

# OCRF Grant Project Completion Report

*Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife*

## Introduction

---

### **Project Name\***

#### **OCRF 2022-2-51 Club Aves Multilingual Birding & Nature Club**

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\***

Multnomah County

### **Actual Impact Measurement Unit**

Miles

Acres

Number of volunteers engaged: 15

Acre Feet

#### **Other (number of participants):**

Total: 105

45 youth, K-5

15 middle-school youth

30 adults and siblings

15 Green Leaders

### **Oregon Conservation Strategy Species \***

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

#### **Alignment with OCRF Program Priorities**

Recreation

# Final Report Questions

## Project Statement\*

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

Club Aves addressed the absence of culturally relevant environmental education and lack of access to green spaces for low-income youth of color, grades K - 8.

We provided engaging environmental education and outdoor experiences for youth and their families, including Spring Break and Summer camps, Family Days, canoe trips, and hands-on environmental education through the Hacienda CDC (Community Development Corporation) after-school education program.

We also expanded to a new Hacienda CDC location, Rockwood Village and started Club Naturalista, a new program that engages middle school youth.

Youth from the Oregon Bird Alliance Green Leaders program volunteered to assist with Club Aves events. They also received mentoring, and learned about curriculum planning and the importance of connecting youth with nature.

## 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.).**

We achieved our goals, providing meaningful outdoor experiences and environmental education to youth and families, fostering stronger connections with nature and reinforcing the importance of environmental stewardship.

### After-School Environmental Education

We held 52 sessions of environmental education, partnering with the Hacienda CDC after-school program. One highlight was a flower dissection activity, a topic that the youth requested. Through dissecting flowers and learning about their different parts, the kids engaged in hands-on learning that sparked curiosity and excitement. They then created bouquets out of the flowers and shared with their families. This activity received a lot of positive feedback, underscoring its impact in fostering learning and meaningful connections with nature.

We also provided 15 sessions of environmental education to 15 high school-aged youth from the Bird Alliance of Oregon Green Leaders workforce development program. The program builds skills for teens to become environmental educators in Bird Alliance and Verde partner programs.

### Outdoor Recreation

#### Spring Break and Summer Camps

We hosted eight weeks of Spring Break and Summer Camps. One highlight was taking the kids

swimming. Every youth was provided a life jacket for safety. We built swim skills throughout the week, starting at calmer river locations and ending the week in more challenging water. We worked on holding breath underwater. Some of the kids learned a new swim skill (the breast stroke!) All the kids felt a lot more confident in the water by the end of week.

### Family Days

We offered seven Family Day camps for youth and their families, visiting places like Oxbow Park, Blue Lake Park, and Cape Lookout State Park. We also visited the Tillamook Forest Center, showing families new spaces for outdoor recreation. Intergenerational learning thrived.

### Canoe Excursions

We took a total of 35 youth on after school canoe excursions in the Columbia Slough with Columbia Slough Watershed Council (CSWC). They encountered a diverse array of wildlife, including multiple great blue herons, snowy egrets, and nutrias. The kids also got to deepen their understanding of watershed health, connecting theoretical knowledge with real world observations.

We took 45 youth on canoe excursions in the Willamette River, with the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership. They encountered deers, eagles, and other native bird species.

### Rockwood Village

We expanded Club Aves to Rockwood Village, a Hacienda CDC affordable housing community in Gresham.

### New Program: Club Naturalista

Club Naturalista is a new program that provides age-appropriate, identity-affirming nature education and leadership development for middle-school youth to deepen their environmental awareness and skills. We started with an after-school pilot curriculum in Spring 2024, offered an overnight camp in Summer 2024, and after-school environmental education in Fall 2024.

## 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.**

Because of the evolving federal funding landscape we have to reassess and adapt organizational funding strategies. We are monitoring opportunities, deepening relationships with current funders, and exploring new partnerships to ensure continued support for our programs and the communities we serve.

Candace Avalos won her election to represent District 1 on Portland City Council. On March 27, 2025 Ismael "Izzy" Meda joined Verde as our new Executive Director. Izzy brings more than 10 years of leadership experience in community-based nonprofit work, most recently serving as the Executive Director at Familias en Acción.

## Next Steps\*

**Describe any next steps for the project, if any.**

We will continue to evolve our programming, as we have done since Club Aves began. We regularly engage Club Aves youth and their families, Green Leaders, and our partners at Hacienda CDC and Bird Alliance in planning program topics, which helps us develop a responsive curriculum tailored to their needs and interests.

## Attachments

**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.**

### Attachment

OCRF 2022-2-51 Club Aves Photos

## Certification

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.

**Yes**

## Applicant Authorized Representative Name\*

**Mary Benson**

## Authorized Representative Title\*

**Grants Coordinator for Verde**