

**OWF Project Committee August 31, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

OnPoint CCU Corporate Offices
Broadway Conference Room

Attendance

Tim, Zach, Dave Cummings
Lori, Carl, Strawn, Matt Davis, Joe Miller, Bryce, Meg, Blaine, Pam, Andrea, Doug, Pat, Mo, Rebecca, Jess

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

Approval of May 2023 Meeting Minutes

The May 2023 Project Committee Meeting Minutes were reviewed/approved by the Committee.

Motion to approve May 2023 minutes (Blaine/Carl)

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 were reported to be about \$84,660.

Project 23-13 – Palensky Highway 30 – Wildlife Underpass

The Columbia River Estuary Study Task Force is asking for a total of \$50,000 for this project to address the urgent need for safe wildlife passage between the floodplain wetlands along Multnomah Channel and the upland forests of the Tualatin Mountains in Oregon. The project will build a 130-foot long underground tunnel with natural substrate and light openings accompanied by 600 linear feet of directional walls to guide amphibians and small mammals safely across the highway.

This project application is a non-game request and can be funded from the Watch for Wildlife Fund. The Committee confirmed the W4W Fund is averaging about \$35,000 per month in revenues, so funding this application represented about a month and a half of W4W revenues.

Motion to recommend to the BOD funding for this project through the W4W fund (Dave/Meg)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-14 – Owl Pellet Dissection for Middle School Students

Forests Today & Forever (FTF), a non-profit organization in Lane County is asking for \$1,000 for The "Owl Pellet Dissection for Middle School Students." The project seeks \$1,000 from the Foundation to purchase owl pellets, providing 2,000 middle school students with a hands-on experience that fosters appreciation for forest wildlife, underscores the need for wildlife protection in forestry, and introduces them to the Northern Spotted Owl's role in the forest ecosystem.

The Committee agreed that this project represents an important educational opportunity for hands-on learning about the forest ecosystem.

Motion to approve funding for this project (Meg/Matt)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-15 – Bonney Butte HawkWatch Platform Rebuild

HawkWatch International is asking for \$5,000 for the Bonney Butte Platform Rebuild. The project's primary goal is to rebuild a platform for a wall tent used by a crew during their field season, providing them with a safe and hospitable space. Funding from the Oregon Wildlife Foundation would support the construction of a new platform for the crew's wall tent, enhancing their safety, comfort, and capacity to conduct research and education.

The Committee found it very difficult to extrapolate specifically what OWF would be funding based on the application materials and the project budget which indicated that only \$790.35 for materials were needed to rebuild in the platform. Many funds on the budget were intermingled, including travel costs for workers to travel from outside of Oregon, and many sources of funding were still listed as pending.

Motion to decline funding for this project (Dave/Pam)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-16 – Rainbow Oak and Prairie Restoration Phase 1

Columbia Land Trust is seeking \$10,000 to initiate prairie and oak restoration on a 50-acre farm field in the Tualatin River floodplain. The project aims to establish prairie vegetation by planting native bulbs, controlling non-native vegetation, and seeding a mix of forbs, sedges, rushes, and grasses over the following year.

Tim noted that this project may be eligible for funding from the *Willamette Habitat Restoration Fund*, but that Committee approval at this meeting would be based on funding from unrestricted funds if the Habitat Restoration Fund cannot be utilized. The Committee also agreed that condition(s) for approval of funding should include that OWF funds only be used for supplies; plant material alone is estimated to cost \$55,000, so this shouldn't be a problem.

Motion to approve funding for this project from unrestricted funds if not available from Willamette Habitat Fund (Blaine/Andrea)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-17 – Safeguarding Coastal Ecosystems

Oregon State University is asking for \$86,421 for this project. The proposal aims to address the challenges posed by seafood processing water discharge in Oregon's coastal communities. The project seeks to minimize the environmental impact of seafood processing by providing actionable

insights for responsible process water management, thus safeguarding coastal ecosystems and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the seafood industry.

Tim and Lori explained why this is a problematic request, primarily because it is not consistent with OWF's funding guidelines or the intent for utilization of the Environmental Enhancement Fund. They have reached out to the applicant regarding these concerns and encouraged the applicant to re-apply with a proposal more consistent with the foundation's guidelines.

Motion to decline funding for this project and seek clarification regarding the project (Dave/Bryce)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-18 – BIPOC Outdoor Education Camp

Vive Northwest is asking for \$5,000 for this project. The proposal outlines an inclusive BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) Outdoor Education Camp aimed at blending outdoor recreation, environmental education, community building, and leadership training.

This proposal is light on details and not entirely consistent with OWF funding guidelines, but OWF staff asked for additional information from the applicant. At the time of this meeting, the applicant had not yet responded to Tim's inquiry. Because this is a new/young organization, Project Committee members encouraged Tim to reach out to the applicant again.

Motion to table Project 23-18 until we hear from the applicant with responses to our questions (Meg/Blaine)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-19 – Horse Heaven Creek BDA Implementation

The Crooked River Watershed Council is asking for \$6,500 for this project. The proposal outlines a restoration project focused on improving the riparian habitat conditions of a 3.2-mile stream section of Horse Heaven Creek in Post, Oregon. The project site is situated on a working cattle ranch adjacent to ODFW's newly designated priority areas for beaver-related restoration. The proposal seeks funding from the Oregon Wildlife Foundation to cover the implementation costs of this foundational restoration work.

Tim noted that this project could potentially be funded through the Oregon Conservation Strategy Implementation Fund. Meg expressed concerns about cattle re-entering the project area and suggested that funding should be contingent upon some assurances related to livestock exclusion from the area. Some Committee members echoed this concern and expressed their intent upon voting that if the project is approved and the area does become destroyed by livestock, the Project Committee should not fund another project like this.

Motion to approve funding for this project with funds coming from OCS Implementation Fund and with a request for additional information related to livestock exclusion from the area (Meg/Pam)

Motion carried unanimously.

Project 23-20 – Nitrox Equipment for Aquarium Research Dive Team

The Oregon Coast Aquarium (OCAq) is seeking a \$4,685 matching grant from the Oregon Wildlife Foundation for the purchase of Nitrox scuba diving equipment. This equipment will be utilized by their research dive team to conduct ecological surveys of the Oregon Marine Reserves in partnership with the ODFW and to complete kelp forest conservation surveys along the Oregon coast in partnership with the Oregon Kelp Alliance (ORKA).

Tim noted that the Pacific Seafood Environmental Enhancement Fund has about \$56,000 in it including \$8,000 from the original contribution, which needs to be utilized in the near future.

Motion to fund this project from the original funds contributed to the Pacific Seafood Environmental Enhancement Fund (Pam/Blaine)

Motion carried with one no (Pat).

New Business

Oregon Native Trout Challenge Fiscal Sponsorship

The purpose of the Basalt to Breakers Native Trout Challenge is to promote Oregon as a premier trout fishery, to highlight Oregon's conservation policies, and to educate anglers on best practices to ensure the future of their local water. OWF staff arranged a meeting for the Oregon Native Trout Challenge Fiscal Sponsorship with Mike Harrington (ODFW Fish Division Administrator) and Shawn Clements (Deputy Administrator). The Department has agreed to support this project and provide technical assistance. They are excited for Oregon to have its own Native Trout Challenge program.

Basalt to Breakers will release instructional and educational materials through social media outlets that will support adoption of these regulations. Increasing awareness of Oregon's native trout species and riparian habitats will inspire individuals to seek positive conservation outcomes such as cleaner waterways, more robust native fish populations, and habitat connectivity. The challenge will launch in the summer of 2024 with a goal of 250 participants, or \$4,000 raised from participation fees, in its first year.

Meg emphasized this is a unique opportunity to promote best fishing practices and safe handling practices.

Motion to recommend approval of the fiscal sponsorship for the Basalt to Breakers Oregon Native Trout Challenge (Dave/Andrea)

Motion carried unanimously.

Five Rivers Subbasin LWD Helicopter Treatment Project

Tim updated the Committee on this multi-partner effort to help recover coastal coho in the mid-coast region through treatment of multiple stream reaches with large wood structures – many of these are inaccessible by ground equipment or the on-the-ground conditions too challenging except through placement using a helicopter. This was #2 in OWEB's (OR Watershed Enhancement Board) North Coast Region Spring funding cycle. It was also the largest funding request in the state. Consequently, while highly-rated in the region, it was unlikely to be funded once the statewide

priority list of projects was compiled. Our region representative asked us to consider withdrawing our application and reapplying in the Fall cycle but with a lower amount of funding requested.

Deer Creek Willow Planting Project

Deer Creek Willow Planting Project is the beneficiary of the withdrawal of our other OWEB funding request. This was ranked #4 in the region and is now likely to receive a “fund” recommendation from OWEB staff.

Elk Creek Floodplain to Forest Restoration Project (AtB request)

Willamette Valley Resilient Landscapes Project (AtB request)

These are America the Beautiful Grant (AtB) Program requests by ODFW. If it’s awarded, OWF will administer these funds in partnership with Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture.

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 would cover equipment rental and operator expenses. ODFW will manage the project and design the structures.

Forest Park Red-legged Frog Pond Habitat Development

Forest Park Red-legged Frog Pond Habitat Development – Portland Parks & Recreation is tentatively allowing the development of suitable pond habitat for red-legged frogs in Forest Park. This is another strategy to reduce red-legged frog mortality on highway 30 by providing them with breeding pond habitat closer to where they live. PP&R has informally requested that the Foundation take the lead in communications, fundraising, and contracting.

Haek Estate: Umpqua River Frontage

Haek Estate – Umpqua River frontage – the Foundation is now the legal owner of this 2.5 acre parcel of land on the Umpqua River near Elkton. Along with the property, the Foundation also received a 2nd distribution from the estate; \$165,000. It is anticipated that some amount of these funds will be used to clean up the property to make it suitable for bank fishing.

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.

Old Business

Nehalem River (Fishhawk Lake) Basin Mitigation Fund Planning

Nehalem River Basin Mitigation Fund Planning is stalled while we await a funding framework proposal from the Lower Nehalem Watershed Council.

The Project Committee should plan to circle back at the next meeting about this to make some recommendations.

Two Rivers Side Channel and Mainstem Project

Two Rivers Side Channel and Main Stem Project is a multi-partner effort to improve critical habitat conditions in a Wild and Scenic River that supports the recovery of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmon and steelhead. Lack of habitat complexity and connectivity of side channels to the mainstem are prevalent issues limiting salmonid productivity in the Clackamas River Basin. The objectives are to restore the form and function of the floodplain and existing side channel and create new cover habitat in the side channel and mainstem for resident and at-risk anadromous fishes.

This project was approved for funding through the PGE Clackamas River Mitigation Fund. Now, the foundation will enter the contracting phase. Tim reaching out to PGE for further details.

Estacada Lake Large Wood Fish Habitat Project

The Estacada Lake Large Wood Fish Habitat project will be constructed at the upstream end of Estacada Lake in partnership with Applied River Sciences and Aquatic Contracting. Five large wood structures will be designed and constructed to provide cover habitat and high velocity refugia for adult salmon and Pacific lamprey. While fish use through the project reach is high, the available cover habitat is limited and primarily concentrated along banks and shoreline where velocities are slower and vegetation provides cover and organic material.

This project was approved for funding through the PGE Clackamas River Mitigation Fund.

AtB Grant Award: Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network

AtB Grant, Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network implementation planning has begun with Pacific Birds and Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO). OWF will receive and administer the funds in partnership with Pacific Birds and KBO.

Highway 30 Harborton Frog Crossing Project

Highway 30 Harborton Frog Crossing Project planning is well underway. Along with our contractors, we're meeting with the Bureau of Development Services, City of Portland, to determine next steps. We have a tentative understanding with ODOT that a box culvert will be installed under highway 30 at Harborton Drive to facilitate frog movement from west to east and return. No egress under the railroad tracks or NW Marine Way is planned.

The Foundation went through the RFP process and hired a firm and engineers to work with us on envisioning a crossing for the red legged frogs. This is the only location where this can happen and will require a trench through Highway 30.

Additional New Business (Not Enough Time to Discuss at the Meeting)

OCRF Strategic Planning – OWF, on behalf of the Department, has engaged the services of a consultant to guide the OCRF Advisory committee and staff through a strategic planning process that will establish goals and objectives for the next two bienniums. There's a likely support role for OWF to play in communications, fundraising, project development or a combination of these.

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. This would be for a portfolio of projects that include the Five Rivers project and others along the coast.

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