

PFA August Staff Report

August 9th, 2023

Virtual

Program Update

The PFA Mitigation Grant Program is celebrating the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission's approval of the Private Forest Accord Mitigation Fund Oregon Administrative Rules, Division 97. This is an important milestone in the establishment of the grant program, and Staff is very grateful for the time, review, and input provided by MAC members and the public.

At this point, the MAC has finalized the following important components of program establishment:

- ✓ [MAC Operating Procedures](#)
 - Clarifies the MAC's basic procedures and roles for Staff, MAC members, and the public.
- ✓ Oregon Administrative Rules
 - These Administrative Rules, adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on August 4th, 2023, are created to implement and interpret the statutory authority of the PFA Mitigation Fund.

Up next, the MAC will be developing and finalizing the following documents and Staff's estimated timelines for completion:

- [Expenditure Framework](#) – *Complete. Needs adoption.*
 - Outlines the purpose, priorities, and funding formats within the Fund and is aimed at providing clarity to ODFW staff and the public.
- Grant Review Process
 - Outlines the grant review and evaluation process, from project submission to award.
 - Committee goal approval is Fall 2023.
- Grant Guidelines – **Attached to email. Please review.**
 - These guidelines accompany the RFP and will illustrate to the public the grant program's purpose, how to apply, and what attachments are required for applications.
 - Committee goal approval September 9th, 2023.

The goal date for the release of the PFA Mitigation Grant Program's first RFP remains October 2nd, 2023.

On the administrative side, Staff is also working diligently on the following:

- A new ODFW PFA web page with more information and links for the grant program
- A communications strategy in advance of the October RFP and longer-term
 - A note about the PFA Grant Program was included in ODFW's Messenger newsletter, which netted 30 new emails in the PFA email distribution list (~150 emails registered)
 - OWEB and OCRF will be transmitting notifications about the PFA RFP through their email distribution lists

- A QR code has been created, for inclusion on all PFA-related materials, directing people to the ODFW PFA web page
- Radio PSA's, social media posts, and press releases related to the upcoming RFP are all in preparation.
- Interim grant management system for applications, grant review, agreement processing, and reporting
- Template grant agreements, working with Dept of Justice
- The hiring of the Staff Assistant is in the reference checks stage of the process.

Agenda item: 4. Staff Report

Andy will summarize the status of the MAC Working Groups. These working groups are finalizing critical processes that will facilitate the launch of the first Request for Proposals (RFP). Below is a preliminary update.

1. Grant Review Process – 4 stages (Reference attachment "Grant Review Process" for more detail)
 - a. Stage 1: Initial quality control & completion check by ODFW
 - b. Stage 2: Review Team Assessments
 - c. Stage 3: MAC Review & Recommendation
 - d. Stage 4: ODFW Review & Presentation to F&W Commission
 - e. **Outstanding Questions for MAC:**
 - i. How long should the RFP be open? 6 or 8 weeks?
 - ii. The geography of review teams decided post-submission of proposals. Dependent on where the proposals come from.
 - iii. Should MAC vote using anonymous voting software?
2. Land Acquisition
 - a. Due to the complexity of land acquisition, ODFW recommends holding off on land acquisition projects for the first year of the grant program.
 - b. Justification:
 - i. Land acquisitions require different documentation, from restoration projects to land acquisitions' unique specificity and complexity. This includes specific application questions and processes, land use information, management plans, environmental site assessments, title investigation requirements, survey requirements, etc.
 - ii. Lack of staff capacity to implement in year 1
 - iii. Lack of expert review teams
 - c. ODFW will work throughout the fall with experts, such as OWEB, to start building the land acquisition sub-program.
3. Next in-person MAC Meeting – **Meeting rescheduled. See description below.**
 - a. Location: World Forestry Center, Portland.
 - b. Tentative Agenda:
 - i. Day 1: Lunch at 11:00, meeting begins at 12:00. Grant proposal summaries presented by the Regional Teams and review by the MAC. Dinner to follow, stay at nearby hotel TBD.
 - ii. Day 2: MAC discussion of proposals and voting on the final funding list.
 - iii. Hotels and meals for MAC members will be paid for as administrative costs from the PFA Grant Program.

- c. **A calendar hold for January 2024 has been canceled, the new date is expected to be in February, pending final discussion with MAC chairs in August 2023. The meeting dates are based on when the Regional Reviews are completed.**

4. Grant Guidelines

- a. The Grant Guidelines have been drafted and are pending a final decision by the MAC. Please review and provide any edits and insights to this document. Applicants will use these guidelines when learning about the program and applying for funding. **Please Note:** Discussions involving the HCP and permitting are still ongoing between ODF, ODFW & the federal agencies and have not been finalized. These discussions may alter the RFP in terms of eligible projects and monitoring requirements.

Agenda item: 5. USFWS & 6. NMFS Presentations

Chris Allen of USFWS and Kate Wells of NOAA will individually present to the MAC on agency priorities across the state in relation to the PFA Mitigation Program. Topics include:

- Federal ESA Section 7 coverage for grant-funded activities in advance of the 2027 HCP (*USFWS Specific Question*)
- Programmatic coverage of HCP-covered species & expectations for mitigation coverage.
- What investments would the agencies recommend the MAC make to uplift the HCP-covered species & what do you see as recovery priorities?
- What could the MAC fund that doesn't exist elsewhere to achieve these priorities?

Conclusions:

The presentation is to engage the MAC and inform prospective applicants what they can expect regarding permitting.