



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

775 Summer St NE Ste 360

Salem, OR 97301-1290

(503) 986-0178

FAX: (503) 986-0199

www.oregon.gov/OWEB



May 15, 2015

The Honorable Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

The Honorable Representative Peter Buckley, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Devlin and Representative Buckley,

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) requests permission to apply for one federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which administers the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (NCWCGP). As the eligible state applicant, OWEB has been requested by a local implementation partner, the City of Cannon Beach, to apply for the federal grant (*See Attachment A, City of Cannon Beach Resolution*). The grant application will request federal funds for:

- Ecola Creek Wetlands Protection and Restoration Project - This project is located east of the City of Cannon Beach in Clatsop County. The City of Cannon Beach, with technical assistance from the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, proposes to acquire an approximately 29 acre parcel immediately adjoining the City's existing Ecola Creek Forest Reserve. Acquisition will allow the City to consolidate management and increase connectivity with the adjacent preserve while also providing permanent protection to 28 acres of estuarine and coastal freshwater forested and emergent wetlands. Once acquired, the City plans to undertake restoration activities aimed at improving fish passage and hydrologic connection in lower Ecola and Waterhouse Creeks. *NCWCGP request: \$161,681; Total project cost: \$255,776; Local sponsor: City of Cannon Beach.*

NCWCGP Overview

The NCWCGP is a nationally competitive grant program which provides matching grants to states for the acquisition, restoration, management or enhancement of coastal wetlands. The program is funded from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. The State of Oregon has received over \$17,000,000 from the NCWCGP to fund 25 projects. The awards have ranged from approximately \$95,000 to the program's cap of \$1,000,000. For states like Oregon, which have an established fund for acquiring natural areas, the required non-federal match is dropped from 50% to 25%.



OWEB works closely with local implementation partners to develop proposed NCWCGP projects. OWEB requires that the local implementation partner submit corresponding acquisition, restoration and/or technical assistance applications to the agency's grant programs in order to secure the non-federal match. OWEB will only accept a NCWCGP award on behalf of a local implementation partner if the project also clears the technical vetting of the agency's grant programs and if the project is awarded state match from the OWEB Board.

Agency Action

On November 11, 2014, OWEB released a notice of deadlines for the 2016 NCWCGP application cycle. As a result of this process, one project was proposed: the City of Cannon Beach's Ecola Creek Wetlands Protection and Restoration project (*hereinafter* "Ecola Creek Project"). OWEB was formally notified by USFWS of the opportunity to apply for NCWCGP grants on February 5, 2015 (*see* Attachment B). Subsequently, on February 9, 2015, the City of Cannon Beach submitted a Pre-Proposal to OWEB, which formally started the agency's review process.

The Ecola Creek Project Pre-Proposal has been reviewed for project soundness by OWEB staff. The Pre-Proposal then received a technical review by an external Coastal Wetlands Expert Review Team convened by OWEB, along with a site visit that also included staff from OWEB and USFWS's NCWCGP program. Based on the review, staff and the Coastal Wetlands Expert Review Team recommended moving forward with submission of a NCWCGP application for the Ecola Creek Project. Based on that recommendation, the OWEB Board approved submission of a NCWCGP application for the Ecola Creek Project at their April 28, 2015, Board Meeting. On May 1, 2015, the City of Cannon Beach submitted their Draft Final NCWCGP Application to OWEB for review (*see* Attachment C).

OWEB will continue to work with the City of Cannon Beach to further refine the application in advance of the June 24, 2015, NCWCGP application deadline, including the following next steps:

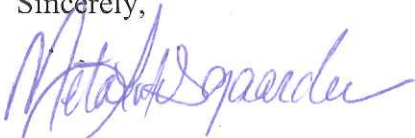
- Review of Draft Final NCWCGP Application by OWEB's Partnerships Coordinator, Acquisitions Specialist, and North Coast Regional Program Representative;
- Budget review by OWEB's Fiscal Manager; and
- Review of Draft Final NCWCGP Application by USFWS staff.

As a part of the proposal, local sponsors will request OWEB funding through the agency's grant programs. The agency will process the grant application requesting state matching funds through its existing application review process. Any state matching funds will be awarded through OWEB's grant program and will not require additional expenditure limitation from the Legislature.

Action Requested

OWEB requests permission to apply for a federal NCWCGP grant from the USFWS for the Ecola Creek Wetlands Protection and Restoration project. If OWEB receives notification of a grant award for any portion of this application, the agency will work with LFO on federal funds expenditure limitation as appropriate. No new positions are associated with this request.

Sincerely,



Meta Loftsgaarden
Executive Director

Attachment A: City of Cannon Beach Resolution in support of Grant Application to OWEB

Attachment B: USFWS Notice of Funding Opportunity and Application Instructions

Attachment C: Draft Ecola Creek Wetlands Protection & Restoration Grant Application Proposal

c: Richard Whitman, Governor's Office
Paul Siebert, LFO
Cathy Connolly, DAS BAM
Renee Davis
Cindy Silbernagel
Juniper Davis

