

ANALYSIS

Department of Fish and Wildlife Rogue River Basin Habitat Restoration

Analyst: April McDonald

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the Bureau of Land Management, Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management grant program, in the amount of \$152,000, for habitat restoration in the Rogue River Basin.

Analysis: The Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management grant program is newly established under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This program provides financial support to projects that conserve and restore riparian areas, fisheries, and water resources. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has identified a project that aligns to the program priorities, including restoration of aquatic resources affected by past and present impacts caused by invasive species, drought, climate change, and wildfires. The Department intends to restore riparian areas, and reduce upland wildfire fuel along Little Butte Creek within the Denman Wildlife Area, in the Rogue River Basin. This will largely be accomplished by the removal of invasive species of vegetation that compete for limited water resources and provide wildfire fuel, and replanting native species to restore habitat. The project will restore 39 acres of riparian habitat and restore 153 acres of upland habitat.

There is no state match requirement for this federal opportunity, and ODFW would not need additional staff to deliver the grant. The deadline for application is April 19, 2023, and award notifications are anticipated by September 30, 2023. If ODFW is awarded, they will return to the legislature to request federal funds expenditure limitation.

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

Department of Fish and Wildlife Filimoehala

Request: Authorization to apply for a federal grant of \$152,000 from the Bureau of Land Management for a Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management grant.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking authorization to apply for a grant from the Bureau of Land Management for Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management. This grant would fund riparian restoration and wildfire fuel reductions along the Little Butte Creek within the Denman Wildlife Area. The department will partner with the Medford Water Commission for volunteer workdays to assist with restoration work.

The grant application is due on April 19, 2023, and no match is required. If awarded, the department will return to request an increase to Federal Funds expenditure limitation. Award notifications are expected in September 2023, and the department will have three years to complete the project.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

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March 28, 2023

The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301



Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) requests approval to apply for a Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management grant in the amount of \$152,000 federal funding from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This is a new program established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021.

Background

Funding through the BLM Aquatic Habitat Management Program provides financial support to non-federal projects that conserve and restore riparian areas, fisheries, and water resources. ODFW has identified one project that achieves the BLM priority to restore aquatic resources affected by past and present impacts caused by invasive species, drought, climate change, and wildfires. The project objectives are to restore aquatic resources, increase resilience and adaptability to climate change and help leverage natural climate solutions within the Rogue River basin where climate change and habitat loss have impacted aquatic resources.

Little Butte Creek Riparian Restoration and Upland Fuels Reduction Project

This project will initiate riparian restoration and upland wildfire fuel reduction along Little Butte Creek within the Denman Wildlife Area. Exotic vegetation will be removed along the riparian setbacks adjacent to Little Butte Creek and native vegetation will be planted to restore natural habitat. Outside of the riparian setbacks, a contractor will be hired to remove exotic vegetation and cut juniper trees to reduce wildfire risks and provide open canopy areas to facilitate mature native tree growth conditions. The project will promote engagement of local communities through the Medford Water Commission volunteer workdays to assist with habitat restoration and expand public and community access to

nature. The project will strengthen ecosystem resilience by responding to drought and wildfire fuel reduction by the removal of invasive species that compete for limited water resources. This project will benefit habitat restoration for Acorn and Lewis Woodpeckers, Yellow breasted chat, bats, coho salmon, summer steelhead, Pacific lamprey, spring Chinook salmon, and cutthroat trout. The project will restore 39 acres of riparian habitat along 7,120 feet of Little Butte Creek, 2,500 feet along Blue Line Creek, and restore 153 acres of upland habitat.

The BLM Aquatic Habitat Management Program does not require applicants to provide match funding. ODFW does not anticipate a need for additional FTE with this funding opportunity.

Agency Action

The application deadline with BLM is April 19, 2023. Award notification is expected by September 30, 2023, before the end of the federal fiscal year. ODFW would have three years to complete the project and spend the funding. If grant funding is awarded, ODFW anticipates making a future request for federal funds expenditure limitation.

Action Requested

ODFW requests approval to submit a federal grant application in the amount of \$152,000 to the Bureau of Land Management Aquatic Habitat Management grant program.

Legislation Affected

None

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curtis E. Melcher".

Curtis Melcher
Director