



NEWS RELEASE



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Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment Monies Available for Willamette River Basin Restoration Projects

Court settlement with polluters will benefit Oregon fish and wildlife

A \$2 million court settlement with an international shipping company has resulted in the creation of a sustained granting program to benefit Oregon rivers and streams, beginning with the Willamette River Basin.

Pre-proposals are being sought by October 14, 2005, for projects that may qualify for funding in 2006.

Called the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment, the grant program will make up to \$300,000 a year available for projects that will restore the quality of Oregon's rivers and associated fish, wildlife and plants. The people living in or near such habitats are intended to be the beneficiaries of the fund, on behalf of the habitats and their species.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will administer the fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will oversee project selection.

"Helping to restore Oregon's rivers, streams and coastal areas will require the collaborative efforts of the state, the federal government and community groups throughout Oregon. Preserving, protecting and restoring our natural resources is essential to the future of our state," said Governor Ted Kulongoski.

The first round of grants will help finance projects in the Willamette River Basin that support implementation of the Governor's Willamette Legacy Program (http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/Willamette_River_Legacy/vision_background.shtml) and meet the following purposes:

- Develop and implement strategies to eliminate and/or reduce pollution and otherwise restore the quality of Oregon rivers, streams and coastal areas;
- Restore and conserve fish, wildlife and plant resources critical to Oregon rivers, streams and coastal areas;
- Identify continuing sources of pollution of Oregon rivers, streams and

- coastal areas; and
- Improve state and local criminal enforcement of environmental and wildlife protection laws intended to protect Oregon rivers, streams and coastal areas.

“We are inviting pre-proposals requesting funds from \$5,000 to \$50,000 and priority will be given to projects that improve conservation on private lands through incentive programs for private landowners,” said Krystyna Wolniakowski, Director of the Foundation’s Northwest Region. “While matching funds are not required, we encourage applicants to include them where possible. These matching funds can come from federal and non-federal sources, cash or in-kind contributions.”

The start up money for the Governor’s Fund came from a criminal prosecution of the shipping company Evergreen International. The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Portland reached a plea agreement with Evergreen in April that requires the company to pay \$25 million as a criminal fine – the largest criminal fine ever imposed on a defendant in a vessel pollution case. As part of the agreement, the company made \$2 million in community service payments, which provided the seed money for the Governor’s Fund for the Environment.

Since then, another \$100,000 has been added to fund from a settlement earlier this year with Thermo Fluids Inc. for an accidental oil and chemical spill from its southeast Portland plant into Johnson Creek.

“It is fitting that payments related to pollution offenses be routed directly back into restoration projects aimed at improving water quality and other habitat important to fish, wildlife and the people of Oregon,” said Kemper McMaster, project leader of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Oregon state office. “The Fish and Wildlife Service is eager to be a partner in these collaborative community efforts to protect and restore the unique natural resources we all depend on in the Pacific Northwest.”

Pre-proposals should be submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation by Oct. 14, 2005. Projects are expected to be approved and funded by spring 2006. Approved projects should be completed within two years.

During this first round, priority will be given to projects that request funds to:

- Provide technical assistance to private landowners to address environmental issues. Technical assistance may include conducting landowner workshops, community meetings and/or direct meetings with landowners;
- Encourage participation and additional enrollment in existing landowner incentive programs available through the Farm Bill (such as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Wetlands Restoration Program, etc. or other similar state and federal programs);
- Provide public awareness through outreach and education on the significance of aquatic resources and the importance of environmental laws to protect those resources; and

- Provide technical assistance to small municipal governments to address non-point source water quality issues (such as the development of Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans).

Those who may apply for grants include non-profit conservation organizations, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, special districts, counties and cities, state government agencies, tribes and federal agencies.

Grant funds may not be used for political advocacy, litigation expenses, terrorist activities, legally required mitigation, equipment purchases not primarily related to the direct completion of the project, website development or videos.

Pre-proposals should be submitted through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's on-line application form at <https://collective.nfwf.org/pre-proposal/Preproposal.php>. When submitting an application, please select the "specific program" button at the bottom of the form and then choose the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment from the pick list. To avoid technical problems, please print out a copy of your pre-proposal for your records before submitting the form.

Pre-proposals will be evaluated and ranked and the strongest proposals will be invited to submit a full proposal by mid-January 2006. Full proposal applicants will be notified of grant awards by the end of February 2006, with funds available for projects by spring 2006.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, established by Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, and the habitat on which they depend. Our goals are to promote healthy populations of fish, wildlife, and plants by generating new commerce for conservation. The Foundation meets these goals by creating partnerships between the public and private sectors and strategically invests in conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The Foundation does not support lobbying, political advocacy, or litigation.

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 544 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.

