Project Committee Meeting Notes
November 16, 2023

23-21 Indian Ford-Ryan Ranch Avian Monitoring Project

The Deschutes National Forest is requesting $5,000 for the Indian Ford and Ryan Ranch Avian Monitoring project. The Deschutes National Forest is undergoing a significant restoration initiative to enhance forest resiliency amidst growing concerns about climate change and wildlife preservation. 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 area. Employing a rigorous, standardized protocol, the project involves mist-netting, banding, and data collection within specific habitats, aiming to evaluate the effects of habitat restoration on priority landbird species and the avian community overall. With a focus on the Indian Ford site's significant avian abundance and its ecologically equivalent forest type to the inland northwest, the project aims to contribute valuable data for regional and national restoration planning. 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.

- Meets Guidelines? Yes.
- Match Requirement? Only $3,000 committed in in-kind
- OCS Species or Habitat? Yes, Aspen Woodlands and Flowing Water Riparian Habitat
- Letter of support from Oregon State University
- Funding Approved? Yes No

23-22 Adopt-a-Lek 2024

The Oregon Adopt-a-Lek program is requesting $10,000 for the 2024 season. This program was initiated in 2006 and has played a crucial role in monitoring the state's sage-grouse populations, with the assistance of dedicated volunteers who collect vital biological data. With over 140 trained individuals, the program 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. As evidenced by the program's substantial coverage during the 2023 lek survey season, the initiative has surpassed the state's goal of surveying 50% of leks, emphasizing the essential role of volunteer efforts. With an emphasis on continued support for the program, the 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.

- Meets Guidelines? Yes.
- Match Requirement? Yes, both cash and in-kind
- OCS Species or Habitat? Yes, Sage Grouse
- Letter of support from Department of the Interior
- Funding Approved? Yes No

23-23 Assessing Distribution of Sierra Nevada Red Fox

ODFW is requesting $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. To address the urgent need for comprehensive data on contemporary SNRF occupancy, abundance, and connectivity, a study was initiated in 2023, targeting three regions in the Cascade Mountains where SNRF are likely to be found. Through a combination of camera-based surveys and genetic analysis of scat samples, the study aims to estimate the fox's distribution and occupancy, while evaluating the effectiveness of these methods in large-scale monitoring efforts. Occupancy modeling, incorporating environmental variables such as land cover, snowpack persistence, topography, recreational use, and prey availability, will be utilized to understand the factors influencing SNRF distribution patterns. 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. The Oregon Wildlife Foundation's support will enable enhanced genetic scat analysis, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of SNRF distribution across Oregon.

- Meets Guidelines? Yes.
- Match Requirement? No
- OCS Species or Habitat? Yes, Sierra Nevada Red Fox
- Letter of support from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Funding Approved? Yes No

23-24 Determining Yellow Rail Distribution

Oregon State University is requesting $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. Despite their classification as an Oregon Conservation Strategy species and their presence in key Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs), their distribution and ecology outside their primary habitat in Klamath Marsh National Wildlife Refuge remain poorly understood. With a significant loss of their original habitat in the Upper Klamath Basin, there is an urgent need to comprehend the impact of hydrological changes on their population. 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. By establishing a comprehensive distribution map, the study seeks to inform future conservation efforts and prioritize restoration areas crucial for the species' survival. 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.

- Meets Guidelines? Yes.
- Match Requirement? Yes.
- OCS Species or Habitat? Yes, Yellow Rail

- Letter of support from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Funding Approved? Yes No

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. The Sierra Nevada red fox (Vulpes vulpes necator), a species of high conservation concern, is facing a critical decline in population, particularly in the Oregon Cascades and California's Sierra Nevada mountains. To better understand the factors contributing to their decline, this study aims to comprehensively assess the diet of these red foxes through fecal metabarcoding. By employing a novel non-invasive approach, the study seeks to identify the complex elements, including vertebrates, invertebrates, and plants, within the diet of these montane red foxes. 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.

- Meets Guidelines? Yes.
- Match Requirement? Yes.
- OCS Species or Habitat? Yes, Sierra Nevada Red Fox
- Letter of support from Northern Arizona University
- Funding Approved? Yes No