



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

# Fish Screening Task Force

## Meeting Minutes

Date: April 2, 2026

Time: 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM

### Fish Screening Task Force Attendance:

Members	Representing	Present Virtually	Absent
Harry Bither	Agriculture Interests	x	
Alex Hardison	Fishing or Fish Conservation	x	
Alexis Vaivoda	The Public	x	
Robert (Bob) Durham	Agriculture Interests	x	
William (Bill) Freeland ( <i>Vice Chair</i> )	Fishing or Fish Conservation	x	
Darin Olson	Agriculture Interests	x	
Judith Barkstedt ( <i>Chair</i> )	Fishing or Fish Conservation	x	

### **ODFW Staff in Attendance:**

Greg Apke, ODFW Fish Passage and Screening Program Manger

Katherine Nordholm, ODFW Fish Passage and Screening Coordinator

**Members of the Public in Attendance:** *\*Additional people may have joined virtually throughout the meeting*

Travis Miller, Legislative Fiscal Office

### **Call to Order, Welcome New Members, and Introductions**

The meeting started at 8:30 AM with a welcome and a round of introductions of everyone on the Teams meeting.

### **Review and Approve Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes**

The meeting then moved on to reviewing and approved the meeting agenda and meeting minutes from the December 5<sup>th</sup> 2025, combined screening and passage task force meeting. Darin Olson moved to approve the agenda and meeting minutes with continued permission to edit for spelling and grammar. Alexis Vaivoda seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Elect Chair and Vice Chair**

The task force held elections to fill the vacant chair and vice chair positions. After discussion of the chair's responsibilities, including helping set agendas, facilitating meetings, serving as a liaison to ODFW, and representing the task force on key issues, Darin Olson nominated Judith Barkstedt as chair, that nomination was seconded by Bob Durham. All voted in favor.

Bill Freeland said he was willing to be vice chair, Bob Durham nominated Mr. Freeland and Judith Barkstedt seconded the nomination. All voted in favor of Bill Freeland for vice chair. ODFW staff thanked both for stepping into these roles and emphasized their importance in guiding strategic task force work in the coming year.

### **Screening and Passage Program Update**

Greg Apke provided an overview of ODFW's organizational structure and the role of the Fish Screening and Passage Program for the benefit of new members. He explained that the agency has roughly 1,200 employees across four divisions, with the screening and passage program housed within the Inland Fish Division and

supported by approximately 70 staff statewide, including four regional screen shops. Apke highlighted the program's regulatory responsibilities, its cost-share funding work with landowners, and the statewide inventories of fish passage barriers and unscreened diversions. He also summarized the program's major funding sources and described several ongoing screening and passage projects across Oregon. He concluded with an update on the significant developments in the Klamath Basin following dam removals, noting both the rapid return of fish and the emerging screening and passage needs now facing local water users.

### **Task Force Member Round Table**

Each member of the Task Force gave updates related to their geographic locations and areas of representation.

### **Public Comments**

The meeting held a public comment period at 10:00. There were no members of the public in attendance and no public comments submitted before the meeting.

### **Screening Program Update**

Katherine Nordholm provided updates on volunteer requirements, reminding members to complete the annual online volunteer trainings and noting she will follow up before the next meeting. The group also discussed rescheduling the October Klamath Falls meeting, ultimately agreeing to move it to October 20–21, with Monday as a travel day and the standard format of a business meeting and site visits. She then shared several program updates, including upcoming outreach to the Salmon Trout Advisory Committee, Oregon's role in hosting the regional FSOC meeting in September, and significant BPA-funded maintenance investments such as shop upgrades, new equipment, and priority screen replacements. She also outlined new safety requirements related to confined spaces and equipment protections, which will require substantial work and funding. Members asked clarifying questions about timelines, funding responsibilities, and how safety upgrades intersect with existing maintenance obligations.

### **Fish Screening Program and Task Force Workplan Discussion**

Katherine Nordholm presented an overview of the Fish Screening Program's history, current obligations, and emerging challenges as the program reaches its thirtieth year. She shared statewide data showing approximately 51,000 water diversions, 2,500 documented screens, and about 700 screens that ODFW actively maintains. She highlighted that new screen installations have steadily declined over the past 15 years while maintenance obligations continue to grow, particularly since funding sources rarely include money for long-term maintenance. Nordholm asked the task force what additional information they need to help begin developing a work plan and long-term vision for the next 30 years of the program.

Greg Apke emphasized the increasing urgency of funding constraints and the need for new, creative funding strategies to support both ongoing maintenance and new screen installations that is required by statute and essential for keeping fish in rivers and out of diversions. He encouraged task force members to think broadly, engage with their stakeholders, and bring forward new ideas similar to the recent successful transient lodging tax legislation that recently passed in the 2026 Legislative Session.

Task force members discussed the need to clarify program goals, better understand the value and maintenance demands of existing screens, and identify priorities for new installations. They suggested gathering more data on screen types, maintenance costs, and the relative benefits of screening efforts. Olson raised the idea of energy-generating screens, based on experiences abroad; Apke noted the concept's promise and complexity. Additional members expressed interest in better public communication about the value of screening and exploring new funding pathways. Nordholm closed by noting the key themes: understanding priorities and costs, communicating value, and brainstorming funding approaches, all of which will shape materials for the next meeting.

*The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM*