

ANALYSIS

Department of Agriculture Rare and Native Plants

Analyst: April McDonald

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for an America the Beautiful Challenge grant in the amount of \$6,607,000, over a five-year period, to benefit Oregon's rare and native plants.

Analysis: Grants provided by the America the Beautiful Challenge 2023 (ATBC) are administered through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The aim of the ATBC grant program is to streamline funding opportunities for projects focused on conserving, connecting, and restoring lands, waters, and wildlife. The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has identified two projects that align to the grant criteria and would benefit Oregon's rare and native plants. The first project furthers the recovery of four state-listed threatened and endangered plants by treating encroachment; improving habitat conditions; mitigating off-road vehicle activities; and addressing grazing conflicts through partnerships with local ranchers. These efforts are a continuation of the ODA Native Plant Conservation Program's ongoing conservation activities. The second project will develop an Oregon Seed Strategy to identify native seed needs across the state, providing a framework for both native and rare seed conservation, restoration, and production efforts. ODA intends to apply for \$3.6 million in grant funding for the first project and \$3.0 million for the second.

This is a competitive grant with a state match requirement equal to 10% of the total project cost, of which at least 2.5% must be cash. The match requirement will be met through a combination of cash and in-kind support from Oregon Native Plant Conservation Coalition partners. The first proposal deadline is April 20, 2023, and award announcements are anticipated in November 2023. If awarded, ODA will return to the Legislature to request an increase in Federal Funds expenditure limitation.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of this request.

Oregon Department of Agriculture Crawford

Request: Authorization to apply for a grant of \$6,607,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's America the Beautiful Challenge grant program to fund rare and native plant communities.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: This grant proposal seeks funding for two projects. The first project seeks to support the recovery of four state-listed threatened and endangered plants through treating invasive plant encroachment, improving habitat conditions, and partnering with local ranchers to address any grazing conflicts. This project reflects \$3,607,000 of the total grant request.

The second project seeks to develop an Oregon Seed Strategy to identify native seed needs across the state. The document will follow the strategy outlined in the 2015-2020 National Seed Strategy while recognizing Oregon's diverse habitats. This project accounts for \$3,000,000 of the total grant request.

The America the Beautiful Challenge is a competitive grant with a match requirement of 10 percent, of which at least 2.5 percent must be cash. The Oregon Department of Agriculture will meet this requirement by a combination of cash and in-kind personal services from the Oregon Native Plant Conservation Coalition. The department will provide facilitation, project and grant management, and oversight of the projects. The grant opportunity was released in March 2023, pre-proposals are due April 20, 2023, and final proposals are due July 20, 2023. If the grant application is successful, the department will return to the Legislature to request additional federal funds expenditure limitation.



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March 10, 2023

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) respectfully requests permission to apply for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) grant. The ATBC is a grant program to fund priority species or habitat-focused conservation and restoration projects across the United States. The ODA plans to submit two proposals under the Implementation grant category. Only states, U.S. territories, or Tribes may apply for funding under these grant categories.

The grant would fund two projects intended to benefit Oregon's rare and native plant communities. The first project will further the recovery of four state-listed threatened and endangered plants by treating invasive plant encroachment, improving habitat conditions through fuel reduction and revegetating with native plants, mitigating off-road vehicle activities, and addressing grazing conflicts through partnerships with local ranchers. These efforts are a continuation of the ODA Native Plant Conservation Program's (NPCP) ongoing conservation activities aimed at recovery and de-listing of each of the four species and their critical habitats. The second project will develop an Oregon Seed Strategy to identify native seed needs across the state, providing a framework for both native and rare seed conservation, restoration, and production efforts. This document will follow the strategy outlined in the 2015-2020 National Seed Strategy and will be tailored to Oregon's unique and diverse habitats. This work directly supports the ODA's mandate to review Oregon's list of threatened and endangered plants by helping track and assess the status of rare plants across Oregon.

Both grant proposals have support from organizations across Oregon, including the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, the Bureau

of Land Management, the Army Corps of Engineers, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Umpqua Native Plant Partnership, and the Native Plant Society of Oregon, among others.

Federal Grant Information

The ATBC is a competitive grant that has a non-federal match requirement of 10%, of which 2.5% must be cash. Approximately \$116 million is available in this funding cycle, which is occurring annually through 2026. This funding opportunity was published in March 2023 and will close July 20th, 2023 (pre-proposals are due April 20th, 2023). The ODA plans to apply for \$3,607,000 (at-risk species proposal) and \$3,000,000 (seed strategy proposal), for a total of \$6,607,000 in federal funds over five years, and the cost share will be met by a combination of cash and in-kind personal services from Oregon Native Plant Conservation Coalition partners.

The ODA will develop inter-governmental agreements with fellow member organizations of the Oregon Native Plant Conservation Coalition. Partnering organizations will execute project objectives and ODA will provide facilitation, project and grant management, and oversight of core partners.

Partnership and Support

Partners include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Rae Selling Berry Seed Bank, ORBIC, OregonFlora, Institute for Applied Ecology, The Understory Initiative, and Wallowa Resources. The Coalition's mission is to address Oregon native plant conservation issues at the state-level through the pooling of resources and information to further the protection of threatened and endangered plant species and restore native habitats.

Action Requested

The ODA respectfully requests permission to apply for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America the Beautiful Challenge grant.

Legislation Affected

If the grant application is successful, ODA will return to the Legislature for increased federal funds expenditure limitation.

Sincerely,



Lauren Henderson, Acting Director
Oregon Department of Agriculture

