

Proj #	Project Title	Lead Organization	Requested Funds	Ecoregion	Project Abstract
1	Avian response to wildfire and post-fire land management in the Oregon Cascades	Oregon State University	\$89,925	West Cascades	<p>Patterns of ecological disturbance are a principal driver of biodiversity worldwide, and can be critical for species of conservation concern. In the mesic coniferous forests of western North America, pyrodiversity—or spatiotemporal variation in fire intensity and frequency—can positively influence biodiversity by creating complex landscape mosaics. However, shifts in historical fire and climate regimes, compounded by post-fire forest management practices such as fuel reductions, thinning, and salvage logging, can alter the trajectory of ecosystem recovery following wildfire. Furthermore, ongoing drought conditions in the Pacific Northwest have contributed to an increased frequency of large, mixed-severity wildfires. As these so-called “megafires” become the norm in the Pacific Northwest, so too have efforts to mitigate future fire risk through thinning and fuels reductions, and to reduce economic losses through salvage logging. Yet, the ways in which drought-mediated wildfire and forest management interact to impact biodiversity are not wholly understood. To address this knowledge gap, we propose to evaluate the response of avifauna to two large, mixed-severity fires in the Umpqua Headwaters and Rock Creek Conservation Opportunity Areas: the 2020 Archie Creek Fire and 2021 Jack Fire, with a focus on several Oregon Conservation Strategy Species. The proposed project directly complements ongoing Pittman-Robertson-funded work to evaluate large mammal response to wildfire using a suite of complementary monitoring data. The outcomes of this research have the potential to guide forest management practices on state and federal lands by identifying recovery trajectories that maximize biodiversity and support sensitive Strategy Species.</p>
2	Beebe Island Ponds Turtle Habitat Enhancement	Clackamas River Basin Council	\$50,000	Willamette Valley	<p>Clackamas River Basin Council (CRBC) seeks Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) support to improve native turtle habitat in two former gravel ponds near the Clackamas River. CRBC is implementing the Beebe Island Side Channel project in the Clackamas River adjacent to the gravel ponds funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). During the scoping of the stream restoration project an opportunity to enhance habitat for non-salmonids in the project area was identified. OCRF funds will be used to fund the installation of turtle basking structures in two perennial ponds adjacent to the side channel project. The OWEB FIP grant will cover vegetation management around the ponds (a total of 26 acres of riparian area will be treated at the site), as well as the design and permitting of the basking structures. In summer 2024, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) documented Western Painted Turtle activity in these ponds, an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species, identifying six distinct individuals during two trapping sessions (No Western Pond Turtles were captured or observed). According to Susan Barnes ODFW, the ponds, particularly the western one, are lacking suitable basking habitat, especially areas near deep-water refuge. Installing basking structures will improve conditions for the native turtles currently inhabiting the ponds and benefit future generations of turtles and other wildlife that rely on aquatic structures for portions of their life histories. Beyond the habitat restoration, CRBC plans to raise awareness about native turtles and their habitat needs by engaging with neighboring businesses, creating online content for social media, our website, and newsletters, and hosting a live recorded webinar about the project. Key partners in this project include Clackamas County (landowner), ODFW (trapping and habitat assessment), OWEB (funding for the broader project), and the Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP).</p>

3	Bend to Suttle Lake Wildlife Crossing Initiative	Oregon Wildlife Foundation	\$100,000	East Cascades	<p>The Oregon Wildlife Foundation, on behalf of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), requests funding to support construction of four wildlife overcrossings near Black Butte on Highway 20, between mile markers 90 and 95 in Deschutes and Jefferson Counties. Highway 20, between Bend and Suttle Lake, intersects several important movement corridors for mule deer, elk, and other wildlife. Like dams, roads act as barriers blocking the migration and movement of terrestrial wildlife. Each year, ODOT documents between 350 and 600 wildlife-vehicle strikes through mule deer and elk carcass collection on this section of highway; this is highest density of deer and elk wildlife-vehicle collisions on any highway in Oregon. Without action to mitigate the roadway's impacts, Highway 20 threatens to block the movement of terrestrial wildlife within the Metolius River Conservation Opportunity Area, preventing wildlife from completing annual and daily movements essential to their survival. Wildlife passage structures are a proven tool for mitigating the impacts of roads on terrestrial wildlife movement. The Bend to Suttle Lake project will complete design and engineering for four overcrossings and associated features along Highway 20 on USFS land. This project will reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, increase motorist safety, and improve habitat connectivity for a variety of species observed in the area, including grey wolf, Pacific marten, Sierra Nevada red fox, and western toad--among a dozen other Oregon Conservation Strategy species--as well as mule deer, elk, and a wide array of other mammals, birds, and herps. The total funds raised will be used, in partnership with other state and federal agencies, to complete geotechnical assessment, roadway design, environmental surveys, and permitting. This project is supported by a robust coalition of more than 18 partner organizations, including federal and state agencies, non-profits, landowners, tribal partners, and a university.</p>
4	Bring it Outside - Rivulets to Rivers: Wonders of Our Watershed Edition	Hike it Baby dba OutGrown	\$49,900	Willamette Valley	<p>There has been a growing emphasis on expanding access to and enjoyment of Oregon's outdoors, focusing on enhancing recreational opportunities, introducing diverse communities to wildlife-associated experiences, and fostering responsible engagement with nature. This approach is crucial for connecting a broader range of Oregonians—including BIPOC families—to outdoor spaces in a meaningful way. OutGrown's Rivulets to Rivers: Wonders of Our Watershed (WOW) program will offer family-friendly education, hands-on outdoor experiences, and an introduction to community science initiatives to strengthen the connection between BIPOC families and the urban watershed they are an integral part of, while supporting priority conservation species. Partnering with PDX People of Color Outdoors (POCO) and Portland/Vancouver US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) program, WOW will center the BIPOC community. The project will feature a participant "Oregon Wetlands Passport" educational booklet and WOW backpack exploration kits available through libraries. In addition to these lasting resources, the project will host 2 community wetland exploration days with guided paddle excursions to provide direct engagement with Portland Metro's urban watershed. Targeted recreation sites will include Smith-Bybee Lakes and Columbia Slough, the Lower Willamette River Floodplain, Forest Park, and Sauvie Island/Scappoose. During the community wetland exploration days, community science opportunities will be introduced and engage families in activities that emphasize responsible outdoor recreation and education on local ecology and wildlife conservation while raising awareness of priority species conservation.</p>

5	Climate Adapted Eco-cultural Restoration & Education	Friends of Tryon Creek	\$100,000	Coast Range; Willamette Valley	<p>This project aims to enhance priority conservation areas within Tryon Creek State Natural Area, a unique urban ecotone between the Coast Range and Willamette Valley ecoregions, both identified as conservation priority areas by the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Friends of Tryon Creek (FOTC), in partnership with Oregon State Parks, seeks to ensure equitable access to nature, particularly for communities historically excluded due to colonialism, redlining, racism, and classism. FOTC has transformed over the past 12 years into a community-focused organization, dedicated to inspiring all Portland-area residents to connect or reconnect with nature. The project will implement climate-adapted conservation strategies to protect Tryon Creek’s essential watershed and urban refugia, maintaining habitat connectivity for mammals, birds, and fish, including salmon and address climate stressors. These efforts support the Oregon Conservation Strategy’s goals of preserving habitats before threats become critical. Additionally, the project will address impacts of drought, enhance recreational opportunities, and promote outdoor equity by ensuring that all community members benefit from the health and wellness aspects of nature. Expected outcomes include improved habitat connectivity between Forest Park and the Willamette River, strengthened climate resilience, and a deeper public appreciation for this urban forest, ensuring that it remains an inclusive natural refuge for current and future generations. This Project builds upon the work that Friends of Tryon Creek have been conducting over the past year, creating a seven chapter Climate Vulnerability Assessment for the park that will help inform future actions and the creation of a Eco-cultural Restoration Plan.</p>
6	Community-Based Riparian Habitat Restoration in Ochoco National Forest	Think Wild	\$58,230	Blue Mountains	<p>Think Wild's Beaver Works Oregon program proposes a riparian restoration project in the Ochoco National Forest to enhance watershed resilience for sensitive species in Central Oregon. The Ochoco Mountains COA (Conservation Opportunity Area) faces increasing threats from drought and wildfires, which threatens sensitive species like Redband trout and Columbia spotted frogs. Our project will install and maintain beaver dam analogs (BDAs) and conduct native willow plantings in Gray Creek, Happy Camp Creek, and Toggle Creek, creating conditions that support beaver recolonization while benefiting many other species that depend on healthy riparian habitats. Project work will engage community volunteers, youth conservation crew members, local youth, and landholders and permittees. Our project provides tangible drought, fire resilience, and climate action, providing the community with opportunities to “recreate for good” and connect with public lands.</p> <p>The project addresses critical habitat needs through three key approaches: 1) installing and maintaining BDAs to improve water storage and late-season flow, creating natural drought buffers and wet meadow complexes that serve as crucial habitat for sensitive species, 2) establishing drought-resistant native riparian vegetation through willow planting to enhance beaver food resources, stream shading, and water retention, and 3) conducting volunteer, youth, landowner, and permittee outreach to build environmental stewardship throughout the Ochoco Mountains region.</p> <p>This project aligns with statewide momentum in beaver-focused restoration and Ochoco National Forest restoration goals while creating hands-on opportunities for community members to participate in public lands restoration. Through our restoration activities, we will deliver habitat benefits including enhanced water retention, increased late-season flows, and climate-resilient wildlife refuges that support beavers, sensitive aquatic species, and local communities.</p>

7	CTUIR Tribal Hunter Education-- Field School	Pandion Institute	\$28,500	Blue Mountains	<p>Although hunting is a foundational part of their culture, many members of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation lack the family support or economic resources to otherwise learn to hunt and handle firearms in a safe, responsible, effective, and culturally-informed manner. Hunting is an expectation of young men (and increasingly available to young women) and for young people lacking the father, uncle, or grandfather that would traditionally teach them to hunt, hunting can be inaccessible or worse—when tried without proper training and guidance, dangerous to self and others or destructive to animals (missed shots, wasted meat, harvesting the wrong animals, etc). This Hunter Education Program and Field School will bring 15 youth from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) onto a section of their ceded lands for a five-day program August 2025. Pandion Institute is working to expand the capacity (and take on liability for) the CTUIR Wildlife Program, which will provide technical support and personnel towards this work.</p> <p>This Field School will be based on Lookingglass Creek on a CTUIR-owned piece of property identifiable on the GPS coordinates shared in this application, which falls on the border of COA 157-- Walla Walla Headquarters. Mornings will be “classroom” sessions where CTUIR Wildlife personnel (trained to ODFW Instructor standards) will deliver a Hunter Safety curriculum adapted to fit both State and Tribal standards, while afternoons will involve youth (no handling of firearms) shadowing adult hunters in the field with the goal of successfully harvesting an animal and learning how to process it. The shooting portion of the course will culminate the week and will be performed on-site by Tribal police, who we hope can take on this program if firearms insurance is too big of a barrier.</p>
8	Determining Western Yellow Rail Distribution and Drought Resilience of Shallow Wetland Habitats in the Pacific Northwest	Oregon State University	\$43,143	East Cascades; Northern Basin & Range	<p>Wetland ecosystems across the western US are declining from overallocation of water resources, and drought. Despite 90% loss of perennial emergent wetlands by the 1980s, the Upper Klamath Basin of southcentral Oregon is key for Pacific flyway migratory waterbirds. Recurring and increased drought has continued to shrink wetlands. Yellow rails are dependent on shallow wetlands, with almost all known breeding range in western North America contained within the Klamath Basin. There are significant knowledge gaps regarding the distribution and migratory patterns of this small and isolated population. Automated recording units (ARUs) offer an opportunity to study their occurrence, behavior, and phenology, while balancing surveyor effort and impact on birds. The objectives are 1) to develop and evaluate a methodology to estimate abundance with ARUs and compare it to human surveys and 2) to build an occupancy model for rails within their range. Combined these objectives will provide a roadmap for understanding the effects of DROUGHT on some of our most SENSITIVE Strategy Species, and potentially water management to make these systems more resilient to future drought. Our project seeks to solve one of the tenants of wildlife research, species abundance using ARUs. This work is the result of an ongoing collaboration among USFWS Migratory Birds (Region 1&8), USFWS Refuges, ODFW, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Wildlife Foundation, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Geological Survey, and Oregon State University. We have amassed 631 hr of volunteer time conducting surveys and ARU deployment. Outcomes include a predictive map that translates not only to rail occupancy but to wetland condition that will be transferable to other species of conservation concern that occupy similar habitats. Additionally, we anticipate this product informing the occurrence of wetland areas that are most resilient to drought as indicated by the presence of rails in these areas.</p>

9	Developing a Beaver Boardwalk and Restoring Habitat on Redwood Highway — Phase 1	Project Beaver (an assumed business name of The Beaver Coalition)	\$36,597	Klamath Mountains	<p>Beavers have been managing the waterways of the northern hemisphere since before humans emerged from Africa. In this land that is now Oregon, all of the species highlighted the Oregon Conservation Strategy coevolved with beavers in charge of that water. Supporting beavers in building and maintaining this “beavered” habitat is perhaps the most impactful action we can take for habitat resiliency and water security as droughts intensify throughout the Beaver State. However, most Oregonians have never experienced a beaver wetland, nor have access to such a place.</p> <p>In the dry lands outside rural Cave Junction, Oregon, beavers have restored a degraded stream into a drought-resilient wetland in prime rearing habitat for native salmon and trout. This is a special site, with a freestanding beaver lodge and abundant wildlife. In the language of the local Takelma People, this site is a “sbink” or “place of the beavers.”</p> <p>This project will lay the groundwork for developing a public and accessible beaver boardwalk at this site, as well as restoring another two acres of wetland habitat “under beaver management.” Here, both locals from this underserved community, and visitors driving Redwood Highway, can recreationally learn from this site and its watchable wildlife. In this first planning phase, Project Beaver will complete plans and permitting for both habitat restoration and recreational visitor facilities on this property.</p>
10	Discovery Center Invasive Plant Project	McKenzie River Discovery Center	\$33,300	Willamette Valley; West Cascades	<p>The McKenzie River Discovery Center (MRDC) land is owned by Lane County Parks, and MRDC has a 99-year lease to the property. The 46-acre site is leased by the MRDC for the purpose of educating Oregon youth about the unique characteristics of the McKenzie River, and promote stewardship of rivers throughout Oregon. The project is located within the footprint of the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire and will concentrate on the historic pond, Hatchery Creek, and wetland area.</p> <p>Invasive vegetation includes English ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>), reed canary grass (<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>), Himalayan blackberry (<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>), and English holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>).</p> <p>Removal of these species is difficult and variable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * English Ivy should be manually removed and grubbed out using hand tools while soil is moist. Girdle ivy climbing up trees at 2 feet, and remove lower vines. * Reed canary grass can be shaded out using willow stakes, or can be chemically treated using triclopyr, an aquatic-safe herbicide. * Himalayan blackberry can be manually removed and grubbed out using hand tools while soil is moist, or chemically treated using triclopyr. If chemically treated, dense thickets should be cut to the base approximately 4 weeks prior to treatment and the regrowth spot sprayed. * English holly should be manually pulled from the ground if small enough, or larger trees should be cut to the base, and stump sprayed immediately with imazapyr. All chemical applications will be administered by an ODA licensed pesticide applicator. <p>To provide additional bank stabilization we will be planting native species above the trail: A riparian mix of native species in restoration projects based on reference conditions in riparian forest and geared towards maximizing site biodiversity and ecosystem. See plant list in Project Objective section.</p> <p>Invasive plants have killed several trees, and had negative impacts on the ecosystem and other native plants.</p>

11	Discovery of species diversity in Oregon's gophers (Rodentia: Geomyidae)	Portland State University	\$50,000	Coast Range; East Cascades; Klamath Mountains; Nearshore; Willamette Valley; West Cascades	<p>Our goal is to discover, document, describe, and delineate the species of pocket gophers (Geomyidae) in Oregon. This work will be centered on vouchered, field-collected specimens and is both species and area-based. This work will yield data for hypothesis-based questions in systematics, environmental biology, and climate change. Collecting efforts will focus on obtaining baseline data on gophers throughout Oregon. Genetic and morphological data will be analyzed; specimens will be collected using state-of-the-science methods and will be preserved, curated, analyzed, and archived in the PSU Museum of Vertebrate Biology.</p> <p>The proposed work will be the first multi-locality collecting expedition to focus on all taxa of Geomyidae in Oregon and collect data to be used into the future, providing data on gopher morphological and molecular levels of variation. The team will generate genomes for each taxon in Oregon; DNA barcodes will complement identifications and enhance their tissue archives. This work will be the first to apply modern, cutting-edge collecting and archival techniques to geomyids to study systematics, biodiversity, and biogeography. Outcomes will include baseline genetic data from populations of gophers, as well as presence, distribution, and basic ecology.</p> <p>This research will result in a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of gophers. Participating organizations will design and implement education programs tailored to the needs of their local region, including afterschool programs, science teacher professional development, games for youth audiences, comic books, programs in local libraries, or other community and school-based projects. Students will be trained in biodiversity research. Investigators will present results at annual professional meetings, as well as popular talks in libraries, museums, schools, and zoos. Results will be made available by means of peer-reviewed journals, books and a popular volume on pocket gopher biology.</p>
12	Enhancing Watershed Resiliency by Supporting Working Lands	Pheasants Forever Inc.	\$50,000	East Cascades; Northern Basin & Range	<p>* Developing drought resilient landscape depends on everyone in the landscape being able to participate. Otherwise, even with the best intentions, landscapes are only treated with random acts of conservation kindness. It is small farms that are missing out the most in conservation programs because they lack the necessary financial flexibility to fund the upfront costs most projects require. With 88% of all farms in the United States considered small farms our ability to implement conservation projects at larger scales will depend on finding ways to include everyone, not just those with the means to do so. Ultimately participation in conservation programs boils down to overcoming three main barriers: time, financial capability, and knowledge. If we remove these barriers, whole communities could unite behind a shared vision for conservation. That is why PF is working to develop a conservation finance solution that would enable everyone to participate in conservation programs. PF has been working with partners in Lake County for the last two years to develop this new effort including the Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and local landowners to support on going efforts and help increase the pace and scale of conservation efforts the reduce the impacts of drought and build a more resilient landscape for people, communities and wildlife. This effort will benefit Sage Grouse, American White Pelican, Black-necked Stilt, Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Greater Sandhill Crane, Long-billed Curlew, Peregrin Falcon, Swainson's Hawk, Trumpeter Swan, Goose Lake Sucker, Great Basin Redband Trout, Warner Lakes SMU, Warner Sucker, Columbia Spotted Frog, and Western Toad. In addition, project will take place in the Conservation Opportunity Areas of Summer Lake, Lake Abert, Thomas Creek-Goose Lake, Warner Mountains, Warner West, and Warner Basin Wetlands.</p>

13	Evaluating fence density along migration corridors in south-central Oregon to benefit deer, pronghorn, and elk: pilot study	Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS)	\$99,874	East Cascades	<p>Connectivity across fragmented habitats is one of the most significant threats to ungulate persistence across the West. In south-central Oregon, migration corridors have been identified along the California-Oregon border. Recent GPS data from elk, mule deer, and pronghorn have highlighted important routes and stopover areas that are connected across several of Oregon’s Conservation Opportunity Areas. Despite this, little is known about how movement is affected by anthropogenic barriers or how access to critical resources may be limited by fencing in drought years. Furthermore, it has been observed that partial migration occurs, but the underlying mechanisms for this behavior are not understood. Our project proposes to initiate a pilot study to 1) estimate fence density, 2) to validate and describe the condition of existing barriers, and 3) to evaluate the current crossing behavior across gradients of migration corridors, fencing densities, and water resources. To accomplish this, we will utilize existing spatial data to estimate the fencing density in south-central Oregon. Second, we will engage volunteers to survey and ground-truth our fence density model with a GIS-based app to determine the type and configuration of the fences as well as critical resources nearby (i.e. water). Finally, we will monitor the current crossing behavior during the fall and spring migrations with remote cameras that are set at different gradients of use, fence density, and access to water resources. By collecting these data, we hope to quantify the energetic costs across three species. An additional goal of this pilot project will be to gather baseline information on fence barriers and to establish community relationships so that future work may be geared towards modifying fencing to be wildlife friendly at critical crossing sites. As future funding becomes available, we will propose future fence modification work to improve the connectivity and resiliency of migrating ungulates.</p>
14	Evaluating stream temperature heterogeneity and thermal buffering capacity resulting from different river restoration methods	University of Idaho	\$100,000	Blue Mountains	<p>Climate change is driving drier conditions and drought throughout Oregon and the Western U.S., resulting in higher stream water temperatures and increasing thermal stress on native aquatic species. The Middle Fork John Day River (MFJDR) Conservation Opportunity Area is a high priority monitoring watershed and is representative of many climates and meadow environments that are critical habitats for native salmonids (e.g., Chinook and steelhead). High summer water temperatures are one of the primary factors limiting native salmonid habitat availability in the basin. To alleviate instream thermal stress, successful meadow restoration must ensure late-season streamflow and thermal buffering capacity to support long-term salmonid survival. Recent stream restoration activities have focused on increasing physical channel heterogeneity and hydrologic connectivity with the floodplain to generate thermal buffering and aquatic habitat resilience. However, it is difficult to evaluate the efficacy of different restoration strategies in addressing high water temperatures owing to the complex hydrologic processes that spatially change over the season. To address these challenges, we have partnered with multiple agencies in Oregon to develop a four-year comprehensive monitoring strategy to link restoration actions, hydrologic processes and thermal responses at the local, reach, and watershed scale.</p> <p>We are requesting funds from OCRF to support the first two years of post-river restoration monitoring. During this initial phase, we will deploy a spatially dense network of monitoring sensors within the river corridor to evaluate hyporheic fluxes, groundwater levels, and surface-subsurface water temperatures. We will further leverage the OCRF funding to connect rural community members with the concepts of hydrologic connectivity and thermal resilience in streams as a potential solution for native aquatic species to survive drought and acute climatic forcing in wet meadow environments.</p>

15	Exploring and Learning in the Columbia Slough Watershed	Columbia Slough Watershed Council	\$50,000	Willamette Valley	<p>This project addresses three needs: improving riparian habitat in industrial zones, addressing barriers to entry preventing students from gaining education in the environmental field, and providing community access to natural spaces. To address these, Columbia Slough Watershed Council (CSWC) will complete work in the COA ID 56 Opportunity Area throughout the project. CSWC works with students in a workforce development program with Ash Creek Forest Management (Ash Creek), a local B-Corp that offers ecological services like habitat restoration, naturescaping, surveys, and consulting. Interns will conduct habitat restoration enhancing riparian forest buffers along the Columbia Slough at Level Beer on NE 148th Ave, a landowner the Council connected with through our Healthy Industrial Lands Initiative (HILI). Interns will benefit from this project by learning about invasive species management and gaining marketable green workforce skills. These efforts will increase shade on the waterway and work to improve the overall water quality within the Slough. English ivy and Himalayan blackberry control and removal will protect existing canopies and create resilient, self-sustaining landscapes. CSWC also seeks to connect community members to the natural spaces in the Columbia Slough Watershed through collaborative event programming. Naturalist events include bat walks, slough science speaker events, and birding paddles. Events will collaborate with long-time organizational partners, including Birders, Feminist Bird Club, Bird Alliance of Oregon, local educators and facilitators, and many others. Events will be held throughout the Columbia Slough Watershed, primarily at Whitaker Ponds, Kelley Point Park, and Smith & Bybee Wetlands. Through these events, we aim to foster lasting connections to natural spaces in the Columbia Slough Watershed, create safe spaces for learning, and facilitate opportunities for community connection.</p>
16	Fix salmon issue in Columbia river for good	Salmon Protection Device	\$50,000	Columbia Plateau	<p>Our Story salmonprotectiondevice.com I knew Steve Cramer since the early 1990's. Steve was working on salmon research as Cramer Fish Sciences. Through the years Steve and I had talked about the idea of Salmon Protection Devices (SPD) to prevent the sea lions from attacking the salmon as they enter the fish ladders at Bonneville Dam. Unfortunately, Steve passed away of cancer in the Spring of 2023. In January, that year I talked with Steve and he said he wasn't going to live much longer and he asked me to make the SPD a reality. I told him I'd do everything I could, but my resources were limited. I contacted the Army Corp of Engineers. They liked the idea and rushed the Section 408 and Joint application. This application normally takes a year, but they finished in one month. We also received the fish ladder drawings from the Corp. If we receive the funding in early April, we'll move heaven and earth to get the first of five SPD's installed in December 2024 barely a year and a half after Steve Cramer's dying request. It will include a memorial name plate in his honor. I Salmon fished on Sauvie Island many times between January and March each year. Our group of about 25 would walk back a few miles to our favorite spot. Salmon are much faster than Sea Lions and can normally out run them, but not on the end of a fish line. Almost every other catch a sea lion would take the Salmon off our line and eat it. We ended up with a salmon head and that's all. As part of the follow-up protocol, we're asking for a three-year moratorium on Salmon Fishing below the Bonneville Dam on both banks. This, along with the SPD will remove easy access to food for the Sea Lions in the river. This should be adequate time to train the Sea Lions to return to the ocean where they belong and give the Salmon population time to recover, free from sea lions and fishermen. the increase in Sea Lions correlates almost one-to-one with the declining fish counts at Bonneville dam.</p>

17	Hatch to Home, Fish Eggucation	Partnership for the Umpquarivers	\$10,440	Klamath Mountains	<p>Project Need/Impact: This project addresses the need for hands-on environmental education by introducing students to the life cycle of fish, fostering stewardship and awareness of local aquatic ecosystems. By focusing on the journey from fish eggs to fry, it aims to cultivate a deeper understanding of conservation challenges faced by native fish species.</p> <p>Location: The initiative will be implemented in classrooms across Douglas County, particularly in areas close to important watersheds and conservation sites.</p> <p>Work: The project involves setting up classroom incubators for fish eggs, providing students with the opportunity to observe and care for the eggs as they develop into fry. Educational modules will cover topics such as habitat requirements, environmental impacts, and the importance of conservation efforts.</p> <p>Partners: Collaboration will include local schools, fish hatcheries, conservation organizations, and educational nonprofits. These partners will provide expertise, resources, and support for curriculum development.</p> <p>Outcome/Benefit: The project will result in increased student engagement and knowledge about aquatic ecosystems and conservation. By promoting awareness of Oregon Conservation Strategy Species, it contributes to long-term stewardship among future generations. Additionally, the project may support local fish populations by fostering a culture of conservation in young people, particularly in Opportunity Areas where education and community involvement are crucial for habitat restoration efforts.</p>
18	High lakes in the Oregon Cascades (Phase 2): Using eDNA metabarcoding to evaluate drought risk and coexistence of fish and amphibians	US Geological Survey, Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center	\$99,959	East Cascades; West Cascades	<p>High elevation aquatic ecosystems are experiencing rapid change with increasing drought and recreation. Fish and amphibians are key elements of food webs in montane lakes and wetlands. Amphibians can be apex predators in fishless systems and food for fish where they cooccur, especially in nutrient-poor mountain lakes. ODFW stocks lakes with hatchery trout for quality angling opportunities. Most montane lakes were fishless prior to stocking. Introduced trout can affect survival and reproduction of amphibians. Drought frequency and severity are forecast to increase and will likely reduce suitability of smaller waters for amphibians, which is expected to increase their use of larger more permanent waterbodies with greater exposure to fish. This has been referred to as a 'climate vise' (Ryan et al. 2014). Information on this pattern is needed to help balance recreational opportunities and conservation needs for both fish and amphibians. In Phase 1 (2022-24), we conducted visual surveys and collected water for eDNA analysis at 30 sites in the Oregon Cascades (attached) to characterize their fish and amphibian communities. The current proposal (Phase 2) funds the completion and dissemination of Phase 1 eDNA results and collection and analysis of samples from a 2nd year to bolster our sample size. Our goals are to better understand amphibian habitat associations across a range of drought susceptibility and to evaluate potential for fish and amphibians to coexist at site and landscape scales as climate change alters wetland depths and hydroperiods. This work addresses multiple Strategy Species and Conservation Opportunity Areas in the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS). We will share results with partners throughout the study including on distributions of fish and amphibians across a drought susceptibility gradient, the use of eDNA markers for sampling these taxa in high lakes, and on implications for fish and amphibians to coexist as montane habitats change in the future.</p>

19	Historic Butte Creek Mill Interpretive Exhibit (Phase 2)	Rogue River Watershed Council	\$20,000	Klamath Mountains	<p>This project is a collaboration between Butte Creek Mill Foundation, Rogue River Watershed Council, and Trout Unlimited at the historic Butte Creek Mill in Eagle Point, Oregon. The partners seek support for developing and designing interpretive exhibits for the Mill, which is free and open to the public. The exhibits will weave local history with Little Butte Creek’s natural environment, highlighting the importance of sustainability and stewardship and addressing regional natural resource issues, particularly related to Coho Salmon in the Antelope Creek-Paynes Cliffs, Shady Cove Foothills, and North Medford Conservation Opportunity Areas. Partners are developing exhibits for the Mill’s Great Hall, deck, and picnic area. Each of these areas overlooks Little Butte Creek and offers terrific opportunities to weave the history of the Mill with its impact on the community and connection to the creek and watershed. Phase 1 funding has been secured and will occur in early 2025 and includes stakeholder interviews and existing media review that will inform the development of an overall vision and intended impact of the exhibits. We will define goals and objectives based on stakeholder input, brainstorm story lines, and outline a high-level narrative to achieve the intended experience and impact of the exhibits. Phase 2 will use this collected information to complete specific planning and design necessary for fabrication and installation.</p>
20	Immersive River Access Project	Adventures Without Limits	\$50,000	East Cascades; Willamette Valley; West Cascades	<p>According to the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, "by providing Oregon’s youth with opportunities to learn outdoor recreation skills in outdoor settings, we have the opportunity to rebuild the foundation for future outdoor recreation participation and reestablish personal connections with nature and their public lands."</p> <p>Through this project, Adventures Without Limits will connect underserved communities to wildlife viewing opportunities that are uniquely accessed by river recreation, including single and multi-day rafting trips on the Santiam, Clackamas, and Deschutes Rivers. Leaning on long-standing partnerships with organizations like Hacienda CDC, Adelante Mujeres, Latino Network, The Companion Program, Edwards Center, Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection, and the School for the Deaf, we will host 6 single-day, and 3 multi-day rafting trips connecting Latinx youth, along with youth and adults with disabilities to the waterways of the Willamette Valley, along with the East and West Cascades. This project centers OCRF's commitment to equity and engaging underserved populations who have been historically excluded from recreation and conservation issues in Oregon, with consideration for race/ethnicity, language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and/or other cultural or economic status.</p> <p>We will serve more than 150 participant user days for a total of 1900 hours in nature. Participants will build community, learn new skills, and develop a deep connection to place in Oregon, including the historically inaccessible natural spaces that are home to fish and wildlife habitats.</p>

21	Impacts of wildfire on Lewis's woodpecker reproduction	Cal Poly Humboldt	\$43,030	East Cascades	<p>This project will engage a graduate student and volunteers to address key knowledge gaps about the effects of fire age and snag density on an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species, the Lewis's Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>). Previous work by my lab and others has demonstrated that habitat suitability is highly variable across this species' range and that regional data is necessary to understand their habitat associations in the east Cascades, one of their primary remaining breeding areas in Oregon. Lewis's woodpecker abundance and reproductive success are likely both influenced by time since fire and post-fire habitat characteristics, especially the density and size of standing dead snags. This project would build on our previous work that demonstrated optimal habitat conditions for abundance of Lewis's Woodpecker in the east Cascades, as well as pilot data demonstrating high reproductive success in a single burned area. Other populations of Lewis's Woodpecker have exhibited habitat mismatches in which abundance and breeding success were inversely correlated, highlighting the need to directly study their reproductive output. This work will help discern what habitat conditions, specifically post-fire forest structure, maximize reproductive output and examine how that output varies with fire age across 6 fires of differing ages. Work will take place in the Deschutes National Forest and White River Wildlife Area, and include some overlap with four Conservation Opportunity Areas. Outcomes will include volunteer engagement, multiple public and scientific presentations, management recommendations for Lewis's woodpecker including habitat prioritization and salvage logging strategy, a scholarly manuscript, and a master's thesis for the graduate student.</p>
22	Investigating the Role of First Food Pollinators in Maintaining Culturally Significant Plants and Highlighting Their Importance to Oregon Wildlife	Oregon State University	\$49,999	Blue Mountains; Columbia Plateau	<p>Insects contribute substantially to Oregon's biodiversity by not only directly supporting vertebrate wildlife by serving as food for many insectivorous animals, but also by pollinating many of the plants that humans and wildlife depend upon, including culturally significant plants. For example, certain plants are identified by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) as First Foods, including roots and berries, which are important food sources for many wildlife species. However, little is known about which insects pollinate these culturally significant plants. This information is needed to evaluate the conservation status of First Food pollinators and guide future management by CTUIR and their partners. In addition, raising public awareness about the role pollinators play in supporting culturally significant plants and vertebrate wildlife is a high priority. Several pollinators in the area are sensitive species, including the western bumble bee (an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species). In collaboration with CTUIR and the US Forest Service (USFS), we propose to 1) sample pollinators and plants and document pollinator relationships (with a focus on First Food plants) at 10 sites in eastern Oregon (including three Conservation Opportunity Areas) from May to September 2025 and 2) produce outreach materials in English and Spanish aimed at outdoor recreationists. Findings will be summarized for use by CTUIR and the USFS in planning restoration and management and shared with the scientific community. Outreach products will introduce the biology, diversity, and cultural significance of pollinators, highlight how they contribute to healthy wildlife populations, and provide tips for watching and photographing them in recreational settings. Outreach efforts will aim to raise awareness about pollinators and encourage recreational pollinator watching, a fast-growing outdoor activity accessible to diverse groups of people in almost any habitat.</p>

23	Lincoln County Parks Riparian Restoration	Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District	\$49,662	Coast Range	<p>This project involves three county parks on the Siletz River, each of which are popular recreational destinations for anglers, swimmers, and campers. The largest portion of restoration activities will occur at the furthest upstream location, Moonshine Park. Here, mature conifers are present along the stream banks throughout most of the park, but human foot traffic has degraded much of the understory vegetation within the riparian buffer and several invasive species are present, particularly Himalayan blackberry (<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>). This park is also a known spawning location for several salmonid species.</p> <p>Ojalla Park is mainly used for its boat launch, which was constructed in 2015 and involved the total removal of trees and ground cover vegetation in the vicinity. Some revegetation was conducted, which we plan to supplement.</p> <p>Jack Morgan Park is used for mixed recreation during the summer and fishing during fall and winter. At this location, conifers are absent from the riparian zone and Himalayan blackberry dominates the stream bank. Our project aims to enrich native tree and shrub cover in the riparian zones of each of these parks and increase plant diversity by removing invasive weeds, planting native shrub species in the project areas, propagating willow along the stream edge, and installing protective fencing in high traffic areas to prevent trampling until plants become established.</p> <p>Expected to benefits coastal salmonids include shade cover provided by planted conifers and eventual large woody debris accumulation, which will serve to lower water temperatures and increase habitat complexity. Mitigating erosion issues at the project sites will help reduce water turbidity, which is linked to increased water temperatures, and will also reduce sedimentation of gravel beds which provide critical spawning habitat. Partners include the Lincoln County Parks & Recreation Department, MidCoast Watershed Council, and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.</p>
24	Linn County Salmon Watch	South Santiam Watershed Council	\$28,750	Willamette Valley	<p>Salmon Watch is an experiential outdoor environmental education program founded by FreshWater Trust in 1993. Salmon Watch started as an effort to educate high school students about wild salmon conservation and watershed ecosystems. Although the World Salmon Council formally assumed implementation of the Salmon Watch program in 2012, organizations across the state have tailored the program to be locally relevant, and have expanded the audience to include younger students. The South Santiam Watershed Council has been offering Salmon Watch trips for 6th graders in the Lebanon Community and Sweet Home School Districts, serving East Linn County students for more than 10 years. We time our program to coincide with peak salmon spawning in our area, which starts in September and ends in late October. Currently, we hold our field trips at River Bend County Park, about five miles east of Sweet Home, Oregon. Learning stations are set up along the riverside trail, providing educators and students access to the river and supporting learning objectives. The Salmon Watch curriculum includes lessons on salmon biology, macroinvertebrates, water quality, and riparian habitat. This curriculum provides a holistic, foundational understanding of fisheries science and aquatic ecosystem functions. Students leave Salmon Watch with a greater understanding of the role society plays in shaping the environment and a deeper awareness of their own impact on the health of their local watershed.</p>

25	Lower Deschutes Salmon and Steelhead Bioenergetics Study: Research and Public Engagement through Media	Native Fish Society	\$40,117	Columbia Plateau	<p>Anglers travel from around the country to the lower Deschutes River to fish for Redband Trout and steelhead. However, many anglers have expressed concern over warmer water temperatures in the lower Deschutes after changes to management at the Pelton Round Butte Dam Complex. While maximum water temperature in the lower Deschutes is now often lower than it was previously, temperatures between March and June are substantially warmer. The change in the timing and magnitude of warm temperatures has caused increased worry among anglers about potential harm to Redband Trout, steelhead, and Chinook. The goal of this study is to test the hypothesis that increased spring temperatures lead to increased juvenile growth rates in steelhead and Chinook, which could in turn, lead to higher survival as adults. Our proposed study is a partnership between scientists at ODFW, USGS, and Native Fish Society. The results from this study will be used to inform management of the Pelton Round Butte Dam Complex. In addition to the research, a media component will make the topic, study and findings accessible to the public, connecting them to the conservation efforts in a tangible way. The media produced will be shared with Native Fish Society, OCRF, and ODFW for distribution, highlighting the impact of their funding on successful conservation investments.</p>
26	Madrone Ridge Project: Protecting biodiversity and the drinking water of Ashland, Oregon	Western Rivers Conservancy	\$50,000	Klamath Mountains	<p>The Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion is one of the most unique and visually stunning locations in the Pacific Northwest. Its variability in elevation, geology, climate, precipitation, and physical connection with the Pacific Ocean makes the Klamath-Siskiyou region one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth. Unsurprisingly, the stunning features and rich diversity of the region attract both year-round residents and seasonal visitors.</p> <p>Here, WRC is working to conserve the 1,974-acre Madrone Ridge property adjacent to the city of Ashland and the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (RRSNF). Acquisition and conveyance to the city of Ashland for permanent conservation will protect Ashland's drinking watershed and buffer it and the city itself from potentially catastrophic wildfire impacts. WRC will convey the property to the City of Ashland, preventing development in a sensitive area, protecting important habitat for threatened fish and wildlife, the city's drinking water supply, and enhancing recreation opportunities on the property and Wrights Creek, an ephemeral tributary of the Rogue River.</p> <p>Madrone Ridge is emblematic of the rich biodiversity found within the Cascade-Siskiyou landscape and provides outstanding wildlife habitat for a number of Oregon Conservation Strategy Species, including the northern spotted owl, pacific fisher, Townsend's big-eared bat and Western pond turtle, among others. The property is located within the Siskiyou Crest Conservation Opportunity Area, and one of the primary concerns in this COA is the loss of habitat connectivity due to development. ODFW identifies conservation acquisitions as a key tool for mitigating this concern. Finally, public access is not currently allowed on Madrone Ridge despite its proximity to urban areas and existing trail networks. Accordingly, conserving the property presents a unique opportunity to expand recreational access and increase trail connectivity between downtown Ashland and the RRSNF.</p>

27	Maternity and Winter Roosts of Myotis Species and Seasonal Activity Patterns of Bats in Dry Forests of Northeast Oregon	US Forest Service	\$55,500	Blue Mountains	Roosting requirements and seasonal activity patterns of forest bats in Northeast Oregon are poorly understood. This region has been subject to a history of intensive timber management, natural high-frequency fire regimes, and drought. Commercial logging has reduced availability of large-diameter trees used for maternity roosts. Availability of roosts may limit populations of bats, and dependence of bats on suitable roosts may magnify sensitivity to environmental stressors. Decreased water availability during periods of drought has been shown to reduce reproductive output for species of forest-dwelling bats that occur in this region. Understanding roosting ecology and activity patterns at relevant spatial and temporal scales is fundamental for evaluating the impacts of forest management, drought, disease, and climate change, and effectively prioritizing conservation of bats. This study will examine characteristics of maternity and winter roosts, and seasonal activity patterns of forest-dwelling bats on the Wallowa Whitman National Forest. This information is critical for development of long-term studies evaluating population trends for bats in response to forest management, drought, and climate change in Northeast Oregon. Five Strategy Species of bat will be monitored in this study; California Myotis (<i>Myotis californicus</i>), Fringed Myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>), Long-legged Myotis (<i>Myotis volans</i>), and Silver-haired bats (<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>), and Townsend's Big-eared Bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>). Monitoring will occur within the Imnaha (ID 161), Wallowa Mountains (ID 163), and Upper Grande Ronde River Area (ID 160) Conservation Opportunity Areas. The US Forest Service (USFS) will lead project activities, with fieldwork and analysis support from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Eastern Oregon University (EOU). EOU and USFS will also partner in education opportunities for university students.
28	Mitigating the Effects of Drought by Restoring Floodplain Systems: Low-Cost and Accessible Methods for Monitoring At-Risk Amphibians	Oregon State University	\$96,582	Blue Mountains	Many amphibians, such as the Columbia spotted frog (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>), are at risk in the Pacific Northwest, where they are threatened by increasing drought, land use change, habitat loss, introduced species, pathogens, and other hazards. Past land management has led to losses of floodplain wetlands, a key habitat for amphibians. Fortunately, efforts are underway to increase stream-floodplain connectivity and complexity through restoration, increasing both floodplain wetland habitat and resilience to drought. While many of these projects are aimed at salmonid recovery, they are expected to also benefit amphibians. However, due to a lack of cost-effective, reliable, and efficient ways to monitor amphibians, little is known about how this kind of restoration affects amphibians. The goals of this project are to 1) address this gap by monitoring amphibian responses to restoration using four methods, and 2) compare the effectiveness, cost, and efficiency of the four methods. We plan to monitor amphibians with the traditional approach of visual surveys and with three rapidly evolving monitoring techniques: 1) laboratory-based metabarcoding on eDNA isolated from water samples; 2) streamside targeted sequence detection on eDNA isolated from water samples, and 3) bioacoustic surveys. The study will be conducted as part of a larger monitoring effort of 12 restoration projects (paired with 11 controls) managed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the US Forest Service, and local watershed councils. This study will help improve our understanding of how restoration affects at-risk amphibians in drought-prone eastern Oregon and build a better understanding of the effectiveness of these novel methods. If successful, these methods may be game-changers that enhance our understanding of amphibian conservation and can be deployed by scientists and citizens, increasing the quality of data on imperiled amphibians and their responses to restoration.

29	Nature connection through conservation and education	The Crest	\$75,000	Coast Range; West Cascades	<p>The Crest's mission is to cultivate the connection between humans and the natural world. We achieve our mission by engaging our community in hands-on, intimate experiences with nature via outdoor education and stewardship activities at Willow Witt Ranch, a 445-acre inholding in the Cascades-Siskiyou National Monument. We offer the community equitable opportunities to experience the deep and complex connections between people, forest, farm, and water. We acknowledge The Nature Gap and actively provide marginalized communities access to our environmental programs by fundraising for scholarships and transportation. We are working to reduce invasive species on the land, and build resiliency in native plants and trees on the property. We work to boost the health of the forest, slow down water and erosion to improve the health of the wetlands, and build trails for the community to connect with the land and each other. This project focuses on engagement with marginalized youth and families throughout Jackson County, closing gaps in equitable access to education and opportunities through our relationships with Title 1 schools and program partners such as Vesper Meadow, Rogue Valley Mentoring, Black Awareness and Social Empowerment group and the Southern Oregon Education Service District's Migrant Education Program. Benefit to: Invertebrates: W. Bumble bee, Monarch, Birds: Acorn Woodpecker, Chipping Sparrow, Great Gray Owl, Greater Sandhill Crane, N. Goshawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Oregon Vesper Sparrow (very likely, but may not be confirmed), W. Bluebird, W. Meadowlark, White Breasted Nuthatch, Mammals: California Myotis, Long-legged Myotis, Fringed Myotis, Pallid Bat, Silver-haired bat, Townsend's Big-eared bat, Pacific Fisher, Pacific Marten, W. Gray Squirrel, Ringtail, Reptiles: NW Pond Turtle, California Mountain King Snake, Oregon Rattlesnake, Amphibians: Western (Boreal) Toad</p>
30	Nature in Focus: A Rural Community Science Initiative	High Desert Museum	\$49,586	Blue Mountains; East Cascades	<p>Rural communities hold significant knowledge about local wildlife that are vital to comprehensive monitoring efforts in Central Oregon. At the same time, these communities have a high percentage of low-income families who face barriers to engaging in wildlife-associated recreation and community science initiatives. Through an intensive workshop series, Nature in Focus will empower 20 rural families (approximately 60 individuals) to engage with the outdoors while contributing to monitoring efforts essential to key conservation issues and species outlined in the ODFW's Oregon Conservation Strategy.</p> <p>This initiative builds on the success of prior programming in rural communities, including a National Science Foundation research study, to promote sustained engagement in outdoor recreation among families who have traditionally faced barriers to these experiences. To ensure equitable access, we will provide a stipend, gas cards, and meal during the workshops and use Spanish translation and interpretation services.</p> <p>Over the course of three full-day workshops, families will engage in outdoor activities, connect with local wildlife professionals, participate in a telemetry scavenger hunt, and learn about statewide and local monitoring efforts. Educational experiences will focus on Oregon Conservation Strategy issues, such as climate change and barriers to animal movement, and Oregon Conservation Strategy species, including the Sierra Nevada red fox and pika. In addition, each family will receive a trail camera to document wildlife in their own backyards and learn how to upload these images to iNaturalist. The initiative will culminate in an exhibition that will use images and stories from these families to increase awareness of community science opportunities and resources among 40,000 visitors to the Museum. Ultimately, this project will enhance community connections to nature, expand recreational opportunities, and support ongoing conservation initiatives in Oregon.</p>

31	Northern red-legged frog (<i>Rana aurora aurora</i>) use of a dedicated under-road crossing and adjacent upland habitat	Portland State University	\$49,991	Coast Range; Willamette Valley	<p>As the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) Species northern red-legged frog, <i>Rana aurora</i>, moves between its upland feeding grounds and wetland breeding grounds at Palensky Wildlife Area, the frogs must cross US Highway 30. In 2024, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) managed installation of a crossing structure below the highway to reduce the substantial roadkill resulting from this migration. To date, no studies have documented the effectiveness of crossing structures installed for <i>R. aurora</i> use, and these data are needed to determine management and inform future crossings. Therefore, PSU researchers along with partners at ODFW and Metro propose coupling PIT tagging, wildlife cameras, radio tracking and habitat measurements to a) determine the extent to which <i>R. aurora</i> use the under-crossing structure; and b) determine routes and habitats frogs use as they travel into the upland forest. These findings will be used to determine whether any changes are needed to improve use of the culvert, to inform future frog-focused undercrossing structures, and to determine management actions for upland recreation use and climate change. Building on our successes mentoring students from backgrounds under-represented in science, we will recruit PSU undergraduates to participate in the proposed research. Project deliverables include an assessment of passage use and an explanation of paths traveled by frogs in and around the structure; recommendations for improvements to the structure; a map of frog migration routes; an evaluation of upland habitat characteristics associated with frog migration; and mentorship of students from diverse backgrounds. The project aims to advance an OCS key issue—habitat connectivity—as well as critical knowledge that can improve populations of an OCS species, <i>R. aurora</i>, by studying the extent to which the crossing structure decreases migration-related mortality of <i>R. aurora</i>, while simultaneously diversifying Oregon's science workforce.</p>
32	Ochoco Preserve Restoration and Recreation Phase 3	Deschutes Land Trust	\$100,000	Blue Mountains	<p>Ochoco Preserve (Preserve) Restoration – Phase 3 near Prineville, Oregon is the final step in a multi-year, multi-phased restoration effort that helps to achieve the restoration of self-sustaining upland, wetland, floodplain, and stream ecological processes. The geographic area surrounding the City of Prineville, Oregon, including the proposed project area is in Moderate Drought (category D1). This project helps to build resilience to drought and mitigate drought-related impacts. Additionally, the preserve will be a recreation site with 1.3 miles of walking trails with interpretive and educational signage with connectivity to the City of Prineville and the Crooked River Wetlands Complex. Ochoco Preserve is home to the confluence of the Crooked River, McKay Creek and Ochoco Creek. Over the past 150 years, landscape changes have occurred on the property in order to facilitate agricultural practices. Common land manipulations such as stream relocation, straightening, and wetlands were filled and leveled. The ecological value of the Preserve has been drastically reduced. This project is designed to allow 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 wildlife and fish habitats are utilized. Strategy Species identified in the Oregon Conservation Plan that will benefit from this restoration include: Western Ridged Mussels, Caspian Tern, Ferruginous Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Trumpeter Swan, Western Meadowlark, Chinook Salmon, and Steelhead.</p> <p>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, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.</p>

33	Oregon Adaptive Sports Paddlesports Strategic Programmatic Expansion	Oregon Adaptive Sports	\$20,000	East Cascades	<p>Oregon Adaptive Sports (OAS) will develop a robust adaptive paddling program to create increased access for Oregonians with disabilities to enjoy world-class outdoor recreation experiences on Central Oregon's scenic lakes and rivers. OAS will work with regional land agencies and owners, recreation facilities, program providers, and tourism/marketing organizations to develop and implement the program while advertising and reaching as wide of a range of individuals as possible.</p> <p>OAS has 28 years of experience in providing high quality outdoor experiences for individuals with disabilities. OAS will leverage this experience to create a sustainable and successful adaptive paddling program that will serve hundreds of individuals with disabilities for many years to come.</p>
34	Oregon State Parks Coloring Book: Ecosystems, wildlife and activities	Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center	\$50,000	Blue Mountains; Coast Range; Columbia Plateau; East Cascades; Klamath Mountains; Northern Basin & Range; Willamette Valley; West Cascades	<p>Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center is partnering with a local artist and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), and is working to build a partnership with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and the Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB) to create a coloring book celebrating 25 of Oregon's beloved state parks, ecosystems and wildlife. This initiative aims to raise awareness of the beauty and importance of these natural spaces while fostering a deeper connection between Oregonians and their public lands. Designed for people of all ages, the coloring book will feature stylized illustrations highlighting ecoregions, strategy habitats and species, and recreational activities unique to each park.</p> <p>In addition to providing a fun and engaging way to learn about Oregon's diverse ecosystems, the coloring book will highlight the conservation efforts needed to protect these special places and the habitat they provide for myriad wildlife. It will also include educational content on the Oregon Conservation Strategy, sustainable park use, local wildlife, and the history of Oregon's park system, encouraging a stewardship ethic in readers.</p> <p>The coloring book will be distributed through various physical channels and online platforms. Environment Oregon Research & Policy Center and partners will promote the project through community outreach events, social media campaigns, and partnerships with schools, libraries and community groups to reach a wide audience.</p> <p>By combining art, mindfulness, education, and conservation, this project aims to inspire people of all ages to appreciate and protect Oregon's state parks for generations to come.</p>

35	Oregon Trumpeter Swan Restoration Project	The Trumpeter Swan Society	\$14,400	Northern Basin & Range	<p>Trumpeter swans were once hunted to near extinction; only 69 were known in the U.S. in 1932. Oregon lost all its trumpeter swans by the early 1900s. The project purpose is to introduce Trumpeter Swans to Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Summer Lake Wildlife Area (SLWA). The high quality wetlands on SLWA makes it an ideal location for restoration efforts. The current Oregon Project began in 2009, with a goal to restore a viable breeding population of trumpeter swans to eastern Oregon. It is a partnership between The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS), ODFW, USFWS and participating zoos. TTSS is a non-profit whose mission is to assure the vitality and welfare of wild Trumpeter Swan populations throughout North America. This project has been supported partially by agency funding plus private and zoo donations. Since 2009, a total of 153 young swans have been released as Summer Lake which has both appropriate nesting and wintering habitat for Trumpeter Swans. The Oregon Project objective is to continue releases at Summer Lake until there are at least 15 wild breeding pairs in Oregon. As of 2024, 4 adult pairs were successful in raising broods. Zoos have provided cygnets to the program in years past, but only in small numbers due to the need of a soft release area for the swans to become acclimated to more wild conditions. A soft release site was essential to allow the cygnets time to mature before release. In 2022, Zoo Idaho in Pocatello, was established as a soft release site for the Oregon program. Zoo Idaho houses cygnets from zoos across the country each year before release. In June, the cygnets are caught up and transported to Oregon, where they are released in various areas of SLWA. In order for this to be successful, zoo staff commit time and funding for travel, often out of their own pocket, to assist with the transfer, processing, and releasing of the swans. This proposal will support the costs of getting zoo swans to Oregon.</p>
36	Owyhee River Spring Raft Expedition: Empowering Hispanic and Underserved Leaders in Malheur County	Friends of the Owyhee	\$43,000	Northern Basin & Range	<p>Friends of the Owyhee (FOTO) builds community around conservation, stewardship, and responsible recreation in the Owyhee region, a high desert ecosystem spanning parts of Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada. Despite its ecological and cultural importance, much of the area remains unprotected. FOTO collaborates with conservation groups, Indigenous Tribes, ranchers, and government agencies to safeguard the region for future generations through outreach, education, and partnerships.</p> <p>The Owyhee River Spring Raft Expedition is a 5-day trip designed to engage Hispanic and underserved leaders from Malheur County, who make up about 35% of the local population. These leaders often face barriers like limited access to leadership and conservation opportunities. The expedition provides an opportunity to build leadership skills, encourage cultural exchange, and promote environmental stewardship among key community figures.</p> <p>The Owyhee Canyonlands includes several Conservation Opportunity Areas identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, we'll explore the middle Owyhee region. The region is home to critical Strategy Species, including the Greater Sage-Grouse, Pygmy Rabbit, and Western Toad. This project immerses participants in the Owyhee landscape, highlighting its conservation needs and creating a direct connection between the leaders and the region.</p> <p>Participants will include Hispanic and underserved leaders, along with potential organizations like Love is King and the Conservation Lands Foundation. The project focuses on leadership development, building community networks, and increasing environmental stewardship. Promoting responsible wildlife recreation and engaging underserved communities aligns with the Oregon Conservation Strategy and the stewardship of the Owyhee landscape.</p> <p>If river conditions such as low run off prevent the rafting trip, a land-based adventure will be offered.</p>

37	Phase 1: Camp Creek Wet Meadow and Aquatic Resiliency Project	Trout Unlimited	\$99,153	Blue Mountains	<p>The Camp Creek Wet Meadow and Aquatic Resiliency Project is located on The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Zumwalt Prairie Preserve (ZPP) 17 miles northeast of Enterprise in Wallowa County, OR. TNC owns 90% of the Camp Creek watershed in its 33,000-acre ZPP and manages the land with strategies that integrate ecological restoration in a working landscape. Camp Creek is a tributary to Big Sheep Creek, which flows into the Imnaha River. The majority of the ZPP is protected in conservation easement land.</p> <p>Camp Creek is an important spawning and rearing habitat for ESA-listed Snake River steelhead, and home to numerous other Oregon Conservation Strategy Species including Columbia spotted frogs, willow flycatchers, Columbia clubtails, common nighthawks, and Western toads. The OR Department of Fish and Wildlife uses Camp Creek as an index stream and has counted steelhead redds there since 1965. ODFW's counts show that Camp Creek consistently produces the most or second greatest number of redds per stream mile in Wallowa County. The project area falls within the Zumwalt Prairie and the Imnaha Conservation Opportunity Areas.</p> <p>Due to historic human activities, Camp Creek is disconnected from its meadow and floodplain habitat and much of the upper basin is not functioning at its ecological potential, increasing its vulnerability to changing precipitation and temperature patterns. This is phase 1 of a comprehensive 4.7-mile project reach which will be completed in 2 construction phases. Phase 1 will enhance 2.8 miles of stream and 30 wetland acres along Camp Creek.</p> <p>The project goal is to re-establish a connected river-wetland corridor in a degraded meadow system, restore floodplain function, enhance climate resilience, and encourage natural habitat forming processes for a biodiverse community of species.</p> <p>Project partners include the Nez Perce Tribe, Grande Ronde Model Watershed Council, Wallowa Resources, ODFW, RIVHAB, Trout Unlimited, and TNC.</p>
38	Pine Creek Conservation Area Spring and Mesic Habitat Restoration	Oregon Natural Desert Association	\$32,550	Blue Mountains	<p>In partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS), the Oregon Natural Desert Association's (ONDA) Pine Creek Conservation Area Spring and Mesic Habitat Restoration project will enhance riparian and mesic habitat and restore spring hydrology on tributaries of Pine Creek. This project would expand on existing work aimed at improving riparian and mesic habitat within the 34,000-acre Pine Creek Conservation Area, which is owned and managed by CTWS. While CTWS has made incredible progress in restoring the main stem of Pine Creek since acquiring PCCA 25 years ago, most of Pine Creek's tributaries remain incised and disconnected from their floodplains, and are lacking healthy riparian vegetation. Under current conditions, these small streams typically run dry by late summer, and are progressively becoming more incised and eroded. Expected outcomes of the project include increases in both year-round soil moisture and seasonal flows in springs and streams, improved vegetation abundance and diversity, enhanced conditions for local mesic habitat and improved downstream habitat conditions for Mid-Columbia steelhead and other priority species of fish and wildlife. To achieve these outcomes, ONDA will recruit and lead volunteers on restoration work trips to undertake "micro" riparian restoration actions, including hand constructing small instream structures to reduce erosion and aggrade sediment, removing small western juniper that are encroaching on the stream channel, and installing native plants. Located within the Lower John Day Conservation Opportunity Area, this project will benefit several Oregon Conservation Strategy Species, including Mid-Columbia steelhead, Ferruginous hawk, and Arrow-leaf Thelypody. Other key results of the project will include increased public engagement in habitat restoration, and increased abundance of plants and wildlife on Pine Creek Conservation Area that Warm Springs tribal members utilize for subsistence and medicinal purposes.</p>

39	Public Access at Pioneer Park West for a Renewed Klamath River	Klamath River Renewal Corporation	\$35,000	Klamath Mountains	<p>The Klamath River has been transformed by the world’s largest dam removal project, the demolition of four outdated hydropower dams to restore the river’s imperiled ecosystem and salmon runs. The Klamath is a unique and large river, and it is well-known for its salmon runs and fishery, recreational opportunities, and its deep cultural significance for multiple Tribes. For the first time in over 100 years, the river is flowing freely through a 41-mile-long reach that was impounded in multiple reservoirs, diverted into flumes, or otherwise limited to flowing only during power generation releases. The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) completed dam removal in October 2024. The first class of fish have already begun to return to the project reach, with salmon being sighted above the previous dam reaches in Oregon for the first time in over 100 years. KRRC is already seeing high traffic in the area, and we anticipate public visitation will continue to increase in the coming year. This project will ensure that the public can access, enjoy, and experience the restored reaches of the Klamath River without negatively impacting newly planted vegetation or cultural resources in the area; it allow the public to witness the river’s and the salmon’s revitalization as they recover from over 100 years of dam-related impacts. The project will not only support recreation and public interest opportunities but further allow the public to see first-hand the positive impacts of dam removal on conservation, wildlife, and the local communities and economies.</p> <p>This request is focused on the Pioneer Park West public access facility, specifically on supporting the construction of the pathways throughout the site and to the already installed river access ramp. The pathways have been designed to direct visitors away from the newly restored areas and away from culturally sensitive areas to allow for successful restoration post dam removal and to protect cultural resources around the area.</p>
40	Relevant and Authentic Engagement for ODFW with Urban populations	ODFW	\$23,585	Willamette Valley	<p>ODFW’s mission is to protect and enhance Oregon’s fish, wildlife, and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations. ODFW staff and programs have been most visible in rural communities (compared to urban communities) for over 125 years of history. However, most Oregonians live in urban areas. ODFW acknowledges that the majority of ODFW resources are deployed based on the needs of fish and wildlife, which creates a perceived gap in service to people between rural areas and cities, especially in the Portland Metro area. To address this gap in service ODFW will partner with Valadrian Consulting to conduct interviews and focus groups with ODFW staff and members of the public living in the Portland Metro area. This will result in recommendations for ODFW’s future engagement in Portland and an ArcGIS map on relevance, awareness, and mission service disparities to inform future engagement activities. ODFW will use the learned information to connect with its urban constituents, expand its outreach efforts about living with wildlife in urban environments, increase awareness of and public engagement with Oregon’s fish and wildlife. This work is expected to benefit both ODFW and members of the public in the urban environment. ODFW will connect with communities historically absent from discussions to learn ways that the agency can better serve and connect with them. ODFW will be using staff time and existing materials to match the funding for this project.</p>

41	Reproductive success of oak-associated bird species of conservation concern to assess value of oak restoration for bird habitat	Klamath Bird Observatory	\$24,996	Klamath Mountains	Oak habitats are among the richest for wildlife, but are threatened and have undergone significant losses, prompting their inclusion as an Oregon Strategy Habitat. Almost half of the 49 bird species in the Pacific Northwest highly associated with oak-prairie habitats have experienced extirpations, range contractions, and/or regional population declines. We propose to enhance our understanding of bird use of oak restoration sites, and the habitat quality they provide for oak-associated bird species. We will begin to identify potential causes of oak bird declines by nest-searching for a suite of oak-associated cavity-nesting species (Oak Titmouse, Western Bluebird, and White-breasted Nuthatch) to measure nesting pair density and productivity. We will also contribute to understanding the value of restored oak woodlands for at-risk birds by comparing nest success, productivity, and age ratios at oak sites in pre- and post-restoration stages in the Rogue Basin. The outcome of our work - to understand the quality of restored oak habitats for avifauna, and to determine whether low reproductive success could be limiting population growth - will provide the direction for the next phase of conservation actions, bolstering recovery efforts for these species of conservation concern. We lack basic information on nest success in oak habitats of varying quality for all of these study species. The general public will benefit because filling knowledge gaps for oak-associated birds could prevent further declines and provide land managers with key information necessary to develop management actions, which supports the purpose and interest of many members of the public to protect biodiversity and rare species, and participate in recreational activities like bird-watching. Funding requested from OCRF will support a Master's student enrolled at Cal Poly Humboldt (and co-supervised by KBO) to carry out this research as part of their thesis, with an intern to assist with field work.
42	Sandy River Climate Change Analysis	The Freshwater Trust	\$49,433	West Cascades	The Sandy River Basin Partners (SRBP), including USFS, BLM, ODFW, Metro, City of Portland, Clackamas and Multnomah Counties, EMSWCD, The Freshwater Trust, and Northwest Steelheaders, have invested millions of dollars since 2007 restoring aquatic habitat throughout the Sandy River Basin (Sandy) following a comprehensive Restoration Strategy. The Sandy is a designated Conservation Opportunity Area (COA 105). Monitoring has shown significant increases in the production of Coho and steelhead smolts and spawning spring and fall Chinook adults (all Oregon Conservation Strategy Species providing recreational opportunities to nearby communities) since implementation of the Restoration Strategy. Climate change, however, threatens recent population gains by warming water temperatures, decreasing summer flows, and increasing flooding. Given the complexity of salmon and steelhead life histories and the interaction of various predicted climate change effects, the magnitude and location of impacts and most effective measures to mitigate them are unknown. The SRBP propose to use Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) to analyze the effects of climate change on Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, and winter steelhead in the Sandy, determine where the risks to their populations are greatest, and identify projects targeted to allay those risks. EDT is a life-stage model that considers interacting and cumulative effects and estimates fish population responses to habitat conditions. It has been widely used throughout the Pacific Northwest for restoration planning. The analysis will consider anticipated shifts in water temperature, flow, habitat surface area, and bed scour. Deliverables will include a comprehensive assessment of anticipated impacts to fish populations throughout the Sandy and a prioritized list of mitigating projects that SRBP can use to focus their efforts. Other Oregon Conservation Strategy species expected to benefit include Pacific Lamprey and Coastal Cutthroat Trout.
43	Shift Community Cycles-Friends of Trees Youth Bike Planting Project	Shift Community Cycles	\$50,000	Willamette Valley	Shift Community Cycles (Shift) and Friends of Trees (FOT) will pilot Youth Bike-Planting, an urban conservation program. It will more fully engage youth with the outdoors and nature in West Eugene, Oregon, a conservation opportunity area (COA ID: 86). Youth will increase tree canopy cover identified using the Tree Equity Score and native plants to address climate change and provide habitat for wildlife in urban areas, which are key conservation issues.

44	South Fork Crooked River Preserve Riparian Restoration	Oregon Natural Desert Association	\$39,241	Blue Mountains; Northern Basin & Range	<p>The South Fork Crooked River Preserve Riparian Restoration Project will restore 0.75 miles of riparian habitat, increase floodplain connection and improve the ecological functioning of the South Fork Crooked River, a major tributary of central Oregon’s Crooked River. Severe drought, combined with historic land use impacts and climate change, have degraded riparian habitat and diminished water quality and quantity in this river system, threatening the survival of already struggling fish and wildlife. Utilizing experience and expertise gained from leading past successful restoration work on the South Fork Crooked River, ONDA will strategically construct Beaver Dam Analogues (BDAs) on a .75-mile reach of the South Fork Crooked River within the 80-acre South Fork Crooked River Preserve. Anticipated outcomes include restored riparian habitat on 0.75 stream miles of the South Fork Crooked River, reconnection of the river with 1.5 acres of floodplain, increased soil moisture and water retention, decreased stream temperatures, and increased riparian vegetation cover. This project addresses the impacts of drought conditions by increasing water retention, restoring channel morphology, and promoting habitat conditions necessary to the survival of 18 Oregon Conservation Strategy Species documented in the watershed, including redband trout, western ridged mussel, and Columbia spotted frog. The project site is at the core of the South Fork Crooked River Conservation Opportunity Area #174 and the area is listed by Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project as an ODFW Priority Wildlife Connectivity Area. This project will benefit OCS Strategy Species and the COA as a whole by improving habitat conditions and resiliency to drought and climate change impacts. This project leverages the strengths of partners such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Oregon Desert Land Trust (ODLT).</p>
45	Supporting fisher (Pekania pennanti) conservation and recovery: Completion of an Implementation Plan to direct a reintroduction of fishers to the southern Oregon Cascades	Oregon State University	\$50,000	Klamath Mountains; West Cascades	<p>Wildlife conservation often requires active management to support recovery of at-risk species. Species reintroductions can simultaneously engage diverse stakeholders while facilitating species recovery. Fishers (Pekania pennanti) are a carnivore of conservation concern historically distributed throughout hardwood-conifer and mixed-conifer forests of North America. Fisher populations declined due to unregulated fur-harvest, forest loss, and incidental take during historical predator-control campaigns. Though fishers have recovered in portions of their historical distribution, fisher recovery in western North America has been limited. Indeed, fishers in the southern Sierra Nevada were listed as federally endangered in 2020 and the Northern California Southern Oregon (NCSO) Distinct Population Segment is under listing consideration by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).</p> <p>In Oregon, fishers are a Conservation Strategy Species and occupy approximately 15% of their historical distribution. While the NCSO represents the largest extant fisher population in the Pacific states, it is physically and genetically isolated from other populations in Washington and California. Threats, including wildfire, forest loss, and climate change, can drastically reduce the quality and extent of fisher habitat and increase risks of isolation and extirpation. To facilitate fisher recovery and persistence in Oregon, a reintroduction was determined to be both feasible and warranted by the USFWS and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). In response, federal, state, academic, and forest products industry partners propose to develop an Implementation Plan to direct a reintroduction of fishers to the Oregon Cascades; a planning area that includes five Conservation Opportunity Areas. An Implementation Plan will provide measurable and discrete steps to execute a successful reintroduction effort, facilitate the recovery fishers, and ensure their persistence into the future.</p>

46	The Audible Bats Project	Northwest Bat Hub	\$49,996	Blue Mountains; Columbia Plateau; East Cascades; Klamath Mountains; Northern Basin & Range; Willamette Valley	<p>Our Audible Bats Project addresses data gaps concerning spotted bats and pallid bats, two Oregon Conservation Strategy Species. These rare bats produce unique audible vocalizations, which we leverage to gather essential data, foster public engagement, and explore novel monitoring methods. Situated throughout Oregon's arid regions, our project serves as a nexus for community involvement, agency collaboration, and scientific rigor. By leveraging the framework of the NABat grid, we ensure that all data collected by our volunteers become integral to a statistically valid master sample. This facilitates the development of robust species distribution models and detailed occupancy maps, informed by both traditional bat monitoring and this highly targeted approach. The alignment with NABat not only enhances the scientific validity of our data but also reinforces our commitment to fostering community engagement and participation. By extending the project, we seek to further strengthen these partnerships. The project's emphasis on public involvement serves as a catalyst for data collection and empowers Oregonians to connect with their natural surroundings and contribute to conservation efforts. This sense of ownership and stewardship is crucial, particularly in an era marked by rapid environmental change. Through continued collaboration with local communities and agencies, our long-term objective is to improve our understanding of presence and habitat use of the target species. This project is the only large-scale monitoring effort focused on spotted and pallid bats in the Pacific Northwest. Data collected, in conjunction with passive acoustic data collected via the NABat protocol, allows us to empirically describe presence, distribution, and habitat use of these species for the first time in this region. Region-specific data are crucial to conservation as both of these species are highly adaptable and strong inferences cannot be made from data collected in other regions.</p>
47	The distribution and resilience of American pikas under changing climate conditions in the central Oregon Cascades	Oregon State University	\$95,676	East Cascades; West Cascades	<p>The American pika (<i>Ochotona princeps</i>) is a climate-sensitive mammal that largely occurs in alpine and sub-alpine habitat in western North America. Pikas exhibit limited heat tolerance, with a narrow ambient temperature window in which they can survive, but do not hibernate and must forage year-round to support their high metabolic rates. As a result, pikas often rely on rocky talus or talus-like habitat, which provides cool microclimates in the heat of summer, and reliable snowpack, which insulates pikas from extreme winter conditions. Rising temperatures, decreased precipitation, and unreliable snowpack imperil pikas by inducing heat stress, reducing forage availability, and increasing their vulnerability to winter conditions. Given their sensitivity to warming temperatures and drought conditions, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife lists pika as a Conservation Strategy Species. Nonetheless, little is known about the distribution of pikas and the potential effects of shifting climate conditions on their ability to persist in the central Oregon Cascades. We seek to address knowledge gaps by systematically surveying for pikas in the central Cascades. We will estimate pika occupancy using systematic detection/non-detection data from community-led volunteer surveys and presence only data from public repositories in an integrated species distribution model. We will estimate the effects of climate, talus, and forest conditions on pika occupancy across an elevational gradient. Through this effort, we will increase community awareness of pika ecology and conservation through community-science volunteer survey opportunities, public presentations, and social media outreach. The outcomes of this project will provide foundational information on the distribution of pikas in the central Oregon Cascades, an understanding of how climate, talus and forest conditions influence pika occurrence, and opportunities for public participation and outreach.</p>

48	Tufted Puffin Social Attraction Experiment and Community Outreach	The National Audubon Society's Seabird Institute ('Audubon')	\$25,998	Nearshore	<p>Tufted Puffin are an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species in the Nearshore ecoregion. In 1988, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) estimated that there were 4,858 Tufted Puffins in Oregon; in 2021—the year of the most recent coastwide survey—the estimate was 553. This project contributes to efforts to recover Tufted Puffins from this dramatic decline by experimenting with social attraction, a technique proven to benefit Atlantic Puffins, while simultaneously elevating awareness and reducing barriers for Oregonians to learn about this iconic seabird.</p> <p>In spring 2024, a group of stakeholders identified five priority strategies for Tufted Puffin conservation in Oregon: conduct management experiments; fill data gaps related to habitat, productivity, and diet; implement conservation actions; build awareness; and pursue a coordinated effort. Leveraging three of the priorities, we will experiment with social attraction and build public awareness through a stakeholder-driven project.</p> <p>We propose to install and monitor decoys (two types), mirror boxes, and cameras on rocks where puffins have been documented. The site will be selected based on observations of puffin activity from the 2024 breeding season and site-specific logistics. Community scientists will be invited to share observations of puffins within the project area. And, we will partner with community groups to create educational materials, host virtual field trips, and elevate interest in puffins by presenting at events and meetings. Our four objectives are to 1) better document Tufted Puffin presence at the project site, 2) compare attraction between two decoy array deployment approaches, 3) encourage engagement from community scientists, and 4) reduce barriers to elevate community awareness and enjoyment of Tufted Puffins.</p> <p>This project is led by Audubon in collaboration with Oregon State University, USFWS, ODFW, Friends of Haystack Rock, Haystack Rock Awareness Program, and Shoreline Education for Awareness.</p>
49	Universal Design Trail at Finn Rock Boat Landing	McKenzie River Trust	\$49,995	West Cascades	<p>This project will design and construct a trail using Universal Design principles at the Finn Rock Landing recreation site on the McKenzie River near Blue River, OR. The project is located in the West Cascades on the east margin of the McKenzie River Area COA 114. The trail will provide a safe, accessible path with interpretive signage and scenic seating options for all members of the public to enjoy, including those with mobility limitations. The project will increase access and inclusion, enhance recreational opportunities, and promote community engagement. Users will experience the serene beauty of the McKenzie River while learning about riparian ecosystems, fluvial processes, protection of threatened species, and restoration efforts to provide native forest regeneration after wildfires. This project will also re-establish native vegetation and will improve site safety by removing approximately 100 mature trees killed in the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire and replacing invasive vegetation with native trees and shrubs. The project addresses important OCS issues including invasive species, water quality, and disruption of disturbance regimes. It will benefit Pileated woodpeckers and white-breasted nuthatches, OCS species that thrive in habitats with healthy native trees and safe snags that can provide nesting cavities. Native vegetation populations provide food to those birds directly and provide adequate habitat for native insects. These provide a valuable food source for bird species and are necessary resources for them to thrive through winter. Removing dead, standing trees will allow us to construct a trail through the understory, creating a wider spacing between the dead, standing trees. This will provide more safe opportunities for clear fledgling flight paths from adjacent standing trees. The vegetation we plant along the trail will create a habitat for shrub nesting birds and diversify the availability of both nesting habitats and food sources for OCS species.</p>

50	Waldo Road Beaver Exclusion Device (BED) Project	Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District	\$50,242	Klamath Mountains	<p>The project will restore natural function to approximately 19-acres of beaver wetland habitat through the installation of three beaver exclusion devices (BEDs; specifically Anchor Fence Culvert Protection Systems) around the exteriors of three culverts on a 0.1-mile stretch of Waldo Road in O'Brien, OR (Josephine County). Beavers have been damming these culverts for at least a decade. This has led to the recent death of a stand of ponderosa pines on an adjacent private property and will likely lead to road damage if unmitigated. Neighboring landowners request a long-term, nonlethal solution.</p> <p>The project, designed to enhance drought resilience, aligns seamlessly with the OCRF Program Priorities by addressing critical aspects of drought mitigation and supporting underserved communities. Beaver exclusion devices (BEDs) are crucial in managing beaver populations without disrupting the natural benefits they provide, such as water retention and habitat creation. The three BEDs proposed in this project will help maintain infrastructure while allowing wetlands to thrive. Beavers contribute to longer water retention in the ecosystem, groundwater recharge, and ensure a sustained water supply during dry seasons. This is important as the Illinois Valley ranked second highest of any area statewide for vulnerability to catastrophic wildfire. Moreover, the exclusion devices prevent potential flooding and damage caused by uncontrolled beaver activities, thereby safeguarding natural and man-made environments. The project will benefit Oregon Conservation Strategy Species of the Klamath Mountains Ecoregion (https://www.oregonconservationstrategy.com/ecoregion/klamath-mountains/). Community led monitoring efforts will help present a more fully developed picture of which species are present.</p> <p>Project partners include Josephine County, Illinois Valley Watershed Council, Project Beaver/Beaver State Wildlife Solutions, ODFW, BLM, Two Rivers SWCD, and local volunteers.</p>
51	Wetland Drought Resilience Monitoring and Outreach on Mt. Hood	Portland State University	\$95,828	West Cascades	<p>Wetlands provide important water storage and drought mitigation benefits and are identified as a Strategy Habitat in the 2016 Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS). High-elevation wetlands like those in the Mt. Hood Conservation Opportunity Area (COA 107) are often the headwaters of streams and create unique, open habitats in a forested landscape. While wetlands and their catchments in the Mt. Hood COA are generally free of immediate anthropogenic stressors, they are subject to climate change. Wetland monitoring to date shows that sites historically saturated year-round, now have water tables that are more than 0.5 m below the ground surface during the growing season (Fig. 1). As wetlands become drier, their above- and below-ground water levels, soils, vegetation (Fig. 2) and overall ecological functioning change, which can reduce local and downstream benefits to wildlife and people.</p> <p>To understand the impacts of drought on wetlands on Mt. Hood, we have been monitoring wetland water levels and temperatures at 11 sites since 2020 using automated sensors and field observations. The project presented here will expand and make publicly available the results of this work. We propose to, 1) initiate water monitoring within 6 new wetlands in the Mt. Hood Area COA (Fig. 3); 2) engage community scientists as well as students from PSU's Indigenous Traditional Ecological and Cultural Knowledge program in plant phenology, beaver, and amphibian surveys; and 3) share what we learn via a Story Map linked to the OregonExplorer 'Wetlands' topic page that allows users to interact with and download wetland water data. To accomplish the above, we will partner with PSU's Indigenous Nations Studies, Bark, The Wetlands Conservancy (TWC), and the US Forest Service. This project will inform the conservation needs of four OCS Species (i.e., Cascades frog, Northern red-legged frog, Oregon spotted frog and Western toad), and identify potential wetland water storage enhancement locations.</p>

52	Willamette Valley Wetland Conservation and Management Program	Ducks Unlimited Inc.	\$67,000	Willamette Valley	<p>Wetlands and floodplain in the Willamette Valley are an increasingly threatened habitat type. This is due to several reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought • Urbanization • Tiling/draining • Land Use conversion <p>Wetlands and wet habitats in the Willamette Valley are critical to amphibians, migratory birds, fish and a multitude of other species, including, the following OCS Species: Dusky Canada Goose, Western Pond Turtle, Coastal Cutthroat trout, Northern Red-legged frog, Western Painted Turtle, Yellow Breasted Chat, and others. This project overlaps in 14 OCS opportunity areas.</p> <p>As stated by the Oregon Conservation Strategy: "About 96 percent of the Willamette Valley ecoregion is privately-owned, presenting challenges to conservation efforts. Conservation strategies that focus on needs of individual at-risk species and key sites are particularly critical in this ecoregion". DU and partners have been contacted by numerous landowners in the last decade who are seeking assistance on wetland management to better serve recreation and fish and wildlife conservation. Finding funding for private lands projects is challenging. Initial estimation of impact could be 20,000 acres in the Willamette Valley that could be positively impacted with a focused initiative and plan. In 2023 DU tested outreach strategies by hosting a workshop with 25 private landowners.</p> <p>The workshop consisted of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who DU is and the Projects we do • Why wetlands are important • Wetland Types • Wetland Plants and crops • Benefits to fish, wildlife and people • Why your property is important • Science of wetland management • How to manage • Generational turnover • Budgeting • Human Dimensions • Connection to the land <p>The workshops were a success and we have several workshops planned for 2025. Due to the clear need of private lands conservation, we plan to invite River Refuge Seed, Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture (PBHJV), and ODFW to discuss partnership and promote their work with habitat, fish and wildlife and private landowners.</p>
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