



**OREGON CHAPTER
OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**
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March 29, 2017

**TO: Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means**

FROM: Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society

**SUBJECT: Full funding for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Policy
Option Packages: Oregon Conservation Strategy Implementation and California
Condor Conservation and Management**

The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society is writing to express our strong support for full funding of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Policy Option Package "Oregon Conservation Strategy Implementation" at \$1 million (#145 in ODFW Budget request), and "California Condor Conservation and Management" (#144 in ODFW Budget request) at \$1.32 million. While we recognize that these Packages were not included in the Governor's budget, we consider their inclusion critical to fulfilling ODFW's conservation objectives laid forth in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. <http://www.oregonconservationstrategy.org/>

The Wildlife Society is an international organization founded in 1937, representing nearly 10,000 professionals, including scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, consultants, conservation officers, students and others who manage, conserve, and study wildlife populations and habitat. In Oregon, the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ORTWS) represents nearly 400 such professionals from many areas of public and private enterprise.

Our mission is to promote wise conservation and management of wildlife resources in Oregon by serving and representing natural resource professionals. A central purpose of ORTWS is to aid public discussion of natural resource management in our state by communicating best available science, and supporting scientifically sound management policies to entities engaged in management decisions.

As you may know, the Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education (HB2402) developed a funding proposal to address systemic issues surrounding revenue sources for fish and wildlife conservation in Oregon. While this funding solution seeks to address ODFW's existing programs and obligations, it also is intended to fund the Oregon Conservation Strategy; an over-arching vision guiding resource management in areas including and beyond game and sportfish.

The Oregon Conservation Strategy was developed by a partnership of numerous agencies, conservation groups and industry stakeholders, and represents a collaborative and proactive strategy for maintaining and restoring Oregon's fish, wildlife and their habitats. Implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy includes, but is not limited to the following priorities:

- Monitor and proactively conserve state and federally listed species
- Maintain and restore critical habitats and the wildlife they support
- Assess and manage the impacts of climate change and wildfire risks to Oregon's wildlife populations and habitats
- Assess and manage the impacts of population growth and development on Oregon's wildlife and habitats
- Assess and manage growing outdoor recreation impacts to wildlife and habitats
- Expand recreational resources and programs, including non-sportsmen-related activities to a broader spectrum of Oregon citizens
- Expand conservation education to inform, engage and cultivate a wider spectrum of Oregon's citizens supporting fish and wildlife conservation
- Continue to build and strengthen hunting and fishing opportunities and programs in Oregon

Similar strategies have been identified by numerous state wildlife agencies across the country, as they grapple with solutions to resource management challenges, systemic funding shortfalls, and the growing proportion of citizens who do not hunt or fish.

While the Legislature considers and debates future funding proposals over the next year or more, any forthcoming success of bills such as HB 3270 will likely not be in effect within this biennium, nor is any near-term solution guaranteed. Thus, ORTWS strongly recommends the Ways and Means Committee include, and vigorously endorse the Policy Option Package "Oregon Conservation Strategy Implementation" at \$1 million (#145 in ODFW Budget request), and the "California Condor Conservation and Management" (#144 in ODFW Budget request) at \$1.32 million.

These funds will function as interim support for programs critical to implementing Oregon's wildlife conservation and endangered species strategies; the long-term funding of which is unknown. On behalf of ORTWS Members and Board, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or to engage further discussion.

Respectfully,
ORTWS Board of Directors