



## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) and the associated Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) was created in 2019 by House Bill 2829. The OCRF was scheduled to be abolished on July 1, 2021, and the Advisory Committee was scheduled to end by January 2, 2022. These sunset dates were removed by the legislature via House Bill 2171 in the 2021 session. The legislature also appropriated money to the OCRF program for the 2021-2023 biennium, including:

- \$545,000 general fund to match the total private funds raised in the 2019-2021 biennium;
- \$1 million general fund to match contributions made to the OCRF from sources other than state government in the 2021-2023 biennium (renewing the fundraising challenge); and
- \$1 million from Oregon's apportionment of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds.

So, once again, the Department has been tasked with raising one million dollars of private funds for the OCRF to help implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy and fulfill its broad mandate for engaging Oregonians in the outdoors.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

All Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee virtual meetings are open to the public and recordings are posted on YouTube for those who cannot attend live.

### ISSUE 1

Amend Oregon Administrative Rule 635-098-0040 related to membership on the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee to conform with House Bill 2171.

## ANALYSIS

House Bill 2171 made three changes to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund program:

1. Added language to the description of the Advisory Committee, “The Associate Director of Outdoor Recreation, or the associate director’s designee, shall serve as a nonvoting, ex officio member.”
2. Removed the sunset date, making the program permanent.
3. Appropriated \$1,000,000 to the Emergency Board, for the current biennium. Including this provision, “The State Fish and Wildlife Director may request that the board release funds appropriated under this section. The board may only release the appropriated funds in increments that match deposits into the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2023, from sources other than state government, as defined in ORS 174.111.”

The proposed amendments to Oregon Administrative Rule 635-098-0040 seek to implement the first two changes described above.

First, House Bill 2829 in 2019 indicated that the membership of the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee would be determined by the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The rules adopted by the Commission in 2019 included the Director of the Office of Outdoor Recreation as a non-voting participant on the Committee. House Bill 2171 in 2021 simply codifies this participation by the Office of Outdoor Recreation. The proposed rule language seeks to match the statutory description of the Office of Outdoor Recreation’s participation as a “ non-voting, ex-officio member” rather than as a non-voting participant as it is described in current rule. For simplicity and clarity, the proposed rule extends this language to the description of the participation of one member of the Commission on the Advisory Committee.

Second, the rules adopted by the Commission in 2019 did not include term limits for Advisory Committee members, because the Advisory Committee only existed for two years. The proposed rule adds a four year term length and limits Advisory Committee members to serving no more than two consecutive terms. This term length and term limit is consistent with other state advisory committees, boards, and commissions.

## OPTIONS

1. Adopt proposed changes to OAR 635-098-0040.
2. Amend proposed changes to OAR 635-098-0040.
3. Make no changes to OAR 635-098-0040.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1

### DRAFT MOTION:

I move to amend OAR Chapter 635, Division 098, 0040 as proposed by staff.

**Effective Date:** *Upon Filing*

## ISSUE 2

Review and approve recommendation to expend OCRF funds for staff support for the program and for the project, “Sea Otter Restoration Community Engagement.”.

## ANALYSIS

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Program was created in 2019 without any upfront funding because of the need to generate \$1,000,000 from non-state sources to kick-start the program. Because of this, managing the fundraising, managing the Advisory Committee, and OCRF grant management has been absorbed by the Natural Resource Specialist 5 position in the Director’s Office. This position is responsible for leading efforts to generate alternative funding for implementing the Oregon Conservation Strategy among multiple other conservation policy efforts.

Now that the OCRF program has matured to a program with at least \$2,545,000 to spend this biennium, the workload is comparable to the department’s other grant making programs. These programs are supported by full time Natural Resource Specialist 3 positions. The Advisory Committee is recommending expenditure of \$181,000 from the OCRF to support hiring a full-time Natural Resource Specialist 3 for the rest of the 2021-2023 biennium. This would cover the salary, benefits, and S&S costs for this position. The department will seek to incorporate this position into the base budget for the 2023-2025 biennium and in to the future.

In the first round of OCRF program grants, the OCRF supported a project entitled, “Feasibility Study: Restoring Sea Otters to the Oregon Coast.” This project has recently been completed and

The Elakha Alliance is seeking to engage in a communications and outreach effort to seek consensus for future restoration of sea otters to the Oregon coast. Specifically, if this project is approved, private donations of \$50,000 would be matched with \$15,000 from OCRF funds to support a half-time South Coast Community Liaison position for all of 2022 and approximately five months of the costs of a Director of Outreach and Community Relations for which the Elakha Alliance will fund the balance of the year from other sources.

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee invited The Elakha Alliance to submit this proposal in late September. A subcommittee reviewed the project using the standard OCRF project review criteria and met on September 30 to make a recommendation to the full Committee. The full Committee met on October 6 and discussed the project with the applicant. The Committee unanimously voted to recommend expenditure of up to \$65,000 for “Sea Otter Restoration Community Engagement.” contingent upon receipt of restricted donations of up to \$50,000.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Accept both expenditure recommendations.
2. Accept only one of the expenditure recommendations
3. Reject both expenditure recommendations

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Option 1.

### **DRAFT MOTION:**

I move to approve expenditure from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund to support a full-time position to support the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund program and expenditure of up to \$65,000 for the project, “Sea Otter Restoration Community Engagement” contingent upon the receipt of restricted donations of up to \$50,000.

**Effective Date:** October 15, 2021