

Analysis

Oregon Department of State Lands

Winchester Uplands Land Acquisition Grant Application

Analyst: Matt Stayner

Request: The Oregon Department of State Lands requests retroactive authorization to apply for a federal grant to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Estuarine Research Reserve System Land Acquisition and Construction Program in the amount of \$772,700 for the purchase of 80 acres of upland habitat in the South Slough watershed surrounding Winchester Creek.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.

Analysis: The subject parcel is adjacent to the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve on two sides in the southeastern corner of the reserve. The 80-acre property contains upland forests through which a number of tributaries of Winchester Creek, including two headwater streams. Winchester Creek is the primary freshwater source for the South Slough estuary. The parcel is currently owned by the Common School Fund. The average age of harvestable timber on the property is 75 years and the current management plan for the property calls for harvesting via clear-cut.

The federal grant funding would allow DSL to fully compensate the Common School Fund for the value of the land, timber, and minerals totaling an estimated \$719,200. The remaining funds would be used for contracted appraisals, Environmental assessments, property line survey, mineral assessment, escrow and title services, and title insurance.

Once the Common School Fund was compensated, the Department of State lands would transfer the parcel to the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve; the foregone potential value in the unharvested timber providing the matching funds requirement for the grant.

DSL has made this request retroactively with the guidance of the Legislative Fiscal Office as the application was due prior to the first meeting of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. A ten-day advance notification letter was received from the Agency.