Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board | Partnerships and Capacity Committee
Submitted Written Public Comments
November 18-19, 2026 | 2027-2029 FIP Interviews

Name	Topic
Marko Bey, Lomakatsi Restoration Project	Response to review team's concerns for Rogue Forest Partners FIP proposal
Lisa Clark, BLM	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal
Holly Jewkes, USDA	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal
Chris Webb, Arnold Irrigation District	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal
Eric Kilcullen, Deschutes SCWD	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal
David Stuart, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal
Josh Bailey, North Unit Irrigation District	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal
Jer Camarata, Swalley Irrigation District	Letter of Support for Deschutes Partnership FIP proposal

Rogue Forest Connectivity Initiative

Date: November 13, 2026

To: OWEB FIP Program Leadership

From: Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative and The Nature Conservancy on behalf of the Rogue Forest Partners

Re: Response to the Expert Review Team Evaluation · Rogue Forest Partners · November 2026

Together, Rogue Forest Partners thank the Expert Review Team for its careful reading of the RFCI application and its recognition of the partnership's governance, track record, science, and monitoring. This response addresses the evaluation's principal concerns, with citations to the submitted Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and work plans and encloses a consolidated restoration acre and budget table.

Two themes appear to underlie several of the review team's concerns: the readiness of Biennium 1 projects and the level of specificity regarding treatment in Biennia 2 and 3, including expansion onto private lands through landowner recruitment. The partnership believes the SAP and supporting materials provide substantial information on both. Biennium 1 intentionally emphasizes implementation-ready projects, while later-biennium work expands as federal authorizations are completed, private landowners are recruited, and landscape-scale prioritization and monitoring refine treatment priorities. We recognize that some of this information could have been more clearly consolidated, particularly anticipated acreage in later biennia and the process for prioritizing private landowner recruitment and offer the following clarifications.

Biennium 1 implementation readiness is documented

The proposal intentionally distinguishes ready-now projects from those awaiting federal authorization. The abstract states that “work will begin in ready-now areas such as Forest Park, BLM River Hills units, and private lands, then expand as Little Applegate federal authorizations are completed.” SAP Table 4.2 (p. 30) identifies Forest Park as “available now, Biennium 1”, which, as a municipal ownership, does not require federal NEPA. It also identifies BLM River Hills as “shovel-ready — Biennium 1” with NEPA complete through the Integrated Vegetation Management EA and the River Hills Determination of NEPA Adequacy. The City of Jacksonville's Council formally voted to partner on RFCI (SAP §2.4, pp. 14, 18). And the Medford BLM — itself a Rogue Forest Partner contributing substantial match — is committed to completing its NEPA-ready treatments through the initiative (p. 14). The Biennium 1 work plan assigns implementation accordingly: 1,000 acres at Forest Park (municipal lands, no NEPA constraints), 340 acres at River Hills (NEPA complete), and initial 30-acres of private-land treatment. Federal projects still completing environmental evaluation (Table 4.3, p. 31) include the USFS Yellowjacket (NEPA in progress) and the BLM Douglas-fir Mortality Complex (NEPA in progress), with implementation beginning in BN2 as authorization is obtained. Given these statements, the partnership believes the proposal establishes both authorization status and landowner/manager commitment for the Biennium 1 implementation areas.

Treatment placement and the Theory of Change

The all-lands distinction that drives the Rogue Basin Strategy is federal versus non-federal: across the basin most wildfire risk to communities is transmitted from lands adjacent to communities, which tend to be non-federal. The proposal's treatment priorities, particularly in the Jackson Creek Watershed, considered the location of individual parcels relative to communities, regardless of ownership, rather than basin-wide metrics. Forest Park, while municipally owned, is immediately adjacent to Jacksonville within the WUI, and the selected BLM areas are embedded within that same WUI landscape rather than remote federal ground. This placement does not diminish the role of individually owned private lands: private thinning scales from 30 acres in Biennium 1 to 100 in Biennium 2 and 630 in Biennium 3 as outreach converts to agreements. Importantly, in the assessment of wildfire risk to communities published in the Rogue Basin Strategy (Metlen et al., 2021), these federal, municipal, and private lands all map as among the highest for delivering fire to communities.

Private landowner engagement

The partnership believes the proposal provides a substantive private-landowner engagement strategy, building on almost two decades of success beginning with OWEB's first dry forest FIP, the Ashland Forest All Lands Restoration Initiative. The SAP §2.5 (p. 15) describes the engagement approach and the partnership's demonstrated delivery through RFRI, West Bear, and Prescription for Safety; §§ 4.4–4.5 (pp. 29–31) sequence outreach and initial treatment in Biennium 1 with expansion in Biennium 2; the Progress Monitoring Framework (pp. 64–66) establishes landowner tracking and a focal-area landowner database; and the Sustainability section (pp. 83–85) identifies funding pathways for expanding private-land implementation. We recognize the process for prioritizing parcels and moving landowners from outreach to agreement could have been more explicit and welcome the committee's questions on it.

Biennia 2–3 location and acres

SAP §4.5 and Table 4.3 (pp. 30–31) sequence continued work at Forest Park and River Hills, expanded private-land treatment, scaled federal thinning in Yellowjacket and the Douglas-fir Mortality Complex, and a growing prescribed-fire program; treatment selection follows the prioritization methodology at pp. 28 and 47–48 (Rogue Basin Strategy risk, mortality, connectivity, and priority-species analysis). We recognize the draft later-biennium work plans could have summarized anticipated acres by geography more clearly. The enclosed table now does: 1,370 activity acres in Biennium 1, 4,390 in Biennium 2, and 2,520 in Biennium 3 across the 5,370-acre treatment footprint, with a $10.9 million restoration budget.

Monitoring

Prior learning is already built in: RFCI's targets are set from RFRI's monitored benchmarks rather than re-proving treatment effects, new baselines are collected only in the new focal geographies, and intensive effort is reserved for new questions — the Douglas-fir mortality response, understory and invasives in a high-use WUI park, and bird demographic response. The partnership is open to tiering monitoring intensity where effects are well established.

Financial soundness

The restoration budget concentrates where the risk science points: 61% of the restoration budget falls on non-federal WUI lands immediately adjacent to Jacksonville, Central Point, Gold Hill, Ruch, and Medford, while federal treatments in the Little Applegate Watershed are carried substantially by agency commitments and match.

Ownership	Acres	Restoration budget	Share
Forest Park (City of Jacksonville)	1,200	$4,172,300	38%
Private lands	740	$2,475,100	23%
Non-federal subtotal	**1,940**	**$6,647,400**	**61%**
U.S. Forest Service	1,690	$2,502,200	23%
Bureau of Land Management	1,740	$1,752,000	16%
Federal subtotal	**3,430**	**$4,254,200**	**39%**
Total	**5,370**	**$10,901,600**	

We appreciate the committee's consideration and look forward to the November 19 discussion.

RFCI Proposal Development Team,
Marko Bey, Shane Jimerfield, Terry Fairbanks and Kerry Metlen

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Prineville District Office
3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754
blm.gov/office/Prineville-district-office

In Reply Refer To:
6600 (ORP060)

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear OWEB Grant Review Team:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Prineville District is writing to support the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council's (UDWC) Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership Proposal for aquatic habitat restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins at the Casey Tract. The UDWC has a long tradition of establishing successful partnerships with projects that lead to measurable change.

As part of their mission to restore the Upper Deschutes River watershed, the UDWC is building collaboratives to address aquatic restoration along the Little Deschutes. The Little Deschutes River flows approximately 92 miles before joining the mainstem Deschutes. The lower 50 miles provide significant habitat for the threatened Oregon spotted frog that was listed as a threatened species in 2014. Within this reach, the Casey Tract is a parcel of public land managed by the BLM as part of the Kellems allotment. The Casey Tract parcel includes over two miles of the Little Deschutes River and represents a high-priority site for restoration due to Oregon spotted frog occupancy, ecological values, and Critical Habitat. The BLM is currently preparing NEPA documentation for implementing Oregon Spotted Frog (*Rana pretiosa*) habitat restoration activities at the Casey Tract and other BLM-managed lands with Critical Habitat in the La Pine Basin.

As a result, the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council's plans for restoration work fits with and augments BLM's restoration interests and goals of improving and enhancing these vital riparian areas. Working together, the BLM and UDWC, along with other partner agencies, can continue to make progress toward restoring a healthy stream corridor that supports all the native species that rely on wetlands, in-stream habitat, and riparian areas.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. For more information, please contact me at 541-416-6864 or lmclark@blm.gov, or Wesley Noone, BLM Hydrologist at 541-416-6856 or wnoone@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

LISA CLARK

Digitally signed by LISA CLARK
Date: 2026.11.13 15:40:02 -08'00'

Lisa Clark
Field Manager
Deschutes Field Office

USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Deschutes National Forest | 63095 Deschutes Market Road
Bend, OR 97701
541-383-5300

File Code: 1500
Date: November 13, 2026

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer Street NE #360
Salem, OR 97301

The Deschutes National Forest wishes to express support for the Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership proposal, Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins. This proposal supports the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (DBHCP) through implementation of strategies outlined in the Oregon Spotted Frog Recovery Plan and the Recovery Implementation Strategy. The DNF was an active partner in the development of the DBHCP and work outlined in this proposal would complement ongoing actions on National Forest System lands to improve conditions across the Basin.

These strategies include designing and implementing habitat restoration projects for the Oregon Spotted Frog, modernizing irrigation infrastructure to support winter stream flows in the Upper Deschutes River, protecting instream flows through transactions with willing sellers, and creating new nature preserves to protect and restore habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog.

Thank you to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for considering investing in these important efforts to support the restoration and protection of habitat and supporting efforts to protect stream flows in the Deschutes basin.

Sincerely,

HOLLY JEWKES
Forest Supervisor

cc: william.munro@usda.gov

ARNOLD
IRRIGATION DISTRICT

19604 Buck Canyon Rd., Bend, OR 97702
Phone: 541-382-7664 Fax: 541-382-0833

November 12, 2026

RE: Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership Proposal – Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins

Dear OWEB Partnerships and Capacity Committee Members:

Arnold Irrigation District wishes to express support for the Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) proposal, Aquatic Habitat Restoration for the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins. The FIP proposal seeks to support implementation of the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (DBHCP) and would fund implementation of strategies outlined in the Oregon Spotted Frog Recovery Plan and the Recovery Implementation Strategy. These strategies include modernizing irrigation infrastructure to support winter stream flows the Upper Deschutes River, protecting instream flows through transactions with willing sellers, designing and implementing habitat restoration projects for the Oregon Spotted Frog, and creating new nature preserves to protect and restore habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog.

This proposal seeks $15M over six years to implement projects identified in the proposal while leveraging more than $17M for these projects over the same time period. Thank you to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for considering investing in these important efforts to support the restoration and protection of habitat and supporting efforts to modernize irrigation infrastructure and protect stream flows in the Deschutes basin.

Sincerely,

Chris Webb, District Manager

Arnold Irrigation District
19604 Buck Canyon Rd
Bend, OR 97702

Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District

deschutesswcd.org | 805 SW Industrial Way #5, Bend, OR 97702 | info@deschutesswcd.org

November 11, 2026

RE: Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership Proposal – Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins

Dear OWEB Partnerships and Capacity Committee Members:

The Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District wishes to express support for the Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) proposal, Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins. This proposal seeks to support implementation of the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (DBHCP) and would fund implementation of strategies outlined in the Oregon Spotted Frog Recovery Plan and the Recovery Implementation Strategy. These strategies include designing and implementing habitat restoration projects for the Oregon Spotted Frog, modernizing irrigation infrastructure to support winter stream flows the Upper Deschutes River, protecting instream flows through transactions with willing sellers, and creating new nature preserves to protect and restore habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog.

This proposal seeks $15M over six years to implement projects identified in the proposal while leveraging more than $17M for these projects over the same time period. Thank you to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for considering investing in these important efforts to support the restoration and protection of habitat and supporting efforts to modernize irrigation infrastructure and protect stream flows in the Deschutes basin.

Sincerely,

Erin Kilcullen

Erin Kilcullen
DSWCD District Manager

November 9, 2026

RE: Deschutes Partnership Focused Investment Partnership Proposal – Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins

Dear OWEB Partnerships and Capacity Committee Members:

I am writing in support of the Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) proposal to restore and protect aquatic habitat for Oregon spotted frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes subbasins.

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) has enduring cultural, historical, and sovereign interests throughout the Deschutes Basin. The Upper and Little Deschutes subbasins encompass a portion of the Tribe's ceded lands under the Treaty of 1855, including areas where the Tribe retains reserved rights to harvest fish, game, and other traditional foods. The Tribe also holds water rights and maintains a sovereign co-management role in Deschutes Basin water resources.

Healthy watersheds, functioning floodplains, adequate stream flows, and connected aquatic habitats are essential to the long-term resilience of native species and the ecological systems upon which Tribal communities have depended since time immemorial. The proposed restoration of Oregon spotted frog habitat offers important benefits beyond the focal species, contributing to broader watershed health and the recovery of native aquatic ecosystems.

CTWS has participated in the development of the Deschutes Partnership's Strategic Action Plan and has contributed to collaborative planning, restoration implementation, and technical review. These relationships reflect the importance of bringing Tribal knowledge, interests, and resource-management perspectives into watershed restoration efforts.

The Deschutes Partnership's established record of collaboration and implementation provides a strong foundation for advancing this work. Its approach to integrating habitat restoration, land protection, streamflow restoration, irrigation modernization, and effectiveness monitoring offers an opportunity to achieve meaningful, measurable ecological outcomes.

I encourage OWEB to recognize the importance of continued investment in this initiative. Sustained collaboration among watershed organizations, Tribal governments, public agencies, landowners, and other partners is essential to addressing the interconnected challenges facing the Deschutes Basin.

I also see considerable opportunities to strengthen Tribal participation in the collaborative stewardship of these resources in the years ahead. Supporting effective partnerships and recognizing the sovereign interests and responsibilities of Tribal governments will be important to the long-term success of watershed restoration throughout the basin.

Thank you for your consideration and for OWEB's continued investment in Oregon's watersheds.

Sincerely,

David Stuart
BNR Watershed Restoration Coordinator
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
805 SW Industrial Way, Suite 5, Bend, OR 97702
(541)-460-1121

NORTH UNIT IRRIGATION DISTRICT

2024 NW Beech Street
Madras, Oregon 97741

(541) 475-3625
(541) 475-3652
Fax (541) 475-3905
nuid@northunitid.com

November 12, 2026

RE: Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership Proposal – Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins

Dear OWEB Partnerships and Capacity Committee Members:

North Unit Irrigation District wishes to express support for the Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) proposal, Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins. The FIP proposal seeks to support implementation of the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (DBHCP) and would fund implementation of strategies outlined in the Oregon Spotted Frog Recovery Plan and the Recovery Implementation Strategy. These strategies include modernizing irrigation infrastructure to support winter stream flows the Upper Deschutes River, protecting instream flows through transactions with willing sellers, designing and implementing habitat restoration projects for the Oregon Spotted Frog, and creating new nature preserves to protect and restore habitat for the Oregon Spotted Frog.

This proposal seeks $15M over six years to implement projects identified in the proposal while leveraging more than $17M for these projects over the same time period. Thank you to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for considering investing in these important efforts to support the restoration and protection of habitat and supporting efforts to modernize irrigation infrastructure and protect stream flows in the Deschutes basin.

Sincerely,

Josh Bailey
General Manager
North Unit Irrigation District

Swalley
IRRIGATION DISTRICT

11/12/2026

RE: Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership Proposal – Aquatic Habitat Restoration for Oregon Spotted Frog in the Upper and Little Deschutes Subbasins

Dear OWEB Partnerships and Capacity Committee Members:

Swalley Irrigation District supports the Deschutes Partnership's Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) proposal. It advances Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan strategies, including modernizing irrigation infrastructure to support winter flows in the Upper Deschutes River, protecting instream flows for fish and wildlife, and restoring and preserving Oregon Spotted Frog habitat. We at Swalley believe modernizing irrigation infrastructure is one of the most important jobs we can do to support fish, farms, and basin biodiversity. We thank OWEB for all it has done to support our efforts.

The Deschutes Partnership's proposal requests $15M over six years and leverages more than $17M in additional funding. We urge OWEB to continue investing in these restoration efforts as we build on decades of holistic, community-based work in our basin that benefits fish, farms, and communities.

Respectfully,

Jer Camarata
General Manager & Board Secretary
Swalley Irrigation District

_____

CC: Deschutes River Conservancy staff

Phone 541/388-0658
Fax 541/389-0433

64672 COOK AVENUE
SUITE ONE
BEND, OREGON 97701

www.swalley.com