Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Douglas Woodcock, Acting Director

SUBJECT: Agenda Item E, November 16, 2023
Water Resources Commission

Water Project Grants and Loans Award Funding Recommendations

I. Introduction

This report describes the multi-agency Technical Review Team (TRT) evaluation process, public comments received, and the Department's funding recommendations for the 2023 Water Project Grants and Loans funding cycle. The Commission will be asked to award funding.

II. Integrated Water Resources Strategy Recommended Action

- 13.E - Invest in Implementation of Water Resources Projects

III. Background

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 839, establishing the Water Project Grants and Loans (WPGL) funding opportunity, which provides funding for water projects that have economic, social, and environmental public benefits. After adoption of rules in June 2015, the Commission has awarded grants each year (Table 1).

Table 1 - Number of Grants and Total Funds Awarded to Date

Year Awarded	Number of Grants	Total Awarded
2016	9	$8,891,118
2017	4	$6,282,232
2018	8	$6,297,755
2019	4	$2,471,120
2020	3	$4,800,000
2021	6	$7,617,440*
2022	3	$6,642,745
Total	**37**	**$43,002,410**

*The 2021 total includes an additional $68,064 that was awarded to the 2021 Fitzpatrick Conservation Project in 2022.

IV. 2023 Funding Cycle

The application deadline for the 2023 WPGL funding cycle was April 26, 2023. The Department received ten eligible and complete applications requesting a total of $28,987,945 in grant funding, with individual grant requests ranging from $252,177 to $5,075,000 (see Attachment 1). There is currently $13,956,563 in unobligated funds available for the Commission to award.

The Department solicited written comments on complete applications during a 60-day public comment period from May 26 through July 25, 2023. The Department received one public comment in support of Trout Unlimited's Sarthou South Fork Little Butte Irrigation Efficiency Project (see Attachment 2).

The Department contacted affected Tribes directly to solicit comments on complete applications where project work would be conducted on lands where the Tribe may have an interest. Affected Tribes were invited to serve as members of the TRT, submit comments for consideration by the TRT, or submit comments for consideration by the Department and Commission. The Department received no comments from Tribes on the applications.

V. Grant Application Review Process

TRT Review
A multi-agency TRT evaluated the applications and developed funding recommendations for the Commission. The TRT consisted of staff from the Departments of Environmental Quality, Fish and Wildlife, Business Development, Agriculture, and Water Resources, as well as the Oregon Health Authority. The TRT discussed the public benefits of each project, considered the public comments, and scored each application. Scoring was based on the potential economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits described in the applications, and the comments received. The TRT scored applications during the meeting and assessed the outcomes, which afforded the TRT members the opportunity to discuss the merits of the project proposals and ensure consistent application of the criteria. See Attachment 1 for the TRT project ranking, evaluation summaries, and funding recommendations. See Attachment 3 for applicable rules on public benefit scoring and Attachment 4 for the Department's Scoring Criteria document.

Public Comment
The TRT rankings and recommendations were published on the Department's website and distributed via the funding opportunity listserv for a 30-day public comment period, which took place from August 31 through October 2, 2023. The Department received four public comments in support of Tumalo Irrigation District's Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration – Group 6b project and one public comment in support of the Owyhee Irrigation District's Kingman Lateral First Mile Piping project (see Attachment 5). The Department also provided a second opportunity for Tribes to comment and received no comments.

Other Considerations
In the 2023 legislative session, North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) received a Direct Appropriation for $2,000,000 of General Funds for the "Infrastructure Modernization Project."

NUID confirmed this funding is for the same project that they submitted an application for WPGL funding *(North Unit Irrigation District Irrigation Modernization and Winter Flow Augmentation Project – Segment 1-2)*. NUID reduced their WPGL funding request from $5,075,000 to $3,075,000 because of the Direct Appropriation.

VI. 2023 Funding Award Recommendations

Based on the TRT ranking and available funding, the top five projects were recommended for funding by the TRT (see Attachment 1). Subsequent to the publication of the document, the Department received a request from NUID to reduce their funding request by $2,000,000. Based on this new information, public comments, and staff review, the Department recommends immediately funding project applications ranked one through six (Table 2). The top six ranked projects total $13,984,445 which is $27,882 more than the currently unobligated funds available. The Department proposes to obligate $27,882 of the $25 million of Lottery Revenue bonds scheduled to be sold in May 2024 for irrigation modernization projects. The $27,882 would be awarded to the Tumalo Irrigation District's Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration – Group 6b project, which is an irrigation modernization project that leverages federal match, as required by the statute that authorized the irrigation modernization funds (see Item B in the Director's Report for more information on these funds). This funding recommendation takes into account the public benefits provided by these applications, respects the planning efforts of the applicants, and mitigates impacts of project delays in a proactive manner.

Table 2 - 2023 Funding Recommendation

Project Name	*Project Type*	*Funding Request*	*Total Cost of Project*	*Funding Recommendation*
McKay Creek Water Rights Switch Project	Water Infrastructure, Flow Restoration & Protection	$4,063,000	$45,131,286	$4,063,000
Oanna & Yasui Sublateral Efficiency Project	Conservation, Water Infrastructure, Flow Restoration & Protection	$1,499,875	$3,800,000	$1,499,875
Arnold Irrigation District Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration Project - Phase 2	Conservation, Water Infrastructure, Flow Restoration & Protection	$2,903,667	$12,458,667	$2,903,667
North Unit Irrigation District Irrigation Modernization and Winter Flow Augmentation Project – Segment 1-2	Conservation, Water Infrastructure, Flow Restoration & Protection	$3,075,000*	$20,300,000	$3,075,000*
Sarthou South Fork Little Butte Cr Irrigation Efficiency Project	Conservation, Flow Restoration & Protection	$252,177	$315,238	$252,177
Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration – Group 6b	Conservation, Flow Restoration & Protection	$2,190,726	$5,465,625	$2,190,726
Total		**$13,984,445**	**$87,470,816**	**$13,984,445**

* Applicant reduced funding request due to Direct Appropriation received for the project.

VII. Summary

The funding recommendation includes the applications that demonstrated the greatest public benefits. As recommended, this would result in six grant awards totaling $13,984,445.

VIII. Alternatives

The Commission may consider the following alternatives:

1. Adopt the funding recommendation contained in Table 2 of this report to fund six applications for a total award of $13,984,445.
2. Adopt a modified funding recommendation.
3. Direct the Department to further evaluate the applications and return with a revised recommendation.

IX. Recommendation

The Acting Director recommends Alternative 1, to adopt the staff funding recommendations contained in Table 2 of this report to fund six applications for a total award of $13,984,445.

Attachments:

1. TRT Ranking and Funding Recommendation
2. Public Comments on Applications
3. Excerpt from Division 93 Rules on Scoring
4. Scoring Criteria Document
5. Public Comments on the TRT Funding Recommendation

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Water Project Grants and Loans Applications

Project Summaries – 2023 Funding Cycle

August 31, 2023

Background

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 839, establishing the Water Supply Development Account to provide grants and loans for water projects that have economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits. The 2023 application deadline was April 26, 2023. The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) received 10 complete applications requesting a total of $28,987,945 in grant funding.

Document Description

The following are evaluation summaries for complete grant applications received for the 2023 Water Project Grants and Loans funding cycle. The multi-agency Technical Review Team (TRT) provided comments on each application, scored applications based on the criteria identified within the Scoring Criteria document, and made a funding recommendation to the Water Resources Commission (Commission) based on that evaluation and available funds. The following evaluation summaries highlight TRT comments gathered by OWRD during the application evaluation process and are prepared for the Commission's consideration and review. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Grant Coordinator to request a review meeting and receive additional evaluation feedback. The evaluation summaries are listed in order of the TRT ranking.

The evaluation summary includes a combined public benefit score, which the TRT used to rank proposed projects. A table is also provided that shows a breakdown of the application score by category. An application could score up to 72 points in each of the economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefit categories. A proposed project could receive up to 24 additional preference points; up to 12 points for legally protecting water instream and up to 12 points for collaboration (these are listed in the "Other" category). There is a maximum public benefit score of 240 points.

Next Steps

OWRD is soliciting public comment on the TRT ranking and funding recommendation through 5:00 pm on October 2, 2023. Information on how to submit a public comment is available here. Public comments submitted on the TRT ranking and funding recommendation will be presented to the Commission who will make a funding decision. The tentative date for the Commission to make its funding decision is November 16-17, 2023.

More Information

If you have questions please contact the Grant Coordinator, Adair Muth, at 971-301-0718 or OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov.

2023 Applications

McKay Creek Water Rights Switch Project

TRT Recommendation: Recommended for Funding

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Ochoco Irrigation District & Deschutes River Conservancy

County: Crook

Funding Requested: $4,063,000 Grant

Total Project Cost: $45,131,286

Project Summary: The goal of the proposed project is to permanently protect the natural hydrograph of McKay Creek from river miles 6-12, providing more early summer streamflow for steelhead fry to transition to juveniles and migrate to suitable summer rearing habitats, lowering stream temperatures, and eliminating the need for diversion structures that create passage barriers for migrating fish. The project would construct a pump station, 6-mile pipeline, and associated District and on-farm infrastructure to deliver reliable irrigation water to 17 farms and ranches and approximately 685 acres adjacent to McKay Creek. As part of the project, irrigators along McKay Creek would trade their privately held water rights, sourced from McKay Creek, for water rights held by Ochoco Irrigation District, sourced from Prineville Reservoir. In exchange for reliable stored water, these irrigators would transfer 11.2 cfs of McKay Creek water rights instream. The project supports Crook County's agricultural economy and supports a long-term effort to restore the natural hydrograph in McKay Creek and benefit steelhead populations in the Crooked River and its tributaries.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 111.5

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
33	36.5	30	12

Economic: The proposed project would likely result in increased economic activity from construction for three years, while also increasing long-term irrigation reliability and agricultural viability in the region. The application provided clear information regarding the increase in productivity that would result from landowners receiving reliable water longer into the irrigation season. The project's innovative use of source switching, coupled with pressurized deliveries and on-farm efficiency upgrades would increase agricultural efficiencies in the system and potentially increase property values. The review team noted the ongoing and increased energy costs associated with water pumping.

Environmental: The project proposes to legally protect 100 percent of the transferred McKay Creek water rights instream, which would preserve critical flows to McKay Creek and help restore the natural hydrograph. The instream protection would result in increased resiliency to climate change impacts. The proposed project would also address the limiting factor of impaired fish passed by removing all diversions from the middle reach of McKay Creek. The review team noted that McKay Creek is a snowmelt-driven system that naturally goes dry in the late summer so the instream benefits would be limited to the natural ecological threshold that exists on McKay Creek.

Social/Cultural: The application described a high level of collaborative planning and the proposed project's role in supporting state, local, federal, and tribal priorities. In addition, the application clearly described how the proposed project would conduct extensive project monitoring and contribute to the body of data publicly available in the state.

Summary: The proposed project outcomes were evaluated as likely to achieve high economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits.

Oanna & Yasui Sublateral Efficiency Project

TRT Recommendation: Recommended for Funding

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: East Fork Irrigation District

County: Hood River

Funding Requested: $1,499,875 Grant

Total Project Cost: $3,800,000

Project Summary: The primary goals of the proposed project are to increase summer stream flows for threatened salmon and steelhead and increase long-term irrigation water reliability. These goals would be achieved by replacing 15,700 feet of non-pressure rated pipe (primarily wood and unreinforced concrete) and eight open concrete water boxes along the East Fork Irrigation District's Oanna and Yasui sublateral lines with 11,700 feet of HDPE pipe, three large pressure reducing stations, plus six smaller pressure reducing stations. The project would eliminate overflows at the existing water boxes that currently lose an estimated average of 2 cfs of flow, which would have a significant positive impact on spawning and rearing habitat availability for ESA-listed spring Chinook and winter steelhead. During drought years, having the ability to deliver water more efficiently would increase reliability and the resiliency of local agriculture to a changing climate. The project would legally protect a portion of the conserved water instream through the Oregon Water Resource Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 104

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
24	29.5	32.5	18

Economic: The proposed project would result in high economic benefits primarily resulting from reducing operating costs and increasing staff efficiencies. The project would also increase the reliability of irrigation for high value agriculture in the region and contribute to an overall strategy of improving critical habitat for steelhead and associated recreational and tribal fishing opportunities.

Environmental: The project proposes to legally protect 75 percent of the conserved water instream. The proposed project would eliminate overflows from the project's sublaterals, likely improving water quality through reduced temperature, turbidity, and contaminant loading. By improving water conservation and increasing instream flows, the proposed project would benefit ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts.

Social/Cultural: The application does an excellent job describing outreach to the local community, the work with local partners, and how the proposed project supports collaborative basin planning efforts, including the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The proposed project would benefit the local food system in the Hood River Valley and the associated recreational fruit picking. The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs offered support to the proposed project as important to the Tribe's Hood River fish habitat program through streamflow and water quality enhancements.

Summary: The proposed project is likely to achieve high economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits. The review team commended the collaboration that went into planning and engaging the community on this project.

Arnold Irrigation District Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration Project - Phase 2

TRT Recommendation: Recommended for Funding

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Arnold Irrigation District

County: Deschutes

Funding Requested: $2,903,667 Grant

Total Project Cost: $12,458,667

Project Summary: The proposed project would enclose over four miles (23,175 linear feet) of open canal into leak-free HDPE piping with the goal of restoring 12.6 cubic feet per second (cfs) of streamflow to the Deschutes Basin. The conserved water would be protected instream for the Deschutes Basin immediately after the construction concludes. Specifically, the conserved water would be legally protected instream from the Arnold diversion flowing to North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) through the Oregon Water Resource Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. The proposed project is part of a four-phase system improvement plan that will eventually restore and protect 32.5 cfs to the basin by enclosing the Arnold Main Canal into piping. The proposed project, phase 2, would improve conditions for native and ESA-listed species, improve public safety, and provide a resilient solution for water supply reliability in the Deschutes Basin.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 89

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
23	28	26	12

Economic: The proposed piping project would significantly enhance the district's infrastructure, resulting in substantial reductions in water seepage loss, reduced maintenance costs, reduced pumping costs, and increased water system efficiencies overall. The proposed project would also benefit agriculture viability in the region by providing conserved water to the junior water right holder, North Unit Irrigation District, through a legal agreement, although this benefit is not guaranteed in perpetuity.

Environmental: The proposed project would protect a significant volume of water instream during the non-irrigation season which would improve habitat conditions for native and ESA-listed species, including the Oregon spotted frog. The increased streamflow during the winter would provide for a more natural hydrograph, increase streamflow, and potentially improve water quality, which would result in increased ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts.

Social/Cultural: The application described how the proposed project would improve public safety by eliminating risks associated with open canals and preventing runoff contaminants from entering the water system. The application described how the proposed project aligns with various statewide initiatives and basin priorities, including the near-term goals of the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan and specific recommendations from the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The application would have been strengthened by adding information about strategies used to engage with Oregon's environmental justice communities.

Summary: Throughout the application current conditions and the anticipated public benefits were thoroughly described and detailed, which provided the review team with a clear understanding of the likely change in conditions. The proposed project outcomes were evaluated as likely to achieve high economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits.

North Unit Irrigation District Irrigation Modernization and Winter Flow Augmentation Project – Segment 1-2

TRT Recommendation: Recommended for Funding

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: North Unit Irrigation District

County: Deschutes

Funding Requested: $5,075,000 Grant

Total Project Cost: $20,300,000

Project Summary: The proposed project would enclose 34,040 linear feet (LF) of Lateral 43, a 113,167 LF open porous irrigation canal, into leak-free HDPE piping to conserve 5.3 cfs of water previously lost to seepage. One hundred percent of the conserved water would be legally protected instream through the Oregon Water Resource Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. The water conservation achieved by this project would (1) eliminate water delivery and operations inefficiencies; (2) improve water quality; (3) improve and stabilize agricultural production through water supply reliability; (4) improve conditions for ESA-listed species including the Oregon spotted frog.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 87

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
22.5	26.5	26	12

Economic: The proposed project would improve the irrigation district's infrastructure and result in a more efficient water delivery system that would reduce seepage loss. The application described how the proposed project would provide more reliable irrigation water for the district's patrons, which would slow the trend of needing to leave fallow high-value agricultural land.

Environmental: The proposed project would legally protect 100 percent of the conserved water in the Deschutes River during the winter months, supporting the natural hydrograph and benefiting native and listed species, including the Oregon spotted frog. The increased winter streamflow would improve habitat conditions and result in increased ecosystem resiliency to drought and climate change impacts.

Social/Cultural: The application described the potential benefits to the local agricultural food system and how the proposed project would improve public safety by eliminating risks associated with open canals. The proposed project would promote priorities identified by local collaborative groups working on water management in the basin. The application described how the project directly correlates to recommended actions in the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy and supports the actions in the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan.

Summary: The application provided sufficient information to demonstrate the likelihood of the proposed project achieving high economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits. The application would have been strengthened if it had included letters of support.

Sarthou South Fork Little Butte Creek Irrigation Efficiency Project

TRT Recommendation: Recommended for Funding

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Trout Unlimited

County: Jackson

Funding Requested: $252,177 Grant

Total Project Cost: $315,238

Project Summary: The proposed project would improve irrigation efficiency by upgrading irrigation methods from flood-irrigation to a combination of center-pivot, wheel-lines, and k-pods on 34.7 acres and eliminating 2.26 miles of unlined irrigation ditch by moving the point of diversion 0.9 miles downstream and installing a pump system. The project would improve cattle production by 25% and hay production by 50% while enhancing instream flows for ESA-listed Coho Salmon and other native fishes and supporting recovery actions identified in NOAA's Final Recovery Plan for Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Coho Salmon. The project would legally protect 100% of the conserved water instream (approximately 0.164 cfs, 27% of the current water right certificates) in South Fork Little Butte Creek through the Oregon Water Resource Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program. The goal of the project is to improve irrigation efficiency and production for the irrigators by upgrading irrigation system infrastructure while supporting streamflow restoration through permanently dedicating 100% of the conserved water instream for the benefit of native fishes.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 85

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
21.5	28	23.5	12

Economic: The proposed project would enhance irrigation efficiency by switching from flood to sprinkler irrigation. The proposed project would enhance the farmland resource through the expected increase in production values of the land. The application described the proposed project's importance to a larger strategy to increase abundance and angler success of ESA-listed fish species on the mainstem Rogue River, which have important cultural, recreational, and commercial values.

Environmental: The project proposes to legally protect 100 percent of the conserved water instream which would increase critically low summer flows in the South Fork Little Butte Creek. The application described how an increase in flow and the elimination of flood irrigation runoff would benefit water quality parameters including temperature and sedimentation. The application clearly explained the likely benefits to multiple limiting ecological factors including streamflow, temperature, and habitat quantity and quality.

Social/Cultural: The proposed project would support local food systems through increased hay and cattle production. The application described how the proposed project would likely provide benefits to drinking water in the Medford area by improving the water quality in South Fork Little Butte Creek. The application described a high level of collaborative planning in the basin and the proposed project's role in supporting state and local priorities.

Summary: The application provided information to substantiate a high standard of economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The review team noted the high level of collaboration occurring in this region.

Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration - Group 6b

TRT Recommendation: Not Recommended for Funding at this time

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Tumalo Irrigation District

County: Deschutes

Funding Requested: $2,190,726 Grant

Total Project Cost: $5,465,625

Project Summary: The proposed project would restore 1.1 cfs of water to Tumalo Creek during the irrigation season and Crescent Creek in the winter by enclosing 11,261 linear feet of open canal and laterals. Approximately 0.85 cfs of the conserved water would be legally protected instream through the Oregon Water Resource Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program and would result in improved temperature conditions and water quantity for ESA-listed species and native fish and wildlife. The proposed project encloses a portion of the open canal referred to as the Columbia Southern Canal. The pipe follows the existing canal alignment and would be installed in a compacted trench with 3 feet of cover to protect from freezing and damage. The surface would be restored with soil and seeding where appropriate.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 71

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
18	24	20	9

Economic: The application described how the proposed project would create efficiencies in water delivery by piping open canals, reduce energy consumption by decreasing pumping costs, and enhance the district's infrastructure. The proposed project would deliver pressurized water to the district's customers which would enhance farmland and potentially increase property values.

Environmental: The project proposes to legally protect 77 percent of the conserved water instream. The application described how increased summer flows in Tumalo Creek would provide important cold water to the Deschutes River in the summer months when temperature affects fish survival. Stream flow is a limiting ecological factor in the Upper Deschutes Subbasin and the proposed project would result in improvements to stream flow.

Social/Cultural: The proposed project is aligned with collaborative planning efforts in the basin and supports state and local priorities, including Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The application described how the proposed project would improve public safety by eliminating risks associated with open canals in highly used recreation areas. The proposed project would also contribute to preventing runoff contaminants from entering the water system.

Summary: The application provided information to demonstrate moderate to high economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits that would result from this project. The review team noted the application would have been improved with updated letters of support.

Mission Area Wastewater Treatment and Reuse

TRT Recommendation: Not Recommended for Funding at this time

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

County: Umatilla

Funding Requested: $5,000,000 Grant

Total Project Cost: $41,250,000

Project Summary: The goal of the proposed project is to create an innovative and tribally sovereign wastewater reuse system that reduces withdrawal from the regional aquifer for irrigation purposes. This would be achieved by creating four wetland/storage pond structures to store recycled water for reuse. This recycled water would be used for the irrigation of the Wildhorse Resort and Casino's landscaping/golf course instead of using potable water withdrawn from the regional aquifer. Wildhorse Golf Course consumes approximately 300 acre-feet (ac-ft) of water annually, which is approximately 30 percent of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's total permitted consumptive use allowance. This proposed project would achieve this goal by allowing the capture of approximately 300 ac-ft of recycled water annually for reuse on the golf course and other landscaping areas, significantly reducing water withdrawn from the regional aquifer for irrigation purposes.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 55

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
22.5	11.5	18	3

Economic: The proposed project would create two permanent full-time operations jobs along with temporary construction-related jobs. The application provided a clear description of how the proposed project would accommodate future economic growth. The proposed project would result in significant enhancement of the Tribe's infrastructure. The application described an innovative wastewater treatment and reuse water conveyance system that would use water more efficiently and effectively.

Environmental: The application described how the proposed project would result in water conservation through the reuse of recycled water rather than groundwater to irrigate community and governmental facilities. The application would have been strengthened by clarifying if the claimed reduction in groundwater use would be permanent or if the groundwater would be used in the future for other uses. The proposed addition of wetland habitat would likely improve ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts for migratory birds and resident species.

Social/Cultural: The application described how the proposed project would improve the living conditions and health of the Tribal community by improving water supply reliability and accommodating future economic growth. The proposed project would also contribute to recreation and scenic values through the addition of wetland ponds and public walking trails. The application would have benefited from more details regarding the project's public outreach activities and how the proposed project aligns with collaborative basin planning efforts.

Summary: The application provided sufficient information to demonstrate the likelihood of the proposed project achieving a high standard of economic public benefits. The review team anticipates moderate environmental and social/cultural benefits resulting from the proposed project.

Well 10 Drilling and Construction

TRT Recommendation: Not Recommended for Funding at this time

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: City of Milton-Freewater

County: Umatilla

Funding Requested: $950,000 Grant

Total Project Cost: $2,655,000

Project Summary: The proposed project would drill a new approximately 1,200-foot-deep municipal water supply well, replacing a recently retired well, for the City of Milton-Freewater in the Walla Walla Subbasin in Umatilla County. The project would improve municipal supply for the City by directly filling the highest pressure zone, replacing an old open-borehole well with new sealed well which will protect the basalt aquifer and help ensure high quality drinking water for the City. The new well would help the City continue to utilize the basalt aquifer system instead of relying upon the over-allocated Walla Walla River during low-flow periods and provide high quality drinking water to over 7,100 users.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 42

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
18	4	17	3

Economic: The application described how the proposed project would result in increased economic activity by providing a necessary water source to support additional development in the area, including proposed housing and business park development projects. The proposed project would result in a significant enhancement of the City's infrastructure and the application described the increase in efficiency that would result from reduced pumping needs.

Environmental: The proposed project would create a potential improvement in the quality of groundwater by helping to prevent potential contamination of the aquifer. The application described potential improvements to groundwater levels if the City implements aquifer storage and recovery in the future, however, proposed projects cannot receive points for future plans. The project is anticipated to result in greater groundwater use, and the review team also commented that the application could be improved by considering the potential for water conservation measures.

Social/Cultural: The proposed project would promote public health in an economically distressed community by protecting and maintaining a high-quality water source for the City's drinking water system and increasing the ability of the water system to provide emergency and fire-flow water storage. The proposed project would contribute to the body of scientific data by creating a new well monitoring opportunity in the region. The application states the City has been involved in the Walla Walla Water 2050 planning process, but the application would have been strengthened by clearly describing how this project promotes state or local priorities.

Summary: The application provided sufficient information to support the likelihood of moderate economic and social/cultural benefits being achieved as a result of the proposed project. The review team's evaluation assessed minor environmental public benefits resulting from the proposed project. To be funded, projects must achieve a minimum score of seven in each category indicating public benefits beyond those of a minor quality would be achieved.

Water Resiliency Phase 3a - Highway 101 Backbone

TRT Recommendation: Not Recommended for Funding at this time

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: City of Cannon Beach

County: Clatsop

Funding Requested: $5,053,500 Grant

Total Project Cost: $6,738,000

Project Summary: The proposed project would culminate a multiphasic resiliency project through the construction of a redundant water transmission line ("backbone") along US Highway 101 in Cannon Beach, in the West Fork Elk Creek water basin. This backbone, when combined with the isolation valves and the more resilient water reservoir constructed during earlier phases of this Water Resiliency project, would mitigate seismic damage, and accelerate recovery of the City's water service after seismic events. The proposed project includes a north section, which would provide water transmission to the north side of the city, and a south section, which would serve the south side of the city and connect to the Tolovana Reservoir. The water transmission lines would be constructed using HDPE pipe, and isolation valves, which were installed during Phase 1, would confine ruptures and minimize interruptions.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 40.5

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown			
Economic	**Environmental**	**Social/Cultural**	**Other**
17	3	17.5	3

Economic: The application provided a clear understanding of the economic value of the proposed project's ability to provide a reliable water supply in the case of a catastrophic event. The application described increases in water use efficiency that would result from the proposed project through leak reduction and system modernization. The proposed project would provide a significant enhancement of the City's infrastructure. As described in the application, job retention and other economic benefits would largely be realized following a seismic event, which are more difficult to quantify.

Environmental: The proposed project would likely have a low to moderate increase to ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts by reducing impacts to the Ecola Creek watershed. The application would have been improved by providing information to support claims of water conservation and improvements to groundwater levels.

Social/Cultural: The proposed project provides significant benefit to public health and safety by providing a reliable drinking water source in the case of a catastrophic event. The application provided a clear description of how the proposed project would promote recommended actions in Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy, and help the City meet a goal of the state's 2013 Oregon Resilience Plan.

Summary: The application provided sufficient information to support the likelihood of moderate overall economic and social/cultural benefits being achieved as a result of the proposed project. However, the review team assessed minor environmental benefits resulting from the proposed project. To be funded, projects must achieve a minimum score of seven in each category indicating public benefits beyond those of a minor quality would be achieved.

Kingman Lateral First Mile Piping

TRT Recommendation: Not Recommended for Funding at this time

Project Information (adapted from application)

Applicant Name: Owyhee Irrigation District

County: Malheur

Funding Requested: $2,000,000 Grant

Total Project Cost: $5,100,000

Project Summary: The proposed project would pipe at least the first 5,900 feet of the King Lateral canal from the head gates to the tunnel of the canal. The Kingman Lateral has a 130 cfs maximum canal flow and the canal losses are approximately 10 cfs in the first five miles. The proposed project would focus on the first segment of the canal because of slope instability in this area and much of the water losses are associated with this segment of the canal. The goals of the project are to conclusively address water loss, address water quality concerns, and maintain deliveries to agricultural producers. Proposed activities include final design, piping 5,900 feet of canal, and installing a new headworks structure.

Technical Review Team Score and Comments

Combined Public Benefit Score: 33

Public Benefit Category Score Breakdown

Economic	Environmental	Social/Cultural	Other
12	10	10	1

Economic: The proposed project would improve the irrigation district's infrastructure and protect against catastrophic canal failure. The proposed project would also result in a more efficient water delivery system that would reduce seepage loss. The application would have been improved with more detail and quantification to describe current conditions and the how the proposed project is likely to achieve economic benefits.

Environmental: The proposed project would potentially improve water quality by decreasing erosion and sedimentation. The proposed project would also provide a moderate increase for ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts by providing additional water for late season reservoir releases. The application would have been improved with more detail and quantification to describe current conditions and the how the proposed project is likely to achieve environmental benefits.

Social/Cultural: The proposed project would promote safety of local food systems by protecting the water source for agricultural in a community that is identified as overburdened and underserved. The proposed project aligns with state priorities for maintaining the cold-water fishery downstream of the Owyhee Dam, but the application would have been strengthened with a description of how the project aligns with other state and local priorities. The application would have been improved with more detail and quantification to describe current conditions and how the proposed project is likely to achieve social/cultural benefits.

Summary: The review team determined the proposed project would likely achieve moderate economic, environmental, and social/cultural benefits. The review team observed that in general, the application lacked details and supporting documentation to explain how the claimed benefits would be achieved as a result of the project.

July 25, 2023

Technical Review Team % Adair Muth
Grant Coordinator, Water Projects Grants and Loans Program
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Sarthou South Fork Little Butte Creek Irrigation Efficiency Project Funding Application

Dear Technical Review Team,

On behalf of Wild Salmon Center, I am pleased to offer public comment in support of Trout Unlimited's application for $252,177 in grant funding for the Sarthou South Fork Little Butte Creek Irrigation Efficiency Project ("Sarthou Project").

Wild Salmon Center is an international nonprofit headquartered in Oregon that has worked with local partners since 1992 to protect and restore the strongest remaining runs of Wild Pacific Salmon. We use science to drive policy, lead planning processes, and support implementation, and we know that the health of our water resources is directly linked to the recovery of our iconic wild fish and the vitality of our communities and economy. Low streamflows and high water temperatures are stressing even our healthiest salmon runs, and these problems are worsening due to climate change and increased human demand for water. These challenges are felt acutely in southern Oregon, where the survival of irrigated agriculture and wild salmon depends on the same dwindling water supplies.

Trout Unlimited has a proven track record of developing and implementing streamflow restoration projects that generate benefits both for fish and farms, and the Sarthou Project is no exception. This project will increase irrigation efficiency, cattle production, and hay production, while at the same time permanently protecting the saved water instream for SONCC Coho Salmon and other native fish through Oregon's Allocation of Conserved Water (ACW) Program. In addition to these direct benefits, the project will showcase a variety of water conservation approaches and may lead to the development of projects with other agricultural landowners in the vicinity.

The Sarthou Project exemplifies the triple-bottom-line benefits the Water Supply Development Account was created to support, and Wild Salmon Center urges your recommendation to the Water Resources Commission to approve grant funding at the full amount requested.

Best regards,

Caylin Barter
Senior Manager
Oregon Water Policy Program

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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info@wildsalmoncenter.org • www.wildsalmoncenter.org

Excerpt from Division 93 Rules on Scoring
Water Project Grants and Loans

OAR 690-093-0090

Scoring and Ranking; funding decisions

(1) The primary elements in the process of scoring and ranking of applications include the following:
- (a) Initial review for completeness by the Department;
- (b) Public comment;
- (c) The Technical Review Team conducts the initial scoring and ranking for the projects, considers comments from applicants and the public and makes loan and grant funding recommendations to the Commission; and
- (d) The Commission determines the final scoring and ranking of projects, provides for additional public comment, and makes the final decision regarding which projects are awarded loans or grants from the account.

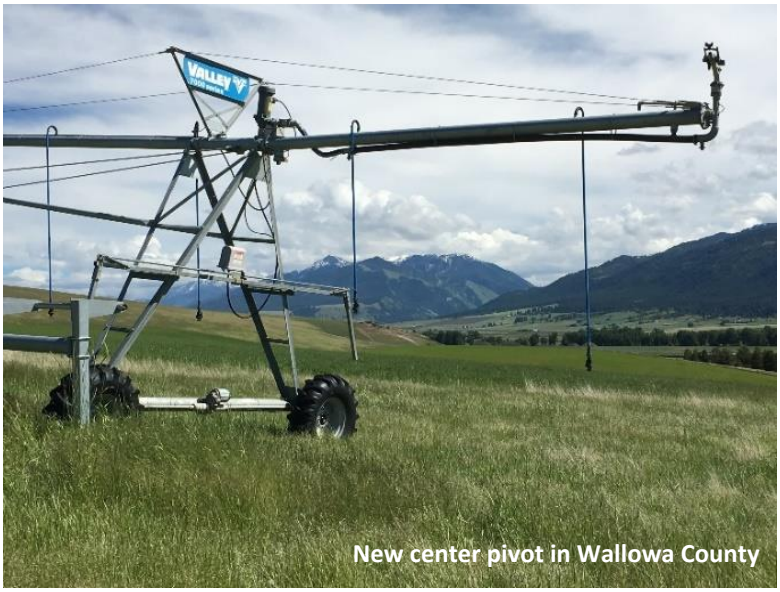
(2) The Technical Review Team scoring methodology shall rank applications based upon the public benefits of the project and additional considerations set forth in ORS 541.677 subsection (1)(b), (1)(d) and (1)(e). The Technical Review Team shall use a score sheet provided by the Department. Each of the three public benefit categories shall be given equal importance in the evaluation and will have scoring sublevels including but not limited to the following:
- (a) The evaluation of economic benefits for a project based on the changes in economic conditions expected to result from the project related to:
  - (A) Job creation or retention;
  - (B) Increases in economic activity;
  - (C) Increases in efficiency or innovation;
  - (D) Enhancement of infrastructure, farmland, public resource lands, industrial lands, commercial lands or lands having other key uses;
  - (E) Enhanced economic value associated with tourism or recreational or commercial fishing, with fisheries involving native fish of cultural significance to Indian tribes or with other economic values resulting from restoring or protecting water in-stream; and
  - (F) Increases in irrigated land for agriculture.
- (b) The evaluation of environmental benefits for a project based on the changes in environmental conditions expected to result from the project related to:
  - (A) A measurable improvement in protected streamflows that:
    - (i) Supports the natural hydrograph;
    - (ii) Improves floodplain function;
    - (iii) Supports state or federally listed sensitive, threatened or endangered fish species;
    - (iv) Supports native fish species of cultural importance to Indian tribes; or
    - (v) Supports riparian habitat important for wildlife;
  - (B) A measurable improvement in groundwater levels that enhances environmental conditions in groundwater restricted areas or other areas;
  - (C) A measurable improvement in the quality of surface water or groundwater;
  - (D) Water conservation;
  - (E) Increased ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts; and
  - (F) Improvements that address one or more limiting ecological factors in the project watershed.
- (c) The evaluation of the social or cultural benefits for a project based on the changes in social or cultural conditions expected to result from the project related to:
  - (A) The promotion of public health and safety and of local food systems;
  - (B) A measurable improvement in conditions for members of minority or low-income communities, economically distressed rural communities, tribal communities or other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes;
  - (C) The promotion of recreation and scenic values;

(D) Contribution to the body of scientific data publicly available in this state;
(E) The promotion of state or local priorities, including but not limited to the restoration and protection of native fish species of cultural significance to Indian tribes; and
(F) The promotion of collaborative basin planning efforts, including but not limited to efforts under the state Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

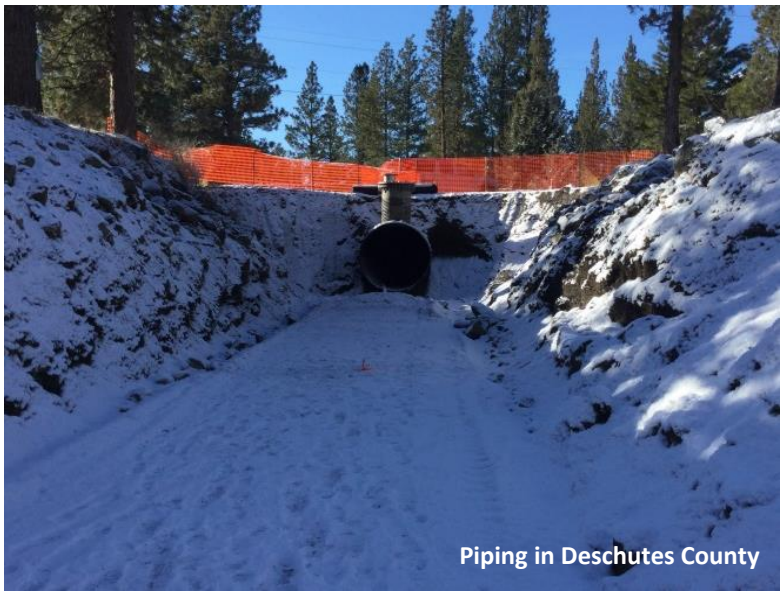
(3) Scoring sublevels shall have a numeric point scale that accounts for positive and negative effects of the project. Sublevel scores shall be summed to a public benefit category level. The Department shall set a minimum score for the application to proceed.
(4) The Technical Review Team will use the total score from the score sheet provided by the Department to rank all applications and make loan and grant funding recommendations to the Commission.
(5) The Commission shall determine the final scoring and ranking of projects and make the final decision regarding which projects are awarded loans or grants from the account based on criteria in OAR 690-093-0100.
(6) The Department shall document the ranking of all applications and make the application ranking publicly available after the funding decisions by the Commission have been published.

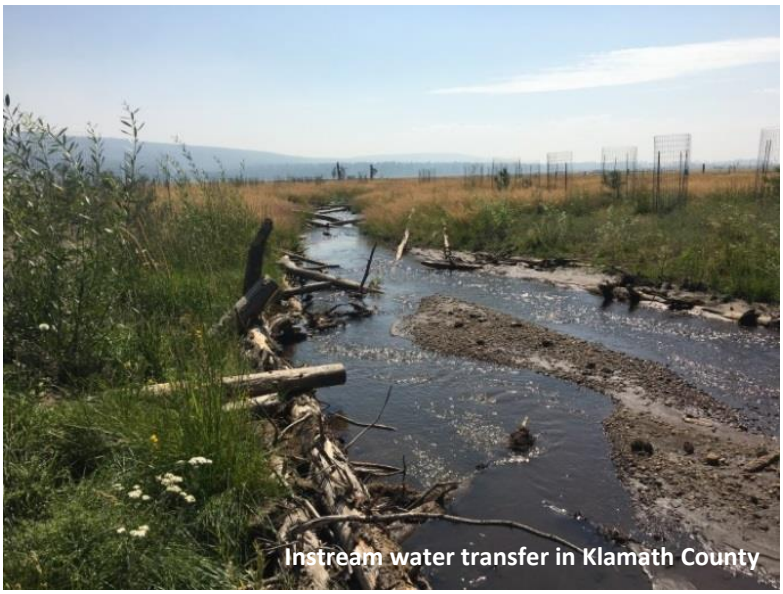
WATER PROJECT GRANTS AND LOANS

SCORING CRITERIA



New center pivot in Wallowa County


Piping in Deschutes County


Instream water transfer in Klamath County

OREGON
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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Scoring Criteria – Water Project Grants and Loans

Document Purpose

The scoring criteria for applications to the Water Projects Grants and Loans funding opportunity are based solely on the public benefits a project is likely to achieve. This document provides an overview of each of the public benefits, describes how the Technical Review Team (TRT) will score the public benefits, and provides recommendations for what information an application should include.

Overview of Application Scoring

Projects funded are those which are likely to achieve the greatest public benefits.

Projects funded are those which are likely to achieve the greatest public benefits. The change in conditions anticipated to result in public benefits must be described and explained in the project application. When evaluating an application, the TRT examines public benefits in three categories: economic, environmental, and social/cultural. To be funded, projects must achieve a minimum score of seven in each category. As discussed below, this is a competitive funding opportunity where projects are ranked according to public benefits, therefore achieving a minimum score does not guarantee funding.

When applicants describe the project's public benefits in their application, they should include a description of the conditions prior to and following project implementation, and clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project is expected to result in a change in conditions that will provide a public benefit. When possible, applicants should quantify the project's public benefits. The TRT will only consider public benefits derived from the tasks and project scope contained within the application and the likelihood of achieving those benefits. Public benefits related to future phases (beyond the scope of the proposed project) or unrelated activities will not be scored and should not be included in the application. Likewise public benefits related to past activities will not be considered.

Each category contains six specific public benefits for a total of 18 possible public benefits. The project must provide some benefit in each of the three categories in order to be eligible for funding. Each of the three public benefit categories is given equal importance in the evaluation. Projects do not need to score in all six benefits within a category but must provide benefit in each of the three categories.

Overview of Application Review Process

After receiving an application, the Oregon Water Resources Department reviews the application to ensure it is complete. Complete applications are posted online for a 60-day public comment period. Next, the TRT, a panel of inter-agency representatives, evaluates the applications based on the economic, environmental and social/cultural public benefits the project would achieve, and reviews the public comments. The TRT develops a project ranking and funding recommendation, which is posted for a 30-day public comment period. Finally, the Department presents the ranking, public comments, and funding recommendation to the Water Resources Commission for a funding decision. Loans will undergo an additional separate financial review.

When making a funding decision, the Water Resources Commission (Commission) considers: 1) the public benefits as evaluated by the TRT; 2) public comments received on the TRT ranking; and 3) funding projects of diverse sizes, types and geographic locations. As outlined in statute, the Commission also considers three preferences: 1) a preference for partnerships and collaborative projects; 2) a preference for projects that provide a measurable improvement in protected streamflow, if a project proposes to divert water; and 3) a

preference for projects that provide a measurable increased efficiency of water use, if a project proposes to increase efficiency.

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact us at OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov or at 971-301-0718.

Scale Used in Evaluation of Public Benefits

Each of the public benefits will be scored according to the scale described below.

Exceptional public benefit: 12 points (pts)

- The project is likely to achieve benefits of an exceptionally high standard or quality.
- The outcomes are very significant, measurable, and represent a key or critical advancement.
- The application includes supporting information and evidence describing the anticipated change in conditions as a result of the project.
- The application includes all necessary information to document a high likelihood of success to achieve the public benefit.

High public benefit: 6 points

- The project is likely to achieve public benefits meeting a high standard of quality.
- The outcomes are significant or represent an important advancement.
- The application includes supporting information and evidence describing the anticipated change in conditions as a result of the project.
- The application includes sufficient information to achieve the anticipated public benefit.

Medium public benefit: 3 points

- The project is likely to achieve moderate public benefit.
- The outcomes are likely to achieve an improvement in conditions.
- The application includes supporting information and evidence describing the anticipated change in conditions as a result of the project.

Minor public benefit: 1 point

- The project may achieve minor public benefits.
- The claims of public benefits are unsupported or unquantified.

No benefit: 0 points

- The project is not likely to achieve a public benefit.
- No positive or negative impact related to the public benefit. No change.

Minor negative impact or detriment: -1 point

- The project may have a minor negative effect or impact to this category.

Medium negative impact or detriment: -3 points

- The project is likely to cause moderate harm and have a negative impact to this category.

Category 1. Economic benefits

The evaluation of economic benefits of a project is based on the change in economic conditions expected to result from the project as demonstrated in the application.

1a. Does the project create or retain jobs?

Job creation means the project would result in new jobs. Retention means the project would prevent the loss of jobs. Job creation and retention benefits may include direct effects within the organization that owns or operates the project, or it may include indirect effects on retail customers or consumers of the project. Temporary jobs resulting from the project will not receive as high of a score as permanent jobs.

Application tip*: Quantify the number and identify the type of jobs to be created or retained as a result of the project. Describe the value of the increase or retention of jobs to the local economy.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* increases in the creation or retention of permanent jobs which provide key or critical benefit in the geographic area or employment sector
High: 6 pts	Increases in the creation or retention of permanent jobs which provide an important benefit in the geographic area or employment sector
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* increase in the creation or retention of permanent jobs, or seasonal jobs important to the geographic area or employment sector
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* increase in jobs, temporary jobs, or job retention, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	The project is not likely to achieve new jobs or impact job retention
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential for *minor job losses*
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate* job losses or a decrease in jobs is likely

1b. Does the project increase economic activity?

Economic activity is associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Such economic activity could occur within one or more entities/businesses and includes an increase in production, gross sales, or net revenue compared to the year preceding project completion. It also includes but is not limited to the arrival of new firms, renewed contracts, and increased orders.

Application tip: *Include information citing economic development plans or other economic activity which would be made possible or supported by the proposed project. If the proposed project protects or maintains current economic activity, demonstrate the degree to which economic activity would decline if the proposed project were not completed and why.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional (five or more years)* increase in long-term economic activity of vital, or key importance are likely to occur
High: 6 pts	Increases in long-term economic activity with the potential to support future activity important to the area/sector
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* (*one to four years)* increase in economic activity
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor, short-term (less than one year)* increase in economic activity, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Increased economic activity *not likely* to occur
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential for *minor losses or decreases* in economic activity
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate losses or decreases* in economic activity are likely

1c. Does the project increase efficiency or innovation?

Increase in efficiency means the project would make improvements in performance or functionality resulting in less effort or waste. Increase in innovation means that new, creative solutions and ideas would be implemented. Examples of increases in efficiency and innovation include water system efficiencies such as system redundancy (back-up, inter-ties), eliminating leakage, innovative production techniques, energy savings (e.g., the energy required to move, treat, or heat water), and time savings.

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* increase in efficiency and innovation
High: 6 pts	*High* Increases in efficiency or innovation
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* increases in performance
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* increases *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Increased efficiency or innovation not likely
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential for *minor decreases* in efficiency or innovation
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate decreases* in efficiency or innovation are likely

1d. Does the project enhance infrastructure, farmland, public resource lands, industrial lands, commercial lands or lands having other key uses?

Enhancement of infrastructure, including municipal infrastructure, farmland, public resource lands, industrial lands, commercial lands and other lands means that the value, effectiveness, or reliability of such infrastructure or lands would increase as a result of project implementation. This includes an increase in the re-sale or rental value of the land or improvements, including: maintained, repaired, or upgraded infrastructure; maintained or buffered riparian areas; and maintained or improved soils.

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* enhancements of infrastructure or land
High: 6 pts	*High* quality of enhancements to infrastructure or land
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* enhancements
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* enhancements, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Enhancements *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential that infrastructure or lands will be *degraded or removed* from productive uses (minor negative change)
Medium detriment:-3 pts	Infrastructure or lands that are *degraded or removed* from productive uses (moderate negative change)

1e. Does the project enhance the economic value associated with: tourism, recreation, fishing (recreational or commercial), fisheries involving native fish of cultural significance to Indian tribes, or other economic values resulting from restoring or protecting water instream?

Examples of enhancement of these economic values include increases in: daily park fees, tour guide revenues, boat or gear rentals, fishing licenses, or hospitality and lodging.

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* increased value of tourism, recreation, fishing, fisheries involving native fish of cultural significance to Indian tribes, or other economic values resulting from restoring or protecting water instream are likely
High: 6 pts	A *high* quality of increased value is likely
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* increased value
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* increased value, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Enhanced values *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential for *minor decrease*s in the economic value of tourism, recreation, fishing, fisheries involving native fish of cultural significance to Indian tribes, or other economic values resulting from restoring or protecting water instream
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate decreases* in the economic value of tourism, recreation, fishing, fisheries involving native fish of cultural significance to Indian tribes, or other economic values resulting from restoring or protecting water instream

1f. Does the project result in increases in irrigated land for agriculture? (which may include increasing irrigated acres, agricultural economic value, or productivity of irrigated land)

Increases in irrigated land for agriculture mean that the numbers of acres (acreage) to be irrigated after project completion would be greater than what could previously be irrigated, or that the agricultural economic value or productivity of current irrigated land would increase. Acreage can include lands that were never historically in production or lands that were historically in production but were taken out of production as a result of insufficient water supply.

Application tip: *Highlight the amount of land currently in production in the area, identify the quantity of additional acreage to be irrigated, and calculate the percentage increase in irrigated acreage that would result from the project. Cite scientific articles, reports, or studies and estimate the percentage increase in irrigated crop's economic value or productivity.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional increase* in irrigated acreage, or agricultural economic value or productivity
High: 6 pts	*High* increase in irrigated acreage, or agricultural economic value or productivity
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* increase in irrigated acreage or agricultural economic value or productivity
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* increase, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Increased irrigated land or increased value or productivity *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential for *minor decreases* in agricultural economic value or productivity or irrigated land for agriculture
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate decreases* irrigated land for agriculture or agricultural economic value or productivity are likely

Category 2. Environmental benefits

The evaluation of the environmental benefits of a project is based on the change in environmental conditions expected to result from the project as demonstrated in the application.

2a. Does the project result in measurable improvements in protected streamflows?

Protected streamflow means water that remains in or is released into the natural channel ***and*** is legally protected by the State in order to achieve one or more of the following:

(A) Supports the natural hydrograph;
(B) Improves floodplain function;
(C) Supports state- or federally-listed sensitive, threatened or endangered fish species;
(D) Supports native fish species of cultural importance to Indian tribes; **or**
(E) Supports riparian habitat important for wildlife.

Application tip: *To score in this category an application **must** describe the legal means by which water would be protected by the State, as well as the quality, timing, duration, or other value this streamflow would contribute. The application must also describe how the legally protected water will achieve (A) through (E) listed above (e.g., how water transferred instream through the Allocation of Conserved Water will support, enhance, or improve riparian habitat for wildlife and the extent to which that water will achieve that benefit).*

Identifying which water rights will be protected instream will provide clarifying information for the evaluation.

Exceptional: 12 pts	Project water (or equivalent volume) is legally protected instream by the State and streamflow supports *exceptional* achievement **in each criteria** (A) through (E)
High: 6 pts	Project water (or equivalent volume) is legally protected instream by the State and streamflow supports achievements of a *high quality* in a combination of criteria (A) through (E)
Medium: 3 pts	Project water (or equivalent volume) is legally protected instream by the State and streamflow supports *moderate* achievement in a combination of (A) through (E)
Minor: 1 pt	Project water (or equivalent volume) is legally protected instream by the State and streamflow supports *minor* achievement in a combination of (A) through (E), *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Improvements in protected streamflow *unlikely, OR streamflow would not be legally protected by the State*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential *minor decreases* to protected streamflow
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate decreases* protected streamflow (e.g., proposes to reverse an instream lease)

2b. Does the project result in water conservation?

Water conservation is reducing water use to achieve the same outcomes by modifying the technology or method of diverting, transporting, applying, or recovering water.

Application tip: *Identify the quantity of water reduction, by comparing what water would be needed to accomplish the task after project completion with what was previously used to achieve the same task.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*40 percent or more* reduction in water use to achieve the same outcomes
High: 6 pts	*21-40 percent* reduction in water use to achieve the same outcomes
Medium: 3 pts	*11-20 percent* reduction
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor (<10 percent)* reduction, *OR* claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Water conservation *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	*Potential for additional water used* to achieve the same outcomes (e.g., sacrificing water efficiency for energy/pumping efficiency)
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Additional water used* to achieve the same outcomes (e.g., sacrificing water efficiency for energy/pumping efficiency)

2c. Does the project result in measurable improvements in groundwater levels that enhance environmental conditions in groundwater restricted areas or other areas?

Measurable improvements in groundwater levels mean that groundwater declines would be reduced or eliminated and/or groundwater levels would increase. Stabilization or improvements in groundwater levels could come from aquifer storage and recovery, artificial recharge projects, natural recharge, or discontinued / reduced groundwater use.

Application tip: *Cite and use quantitative measurements to indicate current levels, and method and frequency that improvements would be measured. If applicable, indicate if these improvements would occur in a groundwater restricted area.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* improvements in groundwater levels
High: 6 pts	*High* quality of improvements
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* improvements
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* improvement to groundwater levels, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Improved groundwater levels *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	*Potential for minor groundwater declines*
Medium detriment: -3 pts	Moderate groundwater declines are likely

2d. Does the project result in measurable improvements in the quality of surface water or groundwater?

Water quality parameters include but are not limited to: temperature, dissolved oxygen, contaminated sediments, toxic substances, bacteria, or nutrients. Improvements could result from a higher quality of water discharged to surface water or injected into groundwater, from increased flow, from treatment or filtration of water already in the environment, or removal of a known contaminant.

Application tip: *Any improvement must be measurable or quantifiable. One must be able to measure or determine the change in quality before and after project implementation. Cite and use currently available baseline water quality data. Include a water quality monitoring proposal for the post project completion period.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional, measurable* improvements in water quality
High: 6 pts	*High quality* of measurable improvements
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate, measurable* improvements
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* improvements, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Improved water quality *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	*Potential minor negative impacts to water quality*
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate negative impacts to* water quality are likely

2e. Does the project increase ecosystem resiliency to climate change impacts?

Ecosystem resiliency to climate change means increasing the ecosystems ability to adapt to changes in climate or positively respond to the impacts of climate change. This includes: increasing streamflow during critical months, increasing natural storage (e.g., wetlands, upland meadows), decreasing water temperature during critical months, protecting or enhancing cold-water habitat, restoring floodplain connectivity and backwater habitats, restoring stream buffers, decreasing coastal erosion and inundation, or decreasing risk of drought, fire occurrence (not fire response), plant disease, or invasive species outbreak. This public benefit is centered on ecosystem resilience, not community resilience. Improvements to a community's resilience to climate change should be addressed in the social/cultural benefit category.

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* improvements in multiple areas in ecosystem resiliency to climate change
High: 6 pts	*High* quality improvements in ecosystem resiliency to climate change
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* improvements
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* improvements, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Improvements in ecosystem resiliency to climate change *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	*Minor decreases* in ecosystem resiliency to climate change may occur
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Moderate decreases* in ecosystem resiliency to climate change are expected

2f. Does the project result in improvements that address one or more limiting ecological factors in the project watershed?

A limiting ecological factor is an environmental condition that limits the growth, abundance, or distribution of an organism or a population of organisms in the project watershed. Cite the limiting ecological factor(s) in your application and how the project may result in improvements.

Examples of limiting factors may include, but are not limited to, barriers to fish passage, lack of high quality habitat for sensitive, threatened and endangered species, low water quality, or low streamflow.

Application tip: *To score in this category an application must include citation of public reports, peer reviewed scientific studies, or other substantiating documentation from a state or federal agency to verify the limiting ecological factor's presence in the watershed.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* progress towards removing limiting ecological factors or making improvements which address multiple limiting ecological factors
High: 6 pts	Important progress making improvements of a *high* quality which address limiting ecological factors
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* progress which address some limiting ecological factors
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* progress, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	*Not likely* to address limiting ecological factors in the project watershed *OR documentation verifying limiting ecological factor not included*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	*Potential minor worsening of some* limiting ecological factors in the project watershed
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Exacerbates* limiting ecological factors in the project watershed

Category 3. Social or Cultural benefits

The evaluation of the social/cultural benefits of a project is based on the change in social or cultural conditions expected to result from the project as demonstrated in the application.

3a. Does the project promote public health, public safety, and local food systems?

This public benefit includes: protection of drinking water sources, repair of septic systems/field, maintenance and repair of other water infrastructure, treatment and protection of drinking water itself, improved emergency response and advisory systems (e.g., WARN network, fish consumption advisories, water contact advisories, etc.), improved or protected water quality for human consumption and human contact (e.g., removal or prevention of toxics, contaminants of concern, bacteria), and the promotion of self-reliant and resilient food networks that connect food producers and food consumers in the same geographic region.

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* promotion of public health, public safety or local food systems vital to the community
High: 6 pts	*High* quality of promotion of public health, public safety or local food systems
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* promotion
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* promotion of public health, public safety or local food systems, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Promotion of public health, public safety or local food systems *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential for *minor negative impact* to public health, public safety, or local food systems
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Degrades* public health, public safety or local food systems

3b. Does the project result in measurable improvements in conditions for Oregon's environmental justice communities (e.g., minority or low-income communities, economically distressed rural communities, tribal communities, or other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes)?

Environmental justice communities in Oregon are minority or low-income communities, economically distressed rural communities, tribal communities, or other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes. Engagement could include outreach efforts to listen and involve environmental justice communities, solicit feedback on conditions in need of improvement, or communicate project description and anticipated outcomes.

Application tip: *Identify which of those communities would benefit from the project and quantify these benefits. Demonstrate that project-siting decisions have been examined and approved by affected landowners and affected environmental justice communities.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	*Exceptional* measurable improvements in conditions for environmental justice communities, and environmental justice communities were engaged in the process of developing projects
High: 6 pts	Improvements are of a *high* quality and environmental justice communities were consulted or provided meaningful opportunity to engage
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* improvements and environmental justice communities were provided meaningful opportunity to engage
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* improvements, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Improved conditions *not likely*

Minor detriment: -1 pt	Likely to result in *minor detriment* in conditions for environmental justice communities
Medium detriment: -3 pts	*Worse conditions* for environmental justice communities are likely

3c. Does the project promote recreation and scenic values?

Recreation and scenic values include recreational fishing, motorized boating, non-motorized boating, and other forms of water-based recreation, swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, sightseeing, hiking, photography, and aesthetic values. To promote those values means the project would improve the quality of or access to the examples identified.

Application tip: *Evidence to support this benefit can be provided in the form of qualitative information, which may include interviews, professional opinion, or surveys.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	Exceptional promotion of recreation or scenic values, improving access and quality
High: 6 pts	*High quality of* promotion, improving access and quality
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* promotion, improving access or quality
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* promotion, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Benefit to recreation and scenic values *not likely*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Potential to detract from recreation and scenic values (minor detraction)
Medium detriment: -3 pts	Moderate detractions from recreation and scenic values

3d. Does this project contribute to the body of scientific data publicly available in this state?

Contributing to the body of scientific data means collecting new scientific information *and* making it available to the public. For example, data could be collected from water quality or habitat monitoring; groundwater studies or other investigations; new stream gages; or new monitoring wells. Contributions could also come from conducting a Seasonally Varying Flow analysis. Collection of scientific data is not sufficient to achieve this public benefit---the data must be made publicly available.

Application tip: *Describe the equipment and/or methods that would be used and whether the data would be made available to the public. Note how this data supplies new information of particular significance to the project area.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	Exceptional contributions of new data to the body of scientific data publicly available in the state
High: 6 pts	High quality of data contributions
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* contributions
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* contributions, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	Contributions are unlikely or would occur regardless of the project
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Not applicable
Medium detriment: -3 pts	Not applicable

3e. Does this project promote state or local priorities, including but not limited to the restoration and protection of native fish species of cultural significance to Indian tribes?

A state or local priority is one that is identified in a plan, strategy, or study such as Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy, a place-based integrated water resources plan, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, state and local water quality plans, species and habitat conservation or recovery plans/strategies, forestry plans, regional solutions priorities, local economic development plans, state or local hazard mitigation plans, etc. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains a list of native fish species: http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/crp/freshwater.asp.

Exceptional: 12 pts	Exceptional role supporting a state and local priority
High: 6 pts	*High* quality role in supporting a state or local priority
Medium: 3 pts	*Moderate* role
Minor: 1 pt	*Minor* role, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	No promotion of state or local priorities
Minor detriment: -1 pt	May be counter to state or local priorities
Medium detriment: -3 pts	Runs counter to state or local priorities

3f. Does this project promote collaborative basin planning efforts, including but not limited to efforts under the state Integrated Water Resources Strategy?

Collaborative basin planning efforts incorporate public processes that are transparent and inclusive of diverse interests.

Application tip: *Demonstration of a collaborative planning effort may include publicly noticed meetings, posting agendas and decisions so they were publicly available, the inclusion of multiple types of water users represented in the process (e.g., instream interests, agricultural, municipal, domestic and industrial users), evidence that the project is supported by the community, and evidence that the project was identified in a Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Plan or another collaboratively developed strategic plan.*

Exceptional: 12 pts	Project was identified in a collaboratively developed plan that is supported by all basin interests and where the public had meaningful opportunities to engage
High: 6 pts	Project was identified by a collaborative group that includes representation of multiple interests, where the public had meaningful opportunities to provide input
Medium: 3 pts	The project promotes the goals of a collaborative basin planning effort
Minor: 1 pt	An effort was made to engage and elicit input from the public, *OR* benefit claims are *unsupported or unquantified*
No benefit: 0 pts	*No change/impact*
Minor detriment: -1 pt	Stakeholders with differing perspectives and/or the public (as appropriate) were *not consulted* about the project and did not have opportunities to provide input
Medium detriment: -3 pts	Stakeholders with differing perspectives and/or the public (as appropriate) were *excluded* during project development

Dear members of the Oregon Water Resources Commission:

We are writing in support of Tumalo Irrigation District's (TID) application (*Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration – Group 6b)* for the Water Project Grant and Loan (WPGL) program to conserve 1.1 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water. We ask your consideration in funding this application to continue TID's efforts to enclose and modernize its system.

The purpose of this project is to improve water conservation, streamflow, water delivery reliability, public safety, and energy conservation by enclosing a portion of the TID system in leak-free piping. The primary benefits of this project are eliminating water loss due to seepage, returning, and protecting conserved water instream, work toward a more natural hydrograph and habitat for fish and aquatic species, eliminating the risk to public safety from the open canals, and energy savings and efficiencies due to elimination of pumping and retention ponds.

We understand that piping projects, like ours, are frequent applicants to the WPGL program as they all provide substantial benefits to the environment, economy, and society. We would like to take this opportunity to explain the unique benefits of our project and the importance of funding our application to allow for construction in Fall 2024.

The conserved water resulting from our project is cold, and is one of the most effective tools of reducing temperatures and suitable habitat for bull trout and redband trout in the Middle Deschutes. The water resulting from the conservation comes from glacier fed Tumalo Creek that is consistently colder than the mainstem Deschutes River. Thus, the protected water resulting from this project flows the entire length of the Deschutes to Lake Billy Chinook – providing temperature abatement that is unique to this project. In March 2022, the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council released *Middle Deschutes River Instream Flow Restoration and Temperature Responses 2001-2021* that tracks the instream flow and temperature in the Deschutes Basin in response to increases in conservation. The report states,

> "Restoring stream flow in Tumalo Creek reduces warming downstream of the TID diversion, delivering cooler flows to the Deschutes River and actively cooling Deschutes River water. Tumalo Creek, approximately five miles downstream of North Canal Dam, is the only tributary and source of additional flow between the dam and Lower Bridge Road approximately 31 miles downstream, where temperatures are historically highest and conditions worst for fish. Increasing flows in Tumalo Creek therefore represents an opportunity to achieve the greatest cooling effect in the Deschutes River between Tumalo Creek and Lower Bridge Road by contributing a greater volume of colder water at the confluence, reducing warming and actively cooling Deschutes River flows."

Restoration of streamflow is also a factor in supporting the ESA-listed Oregon spotted frog habitat in Crescent Creek and Little Deschutes River. This project will support two important life stages of the frog – overwintering (winter) and breeding (spring). The conserved water will be held in Crescent Lake - Reservoir for release over the winter. Under existing channel and wetland conditions, the weighted usable area generally increases with increasing water depth. In the winter, this project will allow for increased flows that will result in more high-quality overwintering habitat that is created upon the margins of the river and in adjacent wetlands. Breeding habitat in the spring is also driven by water

depth, water velocity, substrate composition, and proximity to vegetation. Breeding habitat also generally increases with increasing flows. Moreover, restoring this flow instream will provide better tools to provide more suitable conditions for the Oregon spotted frog.

Thus, we ask the Commission to consider the importance of the quality and quantity of water conserved and protected instream through this project.

In addition to environmental benefits, this project will provide substantial economic benefit to the region and state. A portion of the conserved water (0.25 cfs) will be put in use in the district. With persistent drought, TID patrons have made substantial operational and on-farm improvements – however, having more reliable water available for patrons will provide resiliency for the district and the lands it serves. This additional water will protect family farms and agriculture in Deschutes County.

Since 2005, TID has reliably employed Oregonians every winter through various phases of piping projects. TID expects to construct portions of the System Improvement Plan most winters at least through the next decade, providing stable, well-paying jobs for the region. Last year, TID construction projects created over 200 construction jobs through the winter. This phase anticipates a similar level of jobs created as last year. The project also utilizes local gravel, reinforcing steel, concrete, equipment supplies and rental, fencing companies and seed suppliers indirectly creating jobs through this supply chain.

Thus, we ask the Commission to consider the importance of continuing the momentum of TID's irrigation modernization efforts to the local and regional economy.

Finally, this project provides social and cultural benefits. First, the safety issues of open irrigation canals have been well documented, including two recent drowning deaths. The water in the canals can reach up to 200 cfs and present a real and present hazard to humans and wildlife.

TID recognizes the importance of recognizing and improving conditions for those in our communities that are underrepresented. TID and its conveyance system are in the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. TID is in frequent communication with the Tribe. Tribal consultation was conducted in accordance with Federal law for TID's recent Watershed Plan Environmental Assessment. The Tribe was included during the planning phase of this project. The Tribe is heavily involved with basin efforts to recover culturally important species. The additional instream flow provides a benefit to the Deschutes River that flows to Lake Billy Chinook – an important cultural landmark to the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. All additional instream flow will enhance the tribe's efforts for recovery of culturally important species such as kokanee and steelhead in the lake.

Thus, we ask the commission to consider the social and cultural importance of continuing TID's irrigation modernization efforts.

More details about this project can be found in our full application. We are also available to answer any questions or make any clarifications.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,

DESCHUTES RIVER
CONSERVANCY

September 15, 2023

Water Resources Commission
Oregon Water Resources Department

RE: Support for Tumalo Irrigation District Columbia Southern/Project Group 6B piping project

Dear Water Resources Commission,

The Deschutes River Conservancy strongly supports Tumalo Irrigation District's (TID) Group 6B piping and water conservation project. The mission of the Deschutes River Conservancy is to restore stream flow and improve water quality in the Deschutes River and its tributaries. Flow restoration through Irrigation District infrastructure improvements is one of the primary means for restoring flows in the Deschutes River, and the DRC is fortunate to count TID as a strong partner in that effort.

Flow restoration in Tumalo Creek is particularly significant in that it not only benefits both habitat and water quality conditions in Tumalo Creek, but is key to reducing temperatures and providing refugia for redband trout in the Middle Deschutes in summer months. Details on Tumalo Creek flow restoration temperature benefits can be found in 2020-2021 Instream Flow Restoration and Temperature Responses in the Middle Deschutes River and Middle Deschutes: Progress in Action report (pgs 8-9). The water management opportunities from piping in TID also provide complementary benefits in Crescent Creek, a stronghold for the Oregon spotted frog (OSF), an ESA listed species.

The Group 6B project is critical to maintaining progress and continuing TID's impressive record implementing piping projects that permanently protect water instream. To date, over 21 cfs of flow have been protected via TID's conservation program. This project will add to that protected flow and contribute to the system-wide goals of improving the entire district, which, once complete, will result in the conservation of 32 cfs in Tumalo Creek, with an additional 13 cfs to benefit Crescent Creek and OSF. The Group 6B project will provide direct and immediate benefits to water quality and quantity in the Deschutes Basin, build resilience and adaptability in the face of increasing and dynamic basin-wide water availability concerns, and affords TID's patrons increased opportunity to improve their own water use and participate in the DRC's instream water leasing program. We strongly support OWRD funding of this project.

Sincerely,

Jim Bond
Program Director

TO: Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)

Re: 2023 Water Project Grants and Loans Applications
Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration - Group 6b

Tumalo Irrigation District, (TID)

As a patron of Tumalo Irrigation District and as a water user that supports piping of our canals and is directly affected by the approval of this request to provide funding. I am asking that OWRD approve funding for the Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration - Group 6b to bury the Columbia Southern Canal from Highway 20 to Connarn Rd.

TID has been very aggress is piping the system and has completed over 40% of the canal piping in past years. The piping of 12 miles of the Western Columbia Southern Canal this fall and winter. When this phase of piping is complete, TID will have piped over 50% of our open canals. Now is not the time to place the Group 6b request for funding to be passed over this funding cycle. While the benefits are small in water savings when going from an 80-inch plus pipe at the diversion point (Tumalo Creek and Crescent Lake at Stidal Dam) to a 36-inch plus pipe and smaller. For us water users in the northeast portion of the TID system, the benefit to these users is high. The continual drought we are in, has been a detriment to these users as our rotation of water delivery this summer has proven to be poor to non-existent to these users in the open canals. Providing funding for this phase of the project is critical for the future of these water users.

Another impact of not funding the Group 6b project, is placing secured funding of the continual piping of the Columbia Southern Canal in jeopardy. TID has secured funding to bury pipe from Connarn Rd to White Rock Loop. If the 6b project is not funded then TID may lose the funding for the next phase of the piping project (Connarn to White Rock Loop).

I ask OWRD not to just consider the water saving by piping our open canals, but the impact to TID water users. As we go to the smaller piping sizes, we see that the water savings returned to the river is not as great. This is shown in TID's estimated saving of 1.1cfs for 11,261 feet of buried pipe. The benefit to the water users in pressurized water, reduced electrical costs, secure water delivery and reclaiming open canals for pasture, should also be used in deciding funding requests.

Please approve funding for TID's, Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration - Group 6b

Thank You: David A Arnold

19830 Connarn Rd

Bend OR 97703

Oregon Water Resources Congress

795 Winter St. NE | Salem, OR 97301 | Phone: 503-363-0121 | Fax: 503-371-4926 | www.owrc.org

October 2, 2023

Grant Coordinator
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A,
Salem, OR 97301
Submitted via email: OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov

Re: Comments on Water Project Grants and Loans Applications – 2023 Funding Cycle

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is providing comments on the Oregon Water Resources Department's Technical Review Team (TRT) ranking and funding recommendations for the 2023 Water Project Grants and Loans funding cycle. OWRC is supportive of the district projects that were recommended for funding. However, we are perplexed as to why two other similar projects were not recommended for funding. The only stated reason was lack of support letters. Please consider this letter to be in support of the Tumalo Irrigation District's "Deschutes Basin Flow Restoration - Group 6b" and the Owyhee Irrigation District's "Kingman Lateral First Mile Piping" Project.

OWRC is a nonprofit trade association representing irrigation districts, water control districts, drainage districts, water improvement districts, and other local government entities delivering agricultural water supplies throughout Oregon. These water stewards operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower facilities. OWRC members deliver water to approximately 600,000 acres of farmland in Oregon, which is over one-third of all the irrigated land in the state.

OWRC was an active supporter of the legislation creating the program (SB 839 in 2033) and participated in the two taskforces and formal rulemaking that occurred subsequently. OWRC members have successfully applied for funds in every cycle to implement phased water conservation, efficiency, and supply projects with a myriad of public benefits. Districts are actively planning and implementing a variety of infrastructure projects to modernize their systems to be more resilient to water scarcity. These projects often involve piping of open canals, which provides greater water reliability to the farms and ranches the districts serve, increased water conservation, enhanced instream flows, and other economic, environmental and social benefits. These projects are also seeking state funds to match and leverage federal funds, which are limited and time sensitive.

Several members of OWRC have projects that are recommended for funding in this current cycle and two are not. There does not appear to be a logical reason for two of the applications not being recommended for funding. We understand limits on available funding but the information available publicly states in both instances that more letters of support were needed.

Both projects' primary activity is piping of open canals—an activity that should not require additional detail—and it is disappointing that members of the TRT are apparently unaware of the multiple public benefits that these projects provide. In the case of the application by Tumalo Irrigation District, the proposed project implements the sixth phase of the District's irrigation modernization effort, which has been funded by this same program in the past. Additional education with non-WRD members on the TRT or changes to the TRT would help avoid this scenario in the future. A lack of consistent scoring by the TRT has been an ongoing issue with the program and unlike other potential programmatic reforms, revisions to the scoring process do not require legislative or rulemaking action.

I urge the Commission to revisit the funding recommendations, and if funds are available, make awards to both Tumalo Irrigation District and Owyhee Irrigation District in addition to the other district projects recommended for funding in this cycle.

Your time and consideration of our comments is appreciated.

Sincerely,

April Snell
Executive Director