

ANALYSIS

Item 72: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Good Neighbor Authority Program

Analyst: April McDonald

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Good Neighbor Authority Program in the amount of \$6,551,330 for forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration work; and increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$510,000 for grant expenditures in the 2021-23 biennium.

Analysis: The Good Neighbor Authority Program allows the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to authorize states, counties, and federally recognized tribes to enter into an agreement or contract to conduct projects on federal lands in pursuit of specified land management goals. This grant opportunity through BLM is made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and focuses on high priority projects of mutual interest between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and BLM. Projects will place an emphasis on sensitive species and include:

- Design and implementation of restoration projects to increase habitat complexity and resiliency.
- Reduction of threats related to climate change.
- Removal of barriers impairing the connectivity and migration of fish and wildlife.

Inventory, assessment and monitoring will inform fish and wildlife restoration proposals. Data collected from monitoring and assessments will provide information on the baseline ecological condition and be used to design restoration projects and determine project efficacy. As part of the grant delivery, ODFW will engage the public and stakeholders through environmental education and outreach programs to ensure the public is informed about conservation and restoration of natural resources.

There is no match requirement for this federal grant opportunity. Additionally, BLM offers to partially fund two Good Neighbor Program Regional Coordinators and a Program Coordinator, which is currently established in the 2021-23 budget as a limited duration position. ODFW anticipates continuation of the Good Neighbor Authority Program during the 2023-25 biennium and has included a policy option package in its Agency Request Budget to continue these positions.

ODFW notified the Legislature of its intent to apply for this opportunity on June 6, 2022 and submitted the grant application by July 1, 2022. The agency received notification of award from BLM on July 26, 2022. The performance period lasts until March 31, 2027. ODFW estimates 2021-23 expenditures of \$510,000 and requests the necessary Federal Funds expenditure limitation. The Department anticipates returning to the Legislature to request additional expenditure limitation for its 2023-25 and 2025-27 budgets to expend the remaining grant funds.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the Bureau of Land Management in the amount of \$6,551,330 for forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration work, and increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$510,000 for grant expenditures by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2021-23.

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Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Request: Retroactive authorization to apply for a grant totaling \$6.6 million from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the BLM Terrestrial Good Neighbor Authority Program. Increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$510,000.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Good Neighbor Authority Program (GNA) provides funds to states, counties, and tribes for activities to restore or improve forest, rangeland, and watershed health. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has applied and was approved for a GNA grant from BLM totaling \$6,551,330.

ODFW has proposed to use grant funds made available through the GNA to achieve the following core functions:

- Restore Strategy Species, big game habitats, and water resources affected by
 - past and present land and water use,
 - invasive species,
 - wildfire,
 - drought, and
 - floods.
- Identify the quantity and quality of water required to conserve and restore Strategy Species and big game resources;
- Inventory, assess, and monitor priority habitats and water resources for Strategy Species and big game;
- Maintain and protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the lands and waters;
- Engage with diverse and underserved communities to provide job opportunities and protect at-risk communities from direct and indirect climate-related threats;
- Ensure full compliance with applicable federal law, executive orders, regulations, and policy; and,
- Coordinate, cooperate, and consult with federal, tribal, state, and local governments and other programs, partners, and communities to foster adaptive approaches to conservation and restoration and implement education and outreach programs.

ODFW was provided approval from BLM on July 26, 2022, and funds must be expended by March 31, 2027. ODFW has requested increased Federal Funds expenditure limitation of \$510,000 to begin work in the 2021-23 biennium.

Legal Reference: Increase the Federal Funds expenditure limitation established by chapter 679, section 4(5), Oregon Laws 2021, for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Habitat Division, by \$510,000 for the 2021-23 biennium.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of the Director

4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE

Salem, OR 97302

(503) 947-6044

FAX (503) 947-6042

odfw.com

August 19, 2022

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, President of the Senate
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Speaker of the House
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301



Dear Senator Courtney and Representative Rayfield:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) requests retroactive approval to submit a federal grant application in the amount of \$6,551,330 to the Bureau of Land Management's ORWA Good Neighbor Authority Program. Grant funds would be used to perform forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration work on federal and non-federal lands to benefit fish and wildlife habitat in Oregon.

ODFW also requests \$510,000 federal funds expenditure limitation for the agency's 2021-23 biennium budget to expend grant funding.

Background

This federal funding opportunity is through the US Department of Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) also known as BIL.

ODFW's *BLM Terrestrial Good Neighbor Authority Program* grant application will support work with a focus on high priority projects of mutual interest between ODFW and the BLM. Projects will place emphasis on sensitive species identified in ODFW's Oregon Conservation Strategy (Strategy Species) and big game pursuant to DOI Secretarial Order 3362 (SO 3362), *Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors*. Projects will include design and implementation of restoration projects that increase habitat complexity and resiliency, reduce threats related to climate change to at-risk communities, as well as the removal of barriers to the connectivity and migration of fish and wildlife. Inventory, assessment and monitoring will inform fish and wildlife restoration proposals. Data collected from monitoring and assessments will provide information on baseline ecological condition and will be used to design restoration projects and determine the effectiveness of the projects. Engaging with the public and stakeholders through environmental education and outreach programs will promote knowledge and skills needed to address complex environmental issues and ensures the public is informed about conservation and restoration of natural resources.

The *BLM Terrestrial Good Neighbor Authority Program* core functions will include:

- Restore Strategy Species and big game habitats and water resources affected by past and present land and water use, invasive species, wildfire, drought and floods and increase their resilience and adaptability to climate change
- Identify the quantity and quality of water required to conserve and restore Strategy Species and big game resources and secure water rights and protections to ensure sufficient water availability
- Inventory, assess and monitor priority habitats and water resources for Strategy Species and big game
- Maintain and protect the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the lands and waters
- Engage with diverse and underserved communities to provide job opportunities and protect at-risk communities from direct and indirect climate-related threats
- Ensure full compliance with applicable federal law, executive orders, regulations and policy
- Coordinate, cooperate and consult with federal, tribal, state and local governments and other programs, partners and communities to foster adaptive approaches to conservation and restoration and implement education and outreach programs.

This federal grant opportunity does not require state match for the federal funds. The *BLM Terrestrial Good Neighbor Authority Program* proposes to partially fund a Program Coordinator position (currently a limited duration position for the 2021-23 biennium) and two Good Neighbor Program Regional Coordinators. ODFW has included a policy option package with its 2023-25 Agency Request Budget to continue the Program Coordinator (1.0 FTE) and request additional position authority for the Good Neighbor Program Regional Coordinators (2.0 FTE). ODFW's policy option package requests General Fund for 33% of the personnel costs, to cost share the staff time with contributing federal partners.

Agency Action

ODFW's grant application was approved; the agency received notification from the Bureau of Land Management on July 26, 2022. Funds will be available to spend until March 31, 2027. ODFW anticipates making a future request for additional federal funds expenditure limitation for its 2023-25 and 2025-27 biennium budgets to expend remaining grant funds.

Action Requested

ODFW requests retroactive approval to submit a federal grant application in the amount of \$6,551,330 to the Bureau of Land Management's ORWA Good Neighbor Authority Program. ODFW also requests \$510,000 federal funds expenditure limitation for the agency's 2021-23 biennium budget.

Legislation Affected

Oregon Laws 2021, Chapter 679, Section 4(5) Habitat Division

Sincerely,


Curtis E. Melcher
Director