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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF)
Grant Agreement Final Report
Agreement #095-21; Project Number OCRF-2020-53

Project - Beaver Survey and Restoration: Central Coast Estuaries
The Wetlands Conservancy

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

The coastal beaver survey was designed as a pilot project to begin to address the significant data gap in the understanding of beaver use and distribution in Oregon's coastal estuaries. The goal of this project was to take the beaver survey protocol developed by TWC and adapt it for use in three central coast estuaries to begin. Originally, we had intended to partner with the youth crew from the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to engage with the youth crew. The surveys were completed instead by TWC staff with the support of local partner organizations. We hope that the next survey season will allow us to engage with the youth crew as well as other local partners and youth organizations.

Also due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our beaver survey training was put online. While we were not able to gather in person to train volunteers on the ground, we did make our virtual training available to anyone who was interested. This was an upside to the pandemic as many more people from around the state were able to learn more about surveying for beaver activity.

The surveys of the three estuaries were completed in the fall of 2021. For the initial pilot round, we focused on TWC property, public lands, and partner lands. As we expand this project in the future, we hope to expand surveys on private landowner properties where we believe there to be beavers. While surveying, community members were eager to convey where they had seen beaver sign.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROJECT

Goals

- 1) Understand beaver presence and absence in 3 watersheds of Lincoln County.
- 2) Improve understanding of restoration opportunities in Lincoln County.
- 3) Increase local knowledge of the value of beavers in climate action and community health.
- 4) Engage the community in direct conservation activities in their local watershed.

Objectives

- Convene local partners to discuss process, uses and benefits of The Wetlands Conservancy's beaver surveys.
 - TWC convened multiple partners across three different estuaries on the central coast to best determine where to survey for beavers. Through our partner meetings, we shared information about the benefits of coexisting with beaver, the protocol of TWC's beaver surveys, and gathered information about where beavers have traditionally been observed.
 - Partner organizations included Camp Westwind, Siuslaw National Forest, Midcoast Watershed Council, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, US Fish and Wildlife, and Pacific Forest Trust.

- Deliver beaver survey training for both public and agency personnel in Lincoln County (in-person if safe, otherwise through an online video platform), and offer ongoing education and volunteer opportunities.
 - Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the beaver survey trainings were delivered via Zoom. The virtual format allowed for more people across the state to engage with our beaver survey trainings, and learn more about beavers and their benefits to wetlands.

- Plan and perform beaver surveys, collect data, prepare and share reports.
 - Beaver surveys took place in August, September, and October. Three estuaries were surveyed, the Siletz estuary, the Salmon River estuary, and the Yaquina estuary. Data was collected and recorded. We shared our results with our partners. This project was a pilot to help us determine what other areas we should be surveying for beaver activity. We started with public land and land owned by partners, but were not able to get onto any privately owned land in the pilot round. We have identified other areas in these estuaries that we believe beavers are inhabiting, and plan to expand this survey on the central coast and also in other estuaries along the Oregon coast. While we did see some beaver sign, there is still a lot to learn about how beavers are using the estuarine environment.

- Complete restoration work to increase habitat value in Lincoln County.
 - TWC owns Bayview Oxbow, in Lincoln County. Thanks to upland forest restoration and management, beavers moved back into the oxbow in the winter of 2021, flooding much of the area that was traditionally ponded providing habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds.
 - TWC has secured funding for a willow planting on our Starr Creek preserve, in Lincoln County, that happened in the winter of 2022.
 - All of TWC's restoration plans include efforts to build habitat for beavers on the 800 acres we own and steward in Lincoln County.

SITE LOG AND NOTES BY WATERSHED*

*Narrative details of each site have been omitted for brevity's sake, but detailed notes of beaver sign type, wildlife signs, access, discussions with neighbors, and future leads are documented for each for future project planning.

Siletz

8/15/21 Day 1: Kangas Tract - 1.28 miles, 2 old dams

8/16/21 Day 2: Millport Slough - 2 miles, 0 dams

Drift Creek- 1.8 miles, 0 dams

Yaquina

8/31, Day1: Flesher Slough - 1.35 miles, 0 dams

Poole Slough - 1.7 miles, 0 dams

9/1 Day 2: Wright Creek - 3.5 miles, 0 dams but 2 signs of recent beaver feeding

Estuary behind the Aquarium - .5 miles, 0 dams

Salmon River

10/4/21 Day 1: Fraser Creek Estuary - 2.18 miles, 2 dams, many chews

Westwind property, Beaver Pond - 3.02 miles, 1 dam, 1 bank den

9/5/21 Day 2: Lost Lake - 4.95 miles, 1 bank den

TOTALS: (5) dams total - (2) active; (2) bank dens; (4) recent chews; 22.26 miles surveyed

PICTURES AND VIDEO

The Wetlands Conservancy partnered with the Oregon Zoo to highlight the pilot project.

Oregon Zoo Video: [Scientists Document Oregon Beavers in Saltwater](#)



Bayview Oxbow Preserve, 112 acres, after beaver dam establishment in early winter 2021.



Beaver scent mound in tidal marsh setting (left); beaver dam at Camp Westwind (right)



Willow live stake planted (left) and beaver sign (right) at Bayview Oxbow Preserve

Thank you for funding this pilot project. We're grateful for your support.