



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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March 21, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

RE: SB 5509 - Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife 2023-2025 Budget

Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow, Representative Pham and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2023-2025 budget. The Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) is a network of 32 member organizations working in Oregon to protect our natural world - our water, wildlife, and open spaces - for all people, forever. Together, our statewide community of land trusts, soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), and conservation organizations have protected more than 370,000 acres of land.

We were glad to see that the Governor's Recommended Budget for ODFW included funding to make the existing Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) Coordinator position permanent. However, the GRB did not include any additional grant funding for the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. **We respectfully request that the committee support the full funding of POP 112, which would deposit \$3 million into the OCR Fund as requested in the ODFW Agency Recommended Budget.**

Our land trust members are valuable partners in implementing the Oregon Conservation Strategy by getting funding on the ground for projects that protect species, improve water quality, and connect people to nature. Since its establishment in 2019, the OCRF has funded 91 projects across the state and COLT is excited to watch the program grow and see its impact in urban and rural communities.

In the last four grant cycles, seven COLT members received OCRF funding for projects across the state, including a pilot project by the Wetlands Conservancy to identify and survey beaver habitats in central coast estuaries, a carrying capacity study at the East Moraine Community Forest by the Wallowa Land Trust, and conservation projects in the Trout Creek Ranch and



24 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Blue Mountain Land Trust • Center for Natural Lands Management • Columbia Land Trust
Deschutes Land Trust • Ducks Unlimited • Forest Park Conservancy • Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
Greenbelt Land Trust • Klamath Lake Land Trust • Lower Nehalem Community Trust • McKenzie River Trust
North Coast Land Conservancy • Northwest Rangeland Trust • Oregon Agricultural Trust • Oregon Desert Land Trust
Pacific Forest Trust • Southern Oregon Land Conservancy • The Conservation Fund • The Nature Conservancy in Oregon

The Trust for Public Land • The Wetlands Conservancy • Wallowa Land Trust • Western Rivers Conservancy • Wild Rivers Land Trust
8 ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS: Black Oregon Land Trust • Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy • Clackamas Soil & Water
Conservation District • East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District • Helvetia Community Association
Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District • View the Future • Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District

Pueblo Mountains led by the Oregon Desert Land Trust. **To ensure the implementation of valuable projects across the state and further the goals of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, we hope the committee will consider a \$3 million investment in the grant program.**

COLT is also supportive of HB 2527, a bill that would implement recommendations to improve the Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Management Program within ODFW. Our land trust members work with willing landowners across the state to improve habitat and ecological outcomes that provide public benefits on private land. HB 2527 would improve and revive this important voluntary tool for increasing habitat and wildlife protection on private lands, and allow SWCDs to provide capacity and technical assistance to improve habitat outcomes. Managing habitat for wildlife can be costly, and the tax deferral incentive provided through this program is essential to reach the envisioned program goals.

We thank you for the time and opportunity to testify in support of SB 5509, and look forward to working together as partners to further conservation and habitat and species protection across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelley Beamer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelley Beamer
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts

