

# OCRF Grant Project Completion Report

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*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife*

## *Introduction*

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### **Project Name\***

OCRF 2022-2-40 Community Outreach, Recreation, & Education (CORE) Program

*Character Limit: 200*

**Upon completion of the project, please complete this Final Report document and submit it before the Project Expiration Date in the Agreement. The information you provide will be used for accountability and reporting and displayed to the general public. Please be as clear and concise as possible and avoid jargon or acronyms.**

### **Project Location\***

Mapleton, Lane County  
Florence, Lane County  
Reedsport, Douglas County

### **Actual Impact Measurement Unit**

Miles  
Acres  
Number of volunteers engaged  
Acre Feet

Other (please explain)  
Number of students engaged: 1075  
Number of field trips held: 33  
Number of community members engaged: 216  
Number of community events held: 14  
Summer day-camp attendance (2023 and 2024 combined): 100  
Summer overnight camp attendance (2023 and 2024 combined): 19  
Recreation equipment rentals: 40

## Oregon Conservation Strategy Species \*

List the Oregon Conservation Strategy Species and Oregon Conservation Strategy Opportunity Areas that the Project benefited.

### Conservation Strategy Opportunity Areas

COA 32: North Fork Siuslaw River

COA 34: Siuslaw river Estuary

COA 35: Siuslaw river

COA 36: Takenitch-Siltcoos Lakes

### OCS Species

Western Snowy Plover

Coho Salmon

Pacific Lamprey

Cutthroat Trout

Steelhead Trout

## Final Report Questions

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### Project Statement\*

Briefly describe what the project accomplished and the problem(s) it addressed. Make a clear and concise statement; avoid jargon and acronyms.

*Character Limit: 1000*

The Community Outreach, Recreation and Education program successfully brought place-based outdoor education to publics throughout the Siuslaw Watershed Council's service area. This was achieved through community events ranging from service-learning days to workshops, field trips in connection with local school districts, recreation equipment rentals, and summer programming including a week-long day camp and three-day overnight camp. Located in rural Oregon with a significant economically disadvantaged population, our programming is offered free of charge and gives those who may not otherwise have the opportunity a chance to experience and learn about their natural resources.

### Summary of Goals\*

Describe how project goals, objectives, and/or milestones were completed. Discuss any measurable and achieved benefits (# of volunteers engaged, acreage restored, retrofits, planning documents created, research results, etc.).

*Character Limit: 3000*

The goals of the project enabled by the funding of the grant included the hiring of a part-time Youth Engagement Specialist to expand the capacity of the education department, the hosting of free field trips to local students during the project period, the hosting of community education and volunteer events throughout the watershed, and the running of two summer camps annually for youth from 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It further allowed for the continuance of our free recreational gear rental program.

During the project period 1,075 students were reached through 33 field trips ranging from guided ecology hikes to fish dissections to invasive species removal. From kindergarten to college, these field trips interfaced with local public school districts along with homeschools and other alternative learning institutions. Partnering with the United States Forest Service, Oregon State Parks, the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative, and more, the Siuslaw Watershed Council was able to connect students with professionals in the field to engage in experiential learning and explore career options in conservation.

A total of 14 community events were hosted reaching 216 participants throughout the watershed. These community events included volunteer days such as trash removal and invasive plant control, and educational outings including birding, hiking, native plant crafting, and mushroom foraging.

Summer camp was held in both 2023 and 2024 with programs fully booked each year. The week-long day camp hosted 50 attendees each year, fourth through eighth grade. Among other activities, campers participated in guided ecology walks through dune and forest, crafted fishing lures, caught fish at Honeyman State Park, paddled kayaks in Hult reservoir, and removed invasive species along the banks of the Siuslaw river.

Introduced as an expansion to camp programming in 2023, our overnight program dubbed Wilderness Weekend saw success in both years of its implementation. Catering to high school students, it hosted eight campers in its first year, expanding to 11 in its second. Participants explored the watershed on foot, by canoe and kayak, and even by plane, while learning backcountry camping skills and leave no trace ethic.

The Siuslaw Watershed Council's gear rental program loaned out 33 watercraft and seven bicycles to community members throughout the project period. By providing recreational equipment at no cost to members of our community, we are able to reduce the barriers of access to recreation opportunities throughout the watershed and better connect the public with their natural resources.

## Lessons Learned\*

Describe lessons learned and challenges faced during the grant performance period. Examples being delays, contractual issues, permitting, funding, changes to the project Scope of Work or amendments, etc.

*Character Limit: 3000*

Throughout the course of the project's implementation perhaps the greatest challenge involved in the completion of the stated goals was organizational staff changes. Fortunately, the scope of the project provided for this to an extent, as will be explained. The Siuslaw Watershed Council's executive director moved on in October 2023, and the Education Program Manager was hired to the position as a result. This would have left the education position vacant, but for the Youth Education Specialist who was hired under the provisions of the grant funding. The Youth Education Specialist succeeded the head of the program, having already been made familiar to an extent with the project and its requirements.

This nonetheless resulted in challenges, as any transition does, and doubtlessly had an impact on the efficacy of the discharge of the provisions of the grant. The former-Youth-Education-Specialist-now-Project-Manager was also acting as crew lead for the restoration field crew when he first inherited the program, limiting the amount of time he was able to dedicate until a new crew lead was found. The end result of this was several planned community events not being hosted during the transition period. It also meant that expanded capacity hoped for by the hiring of a Youth Education Specialist was only viable during the time before the prior Education Program Director began his tenure as Executive Director.

## Next Steps\*

Describe any next steps for the project, if any.

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The next steps for this project are to continue to implement and expand into 2025, while further refining and improving existing programming. Strengthening connections with local partners will be a priority; the Siuslaw Watershed Council is working with the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative to allow for more intentional and targeted community invasive species removal projects that will tie in with overarching restoration objectives. We are also moving towards a collaborative project with the Mapleton School District for an urban forestry initiative that will bring together classrooms and restoration professionals and provide funding for campus-wide invasive species removal, partial reforestation, and a native nursery.

Summer camp programming, including the day camp and overnight camp, will be continued, and lessons learned from previous years will be implemented to streamline and improve the overall process. Accessibility of the overnight camp program will be increased through the provision of single-person tents which will allow individuals who do not identify with a gender binary or simply feel uncomfortable bunking with another camper to still have the option to attend. The day camp will continue to work to encourage sign-up and participation of students from smaller communities throughout our service area and from alternative schools alongside the traditional school districts.

Our recreational equipment rental program will continue to be offered throughout the watershed, providing bikes, paddleboards, canoes, and kayaks. Significant efforts will be made to expand awareness regarding this free resource through brochures, fliers, and marketing on social media, while barriers of entry will be reduced through the provision of a boat trailer and inflatable kayak and paddleboard options for ease of transportation.

A number of legacy field trip programs will be re-implemented throughout the watershed, expanding capacity and the diversity of programs offered. These field trips will focus specifically on service-learning events at local restoration sites in collaboration with a number of partners including the United States Forest Service, Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative, and Oregon State Parks. By restoring this programming, we hope to increase direct student engagement and understanding of natural resource career pathways along with building a stewardship ethic among local residents to help serve our watershed far into the future.

## Attachments

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**Include all project data collected, such as surveys, reports, PDF maps, photo monitoring and planning documents. Upload any color photographs of the Project area(s) before and after the Project completion taken at the pre-set photo points as one document.**

### Optional Document URL

If documents are stored in an accessible location such as Dropbox, you may enter the url here.

*Character Limit: 2000*

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qnmQ7zbgxiG\\_9p5aZ-lqYVdHBBk1Yjt4?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qnmQ7zbgxiG_9p5aZ-lqYVdHBBk1Yjt4?usp=sharing)

### Attachment 1

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### Attachment 2

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## Certification

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Drafts of final reports for review may be submitted to [ODFW.OCRF@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:ODFW.OCRF@odfw.oregon.gov)

### **Certifying Statement\***

I certify that the above and attached information is true and accurate.

### **Choices**

Yes

### **Applicant Authorized Representative Name\***

*Character Limit: 200*

Elijah Yager

### **Authorized Representative Title\***

*Character Limit: 200*

Project Manager