

Analysis
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants

Analyst: Paul Siebert

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to the United States Fish and Wildlife Services, for the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (NCWCGP) for \$472,409 for a coastal wetlands conservation and restoration project in Clatsop County.

Analysis: The federal government requires that grants from the NCWCGP be made to a state agency. OWEB works with local organizations on coastal wetlands grant proposals. For this year's grant cycle one proposal was included in the federal grant application to the NCWCGP. *Cathlamet Bay Watershed Connectivity and Tidal Restoration Project*, sponsored by the North Coast Watershed Association, proposes to restore and improve salmonid habitat between river mile 18 and 19 of the Columbia River Estuary in Clatsop County. Restoration actions include removal of culverts that act as fish passage barriers, reconnection to floodplains and restoring tidal wetlands. (federal grant: \$472,409; total project cost: \$710,367).

To serve as match for the \$472,409 in federal grant funds, the North Coast Watershed Association will use OWEB grant funds, funding from the Pacific Power Blue Sky Habitat Fund, and in-kind match from Clatsop County. Federal grant application reviews are expected to continue through January of 2020. Should the federal grant be awarded, OWEB will work with the Legislative Fiscal Office to determine if additional federal funds expenditure limitation is needed during the 2019-21 biennium.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: Approve the request.



Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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May 20, 2019

The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) requests permission to apply for a federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which administers the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (NCWCGP). As an eligible state applicant, OWEB has been requested by a local implementation partner, the North Coast Watershed Association (NCWA), to apply for the federal grant. The grant application will request federal funds for:

Cathlamet Bay Watershed Connectivity and Tidal Restoration Project – This project is located between river mile 18 and 19 of the Columbia River Estuary in Clatsop County, just east of Astoria. The NCWA proposes restoration that will improve access to foraging and rearing habitat for Columbia River Estuary salmonids through road decommissioning, and undersized culvert replacement. These restoration actions will remove fish passage barriers to upstream spawning habitat, reconnect the floodplain, and restore tidal wetlands, while providing local residents year-round safe passage to their homes. *NCWCGP request: \$472,409; Total project cost: \$710,367.*

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, through OWEB 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%.

Action Requested

OWEB requests permission to apply for the federal NCWCGP grant from the USFWS for the project described above. The deadline for application submission is June 28. If OWEB receives notification of a grant award for any portion of this application, the agency will work with LFO on a federal funds expenditure limitation as appropriate. No new positions are associated with this request.

Sincerely,



Meta Loftsgaarden
Executive Director

Attachment A: Project Executive Summary

Attachment B: Cathlamet Bay Grant Draft

Attachment C: National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program: Fiscal Year 20 Notice of Funding Opportunity

c: Jason Miner, Governor's Office
Paul Siebert, LFO
Linnea Wittekind, DAS BAM
Renee Davis, OWEB Deputy Director
Cindy Silbernagel, OWEB Business Operations Manager

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Wittekind

Request: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) requests authorization to apply for a federal grant of \$472,409 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act established the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant (NCWCG) Program to acquire, restore, and enhance wetlands in coastal areas through competitive matching grants to eligible state agencies. This grant program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As an eligible state applicant, OWEB has been requested by a local implementation partner, the North Coast Watershed Association, to apply for the NCWCG grant. The grant application will request \$472,409 in Federal Funds for the Cathlamet Bay Watershed Connectivity and Tidal Restoration Project. This project is located between river mile 18 and 19 of the Columbia River Estuary in Clatsop County.

The North Coast Watershed Association proposes restoration that will improve access to foraging and rearing habitat for the Columbia River Estuary salmonids through road decommissioning and undersized culvert replacement. These actions will remove fish passage barriers to upstream spawning habitat, reconnect the floodplain, and restore tidal wetlands while providing local residents year-round passage to their homes. The total project cost including the requested Federal Funds is \$710,367 with the difference coming from the North Coast Watershed Association through OWEB grants, cash on hand and Clatsop County.

North Coast Watershed Association submitted their application to OWEB on October 29, 2018. The deadline for application submission to NCWCG is June 28, 2019.