



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

2540 NE MLK JR BLVD, PORTLAND, OR 97212 • 503-719-4732 • OREGONLANDTRUSTS.ORG

March 2nd, 2023

To: Joint Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

RE: Support for POP 100, Department of Forestry Budget

Co-Chairs Dembrow, Pham and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) 2023-2025 budget. Protecting our forests from fragmentation and conversion is a key strategy to protect habitat and mitigate climate change, and a top priority for the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) and our 32 member organizations.

While we are happy to see funding to carry out the work of the Adaptive Management Program Committee (AMPC) within the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB), **we respectfully request that this committee support a full-time Forest Legacy Program Coordinator position within the finalized Department of Forestry budget.** The Forest Legacy Program is a U.S. Forest Service program administered through ODF that will receive a record influx of federal funding over the next five years. An investment in Oregon's capacity will pay dividends in the federal dollars available for forest land protection.

POP 100 within the Department's Agency Recommended Budget (ARB) would have increased the Forest Legacy Program Coordinator position from 0.75 FTE to 1.0 FTE. The Forest Legacy program's goal is to protect private forest lands through conservation easements and land purchases. So far, this program has preserved iconic Oregon landscapes like the East Moraine Community Forest in Wallowa County, Eugene Wetlands, the forests of Spence Mountain on Klamath Lake, Gilchrist State Forest, Blue Mountain Heritage Ranch, and Arch Cape Community Forest.

As one of the most important forested states in the country, Oregon has the potential to be a national leader in forest conservation. And we are at a crucial moment in time to make this happen – the federal government has just invested an additional \$700 million in the Forest



24 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Mountain Land Trust • Center for Natural Lands Management • Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Forest Park Conservancy • Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust • Klamath Lake Land Trust • Lower Nehalem Community Trust • McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy • Northwest Rangeland Trust • Oregon Agricultural Trust • Oregon Desert Land Trust
Pacific Forest Trust • Southern Oregon Land Conservancy • The Conservation Fund • The Nature Conservancy in Oregon

The Trust for Public Land • The Wetlands Conservancy • Wallowa Land Trust • Western Rivers Conservancy • Wild Rivers Land Trust
8 ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Black Oregon Land Trust • Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy • Clackamas Soil & Water
Conservation District • East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District • Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District • View the Future • Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District

Legacy program through the Inflation Reduction Act. The members of our coalition work closely with municipalities and communities to utilize this program. **At COLT, we want to make sure Federal dollars come to Oregon, but we need additional capacity at ODF for the Forest Legacy program to scale up with the pace of forest protection and conservation Oregon needs.**

The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is a network of 32 organizations working in Oregon to protect our natural world - our water, wildlife and open space - for all people, forever. Through interviews with land trusts working across the state, COLT has identified a robust list of ten forest protection projects that can be realized in Oregon with access to increased Forest Legacy funding.

Collectively, these 10 projects would:

- Prevent the fragmentation of almost **40,000 acres** of forest landscape in geographies from the coast to eastern Oregon using voluntary tools and a market-based approach.
- Require a total **investment of \$80 million**, including leveraging at least \$14.5 million in matching funds.
- Protect and restore terrestrial and aquatic habitat for a **variety of species** including coho salmon, marbled murrelet, clouded salamander, black bears, cougars, lamprey, and mule deer.
- **Support local economies** through sustainable timber harvesting and provide local community benefits through conservation and recreation opportunities.
- Support **partnerships with a variety of local, state, tribal,** and federal stakeholders including water districts, tribes, cities, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), U.S. Forest Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A moment of historic investment like this may not come again, and we ask the Committee to support the modest boost in ODF staff capacity proposed in POP 100 in the Oregon Department of Forestry's Budget.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Kelley Beamer
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

