



OREGON TASK FORCE ON FUNDING FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND RELATED OUTDOOR RECREATION AND EDUCATION

National Caucus of Environmental Legislators

August 2017



Overview of Funding Task Force

Non-Voting Members

Sen. Chris Edwards	OR Legislature
Sen. Doug Whitsett	OR Legislature
Rep. Ken Helm	OR Legislature
Rep. Wayne Krieger	OR Legislature
Mike Finley	ODFW Commission Chair
Curt Melcher	ODFW Director

The Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education was established by the Oregon Legislature in 2015 through HB 2402.

The purpose was to address under-funding and increasing costs of conservation and related outdoor recreation and education opportunities.

Voting Members

Scott Welch	Columbia Sportswear
Rob Morrison	Leupold & Stevens Corp.
Claire Puchy	Retired, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Robb Ball	The Nature Conservancy
Kenji Sugahara	OR Bicycle Racing Association
Meryl Redisch	Retired, Portland Audubon Society
Bruce Taylor	OR Habitat Joint Venture
James Nash	6 Ranch Fly Fishing
Mark Labhart	Tillamook Co. Board of Commissioners
Tricia Tillman	Multnomah Co. Health Dept.
Queta Gonzalez	Center for Diversity & Environment
Kari Westlund	Travel Lane County
Nancy Bales	Gray Family Foundation
Jim Martin	Retired, Pure Fishing Company
Brad Pettinger	Oregon Trawl Commission
Mike Herbel	Neskowin Store
Paul Donheffner	OR Hunters Association

The Governor appointed a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- Hunters and anglers
- Conservation groups
- Outdoor recreation business
- Tourism industry
- Outdoor education
- Diverse communities

Overarching Objectives



Expand Conservation Efforts



Improve Fishing and Hunting



Connect Oregonians with the Outdoors

Task Force Process

- Year of monthly meetings and work groups.
- Review of historic and projected funding for ODFW's programs and Secretary of State audits.
- Research on conservation funding in other jurisdictions.
- Statistically valid survey of 900 Oregonians to assess the public's perception of ODFW and relative satisfaction with current management of fish and wildlife.
- Determination of the necessary funding (revenue).
- Assessment of 100+ funding mechanisms according to specified evaluation criteria (e.g., sufficient, stable and flexible, politically feasible, etc.).
- Briefings with Governor's Office and Legislative committees
- Vetting proposals with stakeholder groups.



Funding Needed to Fully Implement ODFW's Mission

➤ **Expand conservation efforts (\$46.7 million / biennium)**

- Oregon Conservation Strategy/Nearshore Strategy
- Research, monitoring, and inventories of species and habitats to fill data gaps
- Improve data management, analysis, and distribution
- Restore ecosystems to resiliency
- Increase enforcement of wildlife laws to protect and conserve natural resources
- Establish conservation partnerships with landowners, agencies, industry, and others

➤ **Improve fishing/hunting opportunities and eliminate fee increases (\$22.3 million / biennium)**

- Reduce the need for license fee increases
- Target new funding and marketing to improve hunting and fishing opportunities
- Provide additional fishing opportunities for urban and underserved communities
- Improve research, monitoring, and management of game/non-game species
- Expand collaborative efforts to improve and restore habitat
- Expand enforcement, focusing on areas currently with limited enforcement presence

➤ **Connect Oregonians with the outdoors (\$8.3 million / biennium)**

- Expand conservation education with emphasis on urban areas and partnerships
- Develop wildlife viewing opportunities and facilities
- Develop new communication strategies to reach broader, more diverse audiences
- Increase volunteers and "citizen scientists"
- Expand marketing and outreach to increase participation in wildlife recreation
- Increase diversity in participation and the workforce

➤ **Deferred maintenance (\$9.6 million / biennium)**

- Respond to Secretary of State audit
- Adopt multi-biennial bonding approach
- Undertake additional assessment of funding needs
- Additional spending in rural communities

Total Funding Need = \$86.9 million

- 23% increase in current budget
- 15% increase in FTE
- Scalable

Funding Sources Selected for Legislative Consideration

➤ Oregon Income Tax Return Surcharge Rate of 0.62%

Applied to individual (non-corporate) tax returns.
Exemption for low income filers.

Annual cost to family of 4: \$50,000 = \$17.64;
\$75,000 = \$29.47; \$100,000 = \$42.08

➤ Wholesale Beverage Surcharge Rate of 2.19%

Applied to cost of beverages subject to the Bottle Bill;
not a beverage container deposit.

6 pack of soda = 7 cents;
6 pack of domestic beer = 11 cents;
6 pack of microbrew beer = 19 cents

More Than 100 Funding Options Considered

- Marijuana Tax
- Recreational Equipment Tax
- Beverage Container Surcharge
- Unredeemed Bottle Deposits
- Wildlife License Plate
- General Fund/Lottery Fund Allotments
- Income Tax Return Surcharge
- Agricultural Chemical Fee
- Wild Bird Seed Tax
- Recreational Vehicle Tag
- Real Estate Transfer Tax
- Rental Car Fee
- Lodging Fee
- Donations



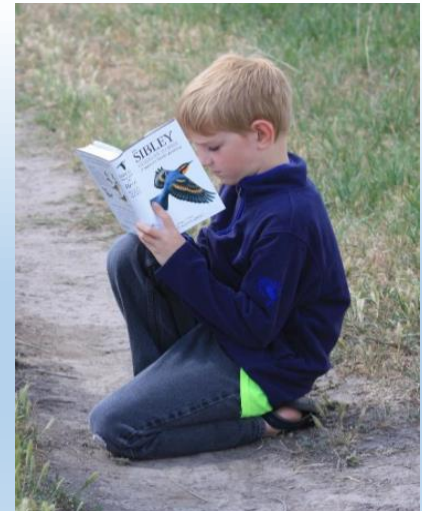
Summary of Task Force Recommendations

- Establish Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund dedicated to:
 - Expanded conservation efforts
 - Improved hunting and fishing opportunities
 - Connecting Oregonians with the outdoors
 - Deferred maintenance

- Dedicate a minimum of \$86.9 million/biennium in new revenues.

- Eliminate future license fee increases.

- Develop monitoring and reporting programs.



Legislative Action on Task Force Recommendations

- **House Bill 3270: Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund w/wholesale beverage tax.**
 - Establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund dedicated to purposes identified by Task Force.
 - Imposes 2.34% tax on sale of wholesale beverages in the state.
 - The bill remained in House Revenue Committee at end of 2017 session.
 - Note: Oregon Constitution requires three-fifths majority approval in House and Senate for revenue raising measures.

- **House Bill 2213: Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund w/general fund appropriation.**
 - Establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund dedicated to purposes identified by Task Force.
 - Creates Advisory Committee to advise Fish & Wildlife Commission on use of funds.
 - Allocates \$11 million in General Fund (potential to leverage federal funding).
 - Bill voted out of House Rules but remained in Ways & Means upon adjournment.
 - Strong bi-partisan support, but challenging fiscal situation.

To Be Continued in 2018...

Washington Wildlife Leaders Forum

Nov. 16-17, 2016



- 50 stakeholders: Public agencies, Governor's office, environmental/wildlife/recreation groups, tribes
- **Long term goal:** Improve stewardship, citizen participation, and funding for conservation and management of all of the State's fish and wildlife
- Speakers included experts from Washington and nationwide
- Forum produced **4 priority challenges:**
 - **Raising public awareness** of importance of conserving F/W
 - **Funding** wildlife and habitat programs
 - Building a **broad coalition** of multiple stakeholders
 - Building **trust** with the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

WWLF – Results

Governor Inslee requested a proviso for a **Wildlife Conservation Task Force** to develop recommendations for funding F/W conservation and connecting citizens and youth to the outdoors:

- Diverse stakeholder members
- Assess F/W conservation programs and funding
- Solicit input and information on regional priorities
- Make recommendations for transforming conservation programs to better engage public and partners
- Recommendations for long-term sustainable funding for conservation by all relevant agencies and entities
- Suggest ways to connect youth and public to outdoors
- Suggest ways to support businesses that “rely upon natural resources that provide our state’s high quality of life”

To Be Continued in 2018...



Questions?

