

Draft Expenditure Framework – intended to start the conversation and will be revised by the full committee

## Framework for Expenditures from the OCRF

### Vision

The Oregon Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee envisions an Oregon where native wildlife thrives in healthy habitats across the state's lands and waters and where all Oregonians realize their role in achieving this vision. To do so, the Advisory Committee hopes to support robust conservation projects and get people involved with Oregon's wildlife, wild places, and recreational opportunities to inspire their personal stewardship.

### Expenditures

The Conservation & Recreation Fund was created to grow the capacity of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to manage all of Oregon's fish and wildlife species and to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The legislation creating the Fund is not specific about how the Advisory Committee will allocate funds. Given the nature of a limited duration Fund, it has been deemed most appropriate for the 2019-2021 biennium to focus on granting monies to partners and organizations that can undertake projects that meet the intent of the Fund.

At the April 6, 2020 meeting, the Advisory Committee indicated their intent to allocate resources from the 2019-2021 biennium to projects via a competitive process. The Committee plans to solicit a diversity of projects through a competitive Request For Proposals process, while retaining the authority to use their discretion to support projects without a competitive process.

By statute and administrative rule, the activities for which the Department may expend moneys from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Promoting the health of Oregon's ecosystems and fish and wildlife species by implementing conservation programs and strategies identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, including conservation programs and strategies for the nearshore identified in the marine component of the Oregon Conservation Strategy;
- (2) Improving engagement of the public in wildlife watching, hunting and fishing opportunities and in other outdoor recreation opportunities related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;
- (3) Improving educational outreach and engagement of the public, including diverse and underserved communities, related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;
- (4) Engaging in, and providing funding for, joint projects of the department and the State Parks and Recreation Department or other state agencies as recommended by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee; and
- (5) Other conservation, management, research, habitat improvement, enforcement, outdoor recreation or education activities.

#### **Other Expenditure Details:**

- There is no minimum or maximum limit on financial requests that can be made from the Fund.

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- The Committee may consider accepting restricted donations on a case by case basis by evaluating proposals against existing program priorities and criteria.

## Who Can Apply

Any public or private non-profit organization may request funds. Private non-profit organizations must have tax-exempt status under the IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). Businesses and individuals are not eligible to apply.

## Program Priorities for the OCRF

To be considered for funding, the funded elements of a project must include one of the priorities defined as either Conservation and/or Recreation as described below. Preference may be given to projects that focus on the intersection of conservation and recreation. In all priority areas, the Advisory Committee will prioritize projects that engage Oregonians in the solution to a key conservation issue or in recreational opportunities that reach out to and engage people who have not participated in the past because of language barriers, financial barriers, access barriers, etc.

For the purposes of the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee, the definition of Conservation is: ***Improving the health of Oregon's ecosystems and populations of native fish and wildlife species.***

The Advisory Committee will prioritize:

- Habitat restoration and improving habitat connectivity related to implementing the recommendations in the Oregon Conservation Strategy.
- Science, research, and monitoring directly related to implementing the recommendations in the Oregon Conservation Strategy, especially through community science activities.

For the purposes of the work of the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee, the definition of Recreation is: ***Any activity undertaken to enjoy, appreciate, or support native fish, wildlife, and their habitats.***

The Advisory Committee will prioritize:

- Opportunities to engage and expand the number and diversity of Oregon's outdoor users.
- Opportunities to introduce Oregonians to wildlife-associated recreation.
- Educational materials and opportunities related to responsible recreation, ecology, and wildlife conservation for kids and adults in multiple languages.
- Research or planning that supports responsible recreational opportunities.
- Enhancement or restoration of trails and access to waterways in a way that preserves or enhances sensitive habitat or that resolves impacts related to informal or dispersed recreation in sensitive habitat.

## Fundability Criteria

While any project that fits the definition of Conservation or Recreation is eligible for funding, the following project elements are more likely to be recommended to the Commission. Those projects that:

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1. Identify a clear and direct benefit to priority fish and wildlife species, habitats, or conservation opportunity areas identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. ([https://oregonconservationstrategy.org/media/ODFW-Wildlife-Priority-Strategy-Species-by-Ecoregion\\_3.2018.pdf](https://oregonconservationstrategy.org/media/ODFW-Wildlife-Priority-Strategy-Species-by-Ecoregion_3.2018.pdf)).
2. Demonstrate intersectional objectives between conservation and recreation.
3. Engage youth, underserved communities and diverse audiences, such as communities of color, tribes, and low income communities, in conservation and recreation activities.
4. Are underway and can be expanded or improved with the addition of OCRF funding.
5. Involve a variety of partners as well as maximize the concept of partnership and co-produced outcomes.
6. Do not require a long term funding commitment.
7. Clearly demonstrate the project is consistent with ODFW plans, policies and goals.
8. Clearly demonstrate the project is, or will be, consistent with local, state, and federal regulations.
9. Projects that are proposed to fulfill a regulatory requirement, such as mitigation, are not acceptable.
10. Preference may be given to projects with higher levels of contributions from multiple community and funding partners or that bring funds to the OCRF.

The Committee recognizes that the types of projects we intend to fund all have inherent economic benefits. However, given the current economic situation, we are particularly interested in supporting projects that maximize job creation and getting Oregonians back to work.

## Measuring Success

The Committee recognizes the importance of both short- and long-term monitoring to evaluate project outcomes. Beyond the reporting that will be required by our successful applicants, the committee intends to allocate 5% of funds to investigating, monitoring, and reporting on the success of our expenditures on a biennial basis. Both evidence-based and values-based metrics will be used to measure the impact of our projects.