



## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) was created within the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) as a new way for Oregonians to support a broad range of conservation and recreation efforts throughout the state. The intent of the OCRF is to increase the Department’s capacity to protect and enhance the species and habitats identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy and create new opportunities for wildlife watching, urban conservation, community science, and other wildlife-associated recreation. Expenditures from the OCRF are recommended to the Commission by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). Since the formation of the OCRF, 62 projects have been funded through three rounds of competitive requests for proposals (RFP). These projects have spanned the state and have provided needed funds to ODFW partners promoting outdoor equity and access as well as science focused conservation and research.

The OCRF has been a successful example of the power of a public-private partnership, where state General Fund dollars have been used to leverage and match private donations from Oregonians (see Commission attachment 2). The OCRF received public donations through the ODFW Electronic Licensing website, the “Oregon Is Alive” website, as well as direct donations – totaling over \$1 million since 2020. In 2022, the OCRF account received a total of \$6 million of General Fund and legislatively appropriated funding, with \$5 million from the General Fund for use on drought related work (\$1 million of which will be used for broader OCRF mission related work) as well as \$1 million for outdoor recreation-related work from federal funds associated with COVID relief. Funds not specifically designated for drought related work are referred to as OCRF ‘main account’ funds.

The Advisory Committee released their fourth RFP to the public in December 2021, which closed in late February 2022 with 59 applications (see Commission attachment 3, 4, and 6). Each project proposal was scored by at least two Advisory Committee members (see Commission attachment 5) as well as reviewed by content experts from ODFW staff and the Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation. The Advisory Committee met on May 2 to discuss project reviews and select projects based on overall rankings (per the defined review process) and the desired diversity of project types and geographies. The Advisory Committee seeks to make multiple, diverse expenditures in each funding round encompassing diverse geography, taxonomy, representation of program priorities, and partner engagement. The Advisory Committee recommended 23 projects for funding for a total expenditure of \$1,036,021 from the OCRF main account.

Following the May 2 OCRF meeting, the OCRF received a restricted donation of \$75,000 for the funding of a set of four (4) additional projects from the fourth RFP. In accordance with OCRF Expenditure Framework, this restricted donation may be matched up to 30% with General Fund by the Advisory Committee for total fund expenditure of \$97,470. The private donor worked with the OCRF Chair and staff to select projects that helped to increase the diversity of OCRF

funded projects taxonomically and geographically. Projects were presented to the OCRF Special Projects Subgroup on June 3 (per OCRF Expenditure Framework Procedures) and then recommended for funding by the OCRF main Advisory Committee on June 13.

**The Advisory Committee is seeking the Commission’s approval for the expenditure of \$1,036,021 from the OCRF main account to fund twenty-three (23) projects selected from the 2021/2022 OCRF RFP cycle (see Commission attachment 3).**

**The Advisory Committee is also seeking the Commission’s approval for the expenditure of \$97,470 from the OCRF main account (\$75,000 from restricted donation and \$22,470 from General Fund) to fund four (4) projects selected from the 2021/2022 OCRF RFP cycle (see Commission attachment 3).**

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

All the Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee meetings are open to public participation and have time on the agenda for comments from participating members of the public. The opportunity to apply for funds was well publicized through a press release, multiple emails, and amplification through our partners’ communication networks.

## **ISSUE**

Conservation & Recreation Fund Expenditure Recommendations from currently available funds.

## **ANALYSIS**

A summary of the Advisory Committee’s process and the recommendations are provided in Attachment 5 and 3, respectively.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Approve Conservation & Recreation Advisory Committee recommendations for expenditures.
2. Reject project proposals

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the selected projects (totaling \$1,036,021) as recommended by the Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Approve the selected special projects (totaling \$97,470) as recommended by the Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee.

**DRAFT MOTION:**

I move to approve the twenty-three (23) projects recommended for funding by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee as described in Attachment 2 with the authority to increase expenditures for projects if restricted gifts are received for those projects.

I move to approve the four (4) special projects recommended for funding by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee as described in Attachment 3.

**Effective Date:** June 17, 2022