



Oregon Environmental Restoration Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

12:00pm – 5:00pm

Submitted Written Public Comment

Received 5/5/26 – 5/18/26

Name	Topic(s)
Oregon Just Transition Alliance	Funding for environmental health priorities
Trout Unlimited	Written support of verbal comments provided at the May 6 OERC meeting
The Understory Initiative	Appendix B project
Bird Alliance of Oregon	Appendix A project
Institute for Applied Ecology	Appendix B project
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts	Appendix B project
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts	Appendix A and Appendix B projects
Oregon Hunters Association	Appendix A projects
Tillamook Estuaries Partnership	Appendix B project
Trout Unlimited	Appendix A and Appendix B projects
East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District	Appendix A projects

From: [Jamie Pang](#)
To: [LANUSSE Clare K * OWEB](#)
Cc: [Cheyenne Holliday](#)
Subject: RE: funding for environmental health priorities/ OERF
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 12:05:01 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

You don't often get email from jamie@ojta.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

RE: funding for environmental health priorities

Chairs Sam and Dembrow, Vice-Chair Holliday and Members of the Environmental Restoration Council-

For the record, my name is Jamie Pang, and I am the Director of Programs and Policy at the Oregon Just Transition Alliance. I have spent a near-decade working on environmental justice, climate justice, and environmental health issues in the State of Oregon. I write today request you use some of the allocated funding from the Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund (OERF) to address some of the environmental health and toxic chemical reduction needs within state agencies. Environmental health has long been an underfunded scope of work as compared to other issues such as climate change- *before* our state is estimated to lose approximately [\\$15billion](#) from federal funding losses.

During the last short session, DEQ as a result of this loss of federal funding was directed to submit 2.5 to 5.0% of proposed budget cuts for the 2025-2027 biennium. Amongst the cuts were: reductions to smoke and air toxics monitoring (which will only worsen with increased wildfires), delaying of hires to support the water quality monitoring and assessment program and wastewater permitting programs, and reductions to funding to their labs. The agency now plans to propose a bond to direct funding for their labs that tests for toxic chemicals and pollutants in the 2027 long session.

Additionally, the Oregon Health Authority has delated for the part-time hiring of the Toxic Free Cosmetics Program as a result of the agency budget reductions related to loss of federal funding. SB 546 passed in 2023 to ban the sale and manufacture of cosmetic products in Oregon containing intentionally added hazardous chemicals—including mercury, formaldehyde, and PFAS. It becomes effective January 1, 2027.

Such programs as listed above are intended to reduce exposures to hazardous chemicals from air, water, and products that get applied directly onto the skin. These exposures cause a multitude of health issues ranging from heart and lung disease, immune and endocrine disruption, and in some cases, cancer—and they impact frontline and low-income communities the most.

The OERF is revolutionary, and I implore you not to forget about human health and the programs that protect health while dispersing these funds.

Thank you,



Jamie Pang

Deputy Director, Policy and Programs

[Oregon Just Transition Alliance](#)

(503) 208-5174 | jamie@ojta.org





James Fraser

Oregon Policy Director, james.fraser@tu.org, (971) 278-8085

May 6, 2026

Oregon Environmental Restoration Council

Transcript of Trout Unlimited's comments delivered verbally at May 6th Council meeting

Co-Chairs Dembrow and Sams, Vice-Chair Holliday, and Members of the Council:

My name is James Fraser and I'm the Oregon Policy Director at Trout Unlimited.

I submitted a letter to accompany these comments, and just wanted to highlight four points:

Number 1: There's quite a bit of guidance in the settlement for the strategic priorities – and even a skeletal framework for a theory of change that you might use moving forward.

You'll see in our letter that I tried to tease out some direction from section 18 in the settlement by adding formatting for readability.

And on the topic of that paragraph: in your last meeting, DOJ referred to the language in the settlement about project types as a “list of *examples*.”

We think it's more than that, and would respectfully characterize it as a “non-exhaustive list” of the project categories that do qualify as remediation or restitution having a nexus to the harm alleged in Oregon's lawsuit.

You all have the discretion to determine which *other similar* projects fall within that scope.

Number 2: I'll mostly defer to our letter on the topic of defining key terms in the settlement and legislation, but would briefly note that we urge you to apply the plain meaning of terminology within the context of this program, and limit the exercise of reviewing other statutes to discern meaning here.

Number 3: We very much support the notion of making an interim distribution, and we support many of the projects described in the April 27th memo, as specified in our letter.

We do respectfully offer a couple points of constructive criticism on the categories and projects list:

First: Per Annette Liebe's comments, the “Reducing human exposure to contaminants” category is the only category that is not elaborated in section 18 of the settlement. It's also slated to receive more funding than any other category.

We submit that the “human exposure” category could be adjusted so that it is less human-focused and re-oriented to reducing exposure for people, wildlife, and fish.

Second: TU recommends providing more than \$500,000 to the “Remediation of impaired waterbodies” category. We support the ODA project currently recommended for funding there. However, the proposed funding list would provide *twenty times* the amount for the “Reducing human exposure” category than for the “Remediation of waterbodies” category.

We urge the Council to balance this so that there’s more funding for the critical and time-sensitive need of remediating water quality to serve fish, wildlife, and people.

And lastly, Number 4: We urge the Council *not* to narrow its focus to harms caused specifically by PCBs, or to prioritize projects expressly related to PCBs.

I didn’t address this in our letter, but it’s important to note that while this settlement is large and resolves a lot of claims, it does not address or relieve the State’s claims against Monsanto / Bayer for PCBs at the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. You can see that in the definition of “Released Claims” on page 4 of the settlement.

To be clear, this Program can spend money on projects in the Portland Harbor, and should address PCBs. But we just wanted to note that this Fund is not intended to make the State of Oregon whole for all PCB contamination in the Harbor, because those claims have not been resolved.

Thank you.

From: [Kathryn Prive](#)
To: [LANUSSE Clare K * OWEB](#)
Subject: Written Comment for Monsanto settlement funding
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 5:01:25 PM

You don't often get email from info@understoryinitiative.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Clare Lanusse,

My name is Kathryn Prive, Executive Director of The Understory Initiative and a member of the Oregon Native Seed Collective I'm writing in support of the ODA proposal to fund Oregon Native Seed Strategy implementation. Native seed supply is currently insufficient to meet Oregon's restoration needs, and strategic capacity-building is essential. Planning and growing appropriate, genetically diverse seed takes years, and without infrastructure, neither the market nor restoration efforts will meet future demand. This is vital not only for ecosystem health but also for mitigating fire risk, especially in Southwest and Central Oregon. I urge the Council to reconsider this proposal's review. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Kathryn Prive



Kathryn Prive M.Sc. (she/her)
[The Understory Initiative](#) | Executive Director
[Rogue Native Plant Partnership](#) | Co-Director
541-973-4303 (cell)



5/13/2026

Re: Bird Alliance of Oregon's input for the Oregon Environmental Restoration Council Meeting, May 6, 2026

Co-Chair Sams, Co-Chair Dembrow, and Vice Chair Holliday and other members of the OERC committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Please accept the following comments on behalf of Bird Alliance of Oregon, a statewide conservation non-profit dedicated to ensuring the state's natural resources and habitats are protected for benefit for wildlife and humans alike with 15,000 members statewide.

We are focussing our testimony on DEQ and OHA's Oregon Priority Brownfields Initiative program, but broadly support many of the other agency requests from ODFW, DSL, OPRD, and DLCDC - and would request to see further details of all the agency requests that were not included in the Governor's proposal so the public and committee could analyze and advocate for consideration.

Our efforts on brownfield restoration have spanned nearly 4 decades, initially led by a longtime environmental champion Bob Sallinger who had been at the vanguard of efforts to advance cleanup of Brownfields around the region to restore them to productive uses both for wildlife and people. Brownfields often are located near significant natural resources and low income communities and our efforts have focused on reducing the negative impact to those communities through cleanup, but also facilitate reuse and restoration to ensure they provide a positive impact to the community in the future. This work has spanned from advocacy around cleanup and reuse of some specific high visibility projects and local policy in the Portland Metro area, but has extended to efforts at the state legislature to help create policy and programs to help facilitate cleanups statewide.

Recently, our organization has completed the purchase of a 12 acre brownfield on NE 82nd Ave in East Portland across from McDaniel Highschool. We plan to clean up, restore, and redevelop the site and build a new wildlife hospital and nature park to serve the state's wildlife and general public of the Portland Metro Area. Our site is part of the historic HG Leville Landfill, which was a rocky quarry that transitioned to a landfill, was capped and remained mostly undeveloped for several decades. An all too common story. Our effort to purchase, restore and redevelop started with 2+ years of due diligence, a year-long negotiation of prospective purchaser agreement (PPA) with DEQ, and significant ongoing maintenance, financial assurance costs, and monitoring costs to maintain our site and facilitate the redevelopment. An extensive process that included barriers that would prove insurmountable to most community based organizations.

Oregon Priority Brownfields Initiative Program is sorely needed to help facilitate brownfield cleanup and reuse across the state, **and** it could be greatly improved by considering how it can better support ongoing brownfield restoration and redevelopment projects that are led by non-profit organizations, provide a real public benefit, and might better be described as shovel ready.

Below we list a few ideas for ways the program could better support projects like ours, and reduce barriers for others community led efforts. And also note that some of these ideas may show up in DEQ's New Brownfield program concept that was not selected, but those details have not been shared;

- Financial assistance to aid in meeting DEQ permit compliance
 - Permit compliance is both difficult to navigate and includes financial capital outlays and financial assurance to meet to implement brownfield cleanup and redevelopment requirements are significant;
 - **This program should provide funding to non profits for testing and monitoring that is required by DEQ permits**
 - **This program should provide funding to non profits for Infrastructure repairs associated with permit compliance - an example for our project is the upkeep or repair of landfill off-gassing infrastructure which helps mitigate risks to the public**
 - Projects like ours have financial assurance requirements for potential emergency clean up. Our requirement is several hundred

thousand dollars over a 15 year duration, a large amount that we struggle to bear.

- **This program should create a DEQ managed Trust, accessible by non profits that covers financial assurance requirements for projects that provide a public benefit.**
- We spent several hundred thousand dollars in consultant fees, for an ESA 1, 2 and other supplementary analysis. We've spent at least 500 + hours staff time working with environmental consultants on these required analysis.
 - **This program should provide more accessible technical support for due diligence, including funding for non-profit staffing.**
- **This program should provide technical support for development of a Prospective Purchaser Agreement, including funding non-profit staff time.**
 - Development of our PPA was a year long process, with well over 750 + hours of staff time. We were fortunate to secure a Pro - bono attorney, that would have likely cost another couple hundred thousand dollars.
- **This program should fund the development of a landfill gas monitoring plan for non profit brownfield redevelopment projects.**
 - Again, we were fortunate to have a Pro bono attorney aid us in this effort -which would have cost 10's of thousands of dollars.

These are all costs that are mostly borne by Bird Alliance of Oregon, with only a few State, Federal, or local funding sources to offset and many are no longer available. DEQ's Initiative could really benefit from incorporating programs and funding streams that can help lessen this burden, which is currently a significant driver in slowing implementation of our efforts, and likely making other projects infeasible to other communities.

Cleaning up contaminated sites and restoring them to productive use is essential for the health of our environment, our communities and our economy. We hope that the OERF can really partner with the community to make this more of a reality for a diverse array of projects across the State.

Micah Meskel
Urban Conservation Director
Bird Alliance of Oregon



May 13, 2026

Oregon Environmental Restoration Council
7756 Summer Street NE, Suite 360
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Council Members,

The Institute for Applied Ecology asks that you include the Oregon Department of Agriculture's request for the Native Ecosystem Resilience and Invasive Species Prevention project among the package of projects funded during your June 22, 2026, meeting.

The Institute for Applied Ecology is a mission-driven non-profit organization that works to restore species and save ecosystems. Founded in 1999, IAE fills a unique niche in conservation and works with a diverse group of partners to conserve native species and habitats through restoration, research and education. Our team of botanists, ecologists, educators, and restoration professionals advances our mission across the western U.S. from our headquarters in Corvallis, Oregon and our branch office in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

IAE is encouraged by this proposal from ODA, which would support the implementation of the Oregon Native Seed Strategy—a partner-developed, strategic guide that empowers conservation, wildfire resilience, and ecological restoration of Oregon's landscapes. The available supply of native seed is insufficient to meet Oregon's needs. Native seeds are essential for environmental restoration, restoration of wildlife habitats, improvement of soil and water quality—all components of the Governor's eligibility list for funding. Planning and growing appropriate, genetically diverse seed takes years—only through appropriate investments in infrastructure and capacity, will we be able to achieve the conservation objectives vital for ecosystem health and mitigating fire risk throughout the state.

This funding proposal would also support the recovery of state-listed threatened and endangered species. There are 76 plant species that are administratively protected by the Oregon Department of Agriculture and continued funding is essential for species' recovery efforts to be successful. These species are critical to Oregon's ecological communities, and are components of the habitat that our pollinators, fish and wildlife rely upon.

We urge the Council to reconsider this proposal's inclusion in their final package of funded projects. Thank you for your consideration, and for your dedicated service to Oregon and its environment.

Sincerely,

Keith Norris, AWB®
Executive Director



COALITION OF OREGON LAND TRUSTS

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May 13, 2026

RE: Agency Program Fund Interim Allocation

Co-Chair Sams, Co-Chair Dembrow, and Vice-Chair Holliday:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today following the interim allocation recommendations for the Agency Program Fund. COLT and our members are excited to track the development of the Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund and the impact its investments will have for communities across Oregon.

COLT is a membership organization representing 32-member land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, and conservation organizations working to protect our habitat, water, and natural spaces - for all people, forever. Collectively, our members have protected more than 780,000 acres of land across our state.

We wanted to share our strong support for the inclusion of \$1.2 million in funding for the Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program (DWSP) at the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). The DWSP has already had a great impact in our state in only one funded grant cycle, helping six communities protect more than 5,000 acres of their drinking watersheds to ensure reliable access to clean drinking water.

Clean drinking water starts with its source. When we protect our water sources, communities have safer and more affordable water. Communities are also more resilient to stressors like fire, drought, and floods. And, when we ensure clean water for communities, we also ensure clean water for fish and wildlife.

Despite receiving no additional funding in the previous two legislative sessions, there is great demand for additional funds from the DWSP. OWEB surveying identified nearly \$15 million in projected need for the 2025-2027 biennium and a \$10 million



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 • Willowa 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

projected need for the 2027-2029 biennium (based on OWEB surveying June 2024 and follow up outreach in September 2025).

Thank you for your service on this Council and your commitment to ensuring benefit for Oregon's environment and communities across the state. We respectfully request your inclusion of \$1.2 million for the Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program in the interim allocation for the Agency Program Fund.

Sincerely,



Joe Buttafuoco
Executive Director
Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts





May 18, 2026

To: Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund Council
Re: Agency Funding Pre-Proposal Projects

Dear Co-Chairs Sams and Dembrow and members of the Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund Council,

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by providing technical services and supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers, and with federal, state and nonprofit partners.

We are thankful to the Council for this opportunity to provide comments on the Agency Funding Pre-Proposal Projects

OACD firmly believes in the urgency of getting OERF agency funds on-the-ground as quickly as possible and reiterate that the Pre-Proposal includes a lot of excellent projects. In our May 4 letter we expressed our support for the following Appendix A projects:

- *ODFW Charting a future for Cleaner Water: Contaminant Mitigation and Habitat Restoration in Priority Watersheds*
- *ODA Pesticide Applicator Training Modernization*
- *DOGAMI Enhanced Reclamation of Mine Sites*
- *DEQ/OHA Priority Borwonfields Initiative*
- *ODA Agricultural Water Quality Restoration Partnership*

And the following Appendix B projects:

- *ODA Native Ecosystem Resilience, Invasive Species Prevention*
- *DEQ Enhanced DEQ Nonpoint Source Watershed Restoration Grant Program* (not included, and may have soil health benefits as well).

We continue with our same reasoning from our previous comments... Since the Council has yet to develop the strategic priorities for the fund, OACD strongly urges the Council to focus this initial funding on "pilot projects" so as not to set precedents nor commitments for future use of the fund. We suggest that this funding round focus on either discreet projects or projects that can be evalutated and repeated/continued if successful. Given that failing setics are an ongoing problem and does not fit the criteria of "pilot project" or a project that can simply be completed with this funding, we propose that the following project not be included in the final list:

- *DEQ Address Groundwater Contamination from Failing Septic Systems* (\$4 million)

We propose that this project be replaced by the following Appendix B projects:

- *ODA Native Ecosystem Resilience, Invasive Species Prevention* (\$1.5 million)
- *DSL Derelict Vessel Removal* (\$2 million)

We have included the Derelict Vessel Removal, in part, based on the precautionary principle, to remove the vessel before there is need to deal with a potential significant pollution occurrence that would negatively impact both the public and natural resources. In addition, this is a very well laid out project that can be completed with this funding opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments to the Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that tapers to the right.

Andrea Kreiner, Executive Director
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
Andrea.Kreiner@OACD.org



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501 • (541) 772-7313
oha@oregonhunters.org • oregonhunters.org

May 16, 2026

Oregon Environmental Restoration Council
c/o Clare Lanusse, OWEB

Co-Chairs Sams and Dembrow, Vice-Chair Holliday, and members of the Council,

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is the largest hunter-led conservation organization with over 12,000 members in 26 chapters across the state. OHA's mission is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage' and we strongly support science-based wildlife management.

OHA strongly supports the Council moving forward with interim distributions to agencies in order to immediately invest in mitigation and restoration work on the ground. Additionally, there is value in syncing the grant cycle with the agency budget cycle.

Upon reviewing the potential funding projects listed in Appendix A and reviewed in the May 6 meeting, OHA strongly encourages the Council to look critically at the balance between funding allocated to human-centric projects and wildlife/habitat-focused projects. It is imperative to establish a strong foundation, anchored in the settlement language, in this interim distribution process that will set the tone for future project approvals.

To that end, OHA supports the projects submitted by Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Contaminant mitigation and habitat restoration in priority watersheds, as well as, restoration and recovery of lamprey and mussels are examples of projects in line with the purpose and intent of the OERC.

We appreciate the service of the Council members and look forward to future engagement opportunities.

Thank you,
Amy Patrick
On behalf of Oregon Hunters Association



TILLAMOOK ESTUARIES PARTNERSHIP

Healthy watersheds for a thriving community

503-322-2222

P.O. Box 493
613 Commercial Street
Garibaldi, Oregon 97118

www.tbnep.org

May 18, 2026

To: Oregon Environmental Restoration Council

From: Dr. Kristi Foster, Tillamook Estuaries Partnership; kristi@tbnep.org

Re: Support for the Sitka Sedge Restoration Project Submitted by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) for Oregon Environmental Restoration Council Funding Consideration

Dear Co-Chairs Dembrow and Sams, and members of the Oregon Environmental Restoration Council (OERC);

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I am writing on behalf of Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (TEP) in support of an urgent restoration project within the Sitka Sedge Natural Area. TEP is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Tillamook County's watersheds through active stewardship, scientific inquiry, community engagement, and education. We have been an active partner of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) on this project for more than 12 years. This letter of support provides information for your consideration in the hope that the Sitka Sedge project may be added to your funding recommendation package.

Urgency – Community, Critical Habitat, and Public Infrastructure at Risk

OPRD, TEP, and a broad coalition of federal, state, Tribal, local, and community partners are advancing an urgent coastal resiliency and estuary restoration project at Sitka Sedge State Natural Area. At the center of the project is a 1930s-era dike that is actively failing and increasingly vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, and flooding. The deteriorating structure partially blocks fish passage, restricts natural tidal exchange, degrades water quality, and contributes to chronic flooding of adjacent roads and infrastructure. ***Without intervention, continued failure of the dike threatens nearby communities, critical habitat, public infrastructure***, and federal and state investments by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), and others into this project.

The existing dike and tide gate prevent natural tidal flushing that is necessary to maintain dissolved oxygen levels, regulate water temperatures, and support estuarine food webs. The degraded conditions of this infrastructure contribute to flooding that carries road and right-of-way contaminants into the estuary. Behind the dike, tidal marshes are at increasing risk of subsidence and drowning as sea levels rise. In addition, a salmon-bearing stream, Reneke Creek, has become partially trapped within the roadside ditch where it accumulates sediment and road-related pollutants, further degrading aquatic habitat.

This project will construct a modern setback dike with a new, more fish-friendly tide gate, farther inland to provide long-term protection and resiliency for the community of Tierra Del Mar, while restoring approximately 68 acres of historic tidal marsh and estuarine habitat currently functionally disconnected from the estuary. Restoration actions will reestablish full tidal exchange, reconnect two historical salmon streams, restore unrestricted fish passage, improve

water quality, reduce flooding impacts (a high priority to Tillamook County Public Works), and increase the marsh's ability to naturally accrete sediment and adapt to sea level rise. The project will also relocate Reneke Creek from its unstable roadside ditch alignment back into a resilient natural floodplain setting.

The Sitka Sedge project addresses climate resilience, estuary restoration, salmon recovery, public infrastructure protection, and community safety in a single integrated effort. It directly advances statewide and regional resiliency priorities, including Executive Order 25-26, which directs Oregon agencies to take urgent action to improve the resiliency of communities and natural and working lands and waters. Sand Lake Estuary, which is part of the Sitka Sedge Natural Area, has long been identified as a high-priority for conservation and restoration.

Over \$6M in Funding Already Secured for Construction – Need for Match

Sixty-percent designs are complete, with final design and permitting underway and scheduled for completion by Fall 2026. Approximately \$1.85 M in federal and state grant funds were awarded for the design phases of the project. TEP has invested over 3,300 hours in project management, with OPRD and other partners contributing similar in-kind resources.

Over \$6 million in federal funding has been secured for construction; however, an additional \$4 million in matching funds are needed to move forward. Failure to secure the remaining funds would jeopardize the entire project, potentially resulting in the loss of already-awarded federal funding and delaying restoration of a rapidly deteriorating system that becomes more vulnerable with each passing winter storm and tidal cycle. ***The urgency of securing matching funds for the Sitka Sedge restoration project cannot be overstated.***

Overview of this Shovel-Ready Project

The Sitka Sedge project will restore full fish passage and tidal connectivity to degraded tidal marsh and salmon habitat that have been disconnected since the 1930s. The project will substantially improve estuarine water quality, restore natural tidal and stream processes, and reduce pollutant inputs to Sand Lake Estuary. Construction of the setback dike will significantly improve long-term resiliency for the Tierra Del Mar community against sea level rise and flooding while allowing the majority of the historical tidal marsh to function naturally, as it once did. The project also eliminates chronic flooding of adjacent transportation infrastructure and roadside drainage systems that currently discharge contaminants into the estuary, which are of significance to Tillamook County Public Works and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), respectively.

This project is consistent with the terms of the Monsanto settlement and Department of Justice (DOJ) guidance by:

- Conducting large-scale environmental and natural resource restoration in a priority Oregon estuary.
- Improving water quality by restoring tidal exchange, reducing elevated water temperatures, increasing dissolved oxygen, and decreasing pollutant inputs associated with roadway flooding and roadside drainage.
- Remediating impairments in an estuarine water body associated with temperature and dissolved oxygen.
- Restoring and reconnecting critical habitat for threatened Oregon Coast coho salmon and other native migratory fish species by removing barriers that have existed for approximately 90 years.
- Restoring natural estuarine hydrology, sediment transport, marsh function, and food-web processes necessary for long-term ecological resilience and adaptation to sea level rise.

Restoration activities will occur as a coordinated implementation effort between 2027 and 2029, followed by long-term monitoring and adaptive management, as indicated in the following timeline:

2027

- Preliminary setback dike construction
- Settlement pre-loading
- Erosion control installation

2028

- Completion of setback dike
- Breaching of the existing dike
- Filling of artificial tidal ditches
- Restoration of natural tidal channels
- Vegetation restoration

2029

- Freshwater creek channel restoration
- Bridge installation
- Fish habitat enhancements in adjacent freshwater systems

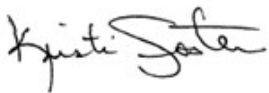
2029–2031

- Monitoring, maintenance, and adaptive management activities

The Sitka Sedge project represents one of the most collaborative coastal resiliency initiatives on the Oregon Coast. OPRD and TEP have worked closely with OWEB, NOAA, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), watershed councils, local governments, landowners, and community organizations to develop and advance the project. Key partners include the Nestucca, Neskowin and Sand Lakes Watershed Council; United States Forest Service; the Tierra Del Mar Neighborhood Association; and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, among many others. A large interdisciplinary technical advisory team representing agencies, Tribes, non-profits, scientists, engineers, and restoration practitioners has guided project development for more than 12 years.

The Sitka Sedge project is shovel-ready. Its inclusion in the OERC funding recommendation package will result in tremendous benefit to the Oregon Coast: climate resilience, estuary restoration, salmon recovery, public infrastructure protection, and community safety. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kristi Foster, Executive Director
Tillamook Estuaries Partnership
A National Estuary Program

OUR MISSION

Tillamook Estuaries Partnership is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Tillamook County's watersheds through active stewardship, scientific inquiry, community engagement, and education.



James Fraser

Oregon Policy Director, james.fraser@tu.org, (971) 278-8085

May 18, 2026

Oregon Environmental Restoration Council

Via email to clare.k.lanusse@oweb.oregon.gov

Re: Trout Unlimited Follow-up Input on Interim Distribution and Projects List

Dear Co-Chairs Dembrow and Sams, Vice-Chair Holliday, and Members of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written input to the Council after the May 6th meeting. We also appreciate that the Governor's Office and Council have made available a summary of the projects not recommended for funding in the interim distribution (i.e., "[Appendix B](#)").

TU [provided written](#) and verbal input for the May 6th meeting, and we wish to briefly supplement those comments regarding the interim distribution:

Trout Unlimited encourages the Council to proceed with the interim distribution. As we testified during the May 6th meeting, we support many of the projects proposed for funding in [Appendix A](#). However, if the Council were to refine or adjust the package, we would recommend and support the following:

1. Adjust the "Reducing Human Exposure to Contamination" category to include fish and wildlife concerns.

This topic came up in the Council's discussion with the Governor's Office at the May 6th meeting, since this category title is not reflective of the settlement language. We appreciate the comments that the category would be re-worded to reflect the settlement's focus on environmental and natural resource issues. This first distribution is an important reflection of the projects that this Council considers to be within the core of its mission and the purposes described in section 18 of the settlement. In TU's view, "reducing human exposure" is too narrow.

2. Remove DEQ's "Address Groundwater Contamination from Failing Septic Systems" project (\$4 million) from the proposed project list, and bring it back at a later date.

TU recognizes that failing septic systems can pollute surface and groundwater. However, this project does not appear to be focused on replacing septic systems in a targeted area (e.g., a grouping of failed septic systems causing a known hotspot of water quality issues), nor does it set criteria for replacing only septic systems which are expected to be having material impact on water quality. Replacing 160 septic systems statewide, or even across

a specific region, may have too diffuse a benefit to be detectable or beneficial to the resource. We would recommend holding on this one until its criteria or proposal is refined accordingly.

3. Backfill the removed DEQ project by funding both: DSL’s “Derelict Vessel Removal” proposal to remove pollutant-laden sternwheeler *Jean* from the Multnomah Channel (\$2 million), and DEQ’s “Enhanced DEQ Nonpoint Source Watershed Restoration Grant Program” proposal to fund important nonpoint source pollution mitigation projects to benefit impaired surface waters (\$2 million).

Assuming the Council does not wish to increase the interim distribution project total, TU believes both of these projects currently in Appendix B are more time-sensitive than the DEQ septic project, and are squarely within the target of the settlement’s purpose.

According to Appendix B (at PDF p. 13-14), the sternwheeler *Jean* is a “168’ derelict vessel” that’s expected to contain “over 100 tons of debris and hazardous materials such as . . . asbestos, batteries, electrical components containing PCBs and heavy metals, and other contaminated liquids.” The State of Oregon has worked for *years* to address this issue, but the vessel remains moored off Sauvie Island—and near a popular public access site. We recommend spending \$2 million of the \$30 million proposed for distribution here (only 6% of the total) on this time-sensitive opportunity to a head-off a much more costly environmental tragedy if/when the *Jean* sinks below the waterline.

The DEQ Nonpoint Source project is scalable (proposed at \$1-3 million, see PDF pp. 8-9), and addresses a key need for Oregon’s impaired waterways. DEQ and designated management agencies are rolling-out a large number of TMDLs currently and over the next few years; as stated in the proposal, the agency “has minimal funding capacity relative to the need.” TMDLs identify issues and opportunities, but TMDLs don’t fund those projects. This proposal would provide important support to complete identified projects, thereby benefiting Oregon’s fish, wildlife, and communities.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering these comments. TU is sharing this input not to be critical of the proposed funding package, but instead, to provide constructive input if the package is subject to change, and as a reflection of what projects we’d consider the highest priorities.

Sincerely,

James Fraser, Oregon Policy Director, Trout Unlimited, james.fraser@tu.org



May 18, 2026

Oregon Environmental Restoration Council

Re: Item 3 -Agency Program Fund Proposal

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Agency Program Fund Proposals presented to the OERC on May 6, 2026. East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is a non-regulatory government agency that serves the lands, waters and people of East Multnomah County. Our mission is to help people care for land and water. Our work is guided by three strategic pillars: soil and water health, climate action, and equity.

We are writing to express our strong support for two agency proposals that align with focus areas of our District:

#1- Oregon Department of Transportation: Research data and planning tools to prepare for the emerging tire contaminant 6PPD-quinone (\$1.9M)

EMSWCD works to support clean water and healthy habitats in the watersheds of East Multnomah County. We do this by partnering with landowners to install green infrastructure, like bioswales, to treat stormwater runoff and cool water before it enters our streams and waterways. Together, with partners like Multnomah County, Metro and private landowners, we work to support salmon habitat by replacing culverts and increasing native habitat along our streams and rivers. While we have made great strides, the health of our salmon is threatened by the chemical 6ppd-q, which is lethal to coho salmon. ODOT's request comes at a vital time to increase Oregon's focus and resources to address 6ppd-q. This project will leverage investments made in other states to identify strategies that will reduce or eliminate this harmful toxin.

#2- Oregon Department of Agriculture: Pesticide Applicator Training Modernization (\$1.5M)

East Multnomah SWCD relies on a robust and trained workforce to apply pesticide and herbicides in support of our natural resource goals. Pesticide applicator training ensures that chemicals stay out of streams and waters and that the people applying chemicals abide by endangered species and water quality protections. Presently Oregon faces an extreme discrepancy between the attempt /pass rates on the Private Pesticide Applicators license exam between English and Spanish Speakers, with English speakers passing at a disproportionately higher rate. The numbers are not a reflection of the need or the talent that exists on farm and in Oregon's agriculture

community, but a reflection of a broken system in need of resourcing. ODA's project will engage professional services via contract to digitalize, modernize, and translate its pesticide applicator training and testing materials across all license categories. Oregon's current materials are largely static and have not been substantively updated in over a decade, and available only in English. ODA's proposal to modernize their pesticide applicator training is vital to our state's commitment to providing equitable access to public resources. It will support workforce development and benefit the health of our lands and waters.

EMSWCD thanks the Governor's Natural Resource Team for the timely and ambitious package of strategic investments brought to the OERC for consideration. We are grateful for the proposed investments and the impact they will have in East Multnomah County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelley Beamer".

Kelley Beamer
Executive Director
East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District