

**OWF Project Committee November 16, 2023
Draft Meeting Minutes**

OnPoint CCU Corporate Offices – Broadway Conference Room/Zoom Hybrid Meeting

Attendance

In-Person: Zach, Rebecca, Gordon, Rob, Gary

Online: Lori Steele, Dave Cummings, Doug, Matt Davis, Monica, Pat, Andrea, Mo, Jess, Pam Simser, Meg

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 AM.

Approval of August 31, 2023 Meeting Minutes

The August 31, 2023 Project Committee Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Committee.

Motion to approve August 2023 Project Committee minutes (Gordon/Dave)

Motion carried unanimously.

Funds On Hand

The Project Committee Grantmaking budget is \$100,000 per year, or ~\$25,000 per quarter. Current unrestricted project funds available are reported to be about \$55,814. The Project Committee noted that several of the project applications under consideration at this meeting could qualify for funding by the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) Implementation Fund.

23-21 Indian Ford-Ryan Ranch Avian Monitoring Project

The Deschutes National Forest requested \$5,000 for the Indian Ford and Ryan Ranch Avian Monitoring project. The Indian Ford and Ryan Ranch Avian Monitoring Project, launched in 2015 with support from various organizations, is designed to assess the impact of restoration efforts on avian populations in the Deschutes National Forest. The long-term monitoring project, spanning a decade, seeks to provide essential insights into the response of avian communities to habitat changes, with plans to incorporate the data into the Oregon Conservation and Recreation program through collaboration with Oregon State University.

This project is ongoing for the next 3 years to complete a full 10 years of monitoring. This is an extremely important phase of the project now that the area has recovered from restoration treatments. Oregon State University is interested in developing graduate study program from the project and publishing the outcome of the restoration and the importance to landbirds.

This project meets OWF funding guidelines and could be funded through the OCS Implementation Fund. Andrea noted that ODFW supports this project.

Motion to approve funding for this project with the note that this will be a one-time donation (Gary/Gordon), and funds for this project could come from OCS Implementation Fund

Motion carried unanimously.

23-22 Adopt-a-Lek 2024

The Oregon (ODFW's) Adopt-a-Lek program requested \$10,000 for the 2024 season. This program was initiated in 2006, and OWF has supported it since its inception. It has played a crucial role in monitoring the state's sage-grouse populations, with the assistance of dedicated volunteers who collect vital biological data. It has significantly contributed to understanding the distribution and population trends of sage-grouse in southeastern Oregon, an area not fully surveyed by state or federal biologists.

With an emphasis on continued support for the program, this proposal seeks to sustain the program through 2024, ensuring adequate data collection to monitor the success of sage-grouse conservation efforts in the years to come. The budget request for 2024 aims to accommodate the growing workload of the Volunteer Coordinator, ensuring the program's effective management and continued success.

Motion to approve funding for this project for 2024 (Gordon/Matt)

Motion carried unanimously.

23-23 Assessing Distribution of Sierra Nevada Red Fox

ODFW requested \$15,000 for this assessment project. The Sierra Nevada red fox (SNRF) in Oregon, managed both as a furbearer and a Strategy Species, has experienced a decline in population and distribution over the past century. Through a combination of camera-based surveys and genetic analysis of scat samples, this study aims to estimate the SNRF distribution and occupancy, while evaluating the effectiveness of these methods in large-scale monitoring efforts. The project's findings will inform management actions for SNRF and aid in the species' conservation planning, ultimately contributing to the preservation of this federally listed species in parts of its range. OWF's support will enable enhanced genetic scat analysis, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of SNRF distribution across Oregon.

This project has strong support from ODFW, and the Project Committee acknowledged that ODFW has been a great partner for the foundation for many years. The Committee discussed potential sources of funding for the entirety of this project, noting that the Committee can only approve \$10,000 without further approval from the BOD. This project is eligible for funding through the OCS Implementation Fund, and prior to the meeting, stated that other discretionary funds could be utilized to support this project. The Committee identified another similar project application (*See 23-25 Understanding the Diet of the Sierra Nevada Red Fox*) submitted by Northern AZ University and encouraged OWF staff to connect the Northern AZ University investigators to this project.

Motion to approve funding for this proposal 23-23 for \$10,000 from the unrestricted funds (Dave/Gary)

Motion carried Unanimously.

23-24 Determining Yellow Rail Distribution

Oregon State University requested \$9,990 for developing a regional map and survey methodology for the Yellow Rail. Yellow Rails (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) in Oregon are of conservation concern due to their specialized habitat requirements within shallow wetland systems. This project aims to

develop a regional map of the wetland systems essential for Yellow Rail survival and to design a survey methodology using Automated Recording Units (ARUs) for broader deployment. The project's proposed budget includes the hiring of a seasonal technician and a detailed timeline for the completion of fieldwork, shallow wetland modeling, and thesis writing. If awarded, the funds will complement existing resources and contribute to the fulfillment of the project's goals. This project application meets OWF funding guidelines and could be funded through the OCS Implementation Fund.

Motion to support funding for this project through either unrestricted funds or the OCS Implementation Fund (Andrea/Dave)

Motion carried unanimously.

23-25 Understanding the Diet of the Sierra Nevada Red Fox

Northern Arizona University is requesting \$5,000 for a study regarding the diet of the Sierra Nevada Red Fox. To better understand the factors contributing to their decline, this study aims to comprehensively assess the diet of these red foxes through fecal metabarcoding. Collaboration with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cascadia Wild, and other groups will enable the collection of scat samples from known fox habitats. Analysis of the samples at Northern Arizona University's Species From Feces lab will help reveal the broader dietary picture, which will subsequently guide management plans and habitat conservation efforts. The project's findings will be communicated through various academic papers, technical reports, and public presentations, ensuring widespread awareness and support for the conservation of these specialized alpine species.

The Project Committee acknowledged similarities between this project and the previously-approved project application (See Project 23-23).

Motion to deny funding for Project 23-25 because of the similarity to 23-23, and the Committee suggests that the applicant correspond with ODFW and those investigators about collaborating on 23-23 (Dave/Gary)

Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business/Action

Nehalem River (Fishhawk Lake) Basin Mitigation Fund Planning

The Project Committee discussed the proposal from OWF staff (Tim) that the Foundation move forward with design and engineering on a number of projects that are to be determined by the Nehalem Basin Partnership; reserving ~\$1MM from the Fishhawk Lake Mitigation Fund for the protection of select timber stands for future large wood recruitment and riparian zone improvements. If approved by the Project Committee, this recommendation would move to the BOD for approval at its December 2023 meeting.

Zach noted that the Foundation has had these funds since 2021, so Tim is encouraging the Committee and the BOD to take action to utilize these funds, while maintaining control of how the funds are spent. Project Committee members agreed and felt that taking action on these mitigation funds is good stewardship and the right thing to do.

Motion to recommend to the BOD to consider Tim's suggestion with respect to utilizing the FishHawk Lake Mitigation Funds (Gordon/Gary)

Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business/Updates

AtB Grant Award: Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network

Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network implementation planning has begun with Pacific Birds and Klamath Bird Observatory. We have signed an agreement with ODFW for management of these funds in partnership with Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture.

Highway 30 Harborton Frog Crossing Project

The Highway 30 Harborton Frog Crossing Project feasibility study is almost complete. A more definitive design and engineering cost estimate is being determined to support fundraising. Drafting of the study report and conceptual design has begun.

Oregon Native Trout Challenge

Basalt to Breakers is making steady progress on the Challenge; they've been meeting with industry reps (retail and manufacturer) and we also had a good meeting with Travel Oregon.

Five Rivers Subbasin LWD Helicopter Treatment Project

This is a multi-partner effort to help recover coastal coho through treatment of multiple streams with large wood structures. This project was resubmitted for funding consideration (with a smaller funding request) during OWEB's Fall funding cycle.

Deer Creek Willow Planting Project

Deer Creek Willow Planting Project was approved by OWEB for funding. We're waiting for the grant agreement.

Elk Creek Floodplain to Forest Restoration Project (AtB request)

This is an America the Beautiful Grant Program request by ODFW; this request was not funded. The plan is to resubmit next year.

Willamette Valley Resilient Landscapes Project (AtB request)

Willamette Valley Resilient Landscapes Project - this is another America the Beautiful Grant Program request by ODFW. This project was not funded.

Big Elk & Sugar Bowl Creeks LWD Project

This is a partnership between ODFW and OWF to treat reaches of Big Elk and Sugar Bowl creeks on land owned and managed by Pacific Forest Trust (PFT); a nonprofit land trust with holdings in Oregon and California. PFT is planning a large thinning project to improve forest health and will set aside select trees for stream placement. OWF funding will purchase some of the trees and pay for equipment rental and operator expenses. ODFW will manage the project and design the structures.

Forest Park Red-legged Frog Pond Habitat Development

The planned next step for this project is a site visit. Scheduling that has been challenging.

Foster Creek

With regulatory approval, OWF will be the conservation easement holder for the Foster Creek property. The current owners will remain as such until OWF identifies either an organization to take possession of the property or an organization to hold the conservation easement with OWF assuming ownership. The owners will, as a condition of our agreement, make a ~ \$275K endowment gift to cover maintenance and legal defense expenses.

Haek Estate: OWF Umpqua River Frontage Property

The Foundation is now the legal owner of this 2-acre parcel of land on the Umpqua River near Elkton. A small construction company based in Springfield visited the property and is preparing bids for landscape clearing, demolition and removal of a derelict outbuilding, repair of the manufactured home, fence repair/replacement, and gate replacement.

Fly Creek Ranch Conservation Easement

Phil Nance approached the Foundation and asked us to hold a conservation easement on his family's ranch property which is located due west of Grandview (Lake Billy Chinook) at the head of Fly Creek canyon. This is one of a handful of privately owned properties in this area which is part of the Metolius Mule Deer Winter Range. Fly Creek Canyon is also a migration corridor for animals moving from the winter range area to the foothills of the Cascades near and around Black Butte. Tim is bringing the appraisal cost estimate to the Land Conservation & Stewardship committee for approval.

New Business

OCRF Strategic Planning

There's a likely support role for OWF to play in communications, fundraising, project development or a combination of these over the next 4 years. The OCRF Advisory Committee anticipates wrapping up their process by middle of Q1 2024.

Coastal Coho Recovery

ODFW has asked OWF to serve as the fiscal administrator for Federal funds they're seeking to support the recovery of coastal coho.

NE Oregon Wildlife Passage Coalition

The NE Oregon Wildlife Passage Coalition is beginning to take shape. Tentatively, OWF will be a funder, aggregate \$, and manage the RFP and contracting processes.

West Willamette Restoration Partnership

See <https://www.westwillamette.org/partnership-network> for more information about the West Willamette Restoration Partnership (WWRP). OWF will play a fiscal agent/fiscal sponsor role as a member organization of the Partnership.

Urban Ecology Research Consortium Symposium

Urban Ecology Research Consortium (UERC) will hold their 21st annual symposia at Reed College on March 11th, 2024. See <https://www.uercportland.org/> for more information about UERC and their symposia. OWF will play a fiscal agent/fiscal sponsor role on behalf of the Consortium.