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October 5, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Cathy P. Kellon, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: Remarks from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Director, Curt Melcher

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Curt Melcher, Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Background: ODFW is the state agency responsible for sustainably managing Oregon fish and wildlife. It sets policies and also has direct responsibilities for protecting and enhancing Oregon's fish and wildlife through harvest regulation, research and monitoring, public education, fish propagation, wildlife area management, and habitat improvement and conservation projects.

More Info: Curt Melcher is a native Oregonian, who graduated from the University of Oregon with a B.S. degree in Biology. He has devoted over 30 years of his career to the protection and management of Oregon's fish and wildlife. During his time at ODFW, he has represented the State of Oregon in numerous regional management forums, including the Pacific Fishery Management Council, Klamath Fishery Management Council, and Pacific Salmon Commission Southern Panel. As ODFW's Director he is accountable for all agency programs leading over 1,200 permanent and seasonal employees.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Update to NW Power and Conservation Council

Curt Melcher, Director

October 11, 2022 – Corvallis, Oregon



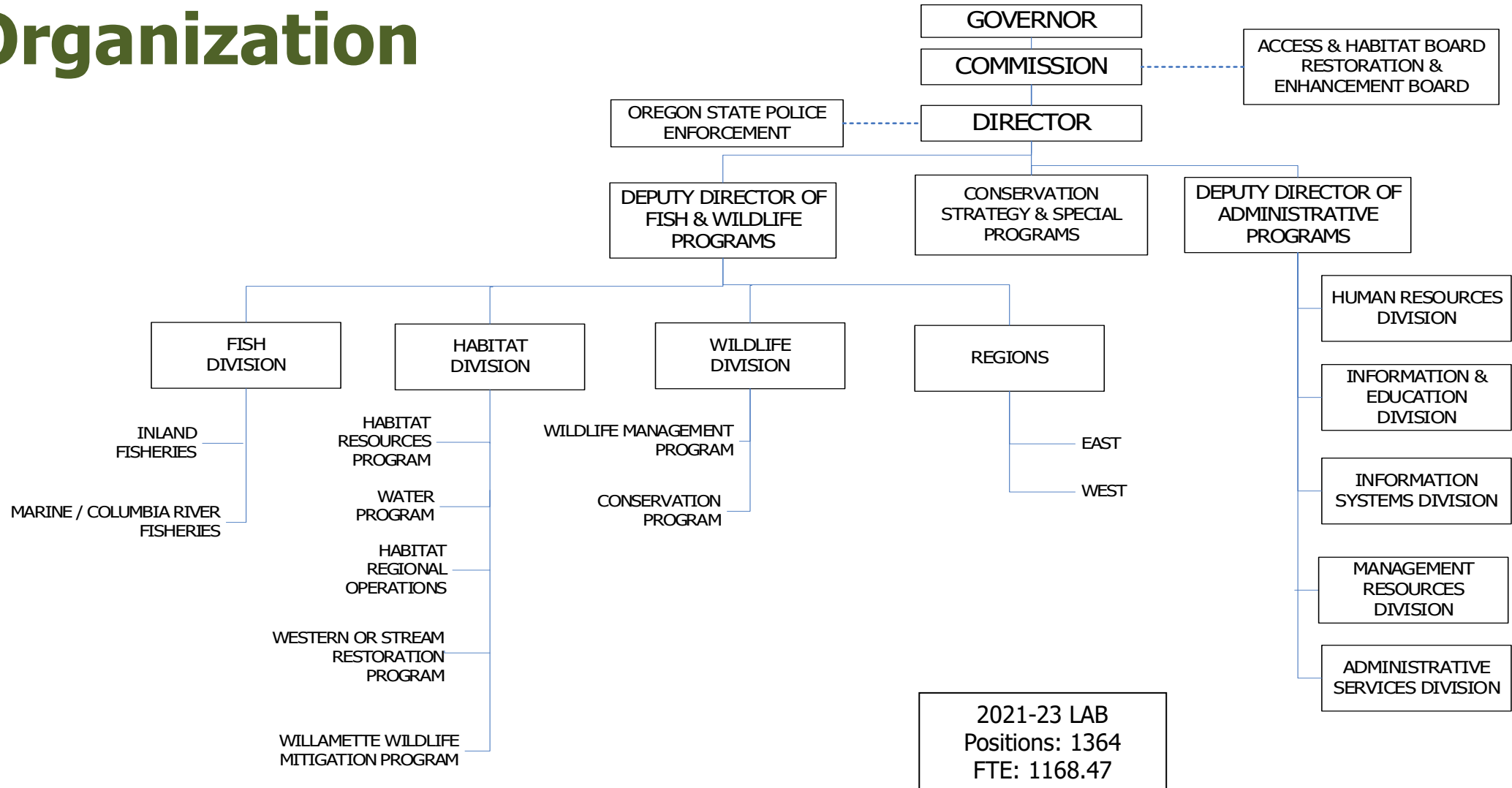
Presentation Organization

- Agency Organization
- ODFW Funding
- Highlights from Divisions and Projects
 - Habitat Division
 - Fish Division
 - Wildlife Division
 - Region Programs
 - R3 and Community Engagement





Agency Organization



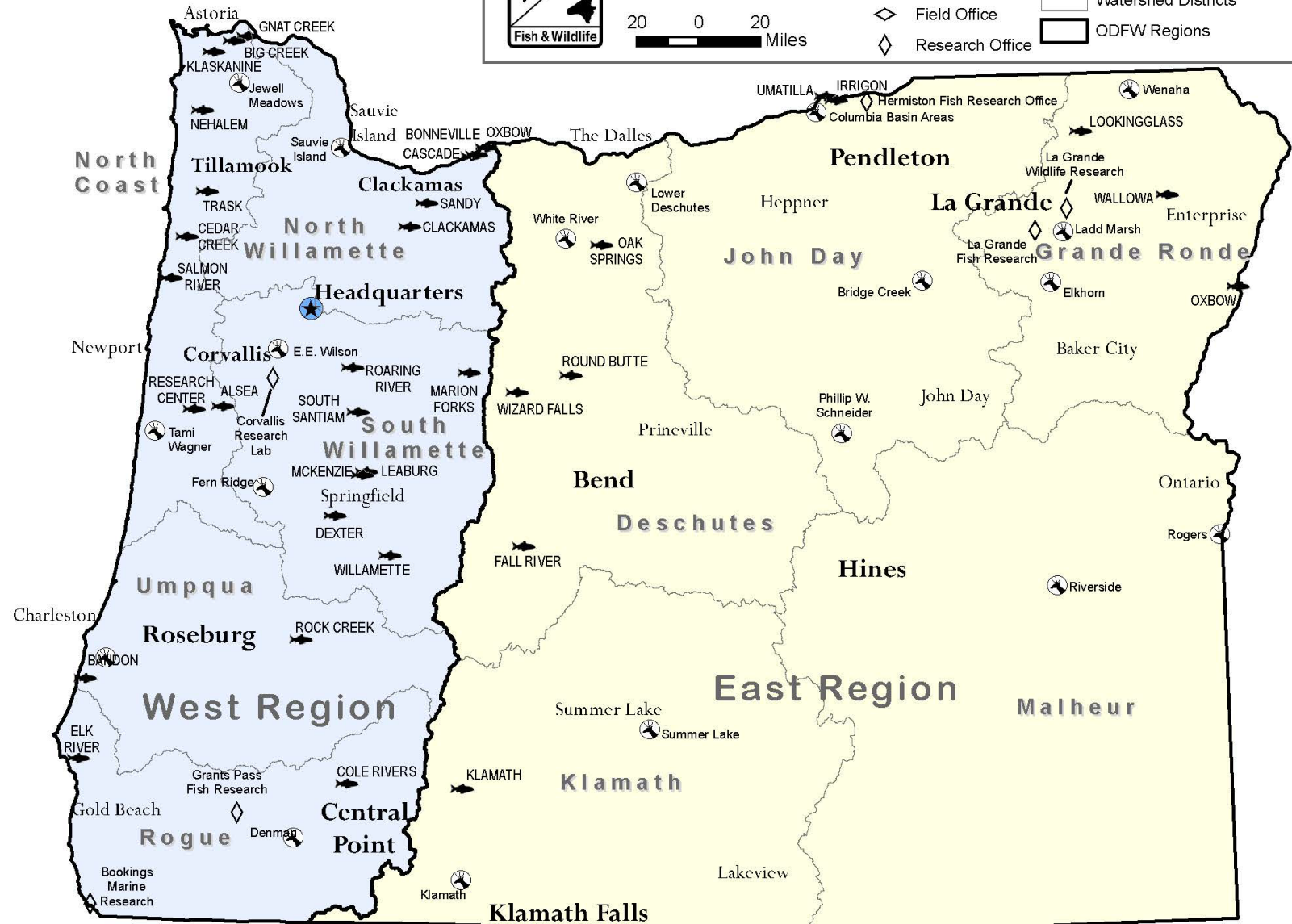
ODFW Regional Programs

ODFW field operations is organized into 2 Regions:

- 10 Watershed Districts
- 24 District and Field Offices
- 22 Wildlife Areas
- 35 Hatchery Facilities
- 4 Screen Shops

ODFW has 1,364 positions

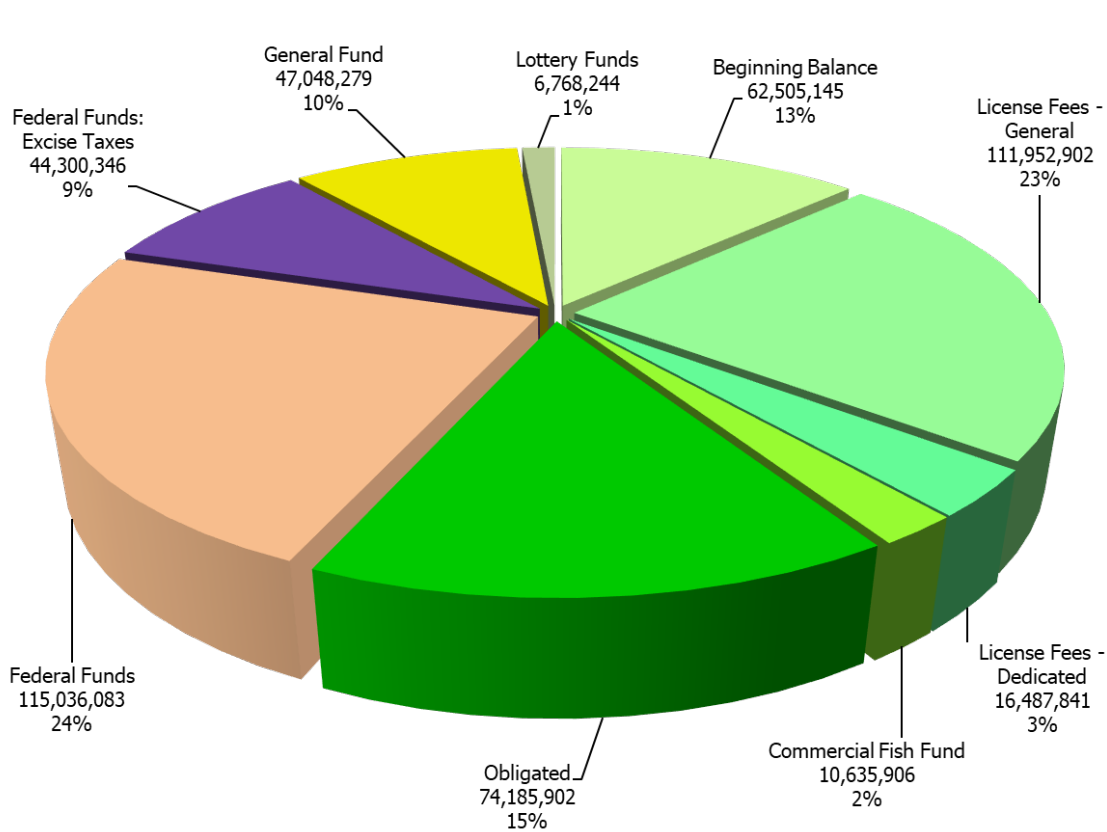
- 844 are in regional programs



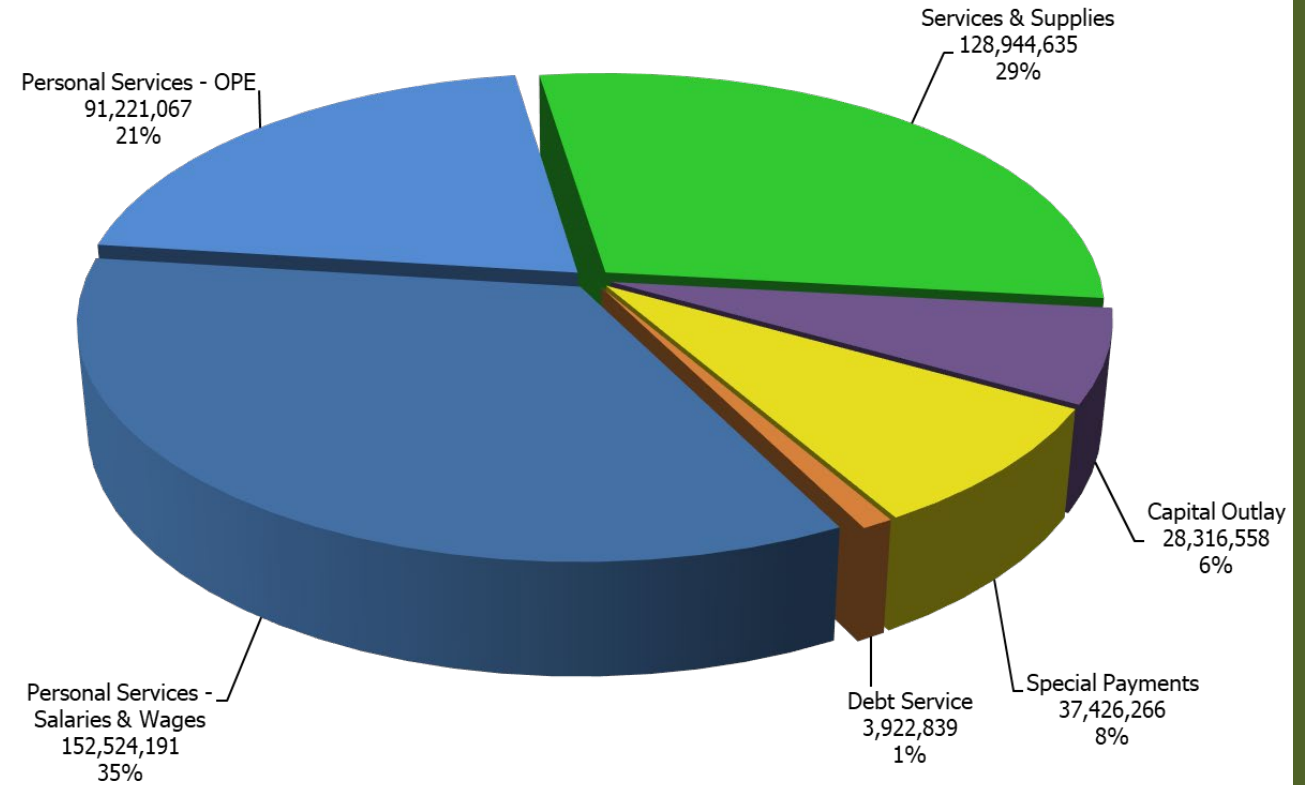
Created by ODFW GIS, 10/22/2021

2021-23 Biennium Current Budget Revenues & Expenditures by Category

Total Revenues \$488.9 million



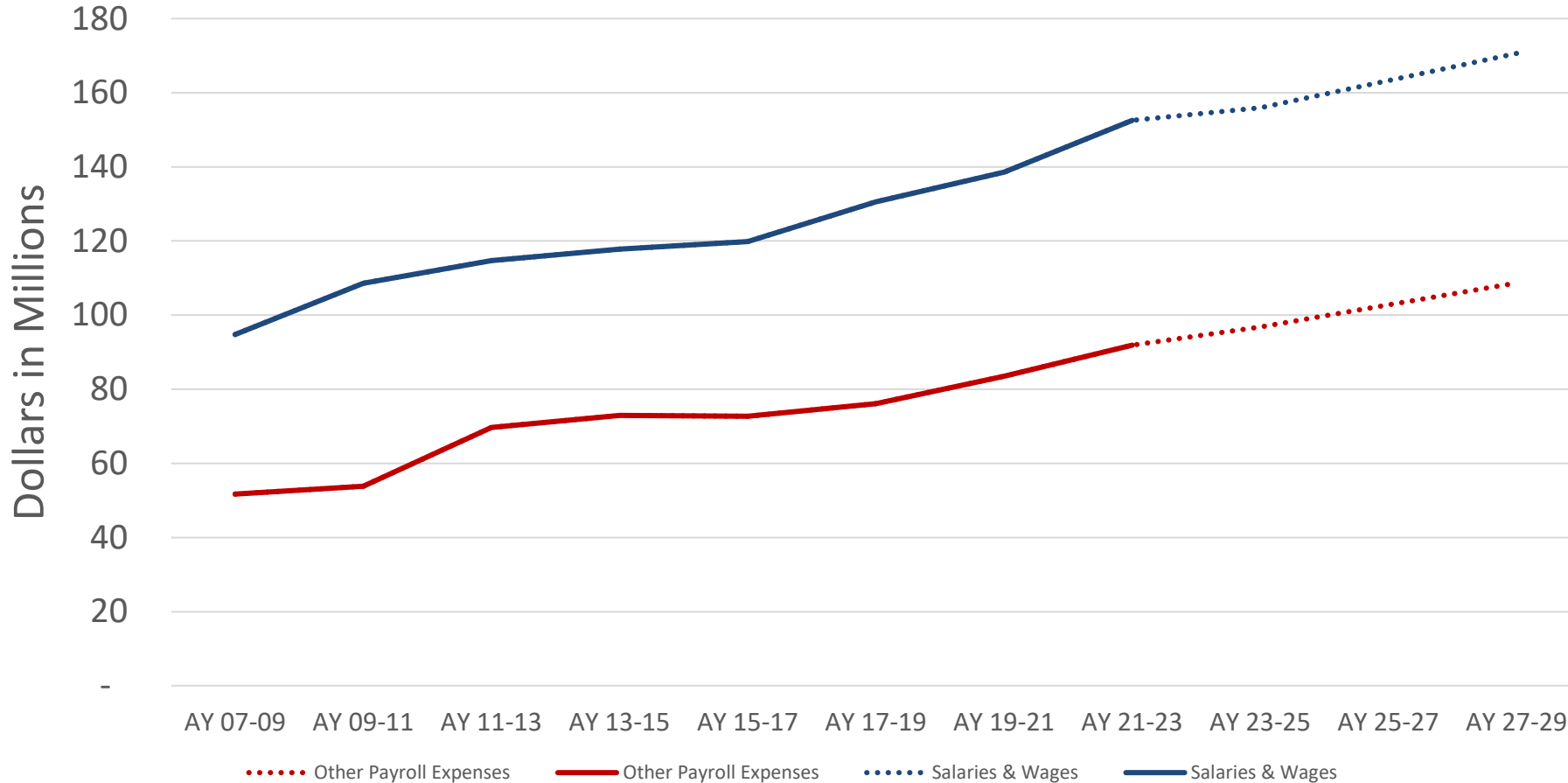
Total Expenditures \$442.4 million



Personal Services Growth



Personal Services Growth

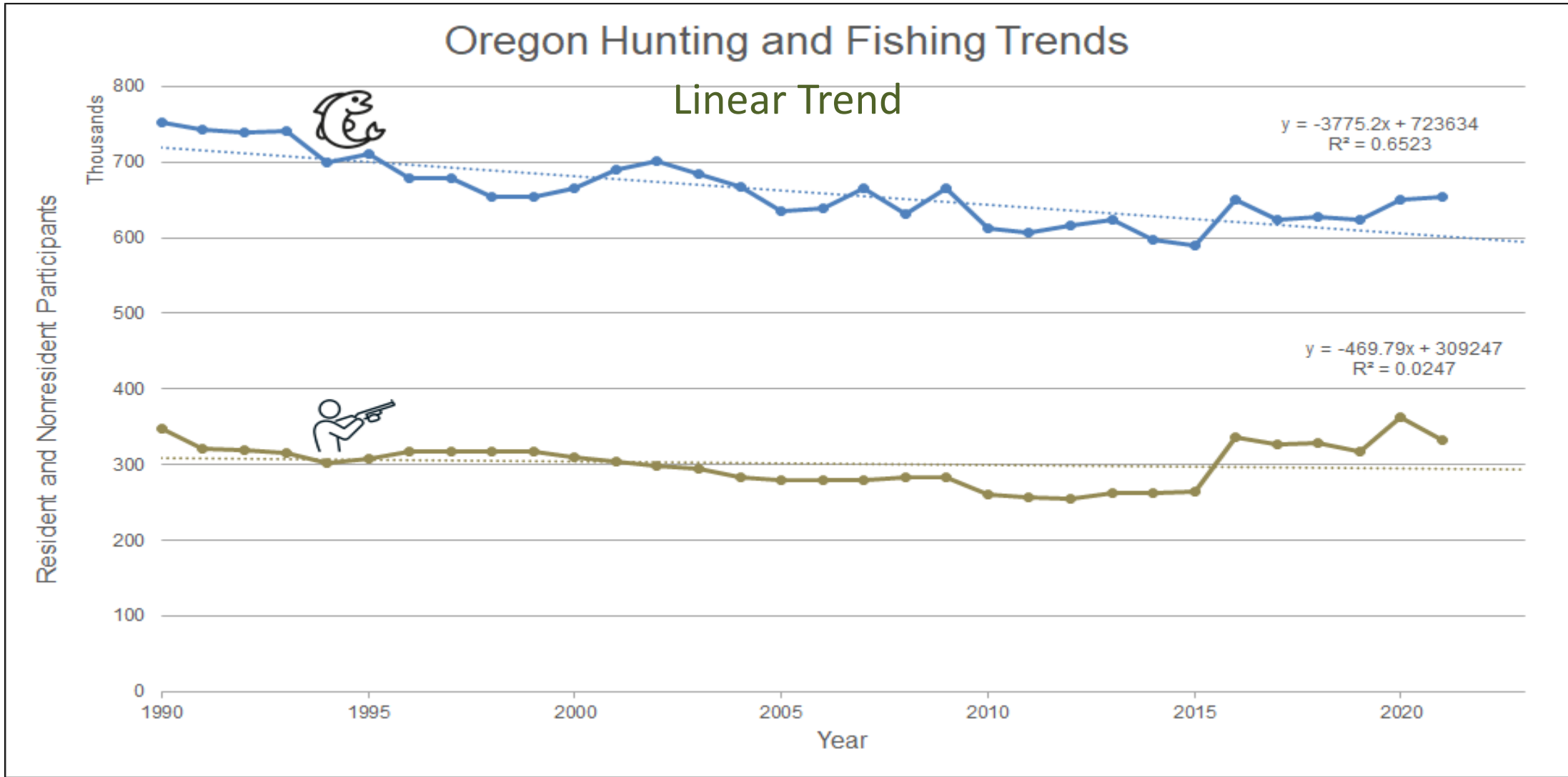


Personal services makes up 55% of agency expenditures.

With Current Service Level expenditures (maintaining current business operations), an increase of 8% per biennium is estimated for personal services costs.

This increase factor is attributed to:

- Rising health care costs
- Compensation plan increases
 - Annual pay step increases
 - Cost of Living adjustments
- PERS rate changes



R3 and Community Engagement Program Background

ODFW depends on engagement from all Oregonians to support our mission:

- *To protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.*

ODFW's R3 program focuses on recruitment, retention, and reactivation of outdoor recreationists.

- Create new participants
- Connect with current or lapsed participants to increase their engagement

Outdoor recreationists take part in activities that depend on healthy wildlife and fish populations, including:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Wildlife observation and photography
- Education and interpretation

Habitat Division



Habitat Division

- ODFW's mission is "to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for the use and enjoyment by present and future generations".
- Healthy, abundant, and accessible habitat is the foundation on which healthy fish and wildlife populations can persist.
- This focus is increasingly important as Oregon's population grows and fish and wildlife habitat is impacted by changing land use, climate change, inadequate water quality and quantity conditions, and other issues.



Habitat Division

Habitat Division Establishment

- In addition to continuing the conservation work within the existing, realigned programs of Habitat Division, we are shoring up the foundation of the new division within the agency, ensuring staff capacity aligns with the division's purpose and strategic objectives.
- Addressing both field-based and administrative needs.
- Creating consistency with Fish and Wildlife Division's organizational structure.



Habitat Division Programs

Water Quality and Quantity Program

- Collects and develops science on future instream priorities for fish and wildlife and provides technical and policy assistance in regulatory and collaborative processes
- Plans, supports, and communicates flow restoration and climate adaptation priorities

Hydropower Program

- Works closely with non-Columbia River System hydropower operators, other agencies, and interests in federal and state hydropower licensing proceedings to advance fish and wildlife protection and mitigation measures and protect Oregon's natural resources
- Assists with development and implementation of mitigation obligations arising from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licenses.



Habitat Division Programs

Land Resources Program

- Provides technical and policy assistance to local, state, and federal agencies and private landowners to ensure the habitat needs of fish and wildlife are considered and protected within land use planning and proposed development
- Plans, supports, and communicates habitat conservation and climate adaptation priorities for the Department
- Program areas:
 - Energy development
 - Land use and waterway alterations
 - Agricultural ditch maintenance
 - State and Private Forest Practices
 - Federal Forest Stewardship – Good Neighbor Authority
 - Habitat Mitigation Policy and Fund Coordination



Regional Habitat Programs

Regional Habitat Biologists

- Provide habitat expertise for land and water management activities in ODFW Watershed Districts. Work with landowners and partners to implement habitat improvement and restoration projects according to management and conservation priorities. Coordinate regional habitat councils and initiatives.



Oregon Conservation Strategy Farm Bill Biologists

- Provide additional implementation capacity and biological expertise for development of Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm Bill Programs, such as Conservation Stewardship, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Wetland Reserve Easements.



Regional Habitat Programs

Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program

- Protects lands and restores habitats in the Willamette Valley as mitigation for habitat lost by construction of dams in the Willamette Watershed

East Region Fish Habitat Restoration Program

- Implements instream and riparian habitat restoration projects to directly benefit fish populations in central and Eastern Oregon

Western Oregon Stream Restoration Program

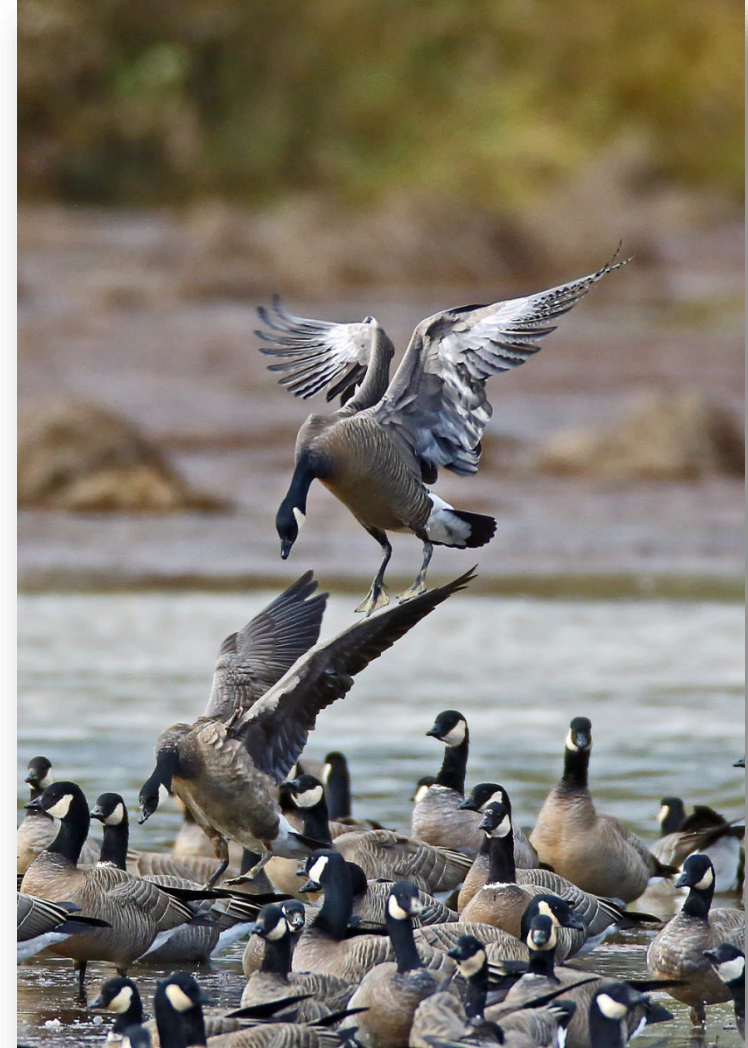
- Plans, conducts and provides technical support for stream restoration projects in western Oregon in close collaboration with watershed councils



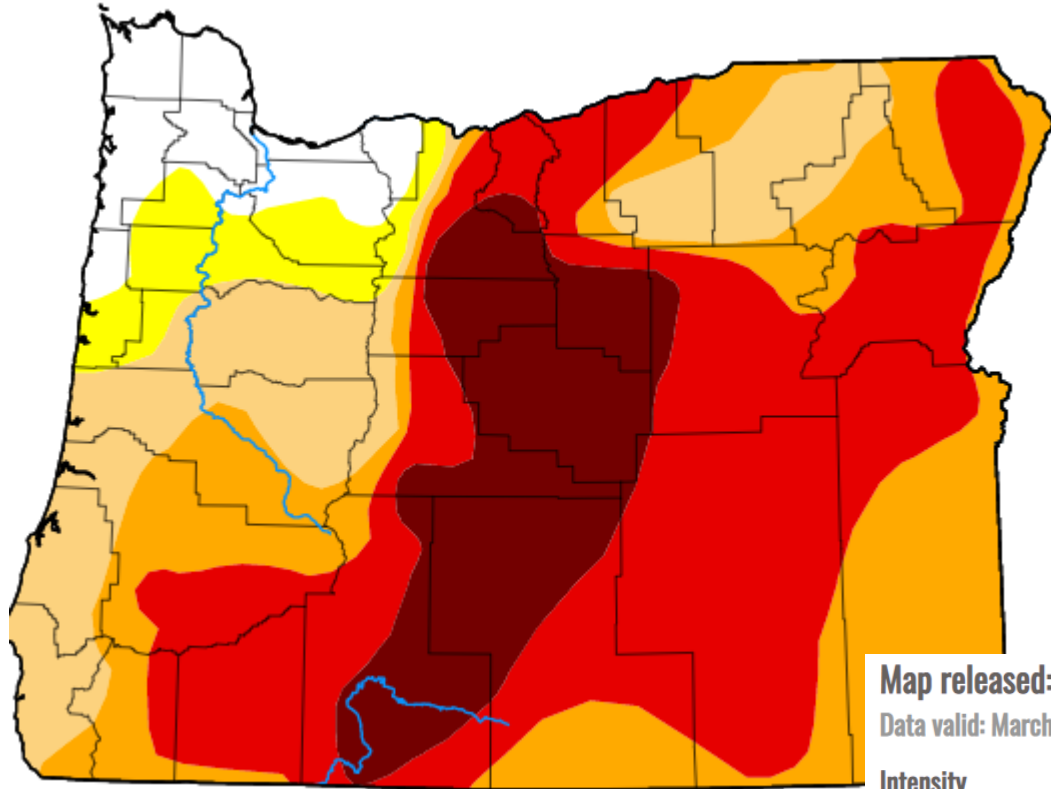
Habitat Division – Focal Area

Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Project Summary

- Mitigation obligation = 26,537 acres
- 23 Legacy Properties
 - 9 CE / 14 FTA
 - 9,657 acres
 - \$59,051,886
 - Average \$6,115 /acre
- 50 Agreement Properties
 - 11 CE / 39 FTA
 - 12,345 acres
 - \$68,780,637
 - Average \$5,572/acre



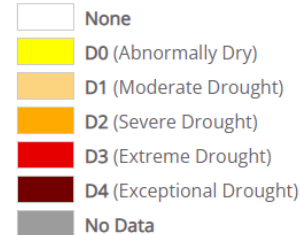
Habitat Division – Focal Area



Map released: Thurs. March 24, 2022

Data valid: March 22, 2022 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Drought Planning, Climate Change

- One of the Division's highest priorities is climate change and its associated effects such as drought.
- Oregon has seen drought conditions 16 of the last 20 years, with 2021 showing the most intense period of drought affecting ~26% of land.
- Drought conditions have led to record lows in stream flows, record high stream temperatures, and wildfires of unprecedented scale and severity. These habitat conditions and losses have significant short- and long-term consequences for certain fish and wildlife populations.
- There is a need for proactive, prioritized action to protect and restore land and water given these changing and declining conditions.
- Habitat Division is working to identify restoration needs on land and in water, prioritize climate policy implementation strategies, and target ODFW's conservation investments.

Fish Division



Fish Division

Stewards of Oregon's fish populations.

- Responsible for regulating harvest, protection, and enhancement of fish populations in an ecosystem-function framework through engagement with stakeholders.
- We are charged by statute (ORS 506.036) to protect and propagate fish in the state.
- Balance cultural, social and economic wishes of Oregonians.



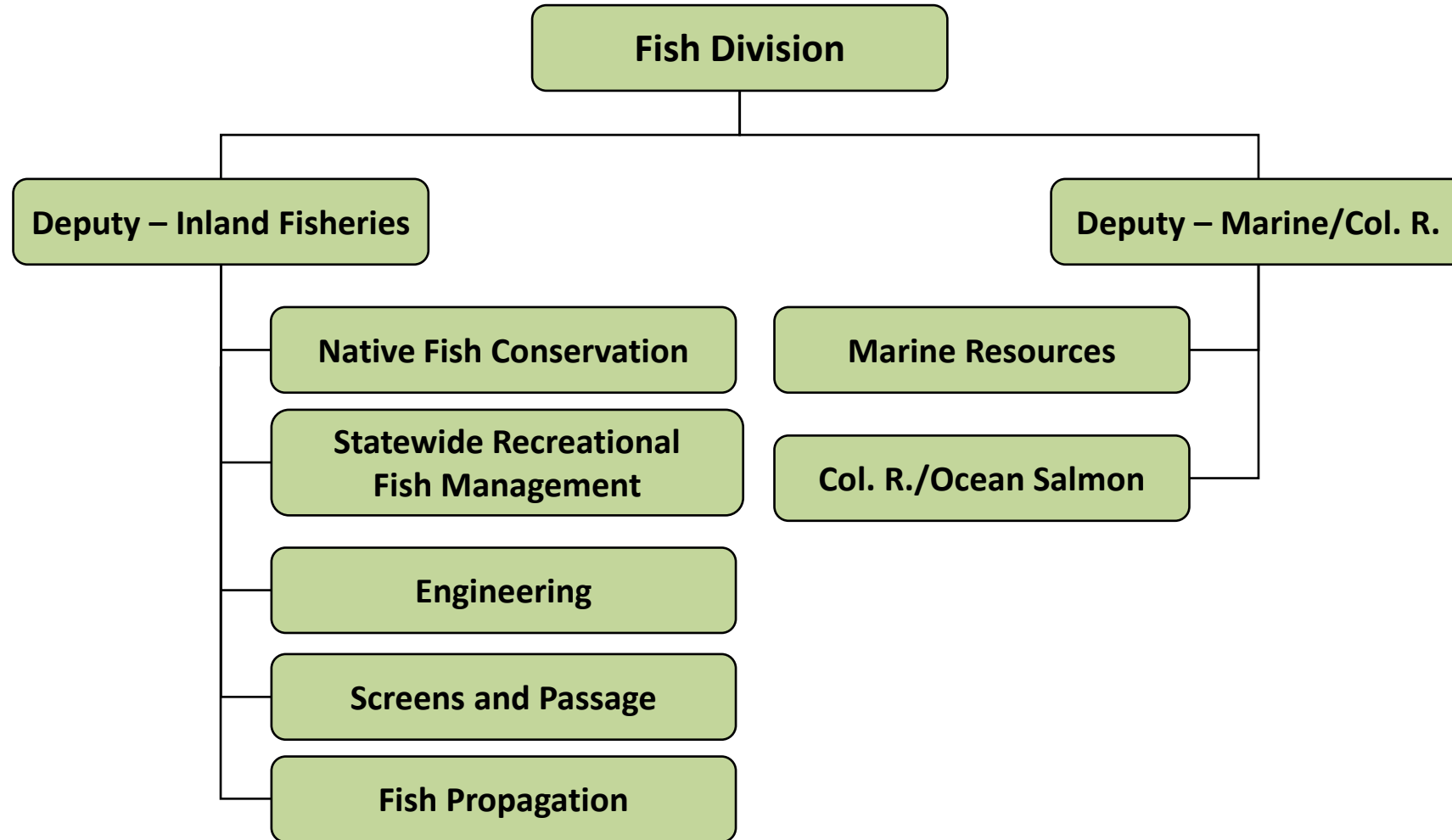
Fish Division

Fisheries Management

- Allow resource use that is consistent with sustainable populations while providing outdoor-connected opportunities and social, cultural and economic benefits to Oregon.
- Conduct science to address uncertainties and knowledge gaps related to run forecasting, critical habitat, and stock assessments must be considered.
- Manage fisheries within a conservation framework that protects weak stocks and scales harvest to the health of runs.
- Continue work with Tribal, State, and Federal partners, as well as other interjurisdictional management agencies.



Fish Division Programs





Fish Division – Focal Areas

Columbia River native fish populations

Hydro

- Work continues with regional partners and the federal government to improve salmon/steelhead survival within the Columbia River System

Predators

- Pinniped management at Bonneville Dam and Willamette Falls continues to limit potential long-term negative conservation consequences

Fisheries

- Intensive in-season co-management of mixed-stock/weak stock fisheries to ensure non-treaty and treaty fisheries are within necessary conservation constraints



Fish Division – Focal Areas Infrastructure

Hatcheries

Wildfire, drought, and other impacts of climate change will continue to stress our hatchery system.

- Climate vulnerability assessment of the hatchery system.
- Evaluating technologies/approaches to maintain production.
- Conducting fish health research and monitoring.
- Incorporating resilience into any investments.
- Will require additional resources, may require changes in programs.

Wildlife Division



Wildlife Division Programs

- Game Program
- Conservation Program
- Wildlife Health and Population Lab
- Operations Program



Wildlife Division – Focal Areas

Conservation Strategy Implementation



- The conservation program covers many species, but is a smaller component of the Wildlife Division, both in terms of funding and staff. As interest in non-game conservation and management continues to grow, there is a need to expand the capacity and reach of the program.
- Conservation program staff provide technical assistance to partners and landowners, coordinate invasive species management, participate on technical committees, review land development proposals, manage of OCS-related datasets and online tools, and conduct research.
- Examples of current research projects include western pond turtle and western painted turtle monitoring; amphibian egg mass, terrestrial, and aquatic surveys; coastal American marten monitoring; ringtail distribution research; and avian surveys. These efforts provide critical information to fill data gaps for many of our Strategy Species.
- The Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project (OCAMP) is an ongoing effort to identify and prioritize wildlife corridors for a broad array of wildlife species across the state. The results of this effort will be critical for identifying priority areas for restoration and protection and will aid in statewide planning efforts to maintain functional habitat connectivity. This will be necessary to manage wildlife for resiliency to climate change, drought, and wildfires.

Questions?

