

Federal Grant Application Request

Department of Fish & Wildlife

Columbia County Land Acquisition

Analyst: Paul Siebert

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of a \$1,376,786 federal grant application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire the approximately 980 acre Westport Slough near Clatskanie for conservation purposes.

Recommendation: Approve, retroactively, the request to apply.

Analysis: The Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is requesting retroactive authorization to apply for a \$1,376,786 federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Act, Section 6, Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund for purchase of 980 acres near Clatskanie, referred to as the Westport Slough. The property proposed for acquisition contains both freshwater wetlands and riparian areas, two key habitats that would provide benefits to more than 25 species identified as Oregon Species of Concern or Species of Greatest Conservation Need as identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The property would also be made available for limited entry public waterfowl hunting. ODFW reports that the project would require two grants totaling \$2,700,000. If this first application is successful, the Department reports that it would submit a second application next year for the remaining \$1,323,214. The Columbia Land Trust would hold title to the property after the acquisition is complete.

Grants from this program can be used for projects like assistance to implement conservation projects for candidate, listed, and recently recovered species; habitat conservation planning; and land/conservation easement acquisitions. Only state fish and wildlife agencies are eligible for grants from this program, therefore only ODFW can apply for grant projects from the state of Oregon. Grant applications were due January 23, 2015. The Department submitted a 10-day notification letter on January 5, 2015.

Grants from the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund require a 25% non-federal match. The match requirement for this grant proposal would be met using a \$900,000 Lottery Funds grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to the Columbia Land Trust. The Department reports no additional position authority will be required to complete the grant project. If the grant proposal is successful, the Department may need to return to the Legislature for an increase in Federal Funds expenditure limitation.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval, retroactively, to submit a \$1,376,786 federal grant application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire the Westport Slough property.