



**THINK
WILD**



February 2, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund HB2984

Dear House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

On behalf of Beaver Works Oregon (BWO), a program of Think Wild, I want to express our deep gratitude for the \$50,000 grant we received from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) in 2022 and emphasize the fund's critical role in advancing beaver habitat restoration, community engagement, and ecosystem resilience across Oregon. One of Think Wild's largest and fastest-growing initiatives is Beaver Works Oregon - a program dedicated to working with landholders across Central and Eastern Oregon to promote beaver recovery through habitat restoration and nonlethal conflict mitigation. Our team includes a licensed wildlife control operator, giving us firsthand experience in navigating beaver and other wildlife challenges.

With OCRF's support, we have engaged hundreds of volunteers in habitat restoration, planting thousands of native willows and cottonwoods, and implementing restoration techniques such as Beaver Dam Analog (BDA) installations. In the 7 years since this program launched, we have recruited and trained hundreds of dedicated volunteers, hosted community workshops, and provided technical support to landowners across Central and Eastern Oregon to foster beaver coexistence and watershed health. OCRF funding has enabled us to conduct vital landholder outreach, distributing educational materials to over 1,200 riparian landowners, hosting beaver coexistence workshops, and providing technical consultations. This work has strengthened local conservation efforts and enhanced partnerships with agencies, watershed councils, and community organizations working toward shared restoration goals.

However, while habitat restoration is a critical piece of the puzzle, addressing beaver conflict is just as essential. Our team includes a permitted wildlife control operator, giving us firsthand experience navigating beaver-related challenges with landowners. Trapping and removal—whether lethal or for relocation—are not long-term solutions. Instead, we work with landowners to implement cost-effective and sustainable co-existence strategies that benefit both people and ecosystems. That is why we are also excited to see the progress of HB 2984, to be funded under OCRF, which would establish a fund to assist landowners in implementing non-lethal mitigation solutions for beaver conflicts. As Oregon's state mammal and a keystone species, beavers play a critical role in increasing water availability, creating wildfire refugia, and enhancing ecosystem resilience—all benefits explicitly acknowledged in the state legislature's passing of *The Beaver Believer Bill* (HB 3464, 2023). Yet, Oregon currently lacks dedicated funding to support landowners in adopting these strategies, limiting our ability to fully realize these ecological benefits.

By supporting OCRF and HB 2984, we can bridge this gap and ensure that beaver management in Oregon aligns with our climate resilience, wildfire mitigation, and watershed restoration goals. Investing in community-led conservation, habitat restoration, and non-lethal conflict mitigation will yield long-term benefits for both Oregon's landscapes and its people. I urge your continued support for OCRF and HB 2984 and allocate \$1.5 million to OCRF so it can continue to fulfill its vital role

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to conservation in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maureen Thompson, PhD
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