

WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM - HB 2980

Promoting wildlife stewardship and reducing human-wildlife conflicts across Oregon.



Climate change and habitat loss, combined with human population growth and expansion, forces people and wildlife into closer proximity and increases the risk of human-wildlife conflict. These conflicts are costly and decrease tolerance for wildlife. This dynamic erodes support for wildlife conservation generally, and leads to policies focused on short-term lethal options instead of the fundamental changes needed to address human-wildlife conflict. This is true in urban, suburban, and rural landscapes across Oregon.

The Wildlife Stewardship Program was developed by a diverse task force and is supported by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and a strong coalition. It would invest meaningfully in resources within ODFW to reduce human-wildlife conflicts, promote wildlife coexistence and stewardship, and engage new and diverse audiences in wildlife conservation.

The Wildlife Stewardship Program will invest \$923,000 into the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the following:

- Create 3 new wildlife coexistence biologist positions stationed around the state;
- Develop a Living with Wildlife public education and outreach campaign; and
- Establish a grant program to support Oregon's wildlife rehabilitation centers which serve on the frontlines of human-wildlife interactions.

Benefits

- Shift from reactive to proactive approaches to human-wildlife conflicts.
- Provide consistent, streamlined, and standardized approaches to human-wildlife conflict.
- Expand training, logistical, and technical support for response agencies and partners.
- "Keep Wildlife Wild"
- Provide support for Oregon's wildlife rehabilitation network
- Maximize the capacity of existing statewide resources.
- Improve internal agency communication and external partner coordination.

The Wildlife Stewardship Program is a special budget focus for the Oregon Conservation Network and is a priority bill for the Oregon Wildlife Coalition and other conservation organizations.

