



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Private Forest Accord Mitigation Fund and its associated grant program (PFA Grant Program) was established in the 2022 Legislative Session (Senate Bills 1501 and 1502; House Bill 4055) as an outcome of the landmark agreement between timber and conservation groups. The PFA Grant Program is designed to fund projects that mitigate the impacts of forest practices on specific aquatic species covered by the Private Forests Accord Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). This program, in collaboration with a public-private Mitigation Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), prioritizes projects that deliver the most significant conservation benefit for the HCP-covered species, as defined by ORS 527.620.

Expenditures from the PFA Grant Program are recommended to the Commission by the Advisory Committee. This is the second solicitation for the PFA Grant Program. In 2023, the inaugural awards for the PFA Grant Program funded 23 projects totaling \$9.8 million dollars which aimed to provide benefits to aquatic species and habitats across Oregon.

The PFA Grant Program second round of the RFP closed in November 2024 with 63 applicants requesting \$34,168,847.30 in funds (see Commission Attachment C).

The Department is seeking the Commission’s approval for the expenditure of \$10,309,548.21 from the PFA Grant Fund to fund 23 projects selected by the Advisory Committee from the Fall 2024 PFA Grant Program RFP cycle (see Commission Attachment D).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

All PFA Grant Program Advisory Committee meetings are noticed and open to public participation and have time on the agenda for comments from participating members of the public. The opportunity to apply for funds was well publicized through a press release, multiple emails, and amplification through our partners’ communication networks.

Additionally, the public has an opportunity to provide comment prior to (in writing) or (orally) during the hearing that occurs at the Commission meeting.

ISSUE 1

Oregon Private Forest Accord Mitigation Grant Program Expenditure Recommendations from currently available funds.

ANALYSIS

The Department released the PFA Grant Program Round 2 RFP to the public in September 2024, offering up to \$10 million in funding for projects that represent a strategic investment in Oregon's aquatic biodiversity and align with the program's overarching goal of providing the most conservation benefit for HCP covered species.

The PFA RFP closed in November 2024 with 63 applications requesting over \$34 million in project funds (see Commission Attachment A). Attachment A displays all applications submitted by region, project type, and funding request. Of the 63 applications, all regions were represented in the proposal with the majority occurring in the East Region (Region 5), an increase from the previous year's solicitation due to additional outreach and engagement from Department Staff (Attachment C). Projects were characterized as being primarily focused on implementation, planning, or research and monitoring. Of the projects received, the majority were focused on implementation (45 projects) followed by planning (11 projects) and then research and monitoring (7 projects).

Department staff facilitated a two-tier review process where all eligible grant applications were evaluated by six Regional Review Teams (RRTs) and by the Private Forest Accord Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) voting members.

RRTs evaluated proposals against the criteria provided in Attachment B. RRT evaluations were delivered to the Advisory Committee to inform their decisions. The Advisory Committee then continued proposal evaluation based on criteria provided in Attachment B, scoring projects on a scale of 0 to 45 points maximum. Following these reviews, the Advisory Committee held a public meeting in March 2025 to discuss the proposals and rank projects based on the established criteria. Attachment C includes a summary of all submitted applications to the PFA Grant Program.

On March 13th, 2025, the Advisory Committee convened to review and rank project proposals submitted to the PFA Grant Program. Working in collaboration with technical experts across Oregon, the Committee focused on proposals that aligned with program priorities, provided tangible conservation benefits for one or more covered species, and addressed key needs identified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for fish, wildlife, and habitat protection.

The Advisory Committee selected the top projects that best aligned with the program's goal of providing the most conservation benefit for Oregon's fish, amphibians, and habitats covered by the pending Private Forest Accord Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). These projects represent a huge,

strategic investment in Oregon's aquatic biodiversity and watershed health (Attachment D). The Advisory Committee voted unanimously (6 yes, 0 no) in support for the projects now recommended for the Commission's approval.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the Oregon Private Forest Accord Mitigation Grant Fund recommendations for expenditures.
2. Reject project proposals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the 23 projects recommended for funding by the Private Forest Accord Mitigation Grant Program Mitigation Advisory Committee as described in Attachment D, with the provision that Department Staff may make administrative adjustments to project budgets, not to exceed 10%.

Effective Date: April 18, 2025