

## Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund Expenditure Recommendations January 2021

The Oregon Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee announced the second round notice of opportunity (Attachment 5) on August 25 with a deadline to apply of October 21. The Committee received 65 proposals for \$562,021.21. The Committee met on October 26 to initially review the proposals and finalize the review process. The Committee added an additional round of review to help deal with the unexpected volume of applicants.

Between October 26 and November 17, each committee member reviewed 18-19 projects, which resulted in each project having two reviewers. Projects were evaluated on each of the following criteria:

- **Clarity of the proposal** – well presented, organized and with clear deliverables
- **Project outcomes align with OCRF Program Priorities identified in the Expenditure Framework and are consistent with the Oregon Conservation Strategy** – the more the better, but strong alignment with at least one as specified in the framework Framework for Expenditures from the OCRF
- **Timeliness consistent with having the necessary approvals in place** – the Committee seeks projects that will be implemented in the next few months
- **Appropriate partnership and demonstration of partner investment** – project engages a variety of partners and shows commitment from participants
- **Measurability** – the applicant has identified the ability to quantify the results of the project
- **Addresses diversity** - including: geographic, taxonomic, partners engaged, and Oregonians engaged
- **Outdoor Equity** - How well projects engage Oregonians in the solution to a key conservation issue or in recreational opportunities that reach out to and engage people who have not participated in the past because of language barriers, financial barriers, access barriers, etc.

The Committee also took note of whether applicants have a proven track record of achieving stated outcomes and the integration/intersectionality between conservation and recreation demonstrated in the proposal.

Also between October 26 and November 17, each of the 65 proposals was reviewed by one member of ODFW or OPRD staff. Staff provided the Advisory Committee with subjective comments on the need for the project, likelihood that the project would be successful, and clarifying questions the Committee should ask. These comments were available to the Committee members to reference but were not part of the scoring process.

Based on the first round of review, the Committee identified 13 projects that scored high on the Outdoor Equity criterion for review by the Outdoor Equity Subcommittee. The Committee also selected the top 23 projects for the second round review. All seven voting members of the

Advisory Committee reviewed these 23 projects based on the same criteria. Each project received a total score out of 60 points.

The Subcommittee met November 25 and recommended seven projects for additional consideration by the full Committee and requested funds for the first three.

The Committee met on December 9 and, based on available funds, voted to recommend the top three outdoor equity projects and the top four from the top 23 rankings.

The Committee members felt strongly that many of the project proposals were worthy. Additionally, there is not much time left in this program to run another grant cycle, but funds will continue to be raised for the next six months at least. The Committee has requested that the Commission provisionally approve 22 additional projects for expenditure once funds become available. The projects are listed in priority order in Attachment 3. If approved, expenditures of available funds will be made in ranked order unless restricted funds become available for a specific project on the list.

The seven projects recommended for expenditure today total \$64,983.00 are:

<b>Proposal #</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>OCRF Expenditure</b>
38	Community Science for Conservation: Engaging Oregonians in the Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas	The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation	\$9,987.00
17	Wallowa Wolverine and Forest Carnivore Project	Oregon Wildlife Foundation	\$9,996.00
3	Western pond turtle distribution in Yamhill County using community science volunteers.	Northwest Ecological Research Institute	\$10,000.00
53	Beaver Survey and Restoration: Central Coast Estuaries	The Wetlands Conservancy	\$10,000.00
43	Exploring Nature in Lents	ROSE Community Development	\$5,000.00
13	People of Color Outdoor and iUrban Teen Connect in Nature	People of Color Outdoors	\$10,000.00
61	BIPOC Conservation Strategy	Wild Diversity	\$10,000.00

### **Community Science for Conservation: Engaging Oregonians in the Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas**

Pollinators, and primarily bees, are essential to the reproduction of more than 85% of the world’s flowering plants, which in turn produce the fruits and seeds that feed songbirds and other wildlife. Despite the ecological importance of bees, many face extinction risk. Oregon lists both Franklin’s bumble bee and the western bumble bee as Strategy Species in the Oregon

Conservation Strategy, and lists several more bumble bees as Data Gap Species. In order to effectively recover populations of these bees, we need to fill gaps in knowledge of their distributions, habitat associations, and life histories. To address this need, we will enlist Oregonians statewide in the Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas ([www.pnwbumblebeeatlas.org](http://www.pnwbumblebeeatlas.org)), a community science project aimed at tracking bumble bees and making data available for conservation purposes. We will recruit volunteers in eight of the nine ecoregions identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy to participate in the project. In addition, we will provide two workshops for volunteer community scientists in regions that participation is needed to fill survey gaps and where Strategy Species have historically occurred; one in southern Oregon and one in eastern Oregon. We plan to engage at least 150 volunteers who will collect photographic vouchers of at least 2,000 bumble bees, and make the resulting data available for conservation and recovery planning of imperiled bumble bee species.

### **Wallowa Wolverine and Forest Carnivore Project**

The Wallowa Wolverine and Forest Carnivore Project is monitoring the persistence of wolverines throughout the Wallowa Range using runpole monitoring and winter tracking to garner new insights on the status and conservation needs of wolverines in Oregon. With additional support from OCRF, the project will pilot monitoring of marten in partnership with Wallowa Whitman National Forest wildlife biologists and gather photo and genetic information on Rocky Mountain red fox to assist ongoing studies of this rare native Oregon subspecies.

### **Western pond turtle distribution in Yamhill County using community science volunteers**

This project seeks to greatly amplify our understanding of the presence and distribution of an OCS Priority Species, *A. marmorata*, throughout Yamhill County. Yamhill County has the fewest documented reports of turtles in the Lower Willamette watershed, greatly impeding our conservation of this species in this area of its range. Using a combination of visual encounter surveys and hands on trapping, we will utilize community volunteers to document the turtle species composition at a minimum of 12 sites throughout the county (all sites will be on public property and access will be requested from land managers). Special focus will be placed on recruiting volunteers from historically underserved communities in order to increase education and stewardship of native turtles. Records for adjacent counties would suggest a relatively robust population of *A. marmorata* in the county, however, the lack of survey effort prevents our understanding of this species in this important area of its range in the Lower Willamette watershed. Habitat conversion, reduction in habitat connectivity, and overpopulation of non-native species have been shown to be major threats to this species. The data collected through this project will be utilized by local land managers to improve habitat and connectivity throughout the watershed. This project is aligned with the ODFW OCAMP project and will be working with that project to incorporate collected data into their occupancy model for this species.

## **Beaver Survey and Restoration: Central Coast Estuaries**

This is a pilot project that refines and tests a process developed by The Wetlands Conservancy to identify and survey beaver habitats in key coastal estuaries with local partners and volunteer teams of community scientists. Indirectly, the project will impact the health of significant estuaries on the central coast, home to over 400 members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and 14,500 residents of Newport/Walport and thousands of visitors/year. Diverse wetland habitats created by beavers are vital to salmon, lamprey, and countless other species. Currently, beaver presence is largely unknown in Oregon's coastal regions. Understanding the location of active beaver populations allows land stewards to select best conservation and restoration techniques. The Wetlands Conservancy will work collaboratively with key regional partners - including the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, OR Department of Fish & Wildlife, MidCoast Watershed Council, and USFS - to review, discuss protocols, and develop a survey process for local implementation in three targeted estuaries: Siletz and Salmon Rivers, and Yaquina Bay. The Wetlands Conservancy will convene partners, train crew leaders and volunteers and will summarize and share results. Surveys are done during low-flow seasons, but planning and training will happen year-round. The Wetlands Conservancy will present results and next steps to community and partners, and discuss potential restoration projects.

## **Exploring Nature in Lents**

This project aims to increase the exposure and awareness of natural areas in and around Lents for young people and teach them about sustainability, conservation and potential environmental field careers. It will connect youth from the Lents Youth Initiative, a program of ROSE Community Development that live in Lents and surrounding neighborhoods. The program focuses on youth of color and low-income youth. The Lents Youth Initiative has been providing an annual training of about 40 hours to 30 youth each spring. These trainings were led by ROSE Community Development. With COVID19 restrictions, it was difficult to continue our training as usual, since it was done in large groups and by one single staff person. With this project we plan to change the way we teach young people about environmental justice and social justice. The different partner organizations will come together and choose a section to teach the students. The group of students will be split up and training done outside so that we can maintain social distancing guidelines. After completing the training, the youth will have an opportunity to apply for a paid summer internship with one of the partner organizations that led the trainings. During the internships, the youth will be able to further their knowledge and experience about natural areas and caring for them.

## **People of Color Outdoor and iUrban Teen Connect in Nature**

People of Color Outdoors (POCO) is a Meetup group that has been connecting Black, Indigenous and People of Color with nature in a variety of ways for the past three years. POCO has hosted approximately 125 outings since 2017. POCO's fiscal sponsor is the Columbia Slough Watershed Council. POCO has approximately 1800 individual members between Meetup and Facebook. POCO's mission is to make outdoor activities accessible in a safe manner, to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). iUrban Teen is a non-profit STEM organization that brings together underrepresented teens and young adults for career exploration and mentoring. iUrban Teen has thousands of members, and has chapters in Oregon, Washington, Texas and California. POCO and iUrban Teen propose hosting an overnight camp on the coast for first time campers. The camp will be a three day, two night camp.

## **BIPOC Conservation Strategy**

Funds are requested to support Wild Diversity's Conservation & Stewardship Program. Our project will create a platform for current & future conservationists of color from our community to learn, explore and thrive. Wild Diversity seeks to move away from the single-day, labor-centered model for people of color in conservation and instead build our community up as thought leaders who have the autonomy to create conservation initiatives that better support and retain people of color within the field. Our conservation program is three parts: 1. Support current BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) conservation leaders to collaborate on a new vision for BIPOC conservation for Wild Diversity. 2. Teach our culturally relevant conservation curriculum to students within our Wild X and Youth Ecology programs. 3. Create a foundation for conservation by facilitating access for our community to experience wild spaces, building those relationships with the outdoors, and helping them find their personal 'love language' within conservation.