



NETWORK of OREGON
WATERSHED COUNCILS

March 22nd, 2023

To: The Oregon Legislature Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: **Support** for **SB5509**, Relating to the financial administration of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife; declaring an emergency.

Greetings, Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow and Representative Pham,

The [Network of Oregon Watershed Councils](#) (NOWC) represents **55 watershed councils** statewide, which are local, community-based, non-regulatory groups that assess and monitor environmental conditions, and conduct voluntary conservation projects to restore/enhance the waters and lands for native species and people.

Each watershed council is familiar with their particular ecological habitats' features, and works to understand and address specific challenges, usually focusing on rivers or creeks and the lands that drain into them. Watershed councils partner with community stakeholders such as landowners, companies/industries, municipal/state agencies. Since 1997, the Oregon legislature has encouraged local governments to form watershed councils through [Oregon Statute 541.910](#).

NOWC supports the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) 2023-2025 budget, as described in SB 5509. We particularly support the funding to make the existing Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) Coordinator position permanent. Since it's beginning in 2019, the OCRF has become an important source of support for a wide range of wildlife habitat restoration projects – **the OCRF has funded 16 watershed council projects across our state** – the funding has truly advanced our knowledge, and ability to effectively steward these key habitats.

Moving forward, OCRF funding will be essential to the development and implementation of these types of watershed council restoration projects – we are ready to begin! **We respectfully ask that the committee support the full funding of POP 112, which**

would deposit \$3 million into the OCR Fund as requested in the ODFW Agency Recommended Budget.

Thank you for your consideration,



Vanessa Green
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Network of Oregon Watershed Councils
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Watershed Council Projects Funded through the OCRF, 2019-2023

- Salmon Habitat Restoration & Community Amphibian Surveys – Sandy River Watershed Council
- Tidal Wetland Mapping and Tide Gate Replacement in Southwestern Oregon – A tool for Evaluating Lowland Habitat and Tidal Infrastructure – Coos Watershed Association
- Invasive Ringed Crayfish and their Impact on Native Signal Crayfish, Steelhead and Salmon – Valleys of the Rogue Watershed Council
- Sandy River Delta Rare Turtle Surveys & Conservaton – Sandy River Watershed Council
- Westlake Oak Woodland Restoration Project – Oswego Lake Watershed Council
- Camp Creek Ecosystem Resiliency – Powder Basin Watershed Council
- Cresswell Butte: Initiating Recreation & Conservation Phase 1 – Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- Mid-Willamette Beaver Habitat Assessment and Prioritization – Phase 2 – South Santiam Watershed Council
- Barnes and Bully Creek Upland Improvements – North Fork John Day Watershed Council
- Whychus Creek Stewardship Program – Upper Deschutes Watershed Council
- Gearhart Pollinator Path – Necanicum Watershed Council
- Cottonwood Creek Process-Based Restoration Project – Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council
- Community Outreach, Recreation & Education (CORE) Program – Siuslaw Watershed Council
- Turtle Island Park Restoration Project – Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- Geospatial Analysis and Modeling of Stream Temperature and Fish Habitat in the Clackamas River Basin – Clackamas River Basin Watershed Council
- South Tongue Point Habitat Improvement – Columbia River Estuary Taskforce