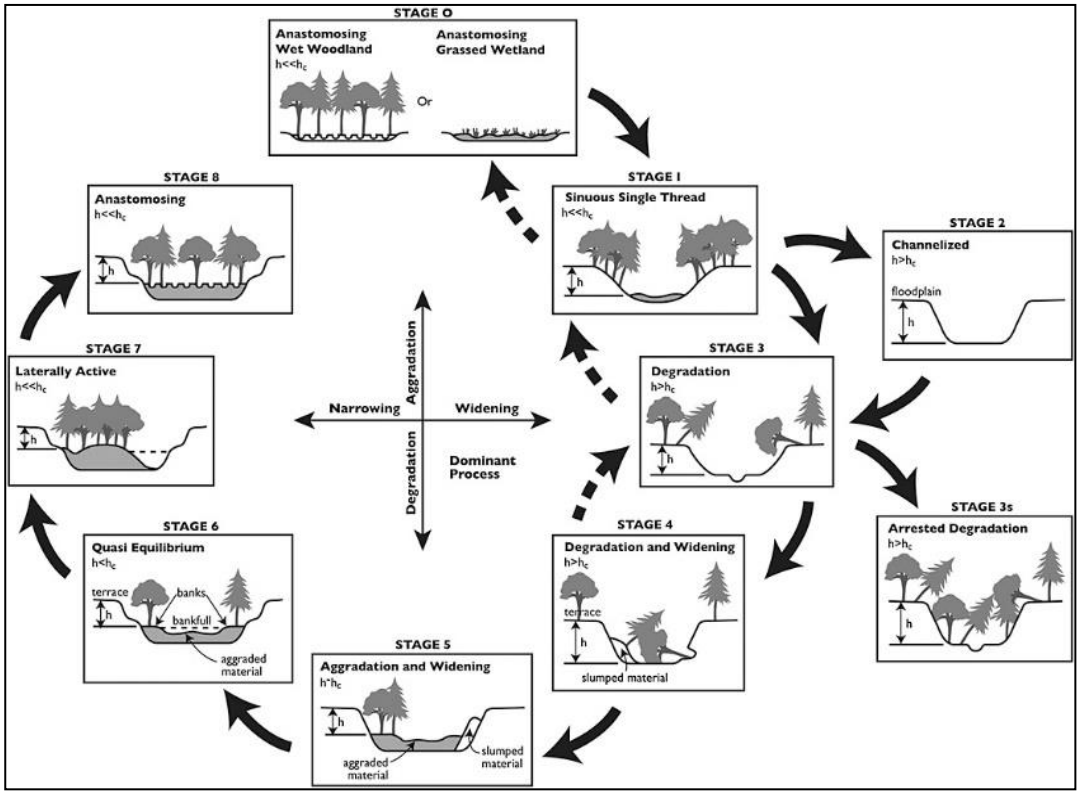

Figure 1. Cluer and Thorne Stream Evolution Model (SEM)

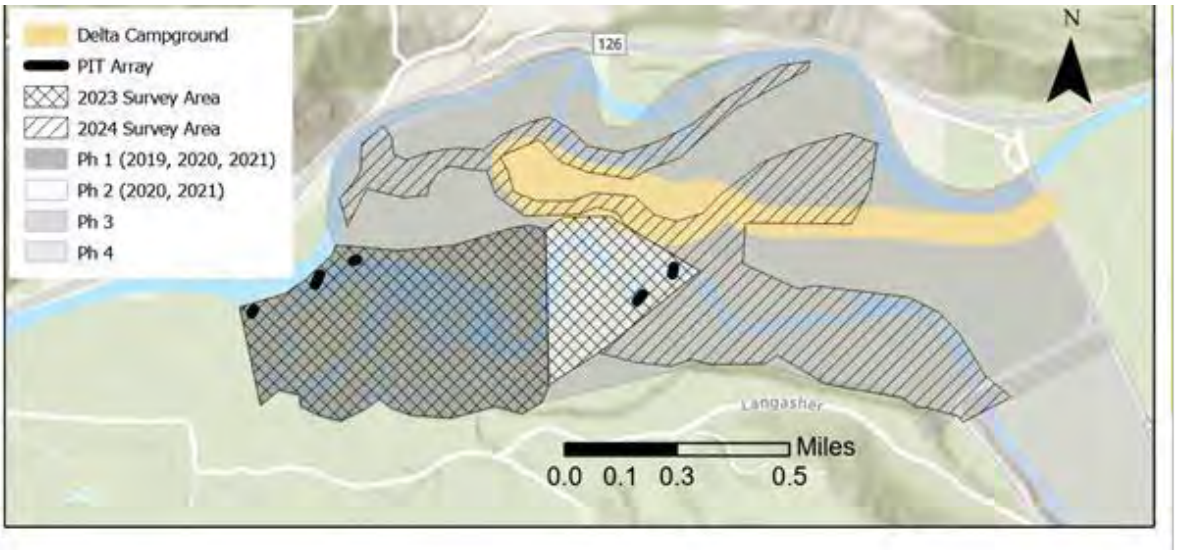

Figure 2. South Fork McKenzie River Floodplain Restoration project by phase (Ph) with proposed monitoring 2023 and 2024 survey areas.

The initial phase of the monitoring project was completed in 2022 after an extended delay caused by the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire. Results of the initial study documented rapid water table recovery, increased salmonid spawning and rearing habitat and increases in the abundance and diversity of macroinvertebrates within project sites (Flitcroft et al. 2022). These results corroborate several hypotheses regarding short-term restoration responses and represent years of coordination among partners to develop and integrate a range of monitoring approaches.

The September 2020 Holiday Farm Fire dramatically altered short- and long-term planning for restoration and associated effectiveness monitoring on the SFMR. The fire encompassed over 173,000 acres in the McKenzie River sub-basin, destroyed over 500 homes, and burned the entirety of the SFMR project area. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 project areas (Figure 2) experienced relatively low intensity burns and exhibited a substantial degree of resilience to the wildfire (Pugh et al. 2022). Wildfire impacts to surrounding riparian forests were more severe, including on the USFS-operated Delta Campground in the Phase 3 project area along the NF-400 road (Figure 2).

In 2021, after an extended public comment period, the WNF chose to decommission Delta Campground due to safety risks posed by hazardous trees and extensive damage to campground infrastructure. The decommissioning created an opportunity to restore over 200 acres in and around the campground by removing roads, campsites, stream crossings, and streamside berms. The decommissioning of Delta Campground began in January 2023 through a partnership between the MWA and WNF and is expected to be completed by March 2023 (Figure 2). The former Delta Campground area is now part of the Phase 3 project area and designs for the restoration are currently under development with restoration slated to begin in 2025.

The delay caused by the Holiday Farm Fire is an opportunity to expand baseline monitoring and apply lessons learned during the initial phase of effectiveness monitoring so that long-term responses to the restoration can be better evaluated. Project partners are seeking $175,000 of OWEB funding (Section 5)

to continue baseline monitoring on the South Fork McKenzie River in 2023 – 2024 while a third phase of habitat restoration is developed. The proposed work will continue ODFW's monitoring of juvenile Chinook salmon, OSU and PNWRS's remote sensing activities, and ensure long-term public availability of remote sensing data collected during the initial monitoring phase as well as those data collected during this proposed work.

2.0 Purpose and Need

Restoration to a Stage 0 condition is a relatively new practice, and the evaluation of long-term responses including riparian vegetation, aquatic species habitat availability, and the geomorphic dynamism over time, still need to be assessed. Further, the unforeseen 2020 Holiday Farm Fire altered on-site conditions and is likely to complicate the long-term restoration response. The delay of the Phase 3 restoration activity to 2025 and continuation of monitoring on the SFMR through this bridge funding proposal will provide an opportunity to address limitations of the initial 2019 - 2022 monitoring effort and further expand the tool chest of monitoring and analytical methods that will support valley bottom restoration monitoring in the years to come. These products will provide valuable insight to land stewards regarding restoration effectiveness and best practices for implementing, monitoring, and analyzing valley bottom transformation.

The OSU Aerial Information Survey (AIS) lab has collected imagery for effectiveness monitoring at SFMR since 2019. These data currently reside on servers at OSU and are only available by contacting AIS staff and requesting data transfer permissions. These data need to be preserved and documented with appropriate metadata to ensure they are available in the future for scientists and managers. The development of a spatial database for the imagery products collected over the SFMR will ensure the long-term availability of the data in a public-facing research data archive for future research on Stage 0 restoration.

The collection of additional imagery on the SFMR Phase 1 and Phase 2 project areas (Figure 2) during the low-flow 2023 period is necessary to fill a gap in the remote sensing monitoring record as additional remote sensing monitoring would not otherwise occur until 2026. Given the history of disturbance on the site via the restoration activity itself and the Holiday Farm Fire, remote sensing monitoring to date has been capturing influences from these two disturbances. As time since disturbance increases, the dynamic response of the river to the disturbances is expected to decrease, allowing the more subtle influences from natural processes to become more evident. Continuing to fill in the remote sensing monitoring record is key to understanding the timing of cross-over to a process-dominated response and thus a better understanding of the trajectory of the restored reaches through time.

Restoration practitioners and managers need to understand how the system is changing across space and through time to understand the degree of wood mobility, the variability of surface temperature change, and how inundated area is changing as a function of subtle geomorphic changes. This aspect of the restoration response was not specifically examined through the initial monitoring effort. The previously published analyses on wood area (Barker et al. 2022), surface temperature (Barker et al. In Prep), and inundated area (Flitcroft et al. 2022) were limited by virtue of the fact that they were focused on the 2020 post-restoration low-flow condition. Applying the wood area, inundated area, and surface temperature processing methods to the remotely sensed survey data for the entire monitoring record would facilitate a spatio-temporal change analysis. The results would improve our understanding of how these characteristics are changing in the system and provide much desired feedback on approach and design that would inform future Stage 0 implementations elsewhere.

A remote sensing survey of the Phase 3 restoration area needs to occur during a low-flow period prior to the onset of restoration activities. Establishment of pre-restoration baseline conditions using consistent remote sensing monitoring methods that will be applied in the post-restoration surveys is a critical component in effectiveness monitoring. Such consistency facilitates an 'apples-to-apples' comparison between pre- and post-restoration conditions. The previous remote sensing monitoring campaign (2019-2021) was limited because the first remote sensing surveys did not take place until after restoration occurred, making a pre- to post-restoration analysis using identical methods impossible. Expansion of the remote sensing survey methods into the Phase 3 survey area will facilitate additional refinement of the remote sensing and analysis practices. It will also provide an enhanced understanding of the broad applicability of the methods by testing the developed methods on a stream component that is different from the previously surveyed Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas.

While ODFW has collected extensive juvenile fish monitoring data specific to the SFMR restoration site, a combination of site conditions and study design challenges have limited the effectiveness of data evaluation. River conditions in the SFMR and water releases from Cougar Dam varied considerably in 2020, 2021, and 2022, presenting challenges for collecting juvenile Chinook salmon. Significant changes in discharge and river temperatures each year require additional data and ongoing analysis to better isolate and understand the effects of restoration on the growth and survival of juvenile Chinook salmon. Adding a second antenna at the upstream end of Phase 2 (Figure 2) in 2021 significantly improved OFDW's understanding of Chinook salmon residency in the restoration area. Collection of additional data before subsequent phases of restoration are completed will help ODFW better evaluate the effects of restoration and restoration activities on juvenile Chinook salmon.

3.0 Methods

3.1 Spatial Data Archive

Monitoring projects utilizing small Unoccupied Aircraft System (sUAS) remote sensing, like the OWEB-funded SFMR monitoring project, need a persistent spatial data archive that allows online public access to remote sensing survey products. The OSU AIS lab will submit data products collected from 2019-2021 during the first phase of monitoring, and data products produced under this proposal, to the USDA Forest Service Research Data Archive (USDA 2022). The AIS lab will perform the necessary formatting and metadata documentation steps in accordance with the requirements of the Research Data Archive (RDA). The anticipated spatial database files would be a collection of TIF (georeferenced tag image file format) and geodatabase (GDB) files. All GDB features, attributes, and entities will be documented in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Biological Data Profile (BDP) of the Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (FGDC 1999).

The RDA is a persistent actively managed database that produces a permanent digital object identifier (DOI) for all accepted data. A primary advantage of creating a DOI includes the databases being citable for researchers or other interested parties that want to use them and refer to them in a publication or other form of media. A DOI also provides a link to where a database can be accessed and helps raise the database's visibility. The authors of the DOIs in the resulting citations will be Jonathan Burnett (USFS), Matt Barker (OSU), Michael Wing (OSU), Steve Wondzell (USFS), and any other applicable contributors. This task will complete by fall of 2023.

3.2 Remote Sensing Monitoring

The OSU AIS lab will continue remote sensing monitoring at the SFMR Phase 1, 2, and expand into Phase 3 by conducting sUAS low-flow surveys using multispectral sensors capable of producing sub-meter resolution imagery. These data will support the measurement of three monitoring indicators: 1)

inundated area, 2) in-stream wood, and 3) surface temperature. A single low-flow survey will be flown for the Phase 1 and 2 project areas in 2023. In addition, high-flow surveys will be conducted in spring 2024 if possible. In the past, we have found it difficult to fly high-flow surveys in the spring. We need a settled weather window to fly the sUAS during a high-flow period. However, flows are regulated by the USACE dam operations which are governed by legal accords. We will be unable to acquire this imagery if high flows do not occur under suitable sUAS flying conditions but can also target spring 2025 if conditions are unacceptable in 2024. These data will be used in conjunction with the 2019 – 2021 sUAS data to conduct a time series analysis of spatio-temporal trends in an effort to answer questions about wood mobility, surface temperature heterogeneity, and variability in inundated areas.

Pre-restoration low-flow condition sUAS surveys will be conducted summer 2024 in a pre-defined subset of the Phase 3 area (Figure 2). This subset of Phase 3 monitoring is necessary to maximize the efficiency by limiting remote sensing surveys to areas that are anticipated to be inundated following restoration. These surveys will be complemented with contemporaneous field surveys to validate the remote sensing data of the three monitoring indicators. Field surveys will document sub-canopy inundated conditions in an effort to improve remote sensing estimates in areas where ground and stream are obscured. The in-stream wood area will be measured and quantified, and both long-term and in-situ stream temperature data will be recorded to facilitate the validation of modeled outputs. Field work for temperature and wood will be adapted from existing methods (Flitcroft et al. 2022, Hinshaw et al. 2022). This task will complete in 2025 with the completion of a manuscript and the final report.

3.3 Juvenile Chinook Salmon Monitoring

Juvenile Chinook monitoring will use a mark-recapture sampling design to estimate abundance and detection timing at multiple PIT tag arrays to calculate residence time, migration timing, and survival estimates of different groups of juvenile Chinook. ODFW will target 2,000 juvenile spring Chinook salmon collections annually throughout the lower SFMR in 2023 and 2024. Field crews will collect juveniles using seines at multiple locations and immediately anesthetize them, implant them with a PIT tag, and release them. Three separate PIT tag arrays were established at the SFMR/McKenzie River confluence in 2019 and two above the Phase 2 project area in 2021 (Figure 2). ODFW will install and maintain the PIT antennae at these sites on a seasonal basis (June – mid-October), with the goal of having them in place before sampling and tagging begin. Existing detection facilities at the downstream fish bypass for Eugene Water & Electric Board-operated Walterville Canal and in the outlet channels from USACE-operated Cougar Dam will provide additional data from fish tagged during this study. In addition, ODFW will be testing a sampling trap in the Walterville bypass canal, which may provide other data on fish from SF McKenzie once they move to the mainstem McKenzie.

4.0 Project Deliverables

- A final summary report documenting juvenile Chinook salmon abundance, migration time, life history, and habitat use in 2023 and 2024.
- Spatial data archive of 2018 – 2021 orthomosaics (fall 2023)
- Phase 1 and 2 sUAS multispectral orthomosaics of 2023 low flow (summer 2023)
- Phase 1 and 2 sUAS high flow orthomosaics (spring 2024 or spring 2025)
- Phase 3 sUAS multispectral orthomosaics of 2024 low flow (summer 2024)
- Spatial data archive of 2023 – 2024 orthomosaics (summer 2025)
- Multitemporal change analysis on wood, surface temperature, and inundated area Phase 1 and Phase 2 (summer 2025).

- Characterization of Phase 3 existing conditions as it relates to wood area, surface temperature, and inundated area prior to restoration (summer 2025)
- Final summary report (summer 2025)

5.0 Timeline

The project will begin in April 2023 and end in September 2025. The project timeline includes proposed monitoring elements (3.1 – 3.3) and associated restoration project elements on the South Fork McKenzie River. Juvenile Chinook tagging and monitoring will ideally take place in 2023 and 2024. The timeline includes an additional in-stream monitoring period in 2025 as a contingency if unforeseen events preclude juvenile Chinook monitoring in 2023 or 2024.

Table 1. Timeline

Project Element	Description	Start	End
Restoration	Delta Campground Decommissioning	January 2023	March 2023
Restoration	Delta Campground Floodplain Restoration Design (Phase 3) Development	January 2023	December 2023
Monitoring (3.1)	Data release of 2018 – 2021 remote sensing data	April 2023	October 2023
Monitoring (3.2)	Phase 1 and Phase 2 sUAS survey	July 2023	September 2023
Monitoring (3.3)	Juvenile Chinook tagging and monitoring	June 2023	September 2023
Monitoring (3.2)	Phase 1 and Phase 2 sUAS high-flow survey	Spring 2024	June 2024
Monitoring (3.3)	Juvenile Chinook tagging and monitoring	June 2024	September 2024
Monitoring (3.2)	Phase 3 Pre-restoration sUAS survey	June 2024	September 2024
Monitoring (3.3)	Juvenile Chinook tagging and monitoring (Contingency monitoring season)	June 2025	September 2025
Monitoring (3.2)	Add to 2023 & 2024 remote sensing data to data release	October 2024	June 2025
	Final Report of Monitoring Results	May 2025	September 2025
Restoration	South Fork Phase 3 Project Implementation	May 2025	August 2025
Monitoring	Evaluating Ecological and Geomorphic Responses to Stage 0 Restoration Monitoring Project Phase 2	2026	2027 or 2028

5.0 Budget

The MWA is requesting $175,000 in OWEB funding to support the proposed scope of work. Partners will provide $69,690 of in-kind match and the MWA will provide $5,223 of cash match. All match can be considered secured. Total project cost is $249,913. The proposed project budget is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Project Budget

Line Item	Unit	Unit Type	Unit Cost	OWEB	In-kind	Cash Match	Total
Project Management							
MWA Executive Director	50	hrs	$67	-	-	$3,350	$3,350
MWA Restoration Program Manager	100	hrs	$55	$3,955	-	$1,545	$5,500
Project Management Subtotals				$3,955	$0	$4,895	$8,850
Contracted Services							
ODFW Crew Lead	4	months	$11,500	$23,000	$23,000	-	$46,000
ODFW Season Crew (3 person)	9	months	$6,500	$30,000	$28,500	-	$58,500
PIT tags	4000	each	$2.50	$5,000	$5,000	-	$10,000
OSU graduate student (AIS lab)	9	months	$5,998	$53,982	-	-	$53,982
OSU AIS lab analysis	400	hrs	$51	$20,400	-	-	$20,400
OSU AIS lab piloting	80	hrs	$175	$14,000	-	-	$14,000
OSU AIS seasonal field support	80	hrs	$35	$2,800	-	-	$2,800
OSU vehicle rental	12	days	$35	$420	-	-	$420
OSU vehicle mileage	1000	miles	$0.28	$280	-	-	$280
OSU lodging	12	days	$140	$1,680	-	-	$1,680
OSU per diem (2 people)	12	days	$120	$1,440	-	-	$1,440
Piezometers	2	each	$817	$1,634	-	-	$1,634
Temp loggers	8	each	$125	$500	$500	-	$1,000
USDA Forest Service PNWRS - J. Burnett	15	days	$550	-	$8,250	-	$8,250
USDA Forest Service PNWRS - S. Wondzell	6	days	$740	-	$4,440	-	$4,440
Contracted Services Subtotals				$155,136	$69,690	$0	$224,826
Travel							
MWA staff travel	500	Miles	0.655	-	-	$328	$328
Travel Subtotals				$0	$0	$328	$328
Total Direct Cost Subtotals				**$159,091**	**$69,690**	**$5,223**	**$234,004**
Indirect							
MWA				$15,909	-	-	$15,909
Project Total				**$175,000**	**$69,690**	**$5,223**	**$249,913**

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item J

Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Awards

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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Agenda Item J supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 3: Community capacity and strategic partnerships achieve healthy watersheds.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Courtney Shaff, Monitoring and Reporting Manager
Theresa DeBardelaben, Drought Programs Specialist

SUBJECT: Agenda Item J. Partnership Technical Assistance (TA) Grant Awards
April 25-26, 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of the 2022 Partnership TA grant offering and funding recommendations. Staff requests the board approve the funding recommendations outlined in Attachment C to the staff report.

II. Background

At the July 2021 meeting, the board adopted its 2021-2023 spending plan and allocated $1.5 million for Partnership TA grants, and approved staff to offer two grant cycles this biennium, with $750,000 being available for each offering. The first offering was awarded in January 2022. There are two project types within the Partnership TA grants, Development, and Capacity. Development applications can develop a strategic action plan (SAP), enhance an existing SAP, and elevate the partnership's performance through the development of governance documents. Capacity applications must have a SAP that aligns with OWEB's template and can support partnership coordination in implementation of the plan.

III. Summary of Solicitation and Review Process

A. Solicitation

In January 2022, staff solicited the second round of Partnership TA grants for the 2021-2023 biennium. Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants were required to participate in a consultation with staff. The purpose of the consultation is to review the program's purpose, allowable activities, evaluation criteria, and timing with applicants.

B. Applications Submitted

Nine applications were received by the deadline requesting $1.09 million. Four applications applied for Capacity funding and five applications applied for Development funding. Applications were submitted from three of OWEB's six regions; a map of the applications can be found in Attachment A to the staff report.

C. Review Process

Applications were evaluated based on the evaluation criteria included in the technical assistance rule OAR 695-030-0045(3), which contains criteria relating to:1) stakeholder engagement, 2) proposal clarity, 3) technical soundness, and 4) organizational capacity. Reviewers provided a 'fund', 'fund with conditions, or 'do not fund' recommendation, and ranked applications. The application evaluations are in Attachment B to the staff report.

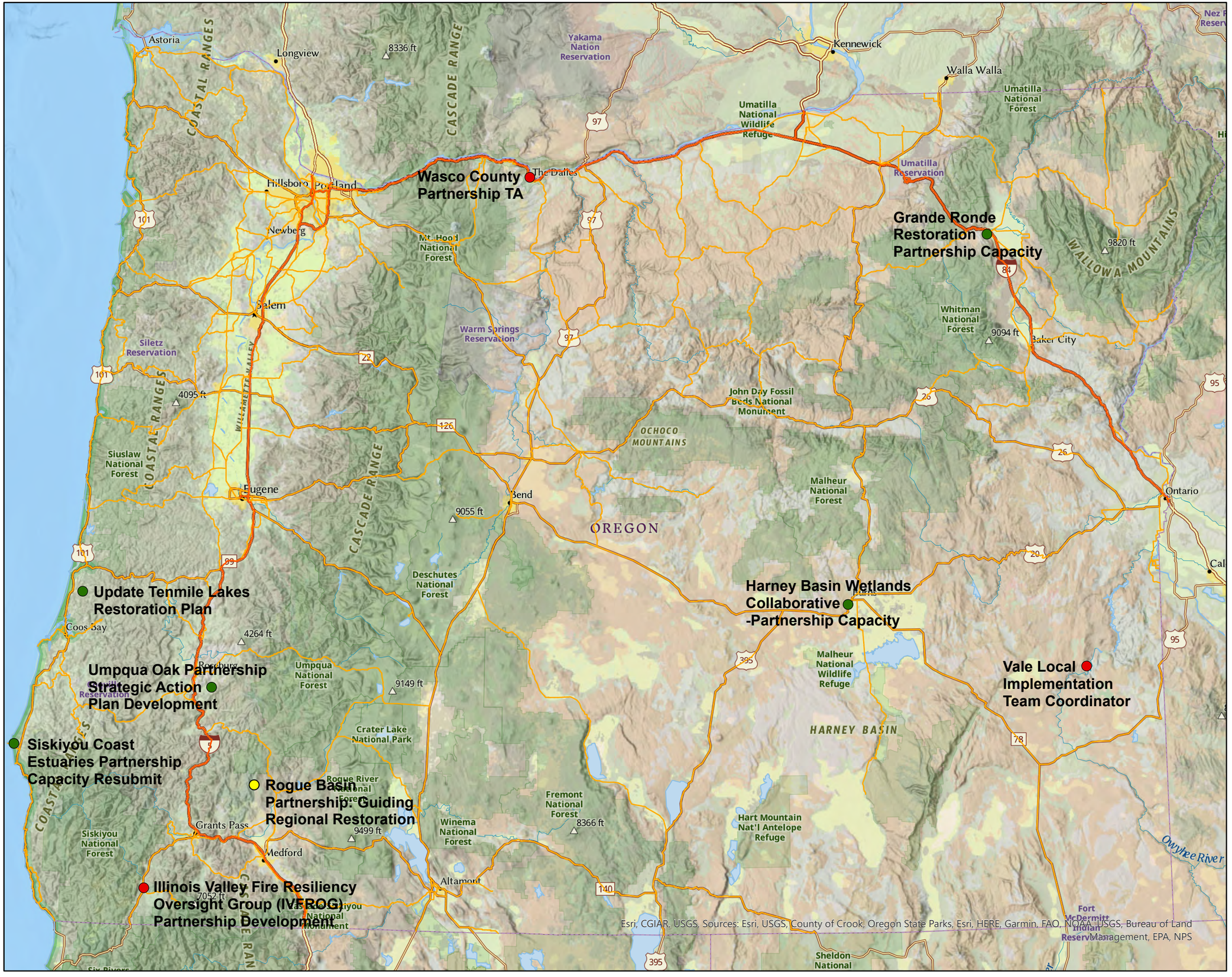
IV. Funding Recommendation

Staff recommends the board award Partnership TA grants as shown in Attachment C.

Attachments

A. Application Map
B. Evaluations
C. Staff Funding Recommendations

Partnership Technical Assistance Grants 2022-2023



Funding Recommendations

Status

- Staff Recommended for Funding
- Below Funding Line
- Not Recommended for Funding
- Interstate Highways
- Oregon State Highways

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8301-22663
Application Name: Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group (IVFROG) Partnership Development
Applicant: Illinois Valley SWCD
OWEB Request: $139,180
Total Cost: $239,288

Application Description:

The project location includes public and private lands within the Illinois River watershed in Josephine County. This area encompasses the rural hubs of Cave Junction, Selma, and Takilma. Specific sub-watersheds are prioritized within the greater basin for landowner engagement and fuels reduction work (see Priority Watersheds attachment).

The mission of the Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group (IV-FROG) is to achieve clear and measurable outcomes relating to the mitigation of catastrophic wildfire risk to the community and improvement of forest health through related silvicultural activities. IV-FROG, now past its initial formation, seeks to increase its durability, sustainability, operational efficiency, and sense of direction. Moreover, IV-FROG aims to increase its competitive advantage in leveraging funding opportunities to achieve our goal of expanding project reach to a landscape scale. This project will maximize the performance of the Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group (IV-FROG) through development of a strategic action plan. This document will be developed cooperatively with a contracted strategic planner, guided by the leadership of the engagement coordinator, and be informed by diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) principles.

Project partners include: Grayback Forestry, Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO), Illinois Valley Fire District, Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (IVSWCD), Illinois Valley Watershed Council (IVWC), KS Wild, National Park Service (NPS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), OSU Extension Service, Rogue Basin Partnership (RBP), Rogue Valley Integrated Fire Plan (RVIFP), Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC), USFS - Wild Rivers Rangers District, Wilson Biochar, Lomakatsi, as well as local community groups and stakeholders.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The partnership has a comprehensive list of partners, representing federal and state agencies, local organizations, and technical experts.

- The partnership recognizes the critical role of partners in project success and proposes an approach to ensure quality engagement in planning by financially compensating partners for their time.
- The project provides measurable outcomes relating to the mitigation of catastrophic wildfires and improvement of forest health.

Concerns:

- The application lacks contextual detail about the project deliverables and goals, as well as timelines specific to the Strategic Action Plan (SAP).
- The application would have benefitted from more information on consultant deliverables.
- More information on the connection with forest and watershed health would have benefited the application.
- The application is lacking detail on current and future tribal coordination.

Concluding Analysis:

The Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group (IVFROG) Partnership is a new partnership comprised of a diverse array of appropriate groups that have worked together informally in the past. Their collective momentum is building, and this proposal is an important next step towards formalizing their partnership. The partners have the right technical and collaborative skills to successfully execute a strategic planning effort. The inclusion of key stakeholders for implementation and development of a Strategic Action Plan demonstrates the partnership's forward-thinking towards future restoration actions. However, the application would have benefited from additional detail on goals and timelines.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 7 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $139,180

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Do Not Recommend; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $0

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8302-22657
Application Name: Update Tenmile Lakes Restoration Plan
Applicant: Willamette Partnership
OWEB Request: $149,758
Total Cost: $187,269

Application Description:

The Tenmile Lakes basin (HUC 1710030404) is located on the Oregon South Coast and encompasses approximately 98 square miles. There are ten named lakes within the watershed with a combined surface area of 4.7 square miles. The City of Lakeside is adjacent to North Tenmile Lake. The watershed spans Coos and Douglas Counties.

The Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership (TLBP) has been convening the Tenmile Lakes watershed group (Partnership) for several years with the goal of restoring water quality in this premiere coho fisheries habitat. In 2021 they completed the Tenmile Lakes Native Fisheries and Water Quality Restoration Plan (Plan) to guide watershed restoration and seek funding for implementation, however, the Plan lacks key components to meet OWEB's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) criteria and the group faces significant capacity constraints. These gaps have been identified by OWEB as significant barriers to successful SAP implementation and to securing funding from state agencies. The Plan therefore needs to be updated to support the Plan's coordinated implementation among partners and to secure the investments needed to restore coho habitat and improve water quality to reduce the frequency and severity of recurring harmful algal blooms.

Proposed Work: Willamette Partnership will update the current Tenmile Lakes Native Fisheries and Water Quality Restoration Plan, develop governance documents, and build local capacity of the Partnership to implement it. Watershed group partners (Partnership) will support this project: Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership, Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI), Coos County, City of Lakeside, OR DSL, OR DFW, OR DLCD, and Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The detailed description of roles and responsibilities demonstrates the capacity of the applicant to implement the project.

The use of an external facilitator will allow the participants to focus on the work and allow another entity to manage the coordination.

- The application demonstrates significant collaboration with local, tribal, and federal partners and represents a continuation of the Partnership's commitment to community engagement in addressing restoration needs and water quality issues in the basin
- The applicant has a proven track record of successful project implementation and facilitation.
- The application provides detail on how project fits into the overall watershed context.

Concerns:

- The application lacks detail regarding building capacity where it has been challenging in the past and how that capacity will be maintained.
- Providing contextual details about the organization and committee operations would have benefitted the application.
- The application lacks details on how teams would communicate with each other.

Concluding Analysis:

The Willamette Partnership has a proven track record of successful project implementation and has the expertise to coordinate an update to the Tenmile Lakes Strategic Action Plan, develop governance documents, and build local capacity of the Partnership to implement it.

This proposal is an important next step towards improving watershed health. The partners have the technical and collaborative skills to update their strategic action plan to align with OWEB's guidance. The inclusion of key stakeholders for implementation and development of the restoration plan demonstrates the partnership's forward-thinking towards future restoration actions

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 2 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $149,758

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Recommend

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $149,758

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8303-22661
Application Name: Grande Ronde Restoration Partnership Capacity
Applicant: Grande Ronde Model WS Foundation
OWEB Request: $149,810
Total Cost: $316,860

Application Description:

This Upper Grande Ronde Partnership Capacity grant is located in the Grande Ronde River Basin in Northeast Oregon. The Upper Grande Ronde Initiative seeks to continue our high functioning partnership as our Focused Investment Partnership grant nears completion. OWEB funds will provide capacity at the Grande Ronde Model Watershed (GRMW) to continue to facilitate the partnership and the process of updating our strategic action plan, The Restoration Atlas. Key management objectives for the Atlases include increase salmonid carrying capacity, reduce juvenile mortality in the Grande Ronde Valley, reduce Chinook pre-spawn mortality, improve flow, and reduce temperatures. Overall key performance indicators for these objectives at the population level include juvenile Chinook and steelhead capacity and survival. The grant funding will be used to provide a 0.4 FTE at GRMW for 3 years to lead the partnership in updating the Catherine Creek and Upper Grande Ronde Atlases, community engagement for new high priority areas, coordinate monitoring efforts, prepare technical reports on findings and bridge the gap between the end of the Upper Grande Ronde Initiative FIP and the application for another FIP within the GRMW geographic coverage area (map of coverage area attached). This Partnership Capacity grant will be matched with our restoration partners time and Bonneville Power Administration funding. There is a clear need within the partnership to expand, improve and maintain communication to the restoration partners, researchers, and landowners in high priority areas in the Grande Ronde River subbasin. The Core Partners (GRMW, ODFW, USWCD, USFS and CTUIR), from the Grande Ronde FIP were incredibly successful in collaborating and putting the available FIP funds to design and restoration work on the ground and guided monitoring efforts using FIP supplemental monitoring funds. Project partners will likely expand as the partnership has grown since 2015.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The application includes a detailed list of appropriately scoped and scaled products to be developed.
- Partner roles are well described, and appropriate partners are engaged including production, funding, and research partners.
- The timeline is appropriate and demonstrates the partners understand the level of effort that will be needed to conduct the work.

- Supporting documents for governance and conflict resolution demonstrate how decisions are made and core partners agree to a code of conduct.
- Partners are very engaged with a robust process to prioritize, implement, and monitor efforts.
- This project builds on a successful, recently completed Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) initiative level grant, demonstrating that the partners have ample experience and expertise to lead this next phase of project development.

Concerns:

- Additional detail in the budget would have been helpful to understand how funding will be allocated between the proposed project objectives.
- The application would have benefited from a description of local community engagement.

Concluding Analysis:

The Grande Ronde Restoration Partnership is a long-standing partnership with a history of successfully implemented restoration work. Partner roles are well described and the attached partnership letter documents support. The proposed work supports staff to continue coordination of the Partnership, updating the Atlas, as well as maintaining monitoring and adaptive management efforts. The Partnership has recently completed implementation of a FIP initiative level grant. The proposed work will set the stage for the partnership to build on their successful efforts within a new geography in their basin and update the partnership documents to incorporate lessons learned from their first FIP award.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 1 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $149,810

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Recommend

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $149,810

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8304-22655
Application Name: Siskiyou Coast Estuaries Partnership Capacity Resubmit
Applicant: Curry SWCD
OWEB Request: $ 96,875
Total Cost: $145,351

Application Description:

The Siskiyou Coast Estuaries Partnership (SCEP) consists of the Curry Watersheds Partnership (CWP; which is made up of the Curry Soil & Water Conservation District, the South Coast Watershed Council, the Lower Rogue Watershed Council, and the Curry Watersheds Nonprofit), Wild Rivers Land Trust (WRLT), and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The partnership's geography covers the nine major south coast watersheds in Curry County, Oregon, but the focus of this project is on the Sixes River watershed. The SCEP completed a Strategic Action Plan for the Sixes River watershed in 2019 and we are seeking capacity funds to implement and enhance portions of this SAP, and improve partner coordination for project implementation and monitoring. The specific capacity needs that this application seeks to address are: 1. Implementation of the Sixes SAP outreach plan, and 2. Enhancement of the Sixes SAP Progress Monitoring Framework. Through implementation of the outreach plan, we are proposing to: a) Increase engagement with regional tribes around the Sixes SAP and explore opportunities to bring them on as core or supporting partners; b) Increase engagement with other natural resource organizations around the Sixes SAP and explore opportunities to bring them on as core or supporting partners; and c) develop project ideas with landowners and stakeholders, which will enable us to engage with relevant permitting agencies and funders. We are proposing to enhance the SAP Progress Monitoring Framework through the development of a comprehensive monitoring plan. The SAP currently does not include specific ecological outcomes due to the lack of baseline data and expert knowledge available during the initial development process. The monitoring plan will identify specific ecological outcomes, how they will be monitored, and will be developed collaboratively by the SCEP and additional technical experts from DEQ, USFS, USGS, BLM, and South Slough Estuarine Research Reserve.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The application includes a detailed description of outreach and monitoring efforts that will support implementation of the Sixes Strategic Action Plan (SAP).
- The partnership has an existing strategic action plan and governance documents that were developed through a previous Partnership TA grant.
- The applicant and partners have a proven track record of successful coordination and project implementation.
- The budget for the project is clear and aligns with the proposed work.

- The project is timely and builds off the momentum of existing action plans and lessons learned.
- Timeline for completing the objectives identified in the application is appropriate.
- Project staff and partners have the technical expertise to successfully complete the proposed work.

Concerns:

- Application did not explain why the Partnership is just now developing their outreach plan given their SAP was completed in 2019.
- There are two tasks in the project's schedule (develop SAP project ideas and create online project tracker) that are not included in the Project Management table, making it unclear who is responsible for delivering these tasks.

Concluding Analysis:

The resubmitted application addresses reviewer concerns raised in the previous submittal particularly around how Tribes will be engaged. Curry SWCD and partners have a proven track record of successful coordination and project implementation. Capable and knowledgeable staff are involved with appropriate leadership roles. This proposal is an important next step towards improving watershed health. The partners have the right technical and collaborative skills to successfully execute the proposed work. The inclusion of lessons learned and referencing existing action plans demonstrates the partnership's forward-thinking towards future restoration actions.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 4 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $96,875

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Recommend

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $96,875

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8305-2266
Application Name: Vale Local Implementation Team Coordinator
Applicant: Pheasants Forever Inc
OWEB Request: $149,877
Total Cost: $264,668

Application Description:

Pheasants Forever seeks funding to support a position to oversee coordination capacity for the Vale Local Implementation Team (LIT) located within Malheur County (Ontario, Oregon). LITs are locally driven, collaborative groups, convened by the ODFW and use local input and guidance to meet goals and objectives identified within the Oregon Sage-grouse State Action Plan. Five LITs were identified in 2005 within the Oregon Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy and their jurisdictions align with BLM District and Resource Area boundaries.

The LIT program is intended to be flexible to accommodate local interests and challenges, but the overall purpose of each LIT is threefold: 1) provide a central platform to increase communication among stakeholders; 2) identify existing efforts with regard to sage-grouse and shrub-steppe conservation to develop a strategic plan moving forward that streamlines future efforts; and, 3) procure funding for project implementation.

The coordinator is essential to LIT development and will foster effective collaboration among interest groups across the Vale LIT area by hosting one-on-one meetings, small focus groups, and other outreach events. The coordinator will help Vale LIT establish a collaborative forum to develop landscape-scale strategies that set shared priorities to address threats to sage-grouse; work with the group to procure funding to implement their strategy; and host field tours to encourage future conservation-minded collaborations. Vale LIT partners include BPT, CWMAs, DSL, landowners, Malheur SWCD, MWC, OWC, NRCS, ODFW, OSU, USFWS, Vale District BLM.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The application includes a detailed description of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), governance, and coordination needed to advance the Partnership's work to benefit sage grouse.
- There is demonstrated collaboration and support with key partners such as public lands managers, local entities, and technical experts.
- Partners have a proven track record of successful coordination and project implementation.
- Strategies identified are appropriate and reasonable given the large geographic area.
- The proposal is informed by similar Local Implementation Teams working on projects to benefit sage grouse habitat.

Concerns:

- The application lacks details on the roles and responsibilities of the partners.
- The timeline for completing the SAP may not be achievable in such a short timeframe.
- There is a lack of detail on project implementation once the SAP is complete.
- A position description for the proposed coordinator to be hired with these funds would add clarity to the expectations of the role.
- The proposed work heavily relies on the ability to recruit and hire the right person for the proposed coordinator position who can both coordinate the Partnership and author the SAP and governance documents.

Concluding Analysis:

Project partners have a proven track record of successful coordination and project implementation. This proposal is timely and describes the limits the Partnership has reached by having a part-time coordinator housed outside the Basin. The partners have the engaged the right technical partners to collaborate on development of a Vale SAP. The proposed timeline is ambitious and unclear if all the work will be completed. The success of the work relies heavily on a to be hired coordinator to facilitate and prepare all the proposed deliverables.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 6 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $149,877

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Do Not Recommend; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $0

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8306-22652
Application Name: Wasco County Partnership TA
Applicant: Wasco SWCD
OWEB Request: $95,150
Total Cost: $121,850

Application Description:

Wasco County SWCD and Area Watershed Councils work in a close, informal partnership with WyEast RC&D on projects relating to water conservation and remote data collection to support working lands and healthy watersheds. We intend to continue working together toward our common goals and need a strategic action plan to support the work long term. With ongoing drought and climate change, we are seeing increasing demands on our time and resources and need to be strategic in our planning and develop our Partnership's capacity with an eye towards the future.

Our primary goal is to develop a Strategic Action Plan (SAP). We also seek to elevate our partnership's performance through effective governance by using the SAP to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the three core entities, and develop both a communications plan and long-term funding plan. Core partners include Wasco County SWCD, Wasco County Area Watershed Councils, and WyEast Resource Conservation & Development Council. Other partners we work with include Wasco County, Mid Columbia Economic Development Council, USDA NRCS, ODFW, CTWS, ODA, DEQ, ODF, USFS, local electrical utilities, Oregon Department of Energy, University of Oregon through the RARE AmeriCorps program, and the OWEB Lower Deschutes Small Grant team.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The project is timely and identified the need for coordination to maintain the momentum of the partners.
- The Strategic Action Plan will build off previous watershed assessments.
- The applicant has a proven track record of successful engagement, collaboration, and communication.
- The Strategic Action Plan will assist the Partners with theirability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, and disturbances related to changing climate conditions.
- The timeline is realistic for the proposed work.
- The budget includes stipends to partners to support the Strategic Action Plan development.

Concerns:

- The application lacks contextual details about how updating existing assessments for individual partners will be rolled up into a singular Strategic Action Plan for the Partnership.
- The application does not describe what ecological limiting factors the partners will be working to address via development of a Strategic Action Plan.
- The included lump sum budget lacks sufficient detail to understand the facilitator roles and responsibilities.
- There is a lack of detail regarding long-term implementation of action plan once the project is complete.
- The process for developing the memorandum of understanding should be prioritized to outline partnership roles.

Concluding Analysis:

The Wasco SWCD and Wy'East RC&D have a proven track record of successful coordination and project implementation. This proposal is an important next step towards improving watershed health. The partners have the right technical and collaborative skills to successfully execute the action plan. The inclusion of key stakeholders for implementation and refinements of the action plan demonstrates the partnership's forward-thinking towards future restoration actions. Including more detail on how the partners will use the SAP and how the plan would assist the partnership would have benefitted the application.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 8 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $95,150

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Do Not Recommend; falls below staff-recommended funding line

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $0

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8309-22658
Application Name: Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative -Partnership Capacity
Applicant: High Desert Partnership
OWEB Request: $147,216
Total Cost: $209,775

Application Description:

The Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative (HBWC) works across the entire area of the closed lake basin located in Harney County, facilitating collaborative work with public land managers and private landowners in order to steward a healthy wetlands ecosystem. Harney County is about 25% privately owned and 75% publicly owned land, and this crucial ecosystem supports wildlife habitat for fish, migrating birds, and livestock production.

This technical assistance project would provide capacity support for HBWC to strengthen the individual and collective work of the partners. This collaborative is a long-standing collaborative group (over 10 years working together) and the partners are supported by High Desert Partnership (HDP). Recently, the collaborative has seen notable turnover, with longtime partners retiring or moving into other work. There is a significant and growing need to support the development of new partners and ensure that institutional knowledge is developed and maintained. This grant project would support staff salary for the HBWC Coordinator, whose work includes coordinating SAP implementation, conducting HBWC meetings with facilitation, grant tracking and management, and supporting partners with a variety of other needs. The HBWC Coordinator holds valuable institutional knowledge of this work, which is especially important given the collaboration's recent partner turnover.

Project partners include, Harney County Watershed Council, Ducks Unlimited, The Wetlands Conservancy, Portland Audubon, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney County Soil and Water Conservation District, Intermountain West Joint Venture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Eastern Oregon Ag Research Center and private landowners and ranchers in the basin.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The applicant has a proven track record of successful collaboration, implementation, and communication via their implementation of an OWEB funded Focused Investment Partnership Initiative level grant.
- The applicant demonstrates collaboration with partners including local, state, and federal government entities as well as public lands managers and private landowners.

- The project is timely and maintains the momentum of the Partnership to complete on-going projects funded in the FIP.

Concerns:

- The application does not include detail regarding long-term planning.
- The application mentioned tribal support but wasn't clear how tribes are engaged in the Partnership.
- The budget for facilitation lacks detail and is unclear how often facilitation occurs.
- The proposal would benefit from inclusion of lessons learned during their six years of experience as an OWEB Focused Investment Partnership.
- The proposal would benefit from loading a scope of work description for each of the three identified roles: Ecological Coordinator, Admin Coordinator and Facilitation.

Concluding Analysis:

The High Desert Partnership has a proven track record of successful project implementation. This proposal is an important next step towards achieving the goals of the partnership. The partners have the technical and collaborative skills to achieve the outcomes described in the proposal.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 5 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $147,216

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Recommend

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $147,216

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8308-2265
Application Name: Umpqua Oak Partnership Strategic Action Plan Development
Applicant: Ducks Unlimited Inc
OWEB Request: $95,614
Total Cost: $149,184

Application Description:
The Umpqua Oak Partnership (UOP) works in the Umpqua River basin that is generally described by the Douglas County boundary. The Umpqua River Basin contains some of the largest remaining tracks of Oregon White Oak (Quercus garryana) forests and savannas in the Pacific Northwest. Oak and prairie habitats are among the Pacific Northwest's most threatened habitats with estimates as low as 4-7% remaining (ODFW 2006). However, oak forests and prairies in the Basin are under the same human stresses found in other portions of Washington, Oregon, and California. Oak landscapes are a part of the Basin's natural and cultural heritage. Umpqua Basin tribes were the original land stewards of oak habitats and the First Peoples of the Umpqua River Basin, including the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, used fire and other methods to manage oak habitats providing tribal members with food, medicine, tools, home materials, decorations, and cultural needs. With this funding we will continue to collaborate with partners, finalize governance documents, complete our strategic action plan, develop a monitoring plan that aligns with the Klamath-Siskiyou Oak Network's plan, and create oak distribution and prioritization maps to guide conservation initiatives.

The UOP is a high functioning group with a dedicated and engaged core of participants that make up the Steering Committee. Partners are committed to completing the planning processes and eagerly anticipate moving forward with several restoration projects and conservation initiatives in the coming years.
Core Partners: Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Federal: BLM, NRCS, USFWS, USFS, State: ODF, ODFW, OWEB, TNC, Douglas SWCD, Douglas Small Woodland Association Douglas Forest Protective Association, Douglas County, Klamath Bird Observatory, OSU Extension, Pacific Birds, Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers, Landowners, University of Oregon Friends of Kanipe Ranch, The Elkton Reserve, Yew Creek Preserve.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The project is timely and maintains the momentum of the partnership to transfer to an action group.
- The partnership has a proven track record of successful engagement, collaboration, and communication.

- The application identifies future collaboration with partners including local, state, and federal government entities as well as private landowners.
- The proposed plan, if implemented, is likely to result in multiple ecological benefits, including improved plant productivity and health of oak habitat.
- In addition to developing a strategic action plan (SAP), the proposed project will also finalize governance documents and develop a monitoring plan that aligns with the Klamath-Siskiyou Oak Network's plan.
- The budget for the partnership is clear and aligns with the activities and staffing needed to develop the SAP.

Concerns:

- There is a lack of detail regarding the timeline for deliverables and long-term solutions once the project is complete.
- The application documents tribal support but was not clear how they are involved and to what extent.

Concluding Analysis:

The Umpqua Oak Partnership has a proven track record of successful engagement, collaboration, and communication. This proposal is an important next step towards improving watershed health and oak habitat. The partners have the right technical and collaborative skills to successfully to develop and execute the SAP. The committees are well thought out with clear tasks; communication and leadership roles are established. The inclusion of key stakeholders for implementation and refinements of the SAP demonstrates the partnership's forward-thinking towards future restoration actions. However, the application lacks information on long-term solutions once the SAP is complete.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Recommend

Review Team Priority: 3 of 8

Review Team Recommended Amount: $95,614

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Recommend

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $95,614

Staff Conditions: N/A

2022 Partnership Technical Assistance Grant Cycle

Application Number: 223-8309-22662
Application Name: Rogue Basin Partnership: Guiding Regional Restoration
Applicant: Rogue Basin Partnership
OWEB Request: $74,707
Total Cost: $97,596

Application Description:

The Rogue Basin Partnership (RBP) seek Partnership Capacity funding to update our strategic action plan (SAP) and to continue to facilitate coordination among Members. Engaging in these activities will further the implementation of the restoration strategies described in our SAP – the Rogue Restoration Action Plan (RRAP). Made up of 23 members, RBP is the regional natural resources planning entity for the Rogue River Basin, located in southern Oregon. Motivated by a deep commitment to regional planning, environmental entities and municipalities organized themselves to form RBP in 2015 – the RRAP soon followed as the Basin-wide SAP. RBP has a history of coordinating restoration activities across the Basin; prior to RBP, regional partners known as the Rogue Basin Coordinating Council gathered to engage in regional restoration planning. As our Partnership matures and our RRAP (SAP) ages, we find that we need to elevate our performance in RRAP implementation through: 1) strategic plan updates to maintain relevance, 2) an improved online dashboard to monitor and report progress and achievements, and 3) increased coordination among our working groups (WG) and Members. Further, RBP Members will fortify its Partnership's mission through increased WG coordination, communications, member engagement, peer-to-peer learning, restoration project planning, and RRAP project monitoring. RBP continues to regularly convene to strategize and work Basin-wide to support RRAP implementation. Capacity funding is necessary for RBP to continue to mature and support the unique regional relationships found in the Rogue Basin. OWEB funding will allow RBP to leverage existing secured funding so it can: continue to coordinate RRAP implementation; strengthen communication, networking, and regional project implementation between Members and Working Groups; plan, track, and report to RBP Members the status of implementation actions; and seek additional, non-OWEB Partnership funding.

Review Team Evaluation

Strengths:

- The project maintains the momentum of the partnership to complete ongoing projects identified in the previous action plan.
- The partnership represents a spectrum of state agencies, local organizations, and technical experts.

Concerns:

- The application is unclear on the longevity for the group membership to ensure successful implementation of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP).
- The application would have benefitted from a description on what has been achieved during implementation of the existing SAP.
- The benefit of the partner retreat is unclear regarding how it will enhance the SAP update.
- The application is unclear on specifics for the project tracker, monitoring, and who will complete data entry.
- The qualifications needed to successfully develop and implement the plan are not clearly outlined.
- The application is unclear how the action plan complements current restoration and acquisitions projects.

Concluding Analysis:

The Rogue Basin Partnership is a large partnership with a 10-year history. The vision of updating the SAP to assist in prioritizing restoration is an important next step to continue to improve watershed health. The partners have the right technical and collaborative skills to successfully update and execute the action plan; however, the application lacks comprehensive detail on projects that were a result of the previous action plan. The application does not adequately provide an overview of how the action plan integrates on-going restoration.

Review Team Recommendation to Staff: Do Not Recommend

Review Team Priority: N/A

Review Team Recommended Amount: $0

Review Team Conditions: N/A

Staff Recommendation: Do Not Recommend

Staff Follow-up to Review Team: N/A

Staff Recommended Amount: $0

Staff Conditions: N/A

Partnership TA Projects Recommended for Funding in Priority Order				
Application Number	**Applicant**	**Project Title**	**Amount Recommended**	**Priority**
223-8303-22661	Grande Ronde Model WS Foundation	Grande Ronde Restoration Partnership Capacity	$ 149,810	1
223-8302-22657	Cascade Pacific RC&D	Update Tenmile Lakes Restoration Plan	$ 149,758	2
223-8308-22656	Ducks Unlimited	Umpqua Oak Partnership Strategic Action Plan Development	$ 95,614	3
223-8304-22655	Curry SWCD	Siskiyou Coast Estuaries Partnership Capacity Resubmit	$ 96,875	4
223-8307-22658	High Desert Partnership	Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative - Partnership Capacity	$ 147,216	5
Total Partnership TA Projects Recommended for Funding by TRT and OWEB Staff			**$ 639,273**	

Partnership TA Projects Recommended by TRT but Not Funded (in Priority Order)				
223-8305-22660	Pheasants Forever	Vale Local Implementation Team Coordinator	$ 149,877	6
223-8301-22663	Illinnois Valley SWCD	Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group Partnership Development	$ 139,180	7
223-8306-22652	Wasco SWCD	Wasco County Partnership	$ 95,150	8
Total Partnership TA Projects Recommended by TRT but Not Funded			**$ 384,207**	

Partnership TA Projects Not Recommended for Funding by TRT			
Project Number	**Applicant**	**Project Title**	**OWEB Request**
223-8309-22662	Rogue Basin Partnerhsip	Rogue Basin Partnership: Guiding Regional Restoration	$ 74,707
Total Partnership TA Projects Not Recommended for funding by TRT			**$ 74,707**

TOTAL: All Partnership TA Project Requests	**$ 1,098,187**

Agenda Item K

Public Comment

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

PLACEHOLDER

OREGON
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Agenda Item L

FIP Carry Forward Approval

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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Agenda Item L supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #4 – Watershed organizations have access to a diverse and stable funding portfolio.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item L – Approval of Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP) Carry Forward Funding
April 25-26, 2023 Board Meeting

I. Introduction

The board awards funds for FIP initiatives for up to three consecutive biennia. OWEB's internal policy for managing these funds allows for the funds to be carried forward into the next biennium following the board awards . This item requests board approval to carry over FIP funds for an additional biennium.

II. Background

While FIP funds are available for two biennia, funds are not always obligated by the end of the second biennium. This situation arises for several reasons: projects are completed under budget with excess funds returned to the holding account; projects are cancelled due to circumstances beyond the grantee's control; or project development and permitting takes longer than anticipated.

Under current policy, funds in FIP holding accounts expire at the end of the second biennium, following board award, and require board approval to carry funds over to a third biennium. The table below includes FIP holding accounts requested for carryover:

Holding Account #	FIP Name
220-8205	Upper Grande Ronde
220-8206	Baker Sage-grouse
220-8207	Clackamas Partnership
220-8208	John Day Basin Partnership
220-8213	Rogue Forest
220-8215	Warner Basin Aquatic Habitat Partnership

As this approval is administrative in nature, staff will be requesting authority to carryover all FIP funds for three consecutive biennia when the board approves the 2023-2025 spending plan in July in order to preclude similar requests in the future.

III. Recommendation

Staff request the board approve carry forward of funds in the six FIP holding accounts identified in this report.

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item M

OAHP Grant Awards

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Salem OR 97301-1290
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(503) 986-0178

Agenda Item M supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 5: The value of working lands is fully integrated into watershed health.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Eric Williams, Grants Program Manager
Taylor Larson, OAHP Coordinator
Robin Meacher, OAHP Easement Specialist

SUBJECT: Agenda Item M. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) Grant Awards
April 25-26, 2023, Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of the 2022 OAHP grant offerings and funding recommendations. Staff request the board approve the funding recommendations from the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission outlined in Attachment E to the staff report.

II. Background

In March 2022, the Oregon Legislature approved $5 million in funding for the OAHP. At the July 2022 meeting, the board amended its 2021-2023 spending plan and allocated $4.315 million for OAHP conservation covenant and easement grants and$150,000 for OAHP conservation management plan grants.

The Governor's Recommended Budget for OWEB was released at the end of January. State agencies must support the Governor's Budget. The Governor's Recommended Budget for OWEB reallocated available OAHP funds, reducing the amount available for grants, and increasing the operations budget so that the program can operate for the full biennium. With anticipated interest revenue and carry forward, $4,200,000 is available for grants. The Governor's Recommended Budget continues OAHP staffing capacity in the 2023-2025 biennium without allocating new funds. With $66,308 requested (and recommended) for conservation management plan grants, $4,133,692 is now available for conservation covenant and easement grants.

III. Summary of Solicitation and Review Process

A. Solicitation

In August 2022, staff solicited applications for both conservation covenant and easement grants as well as conservation management plan grants. Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants participated in a consultation with staff. The purpose of the consultation is to review the program's purpose, allowable activities, evaluation criteria, and timing with applicants.

B. Applications Submitted

Nine applications were received by the October 31, 2022 deadline requesting $5,556,125. Seven applications applied for conservation easement funding ($5,489,817) and two applications applied for conservation management plan development funding ($66,308). Applications were submitted from five of OWEB's six regions; a map of the conservation easement applications can be found in Attachment A and a map of the conservation management plan applications can be found in Attachment B to this staff report.

C. Technical Review Process

The conservation management plan development applications were reviewed in accordance with administrative rules for the program established in 2019. Staff recruited a technical review team comprised of nine experts from throughout the state with expertise in conservation and agriculture. Staff met with each reviewer individually to orient them to the program and help familiarize them with the evaluation criteria. The technical review team was then given access to both conservation management plan applications, asked to read them and attend a December 19, 2022 meeting. The technical review team discussed strengths and concerns as they related to the evaluation criteria, voted on whether to recommend each project for funding, and then ranked those applications recommended for funding. The technical review team meeting informed the development of a staff evaluation for each project found in Attachment C.

The conservation covenant and easement applications were reviewed in accordance with administrative rules for the program, adopted in 2019. The process utilizes technical experts to evaluate agricultural and natural resource values and outcomes and project soundness as defined in the application evaluation criteria in the administrative rules. Each application was reviewed by a team of experts with specific knowledge of the type of working land and natural resource values described, as well as statewide experts in land use and soil science. All applicants were provided the opportunity to host site visits for their project review teams.

A team consisting of staff, OWEB's due diligence contractor, and the Oregon Department of Justice conducted project soundness reviews. The reviews included identifying transaction soundness concerns and whether those concerns are likely to be resolvable in the 18-month timeframe allowed for closing transactions after the OWEB Board awards funding. Organizational capacity was evaluated by OWEB's due diligence contractor and OWEB staff, utilizing the review criteria included in the administrative rules.

Technical feedback from review team members, OWEB's due diligence contractor, and DOJ was used by OWEB staff to develop the application evaluations in Attachment D.

D. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting

The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission consists of 12 members appointed by the board representing a diverse set of agricultural and conservation expertise. The commission is charged with providing the board with funding recommendations for OAHP grant offerings based on the availability of funding from the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund.

The commission met March 16, 2023 to deliberate and make a formal funding recommendation to the board. The commission voted to fund both conservation management plan grant applications received in full, and all seven conservation easement grant applications—six at the full amount requested and one at 67% of the requested funding. The requested and recommended funding amounts are outlined in Attachment E.

IV. Funding Recommendation

Staff recommend the board award OAHP grants as shown in Attachment E as recommended by the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission with project-specific conditions detailed in Attachment F.

Attachments

A. OAHP Conservation Easement Application Map
B. OAHP Conservation Management Application Map
C. OAHP Conservation Management Plan Staff Evaluations
D. OAHP Conservation Easement Staff Evaluations
E. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Funding Recommendations
F. OAHP Conservation Easement Project Specific Funding Conditions (to be provided to the board in advance of the meeting)

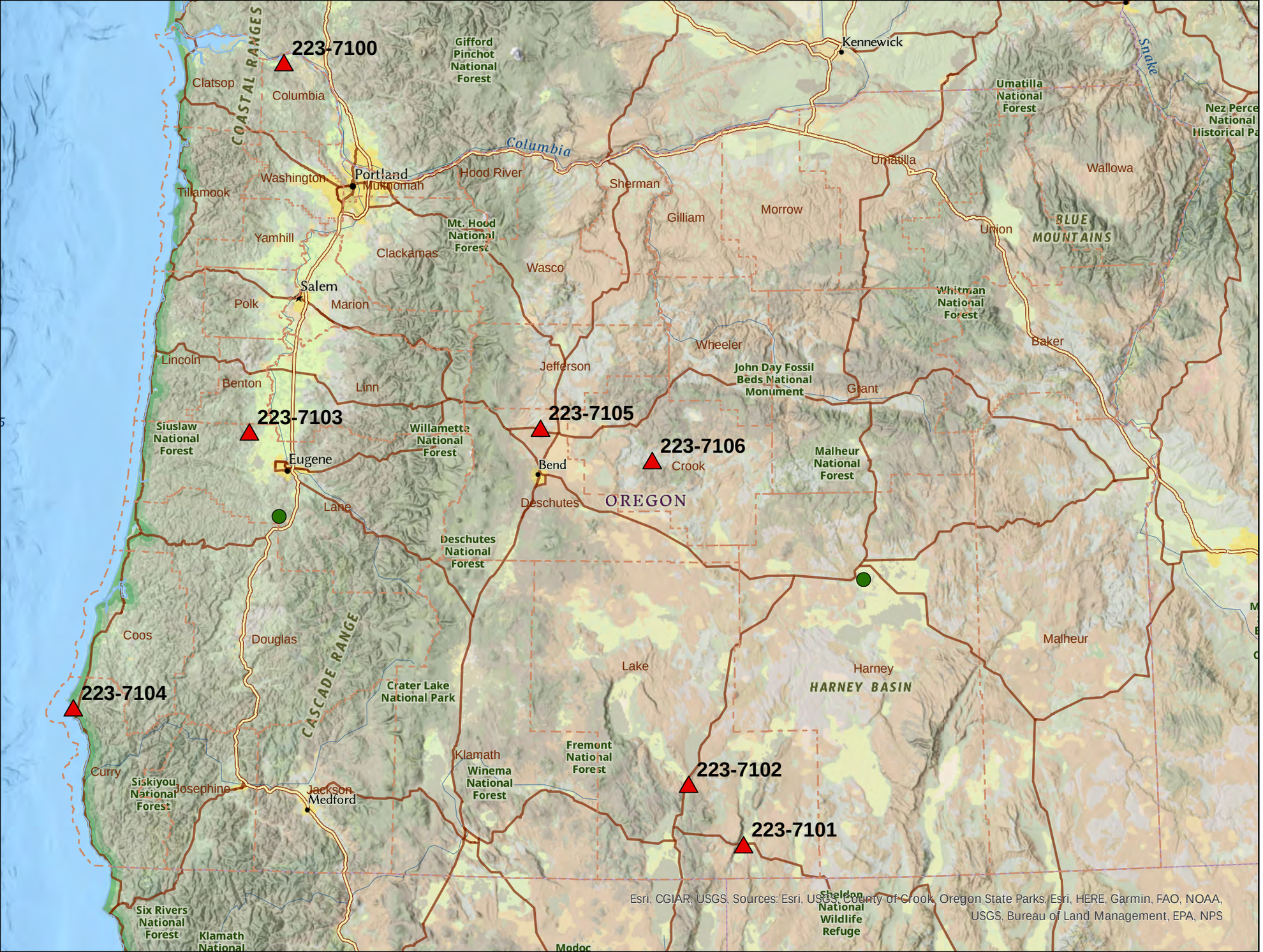
Attachment A

Proposed Conservation Easement Projects

Fall 2022 OAHP Applications

Project Type

- Conservation Easement
- Conservation Management Plan
- Counties



Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Sources: Esri, USGS, County of Crook, Oregon State Parks, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS

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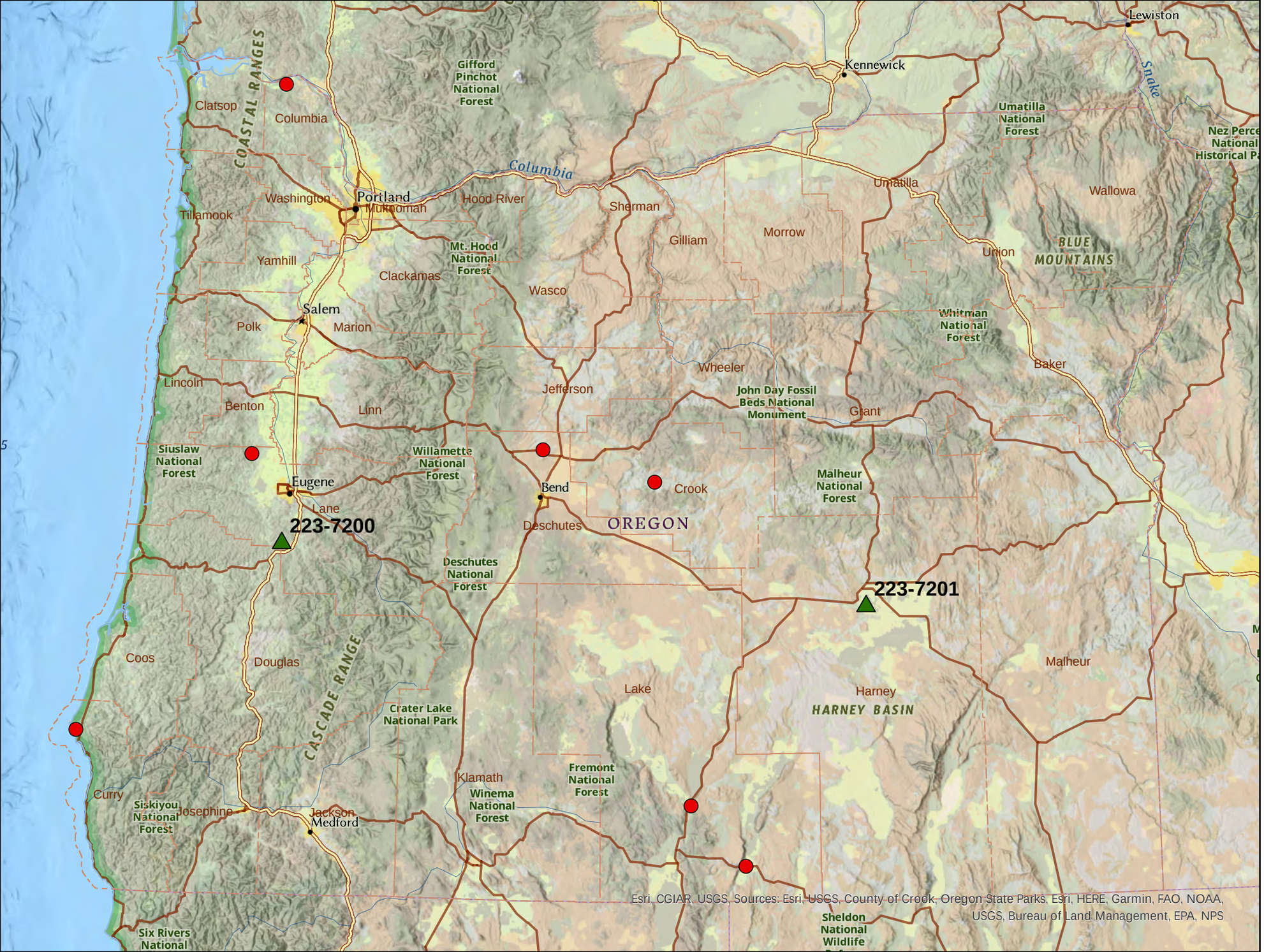
Attachment B

Proposed Conservation Management Plan Projects

Fall 2022 OAHP Applications

Project Type

- Conservation Management Plan
- Conservation Easement
- Counties



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FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Management Plan

Application No.:	223-7201-22602	**Project Type:**	Conservation Management Plan
Project Name:	Baker and EOARC Wet Meadow Management Plans		
Applicant:	High Desert Partnership		
Region:	Eastern Oregon	**County:**	Harney
OWEB Request:	$41,366	**Total Cost:**	$70,913

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

Flood meadows of the Harney Basin are a critical forage resource for ranches in the area and support abundant bird diversity. In rancher workshops to discuss flood meadow management, there was a consensus that most ranches would not be sustainable without the flood irrigated wet meadow forage base. The meadows are irrigated by spreading stream and river flows derived from snowpack melt. However, snowpacks have been declining since the 1950s and recent climate shifts are likely to place even more pressure on water management. There is a pressing need to better understand how existing water resources may be used more efficiently. Invasive species such as reed canary grass (Phalaris arundinacea) represent an additional threat to both hay production and bird habitat. While some ranchers like the high productivity of reed canary grass. Many are concerned about the low forage quality. Bird biologists are concerned that this species reduces diversity of associated plants, insects, and bird species. Given the serious reduction in extent of wetlands in the Pacific Flyway and the Southern Oregon Northeastern California (SONEC) region in particular, improved efficiency in water management is a pressing issue.

Coordinated sampling to allow better assessments of how water and vegetation impact individual bird species use, and overall species diversity will be conducted at one Upper Silvies and a second Lower Silvies flood irrigated wet meadow sites. (see map). Wet Meadow Partners, Portland Audubon, High Desert Partnership, Baker Ranch, Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center (EOARC), Burns High School Biology Class and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge will work together to develop vegetation and water management recommendations to enhance flood irrigated wet meadow habitat values, suppress invasive species, sustain, and increase bird use and optimize agricultural production in concert with a changing climate and water patterns.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation management plan applications in OAR 698-010-0090.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND

Summary of staff's assessment of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the conservation management plan(s). (OAR 698-010-0090(1))

Strengths

- The application demonstrates that wet meadows are an important forage production resource for many ranches in the region, including on the two properties proposed for Conservation Management Plan (CMP) development.
- The extent to which wet meadows provide critical food and habitat for waterbirds is well described.

- Baker Ranch is representative of many commercial ranching operations in the area and has a long history of integrating conservation practices into their ranching business.
- The Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center is managed as a "typical Great Basin ranch" and is well positioned to communicate findings associated with vegetation and water management best practices to a wide audience in the surrounding community and throughout the region.

Concerns

- The significance of the of the agricultural, natural resource and social values of the two agricultural operations subject to the proposed CMPs are not discussed in detail in the application.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which implementation of the plan(s) would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on working land, including how implementation of the plan(s) would: ((OAR 698-010-0090(2)(a),(b))

(a) Maintain or improve the economic viability of the operation; and
(b) Reduce the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land.

The extent to which implementation of the plan(s) would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits, or other investment gains, including the regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors. (OAR 698-010-0090(4))

Strengths

- The uncertainties and challenges associated with maintaining agricultural viability on Baker Ranch in the face of a drying climate are well described. The project has potential to help with climate change resiliency of ranches reliant on wet meadows for forage.
- The connection between the hydrologic regime and resulting forage quality are well articulated and the proposed approach of monitoring to better understand how a change in hydrology will impact the composition and abundance of the forage stand is justified in the application.
- The threat of conversion from native grasses to reed canary grass monocultures and the degree to which this would have a detrimental impact on long-term agricultural outcomes is well supported in the application.
- The application describes an approach to developing conservation management plans that is designed to be adaptable and addresses the problem at a systems level as opposed to farm level.
- The importance of wet meadows to ranching operations in the region is well documented. The resulting CMPs proposed in the application would enhance the ability of the operations to consistently produce high quality hay in their wet meadow pastures.
- The application describes an ongoing risk of conversion from diverse stands of native grasses to monocultures of poor quality, invasive grasses as well as the potential for increased conversion risk associated with a changing climate and how the proposed CMPs will support the development of adaptive management strategies.

Concerns

- It is somewhat unclear that all the work proposed in the application is in support of the development of conservation management plans and that the resulting CMPs will lead toward desired future conditions on the two subject properties.
- The application lacks detail as to what the current agricultural management practices and goals are on the properties subject to the proposed CMPs.
- The application in unclear as to whether desired future conditions have already been determined at the two properties subject to the proposed CMPs, or if these still need to be developed.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which implementation of the plan would protect, maintain, or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality, or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-010-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;

(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality, or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land subject to the plan;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Sustaining ecological values, as evidenced by the conservation management plan or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The proposal clearly articulates how the proposed CMPs will support balancing habitat needs of waterfowl with those of grazing cattle in wet meadows on Baker Ranch and the EOARC.
- The proposal describes the basis for seeking more information to inform the plan for the adoption of conservation practices that will benefit wildlife and support the production of forage for livestock, while improving water quality, quantity and soil health in wet meadows on ranches throughout the region, advancing knowledge about agricultural water management and its relation to climate change.
- The proposal describes an approach that could help inform future CMPs throughout the Great Basin by defining desired future conditions and effective management actions to support forage production, wildlife habitat and water quality in wet meadows.
- Both properties subject to the proposed CMPs are within the Upper Silvies River Conservation Opportunity Area of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, contain identified strategy habitats, and are considered Important Bird Areas by the Audubon Society.
- The proposal describes how the project will collect water quantity data informing the development of management practices that will address the protection, maintenance or improvement of water quality and/or quantity.
- The proposed project intends to collect flora and fauna data to inform the development of two CMPs, recognizing that more information is needed to inform the development of CMPs in wet meadows.

Concerns

- The application does not reference how water quality affects vegetation and forage production on the properties and whether the proposed CMPs will incorporate this aspect.
- It is unclear from the application how all aspects of the proposed data collection and inventory work will support the development conservation management plans on Baker Ranch and the EOARC.
- The application lacks source information in its discussion of climate change and desired future conditions.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	Medium	High

The capacity and competence of the prospective conservation management plan holder to enter into and (if implementation funding is awarded) monitor and carry out implementation of a conservation management plan, including: (OAR 698-010-0090(5)(a)-(c))
(a) The financial capability to manage the plan(s) over time;
(b) The demonstrated relevant commitment, expertise, and track record to successfully develop, implement, carry out, and monitor plan(s); and
(c) The strength of the conservation management plan holder as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- The High Desert Partnership is well networked in the region and has a strong legacy facilitating public/private partnerships.

Concerns

- The application does not describe the financial capability of the applicant (High Desert Partnership).
- The application does not describe the commitment, expertise or track record of the applicant (High Desert Partnership).
- The application does not describe the strength and governance model of the conservation management plan holder (High Desert Partnership).

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: (OAR 698-010-0090(6)(a)-(c))
(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the conservation management plan, with a preference for longer term agreements if implementation funding is awarded; and
(c) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working land projects.

Strengths

- The application budget details a variety of in-kind match from a variety of individuals, governments and organizations.
- Oregon State University Extension participation in the project is beneficial for reaching the broader community, basin wide.
- The application proposes to develop two conservation management plans for ~$30K
- Many partners are included in the project, increasing the likelihood that the project will encourage additional working land projects in the future.
- The proposed conservation management plans will cover over 800 acres.
- Both properties proposed for CMP development can be seen from the road and have the potential to be good showcase properties.

Concerns

- The proposed CMPs have a duration of six years, too short to qualify them for future OAHP implementation funding (20 year minimum).
- The application budget does not include any cash match.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of plan implementation on owners or operators of neighboring lands, including: (OAR 698-010-0090(7)(a), (b))
(a) A plan for communicating with neighboring owners and operators once a conservation management plan is ready to be implemented about how to mitigate potential impacts; and
(b) A maintenance plan for infrastructure that may impact neighboring lands if not maintained over time.

Strengths

- The application is for the development of a CMP while the criteria is applicable to CMP implementation; however, the application describes, in general, a plan for communicating the goals for the project and lessons learned/any concerns arising from implementation of the CMPs with neighboring landowners.
- The Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center intends to share findings from project with Harney County flood irrigated wet meadow managers.
- The applicant indicates they plan to share the resulting CMPs with their local NRCS office.

Concerns

- The plan for communicating with neighboring landowners would benefit from more detail as to who will be contacted and how/when that communication will take place.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-010-0090(8))

Strengths

- The application describes the potential for changes in plant communities to affect the productivity of wet meadows and ultimately the economic viability of ranching in the region. This could increase the pressure on larger ranches, like the Baker Ranch, to sell or transition the use on portions of the property to provide an alternative source of income when agricultural productivity is down. The project has potential to help other ranches find ways to maintain agricultural productivity.

Concerns

- The urgency of the threat of conversion to non-agricultural use is not discussed in detail for either location.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

This application proposes developing two Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) across 800 acres on two ranching properties that will complement one another. The properties are agriculturally and ecologically significant to the region in both scale and influence. It is clear from the application that wet meadows are an important forage production resource for many ranches in the region, including the two properties proposed for CMP development.

It is somewhat unclear that all the work proposed in the application will directly support the development of Conservation Management Plans or how the resulting CMPs will lead toward desired future conditions on the two subject properties. Similarly, the impacts of climate change on the ability of wet meadows to persist in the region is not well explored and may impact the long-term significance of wet meadow agroecosystems throughout the Great Basin over the coming decades.

Overall, the proposed development of these Conservation Management Plans will likely support long term agricultural viability as well as enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water quality on the two properties. The project also has a high potential to lead to the development of future CMPs in the region through the development of management best practices and desired future conditions for wet meadows across the region.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend application #223-7201-22602 received through the 2022 conservation management plan grant solicitation for funding to the OWEB Board at the amount of $41,366 in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation management plan projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Management Plan

Application No.:	223-7200-22539	**Project Type:**	Conservation Management Plan
Project Name:	Branch Road Conservation Management Plan		
Applicant:	Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council		
Region:	Willamette Basin	**County:**	Willamette
OWEB Request:	$24,942	**Total Cost:**	$25,441

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

Branch Foard Farm, is a property of 72.66 acres (map and tax lot 20-04-23-00-01000) located at 79442 Repsleger Road, Cottage Grove, in Lane County, Oregon. The property has been in a conservation easement for over 5 years, with areas designated for sustainable agricultural operations. The Farm Operator runs a diversified small farm operation with a mix of market vegetables and livestock for direct-to-consumer markets. The farm acts as a classroom for community workshops in rural living skills, a site for children's programs, and an event venue for large group gatherings.

Climate change and has brought increased pressures on soil and water resources in recent years, with longer dry seasons in the summer, and greater frequency of extreme weather events. Concerns about continued sustainability of farming practices have led the Farm Operator to seek strategies and efficiency improvements to conserve and enhance available soil and water resources, as well as natural areas located on the property's forests and riparian zones.
The work being proposed includes the creation of a comprehensive conservation management plan for the entire property that will address natural resource management needs in the interests of agricultural sustainability, economic viability of the farm operation, and enhancement and stewardship of natural habitat.

The Farm Operator of Branch Road Farm, Andhi Reyna, and the property's Landowner, Jerry Russel, seek to partner with the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council to create a Conservation Management Plan that will address water resource concerns, soil conservation priorities, and natural habitat maintenance and restoration in the coming decades.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation management plan applications in OAR 698-010-0090.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND

Summary of staff's assessment of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the conservation management plan(s). (OAR 698-010-0090(1))

Strengths

- The operation managing the property subject to the proposed Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is an active participant in the local food economy and is often open to the public.
- The property has a diversity of habitats including wetlands, riparian areas, oak woodlands and conifer forests.
- The property supports the production of a variety of agricultural products for the local market including livestock and vegetables.

- The property supports multiple viable agricultural business that include crop production, livestock, value added food processing and agritourism.
- The farm level management described in the application demonstrates an attentiveness to both agricultural and natural resources on the site.

Concerns

- The property may be too small to support some types of agricultural production and provide meaningful contributions to all habitat types present on the property.
- Slopes and soil types on the property may limit the types of agricultural production possible which may impact the ability of future operators to respond to a changing climate and economic conditions.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which implementation of the plan(s) would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on working land, including how implementation of the plan(s) would: ((OAR 698-010-0090(2)(a),(b))

(a) Maintain or improve the economic viability of the operation; and
(b) Reduce the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;

The extent to which implementation of the plan(s) would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits, or other investment gains, including the regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors. (OAR 698-010-0090(4))

Strengths

- The application describes how the proposed CMP could lead to better "control" of water across the property, including the installation of a pond. This would support the economic viability of the agricultural operation by improving soil infiltration and reducing erosion leading to better forage production for livestock.
- The proposed CMP will address challenges resulting from climate change, including prolonged dry seasons, which limit water availability later in the summer.
- The proposed CMP will serve as the management plan for an existing conservation easement on the property, ensuring conservation benefits resulting from this project are secure.
- The application clearly describes the challenges facing the operation presented by the interaction between grazing management objective and water quantity across the property.
- The proposed CMP will build on a previous forest management plan that focused on the forested sections of the property, demonstrating a proactive commitment by the land manager to natural resource planning.
- The application describes how the implementation of a CMP would increase the long-term sustainability of diversified agriculture on the property, and how that would decrease pressures to convert the land to non-agricultural use.

Concerns

- Steep slopes on the property may present erosion challenges when it comes to some of the proposed outcomes, including objectives that require thinning the forest and grazing livestock.
- The application lacks specific details as to what conservation actions the proposed CMP will lead to and how success will be measured.
- There is little detail in the application describing what has been achieved at the site during the life of the previous management plan (forest management plan). Additional detail would provide context on the extent to which the farm operator is able to follow through on management plan objectives and the extent to which implementation of the proposed CMP would lead to significant agricultural outcomes.
- Current agricultural practices being implemented on the property are described at a high level, but more detail would be helpful to understand how the proposed CMP will lead to the desired future condition.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The application demonstrates that the project team has detailed knowledge of the overall ecology on the property including species of concern.
- The proposed CMP will address the goals of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Program area plan including strategies for riparian areas.
- The property is just outside (<1mile) the Upper Siuslaw Conservation Opportunity Area of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, and the proposed CMP would include actions to benefit oak woodland, riparian and wetland habitats all priority habitats according to the OCS.
- The application describes that the property is located near two known spotted owl nesting sites and provides habitat for Fender's Blue Butterfly, Kincaid's Lupin, and Oregon White Oak.
- A clear connection is made in the application between grazing management and impacts to water quality. This connection is then used to justify the need for a CMP.
- The proposed CMP will keep conservation momentum going on the property by building from a forest management plan to a more holistic conservation management plan.

Concerns

- The proposed CMP puts an emphasis on enhancing oak habitat, but the acreage may be too small to benefit many species reliant on oak habitat.
- The application lacks detail about the actions taken in the last decade to improve the oak habitat in the forest management plan.
- The application lacks detail about any logistical challenges that led to complications implementing 2014 EQIP funding and the extent to which those conditions still exist.
- The desired future conditions in the forested areas of the property are not well described.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The capacity and competence of the prospective conservation management plan holder to enter into and (if implementation funding is awarded) monitor and carry out implementation of a conservation management plan, including: (OAR 698-010-0090(5)(a)-(c))

(a) The financial capability to manage the plan(s) over time;
(b) The demonstrated relevant commitment, expertise, and track record to successfully develop, implement, carry out, and monitor plan(s); and
(c) The strength of the conservation management plan holder as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- The plan holder (Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council) has a track record of successfully integrating conservation actions into working landscapes through several projects in their service area.
- The plan holder describes their new Working Lands Program and how it builds on legacy programs at the organization, demonstrating a commitment to supporting agricultural landowners carry out conservation actions on their land.
- The applicant demonstrates ongoing growth in the budget of the organization and extensive grant management experience at the executive level

Concerns

- None

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: (OAR 698-010-0090(6)(a)-(c))

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the conservation management plan, with a preference for longer term agreements if implementation funding is awarded; and

(c) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working land projects.

Strengths

- The application describes how the CMP will support the farm operator in accessing NRCS conservation funding to implement portions of the plan.
- The farm and local conservation community are already using this property as a showcase for conservation actions in the community, increasing the likelihood that successful implementation of a CMP will lead to other working landowners in the region adopting their own CMPs.
- The proposed CMP has a time horizon of 20 years and will cover the entire property. This will facilitate holistic, long-term thinking and will qualify the applicant to apply for implementation funding through a future OAHP CMP implementation grant.

Concerns

- The application does not describe how the proposed CMP will incorporate the previous NRCS Forest Management Plan in order to show progress.
- It is unclear to what extent the applicant demonstrates an ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources, as the application only identifies NRCS and OAHP as potential CMP implementation funders

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of plan implementation on owners or operators of neighboring lands, including: (OAR 698-010-0090(7)(a), (b))

(a) A plan for communicating with neighboring owners and operators once a conservation management plan is ready to be implemented about how to mitigate potential impacts; and

(b) A maintenance plan for infrastructure that may impact neighboring lands if not maintained over time.

Strengths

- The application is for the development of a CMP while the criteria is applicable to CMP implementation. Nevertheless, the application describes previous successes communicating about conservation projects happening on the property with neighbors.
- The farm operator intends to keep neighbors abreast of developments in the CMP's implementation and invite them to a tour of the property as projects are completed.

Concerns

- None

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-010-0090(8))

Strengths

- The application describes how the implementation of a CMP will increase the long-term sustainability of diversified agriculture on the property and how this will decrease pressures to convert the land to non-agricultural use.
- There is an existing perpetual conservation easement on the property.

Concerns

- There is not much detail provided in the application about the surrounding landscape, which would help to understand what is happening around the farm in order to better understand the threat of fragmentation of habitat and farmland beyond the property itself.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The property proposed for development of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is 73 acres of diverse habitat including wetlands, riparian areas, oak woodlands and open farmland that support the production of a variety of agricultural products for local markets in the upper Willamette Valley. The application demonstrates that slopes and water quantity present challenges to the operation, and that the development of a CMP would help the operator make better use of the land while reducing erosion, increasing water quality, and improving habitat for fish and wildlife.

The application is vague when it comes to the specifics of what will be included in the CMP proposed for development; however, the applicant has a record of successful project development. The CMP is intended to serve as the management plan for an existing perpetual easement on the property, inspiring confidence that the resulting CMP will further the goals of the agricultural operator, as well as the OAHP program over the coming decades.

The interaction between grazing management and water management are at the heart of the proposed CMP. The application makes a clear connection between water quantity, grazing impacts, and water quality. The need for a CMP is justified throughout the application in order to balance the needs of the agricultural operation with those of the ecosystem upon which the business is reliant. The property is somewhat limiting when it comes to agriculture due to slopes, soils, size, and water availability; however, the operation is similar in this regard to many farms in the region producing for local markets. This, combined with the operation's commitment to sharing their practices with the surrounding community and the applicant's recent establishment of a working lands program to promote conservation opportunities throughout the watershed, demonstrate a high potential that an investment in developing a CMP for this property would support the development of additional high-quality projects in the future.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend application #223-7200-22539 received through the 2022 conservation management plan grant solicitation for funding to the OWEB Board at the amount of $24,942 in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation management plan projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7104-22600	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	Wahl Ranch Conservation Easement		
Applicant:	Wild Rivers Land Trust		
Region:	Southwest Oregon	**County:**	Curry
OWEB Request:	$4,008,000	**Total Cost:**	$10,323,000

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The Wahl Ranch Conservation Easement Project is the purchase of a conservation easement on the 775-acre Wahl Ranch, located on the southern Oregon coast in the lower Elk River watershed. The Ranch is located about three miles north of Port Orford, about ½ mile west of Hwy 101, and immediately southeast of Cape Blanco, which is the western most point in Oregon and one of the most western points in the contiguous United States of America. The Project will perpetually protect 775 acres, including ~250 acres of fish and wildlife habitat, ~1.1 miles of the Elk River including the Elk River estuary, large portions of two low-gradient tributaries to Elk River, several wildlife ponds, and 0.6 miles of Oregon coastline.

This project presents an opportunity to protect a large family ranch and an ecologically critical piece of this remarkable landscape for generations to come. The Ranch is in a 20 mile stretch of scenic coastline consisting of ten ranches owned by eight families interspersed with public parks and natural areas. It is the longest stretch like it left on the Oregon coast, and is known as the "dark coast" by sailors for lack of lights from development. None of the ten ranches has converted out of ranching in four generations, but significant residential and commercial development pressures have now reached Oregon's south coast. The project will also ensure that investments made by the Ranch to restore and protect ecological areas supporting fish and wildlife are secured, including major restorations on Cedar and Swamp Creeks, with additional restoration work planned for both.

Partners include the Wahl Ranch, Wild Rivers Land Trust, The Conservation Fund and the Natural Resources Conservation Service through their Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. The project supports the recommendations of the Southern Oregon Northern California Coast recovery plan and the Elk River Strategic Action Plan for Coho Salmon Recovery.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the application's technical review team, and OWEB's due diligence contractor.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND; EASEMENT SPECIFICS

Summary of staff's assessment of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The application describes the property as a locally and regionally important agricultural operation, and that the operation is internationally known.
- The ranch is Curry County's first designated century farm and has been in the same family since 1874 (148 years) demonstrating the land's ability to support a variety of viable agricultural operations through changing economic conditions.
- The property is positioned in a critical area of the Elk River that provides habitat for humans, livestock and wildlife. While the threat of development is variable, the need for conservation in this area of the Elk River will always be high and a project of this size with these resources can help the area get ahead of the curve.
- The property hosts a diversity of habitats including coastal conifer forest, coastal bluffs, riparian areas, coastal dune/beach/estuary, and wetlands.
- Approximately 30% of the property is designated for fish and wildlife habitat supporting the long-term integration of agriculture and habitat values.
- The property is comprised of a large tract of agriculturally and ecologically productive land. The project parcels are part of a large multi-generational operation that has demonstrated sustainable animal husbandry and land stewardship for decades.
- The property supports a leading ranch operation in the region that provides employment and contributes to the local social fabric of the rural community, offering a prime example of how watershed restoration and ranching can co-exist.
- Two of the streams on the property, Cedar and Swamp Creeks, offer high-quality Coho salmon overwintering and rearing habitat in the Elk River system.
- The property contains approximately one-third of the Elk River estuary, which is a limited and important resource to many species of concern in the Elk River Watershed. Interior portions of the Ranch include approximately 59 acres of freshwater wetland including emergent marsh and lowland riparian woodland. These wetlands and riparian areas are fenced off from grazing and there have been several restoration and protection projects in cooperation with the Curry Watersheds Partnership over the past few decades to restore the fish habitat functions to these systems.
- The lower Elk River is a key corridor for migrating birds and has high plant and animal diversity, leading the Elk River to be recognized as a globally Important Bird Area in 2019.

Concerns

- The application presents the regional significance of the property in its current operation, but there is little discussion regarding the ability of the property to support alternative agricultural commodities and whether the agricultural significance would remain if the current use ceased.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement eliminates the possibility of subdivision, residential development and limits non-farm uses, reducing the potential for future conversion and fragmentation of the property, facilitating the likelihood that the property will remain in agricultural use.
- The property is currently an intact working ranch with existing water rights leased to the State. The pastures do not currently require irrigation due to the climate in this coastal area, as well as how they are currently managed. This demonstrates that the viability of the operation will not require reactivating the water rights to

irrigation from the current instream lease in the immediate future. The existence of irrigation rights provides for continued agricultural viability should operations need to change or a change in the overall climate of the area.

- The proposed conservation easement will maintain the ability of the property to continue in productive agricultural use by allowing flexibility in the type of agricultural commodity that can be produced and solidifying the right to conduct agricultural operations across the property. The land has served as a sheep ranch, but also has the soils and water needed to potentially grow crops or other livestock in the future.
- Currently, the property has farm infrastructure that supports the sheep operation, which will be a continued allowable use once the proposed conservation easement is in place, but there is no onsite residence to support the operator itself. The proposed easement will allow the development of one homesite, not associated with a subdivision right, further supporting the ease of running the operation where it is located.
- The proposed conservation easement would significantly reduce the real estate value of the land, making it more affordable for an agricultural operator to purchase by removing speculative value around development potential.
- Proceeds from the sale of the proposed conservation easement would address financial needs of the Ranch partners, allowing them to continue implementing additional maintenance, enhancement and restoration projects.

Concerns

- Absent a transaction agreement and more detailed conservation easement draft defining commitments and terms, a discussion regarding the landowners' decision making, both during the transaction and during the LLC's ownership of the property, would have provided more clarity on the commitment from the parties and the specifics of easement administration.
- The proposed conservation easement does not empower the land trust to require ongoing agricultural use of the property.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement maintains the property as a large intact ranch with approximately 30% of the ranch designated as reserves for fish and wildlife habitat benefits. The primary beneficiary species include aquatic species and Pacific Flyway migratory bird species. The landowners plan to continue restoration actions to enhance these benefits on the property.
- The proposed conservation easement would protect important habitat features for a variety of species including rearing habitat for SONCC Coho in Swamp and Cedar Creeks, habitat for Chinook, Coho, and other aquatic species in the Elk River estuary, and a Pacific Flyway migratory bird area of significance.
- The agricultural operation is managed in a way that protects water quality by utilizing rotational grazing and maintaining riparian buffers. These practices are intended to be encompassed in the proposed conservation easement itself, either by the utilization of the Habitat Management Zones to maintain the riparian buffers, or the intended management plan. There is no indication of water quality problems associated with the current agricultural practices.

- The ranch has leased the water rights associated with the property to the State to support aquatic species conservation, demonstrating a commitment to the ongoing conservation of the water resources of the property.
- The property is within a large stretch of the Oregon coast known as the "dark coast" for lack of lights from development. The proposed conservation easement would remove the risk of fragmentation and conversion of this property. The property could reasonably be divided into multiple units, fragmenting the natural resources and potentially reducing the comprehensive approach to restoration and habitat maintenance.

Concerns

- The proposed conservation easement is intended to build the current management regime into the ongoing operations of the land, which is labor intensive, requiring a similarly motivated landowner into perpetuity, which may be challenging.
- More detail supporting the specific history, partners, and funding for the restoration work would have been valuable to confirm claims regarding fish population response and determine whether specific actions are appropriate to carry forward into the management plan.
- The application includes statements regarding the importance of the water resources for Coho salmon, such as "Swamp Creek consistently produces the highest number of Coho smolts of any winter rearing habitat in the Elk River watershed," but does not provide evidence or source information for these claims.
- The management plan outline provided in the application lacks detail regarding the specific approach to managing the agricultural resources in a manner that will sustain the significant natural resource values.
- The application has little discussion on the extent to which the proposed conservation easement would lead to water quality improvements such as water temperature reduction or enhanced manure and bacteria control.
- The application claims that the past and planned restoration work on the property supports the Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, but there is no detail provided as to which specific actions support specific goals in the program in this region.
- Certain allowable uses in the proposed conservation easement template (e.g., renewable energy development) may conflict with the specific agricultural and natural resource values on the site. While the applicant intends to use the OWEB provided template, more detail on the specific reserved rights acceptable to the landowner and the land trust would have provided a better understanding regarding the specific interaction between flexibility and maintaining the resources.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and

(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The landowners and their family have been managing this land for agriculture for nearly 150 years. There is a strong dedication and commitment to preserving the property as a working land and the existing ranching operation is viable and a leader in the region.
- The current operation, a large-scale sheep operation, is unique in an area dominated by small calf-cow operations. The ongoing viability of this operation is supported by the landowners' extensive work developing the soil health and organic matter content across the property's pastures.
- The Wahl Ranch is a key part of the area agricultural infrastructure needs, supporting the businesses that provide resources to area farms and ranches.

- The proposed conservation easement would protect a significant working property in the region, considered a keystone parcel to the region's agricultural base, maintaining a landscape that has remained mostly intact. The proposed conservation easement will limit subdivision and conversion of the subject parcel, which will ensure that the land is available for agricultural use beyond the current landowner, maintaining a large amount of acreage for continued contribution to the agricultural land base.

Concerns

- The proposed conservation easement retains rights to another residence, with no description of siting restrictions. There is no detail in the application regarding discussions with the landowner to ensure placement of the house is not detrimental to conservation of the significant natural resources and/or agricultural operations.
- The proposed easement does not guarantee that the property will remain in agricultural use (i.e., potential wildlife habitat), though it does make ongoing agricultural use more likely because of the land management restrictions.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)

(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;

(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;

(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;

(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and

(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- Wild Rivers Land Trust (WRLT) is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance Land Trust Accreditation Commission, which means they have met the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.
- WRLT is the main land trust that serves the southern coast area and is developing the relevant expertise and track record of a land trust with a proven approach to accomplishing conservation transactions and to hold, monitor, and steward complex conservation easements.
- The Conservation Fund's commitment to partnership in the project adds additional capacity to the organization's ability to complete the transaction and fundraising needs.
- The applicant utilizes TerraFirma insurance for its conservation investments.

Concerns

- The project budget has a gap of $1,200,000 to fund the purchase of the conservation easement. The application states there is a commitment by the applicant, Wild Rivers Land Trust, and The Conservation Fund, to launching a private fundraising campaign to close this gap. There is no detail provided about the timing, feasibility, or organizational capacity of either organization to conduct such a significant campaign within the 18-month funding window. There is no discussion around contingencies if this campaign is unsuccessful, creating uncertainty about the overall likelihood of success of the project as currently designed.
- The application lacks clarity regarding the transaction mechanics and roles and responsibilities between the organizations. It appears the applicant is intended to be the long-term holder of the conservation easement, but The Conservation Fund is managing the transaction. As the applicant will be the recipient of any OAHP award and party to any grant agreement, a thorough description of the roles and transaction mechanics would have provided more clarity as to the overall capacity of the two groups working together to manage a project.

- The proposed conservation easement will nearly double the number of acres in the applicant's conservation portfolio, a significant jump in stewardship obligation. Additional detail would be helpful to determine that the land trust's stewardship fund is maintained in a manner that is not outpaced by its stewardship obligations, including a funding plan considering that the project needs additional unaccounted for acquisition dollars as well as stewardship funding.
- The application does not describe whether conservation of agricultural land is in its organizational mission, vision, or other organizational documents.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;

(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals;

(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and

(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement.
- The proposed project could set a precedent for other working ranches in the Elk River area, serving as an "early-adopter" model for the other seven local ranching families along this stretch of coast facing similar development pressures and generational transfer.
- The proposed conservation easement builds upon previous conservation investments, guaranteeing the preservation of the outcomes of extensive conservation and watershed restoration projects that have occurred on the land, primarily funded with public dollars.
- The project described in the application is consistent with the local comprehensive plan and statewide planning goals.
- The property is zoned Forestry Grazing (FG). The purpose of the Forestry Grazing Zone is to implement the forest land policies of the Curry County Comprehensive Plan, to implement Statewide Planning Goal 4 with respect to protection of working forest lands, to implement the agricultural land policies of the Curry County Comprehensive Plan and to implement Statewide Planning Goal 3 with respect to protecting intermixed farm and forest land.
- The Wahl family is well known locally and are considered community and agricultural leaders in their field.

Concerns

- There is no Conservation Management Plan as defined by the OAHP currently associated with the project and the application does not describe plans to develop one.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The application describes the extent to which it attempted to understand potential impacts on neighboring landowners through outreach to community groups, adjacent neighbors, federal and state national resource agencies. It further describes an intention to continue outreach activities.

- Wild Rivers Land Trust applied to the OWEB Land Acquisition funding opportunity in 2021 for funding to place a conservation easement on the Wahl Ranch. As a part of that application process, they reached out to eight adjacent neighbors, Curry County, Curry Watersheds Partnership, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Forest Service, Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, Kalmiopsis Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited, Native Fish Society, Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Curry Soil and Water Conservation District.
- The applicant discussed agricultural conservation easements and the proposed Wahl Ranch project with the board of the Curry Soil and Water Conservation District.
- As a part of the public comment period associated with the applicant's previous application to the OWEB Land Acquisition Program, it received written comments from the Coos-Curry Farm Bureau and the Curry County Planning Department. The applicant responded to each of these letters to provide clarifying information about various aspects of the project.

Concerns

- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the applicant does not describe engagement efforts and any efforts to address impacts.
- It appears the community engagement done to date has been responsive to funder needs and not necessarily proactive.
- Despite the outreach, the application is unclear on whether any potential impacts were raised in discussions with neighbors.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- The property is within a section of Oregon coast that is relatively undeveloped but facing pressure from a variety of non-agricultural uses including golf courses and residential development. There are 8 ranching families that own 10 ranches along the 30-45 miles of coastline. There is pressure to subdivide, sell, and/or develop these lands that will likely increase in the future.
- Subsequent heirs to the property will likely face steep taxes at the time of generational transfer increasing the pressure to sell off fragments of the ranch.
- Climate change will lead to population density shifts, economic changes and continued development that will threaten continuous landownership patterns on the Oregon South coast as competing needs for available private lands will grow.
- The application discusses the major threats, including subdivision, nonfarm dwellings and commercial recreation, such as golf course development. Oregon Department of Agriculture concurs that these threats are real and ongoing.
- Speculative land values relating to nonfarm development potential is driving development and conversion pressure along the south coast, the cumulative impacts of which are detrimental to the ability of farms and ranches to operate and the availability of agricultural infrastructure.
- There are significant gravel resources on the property that the landowner intends to extinguish development rights to with the proposed conservation easement. Future circumstances may lead the current landowners or a future landowner to an alternative outcome absent the removal of these rights through the proposed conservation easement.

Concerns

- More specific information about development trends and the number of approved applications for non-farm uses in the area would have allowed a more thorough understanding of the rate and scale of conversion to non-farm use threatening the region's working lands and this property specifically.

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- A conservation easement is the proposed property interest to be acquired, which is an appropriate legal tool in this instance. The applicant is using the OWEB conservation easement template. The proposed easement creates agricultural, building envelope, and habitat management zones, each with its own permitted uses and restrictions, which is a good framework for this kind of easement.
- The Wahl family recently consolidated ownership of the land from a partnership composed of eight siblings to an Oregon limited liability company, via a bargain and sale deed recorded on November 16, 2022, with instrument number 2022-03959. This is a positive step because it unified the ownership group into one single entity. The AmeriTitle preliminary title report from September 7, 2022 does not include this change, since it predates the conveyance.
- There are no access issues. The property has access via McKenzie Road, a public road, which connects to US Highway 101.
- There are no apparent boundary issues with the property.
- There are six certified water rights on the property, five being for irrigation. The irrigation rights totaling 401.9 acres currently are leased at no cost for instream use with the Oregon Department of Water Resources. The instream lease is renewed every five years. The sixth water right is for livestock use. The conservation easement allows WRLT to act to retain the validity of the water rights if the landowner fails to do so. If this were the case, WRLT's preference would be to continue the instream lease with OWRD.

Concerns

- The estimated easement purchase price of $10,000,000 lacks substantial justification, raising concerns as to whether the appraisal will support the expected purchase price. This concern was raised during the review of the project in a previous application to OWEB's land acquisition program and the current application still lacks sufficient detail regarding the foundations for the purchase price and the landowner's commitment if the appraisal results in a lower value.
- The overall mechanics of the transaction and the partnership between Wild Rivers Land Trust and The Conservation Fund are uncertain. While it is not uncommon for a project not to have a transaction agreement at this stage, the expectations and obligations of each party is unclear, including the obligations of the landowner. It is unclear whether the applicant, Wild Rivers Land Trust, or The Conservation Fund will be the initial grantee of the conservation easement, or if The Conservation Fund intends to transfer its interest in the conservation easement to WRLT, necessitating a conveyance agreement, and additional title insurance.
- Uncertainty exists surrounding the nature of rights and ramifications of a historic colonial burial site present on the property. The issue is not thoroughly explored in the application materials and is a concern that was raised in a previous application to OWEB's land acquisition program. A quiet title action, as identified in the application, may not be sufficient to settle the issue and additional due diligence and legal analysis is needed to determine the extent of the issue and the application would have benefited from a detailed path toward resolution to provide confidence that the issue can be resolved in the 18-month OWEB timeline.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The property is part of a century farm that has been in the same family since 1874. Over the years it has supported various agricultural operations, changing overtime as the landowners/operators have responded to changing market conditions. The land has supported the farm business, contributed to the local economy by providing jobs, and contributes to the scenic quality of the southern Oregon Coast. The property hosts significant natural resource values, including productive agricultural soils, habitat reserves that include riparian areas along the Elk River and tributary streams, coastal bluffs, forests and wildlife ponds. The Elk River is a significant source of Coho salmon habitat, with Cedar and Swamp Creeks (both on the property) offering high quality overwintering and rearing habitat. The property also hosts one-third of the Elk River estuary.

There is significant threat of conversion given the pressures facing large oceanfront landowners on the southern Oregon coast. There is significant potential for land division and the current zoning allows several uses that would have negative impacts on the significant agricultural and natural resource values – including certain divisions and residential uses as well as destination resorts, landfills, and aggregate exploration and extraction. The easement will prohibit the development of more than one residence, and the restrictions on subdivision will also function to maintain and protect the connectivity of habitat across the working land, facilitating ongoing compatible management and restoration opportunities due to unified ownership throughout the stream channels. The proposed easement is not designed with affirmative obligations to continue farm uses, but agricultural productivity is built into the purpose and supported by the restriction of non-agricultural uses.

Given the uncertainty over the suggested easement value, it is unclear whether the landowner would accept a purchase price below the amount proposed in the application. Even with the NRCS funding and if awarded OAHP funding, the project will have a funding gap of $1,200,000, intended to be raised through a private fundraising campaign, details of which are not identified. The mechanics of the transaction are not clearly described, including whether The Conservation Fund or Wild Rivers Land Trust will initially purchase the conservation easement and the rights and obligations of the two parties under this grant proposal and the project mechanics in general. Further complicating the transaction is lack of clarity regarding the status of title to ½ acre referenced in a historic deed as the site of a historic grave.

Overall, the project presents a significant property for agricultural and natural resources values, facing well documented threat of fragmentation and conversion, and a proposed conservation easement that would address these issues. The working land in the proposal is significant in scale, in its contribution to the working landscape of its region, and for its natural resource values. The proposed conservation easement protects the resources, facilitates ongoing viability of the agricultural operation and sustains the viability of the property for agriculture.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7106-22616	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	Aspen Valley Ranch – Rim Tract		
Applicant:	Deschutes Land Trust		
Region:	Central Oregon	**County:**	Crook
OWEB Request:	$286,280	**Total Cost:**	$701,021

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The proposed Aspen Valley Ranch, Rim Tract Conservation Easement (Project) is located in Crook County near Post, Oregon. The Project sits among other large ranches and public land in an undeveloped valley, consisting primarily of upland rangeland and valley-bottom cultivated farmlands, stretching from Post to Paulina, OR.

This valley is an important wildlife corridor for pronghorn antelope, Rocky Mountain elk, and mule deer and includes critical winter range for the latter two species. Native sagebrush uplands also provide important greater sage grouse habitat, and the Project includes one known lek site. The Nature Conservancy's report on Resilient Terrestrial Landscapes has identified most of the Project as "resilient private land," supporting moderate to moderate-high Topoclimate Diversity, which provides high resiliency in the face of climate change.

The area around Aspen Valley Ranch has been subject to conversion and fragmentation pressure for many years due to its proximity to Prineville and the relatively low proportion of private lands in Crook County. Evidence of this includes a residential subdivision, which lies a couple of properties to the west of Aspen Valley Ranch, and an increase in low-density residential development from the division of larger ownerships.

Protection of this area from development is crucial to protecting habitat connectivity between the Ochoco and Maury Mountains and maintaining Crook County's agricultural community. The Land Trust proposes to work with Aspen Valley Ranch, LLC to implement a conservation easement on 3,907 acres of Aspen Valley Ranch, known as the Rim Tract. This Project is the second phase of a four-phase project that seeks to place a conservation easement over the entire Aspen Valley Ranch. Phase I, the Butte Tract, was completed in 2019.

Project partners include Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, ODFW, Crook County SWCD and the Crooked River Watershed Council.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the project's technical review team, and OWEB due diligence contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND; EASEMENT SPECIFICS

Summary of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement is 3,907 acres of undeveloped rangeland situated in the Post-Paulina corridor, which contains some of the most intact large ranches and farms in the region.
- The property is near or adjacent to other protected working lands and federally managed natural resource land (USFS), contributing to a conservation and agricultural foothold in the Post area.
- The property is within an important travel corridor for multiple species of concern including pronghorn and rocky mountain elk, and provides winter range for mule deer and elk.
- The property is one of the northern most extents of remnant sage grouse habitat and provides a large, intact tract of legacy sage brush stands.

Concerns

- On its own, the acreage in this proposed conservation easement is on the low end of what is needed to independently support a cattle operation.
- The extent to which sage grouse currently utilize the property has not been documented.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- The application describes a proposed conservation easement that would prohibit or restrict subdivision of the property, reducing the potential for fragmentation of the working landscape.
- The proposed conservation easement would eliminate or restrict uses that would conflict with agricultural use, while specifically reserving rights to conduct agricultural activities, primarily those that support ongoing ranch activities and livestock grazing.
- The proposed conservation easement will reduce the fragmentation of the 3,700+ acres within the proposal, adding to the connectivity between neighboring ranches with strong wildlife habitat values (Bonneview Ranch, Shotgun Ranch and the Nature Conservancy's Juniper Hills Ranch), contributing significantly to the aggregated amount of land available for ongoing rangeland use.
- The property is adequate in size to support ranching and has soils consistent with maintaining forage coverage, providing the foundation for ongoing viability of the property for agriculture.

Concerns

- The property's agricultural utility is significantly benefited by its inclusion in a larger ranching operation and landholding, but the larger project is designed in a manner that essentially places four individual easements on the 15,696-acre ranch, potentially complicating management beyond the proposed easement's first-generation landowner.
- Infrastructure supporting the property is located outside the proposed conservation easement area, which may result in this property being isolated from vital infrastructure. This may impact long-term viability of the land to support profitable agriculture.
- Additional agricultural uses that may be conducted on the property are not discussed, and the limited water resources, topography, and soils may limit the land's ability to provide more than forage for livestock. This could reduce the viability of the operation if raising beef cattle is no longer economical and other agricultural uses are not supported.
- The proposed conservation easement does not empower the land trust to require ongoing agricultural use of the property.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The property is within mapped mule deer, sage grouse low density, and pronghorn winter ranges, and is host to habitat for other sage brush obligate land birds like the sage sparrow and sage thrasher.
- The proposed conservation easement will reduce or remove risk of conversion and fragmentation of the wildlife habitat on and around the property, aiding in maintaining and protecting plant and wildlife habitat and migration corridors. The property adds to the connectivity between neighboring ranches with strong wildlife habitat values (Bonneview Ranch, Shotgun Ranch and the Nature Conservancy's Juniper Hills Ranch), and the Ochoco National Forest and the Maury Mountains, providing important wildlife connectivity from higher elevation to lower elevation habitat types.
- The proposed conservation easement supports the implementation of the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS), by maintaining high priority patches and improving habitat connectivity.
- The continued use of the property as rangeland supports the sagebrush habitat present on the property through the grazing practices described in the proposed management plan. The applicant states the management plan will specifically include a grazing plan that includes utilization of rotational grazing, a practice that aids the maintenance of native vegetation communities.
- This property has been actively involved with ODFW, NRCS, and Crook SWCD projects aimed at enhancing the landscape for ranching and wildlife by restoring thousands of acres of habitat through removal of western juniper and improving springs. Much of the restoration work that has been completed is compatible with the Management Objective identified in Ochoco National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and/or best available science and guidance.

Concerns

- The application lacks detail regarding the interaction between the proposed easement and the management plan, and the extent either will address the interaction between allowable agricultural practices and wildlife and plant conservation values.
- The application describes several significant botanical resources on the property, but the specific vegetation objectives, other than those related to forage, are undefined and will need to be further established if a purpose of the project is to maintain botanical diversity.
- There is a gap along the Crooked River between Phase 1, protected in 2019, and the proposed project area that could result in fragmentation of management objectives if future conservation projects in that area do not come to fruition.
- The application lacks detail on whether there are goals regarding management opportunities to build climate change resiliency measures and restoration opportunities into the project area to support water quality and quantity objectives.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	Medium	High

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and

(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The property is of adequate size to support a ranching operation on its own and is adjacent to an additional 3,755-acre conserved rangeland parcel.
- The proposed conservation easement will limit subdivision and conversion of the subject property, which will ensure that the land is available for agricultural use beyond the current landowner, maintaining a large amount of acreage for continued contribution to the agricultural land base.
- Coupled with the first phase of the project, executed in 2019, the project adds significantly to the long-term availability of agricultural land in the region.
- The property's soils are not unique on their own, but support the uses highlighted on the property – the maintenance of sagebrush and grassland vegetation communities to support a variety of botanical, wildlife, and agricultural forage needs.
- The property is currently associated with an operation that has additional farm infrastructure, primarily barns and corrals, as well as the homestead. The project proposes to allow limited infrastructure on the proposed easement, specifically a corral. This supports maintaining an unfragmented and unobstructed landscape for use by livestock and wildlife.
- The project has a grazing permit on the Ochoco National Forest which has an Annual Operating Management Plan and identifies the number of head of livestock they are allowed to run on the public lands. This plan also provides cumulative value to the project area and increases the value of the agricultural operation beyond just the capacity of the project area, supporting the economic viability of the operation.

Concerns

- The property marginally meets the threshold of acreage needed to support a viable ranch operation on its own.
- The proposed easement does not guarantee that the property will remain in agricultural use (i.e., potential wildlife habitat), though it does make ongoing agricultural use more likely because of the restrictions of land management activities.
- Drought conditions may present a challenge to maintaining forage production. Future drought conditions remain uncertain. The property is in a water-limited landscape, given the general climate, persistent drought in eastern Oregon and lack of water rights. Continued increase in aridity may limit the landscape's potential for sustaining cattle.
- The 'developed springs' and other stock ponds on the easement are an unreliable source of water. This could mean the producer will need to rely on transporting water into various pastures for the cows.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	Medium	High

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)

(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;

(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;

(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;

(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and

(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- Deschutes Land Trust (DLT) is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance which means they have met the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.
- DLT stewards over 8,000 acres of land in conservation easements, demonstrating a commitment to, and a track record of, following best practices for conservation acquisitions, land and easement stewardship, and organizational and financial governance.
- The applicant has a proven track record of accomplishing conservation transactions and demonstrates a general approach to funding conservation easement stewardship that is typical of land trusts of its size.
- The land trust utilizes Terrafirma Insurance, which provides support for the legal defense of a conservation easement up to $500k for each claim.

Concerns

- The applicant does not describe in the application whether conservation of agricultural land is in its organizational mission, vision, or other organizational documents.
- The application is inconsistent regarding the expected annual stewardship obligations and associated costs. The narrative describes an annual cost reasonable for an easement of this nature, though the uploaded documentation is possibly for a project other than the subject and would be substantially higher for the project described in the application.
- Clarification and additional detail is necessary to determine that the land trusts stewardship fund is maintained in a manner that is not outpaced by its stewardship obligations.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;
(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;
(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;
(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals;
(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and
(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The project budget demonstrates a diverse funding stream, with multiple public and private partners contributing financially to the purchase of the conservation easement.
- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement.
- The proposed easement is intended to build on the conservation of 3,755 acres of land protected with a conservation easement in 2019 by the same landowner and in the immediate vicinity. The proposed project is considered the second phase of a four-phase project, eventually resulting in the conservation of the full 15,000 deeded acres owned by the current landowner.
- The applicant demonstrates the project's consistency with Crook County's approach to Statewide Planning Goal 3.
- The land trust refers to the project area as their Post-Paulina focus area and continues to actively discuss conservation projects with neighboring landowners. The applicant suggests that continued success with this landowner will demonstrate the value of working lands conservation, which could lead to additional projects in the area.
- The property in the proposal has historically received funding from both state and federal entities to accomplish important restoration goals and objectives and sets an example for neighbors in the watershed to do similar work.

- Based on ongoing conservation initiatives, such as the Mule Deer Initiative, the project provides a platform to continue to leverage additional conservation dollars.

Concerns

- There are no current plans to develop a Conservation Management Plan as described in the OAHP.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The application describes that the local community is knowledgeable of the land trust's relationship with the landowner and its plans for additional conservation in the Post-Paulina area.
- The applicant states it is unaware of any opposition to the project outside the general opposition to public funding to acquire any interest in property.

Concerns

- The long-term benefits of additional investments and any negative impacts along with ways to mitigate them were not described in detail. The applicant did not conduct significant local outreach related specifically to the project, resulting in limited knowledge of any potential impacts to neighboring lands. The application does not identify any impacts the easement would have on owners or operators on neighboring lands and the land trust did not discuss any attempts to determine impacts.
- The land trust did not discuss any attempts to determine impacts and states that they did not do any community engagement around this proposed project.
- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the applicant does not describe efforts to address impacts.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- The property is located within Crook County which experienced the greatest percentage of population growth in central Oregon in 2021. This increased population growth poses a risk of potential loss not only of working lands for agriculture but also the benefits they provide to wildlife dependent on upland habitats.
- Low density residential is the most prominent type of development in the area, which contributes to disruption of neighboring farms. A nearby low-density residential subdivision demonstrates the development trends in the area and provides an example of an alternative trajectory for this property without permanent protection.
- A significant amount of the Crook County is in public land ownership, leaving less land available for development, putting greater pressure on the remaining private landowners.
- While the current landowner does not currently have any intention of subdivision or conversion, it can be assumed that the trends in the county and region could extend to the property if under a different ownership or if the current landowner were presented with need/desire to liquidate any of their land.
- There are multiple uses (solar energy, wind energy, solid waste facility, etc.) allowed on the property under current zoning that could negatively impact the viability of the property for agriculture and negatively impact water quality and wildlife habitat.

Concerns

- The proposal references the “sage brush subdivisions” in the form of Riverside Ranches and Paulina Ranches as evidence of the potential future for Aspen Valley Ranch without the proposed conservation easement. These subdivisions, however, were prior to the establishment of land use planning in the area and the property’s current zoning is much more restrictive.
- There is a lack of detail regarding the present trends of development in the area and specific threats to the property.

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- The transaction mechanics appear to be relatively sound, though specifics of the transaction itself, beyond the proposed conservation easement terms, were not provided.
- The applicant provided a copy of an offer to the landowner, which describes the financial terms of the proposed conservation easement, but specifically states it is not a binding commitment by either party, rather a description of intent. A binding commitment will be required as part of OWEB’s standard funding conditions incorporated into the grant agreement if the project is awarded funding.
- There are no access issues with the property. A significant portion of the eastern boundary of the property borders Newsome Creek Road, which is apparently a public road that connects to State Highway 380. According to the applicant, the property has four points of legal access via Newsome Creek Road.

Concerns

- The land trust states that the Phase I easement on the Aspen Valley Ranch was used to estimate the proposed purchase price, since that portion of the ranch is similar in character to the subject property. Whether the final appraisal will support the purchase price is uncertain.
- There are multiple individuals holding severed mineral rights on the property. The applicant provided a preliminary title report from January 11, 2007 (Title Number 0080054), and based on the tax lots listed, it is unclear if it includes all or more than the subject property. Two title exceptions pertain to oil, gas, and other mineral rights granted or reserved to the individual holders recorded in deeds in multiple deeds from 1955, 1958, 1968, and 1974, respectively. Title Exceptions 22 and 23 are statements of a claim of mineral rights in two recorded deeds in 1990. The application does not include the corresponding exception documents. An updated PTR and title exception documents for the subject property need to be provided. The status of these mineral rights and their impacts on the conservation purpose of the conservation easement is unclear. The resolution of these outstanding rights, through quitclaim deeds or a remoteness evaluation, may be cumbersome and time consuming, delaying closing of the transaction.
- The 2007 title report shows a conveyance of a timber deed in 2004, which presumably severed the timber rights to a portion of the property. More information is needed to understand if and how this affects the agricultural operations on the subject property.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The 3,907 acres of Aspen Valley Ranch in this proposal, known as the Rim Tract, is part of a larger ranching operation that sits within a mosaic of federally managed lands and other conserved working lands. The property contributes to the region’s agricultural landscape and builds upon previous conservation investments targeted at preserving agricultural spaces while protecting habitat for species of concern – primarily the greater sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and mule deer. The property has the foundations of a productive range property – soils capable of growing forage for livestock – and is large enough to support a viable ranching operation. The property provides an important corridor between high quality habitat for multiple plant and wildlife species. There is a moderate level of threat of conversion to non-farm uses, either residential or extractive uses such as mining or energy development.

By restricting future subdivision and eliminating uses incompatible with agriculture, the proposed conservation easement would protect the ability of the property to remain viable for agriculture into the future. The viability of the property for agriculture on its own is somewhat limited by its size and lack of infrastructure. Water scarcity may prove a limiting factor to viability if extended drought occurs into the future. The application does not discuss a mechanism for the land trust to intervene if agricultural use is no longer employed on the property, and the draft easement does not include detail on this issue.

The restriction on subdivision and uses incompatible with agriculture will also protect and maintain the significant wildlife and other natural resource values present on the property. This will maintain the property in a condition that will continue to contribute to significant habitat connectivity, supporting the implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and other natural resource plans in the area. The proposed easement will incorporate a management plan that will address grazing impacts and other management objectives, though the amount of detail in the management plan outline did not provide sufficient information to understand the applicant's approach to vegetation management beyond forage production. The project area itself provides important habitat connectivity between public and private lands, for mule deer migration, elk and pronghorn, and several other wildlife species, and the proposed conservation easement would guarantee it continues to do so. Overall, the project area has been a key area for providing habitat connectivity between public and private land and has been instrumental in maintaining and restoring shrub steppe and bunchgrass ecosystems.

The property is situated among other large ranches within the Post-Paulina Valley and in conjunction with other protected working lands, will contribute substantial acreage to the agricultural land base. The suitability of the soils, slope and water availability for growing forage supports livestock production—a critical component of the ranching economy in the region.

Deschutes Land Trust (DLT) is an experienced entity with a significant track-record in implementing conservation land acquisitions in Central Oregon since 1995. To date, DLT has conserved 8,900 acres through fee title acquisition and 8,200 acres through conservation easements. DLT is also accredited by Land Trust Alliance, which means DLT has met the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence. Overall, the transaction appears to be a relatively standard conservation easement transaction, though there is a lack of detail regarding the transaction document itself and the draft conservation easement appears to be a draft of the easement executed in Phase 1 of the project. There are no concerns regarding access to the property or boundary issues, but further title examination is needed to fully understand the exceptions to title relevant to the subject parcel and any potential impacts to the agricultural and habitat uses of the property. The mineral interests, as evidenced by the preliminary title report submitted by the applicant, are complex and include reservations held by the federal government, and more importantly, interests severed and conveyed among private individuals. Further evaluation and explanation are needed to fully understand the risks associated with these rights and the potential avenues for resolution.

The proposal presents a diverse funding plan for the transaction itself, demonstrating an ability to leverage multiple funding sources to fund the purchase price. The project builds on multiple other conservation investments in the region, including restoration, land preservation, and enhancements to the agricultural infrastructure. The applicant's approach to stewardship funding calculations is reasonable, though the accompanying documentation to support the figure needed to administer the easement is confusing and does not appear to apply to this project. The applicant did not describe its approach to funding the stewardship need for this conservation easement, only its general approach to funding stewardship needs across its conservation portfolio.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7100-22521	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	Seely Farm Phase 1		
Applicant:	Oregon Agricultural Trust		
Region:	North Coast	**County:**	Columbia
OWEB Request:	$276,297	**Total Cost:**	$429,896

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The Seely Farm Phase 1 conservation easement project is located in Clatskanie, Columbia County. This conservation easement project will permanently preserve 385 acres of high value farmland and keep it in active agricultural management. The property is located within the Beaver Drainage Improvement Company's operating region and has well-maintained infrastructure and sufficient water rights to ensure ongoing agricultural use.

The Seely Farm, like many neighboring properties, is threatened by rezoning of local farmland to industrial use by Columbia County. This project area is adjacent to Port Westward, which has been a prospective site for coal export terminals, oil-by-rail trans shipment facilities, a fracked gas-to-methanol refinery, and - currently - a biofuel refinery and export terminal. Each of these development proposals and associated rezones have been hard fought by the local farming community due to concerns of direct and indirect negative impacts on farming and water management on the lands surrounding Port Westward.

In addition to ongoing production of agricultural products, this conservation easement will protect the habitat of the Lower Columbia white-tailed deer, a Federally-threatened species, and numerous avian and amphibian species of state concern listed later in this application. The property also contributes to the network of protected lands in the lower Columbia River region of the Pacific Flyway used by 150,000 migrating shorebirds for migratory and breeding habitat. Oregon Agricultural Trust is the project manager and will be the long-term conservation easement holder.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the project technical review teams, and soundness review from OWEB due diligence contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND

Summary of staff's assessment of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement is 385 acres, which is about seven times larger than the average farm in the area and will serve as an anchor for future conservation easement projects on nearby farms.

- The property has unique, highly productive soils with high biomass. The high capability of the soil coupled with drainage infrastructure and available irrigation water enables the property to produce high value commodities such as mint, blueberries, and cattle. Climate change may increase the "growing degree days" making the site suited to a wider range of intensive crops in the future.
- Approximately 2,700 acres of land in the area is serviced by the Beaver Drainage Improvement Company which maintains infrastructure utilized to manage excess water during periods of high precipitation and provide irrigation water during the dry summer months. All farms in the area are interconnected to the system. The property is a significant land base within that system, supporting the ongoing functionality of the District, facilitating this and adjacent land to continue producing agricultural products.

Concerns

- The Port of Columbia County has purchased ~830 acres of PA-80 land (a zoning designation of Primarily Agriculture, meaning an agriculture district with a minimum lot or parcel size of 80 acres) to add to its Port Westward Industrial Park, which totals 1,700 acres adjacent to the Seeley Property. That would remove 15% of the 5,800-acre irrigation District from agricultural zoning and potentially challenging the Beaver District's capacity to manage for agriculture and likely remove more land from agriculture with a large mitigation requirement within the District. If agricultural land continues to be transitioned to other uses within the irrigation district, the district itself may struggle to function, eliminating much of the drainage and water management capacity benefitting the property in this proposal.
- There is little evidence specific to this property provided in the application regarding the significance of natural resource values associated with fish and wildlife habitat – specifically the Columbia white tailed deer, which is identified by the applicant as a species of concern that has been identified on the site.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement would reduce subdivision of the property, allowing one division rather than the four potentially allowed under the current zoning, maintaining a larger than average acreage in agricultural use. This reduces fragmentation of the property itself, but also can help support ongoing agricultural use of neighboring land by continuing the pattern of land use that supports farm uses over a large area.
- The property has high productivity soils, ample water resources and infrastructure—all of which support the long-term potential viability of the property for agriculture.
- The applicant mentions that the easement would allow the owner to reduce their debts and reinvest in the operation, supporting the ongoing economic viability of the operation.
- The proposed conservation easement protects this property from conversion to uses other than agriculture, which helps the Beaver Drainage District remain viable as an entity. Otherwise, the District may not be able to adequately maintain the water management infrastructure that supports the agricultural production on the land, resulting in increased pressure on neighboring properties to convert to non-agricultural uses, fragmenting the agricultural landscape in the area.
- The proposed conservation easement utilizes affirmative obligations to maintain agricultural use on the property, triggering intervention if agricultural use ceases on a significant portion of the property for a duration of 3 years. The land trust (OAT) also includes easement provisions that provide them with a right of first refusal and the option to purchase at agricultural value, as well as the right to lease the land to resume agricultural use. These provisions, if activated by the land trust (the easement provides the right but not the obligation for the land trust to activate these provisions) significantly increase the likelihood that the land will remain in agricultural use regardless of the landowner. It also encourages any future transfer of ownership to be to an agricultural operator.

Concerns

- Limited subdivision of the property will be allowed under the terms of the easement, but there is not sufficient detail in the application to determine where and what any resulting property configuration will be if the right is activated and the resulting impacts on the agricultural values.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement would keep highly productive agricultural soils, that also contribute to water filtration and microbial habitat, from being converted to non-agricultural use.
- The proposed conservation easement would maintain the status quo for wildlife natural resource values on the property through guaranteeing continued agricultural uses. Maintaining agricultural conditions on the site would provide greater habitat and water quality opportunities for many bird and mammalian species, including the federally endangered Columbia white-tailed deer, as compared to the impacts that may result from industrial or residential developments.
- The property is within the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy Columbia River-Blind Slough Swamp Conservation Opportunity Area. This COA encompasses the Julia B Hanson Refuge for Columbia white-tailed deer and Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge, the lower Columbia River region of the Pacific Flyway and is important to migratory and wintering waterfowl. The Federally endangered Lower Columbia population of the Columbia white-tailed deer has been observed in the area. The proposed conservation easement would maintain the property in open space, providing a larger contribution to the connectivity of wildlife habitat for terrestrial and avian species than residential or industrial use.

Concerns

- There is a lack of detail regarding the project's potential impacts on water quality and how the proposed conservation easement may mitigate or exacerbate those impacts, given the ample surface water resources present on the site.
- The application does not address the extent to which the proposed conservation easement would address Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program goals.
- As open space, the property provides habitat connectivity, but lacks high-quality habitat itself for Columbia white-tailed deer, migratory birds, and aquatic species.
- Columbia White tailed deer, specifically the Columbia River Distinct Population Segment (DPS) is strongly associated with riparian habitat along the lower Columbia, and habitat fragmentation due to agricultural and residential development is specifically called out in the Oregon Conservation Strategy as a limiting factor for habitat. The OCS recommended actions regarding Columbia White tailed deer, are to restore and manage floodplain wetlands and tidal wetlands. The application does not address how the project will benefit the species other than the continued availability of open space provided by the agricultural use at the current level. Specifically, there is little detail to demonstrate that the agricultural practices will not conflict with this habitat and there is nothing presented that demonstrates how the applicant intends to balance potential conflicting goals regarding the agricultural use and the habitat needs for the deer.
- The application, the draft of the proposed conservation easement, and the management plan outline lack sufficient detail to determine the extent to which the landowner and applicant are committed to a conservation easement that will maintain the natural resource goals presented in the application – primarily regarding livestock stocking rates, perimeter and cross fencing, and promotion and maintenance of riparian buffers.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and
(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The property has ample water, productive soils, mild topography and is well suited to a variety of high-value crops. The property could support a variety of agricultural products—including short-term high value crops (vegetables or other) and livestock grazing.
- Cattle (beef and dairy) from the Beaver Drainage District area have historically been important to the region. The current cattle operation is revitalizing this use under management that appears sensitive to the challenges of maintaining a grazing regime that supports the unique soil and water resources considering the high organic content in the soil, high water table and substantial annual rainfall leading to high amounts of surface water throughout the seasons.
- The sub-irrigation available on the property produces high rates of spring through fall forage growth, leading to high rates of weight gain of grazing cattle and the ability to grow winter feed.
- The proposed conservation easement would strengthen the viability of the subject operation and helps maintain the land base of farming operations within the drainage district, where a critical mass of "members" is needed to maintain the District as a functioning entity providing water management critical to all agricultural operations within the drainage district.
- The property is part of the largest agricultural land base in Columbia County and is a buffer between the industrial ownership of the nearby Port and the surrounding agricultural uses. Conservation of the property as a working land will be a significant contribution to the long-term conservation of the agricultural land base.

Concerns

- Currently, the property is not growing the productive forage that is the focal point for the outcomes associated with the current management. It will take time to get the fields transitioned from the recent poplar harvest into high-quality pastures that produce the valuable soil and water quality outcomes sought by the project.
- Management limitations due to the transition from poplar plantation toward pasture establishment, such as maintaining an appropriate stocking level to not damage the soil resources, may limit the short-term income potential of the property.
- While the land is suitable to a wide variety of crops, it is isolated from the farm infrastructure in the Willamette Valley and other ag-based regions of the state. There are currently few other cattle producers in the region, limited custom operators for plowing and planting, no nearby equipment repair operations, and no nearby farm supply sources. This requires the operation to be highly self-sufficient and/or able to absorb the costs of traveling for these resources.
- The property is reliant on the Beaver Drainage District to manage its water infrastructure. If the District were to fail to operate its system of ditches and pumps, maintaining the viability of the farm would become challenging.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)
(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;
(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;
(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;
(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and
(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- Though not accredited with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the land trust implements practices like one that is eligible for accreditation. OAT also describes sound governance principles in the application.
- OAT is the only agricultural land trust working on a statewide basis. They have a staff of seven employees with extensive experience in acquiring and stewarding conservation easements for agricultural purposes. This property is within one of the applicant's specific investment zones in their Farm and Ranch Protection Plan, demonstrating that the applicant is

committed to stewarding this easement and establishing a significant foothold for agricultural conservation in the region through the successful implementation of this large project.

- The organization shows a commitment to easement stewardship by establishing a stewardship fund of $500,000 prior to the organization holding its first easements. The fund is invested and has a stated target return rate of 6%. The applicant intends to grow the stewardship fund with each easement it acquires.

Concerns

- Oregon Agricultural Trust is a relatively young land trust and does not yet hold any conservation easements.
- The acquisition of this conservation easement will significantly increase the organizations stewardship obligations, going from 0 to hundreds of acres to monitor.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;

(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals;

(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and

(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The applicant has secured a 50% funding match of for the project through the NRCS ACEP-ALE program.
- The landowners have committed to providing $16,600 to a stewardship fund for the property.
- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement.
- The project is consistent with local and state goals for environmental protection, enhancement of water quality and providing habitat for wildlife.
- The project is consistent with the Oregon Conservation Strategy and would provide an example of the benefits of utilizing long-term conservation tools.
- The project is consistent with the PA-80 ag zoning.

Concerns

- There is no Conservation Management Plan as defined by the OAHP associated with the property.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The applicant discussed the project with leadership at the Beaver Drainage District and the District expressed its support for the project.
- The proposed conservation easement on Seely Farm Phase 1 land would help protect the infrastructure necessary to support many farms in the area.

Concerns

- The applicant did not conduct significant local outreach, outside the leadership of the Beaver Drainage District, resulting in limited discussion of any potential impacts to neighboring lands in the application.
- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the applicant does not describe efforts to address impacts.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- The application clearly describes the industrial expansion nearby the property, including a biofuels refinery currently in permitting on land currently used for agriculture. This demonstrates a demand for industrial land in the area, which could eventually lead to the subject property's conversion to such use if the ownership changes or the goals of the current owners change. The adjacent landowner, the Port of Columbia County, recently signed a 30-year lease with an organization to develop a biofuels refinery on property adjacent to the Seely property.
- Columbia County supported the increased development of the Port Westward facility by approving the rezoning of 837 acres owned by the Port from Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) to Resource Industrial Planned Development. This demonstrates a trend toward elevating non-farm uses on agricultural lands.
- There is land in the area that will likely generationally transition in the next decade. The presence of larger blocks of land are important for many of the crops that fit this area.
- While the PA-80 zoning provides some level of security from fragmentation, there is the potential for the property to be divided into up to four separate parcels, each with a homesite, if the appropriate development standards are met.

Concerns

- The urgency of the development threat is unclear, as there are no immediate proposals to rezone the property outside of agricultural land designation.

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- The overall approach to the conservation easement is sound. In addition to keeping the land in agricultural use and limiting subdivision to one additional lot with a residence, the easement also grants OAT the right to lease the property for an agricultural purpose if it is unused for agriculture by the current and future owners.
- There is a deed of trust that will need to be subordinated to the proposed conservation easement and the applicant states the financial institution is willing to do so.
- There are no apparent boundary issues.
- There are no apparent access issues, though access rights across the unencumbered section of the landowner's property may be necessary to have access to the easement area.

Concerns

- The draft conservation easement accompanying the application is confusing, particularly in relation to the required NRCS terms that are attached as an exhibit to the document. The proposed conservation easement will need substantial revisions prior to OWEB approval.
- The applicant used a general formula to estimate the purchase price, which may not be supported by an appraisal.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The property is 385 acres of farmland with uniquely productive soils in the lower Columbia River drainage that is part of a larger farm operation and the first phase of an expected 1000-acre conservation project. The property is an agricultural anchor in the area, particularly because of its contribution to maintaining the land base within the Beaver Drainage District, which provides crucial water management services to a significant amount of farm operations in the immediate region. Ongoing interest of the nearby Port of Columbia to purchase and rezone land to industrial uses indicates a trend toward conversion to non-agricultural uses in the area and puts pressure on the property and adjacent agricultural operations.

The property contributes to an overall network of open space and habitat sites in the vicinity. There is limited wildlife habitat directly onsite, though the property is part of a network of open space utilized by Columbia white tailed deer and migrating birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway. The property has significant soil resources, consisting of prime agricultural soils with high organic matter, making them highly productive agriculturally, as well as providing water

storage capacity. The application does not contain significant detail regarding the proposed easement's approach to maintaining habitat for the Columbia white tailed deer, despite the species being identified as a significant natural resource value of the property. Specifically, there is little detail to demonstrate that the agricultural practices will not conflict with this habitat and there is nothing presented that demonstrates how the applicant intends to balance conflicting needs regarding the agricultural use and the habitat needs for the deer.

The proposed conservation easement will reduce subdivision of the property, maintaining a larger than average acreage in agricultural use, providing important open space. This reduces fragmentation of the property itself, but also can help support ongoing agricultural use of neighboring land by continuing the pattern of land use that supports farm uses over a large area. The proposed conservation easement includes provisions that facilitate ongoing agricultural use, including affirmative requirements to maintain farm use on the property and allows the land trust to step in to facilitate that requirement. The easement will prohibit conversion to non-agricultural uses, reduce infrastructure that does not support the agricultural purposes, and eliminate uses that would have significant adverse impacts to the soil and water resources that support a productive agricultural operation.

A discussion of the interaction between the use of the property for migrating birds and the necessity to drain the land to make productive for agricultural use would have been useful to determine how the value of the property for migrating birds would be protected or maintained. The application gives a general description that the area where the property is located is important to migrating birds, but the specific use and the benefits from maintaining the property as working land are not discussed in sufficient detail to determine what impacts the project will have on this natural resource value.

More detail regarding the location and configuration of the limited allowable division of the property and the permitted residential uses, both before and after the subdivision, and a discussion on how these uses will interact with the stated goals of unfragmented agricultural land would have been helpful. The easement draft's allowable uses also include a building zone, the location and size of which is not discussed further in the application. The building zone would allow for uses such as animal feeding operations, residential, and additional infrastructure. There is limited discussion regarding these uses and the impacts to the values of the working land or the viability of the farm operation and the management plan outline does not include a level of detail to fully evaluate how the protection of the significant agricultural and natural resources will balance with these allowable uses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7105-22611	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	Pitchfork T		
Applicant:	Deschutes Land Trust		
Region:	Central Oregon	**County:**	Deschutes
OWEB Request:	$129,175	**Total Cost:**	$387,189

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The proposed Pitchfork T Conservation Easement (Project or Pitchfork T) is located in Deschutes County between the City of Sisters and community of Terrebonne, Oregon. Although the land immediately surrounding the Project remains primarily in agricultural production, it is located within a fast-growing area of the county where landownership is becoming increasingly fragmented due to its proximity to the Cities of Sisters, Redmond and Bend, the low proportion of private lands available in the County and the aging population of farmers. The Project is proximate to BLM and U.S. Forest Service managed land—including the Crooked River National Grasslands—as well as two Deschutes Land Trust Preserves (see uploaded map).

The Property is within a core wildlife migration area for elk and a declining mule deer population and is mapped as having a relatively high probability of use during migration. Although the Project is not, in isolation, sufficient to support large game, it represents a potential "foothold" or starting point for future acquisition projects that would collectively represent meaningful habitat conservation, improving impeded wildlife movement and helping to connect migrating wildlife with larger, undeveloped landscapes.

Development or fragmentation of the Project area would further impede wildlife use and migration and compromise Deschutes County's rural, agricultural community. The Deschutes Land Trust will work with the landowners to implement a conservation easement on 170 acres of Pitchfork T that would prohibit development of the property and include a management plan that prescribes regenerative grazing and farming practices, and wildlife friendly fencing. This Project is the first phase of an intended two-phase project that seeks to place a conservation easement over neighboring landowner land holdings, further enhancing wildlife habitat and agricultural communities.

Project partners include NRCS, Metolius Winter Rang Working Group, UVE.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the project technical review teams, and soundness review from OWEB due diligence contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND; EASEMENT SPECIFICS

Summary of the project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement is one of the larger agricultural tracts in the area between Sisters and Redmond that remains in primarily farm use. The average farm in Deschutes County is 91 acres and this property is 170.5 acres.
- The property has relatively senior water rights serviced by the Three Sisters Water District, which relies on modernized piping irrigation infrastructure.
- The property functions as open space that provides a foundation for the maintenance of soil resources, pasture and rangeland, and a wildlife migration corridor.
- An easement on the property could serve as a starting point for additional conservation opportunity within the area to permanently protect the corridor, connecting federal lands through private lands conservation easements, supporting the goal of the Metolius Winter Range Group – a collaborative group working to improve habitat for wildlife utilizing the winter range that overlays the project area.
- The property has the foundations for a productive agricultural operation – productive soils, water infrastructure, and access to markets. Most soils on the property are classified as "prime farmland if irrigated" indicating that any future farms will be on good soil, especially given the care and soil-centric practices by the current producers.
- The current landowners are committed to producing local food in a sustainable manner. They are involved in the community through their business selling to local restaurants and CSA members. Ensuring the property remains available for agriculture through an easement will help support the continuation of cattle production or other agricultural practices contributing to the local food economy.

Concerns

- Pitchfork T is 170 acres surrounded by fragmented farmlands, public lands, and rural housing development. Therefore, on its own, the property may be too small to independently have real agricultural significance in the area and may not provide a great amount of wildlife conservation due to its relatively small contribution to open space independent of adjacent lands.
- The property's soils are primarily dependent on irrigation for significant agricultural production.
- There is no direct access to water on the property, but it is entirely irrigated from the Three Sisters Irrigation District. Although they have an efficient system and run a water-conscious practice, water shortage and drought pose a potential threat to this property.
- Significance of the property for ungulates and as an agricultural stronghold is dependent on the acquisition of easements on neighboring lands and a complimentary management scheme across any future conservation across the landscape. This makes desirable outcomes in terms of agricultural viability and wildlife habitat dependent on factors outside the scope of this specific project, including the need for future funding.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) *The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and*
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement would eliminate any future potential to subdivide the property, prohibit conversion to non-farm uses, and reduce the amount of additional infrastructure allowed on the land. This would facilitate, though not guarantee, continued farming or ranching on the property by eliminating the right to conduct most other uses.

- The proposed conservation easement would specifically reserve the right to conduct agricultural activities, which will be further elaborated on in a management plan that will be incorporated into the conservation easement.
- The land itself has been in active production for decades, demonstrating its ability to support viable agricultural activities regardless of the operation's value-added activities. The property has the basic components needed to be viable for agriculture – productive soils, water infrastructure, and access to markets.
- The land's water rights are part of the Three Sisters Water District, which provides water through a pressurized pipe system, significantly reducing water loss due to evaporation and seepage.
- The proposed conservation easement would specifically reserve the right to conduct agricultural activities, facilitating continued use of the property for local food production, which is growing in popularity in the urban environment around Bend, supporting the viability of the farming operation.

Concerns

- If the larger conservation vision described in the application does not come to fruition, the property could become isolated open space within a relatively fragmented area. This could reduce the viability of the property for agricultural use by increasing potential conflicts with increased residential uses nearby.
- Water shortage and drought pose a potential threat to ongoing agricultural viability of this property. There is no direct access to water on the property and it is entirely reliant on irrigation water from the Three Sisters Irrigation District.
- A discussion of decision making, both during the transaction and during the LLC's ownership of the property would have provided more clarity on the commitment from the parties and the specifics of the proposed easement's administration.
- The proposed conservation easement does not empower the land trust to require ongoing agricultural use of the property.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement would reduce conversion and fragmentation of this property, aiding in connectivity between the federal land on the Deschutes River and Whychus Creek, a core migration area for large game, primarily mule deer and elk. The property is not directly adjacent to the federal land but is connected via additional open space – either pasture or rangeland.
- The project supports the goals of the Metolius Winter Range Group – a collaborative group working to improve habitat for wildlife utilizing the winter range that overlays the project area -- by connecting federal lands through conservation easements on private lands.
- The proposed conservation easement and current management practices are aligned with the Upper Deschutes Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan.
- Current management includes actions that support soil health and water quality and quantity efforts, and these actions are intended to be included in the management plan accompanying the conservation easement.

- Protecting the property from conversion, would at bare minimum, conserve the soil and have water availability benefits regardless of the management practices.
- The management plan described by the applicant would maintain flexibility for the landowner to respond to changing environments, both economic and natural, and is intended to include goals and objectives for maintaining the important natural resource values identified on the property.

Concerns

- Pitchfork T is a relatively small property surrounded by fragmented farmlands, public lands, and rural housing development. On its own, the property may not provide a great amount of wildlife conservation value to ungulates due to its size.
- The application highlights how large game species would benefit from the proposed easement but does not describe how management practices associated with the proposed easement would impact other wildlife species.
- A large portion of the property is irrigated agriculture, which contributes little to the wildlife habitat of the property beyond open space. It is unclear how the proposed conservation easement or the resulting management plan will address any potential wildlife and livestock conflicts and how monitoring will be used to identify impacts.
- The application lacks detail to support the stated effects of soil health principals and water management techniques intended to be incorporated into the management plan.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and

(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The property sits within an area of increasing fragmentation, making it part of a potential stronghold for continued availability of agricultural land within the region. This property could be a catalyst for additional conservation of nearby agricultural land.
- The operation itself is significant in its participation in a local food economy, supporting agricultural education, training new farmers, providing a canvas for research on non-conventional farming practices, and hosting farm-to-table events, along with a farm store. Much of this activity does not take place directly on the property to be conserved, but the property supports these activities by providing adjacent local ground to contribute to the operation.
- The proposed conservation easement would complement an existing, viable farm property owned and managed by the same entity, allowing for expansion of the livestock aspects of the operation. The property provides grazing land for the business's herd that is close to other aspects of the farm business, reducing reliance on leased land.
- The operation is relatively close to the communities of Redmond, Sisters, and Bend, which provide urban areas with a market for locally raised agricultural product.
- The parcel's suitability for pasture and range is supported by its productive soils and flat topography, which also help reduce the possibility of significant erosion that could degrade water quality.

Concerns

- The property is marginally large enough to function on its own as a viable agricultural operation. The conservation easement will only apply to this property, not all land utilized in the operation, and does not bind the two. The nearby property is the core of the operation, and the extent to which this property would be significant without it is not well detailed in the application.
- The conservation of this parcel is intended to be the start of a broader effort, which could make a significant contribution to the agricultural land base if successful, but if not successful would result in a small parcel isolated among rural residential uses.
- There is no direct access to water on the property, rather it is entirely dependent on water supplied by the Three Sisters Irrigation District, which transfers water from Whychus Creek. Although the current landowners have an efficient system and run a water-conscious practice, increased pressure on water resources in the area and drought pose a potential threat to this property's ongoing suitability for agriculture.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)

(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;

(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;

(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;

(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and

(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- Deschutes Land Trust (DLT) is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance which means they have met the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.
- DLT stewards over 8,000 acres of land in conservation easements, demonstrating a commitment to, and a track record of, following best practices for conservation acquisitions, land and easement stewardship, and organizational and financial governance.
- The applicant has a proven track record of accomplishing conservation transactions and demonstrates a general approach to funding conservation easement stewardship that is typical of land trusts of its size.
- The land trust utilizes Terrafirma Insurance, which provides support for the legal defense of a conservation easement up to $500k for each claim.

Concerns

- The application does not describe whether conservation of agricultural land is in its organizational mission, vision, or other organizational documents.
- The application is inconsistent regarding the expected annual stewardship obligations and associated costs. The narrative describes an annual cost reasonable for an easement of this nature, though the uploaded documentation is possibly for a project other than the subject and would be substantially higher for the project described in the application.
- Clarification and additional detail would be helpful to determine that the land trusts stewardship fund is maintained in a manner that is not outpaced by its stewardship obligations.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;
(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals;
(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and
(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The project leverages match money from the NRCS ACEP/ALE program for the purchase of the conservation easement.
- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement.
- As the first working land easement in the area, the proposed project would establish a conservation foothold in the region.
- The property's zoning is for exclusive agricultural use and the application describes how the conservation easement is consistent with the "spirit" of that zoning designation by preserving the land base for agriculture.
- The project area has a grazing permit on the adjacent Crooked River National Grassland which has an Annual Operating Management Plan and identifies the number of head of livestock allowed to run on the public lands. This plan also provides cumulative value to the project area and increases the value of their ag operation beyond just the capacity of the project area.

Concerns

- There are no current plans to develop a Conservation Management Plan as defined by OAHP.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The applicant has communicated their intentions to place a proposed easement on the property to the Metolius Winter Range Group and they have expressed their support.
- The applicant states they are unaware of any opposition to the project.

Concerns

- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the applicant does not describe efforts to address impacts. The applicant states that they did not do any community engagement around this proposed project.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- The property is in an area experiencing high population growth rates, which puts pressure on agricultural lands by attempted conversions and fragmentation of the landscape leading to conflicting uses across the geography.
- Due to the population growth in central Oregon, this property and area are highly valued in economic and development terms, with encroaching low density residential development putting pressure on the larger landholdings.
- This area, which was once a rural farming/ranching area, has become highly fragmented, impacting winter habitat and habitat connectivity.

- The area is under threat from land division, development of nonfarm dwellings, intensive recreational development and proposed rezoning of land for rural residential and recreational development.
- The applicant describes a pattern of attempted reclassification of farm zoned lands by Deschutes County. The current landowners may not have intentions of capitalizing on any potential for conversion or fragmentation of the land, as demonstrated by their commitment to the conservation easement application; however, the landscape around them suggests that future owners without such commitment may push for a change of use of the property.

Concerns

- Much of the land in this area is no longer valued as contributing to the agricultural land base due to the nature of the reduced size of the fragmented properties, suggesting a trajectory away from agricultural uses in the area that the proposed conservation easement may not be able to alter on its own**.**

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- The transaction mechanics appear to be relatively sound, though specifics of the transaction and the terms of the proposed conservation easement itself were not provided.
- The applicant submitted a copy of the offer presented to the landowner describing the financial terms of the purchase of the conservation easement. The offer does not address any additional terms relating to the transaction.
- The applicant submitted a letter of intent that includes general proposed easement terms as well as a description of the due diligence needs associated with the conservation easement. While the letter of intent is not binding, it describes the parties' intentions surrounding the basics of the conservation easement and funding needs.
- There are no access issues, there is direct access to the property from a public road.
- There are no apparent boundary issues with the property.

Concerns

- Significant follow up is needed related to title and vesting matters. The preliminary title report provided has numerous exceptions without accompanying documentation and vesting needs to be confirmed.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and social values of the working land are substantially tied to the current management practices and the business associated with the property. The property is an above average sized parcel for the immediate area and surrounded by fragmented farmlands, public lands, and rural housing development. The tract is in the northern part of Deschutes County commonly known as the Lower Bridge area. This part of the county is generally more viable for long-term agricultural operations than areas located to the south and southwest. The level of fragmentation of farmland in Deschutes County is high, and this property could represent a starting point for conservation of adjacent land, resulting in the ultimate conservation of a significant amount of pasture and range. On its own, however, the property may be too small to independently alter the trend of fragmentation and development across the region and does not provide a great amount of wildlife habitat conservation due to its relatively small contribution to open space independent of adjacent lands.

The proposed conservation easement is designed to address the most significant threats to the working lands and natural resource values on the property, eliminating the ability to subdivide and the right to conduct activities inconsistent with agricultural use. These restrictions reduce the likelihood of conversion of the property and reduce fragmentation of use across the neighboring parcels. Ultimately, the proposed conservation easement as described in the application would leave the property at baseline for ongoing agricultural use and natural resource values.

The property provides open space and connectivity between high quality wildlife habitat but doesn't provide high quality habitat itself. The soil health and water quality/quantity management practices, along with the control of invasive plant species resulting from current management practices are intended to be incorporated into the management plan accompanying the easement. The proposed conservation easement will maintain the property as open space and facilitate management that aims to build soil health and biomass for retention of carbon, water resources, and the sustained ability to grow crops.

The applicant is an experienced entity with a significant track-record in implementing conservation land acquisitions in Central Oregon for decades. The applicant is accredited by Land Trust Alliance's Land Trust Accreditation Commission, which means it has met the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence. There are no significant concerns regarding the applicant's ability to successfully complete this transaction pursuant to OWEB's requirements and timelines.

Additional detail would be useful to understand the specific path toward fully funding the stewardship need for this conservation easement, as the applicant provided only a general description of its stewardship funding approach. The approach is typical, utilizing a combination of funds from its Stewardship Fund and unrestricted funds for general operation to pay for its stewardship activities, often supplementing these funds with additional grant funding for stewardship management and restoration activities. The Stewardship Fund generates income to support annual stewardship costs. However, the current balance of its Stewardship Fund is not provided in the application, rather a general intention to grow the fund, but additional detail would have provided more confidence that the applicant is positioning itself to ensure its stewardship obligations do not outpace its funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7101-22522	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	O'Keeffe Ranch		
Applicant:	Oregon Agricultural Trust		
Region:	Central Oregon	**County:**	Lake
OWEB Request:	$277,776	**Total Cost:**	$911,549

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The O'Keeffe Ranch, LLC project is composed of 6,511 acres in multiple non-contiguous tracts around the town of Adel in Lake County. It is a Phase 1 of a hopefully 2 or 3 phase acquisition process. The properties, though technically not contiguous are connected by the O'Keeffe's grazing allotments and are part and parcel of their summer grazing strategies. The O'Keeffes are seeking a sale of conservation easement to preserve a century-old family ranching operation, and help ensure their economic sustainability for the long term by reinvesting the proceeds into further pasture, economically stabilizing the operation for the future and reducing their reliance on leased pasture.

The property is composed of high-quality native rangeland for grazing, and is significant to the conservation of sage grouse and pronghorn. It is within an area with a significant history of ranching, lying on both sides of the Warner Valley, and the town of Adel and is contiguous with resources of a high conservation concern, being near to the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge, the Fish Creek Rim and the Warner Mountains, with many other buttes, canyons, and ephemeral wetlands besides.

OAT is seeking match funding for a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Lands Easement - Grasslands of Special Significance (ALE-GSS) conservation easement, for which those matching funds have already been awarded. Parties and partners limited to the transaction would be the O'Keeffes, Oregon Agricultural Trusts, NRCS and OWEB

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the project technical review teams, and soundness review from OWEB due diligence contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND

Summary of staff's assessment of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement is comprised of large non-contiguous tracts of agriculturally and ecologically productive land that is part of a larger operation that includes federal grazing allotments, and as a unit is nearly three times the size of the average operation in Lake County. The project parcels are part of a large multi-generational operation that has demonstrated sustainable animal husbandry and land stewardship for decades.
- The parcels, especially combined with the allotments currently under the same management, are significant for the species listed, as they are comprised mostly of sagebrush rangeland with native perennial bunchgrasses—providing habitat for wildlife species of concern such as sage-grouse, pronghorn antelope, and mule deer.
- The property supports a leading ranch operation in the region that provides employment and contributes to the local social fabric of the rural community.
- The parcels represented by this project are strategically located in places that, if lost to development or converted to non-agricultural uses, would significantly fragment available rangeland, significantly altering the region's agricultural future.
- The parcels of interest rank highly for resilience to conversion and wildfire, due to the quality of management, according to the Rangeland Analysis Platform. The soil classes across the tracts are appropriate for the ongoing use as rangeland and there is little evidence of conflicting area land uses that could hinder the ability to ranch and the effectiveness of the operation. These parcels have been managed as rangeland for decades (since 1905) and contain valuable forage that support substantial agricultural productivity and wildlife habitat.

Concerns

- On their own, the seven individual tracts that make up the property are likely too small to support a viable operation independently and are dependent on off-site infrastructure.
- The property lacks access to the water needed to support a viable ranching operation independent of the infrastructure and water associated with an off-site established operation.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- Limited residential building will be allowed on the tracts (total of 2 across the entire project area), providing an opportunity for onsite residence of an operator or associated farm labor, reducing the likelihood of conversion to non-farm use and facilitating the transfer of ownership to an agricultural operator.
- The proposed conservation easement restricts uses that would allow for the conversion of the property to uses incompatible with the agricultural values.
- The proposed conservation easement utilizes affirmative obligations to maintain agricultural use on the property, triggering intervention if agricultural use ceases on a significant portion of the property for a duration of 3 years. The land trust (OAT) also includes provisions that provide them with a right of first refusal and the option to purchase at agricultural value, as well as the right to lease the land to resume agricultural use. These provisions, if activated by the land trust (the easement provides the right but not the obligation for the land trust to activate these provisions) significantly increase the likelihood that the land will remain in agricultural use regardless of the landowner. It also encourages any future transfer of ownership to be to an agricultural operator.

Concerns

- The amount of subdivision allowed across the property appears to be intended to facilitate the purchase of each tract (there are 7 tracts included in the application and the ALE Minimum Deed Terms allow for the property to be conveyed as 7 separate parcels) at an "obtainable" agricultural scale based on the average operation size (approximately 1,900 acres) in Lake County. It is unclear whether each independent tract could support a viable operation on its own, especially given the remoteness of each tract included in the project, potentially resulting in "orphaned" tracts that are not integral parts of any operation.
- The application lacks detail on the allotments that are associated with the current operation. Additional detail would allow for a more thorough understanding of how the allotments may interact with each individual parcel, since each can be conveyed and managed independently of the main operation under the terms of the easement.
- The property is to be protected as grassland of special significance under the NRCS ALE minimum deed terms, which limits the type of agriculture that is compatible with grassland, pasture, and grazing. This could be challenging if the land trust to chooses to activate its rights to require affirmative agricultural use if the most likely use, livestock grazing, becomes uneconomical.
- The application includes conflicting statements on how the goals of maintaining the property as rangeland (which is the foundation of the applicant's description of the significance of the working land) and the need for flexibility of agricultural practices will be addressed.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The project is consistent with the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy in that it sits within two Conservation Opportunity Areas and conservation easements are a recommended action in those COAs.
- The proposed easement would restrict uses of the various tracts that conflict with sagebrush habitat, which is an Oregon Conservation Strategy habitat.
- The applicant included the minimum deed terms from ACEP/ALE as part of the proposed conservation easement. The minimum deed terms limit the agricultural uses to grassland uses as defined by NRCS, including grazing, production of hay, harvest for hay and non-crop seed production, mowing, construction of fire breaks, conducting fire pre-suppression and rehabilitation activities, and conducting common grazing practices, including cultural practices.
- The project maintains habitat connectivity by limiting conversion to uses that are incompatible with the needs of the two primary species identified as significant to this proposal – sage-grouse and pronghorn. Movement and migration corridors will be more permanently protected by maintaining this land cover. Many of the project parcels are within what is currently one of the most intact and functional large scale migration corridors in the state, and preservation of this open space is critical for continued function.

- The application states the project's proposed management plan will meet the requirements of NRCS ACEP/ALE funding, which will require the grazing and other land uses to be compatible with the habitat needs for sage-grouse, specifically.
- The proposed conservation easement supports several conservation efforts and plans including the SAGECON effort and land management plans for the federal lands surrounding most of these private lands.
- The proposed conservation easement supports the protection and maintenance of the wildlife habitat on and around the property. Keeping these lands in native sagebrush habitats and protecting the mesic and meadow habitats will enhance overall habitat values with the surrounding Federal lands for not only sage-grouse and several other sagebrush obligate species, but for other publicly important wildlife species such as pronghorn and mule deer. The 233 acres of mesic habitats described in the proposals are limited within the existing landscape and are of critical importance to a host of species, but especially as brood rearing habitats for sage-grouse.

Concerns

- There are conflicting details throughout the application and the draft conservation easement regarding the easement project's approach to maintaining a predominantly native grass land cover and maintaining the sagebrush habitat type across the protected property if there are conflicting needs with the agricultural operation. The management plan outline presented does not add clarity.
- The application identifies multiple water resources present on the property, primarily intermittent streams. The application identifies the watersheds incorporated in the project area – Camas Creek and Sagehen Creek watershed, Lower Twelve Mile and Twenty Mile Creek watersheds, Piute, Fish Creel and Guano Creek watersheds. However, it does not discuss the state's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, and how, or if, the project supports the goals of the program.
- A grazing management plan is required by the federal funder (NRCS) under the grasslands of special environmental significance designation. The application and the attached outline for the management plan do not provide adequate detail to determine the extent that resources are intended to be protected, maintained, or enhanced, beyond relying on what is required by NRCS.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIGICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and

(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The landowner and their family have been managing these lands for agriculture for over 100 years. There is a strong dedication and commitment to preserving working lands and the existing ranching operation is viable and a leader in the region.
- The proposed conservation easements would solidify the rangeland grazing uses common on adjacent federal lands, increasing the long-term compatibility and viability of both land ownerships to continue as productive rangeland.
- The parcels are strategically located in places that provide access and connectivity to federal grazing lands. If one of more parcels were lost to development or converted to non-agricultural uses, it would fragment available rangeland, inhibiting the ability to move stock across the landscape, significantly altering the region's agricultural future.

Concerns

- If a parcel (or parcels) become severed from a ranching operation with infrastructure and available water, they may not be able to support a viable agricultural operation.
- The property is in a water-limited landscape, given the general climate, persistent drought in eastern Oregon and lack of water rights. Due to ongoing drought in the West, water availability may limit the landscape's potential for sustaining cattle.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)

(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;

(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;

(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;

(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and

(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- Though not accredited with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the land trust implements practices like one that is eligible for accreditation. OAT also describes sound governance principles.
- OAT is the only agricultural land trust working on a statewide basis. They have a staff of seven employees with extensive experience in acquiring and stewarding conservation easements for agricultural purposes. While this property is not in one of OAT's Investment Zone, OAT is committed to stewarding this easement and establishing a significant foothold for agricultural conservation in Lake County through the successful implementation of this large project.
- The land trust's project management staff have considerable experience implementing conservation transactions and stewarding conservation easements.
- The organization shows a commitment to easement stewardship by establishing a stewardship fund of $500,000 prior to the organization holding its first easements. The fund is invested and has a stated target return rate of 6%. The applicant intends to grow the stewardship fund with each easement it acquires.

Concerns

- Oregon Agricultural Trust is a relatively young land trust and does not yet hold any conservation easements.
- The acquisition of this conservation easement will significantly increase the organizations stewardship obligations, going from 0 to thousands of acres to monitor.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;

(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals;

(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and

(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The project is consistent with the SageCon effort and Oregon Conservation Strategy and would provide an example of the benefits of utilizing long-term conservation tools.
- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement, solidifying the efforts and many of the management strategies employed by the landowner that have been beneficial for rangeland management and sage-grouse.
- The project includes NRCS ACEP/ALE funds, which will require a grazing plan for this project, and the applicant intends to build the management strategies into the ongoing operation of the landscape.
- The project is consistent with planning goals, specifically Statewide Planning Goals 3, 5, and 6.
- The applicant is leveraging NRCS funding (75% match) and has the potential to set an example in the local area for future conservation easements.

Concerns

- There is no Conservation Management Plan as defined by OAHP currently in place for the property and the applicant states there are no present plans to develop one.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The applicant states it is unaware of any opposition to the project.

Concerns

- The long-term benefits of additional investments and any negative impacts along with ways to mitigate them were not described in detail. Due to landowner preference, the applicant did not conduct significant local outreach, resulting in limited knowledge of any potential impacts to neighboring lands. The application does not identify any impacts the easement would have on owners or operators on neighboring lands and the land trust did not discuss any attempts to determine such impacts.
- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the applicant does not describe efforts to address impacts. The application states that they did not do any community engagement around this proposed project.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- While significant residential development in this area is unlikely, energy development and mining are potential threats to long-term agricultural use.
- Lake County has seen an increasing trend over the last 15 years with non-agricultural development of isolated parcels, supported by the number of non-farm dwellings approved by the county. This proposal would facilitate these parcels remaining in agricultural use.
- Lake County is second only to Deschutes County in terms of the number of nonfarm dwellings approved on EFU land in Oregon. Lake County is also susceptible to large footprint energy generation development.

Concerns

- Each independent tract is part of the working-whole of the operation, and the property is already fragmented in that it sits as scattered inholdings within Bureau of Land Management ownership. Without the associated grazing allotments, each individual parcel would be isolated from the others, fragmenting the operation.
- The level and urgency of threat is poorly described in the application.
- Urgency is lower here compared to other, more desirable and less isolated locations for both residential and commercial development.

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- The approach to the conservation easement is sound, with the land trust providing for ongoing agricultural use, limiting home construction across the tracts, and limiting subdivision within the tracts. The proposed easement also grants the land trust the right to lease the property for an agricultural purpose if it is unused for agriculture by the current or legal owners.
- There are no apparent boundary issues and most of the tracts are legally described in manner that is consistent with the proposed boundary of the conservation easement. Most of the neighboring properties are owned by the federal government, presenting limited risk of encroachment on the easement area.
- There are no financial encumbrances on the property, eliminating the need for any subordination or payoff negotiations that could slow the project.
- Ownership is simplified through the consolidation into an LLC.

Concerns

- There are several mineral reservations benefitting the federal government and the State of Oregon and the risk of these rights being exercised is unclear. Obtaining a release from the State of Oregon and conducting a mineral remoteness assessment to understand the risk related to the federally held rights may delay the project.
- Access to most of the tracts will require access agreements with Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM's willingness to grant NRCS and OWEB with the needed access rights for easement monitoring purposes is unclear.
- The proposed purchase price is based on an appraisal from a California-based appraiser, who used four "After" comparable sales from California and only two from Oregon to determine the hypothetical "after" value. The development restrictions from an agricultural conservation easement in California might have a greater market value than in Oregon, based on our comprehensive land use laws. This issue will need to be addressed by the OWEB appraisal review.
- Based on the age of the appraisal, the OWEB review appraiser might request that it either be updated or replaced.
- The draft conservation easement accompanying the application is confusing and cumbersome, particularly in relation to the required NRCS terms that are attached as an exhibit to the document.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The 6,511-acre property is part of the landowner's century-old family ranching operation and supports significant agricultural values and significant contributions to habitat for sage-grouse and pronghorn antelope. The extent to which the proposed conservation easement will enhance, protect, maintain those resources lacks clarity throughout the proposal, and the level of threat of conversion or fragmentation is not well described.

The property lies on both sides of the Warner Valley and is near the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge, and amidst federal grazing lands where the landowners hold grazing allotments. The connectivity for both range uses and wildlife are unique in this part of the state and the contribution to habitat and agricultural values are significant beyond the benefits to Lake County. The property supports the current agricultural operation in providing needed summer range and provides resiliency to the impacts of climate change for both rangeland and habitat needs.

The approach to the proposed conservation easement provides flexibility in the agricultural uses, building potential, and allowable division of the property, helping facilitate ongoing use by an agricultural operator tied to the area. The proposed terms do limit the agricultural uses to those compatible with grassland – which is defined broadly – but could still be financially limiting if in the future the value of running livestock across this landscape is uneconomical. The proposed easement's allowance for the individual tracts to be sold independently of each other has both positive aspects and potential challenges. The easement terms would apply regardless of ownership, facilitating continuation of compatible uses and the ease of moving cattle across the landscape; however, each independent parcel is likely too small and isolated to support an operation on its own, requiring the parcel be tied to a larger operation or risk the piece becoming an "orphaned" parcel that is not operated in conjunction with the surrounding landscape. The agricultural values and outcomes are supported by the proposed easement's grant of rights to the land trust to require ongoing agricultural use and the right to lease the land out irrespective of the owner if agricultural use ceases for a given amount of time. This gives the land trust more certainty around the use of the property, helping facilitate coordinated management, even if under fragmented ownership.

The extent the proposed conservation easement protects and maintains natural resource values is not well described in the application, instead requiring reviewers to piece together the protections required by NRCS through its designation of the property as a grassland of special significance. The project supports implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and the Oregon SageCon effort by facilitating continued connectivity of open grassland in areas important for sage-grouse, pronghorn antelope, and other upland birds and mammals. It appears that the intent of the project is to maintain the rangeland characteristics and encourage the ongoing proliferation of sage-steppe habitat cover, but the application lacks clarity in this regard, instead asking OWEB to rely on the assumption that the NRCS requirements for easements funded through Grassland of Special Significance designation will guarantee this outcome. The management plan outline submitted with the application does not provide sufficient detail for the land trust's approach to the interaction between the natural resource and agricultural values. Without further detail, it is unclear whether the easement, even with the Minimum Deed terms and resulting management plan, will maintain the sagebrush habitat type across the protected property. The application requires reviewers to make assumptions regarding the land trust's approach to maintaining wildlife habitat across the landscape, specifically regarding the potential conflict inherent in the draft easement terms relegating natural resource and habitat values to lower status than current and potential intensified agricultural use.

The project overall is a relatively straight forward conservation easement transaction, though the terms of the transaction were not described in detail. The landowner is an LLC, though it is unclear the level of commitment of all parties and what level of agreement is needed among the parties to complete the transaction. A discussion of decision making, both during the transaction and during the LLC's ownership of the property would have provided more clarity on the commitment from the parties and the specifics of easement administration. OAT's described approach to protecting ongoing agricultural use of the property is strong. In addition to keeping the land in agricultural use, limiting home construction, and limiting subdivision of the property, the easement also grants OAT the right to lease the property for an agricultural purpose if it is unused for agriculture by the current and future owners. The main concern is having OAT prepare a conservation easement that coherently integrates the easement terms required by NRCS with OWEB's requirements for meeting the purposes of the OAHP. The draft conservation easement accompanying the application is not based on the OWEB CE template and is a bit confusing and cumbersome, particularly in relation to the required NRCS terms that are attached as an exhibit to the document.

The title shows multiple severed mineral reservations, held by the United States and the Oregon State Land Board. At the very least a mineral remoteness report is necessary to evaluate the likelihood that marketable minerals are present on the property and any potential risk to the conservation purposes of the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7102-22523	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	Ferrell, Justin and Jayna		
Applicant:	Oregon Agricultural Trust		
Region:	Central Oregon	**County:**	Lake
OWEB Request:	$223,056	**Total Cost:**	$405,615

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The Ferrell property is in Valley Falls, Oregon, immediately underneath the Abert Rim. The parcel is the home ranch parcel for the Ferrell's ranching operation and is used as winter pasture and for summer hay production. The Ferrells are interested in selling a conservation easement for multiple reasons: They would like to silence the potential speculative interest in their land created by the existence of a historic subdivision on their property, especially given their scenic location and easy road access; ensure that their land stays in agriculture for the benefit of their family and community, and to gain access to liquid capital to increase their pasturage and pay down debt, increasing the diversity of grazing opportunities and the resiliency of their ranching business in the long term.

The conservation easement is an ACEP-ALE Standard easement, intended to protect the property from conversion to non-agricultural uses or uses which may harm its potential for agriculture in the long term. The property would be used in keeping with any potential utilizable form of agriculture so long as it did not harm the long-term viability of the agricultural resources thereon.

The property has already received a 50% funding agreement from NRCS via their ACEP-ALE easement program. There are no other identified partners

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the project technical review teams, and soundness review from OWEB due diligence contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND

Summary of the project's responsiveness to the application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement is 514 acres of farmland comprised entirely of prime agricultural soils—soils of this quality, at this scale, are not common in Lake County.
- Secure groundwater rights allow the property to be one of the most productive agricultural properties in the region.

- The property can produce high quality hay/alfalfa and livestock, which are major contributors to the local economy of Lake County.
- Groundwater rights exist for irrigation on this and adjacent lands for a place of use encompassing 260 acres with a priority date of 2012 (130 acres of which is used on this property), and a further 70 acres with a date of 2016. This is not a ground water limited aquifer.
- The property is at the base of Abert Rim which is a popular sight on the Oregon Outback Scenic Highway and one of the most identifiable geological features in Lake County.
- The property provides a lower elevation location for calving, an asset to a farm or ranch in this region as it provides flexibility and a safer place for calving operations than reliance on more remote high-country areas with more extreme weather conditions.
- Though smaller than average for an agricultural property in this region, its attributes as a "home ranch" make it valuable to any operation, which could provide opportunities for other operators if the landowners no longer choose to own and manage the land.

Concerns

- The size of the property (514ac.) is smaller than the average farm in the region (1,983 acres). On its own, the acreage in this proposed conservation easement is likely not large enough independently support a viable cattle operation.
- The property on its own does not provide significant, high-quality habitat and is not adjacent to protected, high-quality habitat.
- The water right that facilitates the utilization of the prime soils for significant agricultural outputs is legally secure, but the future of groundwater and surface water availability in Lake County is uncertain given ongoing drought and changes in the water regime due to climate change.

PROTECTING, MAITAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement would eliminate subdivision rights and reduce the allowable uses to only those consistent with agricultural use of the property. These requirements together eliminate the potential for fragmentation of the working land and the likelihood of conversion to a non-agricultural use on the property itself.
- The proposed conservation easement would support the potential agricultural viability of the property by protecting the ability to farm on these high-quality soils with associated ground water rights for irrigation. Additional infrastructure onsite and within the proposed conservation easement currently supports the type of commodity produced onsite (hay and cattle) – improvements consist of a hay barn and two equipment barns, a residence, and a groundwater fed center pivot irrigation system.
- The proposed conservation easement provides for the development of additional farm infrastructure, including housing infrastructure, supporting the potential for onsite residence of the farm operator and associated farm labor.
- The proposed conservation easement would likely decrease the value of the land, resulting in a reduced tax burden on the estate. While this is highly particular to the individualized finances of the landowner, the potential for conservation easements to reduce the estate tax is generally acknowledged as a benefit of easements in facilitating transfer of ownership to the next generation by reducing the need to divide or sell the property to pay the taxes associated with settling the estate.

- The proposed conservation easement utilizes affirmative obligations to maintain agricultural use on the property, triggering intervention if agricultural use ceases on a significant portion of the property for a duration of 3 years. The land trust (OAT) also includes provisions that provide them with a right of first refusal and the option to purchase at agricultural value, as well as the right to lease the land to resume agricultural use. These provisions, if activated by the land trust (the easement provides the right but not the obligation for the land trust to activate these provisions) significantly increase the likelihood that the land will remain in agricultural use regardless of the landowner. It also encourages any future transfer of ownership to be to an agricultural operator

Concerns

- The property is half the size of average agricultural properties in the region, and the scale of protected working lands resulting from this easement may not be sufficient to alter the direction of land use in surrounding private lands.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The project meets the objectives of the Oregon Mule Deer Plan by maintaining mule deer winter range and supports the implementation of the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy by protecting open space for wildlife to move between nearby Conservation Opportunity Areas. There is considerable use by mule deer year-round, especially during winter months, and some use by bighorn sheep.
- The proposed conservation easement would maintain habitat connectivity by limiting conversion to uses that are incompatible with the needs of migrating wildlife, including the two primary species identified as significant to this proposal – mule deer and bighorn sheep. Movement and migration corridors will be more permanently protected by maintaining this land cover. Though not directly adjacent to other protected areas, the property is within a network of land managed for wildlife, sitting between Bureau of Land Management land and just north of US Forest Service land.
- The property is at the base of the Abert Rim, a prominent feature along the Oregon Outback Scenic Byway and a major part of the natural landscape of Lake County and important to the local community. The limited development allowed in the proposed conservation easement would contribute to the preservation of the view of Abert Rim as a scenic amenity for the people of Lake County and Oregon generally.
- The proposed conservation easement does not require the current agricultural use persist, but maintaining the land as 'open space', guarantees that even if farm practices change to a crop cover that is less beneficial for wildlife than its current use as forage production, the benefit to wildlife generally will be maintained by eliminating irreversible conversion and fragmentation.
- The landowner is currently implementing a conservation plan that is consistent with the goals of the state Agricultural Water Quality Program.

Concerns

- The application provides little detail regarding the approach to utilizing the management plan to support natural resource and agricultural values on the property. The application lists soil resources and big game forage as natural

resource values important to the property, but the draft easement and the nominal outline of the management plan do not provide detail on the approach to managing these values alongside agricultural values.

- The proposed easement aims at maintaining healthy sage-steppe vegetation communities beneficial to native wildlife. The proposed easement terms are flexible on type of agricultural use, which is good for agriculture, but could have impacts on the positive outcomes for mule deer and big horn sheep if the current agricultural use changes. The application is unclear how the project will incorporate wildlife values and the draft easement does not stipulate that managing for wildlife is a purpose or an independent conservation value, suggesting the benefits to these species are potential by-products of the primary purpose, which is to preserve the agricultural use of the property.
- On its own, the property may not provide a great amount of wildlife conservation value to ungulates due to its size.
- The application does not address how the proposed easement would address issues of water quality and/or quantity.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and

(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement is flat, with sufficient access, productive soils, and onsite infrastructure to support the agricultural operation. The proposed easement has flexibility for additional infrastructure and for the type of agricultural use allowed, which supports an onsite operation and the parcel's desirability as an addition to an off-site operation. The maintenance of small-scale residential use, limited in amount and location, adds to the likelihood of owner-operator management and supports potential employee housing for an operation that is primarily based off-site.
- The soils in this area are uniquely productive for agricultural purposes, with productivity potential bolstered by the existing water rights, that will continue to support the property's viability. The property is highly conducive to hay production and the proposed conservation easement would facilitate the ongoing availability of this property to contribute to this regionally significant agricultural commodity.
- Existing water rights for irrigated agriculture amplify the agricultural value of the ranch. The irrigation systems that serve the property have been or will be upgraded, which point to this operation's ability to be profitable and resilient.
- The current agricultural uses align with the agricultural operations in the surrounding area – hay production and ranching support all facets of the rural economy of southern Lake County.

Concerns

- Due to ongoing drought in the West, groundwater availability may present a challenge in the next 30-50 years if annual precipitation continues to be below average**.**
- The degree to which water rights will be incorporated into the proposed easement and associated management plan is not described in the application.
- The property is a relatively small operation by local standards, limiting its contribution to the region's agricultural land base.
- The proposal states that the influx of liquidity resulting from purchase of the proposed conservation easement will facilitate the landowner's ability to increase the operation's pasturage, an important agricultural outcome identified by the applicant; However, the income from this project may not be enough to significantly reduce the

overall debt load to the point of providing liquid capital, potentially reducing the immediate effectiveness in prolonging existing operations.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	Medium	High

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)

(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;

(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;

(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;

(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and

(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- Though not accredited with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the land trust implements practices like one that is eligible for accreditation. OAT also describes sound governance principles.
- OAT is the only agricultural land trust working on a statewide basis. They have staff of seven employees with extensive experience in acquiring and stewarding conservation easements for agricultural purposes. This property is in OAT's Chewaucan River Investment Zone, which means this portion of Lake County is a target area for the organization and presumably will be so for the long-term.
- The land trust's project management staff have considerable experience implementing conservation transactions and stewarding conservation easements.
- The organization shows a commitment to easement stewardship by establishing a stewardship fund of $500,000 prior to the organization holding its first easements. The fund is invested and has a stated target return rate of 6%. The applicant intends to grow the stewardship fund with each easement it acquires.

Concerns

- Oregon Agricultural Trust is a relatively young land trust and does not yet hold any conservation easements and does not have an established track record to demonstrate capacity.
- The acquisition of this conservation easement will significantly increase the organizations stewardship obligations, going from 0 to hundreds of acres to monitor.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;

(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals

(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and

(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The project is leveraged with federal NRCS funds in a cost-share approach to funding the purchase of the easement. There are no other funding sources identified for the easement purchase.
- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement.
- The project is consistent with planning goals, specifically Statewide Planning Goals 3, 5, and 6.
- This easement would set an example for producers in Lake County that conservation and profitable ranching are complementary. This will serve as an example for other landowners to follow.

Concerns

- There are few conservation easements within the local area and the appetite for additional conservation easements within the region is vaguely discussed.
- There is no Conservation Management Plan as defined by the OAHP currently in place for the property and the applicant states there are no present plans to develop one.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The applicant states it is unaware of any opposition to the project.

Concerns

- The long-term benefits of additional investments and any negative impacts along with ways to mitigate them were not described. Due to landowner preference, the applicant did not conduct significant local outreach, resulting in limited knowledge of any potential impacts to neighboring lands. The application does not identify any impacts the easement would have on owners or operators on neighboring lands and the land trust did not discuss any attempts to determine impacts.
- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the application does not describe efforts to address impacts. The applicant states that they did not do any community engagement around this proposed project.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- The threats are not well discussed beyond the speculative value of the nonconforming townsite plat parcels; however, general development threats have increased greatly within Lake County over the last decade and are likely in this area due to the scenic value of Abert Rim. The threat of development and non-agricultural use is also supported by the number of non-farm dwellings approved by the county and growing interest from energy facility development.
- The current threat of conversion facing this property is primarily toward subdivision into ranchette sized parcels, given the development rights associated with the parcel's zoning, usually for manufactured housing. However, the adjacency of a significant natural feature (the Abert Rim) of scenic quality and easy access off the major transportation routes in the area raises the possibility of its development for "amenity" ranch sales.

Concerns

- The urgency of the identified development threat may be lacking as compared to other, more desirable locations for residential development.
- The extent to which the elevated subdivision threat associated with the historic plat as identified in the application would be approved under current laws is tenuous.

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- The application proposes a typical conservation easement transaction; however, the transaction details are not provided.
- In addition to keeping the land in agricultural use and limiting subdivision of the property, the proposed easement also grants OAT the right to lease the property for an agricultural purpose if is unused for agriculture by the current and future owners.
- There are no access issues. The property has legal access from Abert Rim Road to US Highway 395 and State Highway 31.
- There are no apparent boundary issues with the property.

Concerns

- There are numerous financial liens encumbering the property, which will need to be either subordinated or paid off at, or prior to, closing. The status of these obligations is confusing, to the extent that it is unclear which entities need to consent to the conservation easement beyond the landowners listed in the application. Sorting this out with the multiple lenders may be a daunting and time-consuming task.
- There is a reservation by the county for mineral rights and public rights of way. The risk of these rights being exercised, and what impact they would have on the objectives of the project, is unclear.
- The draft conservation easement accompanying the application is not based on the OWEB CE template and is confusing and cumbersome, particularly in relation to the required NRCS terms that are attached as an exhibit to the document.
- The appraisal is from a California-based appraiser, who used four "After" comparable sales from California and only two from Oregon to determine the hypothetical "after" value. The development restrictions from an agricultural conservation easement in California might have a greater market value than in Oregon, based on our comprehensive land use laws. This issue will need to be addressed by the OWEB appraisal review.
- Based on the age of the appraisal, the OWEB review appraiser might request that it either be updated or replaced.
- The legal status of a mutual well agreement for irrigation is unclear, as it is not discussed in the application but does appear on the Status of Record Title documents provided by the applicant. The nature and effect of this agreement could have impacts on the water situation for the property, but more detail is required to understand the extent of those impacts.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The 514-acre property lies just east of the junction of US Highway 395 and State Highway 31 near the community of Valley Falls. It is agriculturally significant in Lake County due to uniquely high-quality soils and legally secure groundwater rights. It sits amidst a migration corridor for mule deer and other wildlife species, contributing to a network of open space between two important federal land bases. Sitting at the base of the Abert Rim, an impressive geological feature in southwest Oregon, the property contributes to the scenic view from the Oregon Outback Scenic Byway. Though relatively isolated, and smaller than the average agricultural property of its kind in the area, the protection of the property for agricultural, open space, and scenic values will contribute to the protection of the region's agricultural land base, aid in providing habitat needs for wildlife, and support the economic viability of the current and potential future operations.

Though the property is currently primarily in grass and forgeable crops, the proposed conservation easement is flexible regarding the type of the agricultural use that can be conducted on the property. This could lead to the transition away from forage crops, which would have an impact on the natural resource values identified by the applicant – primarily forage for mule deer and big horn sheep. Maintaining the property as open space, however, provides greater benefit than the alternative of irreversible conversion to energy facilities, industrial, or rural residential use. While the

property's individual contribution of benefits to mule deer and bighorn sheep specifically are relatively minor overall, the maintenance of the property's soil resources are important considerations.

The overall threat of conversion facing the property is not well documented by the applicant. In general, Lake County approves a high number of non-farm dwelling on farm properties; however, it is unclear whether the development threats described in the application are real versus hypothetical in this portion of Lake County.

Overall, the transaction presented appears sound, though there is significant financial leveraging of the property and farm infrastructure, making it challenging to determine the extent to which additional parties and institutions need to subordinate their interests or otherwise consent to the conservation easement. There are also several mineral interests that are severed from the property. The application does not describe whether measures have been taken to address these issues, other than a general statement regarding the presence of a mortgage.

The property lies in OAT's Chewaucan River Investment Zone, an area of focus for its farm and ranchland protection efforts. The zone was identified due to its high-quality soils and irrigated pasture and hay fields, which are core features of the agricultural economy in Lake County. The applicant's ongoing investment in the area supports the organization's capacity to invest in the stewardship of this conservation easement, in directing both financial assets and staff time to the area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

FALL 2022 OWEB Grant Offering

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

Conservation Covenants and Easements

Application No.:	223-7103-22597	**Project Type:**	Conservation Easement
Project Name:	Hagen Farm Conservation Easement Phase 2		
Applicant:	McKenzie River Trust		
Region:	Willamette Basin	**County:**	Lane
OWEB Request:	$289,233	**Total Cost:**	$469,223

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION [PROVIDED BY THE APPLICANT]

The 230 acre Hagen farm is located West of Junction City in Lane County, Oregon. In 2011, McKenzie River Trust completed a 61.7 acre conservation easement covering the riparian area around Ferguson Creek using a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant. The goal of this project is to place an additional 156 acre easement on the property covering the remaining riparian zone, a timber stand, and four agricultural areas resulting in 217.7 protected acres. The goal of the project is to conserve this property for a combination of agricultural use, sustainable timber production, preservation and restoration of wildlife habitat, and protection against the future fragmentation of this important wildlife anchor. The property contains significant wet prairie habitat that will be enhanced through a restoration project led by the Long Tom Watershed Council with secured OWEB funding once the working lands conservation easement is in place.

McKenzie River Trust and Ducks Unlimited have secured Willamette Valley NAWCA funding to support the purchase price of the easement but need additional funds to support our match requirement and due diligence expenses. Funding would support the purchase price of the easement as well as acquisition costs and staff time. Ducks Unlimited is administering the NAWCA grant funds. McKenzie River Trust is partnered with the Long Tom Watershed Council to implement a wetland habitat restoration project in the conservation zone of the phase 2 Easement.

REVIEW

The review below is the staff evaluation of the project based on the evaluation criteria described for conservation easement applications in OAR 698-015-0090, feedback from the project technical review teams, and soundness review from OWEB due diligence contractors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORKING LAND; EASEMENT SPECIFICS

Summary of staff's assessment of project's responsiveness to application criteria.		
Low	***Medium***	***High***

The significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land subject to the working land conservation covenant or easement. (OAR 698-015-0090(1))

Strengths

- The subject property is 156 acres of a larger 230-acre property located in the transition area between the coast range and the mid-Willamette Valley. The property contains a mix of conifer forest, a riparian area along Ferguson Creek, and dispersed agricultural fields currently used to produce hay.
- The property subject to the proposed conservation easement has the foundations for a productive agricultural operation – productive soils, water rights, and access to markets.

- The property provides habitat for several Oregon Conservation Strategy species, including Acorn Woodpecker, Western gray squirrel, Western blue bird, and fish habitat within Ferguson Creek.
- The property provides the foundation for a project that enables habitat conservation and restoration while supporting local, small-scale, family-owned farming.
- The property has senior water rights on Ferguson Creek and holds irrigation rights (OWRD Permit number S 13654) to 40 acres.

Concerns

- The property is relatively small and surrounded by fragmented farmlands, industrial timberland, and rural housing development. Therefore, on its own, the property may be too small to independently have real agricultural significance in the area.
- There is little detail provided in the application about the property's agricultural resources themselves, rather the application characterized agricultural significance in the context of threat of conversion to timber production.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING FARMING OR RANCHING ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the working land conservation covenant or easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on regionally significant working land, including: ((OAR 698-015-0090(2)(a)-(d))

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land;
(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use after the covenant or easement is in place;
(c) The potential viability of the property for agriculture; and
(d) Improving or maintaining the economic viability of the operation, including future transfer of ownership.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement will eliminate the right to divide the property, eliminating the risk of fragmentation.
- The proposed conservation easement will restrict uses on the property, including the right to convert to industrial timberland, limiting allowable uses to those compatible with the farm, forest, and wetland and riparian conservation values.
- The proposed conservation easement facilitates the ongoing use of the property for small-scale agriculture, designating agricultural reserves throughout the property.
- The property has water rights for 40 acres and suitable soils to support a variety of cropping systems—much of the property is considered prime farmland by the NRCS
- The property has the foundations to provide multiple sources of income (timber, crops, livestock) from the land which benefits the resilience of a small farm operation.

Concerns

- The application does not detail the overall acreages for the farm and conservation zones – and does not describe how different provisions for each zone will function together.
- The proposed conservation easement reduces the availability of land suitable for agricultural production and fragments the largest agricultural field. It is not clear that the remaining agricultural lands will be able to produce enough income to maintain the agricultural viability of the operation on their own.
- The application lacks detail regarding e the potential impacts to the use of the property for agriculture resulting from the conversion of the center of the southern farm field to wet prairie habitat.
- The viability of the current agricultural operation is not well described. This creates uncertainty around the property's contribution to a viable farming and/or ranching business and the extent the proposed conservation easement will impact it.
- The application does not describe why the 5 acres currently producing blueberries and figs were not included in the proposed conservation easement. This is likely the most valuable farmland asset on the property because of its superior soils, current cultivation, and its location out of the floodplain and adjacent to existing infrastructure and developed access.

- It's not clear how the Water Right Permit 13654 will be impacted by the proposed conservation easement and whether the identified locations of the agricultural and conservation zones within the proposed easement will be compatible with the existing water rights.
- The infrastructure associated with the farm operation – the primary barn, residence, and irrigation – is not included in the easement area. On-site infrastructure is important for small scale farm operations where the entire operation is contained within a single property.
- It is unclear the extent to which the proposed conservation easement will provide additional protection against conversion and fragmentation of the property because of the uncertainty surrounding the current easement's description of the area encumbered in Phase 1.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING HABITAT, WATER, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES ON SIGNIFICANT WORKING LAND

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values by: (OAR 698-015-0090(3)(a)-(e))

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the land, including soil, water, plants, animals, energy, and human needs considerations;
(b) Supporting implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, or other local, regional, state, federal or tribal priorities or plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values;
(c) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitat on and around the working land;
(d) Protecting, maintaining, or improving water quality and/or quantity; and
(e) Implementing a management plan that is likely to sustain ecological values, as evidenced by a management plan, easement or covenant terms, or inherent site condition.

Strengths

- The proposed conservation easement supports the implementation of the ODFW Oregon Conservation Strategy because the property is within the Oregon Conservation Strategy's West Eugene Area Conservation Opportunity Area. The proposed easement is structured to encourage multiple Recommended Actions in this COA, including the continued active management of restored habitats, maintaining and restoring riparian and wetlands habitat and connectivity, and protecting and enhancing oak savanna and grasslands.
- The proposed easement protects and promotes habitat connectivity for Acorn Woodpecker, Western Gray Squirrel, Western Blue Bird, and Oregon white oak, all known to exist on the site.
- The easement supports the expansion of riparian habitat along Fergerson Creek and provides the opportunity to enhance water quality downstream of the property.

Concerns

- The proposed easement may not function to protect the legacy oaks that are located within the Agriculture and Forest Zones as identified on the map included in the application. Agricultural soil disturbance and encroachment from forestry activities are a threat to these trees.
- The application does not discuss the potential impacts that may result from various forms of agriculture (will subsurface ripping be allowed or drain tiles be installed) on water quality beyond the inclusion of additional acreage in the conservation zone focusing on riparian areas.
- About a quarter mile of stream downstream from the homesite is not included in the conservation zone, limiting the connectivity of riparian habitat.
- Much of the property is floodplain. The application lacks detail regarding whether the project supports the implementation of the Ag Water Quality Management Program.

PROTECTING, MAINTAINING, ENHANCING SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL OUTCOMES OR REGIONALLY IMPORTANT VALUES

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the covenant or easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant agricultural outcomes, benefits or other agricultural or conservation values important to the region, including: (OAR 698-015-0090(4)(a)-(b))

(a) The parcel's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; and
(b) The regional significance of the agricultural operation, or its suitability based on soils, slope, location or other relevant factors, and its associated infrastructure.

Strengths

- The property has highly fertile floodplain soils across the property, and the soil types located in the agriculture zones are suitable for farming.
- The proposed easement's structure eliminates the potential of conversion of most of the highest value agricultural soils to other uses – including preventing conversion to industrial timberlands.
- The water rights available on this property are an asset for specialty crop production. If water rights and drainage are maintained and the land is not left fallow to be overtaken with invasive species, then the agricultural land has potential to be available for long-term use and contribute to the overall agricultural land base in the immediate region.
- The property supports multiple compatible uses on a single piece of land (ag, timber, conservation) and keeping the land whole allows diversification of income, thereby improving viability.
- The property is situated in an area where industrial scale farming hasn't yet pushed its way up the valley and industrial scale tree farming hasn't worked its way down from the coast range. The proposed conservation easement could be a catalyst for additional conservation of nearby agricultural land.

Concerns

- It is unclear from the application how many acres will remain available for agricultural use, including the extent to which the Phase 1 easement impacts existing farm use, making unclear whether the acres remaining for agricultural production within the proposed easement are enough to support a financially viable operation.
- Ongoing restoration planned on the property reduces the amount of land available for agriculture.
- The application does not provide enough information to determine how the specific agriculture and conservation zones will function together and the resulting impacts of the proposed conservation easement to the use of the property for agriculture.
- It is unclear in the application regarding the type of agricultural commodity that can be grown within the areas set aside for agriculture in the proposed easement and how the dispersed nature of the agricultural zones will impact the efficiency and viability of the farm operation.
- It is unclear how limitations on grazing within the conservation and forestry zones will impact the viability of the property for agriculture.
- The application is unclear as to how the proposed conservation easement impacts the ability to use existing water rights to support agricultural uses within the identified agricultural zones.
- The proposed conservation easement appears to primarily elevate protection of wildlife habitat, wetlands, and riparian values across the property, while allowing limited agricultural use. The application does not describe how this approach will lead to significant agricultural outcomes and the ongoing agricultural viability of the working land.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed easement or covenant holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a working land conservation covenant or easement, including: OAR 698-015-0090(5)(a)-(e)
(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation;
(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents;
(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation covenants and easements over time;
(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce conservation covenants and easements or other relevant projects; and
(e) The strength of the organization as measured by effective governance.

Strengths

- McKenzie River Trust is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance which means they have met the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.
- The land trust has over 7000 acres of protected land in its portfolio –in fee title and conservation easements - demonstrating a commitment to, and a track record of, following best practices for conservation acquisitions, land and easement stewardship, and organizational and financial governance. McKenzie River Trust currently has 3 FTE of stewardship staff based in Eugene, OR who are charged with monitoring easements and maintaining relationships with landowners.
- The applicant has a proven track record of accomplishing conservation transactions and demonstrates a general approach to funding conservation easement stewardship that is typical of land trusts of its size.
- The organization includes the protection of working lands in its most recent strategic plan. The applicant has demonstrated commitment to working lands on some of their other easements, which is not an easy process.
- The land trust utilizes Terrafirma Insurance.

Concerns

- The application does not describe whether and the extent to which the conservation of agricultural land is in its organizational mission, vision, or other organizational documents.
- The project includes matching funds from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, but there is little detail in the application demonstrating the applicant has a solid understanding of the method for integrating NAWCA requirements with the OAHP and OWEB requirements.

CAPITALIZING ON STATE INVESTMENTS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized, based on: OAR 698-015-0090(6)(a)-(f)

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources;

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements;

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements;

(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals;

(e) The potential for setting an example that will encourage additional working lands projects in the region; and

(f) The existence and implementation of a conservation management plan.

Strengths

- The applicant leveraged other sources of funds to support the purchase of the proposed conservation easement (38% match is demonstrated), and the proposed easement will complement an easement that is already in place.
- The project proposes a perpetual conservation easement, that is intended to build on the conservation of 62 acres of land protected with a conservation easement in 2011 by the same landowner.
- The property in the Phase 1 conservation easement has historically received funding from both state and federal entities to accomplish important restoration goals and objectives.
- The Willamette Valley is home to many diverse agricultural operations. Due to the diverse set of habitats and management zones in the proposed conservation easement, this project has the potential for setting an example that will encourage additional projects in the region by demonstrating the potential of small-scale agriculture's compatibility with fish and wildlife habitat conservation.
- Though a management plan doesn't a exist for the property, plans for habitat and wetland restoration are ongoing.
- The land trust is partnered with Ducks Unlimited and the Long Tom Watershed Council to implement the project. The easement will allow the Long Tom Watershed Council to move forward with a planned wet prairie and habitat restoration project within the newly established conservation zone.

Concerns

- There are no current plans to develop a Conservation Management Plan as defined by OAHP.
- The management plan outline is does not contain sufficient detail to understand how the agricultural and natural resource values are expected to be managed over time.
- The application does not address how the proposed project interfaces with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals.
- The proposed conservation easement results in a sizable amount of agricultural land being removed from production and fragmented across the property rather than guaranteeing the preservation and protection of the continued use of a working land for agricultural purposes. This may perpetuate the perception that conservation easements are not compatible with the ongoing use of land for viable agricultural operations.

IMPACT TO NEIGHBORING LANDS

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The impacts of the covenant or easement or the associated conservation management plan on owners or operators of neighboring lands, and the extent to which there is a plan of engagement with neighboring landowners about how to mitigate any impacts resulting from the covenant or easement, if necessary. (OAR 698-015-0090(7))

Strengths

- The proposed easement would protect the water quality and riparian habitats of Ferguson Creek in perpetuity while also contributing to the restoration and enhancement of the natural water system. This would lead to improved water quality in the local area.
- The applicant states they are unaware of any opposition to the project.

Concerns

- The applicant did not conduct significant local outreach, resulting in limited knowledge of any potential impacts to neighboring lands. The application does not identify any impacts the easement would have on owners or operators on neighboring lands and the land trust did not discuss any attempts to determine impacts.
- There is no conservation management plan associated with the project, and therefore the applicant does not describe efforts to address impacts. The applicant states that they did not do any community engagement around this proposed project.

THREAT OF CONVERSION OR FRAGMENTATION

Low	*Medium*	*High*

The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. (OAR 698-015-0090(8))

Strengths

- The property is within a landscape that sits within the transition areas between industrial timberland operations and rural residential, positioning it in an avenue of potential conversion to non-agricultural uses.

Concerns

- The applicant identifies the property as within a "location near an area experiencing development growth along with recent trends of rural development [that] increase the risk for future development of the property into non-working land use." However, there is no detailed discussion or supporting documentation of such a threat provided.
- The urgency around the threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land is not well documented.
- The provisions within the Phase 1 conservation easement and the Notice of Grant Agreement related to that easement cast uncertainty on the level of division practically and legally allowed across the greater property. The description of the land that the easement pertains to within both documents is confusing and the application does not describe the impact these uncertainties have on the overall threat across the property.

SOUNDNESS OF TRANSACTION

Low	Medium	High

The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. (OAR 698-015-0090(9)

Strengths

- There are no access issues. The property has legal access from Ferguson Creek Road.
- There are no apparent boundary issues. MRT has budgeted to pay for a survey of the proposed conservation easement area, which will identify any boundary discrepancies with neighboring properties.

Concerns

- The current easement was not legally described and references to the location within the recorded document lack clarity. The applicant has contacted a surveyor to legally describe the current easement, though it is unclear whether the applicant intends to amend the current easement to reflect the clarified easement boundary and the impact the process may have on the timing of the proposed Phase 2 easement.
- In the Cascade Title Co. status of record title (SORT) report dated June 29, 2022, exception #14 pertains to a deed of trust for the benefit of U.S. Bank N.A., dated August 31st, 2021. This deed of trust will need to be subordinated to the conservation easement, which presumably the NAWCA funder will require, too.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The property in this proposal is a varied landscape with forestlands, riparian and prairie habitats, and dispersed agricultural fields. While the property supports habitat resources that represent a contribution to habitat values in the region, the agricultural values on the property are arguably too small and fragmented to represent a significant contribution to the overall agricultural land base. The property itself presents the characteristics of a viable farm property – good soils, good topography, easy access to markets, and reasonable access to water. The existence of a separate income producer – the timber zone – allows for increased economic viability, contributing to the likelihood that farm income can be supplemented if markets change; however, the extent to which the proposed conservation easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming and contribute to significant agricultural outcomes is not well documented in the application, and the resulting amount of acreage remaining for agriculture and the type of agricultural use allowed is unclear.

The application better demonstrates the property's significance for forestry, riparian and prairie natural resource values. The habitat protected throughout the property within the proposed conservation easement represents a valuable contribution to the conservation of strategy habitats in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, as well as supporting migratory birds and waterfowl. Under the proposed terms of the easement the riparian corridor is heavily restricted, securing valuable habitat as well as contributing to improved water quality. Further, the proposed conservation easement proposes to set aside a large portion of the property's land base for a wet prairie restoration project. The proposed easement will protect the restored habitat and enlarge the riparian buffer along Ferguson Creek and facilitate operations in the forestland that embraces longer rotations and smaller units in harvest. The proposal represents the second phase of conservation on the larger property, building upon a conservation easement purchased by the applicant in 2011 with funds from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The same funding is presented as match funding for the OAHP proposal. That conservation easement put 62 acres of the land into permanent habitat reserves.

The applicant is an established land trust with a proven track record of purchasing and stewarding conservation easements. It utilizes Terrafirma insurance and has a general approach to funding and managing stewardship needs of a conservation easement of this nature. There are no concerns about the applicant's capacity to manage the transaction and complete the project within the OWEB required timeline of 18-months.

The application did not include a transaction agreement of any type, so the specifics of the legal and financial terms of the proposed transaction could not be evaluated. Limited work was conducted by the applicant to support the proposed purchase price and it is unclear whether the landowner will accept less than the expected value if the appraisal does not support the anticipated amount. There are no significant soundness issues, other than concerns regarding the proposed

purchase price. Title matters include a need for the subordination of a mortgage and the need to clarify the boundaries of the Phase 1 conservation easement prior to executing the proposed conservation easement.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Commission recommend the OWEB Board fund in accordance with OWEB's grant agreement for OAHP conservation easement projects, including project-specific conditions specified in the grant agreement.

Attachment E

Project Type	Project Name	Applicant	OWEB Request	Application No.	Staff Recommendation	OAHC Funding Recommendation
CE	Wahl Ranch	Wild Rivers Land Trust	$4,008,000	**223-7104-22600**	**Fund**	$2,702,395
CE	Aspen Valley Ranch – Rim Tract	Deschutes Land Trust	$286,280	**223-7106-22616**	**Fund**	*$263,779
CE	Seeley Farm Phase 1	Oregon Agricultural Trust	$276,297	**223-7100-22521**	**Fund**	$276,297
CE	Pitchfork T	Deschutes Land Trust	$129,175	**223-7105-22611**	**Fund**	*$121,134
CE	O'Keefe Ranch	Oregon Agricultural Trust	$277,776	**223-7101-22522**	**Fund**	$277,776
CE	Ferrell, Justin and Jayna	Oregon Agricultural Trust	$223,056	**223-7102-22523**	**Fund**	$223,056
CE	Hagen	McKenzie River Trust	$289,233	**223-7103-22597**	**Fund**	*$269,255
		Total Conservation Easement Staff Recommendation				**$4,133,692**
CMP	Baker & EOARC	High Desert Partnership	$41,366	**223-7201-22602**	**Fund**	$41,366
CMP	Branch Road	Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council	$24,942	**223-7200-22539**	**Fund**	$24,942
		Total Conservation Easement Staff Recommendation				**$66,308**
Total OAHC Funding Recommendation			**$5,556,125**			**$4,200,000**

* Funding recommendations changed due to ineligible costs included in proposed budget.

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item N

Spending Plan

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

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Agenda Item N supports all of OWEB's Strategic Plan priorities

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Lisa Charpilloz-Hanson, Executive Director
Eric Williams, Grant Program Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item N – 2023-2025 Spending Plan
April 25-26, 2023 Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This report updates the board on OWEB's 2023-2025 Spending Plan. This item is for discussion only; no board action will be taken at this time. The board will, however, be asked to provide direction to staff for moving forward with final options for the July 2023 meeting.

II. Background

After the Oregon Legislature approves OWEB's budget at the beginning of each biennium, the board considers and approves a spending plan for the distribution of grant funding. The OWEB Spending Plan guides the agency's grant investments for the biennium. Available funding for the board to distribute includes Measure 76 Lottery, federal, salmon license plates, general, and other funds. The bulk of OWEB's funding historically came from two major sources: Measure 76 Lottery funds and the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF). In the current biennium, OWEB for the first time in its history, received significant general fund appropriations for drought and wildfire resilience, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, and the Water Acquisitions program

At its July 2021 meeting, the board adopted a 2021-2023 Spending Plan totaling $142.9 million. In January 2022, the board updated the spending plan to include $10.8 million in drought resiliency funds appropriated during the December 2021 special legislative session. Following the short legislative session, the board added $19.1 million in April 2022 for wildfire recovery, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, and water acquisition grants. In July 2022 the board added $14.3 million to the spending plan to include the second year of PCSRF as well as recaptured funds that were not spent from prior grant awards. In October 2022, the board added funds for Klamath post-dam removal watershed restoration to the spending plan by decreasing other line items. The spending plan total for 2021-2023 is $187.06 million. The 2021-2023 Spending Plan, total board awards and proposed awards to date, and funds remaining in each line item as of April 2023 is included on page 9 of this document.

III. 2023-2025 Spending Plan Development

Based on the February 2023 revenue forecast, it is estimated that a total combined approximately $131.7 million will be available for grant distribution through Measure 76 Lottery Funds and PCSRF funding over the course of the biennium for core programs, exclusive of legislatively directed funds and transfers to other agencies. This compares to $123.5 million for core programs in the current spending plan. For Lottery funding, this amount is dependent on revenues received. For PCSRF funding, this amount will be dependent on OWEB's successful receipt of funding through the competitive federal grant process. If Congressional funding is available, PCSRF provides an opportunity for eligible applicants—including OWEB on behalf of the State of Oregon—to submit grants each year. It should be noted that there are limitations on eligible uses of the available PCSRF funds, such that these funds cannot be used for all aspects of OWEB's grant programs.

In January 2023, the board was updated on the process and timeline for approving the 2023-2025 Spending Plan and discussed spending plan categories and estimated allotments to each category. Between January 2023 and April 2023, staff discussed funding options for specific grant types within each category. Based on board feedback and staff discussions, a draft 2023-2025 spending plan is provided as Attachments B (percentages) and C (spending plan detail).

IV. Spending Plan Line Items

The spending plan contains a range of items. Some are frequently discussed (for example, restoration, technical assistance, and monitoring grants; focused investments; and council capacity), while others (for example, weed grants, small grants, district capacity, and CREP) are less frequently on the board's agenda. At the April 2023 board meeting, staff will present on each line item to give the board a better sense of what is funded in each area. Subsequent attachments to the staff report provide summaries of the spending plan line items. Staff will present information to the board at the April meeting to provide additional details about the programs and answer any questions the board may have about those programs. These presentations are in advance of the July 2023 board meeting, at which decisions will be made on spending plan amounts for the 2023-2025 biennium.

V. Recommendation

This is an information item only. Staff will be seeking feedback on spending plan line items for development of a final proposal for board consideration in July 2023. No decisions will occur at the April 2023 meeting.

Attachments

A. 2021-2023 Spending Plan (located at the beginning of the board book)
B. Draft 2023-2025 Spending Plan
C. C-1 through -18 Spending Plan Line Item Summaries

OWEB 2023-2025 DRAFT GRANT FUNDS SPENDING PLAN

(Core Programs)

April 2023 Board Meeting

	GRANTS	Proposed 2023-2025 (July 2023) *for Board approval July 2023	Anticipated additions contingent upon FFY 2024 PCSRF funding	Anticipated 2023-2025 (July 2024) *for Board approval July 2024
1	**Open Solicitation:**			
2	Restoration	31,500,000	3,000,000	34,500,000
3	Technical Assistance			
4	Restoration TA	4,097,000	1,903,000	6,000,000
5	CREP TA	1,200,000	-	1,200,000
6	Stakeholder Engagement	2,000,000	-	2,000,000
7	Monitoring grants	4,500,000	-	4,500,000
8	Land and Water Acquisition	6,500,000	2,000,000	8,500,000
9	Weed Grants	3,250,000	-	3,250,000
10	Small Grants	2,800,000	-	2,800,000
11	Quantifying Outputs and Outcomes	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
12	**TOTAL**	**56,847,000**	**6,903,000**	**63,750,000**
13	**% of Total Core Programs**	**45.54%**		**48.39%**
14	**Focused Investments:**			
15	John Day Partnership	4,000,000	-	4,000,000
16	Baker Sage Grouse	2,348,000	-	2,348,000
17	Warner Aquatic Habitat	1,857,000	-	1,857,000
18	Rogue Forest Rest. Ptnrshp	1,800,000	-	1,800,000
19	Clackamas Partnership	2,309,000	-	2,309,000
20	Klamath Siskiyou Oak	2,715,000	-	2,715,000
21	East Cascades Oak	2,433,000	-	2,433,000
22	Siuslaw Coho	4,000,000	-	4,000,000
23	Coos	3,859,000	-	3,859,000
24	Estuaries	3,922,000	-	3,922,000
25	New FIP Solicitation	8,000,000		8,000,000
26	FI Effectiveness Monitoring	500,000	-	500,000
27	**TOTAL**	**37,743,000**	**-**	**37,743,000**
28	**% of Total Core Programs**	**30.23%**		**28.65%**
29	**Operating Capacity:**			
30	Capacity grants (WC/SWCD)	17,793,843	-	17,793,843
31	Statewide org partnership support	525,000	-	525,000
32	Organizational Collaboration	-	-	-
33	Partnership Technical Assistance	-	-	-
34	**TOTAL**	**18,318,843**	**-**	**18,318,843**
35	**% of Total Core Programs**	**14.67%**		**13.91%**
36	**Other-Prior Committed Funding:**			
37	CREP	750,000	-	750,000
38	Governor's Priorities	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
39	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership	330,000	-	330,000
40	Strategic Implementation Areas	1,500,000	-	1,500,000
41	Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership	350,000	-	350,000
42	Klamath Post Dam Removal Watershed Restoration/KRRC-Contingency	8,000,000	-	8,000,000
43	**TOTAL**	**11,930,000**	**-**	**11,930,000**
44	**% of Total Core Programs**	**9.56%**		**9.06%**
45	**TOTAL Core Programs**	**124,838,843**	**6,903,000**	**131,741,843**

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Governor's Priorities

Recommended Amount: $1,000,000

I. Summary

The Governor's Priorities spending plan line item supports work within the sideboards of Ballot Measure 76 that furthers priority programs and initiatives related to restoration in Oregon. Typically, these investments address landscape-scale or emerging issues related to restoration needs of importance as identified by the Governor's Office. Grant investments are targeted and catalyze broad-scale, multi-organizational work. These types of investments are unique in that they address both technical assistance and restoration needs while focusing on areas of importance to the Governor.

II. Program History

Under Ballot Measure 76, OWEB's funding has flexibility to address a range of needs that ultimately lead to on-the-ground restoration work. This, combined with Oregon's approach to addressing broad-scale initiatives through multi-organizational partnerships, has resulted in the use of OWEB funding as a catalyst to support emerging or particularly complex natural resource challenges and opportunities.

These investments have varied over time and include:

- Support for initial work of forest-health collaboratives, including statewide coordination, technical support for local collaboratives, and planning and implementation support for these groups.

- Partnerships with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support on-the-ground investments in Salmon Stronghold projects. This work led to a multi-organizational partnership to develop a Coastal Coho Business Plan and component action plans through a partnership with NFWF, the Wild Salmon Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

- Support for development of a federal, state, and local agency and organization partnership focused on clean water. The partnership includes a comprehensive framework in support of monitoring and implementation focused on the state's agricultural water quality program, currently focused on Strategic Implementation Areas.

- Support for the development of a working lands easement program concept focused on agricultural lands. This resulted in legislative approval of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program.

III. Demand

Investments in this line item are typically approximately $1 million per biennium. Because this program operates as a proactive grant-making item, the demand does not exceed the funding available.

IV. Future Need

The Governor's Office is in the process of identifying future focus areas for the Governor's Priorities funding and will provide updates at future meetings. In addition, as in previous biennia, the Governor's Office may come before the board during the biennium with additional program priorities.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the 21-23 Biennium

In the last biennium, the board invested in three initiatives through this spending plan item:

Post-Fire Recovery Immediate Response - $300,000 to provide grants to support immediate post-fire recovery work during the 2021 and 2022 fire seasons. Eligible implementation actions included stabilization efforts and log salvage for future restoration. Funding also could be used for stakeholder engagement to aid landowners in accessing fire-response funding along with technical assistance for fire impact assessments. Grants awarded under this offering included post-fire immediate recovery grants for the Cougar Peak, Bootleg, and Double Creek wildfires.

Climate-Related Initiatives - $350,000 to support work that was mutually agreed upon by OWEB and the Governor's Office. Grants awarded under this offering included a grant to develop a baseline soil carbon map for Oregon, and a technical assistance grant that assesses the current and forecasted need for reforestation, along with the capacity of the reforestation pipeline (e.g., seed, seedling production, site preparation, planting, post-planting maintenance, etc.) following wildfires and other climate-driven events and disturbances.

Tide Gate Partnership - $247,000 to support efforts associated with increased tide gate repair and replacement efforts along the Oregon Coast and lower Columbia River. Grants awarded under this offering included a monitoring grant to develop a common monitoring approach for tide gate replacement projects, and a technical assistance grant to develop an engineering tool that can model tide gate size based on location and other inputs, to be used by landowners and regulatory agencies to assist with complex design and permitting processes.

The remaining $53,000 balance in the 2021-2023 Governor's Priorities line item was allocated to the Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration (see Attachment C-18).

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$793,000	$0
2021-2023	$1,000,000	$0
2023-2025	$1,000,000	

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Open Solicitation - Restoration

Recommended Amount: $34,500,000

I. Summary

Open solicitation restoration grants are OWEB's primary method of delivering support for watershed projects that restore watershed functions. Open solicitation restoration grants are offered twice per year, spring and fall, through a competitive granting program.

II. Program History

Open solicitation restoration grants aid landowners and landmanagers to restore watershed health locally and have been part of OWEB's history since its beginning in 1987 as the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board. Initial investments were modest and focused on restoration demonstration projects. The number of projects and level of investment quickly increased as the Oregon Legislature and the public supported OWEB through Ballot Measures 66 and 76. At the same time, organizational capacity within watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and other groups to plan and implement projects grew, and landowners became engaged in implementing voluntary projects.

Restoration accomplishments in Oregon, including those funded by OWEB, have been reported through the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI). From 1999 through 2022, OWEB invested $430 million in 7,146 OWEB restoration projects that have reported their accomplishments to OWRI. Riparian, road, upland, fish passage, and instream restoration activities make up the largest number of projects, respectively. These projects have resulted in:

- 6,563 linear stream miles treated through instream and riparian activities
- 7,048 miles of habitat made accessible for fish
- 1,392,620 acres treated through upland activities
- 61,369 acres of wetland/estuarine habitat restored/created/enhanced.

III. Demand

Should the board award recommended restoration projects at the April 2023 board meeting, the board will have awarded 65% of requested funds, or $34.6 million out of $52.9 million requested.

The board will have awarded 87% of the funds requested in applications recommended for funding by regional review teams.

IV. Future Need

Even with 11 FIPs operating during the biennium, demand for open solicitation restoration funds remained high. The average restoration grant award continues to increase, exceeding $200,000 this biennium. This is up from about $150,000 in 2017.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

This biennium saw the return to in-person site visits and review team meetings, a welcome change from pandemic-induced virtual meetings. Regional Program Representatives (RPRs) provided facilitation of each other's regional review team meetings as well as peer review of evaluations. This model provided RPRs with opportunities to both broaden exposure to many more reviewers as well as ensure consistency throughout the review process.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$24,565,000	$0
2021-2023	$32,000,000	$*
2023-2025	$34,500,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Open Solicitation – Technical Assistance

Recommended Amount: $6,000,000

I. Summary

Open solicitation technical assistance (TA) grants are offered twice per year, spring and fall, through a competitive granting program for watershed assessments and designs that lead to eligible restoration projects. TA grants through the open solicitation process are currently capped at $75,000 per grant.

II. Program History

Since 1999, OWEB has been awarding TA grants. These grants play a key role in developing future restoration grant proposals and increase the capacity of OWEB's local partners to engage in project development, planning, design, coordination and permitting. There are two types of TA grants offered through the open solicitation program:

- Technical Design and Engineering: Development of technical design for a restoration project.
- Resource Assessment and Planning: Development of an implementation plan for restoration activities.

III. Demand

Should the board award recommended TA projects at the April 2023 board meeting, the board will have awarded 61% of requested funds, or $4.489 million out of $7.2 million requested. The board will have awarded 79% of the funds requested in applications recommended for funding by regional review teams.

We have also seen a positive development in the form of TA requests to fund development of land and water acquisition grants. While these activities have always been eligible for TA grant funding, most funding was awarded to develop restoration projects.

IV. Future Need

Even with 11 FIPs operating during the biennium, demand for open solicitation TA funds remained high. This trend is expected to continue, and increased TA fund requests are expected due to several factors: 1) increased need for cultural resources compliance in OWEB-funded grants; 2) increased permitting costs due to "no net-rise flood certifications"; 3) increased services required to address

local land use permitting; and 4) increased needs to produce fully permitted projects prior to seeking restoration funds. For these reasons, staff will request as part of the spending approval in July 2023, the following policy changes for TA grants:

Removal of the $75,000 cap (the cap currently does not apply to Focused Investment Partnership TA grants).

Since costs are increasing and match funds are more difficult to obtain for TA projects, greatly reducing the match requirement.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

We have continued to see a trend toward more complete design work in TA grant projects. This reduces uncertainty in permitting and budgeting for restoration projects, which has become more critical with inflationary pressures experienced in the last two years.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$3,270,000	$0
2021-2023	$5,500,000	$*
2023-2025	$6,000,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Open Solicitation – Stakeholder Engagement

Recommended Amount: $2,000,000

I. Summary

Open solicitation stakeholder engagement projects include outreach efforts that are necessary for carrying out eligible restoration and acquisition projects, or programs that lead to eligible projects.

II. Program History

From 1999 to 2011, OWEB awarded outreach and education grants. Under Measure 66, these activities were funded through non-capital funds, which could be used for a variety of purposes that furthered the goals of improving water quality, recovering fish and wildlife, and enhancing watershed health.

Measure 76 changed the constitutional language regarding education and outreach grant offerings. Due to these changes, beginning with the October 2011 grant cycle, OWEB only offered outreach grants that are necessary for activities to protect or restore native fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, or stream flows. Grants for education only are not eligible under Measure 76. In 2017, the board adopted rules for the new stakeholder engagement offering that provided further guidance for the program.

III. Demand

Should the board award recommended stakeholder engagement projects at the April 2023 board meeting, the board will have awarded 74% of requested funds, or $1.8 million out of $2.4 million requested. The board will have awarded 95% of the funds requested in applications recommended for funding by regional review teams.

IV. Future Need

As projects, permitting, and community engagement become more complex, the need for stakeholder engagement grants will continue to grow. These grants provide a form of capacity funding that is essential for project development. More communication is needed to secure understanding and buy-in for eligible restoration and acquisition projects from landowners, operators, and communities. While the path is still being determined for many organizations, reaching previously underserved communities is emphasized more than in the recent past.

Stakeholder engagement grants are an ideal opportunity to help OWEB achieve its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Regional Program Representatives continue to communicate the value of the stakeholder engagement offering to prospective grantees. While community engagement can add length to the project development timeline, it is often essential to achieving successful restoration and acquisition outcomes.

Investments by Biennium (in millions)		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$1,014,000	$0
2021-2023	$2,750,000	$*
2023-2025	$2,000,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Open Solicitation Monitoring Grants

Recommended Amount: $4,500,000

I. Summary

Prior to 2021, open solicitation monitoring grants were solicited once a year during the fall grant cycle. Beginning in 2021, these monitoring grants switched to being solicited during the spring grant cycle, with board awards in the fall.

Eligible monitoring activities include describing current watershed conditions and establishing trends about watershed conditions by gathering and analyzing data. Applicants can also request funding for evaluating the specific effects of a restoration or acquisition project or program by comparing similar watershed components before and after implementation of restoration or acquisition. Effectiveness monitoring is not a requirement of any OWEB grant and is above and beyond compliance monitoring/implementation reporting. Monitoring information can assist restoration practitioners and OWEB in determining the biological and physical changes due to restoration actions and inform future restoration design. Monitoring grant applications must articulate the monitoring question to be answered and provide information about complementary monitoring that is occurring in the watershed, among other monitoring grant application requirements. Monitoring projects must make their monitoring results publicly available.

Open solicitation monitoring grants differ from OWEB's Quantifying Conservation Outcomes and Outputs line item in the spending plan in that the open solicitation monitoring grants are proposed by local partners to OWEB as part of the agency's responsive grant-making process. The monitoring projects funded in the open solicitation grant program are designed and led by grantees, and typically are smaller in scope and effort than effectiveness monitoring projects funded by OWEB in the Quantifying Conservation Outcomes and Outputs.

II. Program History

As a part of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, OWEB and other state natural resources agencies developed an associated monitoring strategy. This strategy described an overall framework for structuring coordinated monitoring and provided direction to help integrate Oregon Plan programs and monitoring with region-wide watershed enhancement and salmon recovery efforts. OWEB's monitoring grants assist the agency in meeting its responsibility to 1) provide support for cooperative monitoring activities, 2) describe the results of restoration investments, and 3) report on Oregon Plan progress.

III. Demand

The total allocation to open solicitation monitoring grants in the 2021-2023 biennium was increased from previous biennia for a total of $4.750 million, resulting in a total of 35 applications being funded. The board awarded 60% of requested funds, or $4.579 million out of $7.686 million

requested. The board awarded 91% of the funds requested in applications that were recommended for funding by regional review teams. The total allocation to open solicitation monitoring grants in the 2023-2025 biennium is $4.5 million and is $250,000 lower compared to the previous biennium.

IV. Future Need

It is anticipated that a consistent and significant need for monitoring funds will extend into the next biennium, given that 24-35 monitoring applications have been received each year since 2015. Alternate sources of funding for monitoring in Oregon are limited, and in some cases other funding sources have seen reductions in available funds in recent years. For example, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Clean Water Act Section 319 grants can only fund a limited number of monitoring projects statewide due to limited funding. In addition, recent budget cuts in Bonneville Power Administration's Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Program have resulted in OWEB receiving more monitoring applications from entities in the Columbia Basin.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

During the 2021-2023 open solicitation grant cycle, OWEB's effectiveness monitoring coordinator and regional program representatives continued to offer informal pre-application consultations with potential monitoring applicants. These consultations allow the applicant to describe their monitoring interest and provide an opportunity for OWEB staff to advise them on integral components of a successful monitoring project. In addition, OWEB staff convened the Oregon Plan Monitoring Team to discuss the technical merits and potential benefits of monitoring applications received during the 2021-2023 biennium. These reviews were provided to the regional review teams to inform their funding recommendations.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$1,750,000	$0
2021-2023	$4,750,000	$*
2023-2025	$4,500,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Open Solicitation - Land and Water Acquisition

Recommended Amount: $8,500,000

I. Summary

OWEB funds projects involving the acquisition of interests in land and water from willing sellers for the purpose of maintaining or restoring watersheds and habitat for native fish or wildlife. OWEB-funded interests in land and water may be held by a variety of entities including, but not limited to, local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, and not-for-profit conservation organizations and land trusts.

OWEB funds several types of land and water acquisitions: the purchase of property in fee simple, conservation easements, permanent water rights, water leases, and contractually protected instream flow.

II. Program History

Land Acquisition: The board began making land acquisition grants in 1998. Several grants were awarded during the first few years of the program. In 2000, interest in the program began growing, and grew significantly over subsequent biennia. To date, the board has awarded approximately $55 million in land acquisition grants, leveraging approximately $97 million in matching funds and protecting approximately 87,000 acres.

Water Acquisition: The board awarded its first water acquisition grant in 2001. Until 2010, only five grants were awarded, with a relatively small award amount for each project (i.e., under $40,000). Beginning in 2010, interest in water acquisition grants began to grow because of increased organizational capacity in select areas of the state to carry out water acquisition projects and programs and increased concern about instream flow issues. Since 2010, the board has awarded over $5.01 million for water acquisition grants, resulting in the short-term transfer of over 103 cubic feet per second (cfs), or 17,987 acre-feet and the permanent transfer of about 33.5 cfs, or 6,477 acre-feet to instream use. To date, funding requests to OWEB have come from three primary locations in the state: the Deschutes, Klamath, and mid-Columbia basins. In addition, OWEB is now seeing more applications from the Rogue Basin. These awards have supported a range of activities from permanent transfers and temporary leases of instream water rights to incentivizing voluntary curtailments by irrigators.

III. Demand

Land Acquisition: Two open solicitation grant cycles were held in the 2021-2023 biennium. Five applicants requested approximately $12 million in funding, with three projects awarded $3 million, and one project requesting $2.9 million recommended for funding at the April 2023 board meeting. In addition, one land acquisition project that is part of a Focused Investment Partnership was awarded $818,550.

Water Acquisition: Due to a pandemic-induced pause in grant offerings, there was only one solicitation in the 2021-2023 biennium resulting in two eligible applications requesting $509,875.

IV. Future Need

Land acquisition: Funding needs in the 2023-2025 biennium are expected to be approximately the same as the 2021-2023 biennium.

Water acquisition: During the 2022 Legislative session, $10 million in general funds was appropriated for water acquisition grants as part of a drought resilience package. The funds were deposited in OWEB's Flexible Incentives Account, which is continuously appropriated. Since nearly all of these funds will be available in 2023-2025, lottery or PCSRF funds are not expected to be needed for water acquisition grants.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Land Acquisition: In the first cycle of the biennium, the board awarded grants to projects that protect ecosystem connectivity, increase climate resilience, and restore and protect tidal wetlands. The scope of these projects, and the significance of the habitat they involve, align with the board's established principles for the program. One of the awarded projects was completed, in addition to the completion of five projects awarded funding in prior biennia.

Water Acquisition: To incorporate recent changes to program rules, the grant application was updated for a 2022 solicitation. OWEB is now overseeing a greater portion of the application review process with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation partnering on the review of organizational capacity, transaction soundness, and water rights valuation. New guidance was created reflecting the updated 2020 rules and the 2022 solicitation resulted in four applications. Two of those applications are undergoing technical review in advance of board awards in July.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium

2019-2021	$4,905,000	$0
2021-2023	$8,500,000	$*
2023-2025	$8,500,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Open Solicitation – Small Grant Program

Recommended Amount: $2,800,000

I. Summary

OWEB small grant program funds are awarded biennially to cooperative partnerships of watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and tribes. These small grant teams (Teams) form to prioritize and implement smaller-scale watershed restoration projects. Teams select from an OWEB rule-defined list of actions when identifying priority watershed concerns for their small grant area. Priority concerns include: fish passage; urban impact reduction; road impact reduction; water quality and quantity/irrigation efficiency; and instream, riparian, wetland, and upland process and function. Teams set application cycles, review submitted proposals, and submit recommended projects to OWEB.

II. Program History

In 1999 OWEB investigated ways to be more responsive to small restoration projects. During this time the Oregon Legislature encouraged the agency to initiate a county-based, local cost-share program through a budget note in OWEB's legislative adopted budget.

In January 2002, the board adopted administrative rules establishing the small grant program with the goal of supporting implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds by funding small, straightforward restoration projects designed to improve water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife habitat. Such projects are to include, but are not limited to, those developed to address Total Maximum Daily Loads, Agriculture Water Quality Management Plans, urban non-point source pollution management plans, and the Board of Forestry's Forestry Program for Oregon.

The board set boundaries for 28 geographic areas throughout the state. Within each area a Team may form comprised of representatives from local watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and tribes. Teams are guided by self-defined operating procedures, along with a list of watershed priorities and eligible project types revisited biennially. Historically the board has awarded $2.8 million ($100,000 per team) per biennium to the program.

In the 2017-2019 biennium, the board approved an incentive for Teams with high demand for funds where unexpended small grant funds from the previous biennium are provided to Teams who allocate 95% of available funds by the midpoint of the biennium. In 2017-2019, $350,000 in

additional funds were allocated to 12 Teams; in 2019-2021, three Teams received $95,000 in additional funds.

III. Demand

In the 2021-2023 biennium, all 28 Teams successfully reorganized and were awarded $100,000 each. As of March 24, 2023, 149 project grants have been awarded allocating more than $1.7 million of the available $2.8 million in small grant program funding this biennium. This is a typical rate of spending as teams work to expend the balance of available funds by June 30, 2023.

IV. Future Need

The biennium spending plan need is expected to remain stable at $2.8 million. The continuation of unspent program funds carryover is requested to allow high-performing Teams access to carried over funding after expending their original funding award at the mid-point of the biennium.

Three Teams have requested adjustment to their Small Grant Area boundaries. Small grant program rules allow Teams to petition the OWEB Board to adjust the boundaries of Small Grant Areas. The administrative rule outlines a process whereby the OWEB Board may choose to consider a boundary-adjustment petitions once a biennium at the time it considers reauthorizing small grant program funds for the next biennium. In keeping with rule, Teams 17, 18, and 19 petition to adjust their boundaries to better align with existing watershed restoration partnerships and ecological similar landscapes. A written request for boundary adjustment, approved by the Teams 17, 18 and 19 along with a map illustrating the boundary change will be provided to the board in July prior to reauthorization of the small grant program for the 2023-2025 biennium

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$1,500,000	$0
2021-2023	$2,800,000	$*
2023-2025	$2,800,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes

Recommended Amount: $1,000,000

I. Summary

Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes (QCOO) includes OWEB-led initiatives that evaluate specific types of restoration actions at a broad geographic and temporal scale, rather than at the project scale. QCOO are targeted investments that are identified and developed collaboratively by staff and local partners. QCOO is different from Open Solicitation Monitoring Grants, which are proposed by local partners and considered through OWEB's responsive grant program. For example, QCOO funds supported the evaluation of restoration approaches that aim to achieve Stage 0 conditions, and to evaluate tide gate restoration effectiveness. QCOO funds have also supported outcomes tracking for OWEB's Focused Investment Partnership grants, and the 'Telling the Restoration Story' grant offering, which helps local partners compile and report existing data to highlight progress towards meeting ecological outcomes and communicate lessons learned. OWEB staff support QCOO efforts by convening cross-agency teams to engage with natural resources agencies to achieve common objectives. For example, OWEB convenes a team to provide guidance for Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) monitoring, including the Oregon Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Quality, and Fish and Wildlife.

II. Program History

In September 2004, the board authorized the initial concept of an Effectiveness Monitoring program and hired the Effectiveness Monitoring Coordinator position. Staff worked closely with the board to identify the appropriate scale for program-level monitoring efforts, such as at the watershed-scale Upper Middle Fork John Day Intensively Monitored Watershed (IMW) that was established in 2008. In September 2016, OWEB filled the Conservation Outcomes Coordinator position, which assists the state of Oregon with quantifying outcomes associated with collective conservation actions. QCOO is the title for the previously named Programmatic Effectiveness Monitoring line item in OWEB's spending plan.

III. Demand

Demand for QCOO has been consistently increasing since 2017. However, due to reductions in Lottery revenue, the funding amount for this line item in OWEB's 2019-21 spending plan was reduced from $1,278,000 to $760,000 and some QCOO staff were shifted to other positions due to budget challenges. In the 2021-23 biennium, OWEB re-adjusted the spending plan and budgeted $1,250,000 in this line item. Should the board award recommended projects at the April 2023 board meeting, the board will have awarded $983,000. Throughout these past two biennia, demand for QCOO has remained high, with several 'Telling the Restoration Story' proposals in progress; and emerging needs to document climate benefits from OWEB investments and continuing to support Stage 0 restoration effectiveness monitoring.

IV. Future Need

Staff continues to work with the board to identify priority QCOO needs. At the January 2023 board meeting, strong support was expressed for 'Telling the Restoration Story'. Following that meeting, staff met with

interested board members to discuss which projects are considered for this offering and how the resulting products could reach broader audiences including non-traditional partners. In addition, staff are exploring whether 'Telling the Restoration Story' could highlight outcomes from a variety of actions such as post-fire recovery grants. Pursuing these concepts may require additional resources for the offering. Staff are planning to utilize funds from this line item in the 2023-2025 biennium to continue to support physical habitat monitoring to track restoration effectiveness monitoring in the Middle Fork John Day River IMW. There are ongoing needs to support stage 0 restoration effectiveness monitoring as OWEB continues to fund these valley-wide restoration actions across Oregon.

To increase efficiency and serve Oregonians, there is an increasing need for coordination among state natural resources agencies. For example, OWEB and other water agencies are exploring how to provide water data through a new, more efficient, and transparent online Water Data Portal. OWEB continues to advise and support inter-agency efforts to provide technical resources to grantees and partners. Moreover, staff are compiling resources to help grantees identify specific monitoring needs related to climate change and develop monitoring plans that consider climate change.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

'Telling the Restoration Story' - These grants support compilation, analysis, and/or interpretation of existing data from a watershed restoration project to tell data driven stories restoration outcomes. In the 2021-23 biennium, three new projects were funded and are currently working towards product development describing: (1) pollinator habitat in the Zumwalt Prairie acquisition; (2) fish recovery improvements under the collaborative Lostine flow agreement in Wallowa County; (3) and bull trout restoration in Sun Creek, located in the Klamath Basin. Staff has recruited grantees to identify three projects that are in the process of submitting applications in 2023 (Ni-les'tun on the Oregon Coast; Little Butte/Bear creeks in the Rogue watershed; and Sandy River Basin near Portland). In addition, at least three more projects are currently under active exploration. In January 2023, the board approved $150,000 for this initiative, providing an opportunity for several additional proposals (each project award is typically $30,000).

Carbon and Riparian Condition Monitoring of Riparian Reforestation Projects – OWEB is working with The Nature Conservancy to support a statewide monitoring project that will assess the effectiveness of streamside revegetation projects for restoring riparian function and evaluate what project characteristics and management practices lead to restored riparian function and climate benefits. In January 2023, the board approved $100,000 for monitoring carbon and riparian condition of riparian planting restoration projects.

Effectiveness Monitoring of Stage 0 Restoration and Workshop – OWEB awarded funding to the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council and the McKenzie Watershed Alliance to implement the first phase of the effectiveness monitoring of Stage 0 restoration actions in Whychus Creek and South Fork McKenzie River, respectively. In November 2020, practitioners, researchers, regulators and other stakeholders convened at the Stage 0 Monitoring Workshop to discuss current topics and identify data gaps related to implementing and monitoring restoration projects intended to achieve a Stage 0 condition.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$760,000	$0
2021-2023	$1,250,000	$*
2023-2025	$1,000,000	$

*Full biennium data not available

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Focused Investment Partnerships

Recommended Amount: $37,743,000

Components of recommended amount:

Cohort 2 FIP Initiatives	$12,314,000
Cohort 3 FIP Initiatives	$16,929,000
2023-2025 FIP Solicitation	$8,000,000
FIP Effectiveness Monitoring	$500,000

I. Summary

Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP) investments address a board-identified priority of significance to the state; achieve clear and measurable ecological outcomes; use integrated, results-oriented approaches as identified through a strategic action plan; and are implemented by high-performing partnerships. Focused Investment Effectiveness Monitoring (EM) supports efforts to evaluate outcomes from dedicated FIP funding to help board, staff, and stakeholders to adaptively manage partnership investments in the future.

II. Program History

In June 2013, the board approved its Long-Term Investment Strategy Framework with four major areas of investment: Operating Capacity, Open Solicitation, Focused Investments, and Effectiveness Monitoring. At that time, no formal definition, process, or solicitation approach for the FIP program existed. In October 2013, OWEB initiated a nine-month process to develop the definition, criteria, and program structure (including solicitation approach and process) for the FIP category in the Long-Term Investment Strategy. This was followed by initiation of an 18-month process to set board priorities and solicit for investments within the program.

Following an extensive public process, the board selected the following priority areas for focused investments at its April 2015 meeting:

1) Sagebrush/Sage-Steppe Habitat

2) Oregon Closed Lakes Basin Wetland Habitat

3) Dry-type Forest Habitat

4) Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat

5) Coho Habitat and Populations along the Oregon Coast

6) Aquatic Habitat for Native Fish Species

7) Coastal Estuaries

To date, OWEB has funded 16 FIP initiatives. Six partnerships were awarded FIP funding for 6-year initiatives in 2016 as Cohort 1, five partnerships were awarded FIP funding in 2019 as Cohort 2, and five more partnerships were awarded FIP funding in 2022 as Cohort 3.

Recognizing the need to understand how FIPs are achieving their intended ecological and programmatic impacts, the board awarded funds to the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) in April 2016 to help OWEB establish a structure for evaluating progress towards ecological outcomes and program-level impacts, based on theory of change approaches. The resulting progress monitoring framework helps OWEB and local implementers evaluate progress toward outcomes for each of the board-identified ecological priorities.

III. Demand

In August 2021, staff announced the solicitation for FIP initiatives for the 2021-2023 biennium. Eleven applications were submitted, and in July 2022 five partnerships were awarded FIP initiative funding by the board.

In January 2022, the board awarded Focused Investment EM funding to support the ongoing work of the OWEB-BEF partnership toward the continued development and improvement of the FIP program, and grants to fill priority monitoring gaps for the Cohort 2 FIP initiatives. In April 2022, the board awarded additional Focused Investment EM funding to support a post-FIP reporting pilot project with the Ashland Forest All Lands Restoration FIP Initiative.

IV. Future Need

Details on the budgets for the Cohort 2 and 3 FIP initiatives are found in Attachment A. Project work plans for Cohort 2 and 3 FIP initiatives for the 2023-2025 biennium are available upon request.

During the 2023-2025 biennium, the intent of the Focused Investment EM line item is to continue FIP program evaluation and improvements through work with the BEF team, completing Adaptive Management pilot projects, and providing support to Cohort 3 FIPs as they develop metrics and monitoring plans. Other anticipated work includes hosting a FIP Gathering where all cohorts of FIP initiatives across the state would be invited to share with and learn from each other. Depending on progress for the post-FIP pilot project initiated in the 2021-2023 biennium, additional grant opportunities for Cohort 1 FIPs to engage in post-FIP reporting could be offered.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

An update on progress for Cohort 2and 3 FIP initiatives was provided at the January 2023 meeting, which featured progress tracking reports for the Cohort 2 FIP initiatives.

For Focused Investment EM, OWEB has entered into supplemental monitoring grant agreements with two of the five Cohort 2 FIP initiatives to fill gaps identified in their strategic action plan results chains; one grant agreement is pending; and the remaining two FIPs have approved monitoring concepts in place and anticipate submitting full applications within the coming weeks. BEF is working with OWEB staff to review and update the strategic action plan template which will be made available with the 2023-2025 FIP solicitation. At the time of writing this staff report, BEF is in the process of final formatting of a partnership governance guidance document that will be a reference for FIP program partnership applicants and others interested in strengthening the governance of their partnerships. BEF has engaged two Cohort 2 FIP initiatives in a pilot program in applying an adaptive management framework to their work, which will inform publicly available guidance on the topic.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$22,110,000	$0
2021-2023	**$32,391,000	$*
2023-2025	$37,743,000	

*Full biennium data not available

**Includes 'make whole' funding that was carried forward from 2019-2021.

Attachment

A. FIP Budget Tables

Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP)
2023-202 FIP Budget Tables

Table 1. Baker Sage-grouse LIT

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$71,380	$56,379
Stakeholder Engagement	$552,386	$552,386
Technical Assistance	$24,200	$0
Restoration	$1,753,821	$886,875
Land Acquisition	$0	$750,000
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$33,368	$101,979
TOTAL	***$2,435,155**	**$2,347,619**

* Total includes “make whole funds” awarded in this biennium – Covid reduction from the previous biennium.

Table 2. Clackamas Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$140,001	$126,000
Stakeholder Engagement	$23,000	$23,000
Technical Assistance	$320,760	$0
Restoration	$2,385,532	$1,950,000
Land Acquisition	$0	$0
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$212,707	$210,000
TOTAL	***$3,082,000**	**$2,309,000**

* Total includes “make whole funds” awarded in this biennium – Covid reduction from the previous biennium.

Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP)
2023-202 FIP Budget Tables

Table 3. John Day Basin Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$350,763	$143,217
Stakeholder Engagement	$0	$0
Technical Assistance	$53,737	$145,000
Restoration	$2,094,806	$3,241,783
Land Acquisition	$818,550	$0
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$798,293	$470,000
TOTAL*	***$4,116,249**	**$4,000,000**

* Total includes “make whole funds” awarded in this biennium – Covid reduction from the previous biennium.

Table 4. Rogue Forest Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$60,000	$90,000
Stakeholder Engagement	$213,000	$170,000
Technical Assistance	$180,000	$133,000
Restoration	$2,067,000	$1,107,000
Land Acquisition	$0	$0
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$180,000	$300,000
TOTAL	**$2,700,000**	**$1,800,000**

Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP)
2023-202 FIP Budget Tables

Table 5. Warner Basin Aquatic Habitat Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$30,990	$45,000
Stakeholder Engagement	$0	$75,000
Technical Assistance	$0	$100,000
Restoration	$2,132,756	$1,537,000
Land Acquisition	$0	$0
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$129,485	$100,000
TOTAL*	***$2,293,231**	**$1,857,000**

* Total includes “make whole funds” awarded in this biennium – Covid reduction from the previous biennium.

Table 6. Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$188,934	$189,965
Stakeholder Engagement	$166,219	$162,724
Technical Assistance	$100,058	$137,384
Restoration	$688,876	$2,019,392
Land Acquisition	$0	$0
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$229,155	$205,270
TOTAL	**$1,373,242**	**$2,714,735**

Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP)
2023-202 FIP Budget Tables

Table 7. East Cascades Oak Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$103,000	$252,000
Stakeholder Engagement	$77,000	$0
Technical Assistance	$456,000	$0
Restoration	$1,280,000	$1,858,000
Land Acquisition	$535,000	$323,000
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$93,000	$0
TOTAL	**$2,544,000**	**$2,433,000**

Table 8. Oregon Coast Estuary Collaborative

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$35,200	$131,000
Stakeholder Engagement	$55,000	$70,000
Technical Assistance	$322,300	$353,700
Restoration	$225,500	$1,947,000
Land Acquisition	$825,000	$1,300,000
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$60,000	$120,000
TOTAL	**$1,523,000**	**$3,921,700**

Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP)
2023-202 FIP Budget Tables

Table 9. Siuslaw Coho Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$257,235	$115,000
Stakeholder Engagement	$75,000	$23,000
Technical Assistance	$75,000	$150,000
Restoration	$3,374,358	$2,382,383
Land Acquisition	$0	$1,104,617
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$218,000	$225,000
TOTAL	**$3,999,593**	**$4,000,000**

Table 10. Coos Basin Coho Partnership

OWEB Grant Category	2021-2023 OWEB Investment	2023-2025 OWEB Investment
Partnership Capacity	$112,704	$98,909
Stakeholder Engagement	$183,478	$126,691
Technical Assistance	$200,000	$185,000
Restoration	$2,320,568	$2,542,500
Land Acquisition	$19,550	$176,550
Water Acquisition	$0	$0
Monitoring	$633,314	$729,321
TOTAL	**$3,469,614**	**$3,858,971**

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Statewide Organization Partnership Technical Assistance

Recommended Amount: $525,000

I. Summary

The Oregon Conservation Partnership (Partnership) includes The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC), Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), and Oregon Conservation Education & Assistance Network (OCEAN). These separate groups collaborate and coordinate to deliver technical support, member services, program development, training, and outreach to their more than 150 conservation organizations.

II. Program History

Since 2007, the board has approved grants to support the efforts of these organizations, recognizing that they provide a vital link between OWEB's programs and successful on-the-ground work. OWEB's funding has supported various deliverables in past biennia, including conferences, training, webinars, regional and local media assistance, and one-on-one work with local organizations.

In 2012, OWEB, NOWC, and OACD began meeting to discuss ways to further advance collaboration among the organizations. This resulted in NOWC and OACD taking steps to formalize a partnership that included shared office space and staff resources, allowing them to reduce overhead and expand capacity. In recent years, the organizations' work has expanded to include COLT and OCEAN. This expanded effort resulted in a Partnership request to the board for the 2015-2017 biennium that included funding for partnership-focused deliverables in each of the four organizations. This model has continued through the 2021-2023 biennium.

III. Demand

The Partnership has continued to focus on providing educational opportunities for their constituents including the CONNECT conference and webinars. These events continue to be well attended and cover many relevant topics.

IV. Future Need

OWEB staff are proposing a slight increase in funding for the 2023-2025 biennium. The Partnership and OWEB staff have discussed increased opportunities for service delivery to constituents,

including support to track and apply for the increased federal funding opportunities because of recent federal legislation.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Examples of accomplishments include:

2022 CONNECT Conference, which was held both in person and virtually;

Monthly webinars covering a diversity of topics;

Site tours; and

At least one earned media article a month.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$425,000	$0
2021-2023	$450,000	$*
2023-2025	$525,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Council Capacity

Recommended Amount: $9,486,708 (total line item $17,793,843 including Districts)

I. Summary

Council Capacity grants are awarded biennially and help support the operations of effective watershed councils that engage people in their communities to participate in collaborative, voluntary restoration projects to protect or restore native fish or wildlife habitats and natural watershed functions to improve water quality or stream flows of watersheds.

II. Program History

OWEB has provided operating grants to watershed councils for more than 20 years. Watershed councils are locally based, voluntary, and under ORS 541.890(15), "designated by a local government group convened by a county governing body, to address the goal of sustaining natural resource and watershed protection, restoration and enhancement within a watershed."

OWEB does not create or oversee watershed councils. OWEB has statutory discretion to provide capacity grants to councils that represent a balance of interests in their watersheds and demonstrate the potential to protect and enhance the quality of their watersheds. Councils also are expected to assure a high level of citizen involvement in the development and implementation of watershed action programs (ORS 541.910).

Watershed councils use operating capacity funding to engage in local, regional, and state planning processes including providing public comment on OWEB rule advisory committees, board, and committee meetings. Sustained local capacity funding enables councils to engage with local communities to develop complex projects which they submit to OWEB grant programs such as Open Solicitation.

In July 2021 the OWEB Board awarded a total of $15.121 million for Operating Capacity grants, this amount was split evenly between councils and districts. For the 2021-2023 biennium, 55 councils were funded at $131,465 and one council received $328,663 (merger bonus) for a total award of $7.559 million. Staff used the merit criteria and evaluation process adopted by the board in July 2014 to determine funding levels, including full funding, reduced funding, and do not fund.

III. Demand

Council capacity funding supports watershed councils to work with their local communities to help implement local restoration, and conservation goals and implement state and federal plans. The

funds are used to support relationship and partnership building, project development, staff and board training, and operational costs. In recent years additional federal funds, targeted at on-the-ground restoration, have been made available through the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and more recently the Inflation Reduction Act. This increase in federal restoration funding is increasing the need for capacity funding to support local organizations in the development of projects to take advantage of these generational funding opportunities.

IV. Future Needs

For the 2023-2025 biennium staff propose to shift the approach from equal distribution of funds between councils and districts to begin narrowing the base funding gap between the two entities. For the 2023-2025 biennium OWEB staff proposes to provide an increase in funding for councils that meet all of OWEB's merit criteria from $131,465 to $166,142, which is 10% less than districts.

The proposed approach narrows the capacity funding gap between individual councils and districts, recognizes the need for both types of organizations to offer competitive wages to recruit and retain qualified staff, while acknowledging districts have an additional workload that includes the legal requirements of local government entities.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Councils serve a different niche and play an important role in engaging communities in conservation and restoration activities on private land critical for endangered species recovery. Examples of council accomplishments from the 2021-2023 biennium include:

- 30 councils (60 total staff and board members) participated in a series of DEI trainings hosted by the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils.
- The North Fork John Day WC secured new funding sources, enabling the council to serve new landowners. New funding sources include National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's America the Beautiful Challenge funding, Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund grants and Bella Vista grants.
- Lower Rogue WC is working with more than 120 unique landowners to address invasive weeds.
- Malheur WC installed more than 73,000 feet of fence to protect riparian areas.
- Luckiamute WC was able to leverage its Operating Capacity grant 13:1 and its budget exceeded $1 million for the first time with funding from state, federal and private sources.
- Long Tom WC formed the Urban Waters and Wildlife Partnership, serving the entire Eugene-Springfield metro area and completed three urban projects treating 108 acres of stormwater.
- The Siuslaw WC distributed over 20,000 native plants at no cost to local riparian residents.
- The Hood River Watershed Group worked completed Phase 2 of Neal Creek Instream Habitat Restoration, which included creation of two new side channels totally 640 feet of new off-

channel habitat, 2 alcoves and 11 log-jams along 1.5 miles of stream and across 5 private land ownerships.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$7,129,000	$0
2021-2023	$8,510,500	$*
2023-2025	$9,486,708	

*Full biennium data not available

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District Capacity

Recommended Amount: $8,307,135 (total line item $17,793,843 including Councils)

I. Summary

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) capacity grants provide funding for 45 SWCDs to work with landowners to conserve natural resources and lend support to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Agricultural Water Quality Management Program. The funding is divided into two funds for each SWCD: 1) Scope of Work funds support working with landowners and partners to protect and conserve natural resources; specifically, providing technical assistance and community engagement for the restoration and protection of native fish and wildlife, watersheds, and water quality through implementation of Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans. 2) District Operations Fund supports the capacity of the SWCDs to comply with Oregon Revised Statute requirements, conduct business, and aid landowners and partners.

II. Program History

SWCDs have an over 75-year history in Oregon. South Tillamook became the first official Soil Conservation District in 1939. In 1963 the Oregon Legislature added “and Water” to the district title. SWCDs are not state agencies but political subdivisions of state government known as municipal corporations. They are governed by enabling legislation under ORS 568. The five to seven members of SWCD Boards of Directors are elected officials.

Implementation of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Program is guided by legislative direction and budget notes. The annual work plan, commonly known as the Scope of Work , is built on the following principles:

1) ODA is responsible to develop, periodically modify, and implement Agricultural Water Quality Area Plans that are sufficient to meet water quality standards as described in statute.

2) SWCDs are the Local Management Agencies that assist ODA in implementing the Area Plans. SWCDs are to be involved in timely, effective implementation of Area Plans to the fullest extent practical.

3) Legislative budget notes (1997, 2007) provide direction on the use and purpose of funds allocated to SWCDs, as further refined in the Intergovernmental Agreement between ODA and OWEB.

4) Legislative direction is to use these funds to implement the agricultural portion of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds as administered by ODA.

III. Demand

In the 2021-2023 biennium, 40 SWCDs received full-capacity grant funding. Four Baker County SWCDs split two full shares of capacity grant funds. In recent years additional federal funds, targeted at on-the-ground restoration, have been made available through the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and more recently the Inflation Reduction Act. This increase in federal restoration funding is increasing the need for capacity funding to support local organizations in the development of projects to take advantage of these generational funding opportunities. OWEB funding helps to provide stability for staff funding.

IV. Future Need

For the 2023-2025 biennium OWEB staff are proposing to shift the approach from equal distribution of funds between councils and districts to begin narrowing the base funding gap between the two entities. OWEB staff proposes to provide districts a 5% cost of living increase from the initial 2021-2023 district capacity award which would move individual awards from $175,813 to $184,603 (the four Baker County SWCDs will continue to split two awards). The proposed approach recognizes the need for both types of organizations to offer competitive wages to recruit and retain qualified staff, while acknowledging districts have an additional workload that includes legal requirements of local government entities.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

SWCDs continue to work directly with ODA, watershed councils, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other partners in implementing Oregon's 38 Agricultural Water Quality Area Plans and assist landowners in conducting conservation work on agricultural lands. SWCDs are also vital to assisting ODA in implementing the Strategic Implementation Area Initiative. Examples of SWCD accomplishments from the 2021-2023 biennium include:

- Districts all over the state work together to plan and implement a wide variety of conservation projects and engage land managers through outreach events.
- In 2022 districts continued their partnership with NRCS's conservation programs. Two such incentive programs that are widely utilized by districts are the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), used to restore numerous miles of riparian buffers on ag lands, and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). In 2022 districts were awarded over $4.8 million from RCPP. Awarded projects include Tualatin SWCD's, Tualatin Basin Habitat Conservation Partnership which is working to remove barriers that obstruct migration access for native migratory fish in the Gales Creek Watershed; and Harney SWCD's Southeast Harney County Oregon Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy Project, whose goal is to reduce primary threats to Greater sage-grouse and improve habitat quality and quantity by accelerating the implementation of conservation actions on private lands.
- Conservation work around the state on ag lands also continues at the Wasco County SWCD. They recently completed an OWEB Stakeholder Engagement grant and feasibility studies to further progress on their Fifteen-mile Managed Underground Storage Project. This engineered subsurface storage facility is designed to catch and store water when flows are abundant, and

release water back into the stream when flows are low, augmenting water quality and quantity to benefit land managers and support wildlife.

- At Fort Rock Silver Lake SWCD, The Buck Creek Diversion Dam Replacement Project, a partnership consisting of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and a private landowner continues. This project replaces an existing irrigation diversion dam on Buck Creek, a tributary of the Paulina Marsh in Lake County, Oregon. The existing diversion represents the last fish passage impediment between Highway 31 at Paulina Marsh and the headwaters in the public land's ownership.
- The Coos SWCD continues working to implement a 10-year water quality monitoring project in the Lower Coquille River ODA Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) to collect data on water temperature and bacteria. The water quality monitoring will identify areas where riparian vegetation conditions and livestock activity affect water quality. The data will then be used by the Coos SWCD and partner organizations to prioritize restoration locations and actions to improve water quality within the SIA.
- Gilliam SWCD together with the Gilliam East John Day Watershed Council, ODA, OWEB, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, is implementing an ODA SIA Ag Water Quality Support Grant, to assess the most widespread ag water quality concern in the Lower John Day: elevated temperature. Funds will be used to update and perform a ground-based riverscape assessment and data survey of riparian conditions in over 60+ miles of the Thirty-mile Watershed. The assessment will be used to define the most effective places to lower stream temperatures in ag lands.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$7,129,000	$0
2021-2023	$8,510,500	$*
2023-2025	$8,307,135	

*Full biennium data not available

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Weed Grants

Recommended Amount: $3,250,000

I. Summary

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) noxious weed control grants are awarded annually through the Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB). Grant projects protect watershed health, native fish, and wildlife habitat from the negative impacts of State Listed noxious weeds. Under the OSWB Grant program, the OSWB works to fund as many high-priority projects as possible with the available funds. Grants are restricted to projects that restore, enhance, or protect fish and wildlife habitat, watershed functions, native salmonid populations, or water quality. Grants are for noxious weed control work. They must address State Listed noxious weeds and can include assessment, survey, outreach, and project design activities that are necessary to enable the weed control portion of the project.

The prevention and control of State Listed noxious weed species are critical elements of watershed protection and enhancement. To address this issue, ODA and OWEB partner to support the implementation of high-priority noxious weed control statewide. Noxious weed control is a first step in restoring watershed health and is key to protecting the investment in Oregon's restoration work.

II. Program History

The OSWB Grant Program was established in the 1999-2001 biennium after the passage of Measure 66. Until 2010 and the passage of Measure 76, the fiscal responsibilities for OSWB grants were administered through ODA. The passage of Measure 76 in 2010 started the partnership between OWEB and ODA for OSWB grants. The ballot measure changed the language within the constitution, designating OWEB as the single granting agency for State Lottery funds designated for watershed restoration. This change resulted in a move of OSWB grant funding under OWEB's budget, rather than being transferred directly to and administered by ODA.

The 2011-2013 biennium was a transition period for the OSWB grants partnership. A process was completed to identify strengths, challenges, and redundancies in the process, and refinements to the process were made based on the lessons learned.

III. Demand

Funding to the OSWB Grant Program provides cooperators with resources that are important for protecting Oregon's natural resources, treating priority state-listed invasive noxious weeds, and maintaining weed control activities in small communities. In the current biennium, 95 OSWB grants have been awarded, averaging $34,210. Many cooperators around the state depend on OSWB grant funding to pay for priority invasive noxious weed project work, match other federal or private grants, and keep staff funded to do invasive noxious weed work.

IV. Future Need

The demand for weed grants is expected to remain high. OSWB grant funding will focus on:

- Treatments on priority state listed noxious weeds,
- Areas impacted by wildfire,
- Aquatic noxious weeds,
- Funding essential to support local noxious weed staff, for weed surveys, monitoring, or treatments.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Highlights in the current biennium include:

- Completed projects reported leveraging 152% match with OSWB/OWEB funding.
- Completed projects treated 19,632 net acres, 10.5 instream miles, and 255 riparian miles, and surveyed 705,066 gross acres.
- Biocontrol activities were included in eight grants, targeting Russian knapweed, Canada thistle, Leafy spurge, and gorse. Crooked River Weed Management Area Grant, Central Oregon Coordinated Biocontrol Project is a great example of collaborative and coordinated grant. The grant worked with five counties: Crook, Jefferson, Wheeler, Deschutes, and Wasco covered 4228 gross acres. Grant included survey, releasing and monitoring, three biocontrol agents in Central Oregon.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$1,631,000	$0
2021-2023	$3,250,000	$0
2023-2025	$3,250,000	

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Strategic Implementation Areas

Recommended Amount: $1,500,000

I. Summary

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Agricultural Water Quality Management Program, is leading the "Strategic Implementation Area" (SIA) initiative. Select areas around the state receive focused stakeholder engagement, technical assistance, monitoring, and where necessary, compliance follow-up to address water quality concerns in agriculturally influenced areas. Local partners work with landowners and managers to meet and exceed water quality requirements, and ODA follows up as needed to address compliance concerns.

For each SIA identified by ODA, OWEB Stakeholder Engagement/Technical Assistance (TA) and Monitoring funding is offered. TA funding supports the SIA lead and local partners in developing outreach plans and working with landowners to develop restoration projects. Any restoration projects developed within the SIA may be submitted either through OWEB's grant programs or in partnership with other agencies for implementation.

Monitoring funds support baseline and long-term monitoring within the SIA geography. Each SIA convenes a local monitoring team to provide guidance and feedback on local monitoring objectives and the development of a monitoring proposal. Prior to implementation, all monitoring plans are reviewed by a Statewide Monitoring Advisory Group made up of representatives of OWEB, ODA, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

During the 2021-23 biennium, ODA and OWEB resumed SIA grants following the COVID-19 funding pause in 2020. Two SIAs applied for funding in January 2021; five applied in June 2021; and four applied in February 2022. In addition, OWEB convened an application and award process to offer the remaining recaptured funds from the 2017-19 biennium to current SIA grantees in January 2022.

II. Program History

Beginning with the 2017-2019 biennium, the board awarded $100,000 of Stakeholder Engagement/ TA funds for each SIA. These funds are available for up to four years to help SIA partners engage stakeholders, plan, and develop future conservation actions to address impacts on Oregon's water quality standards, and/or to address goals identified in salmonid conservation and recovery plans. The board also awarded an additional $25,000 in monitoring funds for each SIA. These funds are available for monitoring work after an approved monitoring proposal has been developed. The purpose of SIA monitoring is to measure changes in landscape and/or water quality resulting from

the implementation of projects that improve agricultural management practices. Detecting a signal in water quality and landscape conditions takes time, which is why the monitoring funds are available for up to 10 years.

During the 2021-23 biennium, OWEB worked with SIA grantees to provide flexibility in the use of funding between the TA and Monitoring funding categories. Two current SIA grantees requested to shift funding from TA to Monitoring to meet their monitoring needs.

III. Demand

As ODA and local partner staffing recovers from COVID-19 impacts, demand for SIAs is anticipated to continue to increase during the 23-25 biennium. ODA has developed a five-year schedule to identify SIAs geographically distributed throughout the state. For the 23-25 biennium, ODA anticipates identifying nine new SIAs. In each SIA area, ODA and local partners will estimate the OWEB funds needed for local technical assistance and tailor local partners' SIA technical assistance requests to the amount of funding needed. In addition, there is increasing demand for restoration funding for SIAs to be responsive to landowners. OWEB and ODA are considering how to address this need and may bring a proposal to the board in July 2023.

IV. Future Need

It is anticipated that SIAs will continue to be selected using a robust prioritization approach based on data from multiple sources including state and federal agencies. Funding will continue to be needed to assist in providing TA and Monitoring in selected SIAs. Current SIA grantees have consistently identified a need for additional monitoring funding, and agency staff has been working collaboratively to improve the process and identify specific areas of potential future need.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Several soil and water conservation districts have developed projects because of the SIA program and OWEB TA funds, and have submitted applications to OWEB's small grant and open solicitation grant programs. In addition, 16 groups have developed monitoring plans and are currently in various stages of data collection.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$1,925,000	$0
2021-2023	$1,500,000	$0
2023-2025	$1,500,000	

*Full biennium data not available

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Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Cost Share & Technical Assistance

Recommended Amount: $750,000 for CREP Cost Share, $1,200,000 for CREP TA

I. Summary

The Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a cooperative venture between the State of Oregon and Farm Services Agency (FSA), with technical support from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), state agencies, and local partners including soil and water conservation districts, watershed councils, and resource conservation and development councils. The purpose of this long-standing program is to restore, maintain, and enhance streamside areas along agricultural lands to benefit fish, wildlife, and water quality. Landowners enrolled in CREP receive annual rental payments and state and federal cost-share incentives to install approved conservation measures such as planting trees and shrubs and installing fencing and livestock watering facilities. OWEB also provides competitive, statewide CREP Technical Assistance (TA) grants every two years. These grants support costs associated with local CREP implementation including staffing, travel, training, outreach, and planning.

II. Program History

In 1998, Oregon CREP was established to support implementation of approved conservation practices aimed at improving riparian function on private lands throughout Oregon. The State of Oregon contributes 25% of the eligible cost-share for establishing approved conservation practices, 75% of eligible cost-share (minus available federal cost-share) for certain water developments, and 100% of costs for heavy-duty tree protectors. FSA contributes federal cost-share, rental payments, incentive bonuses, and administrative oversight. NRCS and the Oregon Department of Forestry provide the majority of the necessary technical assistance, with Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and others providing in-kind technical assistance. Since 1998, Oregon CREP has grown from a relatively small, experimental program into a robust statewide program that provides important, unique financial incentives and continues to be a leader in enrollments nationwide.

The board has supported CREP technical assistance with funding since 2001, beginning with SWCDs. In 2011, in consultation with CREP agency partners, funding eligibility expanded to include multi-county, multi-organization proposals. In that same year, OWEB and NRCS joined to invest over $1 million in CREP TA grants independent from the funding for SWCD capacity and OWEB's regular

technical assistance grant program. These two-year grants aimed to address critical technical assistance needs for Oregon CREP.

III. Demand

The agency is on track to expend all CREP funds by the end of the biennium. For the TA portion of the program, nine organizations secured funding through CREP TA grants; however, the funding available was not fully utilized. With funding in federal farm bill programs increasing, we anticipate that demand for technical assistance will increase in order to access the federal funds.

IV. Future Need

The CREP cost-share program is seeking to make available $750,000 in the 2023-2025 biennium. Staff estimate 10 organizations will apply for CREP TA funding in the 2023-2025 biennium. In the past, NRCS has contributed to the CREP TA program, and OWEB staff are in conversations to continue that investment this biennium. If that occurs, the number will be increased in July.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

The CREP TA funding supported nine programs in the 2021-2023 biennium. These programs provide critical technical assistance for Oregon CREP, covering 12 counties statewide. During the 2022 federal fiscal year, 3,185.4 acres were enrolled into CREP, 758.3 acres newly enrolled while 2,427.2 acres were re-enrolled. Farmers who participated in CREP received a total of $652,492 in payments during the 2022 federal fiscal year. Of that, 37% came from OWEB funding and the remaining 63% was paid by FSA.

Investments by Biennium – CREP Cost Share		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$750,000	$0
2021-2023	$750,000	$0
2023-2025	$750,000	
Investments by Biennium– CREP TA		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$1,163,000	$0
2021-2023	$1,200,000	$0
2023-2025	$1,200,000	

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Other Prior Committed Funding-SageCon Partnership

Recommended Amount: $350,000

I. Summary

The SageCon Partnership is a collaborative partnership focused on the ecological, social, and economic resilience in Oregon's sagebrush country. The partnership's work spans across science, policy, communication, and on-the-ground restoration, addressing challenges that operate at a landscape scale where no single agency or organization can make a big enough difference alone.

II. Program History

Sagebrush rangelands occupy about one-third of the state of Oregon and vast swaths of the western U.S. and face multiple threats across much of the range. In 2010, with populations of the Greater sage-grouse declining, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service proposed a listing under the Endangered Species Act. In response, a diverse range of partners in Oregon came together to build the Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan as an "all hands all lands" approach to species and habitat conservation for the sage-grouse.

The SageCon Partnership was charged with coordinating implementation of the plan across the many public and private partners that play a role. Partners increasingly recognize that the issues underlying sage-grouse decline are much broader and more complex than conservation of a single species and that a broad approach to restoring sagebrush ecosystem health is needed. In addition, complex issues like invasive annual grasses, wildfire, juniper encroachment, impacts from energy, mining, and infrastructure require cross-sector, collaborative, science-based approaches. Continuing negative habitat and population trends highlight the need for a strategic, coordinated approach that ensures partners are working effectively on the right things and in the right places to address those issues.

OWEB has a vested interest in sage-grouse, their habitat, and associated rural communities. The habitat area spans three OWEB regions and has been a major focus of watershed restoration investments for the Board. The area comprises large tracts of private, state, and federal lands. Over the years, numerous watershed projects funded by OWEB on private lands have been designed to enhance sage-grouse habitat. Other projects have been conducted in conjunction with federal land managers with the same purpose in mind.

III. Demand

Funding for this line item continues investment in key coordination and collaborative governance to planning and coordination from statewide to local levels, and leverages and coordinates tens of millions of dollars of state and federal investment on the ground. The partnership addresses the health of Oregon's sagebrush ecosystem, rural community vitality, and threats to habitat and wildlife, while advancing economic development within a conservation framework.

IV. Future Need

OWEB staff are proposing the same funding amount as in the 2021-2023 biennium for the SageCon Partnership in the 2023-2025 biennium

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

SageCon Partnership funding from OWEB in the 2021-2023 biennium has supported:

- Ongoing governance, coordination, and facilitation efforts, including budget coordination, a refreshed and updated SageCon vision and purpose document, annual SageCon Summit events in 2022 and 2023, and regular meetings of the executive-level Coordinating Council and program-level Staff Implementation Teams.
- Support for locally-led collaboration, including regular communication and technical support for Local Implementation Team coordinators and the Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances Coordinating Committee, and continued work on the SageCon Landscape Planning Tool to assist in developing cross-boundary sagebrush conservation projects.
- The implementation of ongoing coordination efforts to address invasive annual grasses, a key threat in the sagebrush ecosystem.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$300,000	$0
2021-2023	$350,000	$0
2023-2025	$350,000	

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Other Prior Committed Funding-Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership

Recommended Amount: $330,000

I. Summary

In 1995, the lower Columbia River was designated as an 'Estuary of National Significance' by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recognizing the river's important to the Pacific Northwest and the entire United States. The governors of Oregon and Washington, along with the EPA, needed an organization to further study the lower river and coordinate its restoration. They created the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (LCEP) to study and care for the lower river, and in 1999 the organization was incorporated as a non-profit organization. Since 2003, Oregon has provided state matching funds via OWEB in support of LCEP.

II. Program History

Beginning in the 2003-2005 biennium, Oregon has provided state funding at a base support level to LCEP, which is used to leverage EPA National Estuary Program funding for water quality and habitat restoration work throughout the lower Columbia River Watershed.

Beginning in 2013, this base funding for LCEP was shifted by the Oregon Legislature from Measure 76 Operating to 76 Measure Grant funds. Since then, at the beginning of each biennium LCEP has submitted a grant application to OWEB requesting funding for habitat restoration, invasive species removal, and community engagement efforts, which in turn is also utilized as the state matching funds to complement federal funding through the National Estuary Program.

OWEB has an interest in the lower Columbia River Watershed as the area supports a large portion of the population of Oregon, as well critical aquatic and terrestrial species, including 13 salmonid species listed as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act that use the river and estuary during key points of their life cycle. Habitats that support these species have greatly declined in both quantity and quality after more than a century of land clearing for development and other human actions. Over the years, numerous watershed projects funded through competitive grant programs independent of the base award, by OWEB have been implemented to restore habitat in the Lower Columbia River Watershed.

III. Demand

LCEP needs state matching funds to complement federal funding received through the National Estuary Program. OWEB funds to LCEP will support riparian and habitat restoration in the lower Columbia River Watershed.

IV. Future Need

OWEB staff are proposing the same funding amount as in the 2021-2023 biennium for LCEP in the 2023-2025 biennium

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

Funding provided by OWEB through the base support level grant has supported habitat restoration and stewardship work at three sites in the lower Columbia River Watershed (Fox Creek in Rainier, the floodplain of the Sandy River Delta in Troutdale, and South Scappoose Creek in Scappoose). Project activities include enhancement of riparian and floodplain habitats through native tree and shrub planting, controlling invasive species, and engaging a diversity of community volunteers in these restoration and stewardship efforts.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$321,000	$0.00
2021-2023	$330,000	$0.00
2023-2025	$330,000	

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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KLAMATH RIVER POST-DAM REMOVAL WATERSHED RESTORATION

Recommended Amount:

$8 million for 2023-25 biennium (in addition to $4.053 million from 2021-23 holding account based on October 2022 board award); remaining $2.947 to be allocated during 2025-2027.

I. Summary

On October 26, 2022, the OWEB Board committed $15 million over a period of 3-5 years for Klamath River post-dam removal restoration watershed restoration contingency costs incurred by Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC). The funding is consistent with OWEB's constitutional and statutory authority to fund projects that address habitat needs for native fish and wildlife, along with water quality.

II. Program History

The KRRC is a private, independent nonprofit organization formed by signatories of the Amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (AKHSA), including the States of Oregon and California, local governments, Tribal nations, PacifiCorp, irrigators, and several conservation and fishing groups, to take ownership and oversee the removal of the four Klamath River dams and restore the river to a free-flowing condition. As part of the AKHSA, PacifiCorp agreed to transfer ownership of the dams to KRRC, and funding in the amount of $450 million for removal and watershed restoration was committed through a California bond and by PacifiCorp ratepayers.

As KRRC implements the dam removal, former reservoir areas will become exposed and require restoration and stabilization of bare sediment deposits for long-term water quality, long-term ecological benefits, and restoration of natural river functions and processes. KRRC submitted a Reservoir Area Management Plan (RAMP) to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the principal responsible entity for the regulatory review of the project. The RAMP describes measures for restoration, monitoring, and adaptive management of the former reservoir areas and high-priority tributaries, including actions specifically planned for the former reservoir area upstream of J.C. Boyle dam, the section of the project located in Oregon. During the FERC review, a question was raised about whether existing contingencies and risk tools provide a high enough level of certainty that the work will be completed on time and within budget. In response to this concern, the states and PacifiCorp agreed to provide additional financial support for the project, divided equally among the three partners. On August 26, 2022, FERC released a Final Environmental Impact Statement and

recommended approval of the proposed license surrender, decommissioning, and removal of the four Klamath River dams.

In October 2022, staff from former Governor Brown's Natural Resources Office requested that the OWEB Board commit funding to support Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration. On October 26, 2022, the OWEB Board committed $15 million over a period of 3-5 years for Klamath River post-dam removal restoration watershed restoration contingency costs incurred by KRRC. The funding is consistent with OWEB's authority to fund projects that address habitat needs for native fish and wildlife, along with water quality. Multiple funding sources administered by OWEB will be utilized for this commitment. The initial grant award made by the board is $4.053 million, which was delegated to the OWEB Executive Director for distribution. The remaining $10.947 million will be included in the OWEB Board's spending plans for future biennia, beginning in 2023-2025.

III. Demand

The contingency costs are to be split equally in three ways among the State of Oregon, the State of California, and PacifiCorp, as described in a Memorandum of Agreement regarding Supplemental Contingency Funding Implementation that was executed by these three entities and KRRC in late 2022. OWEB and KRRC finalized a partnership agreement that affirms the intent of OWEB's investment in Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration and describes the framework, scope, tasks, and timeline for the overarching $15 million in funding. KRRC expects to submit a grant application for OWEB funding in September of 2023. Actions that are likely to be proposed to OWEB for funding include but are not limited to tributary restoration, floodplain reconnection, fish-passage barrier removal, instream large-wood placement, revegetation, and treatment of invasive species.

IV. Future Need

KRRC expects expenditures for restoration work associated with the removal of J.C. Boyle dam to occur over several years through payments to the main restoration contractor, RES. As a result, it is expected that not all the entire remaining commitments of $10.947 million will have to be allocated in the 2023-25 spending plan. At least $3 million (and possibly up to $5 million) could be allocated in the 2025-27 biennium. Oregon's commitment to contingency funding will be met when the entire $15 million is authorized and released.

V. Highlights of Accomplishments or Program Developments in the Biennium

The final License Surrender Order from FERC approving the decommissioning and removal of the dams was issued on November 17, 2022. Ownership of the four dams on the mainstem Klamath River previously owned by PacifiCorp was transferred to KRRC effective December 1, 2022. OWEB and KRRC finalized a partnership agreement that affirms the intent of OWEB's investment in Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration and describes the framework, scope, tasks, and timeline for the overarching $15 million in funding. The States of Oregon and California, PacifiCorp, and KRRC finalized a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Supplemental Contingency Funding Implementation. In February of 2023, OWEB opened a grant cycle for this KRRC-specific grant offering that includes a project-level grant application and associated guidance

documents for use by KRRC to propose specific activities that would utilize the OWEB's post-dam removal watershed restoration funding.

Investments by Biennium		
Biennium	Spending Plan (after any additional funds added)	Remaining Spending Plan at end of biennium
2019-2021	$0	$0
2021-2023	$4,053,000	$ 0
2023-2025	$8,000,000	
2025-2027	$2,947,000	
Total Commitment over 3 biennia	$15,000,000	

Agenda Item O

Other Business

Board Meeting April 25-26, 2023

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