



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) was created within the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) as a new way for Oregonians to support a broad range of conservation and recreation efforts throughout the state. The intent of the OCRF is to increase the Department's capacity to protect and enhance the species and habitats identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy and create new opportunities for wildlife watching, urban conservation, community science, and other wildlife-associated recreation.

Expenditures from the OCRF are recommended to the Commission by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). Since the formation of the OCRF, 91 projects have been funded through four rounds of competitive requests for proposals (RFP). These projects have spanned the state and have provided needed funds to ODFW partners promoting outdoor equity and access as well as science-focused conservation and research. The Advisory Committee seeks to make expenditures in each funding round encompassing diverse geography, taxonomy, representation of program priorities, and partner engagement.

In 2022, the OCRF account received \$5 million of General Fund as part of a statewide drought relief package (HB 5202), with \$4 million for use on drought, wildfire, and aquatic habitat resilience related work and \$1 million to be used for broader OCRF mission related work. The Advisory Committee released their fourth RFP to the public in August 2022, which closed in October 2022 with 64 applications (see attachment 2). Each project proposal was scored by at least two Advisory Committee members (see attachment 3) and reviewed by content experts from ODFW staff and the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation.

The Advisory Committee met on December 5, 2022, to select projects based on overall rankings (per the review process defined in the OCRF Expenditure Framework) and the desired diversity of project types and geographies. The Advisory Committee recommended 25 projects for funding for a total expenditure of \$997,929 from the OCRF. Many of these projects (15 projects) have a clear connection with statewide needs around drought and wildfire research, monitoring, and outreach while addressing several of the Oregon Conservation Strategy's priorities for fish, wildlife, and habitat.

The Advisory Committee is seeking the Commission's approval for the expenditure of \$997,929 from the OCRF to fund 25 projects selected from the Fall 2022 OCRF RFP cycle (see attachment 2).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee meetings are open to public participation with time on the agenda for comments from participating members of the public. The opportunity to apply for funds was well publicized through a press release, multiple emails, and amplification through our partners' communication networks.

ISSUE

Conservation & Recreation Fund Expenditure Recommendations from currently available funds.

ANALYSIS

A summary of the Advisory Committee's process and the recommendations are provided in attachment 3.

OPTIONS

1. Approve Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee recommendations for expenditures.
2. Reject project proposals

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the selected projects (totaling \$997,929) as recommended by the Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the 25 projects recommended for funding by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee as described in Attachment 2.

Effective Date: December 16, 2022