



The State of Oregon



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

# NEWS RELEASE

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Contacts: Krystyna Wolniakowski, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 503-702-0245  
Lee Folliard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 503-231-6179  
Mary Ellen Glynn, Governor's Office, 503-378-4656  
Diane Peterson, US Attorney's Office, 503-727-1066

## OREGON GOVERNOR'S FUND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AWARDS \$346,000 IN GRANTS

Butterflies, salmon, frogs, bald eagles and even people who drink water or wine will benefit from the effects of nine grants awarded today by the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment. The fund was established by a court-ordered \$2 million settlement in a criminal pollution case, and is run by the Governor's office, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment demonstrates the kind of results we can deliver when all levels of government work in partnership on behalf of the citizens of Oregon," said Governor Kulongoski. "Grants from the Fund for the Environment will strengthen this federal-state partnership with our local communities by helping them restore habitats, clean up streams, and ensure that our children have clean air to breathe and safe water to drink."

"When polluters commit crimes in Oregon, the fines they pay will help fix our environment – thanks to our partnership with Governor Kulongoski," said U.S. Attorney Karin Immergut.

"These grants will restore streambeds throughout the Willamette Basin, improve water quality for people and wildlife, and provide a better home for several threatened and endangered species of fish, plants and wildlife," said Foundation Executive Director Jeff Trandahl. "By gaining landowner cooperation in improving fish and wildlife habitat, we're creating win-win solutions that will have lasting benefits for people and the natural resources we cherish."

The nine successful grant applicants, chosen from among 34 who applied, proposed projects which will identify, eliminate or reduce pollution, as well as restore and conserve fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and otherwise restore the quality of Oregon rivers and streams in the Willamette Basin. The grants range from \$16,000 to \$50,000, and total \$346,210. Grant recipients are contributing an additional total of \$461,364 in cash or in-kind contributions to their projects.

The grant recipients of the selected projects are:

### **Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District: Grant \$47, 423; Match \$120,585.**

Establish more than 15 miles of riparian buffer on private lands to provide water quality protection and wildlife habitat for cutthroat trout, steelhead salmon, coho salmon, bald eagles, Fender's blue butterfly, and

the red-legged frog. Work with at least 80 landowners to establish buffers from 35 to 180 feet in width in the lowlands of the watershed. Landowners will be responsible for maintaining the buffers for 10-15 years. Create a geographical information system (GIS) map to demonstrate the buffer boundaries.

**Cascade Pacific RC&D, Inc.: Grant \$34,830; Match \$15,000.**

Hold eight workshops to inform farmers of the importance of riparian areas and gain their participation in the federal Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP). Complete nine CREP plans to improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat along the Willamette River from Albany to Eugene. Work with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and local Soil and Water Conservation to provide additional outreach to agricultural landowners in an effort to improve the streamside riparian habitats in the Willamette Basin. The project will benefit threatened Chinook salmon populations and other salmonid populations in the upper Willamette River.

**Oregon State University Extension Service: Grant \$16,737; Match \$9,881**

Hold conservation training for 120 small-acreage landowners in three Willamette Basin Watersheds (Calapooia, Long Tom, and Mary's River) to empower landowners to implement management practices to improve water quality on their land. Landowners will be recruited through direct mailings and advertisement in community-based media. The training will include field tours where the participants will gain first hand experience from neighboring agricultural farmers who implement conservation practices. Pre- and post-project evaluations will document gained knowledge and understanding and anticipated management or behavior changes. Small-acreage landowners are, for the most part, not aware of government initiatives to improve water quality and the impacts they will have on their operations.

**Salmon-Safe Inc.: Grant \$37,000; Match \$31,400**

Transform the management of 50 Willamette Valley vineyards to fish-friendly practices, implementing water quality and biodiversity protection and enhancement while building consumer awareness of ecologically sustainable Oregon wine. Wineries that focus their process on riparian and wetlands management, water use management, erosion and sediment control, chemical use management, and landscape level biodiversity protection will be promoted by Salmon Safe and U.S. Department of Agriculture organic labels. Salmon Safe will partner with the wine industry's Low Input Viticulture and Enology (LIVE) program offering an expanded series of site visits, fields tours, and fish-friendly workshops to reduce run-off from the valley's steep hillside vineyards. Economic benefits of program participation will be quantified through grower surveys and retail sales data analysis from participating supermarkets. The Willamette Valley supports more than 150 vineyards and presents an opportunity to reduce run-off impacting six native runs of imperiled salmon species throughout the Basin. The project would add to the 85 existing certified vineyard sites statewide—a third of Oregon's wine production—and promote a market-based strategy to restore aquatic habitat and water quality.

**Eugene Water & Electric Board: Grant \$40,220; Match \$53,283**

The project will remove a significant risk from obsolete agricultural chemicals in the McKenzie and Middle Fork Willamette Watersheds to protect drinking water resources for Oregon's second largest population center and critical Endangered Species Act fish habitat. Landowners are unaware of how to dispose of the unsecured chemicals, or do not have the resources to do so, which creates a large potential for undetected leaks into rivers and streams that feed municipal water supplies. Project will include outreach education to growers, a chemical volume survey, and collection and disposal of chemicals. During the chemical collection, the levels of grower participation and quantity and types of waste will be documented, in order to further develop partnerships and expand the opportunities for proper farm waste disposal.

**East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District (ELSWCD): Grant \$20,000; Match \$36,215**

Provide a technician to do outreach and restoration planning on landowner properties for replanting native riparian species on 1.8 miles of the Mohawk River which was previously treated for Japanese knotweed. A

mailing will go out to residents along the Mohawk River and ELSWCD will hold an annual workshop in the Mohawk watershed on riparian restoration and water quality protection. Results of the weed eradication program and restoration of habitat will be disseminated regarding riparian habitat conservation, water quality issues, and increased awareness about the importance of riparian restoration activities. Four landowner properties along the Mohawk River, a tributary to the McKenzie River, were previously treated for knotweed and need riparian restoration planning assistance to benefit migration, spawning and rearing habitat for threatened and endangered salmonids. The Mohawk River is listed on the Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) list for temperature, bacteria, nutrient, pH, sedimentation, and other water quality concerns. Agricultural, commercial, and private residential lands in the watershed are potential contributors to these problems.

**Willamette Partnership: Grant \$50,000; Match \$20,000**

Communicate with buyers and sellers of conservation credits to initiate a Willamette Ecosystem Marketplace and launch a regional Roundtable to lend credibility and guidance to market development. Viable market-driven tools will be identified in the Willamette River Basin to assist private landowners, municipalities, industry, and others to comply with regulations more efficiently and cost effectively while generating better environmental outcomes. Engage local and regional organizations, agencies, and business leaders in developing strategies for applying market-driven conservation tools to critical natural resource issues. This project will advance learning, awareness, and knowledge of viable, voluntary market-driven tools in the Willamette Basin to enable collective, strategic investment in ecosystem services that support the communities, economy, and fish and wildlife.

**Marys River Watershed Council: Grant \$50,000; Match \$66,000**

Provide eight Mid-Willamette Valley watershed councils technical assistance to identify, develop, and implement restoration and protection projects to restore and conserve fish, wildlife, and plant resources. The councils will partner with landowners through direct meetings or community meetings to recruit participation in priority restoration projects. Meetings will include teaching landowners about applicable landowner incentive programs, such as CREP and WRP (the Wetlands Reserve Program). Two to three projects will be identified per watershed council where restoration strategies will be designed. Out of the total 16-24 projects, eight (one for each council) will be submitted for restoration grants and/or implementation of on-the-ground work. In order for watershed councils to increase their capacity to fulfill their role in the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and work with local landowners to complete on-the-ground projects that conserve the natural resources, councils need technical assistance to identify specific projects, create the design, and plan implementation. Technical assistance for the early project development leading up to restoration projects is one of the factors limiting the number of projects that councils can complete.

**Policy Consensus Initiative: Grant \$50,000; Match \$109,000**

Build capacity to assist growers with sustainable agriculture practices and goals by creating the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center (OSARC) at Oregon State University. The project will lead growers to existing certification programs to adopt and demonstrate habitat enhancement, erosion control, pest management, and irrigation efficiency. Several OSARC pilot projects will be launched and partnered with NORPAC Food, Inc. to demonstrate the adopted sustainable management practices. The long-term conservation need is for OSARC to provide a reliable delivery system and a one stop information area and assistance so that farmers and ranchers can understand, assess, and implement sustainable management of their water, soil, fish and wildlife, and human resources. The impact of having the OSARC outreach program at Oregon State University has potential to reach many farmers and result in sustainability on a wide scale. The project will directly respond to the significant conservation needs in the Willamette Basin, including loss of aquatic habitat (wetlands, in-stream, off-channel, riparian, and floodplain), loss of upland habitat (oak woodlands, savannas, and prairie), at-risk aquatic and upland species, impaired water quality, lack of stream flows, and invasive species.

The Governor’s Fund for the Environment was established in April, 2005, with an initial contribution of \$2 million in community service payments as a result of the criminal prosecution of the Panamanian shipping company Evergreen International, which pled guilty to 25 criminal charges. Five of the alleged crimes occurred in Oregon. The United States and Evergreen reached a plea agreement that requires the company to pay \$25 million – the largest criminal fine ever imposed on a defendant in a vessel pollution case.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Oregon helped prosecute the Evergreen case and directed a portion of the fine to create this new fund for the state. The United States Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigative Division and the Washington Department of Ecology each also played a critical role in the Evergreen prosecution.

The Fund was created by Governor Kulongoski and U.S. Attorney Karin Immergut with the goal of establishing a sustainable revenue source that is dedicated to local environmental clean up efforts focused on preserving and protecting Oregon’s rivers, watersheds, and fish and wildlife. The grant amounts vary each year based on the interest earned on the principal and new funds deposited through criminal fines and additional private and public donations.

Community service payments have become an important part of sentencing for criminals who violate environmental statutes. Last year, federal prosecutions in Oregon and Washington led to over \$1.3 million in payments to the Columbia Estuarine Fund, another project administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Grant recipients put those payments to use protecting salmon, eagles, sea birds and Columbia white tail deer. Since 2004, prosecutions in Oregon have resulted in more than \$3.6 million in community service payments.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants, and the habitat on which they depend. The Foundation creates partnerships between the public and private sectors to strategically invest in conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The Foundation awarded over 8,000 grants to more than 2,600 organizations in the United States and abroad and has leveraged – with its partners – more than \$300 million in federal funds since its establishment, for a total of more than \$1 billion in funding for conservation. The Foundation is recognized by Charity Navigator with a 3-star rating for efficiency and effectiveness. Ninety-two cents of every dollar contributed to the Foundation is directed to on-the-ground conservation projects, with five cents supporting management and administration of the Foundation’s multi-million dollar grants program and three cents funding partnership development and fundraising. For more information, visit [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).

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