



## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

The Legislature created the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund in 2019 through House bill 2829. The legislation also created the Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee and required the Department to deposit \$1 million in to the Fund from non-state and non-federal sources in order to access a \$1 million special appropriation from the General Fund. This special appropriation was eliminated during the recent Special Session of the Legislature. The Legislative Fiscal Office clarified on the record that this is intended as a temporary reduction (to deal with the immediate economic/health crisis), with plans to restore general fund dollars in 2021 to match all private donations that come in through the OCRF campaign this biennium.

The Commission adopted Oregon Administrative Rule Chapter 635, Division 98 in October of 2019 to create the nine-member Advisory Committee. Six members represent the Ecoregions of the state as described in the Oregon Conservation Strategy and three members are at-large representatives. Commissioner Mark Labhart and Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, Director of the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation are non-voting participants on the Advisory Committee.

The intent of the Conservation & Recreation Fund was to increase the Department's capacity to implement the recommendations of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, but the Fund sunsets at the end of the 2019-2021 biennium. Thus, the Advisory Committee is recommending expenditures from the Fund to support the work of conservation partners in the state to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy and improve equitable access to wildlife-associated recreation activities like community science, wildlife viewing, and urban conservation.

As of November 2020, despite many delays and setbacks related to the COVID-19 situation, the Department and partners have generated approximately \$200,000 from non-state and non-federal sources. This includes donations from over 12,000 individuals.

The Commission approved eight (8) projects as initial expenditures from the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund in September. Since then, multiple organizations and individuals have approached the Advisory Committee about making donations that are restricted for use on three of the existing projects. The Advisory Committee is seeking the Commission's approval to make these increased expenditures. There is considerable community interest in these three projects, which may lead to future restricted donations. The Advisory Committee is seeking the Commission's approval to accept and expend future restricted donations for these three projects as well.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

All of the Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee members are open to public participation and have time on the agenda for comments from participating members of the public.

## **ISSUE 1**

Conservation & Recreation Fund Expenditure Recommendations

## **ANALYSIS**

Four restricted gifts are proposed in support of three of the projects approved by the Commission in September. The Advisory Committee has accepted the restricted donations and seeks the Commission's approval to increase the financial scale of the three projects. The information is summarized in the table below.

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Primary Applicant</b>	<b>Approved Amount in September</b>	<b>Restricted Donations</b>	<b>New Project Cost</b>
Gilchrist Underpass Wildlife Directional Fencing	Oregon Hunters Association	\$70,000	\$5,000 from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	\$75,000
Link Creek	Trout Unlimited and Caldera	\$7,800	\$1,000 from the Starview Foundation	\$8,800
Feasibility Study: Restoring Sea Otters to the Oregon Coast	The Elakha Alliance	\$10,000	\$1,500 from Oregon Wild  \$10,000 from the Oregon Community Foundation	\$21,500

The Advisory Committee Recommends:

1. Increase expenditures for the project entitled Gilchrist Underpass Wildlife Directional Fencing to \$75,000. Additional funds will support additional lengths of fencing.
2. Increase expenditures for the Link Creek project to \$8,800. Additional funds will support necessary Caldera staff time.
3. Increase expenditures for the Feasibility Study: Restoring Sea Otters to the Oregon Coast to \$21,500. Additional Funds will be matched with funds from the Meyer Memorial Trust, to support The Elakha Alliance’s community engagement and outreach activities around the Feasibility Study and companion Economic Impact Assessment through 2021.

## OPTIONS

1. Approve Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee recommendations for expenditures from the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund.
2. Reject additional expenditures.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1. Approve the expenditures recommended by the Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee.

## DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the increased expenditures for the three (3) projects as recommended by the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee with the continued authority for the Advisory Committee to expend restricted gifts for any of these projects.

**Effective Date:** December 11, 2020