



**COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS**

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April 1, 2025

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

**RE: Support for the 2025-2027 Budget for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (H.B. 5009)**

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair Levy, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) 2025-2027 budget. The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is a membership organization representing 33 land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and conservation organizations working across Oregon to protect our habitat and natural spaces – for all people, forever. Collectively, our members have protected more than 318,000 acres of land in our state.

COLT members are valuable partners in implementing the Oregon Conservation Strategy by getting funding on the ground for projects that protect species, improve water quality, and connect people to nature. COLT members rely on the funding from ODFW programs such as the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF), the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP), and developing Private Forest Accords Mitigation Grant Fund to implement projects that protect and restore habitat for Oregon's fish and wildlife species.

Since its establishment in 2019, the OCRF has funded 183 projects across the state and COLT is excited to watch the program grow and see impact in our communities. Using WWMP grant funds, COLT members have conserved almost 6,000 acres of land through conservation easements and fee title acquisitions, protecting Oregon Conservation Strategy plant, animal and aquatic species. Our members have also



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**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 • Willowa 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

been tracking the development of the PFA Mitigation Grant Fund as the acquisitions and easements portion of the grant program is being built out by the Mitigation Advisory Committee.

COLT and our members appreciate the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) for ODFW includes funding to support the PFA Mitigation Grant Fund and maintains current service level funding for some programs under the Habitat Division. However, there are key investments we urge this Committee to consider in your development of the final budget for the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**In addition to the GRB investments in ODF's 2025-2027 Budget, COLT is respectfully request that this Committee support the following priorities:**

1. **\$20 million** to fully fund the Private Forest Accord Mitigation Grant Program.

The Private Forest Accords is a landmark agreement between timber and conservation organizations to update forest practice guidelines on private forestlands. The goal of the PFA Mitigation Grant program is to support projects that benefit the fish and aquatic wildlife species and habitats covered under the developing Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

In order to ensure the success of the HCP and avoid reverting private forest practices to pre-Private Forest Accord guidelines, it is critical we fully fund the Mitigation Grant Program at the \$10 million annual commitment outlined in S.B. 1501 (2022).

2. **Support additional funding for the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund**

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund is a key component of ODFW's work under the Oregon Conservation Strategy to conserve imperiled fish and wildlife and the habitats they rely on. COLT members have used this funding to protect and restore critical landscapes such as the 16,000 acres of Trout Creek Ranch, invest in collaborative planning in the Rain Forest Reserve and Arch Cape Forest, and provide recreational and accessible trails in partnership with local communities in Corvallis.

The Governor's Budget included no additional funding for this program, and we respectfully request the Committee consider including the following investments:

- **\$1.5 million** to support drought related grant activities, currently captured in H.B. 2984. H.B. 2984 would build on past investments the legislature has made to address the impacts of drought on Oregon communities, and the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund has identified drought resilience on natural and working lands as a top priority for the upcoming biennium.



- **\$1 million** in general grant funding to support continued work to ensure the implementation of valuable projects across the state to further the goals of the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The OCRF plays a key role in achieving conservation outcomes in Oregon, supporting underserved communities and providing outdoor recreation opportunities. However, the program is not included in ODFW's current service level budget, and would benefit from base program funding in addition to specific appropriations.
  - A \$1 million investment in OCRF would fund the OCRF coordinator position with remaining funds to support two solicitation cycles and roughly 15 projects per year.

### 3. Policy Option Packages: 108, 114, and 122

COLT also supports POP 108: Natural Climate Solutions, which would provide continuation of \$2.8 million Other Funds expenditure limitation for the Natural Climate Solutions Fund for projects approved by the Oregon Climate Action Commission relating to carbon sequestration, habitat and floodplain restoration, and wildfire risk reduction projects along with two limited duration (1.50 FTE) positions to complete the projects.

POP 114: Regional Habitat Phase 2 would round out ODFW's regional habitat programs and make use of Monsanto Settlement Funds to support habitat protection and restoration by establishing regional habitat biologists in each watershed district and increasing capacity to engage in land and water development projects.

POP 122: Fish Passage & Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure would provide \$4.5 million Other Funds expenditure limitation to provide continuation of previously approved lottery bond revenue to support wildlife passage projects.

As habitat degradation and loss, climate change, and stressors from invasive species impact Oregon's rich biodiversity and the benefits they provide to our state and economy, it is critical this Committee prioritize additional funding for the Department outside of the investments included in the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments as this Committee works to develop the 2025-2027 Department of Fish and Wildlife budget.

Sincerely,





Joe Buttafuoco  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

