



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

On behalf of our over 12,000 members we urge you to please support passage of HB 3143 - "Landowners Living with Beavers". 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 incredible value of beavers in creating and restoring wetland habitat, improving water quality, and recharging groundwater is finally gaining traction and recognition they deserve as a natural ecosystem engineer. Beavers create habitat and food resources for many wildlife and fish species from endangered salmon to migratory songbirds to myriad insects. Beaver-managed floodplains help 146 Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) Species or 50% of all OCS species¹. Forty-three OCS species are listed as federally threatened or endangered. Of those species, 44% could benefit from beaver-managed floodplains¹. In addition, many resources, including the Climate Adaptation Library², identify ways beavers play a key role in climate change adaptation strategies from sequestering carbon to cooling water and other benefits to mitigate climate change impacts.

Beaver-modified habitats also help the economy! Farmers and ranchers need water to grow crops and raise livestock and cities and towns need dependable high-quality drinking water. Public lands are a major source of this essential resource. Beaver-created habitats store water in ponds, in wetlands, and in the ground, which is slowly and sustainably released. Salmon fisheries in our state can get a boost from beavers since beavers cool and clean water salmon depend on.

In 2023 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and stakeholders developed a Beaver Action Plan which aims to advance restoration of beaver habitats including on private lands. In the same year, the legislature passed HB 3464 which removed beavers from predatory animal status and shifted management of private lands from the Department of Agriculture to ODFW. These new developments provide a great opportunity to provide landowners an alternative to beaver extermination. However, **currently there have been no funds allocated for this purpose.**

HB 3143 would set up a grant program through the existing Oregon Conservation Recreation Fund and award grants of up to 50K to eligible applicants including Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Councils, and others to implement beaver mitigation programs on private land. Grant funds would be used for non-lethal mitigation tools including things like culvert and infrastructure protection systems, flood prevention devices, and landowner outreach. The allocation of \$1.5 million would go a long way in restoring habitats with the help of beavers. Please support HB 3143!

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¹ Dunning and Jacobs. 2024. Assessment of the benefits Beaver managed floodplains to Oregon Conservation Strategy Species: A Literature Review. Oregon Natural Desert Association.

² <https://adaptationpartners.org/library.php>