

A REVENUE DISTRIBUTION FORMULA FOR THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife receives revenue for its operations from a variety of different sources, including the general public, the state of Oregon, the federal government and from private sources. This income supports over fifty separate programs within the agency.

The purpose of this proposed revision to ODFW's revenue distribution formula is to more closely align these various programs with the sources of revenue that fund them. The intended outcome is to have each program funded by the most logical and appropriate source of revenue. This will help to assure that those who are picking up the tab are getting what they pay for and will help to identify who the agency needs to make their case to anytime they need additional revenues. Conversely, in years when budget cuts are required, the impacts will be clearly connected and transparent.

Some examples of the various contributors to the agency's operation include:

Private Sources

- The general public in the form of license revenues
- The commercial fishing industry through licenses and fees
- Private utilities through mitigation agreements

State Sources

- General Fund (income tax revenues)
- Lottery Fund

Federal Sources

- Income tax revenues through various mitigation programs
- Excise taxes on the sale of certain sporting equipment
- Electric ratepayer dollars through the Bonneville Power Admin.

To the greatest extent possible, those who fund the operation should have a direct connection to the programs they are paying for. Fishing and hunting license revenues should be spent on agency programs that support and benefit fishing and hunting activities (which is currently the case). General Fund and Lottery revenues should go toward programs that benefit the public in general and the wildlife resources that all of us enjoy (which is not necessarily the case now). Utility ratepayer funds and certain federal taxpayer dollars should fund mitigation programs that they are obligated to fund.

Here are just a few examples of how ODFW programs could be more closely tied to the appropriate funding sources:

- * Fishing and hunting license dollars, as well as commercial fishing license and poundage fees, would continue to be allocated to programs that directly benefit those user groups, as is currently the case. Fish propagation activities and the associated management activities related to the development, authorization and prosecution of the various recreational and commercial fisheries would be paid by license and poundage fees as well as certain federal appropriations.

- * Activities that primarily benefit the public at large would be paid for with state general fund dollars and certain federal allocations as well as with Lottery funds. These activities include the implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and other conservation programs which do not currently receive license revenues.

- * Fish and Wildlife enforcement activities should be funded by any available revenue sources because these activities benefit all groups, including non-consumptive users. But primarily, they benefit all of Oregon's wildlife, not just those species that are fished for or hunted.

- * Federal funds dedicated to certain mitigation activities would continue to be spent on those programs, however a regular review of those programs should occur to determine if those expenditures continue to represent the best use of those funds. Mitigation agreements can be renegotiated when it makes sense to consider other activities, such as funding conservation efforts.

