



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of State Lands

South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve  
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January 28, 2021

### State Land Board

Kate Brown  
Governor

Shemia Fagan  
Secretary of State

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Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair  
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair  
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

### Nature of the Request

The purpose of this letter is to seek authorization from the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for the Department of State Lands (Agency) and the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve) to apply to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Federal Grant Program: National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Land Acquisition and Construction Program for Fiscal Year 2021.

The amount of the grant request is expected to be **\$500,000 Federal Funds**. This amount will establish universal access and inclusive learning experiences through comprehensive updates to the Reserve's visitor center.

### Agency Action

The call for proposals was issued in December 2020. The Reserve has a construction and fiscal proposal planned for this funding opportunity. The proposal deadline is February 12, 2021. If awarded, the funds will be available July 1, 2021.

### Background

The Reserve is requesting a **\$500,000 Federal Funds** grant from NOAA for the renovation of existing public restrooms, facilities and exhibits at the Reserve to establish universal access and inclusive learning experiences at the Reserve. The complete package would include the renovation of public restrooms to ensure gender neutrality and handicap accessibility, replacement, and installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant doors at five entrances and upgrades to exhibits at the Visitor Center to provide universally engaging and meaningful learning opportunities to all learner audiences.

In 2020, the Agency contracted for a comprehensive assessment of all agency facilities. During this assessment, the critical need for fixing accessibility issues at the Visitor Center was noted. With the requested funds, we will renovate the existing public restroom building to include four ADA accessible and gender-neutral restrooms, update the restrooms with energy efficient fixtures, and install automatic door systems. This proposal will also replace four exterior doors at the Visitor Center with ADA approved doors and automatic openers, as well as install an automatic door opener on an interior door to our public auditorium. In addition, we will update our exhibits to address existing issues of inequity and accessibility, improve relevance, and employ proven communication techniques.

The Reserve's 2017-2022 Management Plan identifies the Visitor Center as a core facility for public access and education programming, and it describes the Reserve's current policy of maintaining facilities open to the public. The Reserve's Facilities Development and Improvement Plan also identifies the existing challenges of our aging facilities and the ongoing need to reduce our carbon footprint.

The required match of **\$214,286 Other Funds** for this renovation project will be supported by direct administrative costs and staff salaries already included in the 2021-23 Legislatively Adopted Budget in addition to in-kind contributions from volunteers and partner agencies. The Agency will seek increased federal funds expenditure limitation during the 2021 legislative assembly if the grant is awarded to the Reserve.

#### **Action Requested**

The Agency and Reserve request that the Joint Committee on Ways and Means provide approval for the application of a federal grant award from NOAA in the amount of **\$500,000 Federal Funds**.

Thank you for your interest and assistance. If you have any questions, please contact Jean Straight at 503-986-5227.

Sincerely,



Vicki L. Walker  
Director

Cc: Matt Stayner, Legislative Fiscal Office  
Linnea Wittekind, DAS Chief Financial Office  
Jean Straight, Deputy Director – Administration  
Bill Ryan, Deputy Director - Operations

## Department of State Lands Wittekind

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**Request:** Authorization to apply for a grant of \$500,000 for the National Estuarine Research Reserve System Land Acquisition and Construction program from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal grant program.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The Department of State Lands (DSL) and the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve is requesting authorization to apply for a federal grant of up to \$500,000. If awarded, these grant funds would establish universal access and inclusive learning experiences to the South Slough's visitor center.

Some of the updates to the visitor center would be: renovating the public restrooms to ensure gender neutrality and handicap accessibility, replacement of ADA compliant doors at five entrances, and upgrades to exhibits to provide engaging and meaningful learning opportunities to all audiences.

The grant application deadline is February 12, 2021. If awarded, the funding would be available by July 2021. A match of \$214,286 Other Funds would be required. DSL plans to meet this matching requirement through administrative costs already in the budget.

## Analysis

### Department of State Lands

#### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Grant Application

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**Analyst:** Matt Stayner

**Request:** Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Estuarian Research Reserve System, Land Acquisition and Construction Program, by the Department of State Lands for grant funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the purpose of renovation of existing public restrooms, facilities, and exhibits at the South Slough National Estuarian Research Reserve.

**Analysis:** On January 28th, 2021, the Department of State Lands transmitted a letter to the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means seeking permission to apply for a federal grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for funding of renovations at the South Slough National Estuarian Research Reserve.

The Land Acquisition and Construction Program of the National Estuarian Research Reserve System provides a perennial funding opportunity to local reserves for a variety of facility related projects. Previous years' funding has been used to expand and replace decking, provide updates to equipment storage, and to purchase adjacent land. The current request will allow the reserve to update restrooms and entrances to ensure ongoing compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and address issues of equity, relevance, and accessibility of the reserve's exhibits.

The funding opportunity requires a non-federal match of \$214,286. That requirement will be fulfilled by in-kind credits for existing budgeted expenditures, and by contributions from volunteers. If funding is awarded, the agency does not expect to receive funding until after July 1, 2021, therefore, no additional expenditure authority is required for the current biennium.

**Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources recommend the approval of the submission of a federal grant application to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Estuarian Research Reserve System, Land Acquisition and Construction Program, by the Department of State Lands, for grant funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the purpose of renovation of existing public restrooms, facilities, and exhibits at the South Slough National Estuarian Research Reserve.