



Co Chairs Rep Helm and Rep Owens, Vice Chair: Rep Finger McDonald, and Members of the of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

My name is Joe Liebezeit, and I'm the Co-Director of Conservation of statewide programs for the Bird Alliance of Oregon. On behalf of our over 12,000 members we ask you to please support passage of HB 2984 - Oregon Conservation Recreation Fund with a \$1.5million allocation. The Bird Alliance of Oregon's mission is to "Inspire all people to love and protect birds, wildlife, and the natural environment upon which life depends." At 122 years old, we are the longest serving conservation organization in Oregon.

The Oregon Conservation Recreation Fund (OCRF) is an incredibly important funding source to implement Oregon's Conservation strategy (our State's Wildlife Action Plan). The current Oregon Conservation Strategy identifies nearly 300 species of conservation concern ranging from the Pacific Marten, the Cascades Frog, the Tufted Puffin, Black Rockfish, and the Ochre sea star. OCRF is one of the few funding sources to address the needs of these species. The OCRF fund is also unique in that it supports local and grassroots organizations to promote conservation of our rich and diverse wildlife and habitats, and to make the outdoors accessible to more Oregonians. It also creates more partnership and collaborative opportunities between ODFW and diverse local organizations.

As a great example OCRF funding to the Bird Alliance of Oregon over the past few years has enabled us to extend our conservation reach in new and impactful ways. Our Plover Patrol program (supported in part by OCRF funds) is helping recover the endangered Western Snowy Plover by involving public members as community scientists to help monitor the population and breeding success of these imperiled birds. OCRF support has enabled community groups, businesses and agencies (e.g. Friends of Netarts Bay, Oyster fisherman, Neah-Kah-Nie School District, Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, etc.) in our outreach and stewardship efforts to protect the plover. See photo below of a plover event involving local schools.

To date, OCRF has been a very successful program, awarding \$7.6 million to 167 projects across all eight of Oregon's ecoregions. The fund has been bolstered by private donations totaling over \$1.4 million dollars from over 20,000 individual Oregonians, businesses, and foundations so far, reflecting the widespread support among Oregonians for the program.

Please continue to support the Oregon Conservation Recreation Fund!

