



Environmental Justice Council

2024

EJC Annual Report



Oregon Department
of Fish and Wildlife

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Environmental Justice Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGENCY INTRODUCTION.....	3
Agency Highlights	3
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS	5
1. Address Environmental Justice Issues	5
Environmental Justice Consideration Process	5
Environmental Justice Community Considerations.....	6
2. Public Participation and Meaningful Involvement	8
Public Engagement Policy and Processes	8
Targeted Audiences	11
3. Agency Environmental Justice Impacts	13
4. Agency Environmental Justice Progress	14
5. Agency Environmental Justice Mapping Tool Involvement	18
6. Agency Environmental Council Engagement 2024	19
7. Agency Environmental Justice Council Legislation Citations.....	19
8. Agency Meaningful Engagement Related Legislation	20
Definitions	21





AGENCY INTRODUCTION

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT



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

AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Debbie Colbert
Director

Shaun Clements
Deputy Director for
Fish and Wildlife Programs

Ken Loffink
Chief Operating Officer

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission consists of seven members appointed by the governor.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PERSONNEL

Antonio Salgado
Community Engagement Coordinator

Camilla Kennedy
Economist & Human Dimensions Analyst

AGENCY BUDGET AND REVENUE SERVICES

ODFW 2023-25 Legislatively Adopted (in millions)

Fund Type	Description	Budgeted Revenue	Budgeted Expenditures
General Funds	Oregon tax revenue appropriated by the Legislature.	\$65.4	\$65.4
Lottery Funds	State lottery revenue constitutionally dedicated to specific natural resources functions	\$6.8	\$6.8
Other Funds	Revenue from the sale of recreational and commercial fishing and hunting licenses/tags/permits. Funding agreements with non-federal government organizations, or other groups/individuals.	\$330.9	\$269.9
Federal Funds	Funding agreements with federal government organizations. Excise taxes on the purchase of firearms, ammunition, and fishing gear.	\$213.5	\$213.5
Total Funds		\$616.6	\$555.6



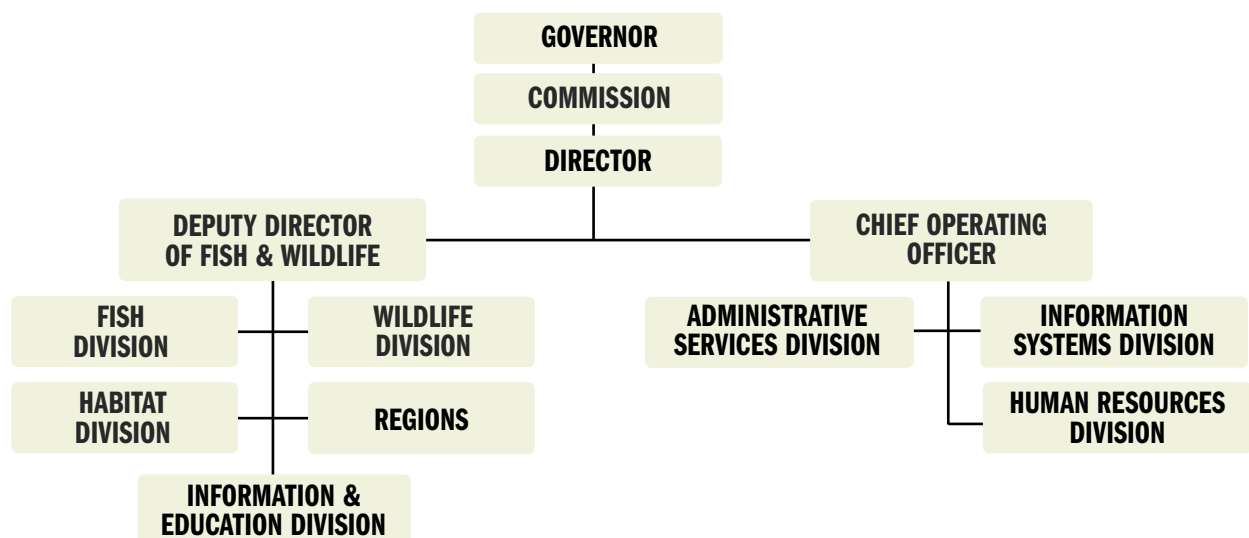


AGENCY PROGRAMS

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) operates under ORS Chapters 496 through 513 to manage Oregon's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The agency consists of over 1,100 permanent staff stationed throughout 25 district offices, 21 wildlife areas, 33 hatchery facilities, and 16 fish-rearing facilities statewide. The agency's organizational structure is comprised of the Director's Office*, seven divisions, and a large number of programs therein , including:

1. **Fish Division:** Recreational Fisheries Program, Native Fish Conservation and Recovery, Marine Resources Program, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program, Fish Restoration and Enhancement Program, Fish Screening and Passage Program, Salmon Trout Enhancement Program, Fish Science and Research, Fish Health Lab, Fish Hatcheries
2. **Wildlife Division:** Wildlife Management Program, Wildlife Diversity Program, Access and Habitat Program, Wildlife Research, Wildlife Health Lab, Wildlife Management Areas
3. **Habitat Division:** Land Resources Program, Water Program, Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund Program, Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program, Private Forest Accord Program, Western Oregon Stream Restoration Program
4. **Information and Education Division:** Public Information Services (Outreach and Communications) and Education Services (Hunter Education, Aquatic and Angler Education, Outdoor Skills Education)
5. **Information Systems Division:** Application Development, Asset Management, Data Management, Network/Telecom Services
6. **Administrative Services Division:** License Services, Contract Services, Realty Services, Accounting, Payroll, Business Services
7. **Human Resources Division:** Recruitment, Labor Relations, Safety and Health, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

* Programs out of the Director's Office include Budget and Economics, Internal Auditor, Conservation Policy, Federal Policy, Legislative/Commission Administration





ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS

1. ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES

(ORS 182.550 SECTION 1)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONSIDERATION PROCESS

a. Does the agency have a defined process for incorporating environmental justice factors into agency operations and decision-making?

ODFW is committed to providing programs and services respectfully, compassionately, and effectively in a manner that acknowledges, affirms, and values culture, language, national origin, class, race, age, ethnic background, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and the diversity of our customers and stakeholders. ODFW is a large agency with a broad scope and does not have a definitive process for incorporating environmental justice factors into all agency operations. Instead, individual agency divisions, programs, and policies have distinct processes for incorporating environmental justice into their operations and decision-making. As the natural resource agency charged with the conservation and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats in Oregon, environmental concerns are central to the agency's business. Expanding the consideration of, and collaboration with, environmental justice communities is currently what the agency is working to improve on through rule-making processes, cooperative agreements, grant programs, and other operations.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) formulates state programs, policies, and Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) concerning management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources. The Commission consists of seven members appointed by the governor representing each regional river basin. The agency is required to involve the public in the drafting of OARs, which includes public in-person and virtual meetings, written comment periods, and a multitude of outreach efforts statewide. Commission meetings are open to the public and provide opportunities for public comment and testimony. For newly established programs or topics where consensus is particularly important, the agency may appoint a rules advisory committee.

In 2021, the Oregon State Legislature adopted new statutes ([House Bill 2993](#)) that require any rule advisory committee appointed by an agency to represent interests of persons and communities likely to be affected by the rule. To better identify communities that may be affected by ODFW's rulemaking activities and incorporate them into the decision-making process, the agency is inviting members of the public from underrepresented communities to complete a [racial equity participation questionnaire](#) regarding interest in engaging in rulemaking and other processes that may affect their community or region. Communities include representatives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), low income, and other underrepresented communities.



Environmental Justice Council

ODFW's Tribal Government Relations Policy promotes government-to-government relations between ODFW and Oregon's federally recognized Indian Tribes. This policy directs ODFW to include consideration of tribal interests in the development and implementation of agency programs that may affect tribes. The agency is currently working with tribes more directly through development of cooperative management agreements that seek to expand collaboration on enhancing fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. The agreements also set up a framework under which tribal members are able to engage in subsistence and ceremonial harvest that will be managed by the tribal governments as opposed to requiring a state-issued license in these geographic areas. These agreements will increase opportunities for tribal members to harvest consistent with tribal values, in coordination with ODFW.

Environmental justice factors are incorporated into decision-making for various ODFW grant management programs (e.g., **Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund**, **Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program**), which include specific criteria to prioritize funding projects that serve environmental justice communities. The agency also utilizes spatial mapping tools (e.g., **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool**) that identify environmental justice communities and issues to prioritize projects and secure federal and state funding.

ODFW also participates on numerous councils and working groups that co-manage fish and wildlife natural resources, which maintain individual processes for incorporating environmental justice factors into their operations (e.g., Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), Pacific Flyway Council, Cultural Resources Cluster and Natural Resources Workgroup, Tribal Water Task Force). For example, ODFW is a member of the PFMC, which is charged with managing ocean fisheries in federal waters, that has its own Equity and Environmental Justice Workgroup that the agency participates in.

b. How does your agency keep track of environmental justice issues that have been identified?

The agency does not have a centralized system that tracks all environmental justice issues that have been identified. Environmental justice issues are recorded, monitored, and addressed around individual agency policies, processes, and programs. In 2024, the agency created a new Community Engagement Coordinator position in the Director's Office. This position will be working to formalize processes to keep track of environmental justice issues beginning in 2025.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

a. How does your agency define environmental justice communities?

ODFW has not universally defined environmental justice communities across the agency, although agency divisions and programs have similar descriptions of 'underserved' and 'underrepresented' communities. These communities include, but are not limited to, BIPOC communities, low-income communities, persons with disabilities, and other communities traditionally underrepresented in the agency's public processes. Since ODFW's efforts focus on natural resource/environmental management, our descriptions of underserved communities and environmental justice communities are very similar. The agency will work on adopting the environmental justice community definition in ORS 182.535 Section 4 under the direction of our new Community Engagement Coordinator in 2025.





b. What tools does your agency use to identify and prioritize environmental justice communities?

ODFW uses a variety of tools to identify and prioritize environmental justice communities, from administrative rules and policies to online spatial tools and resources.

ODFW has long prioritized members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes as a top priority environmental justice community (e.g., [ODFW's Tribal Government Relations Policy: Senate Bill 770](#)). Oregon's tribes have been connected to the management of fish, wildlife, and their habitats since time immemorial. The agency is currently working with tribes on the development of cooperative management agreements that will increase opportunities for tribal members to harvest consistent with tribal values, in coordination with ODFW. These agreements, and the partnerships that flow from them, are a great way for ODFW to support tribal self-determination within the agency's existing authority. By facilitating this reconnection with tribally important resources, cultural practices, and access to the first foods that are managed by ODFW, these efforts are able to address historic losses of opportunity for the tribes while giving the tribes a stronger voice in protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife, and their habitats for future generations.

ODFW uses spatial online tools to identify environmental justice communities and overlays them with natural resource/environmental issues to prioritize agency projects and efforts. The agency uses various online resources, such as the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) that identifies underserved communities that are overburdened by issues related to climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water, and wastewater. Another resource the agency uses is ODOT's [Climate Hazard Risk Map](#) and [Statewide Equity Index Layer](#). These tools spatially display human and infrastructure vulnerability to climate hazards, overlaid with the spatial distribution of disparity across the state based on low-income, race and ethnicity, age, English proficiency, and disability.

ODFW uses these resources to identify and prioritize locations, communities, and projects to seek funding for, build partnerships around, and/or implement projects in. For example, Hood River County was highlighted in the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, as well as in several ODFW fish conservation plans (e.g., steelhead, coho salmon), and the Bureau of Reclamation Water Conservation Assessment. Many underserved communities lack the capacity to track and apply for federal funding opportunities to overcome burdens within their communities, so ODFW partnered with the Hood River Watershed Group to apply and secure federal grants for multiple habitat restoration projects. Restoration efforts in the Lower East Fork Hood River, Neal Creek, and Baldwin Creek will support underserved landowners with water efficiency, restore aquatic habitat to improve water quality and quantity and increase climate change resiliency, while also providing instream habitat for fish listed under the Endangered Species Act.

ODFW develops and implements plans to highlight and prioritize environmental justice communities, including the:

- [ODFW Strategic Plan](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan \(2023\)](#)
- [Limited English Proficiency Plan](#)
- [Program Accessibility for People with Disabilities](#)



Identification and/or prioritization of environmental justice communities can also occur as a result of partnership building, outreach and communication, participation in public processes, grant applications, and other avenues that build collaboration with communities.

2. Public Participation and Meaningful Involvement

(ORS 182.535 Section 2; ORS 182.550: Increase public participation of individuals and communities affected by agencies' decisions)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCESSES

a. Does your agency have a public engagement policy or process for promoting community participation in agency decision-making processes?

The agency gives full consideration to public participation in decision-making. The diversity of issues that ODFW is involved in, along with the differences in scale (e.g., international, multi-state, statewide, regional, local), requires the agency to utilize a variety of processes to promote community participation in agency decision-making. Processes also vary depending on whether the products are related to natural resource plans and projects, agency administration and budgets, or require rulemaking.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission formulates state programs, policies, and OARs concerning management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources. The agency is required to involve the public in the drafting of OARs. Adoption of proposed Administrative Procedures Act rules are noticed to the public six weeks in advance of the decision-making Commission meeting. Meeting materials are posted to the agency public website two weeks in advance of the public meeting providing balanced and objective information on the issues, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions. Language services for alternate languages are offered. The agency solicits written public comments no less than six weeks before rulemaking. The agency takes verbal testimony at public meetings that rotate to different locations across the state, with options to provide testimony both in-person or via electronic meeting software (i.e., Teams or Zoom). For decisions that are of great interest to the public, the agency provides additional opportunities for public participation, including stakeholder meetings, advisory committees, workshops, working groups, and informational briefings.

ODFW promotes community participation in decision-making through diverse outreach channels. The agency maintains a list of interested parties, which are notified of all upcoming Commission decision-making items. The agency continually seeks to involve a diverse range of participants representing an array of views and opinions using a variety of outreach channels, including the agency's website, media releases, and social media. New strategies for reaching expanding audiences are being explored. The agency is currently inviting members of the public from underrepresented communities to complete a [racial equity participation questionnaire](#) regarding interest in engaging in rulemaking and other processes that may affect their community or region. Communities include representatives of BIPOC, low income, and other underrepresented communities.

During the budget development process, ODFW holds a public engagement process with stakeholders. In preparation of the 2023-25 budget proposal, ODFW held four virtual town hall listening sessions where a budget overview was presented followed by a question-and-answer session. Public comments on the budget were also collected by both mail and electronic submission. This input was considered in the Agency Request Budget, which is submitted to the



Environmental Justice Council

Commission for approval before being sent to the Governor's Office. In 2024, ODFW disbanded our External Budget Advisory Committee for the 2025-2027 budget development process in favor of a more equitable approach of open public engagement sessions open to all

Agency decisions that do not require a formal process still prioritize public engagement and community involvement. Input and/or feedback on agency plans, strategies, prioritization efforts, or on-the-ground projects is solicited in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, public meetings across the state, virtual public meetings, written comment periods, advisory committees, small group meetings, surveys, presentations, etc. For example, the **Oregon Conservation Strategy**, Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan, is currently undergoing a comprehensive revision. Public input and community participation is a priority of the revision effort, which will include a diverse stakeholder advisory committee, in-person and virtual public meetings, expanded outreach and engagement efforts with urban and rural communities, and collaborations with tribes. The intent of the State Wildlife Action Plan is for every Oregonian to find their own role in conservation. The revised plan will incorporate "pollution" as a Key Conservation Issue for the first time, creating greater opportunity for overlap in conservation planning with environmental justice communities who are encountering the same pollutants.





b. Describe the current level and quality of public participation?

Level and quality of public participation in agency decision-making frameworks fluctuates due to a number of variables, including topic, issue, and/or degree of impact to members of the public. For example, contentious issues or broad topics that impact more entities typically result in a higher level and quality of public participation. Topics that necessitate an advisory committee or a high level of participation generally attract fewer participants due to the time and effort required. On average, public participation in agency decision-making efforts is good, but still dominated by interest groups with paid staff who can spend dedicated time engaging. The agency is continually working to broaden and diversify entities that engage in the agency's decision-making processes to better represent and incorporate a diversity of communities, views, priorities, and interests into agency decisions, especially those who are interested but unable to participate in the traditional processes laid out in the Administrative Procedures Act. The new Community Engagement Coordinator position created in 2024 will help ODFW leadership consider new pathways for more modern and equitable engagement processes.

c. Does the agency follow-up with individuals and communities after decisions are made?

The agency informs the public after decisions have been made. Commission decisions are posted on the agency's website and sent out as a media release. Commission meeting notes and recordings are also available on the ODFW website. Agency decisions on plans, strategies, grants, and other products are communicated to all participating entities and interested parties via email, website updates, follow-up meetings, and/or personal communications.





TARGETED AUDIENCES

a. Has the agency performed a stakeholder analysis to determine the stakeholder groups impacted by agency decisions?

ODFW has not performed a universal analysis to determine what stakeholder groups are impacted by agency decisions, since the agency's management authorities are extensive and complex. Stakeholder analyses are typically conducted around specific topics, issues, or efforts, and are led by different sections of the agency (e.g., Commission, divisions, programs, regions) depending on the scale or significance of the effort. The methodology behind stakeholder analyses also varies from surveys and self-selection to spatial analyses and agency reports. ODFW is working to expand and diversify the stakeholders engaged in our agency operations.

To better identify communities that may be affected by ODFW's rulemaking activities and incorporate them into the decision-making process, the agency is inviting members of the public from underrepresented communities to complete a [racial equity participation questionnaire](#) regarding interest in engaging in rulemaking and other processes that may affect their community or region. Communities include representatives of BIPOC, low income, and other underrepresented communities.

Since the 2023 legislative session, the Agency Request Budget includes a Racial Equity Impact Statement, which corresponds with the requirements set by HB 2167. This statement describes the impact of programs, policies, and budget modifications on Oregonians in BIPOC communities. The statement also recognizes that successful engagement will require staff at all levels, from leadership to front-line employees, to understand the importance of striving to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of our programs.

b. With which stakeholders does your agency engage?

ODFW engages with hundreds of diverse stakeholders across the state on a wide breadth of topics. Stakeholders that have customarily engaged with the agency include entities that are interested in the conservation and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats, as well as outdoor enthusiasts. These entities include: sports groups (e.g., hunting, fishing), conservation organizations (e.g., species, habitats), environmental advocacy groups (e.g., water resiliency), outdoor recreation groups (e.g., hiking, photography, species collectors), agricultural communities, (e.g., livestock, timber), natural resource-related business industries, science/educational institutions, private landowners, public interest groups, and many more. While not considered 'stakeholders', the agency also heavily engages with tribes and federal, state, county, and local government agencies.

A key stakeholder, and one of ODFW's core target audiences, are individuals that purchase hunting and fishing licenses and tags. ODFW welcomes all persons to hunt, fish, trap, harvest shellfish, and participate in wildlife viewing regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin (including language), sex, age, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation. ODFW's Electronic Licensing System contains more than 1.17 million unique customers that are Oregon residents, representing approximately 28% of the state's population. The agency heavily engages with these stakeholders to increase participation in fishing and hunting activities, advocate for fish and wildlife, and provide information to reduce impacts to our natural



Environmental Justice Council

resources. Hunters and anglers are heavily engaged in the agency's efforts and participate in many of the agency's planning and decision-making processes.

The Racial Equity Impact Statement in the Agency Request Budget includes examples of engagement with communities to increase and diversify public use and enjoyment of Oregon's fish and wildlife. Examples of agency efforts include:

- Development of the ODFW Community Engagement Plan with Racial Justice Council oversight that further integrates BIPOC engagement into the Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation program for hunters, anglers, and wildlife viewers;
- Increasing the availability of department information in multiple languages;
- Pursuing facility upgrades that ensure compliance with accessibility standards, American Disability Act (ADA) access and services; and
- Building and maintaining relationships with underserved populations and BIPOC community delegates and listening to their feedback to further guide how we inform, engage, and collaborate with these communities.

ODFW's **Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund** has funded a wide variety of projects designed to serve environmental justice communities, and has focused on engaging with 'underserved people and communities' described as those that have not traditionally participated in conservation issues or outdoor recreation in the past due to various barriers and perceptions, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and/or other cultural, religious and/or economic status, and other considerations as listed in the **State of Oregon Equity Framework**.

ODFW works with a multitude of diverse stakeholders statewide to implement the **Oregon Conservation Strategy**, which is a broad strategy for all Oregonians offering potential conservation roles and opportunities for citizens, private landowners, organizations, and agencies alike. Healthy fish and wildlife populations require adequate habitat, which is provided in natural systems and in landscapes managed for forestry, agriculture, range, and urban uses; therefore, the agency strives to engage with urban and rural communities, agricultural and timber associations, public interest/sports groups, conservation/non-governmental organizations, and private landowners/managers to work together to prevent the further decline of at-risk species and habitats.

c. What is the extent of meaningful engagement?

The answers provided above identify the extent of 'meaningful engagement' since it depends on the issue, program, and/or process being described. In summary:

- ODFW is working on increasing and facilitating engagement with vulnerable populations to participate in decisions that affect their environment (ORS 182.535 Section 7(a)(d)).
- Public involvement does influence ODFW decision-making via the channels discussed above (ORS 182.535 Section 7(b)).
- The concerns of all participants involved are considered in the agency's decision-making processes (ORS 182.535 Section 7(c)).



3. Agency Environmental Justice Impacts

(ORS 182.550 Section 3: Determine the effect of agencies' decision on environmental justice communities)

a. Does your agency measure the impacts of agency decisions on environmental justice in Oregon communities? Why or why not?

ODFW does not have a comprehensive agency-wide metric tracking the impact of agency decisions on environmental justice in Oregon communities. Measuring impacts of agency decisions has been conducted around specific issues or program efforts, but it has not been a consistent practice across the agency. For example, the [Marine Reserves Program Synthesis](#) had a Human Dimensions component that assessed whether marine reserve implementation had any measurable, direct or indirect social, cultural, and/or economic impacts. This effort required broad-based interdisciplinary research using both quantitative (e.g., surveys, observational studies, economic modeling) and qualitative research methods (e.g., interviews, ethnographies, community case studies).

The Fish and Wildlife Commission must make decisions under the guidance of the state's Wildlife Policy (Ors 496.012). The primary directive to be considered in decisions is whether a decision prevents serious depletion of any indigenous species and provides optimum recreational and aesthetic benefits for present and future generations of the citizens of this state. Thus, ODFW must measure impacts of decisions as they relate to the recreational and aesthetic benefits to environmental justice communities. We consider these impacts through the public engagement process of the Commission and depending on the geographic scale of the decision. Some decisions only impact one environmental justice community, but many impact a diversity of environmental justice communities. In general, these impacts are measured qualitatively—because the decisions are impacting voluntary access or opportunity to interact with fish and wildlife.

Measurement can be difficult due to a lack of data and a need to shift focus to pursue qualitative research, which can help inform greater detail on the impacts at an individual community level. Qualitative research methods, such as focus groups and interviews, capture a wide range and depth of information on the experiences a community has, but also necessitate a more personal outreach effort when compared to surveys. Qualitative research methods require a time investment and specific capabilities, such as providing a safe environment and leaning into active listening skills to collect the information, as well as technical expertise to properly analyze the data and to present findings in a useful manner. ODFW does not have the funding or staff capacity and technical expertise to conduct this level of qualitative research for all agency decisions.





4. Agency Environmental Justice Progress

(ORS 182.550 Section 4: Improve plans to further the progress of environmental justice in Oregon)

a. How is Environmental Justice built into agency strategic plans, policies, and/or legislation?

Environmental justice is built into many ODFW plans, strategies, policies, and programs. Below are summaries of a select few that reflect the diversity of efforts ODFW is implementing to address environmental justice issues and communities.

ODFW's Strategic Plan is made up of four goals, one of which focuses on increasing the diversity of the agency's customers to reflect the gender, age, and ethnic diversity of the state's population. ODFW's Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Program is working on increasing engagement with underrepresented populations by providing workshops, classes, and events that are culturally relevant, in native languages, and offered in readily accessible settings.

Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan acknowledges that there have been gaps in reaching all Oregonians and sets ODFW on a course to find ways to achieve our mission in service to everyone while encouraging everyone to find their place in Oregon's outdoors. This will involve caring for and celebrating existing relationships with people and organizations, while intentionally building new relationships.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL #2

Increase and diversify public participation in the use and enjoyment of Oregon's fish and wildlife resources.

One of the four goals in the **ODFW Climate and Ocean Change Policy** directs ODFW to provide leadership toward a coordinated statewide and regional response that minimizes the impacts of changing climate and ocean conditions on Oregon's natural resources and the communities, culture, and economies reliant on them.

The strategies and focus areas in the **ODFW Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan** (2023) overlap with environmental justice issues and working with environmental justice communities. The plan strives to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of the agency's programs and services to better serve the diverse population of Oregonians.

The **Limited English Proficiency Plan** outlines how the agency will provide timely and meaningful access to ODFW programs, services, and benefits to individuals that do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English, as well as deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

The ODFW **Program Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy** confirms that no person with a disability shall be denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any programs, activities, or services of ODFW because facilities accessible to, or usable by, persons with disabilities are not available.

House Bill 2993 requires any rule advisory committee appointed by an agency to represent interests of persons and communities likely to be affected by the rule. To better identify communities that may be affected by ODFW's rulemaking activities and incorporate them into the decision-making process, the agency is inviting members of the public from underrepresented communities to complete a **racial equity participation questionnaire**



Environmental Justice Council

regarding interest in engaging in rulemaking and other processes that may affect their community or region.

The Racial Justice Council Codification Bill ([HB 2167](#)) includes requirements for state agencies to engage with BIPOC communities as part of their budget and policy development process.

Government-to-government agreements that authorize the take of fish and wildlife resources by tribal members under special policies are adopted by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. Many of these agreements are in [OAR Chapter 635, Division 800](#). A few older agreements are in OAR Chapter 635 [Divisions 41 and 43](#). By forming agreements with tribal governments that increase their self-determination in regulating hunting and fishing by their members, members of tribal communities no longer need to interact with the state to participate in hunting and fishing, restoring a historic norm of tribal governments overseeing such activities by their members. Implementing the new comprehensive agreements identified in the 2024 and 2025 annual workplans for ODFW's executive leadership team as key opportunities to implement ODFW's Strategic Plan.

ODFW also participates on multi-state and international councils that co-manage fish and wildlife natural resources and that maintain individual plans and policies for incorporating environmental justice factors into their operations. ODFW is a member of the PFMC, which is charged with managing ocean fisheries in federal waters, and has its own [Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy](#) that the agency is involved with.





Environmental Justice Council

Grant programs administered by ODFW address environmental justice in their application and project selection processes. The **OCRF** provides funding for projects that reduce barriers for underserved communities to connect with the outdoors, and is committed to reaching out and engaging with underserved communities who have not traditionally participated in conservation issues or outdoor recreation in the past due to various barriers and perceptions, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and/or other cultural, religion, and/or economic status.

The agency produces a large number of species conservation and management plans (e.g., **Rogue-South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan**), which incorporate environmental justice into the specific issues, locations, and recommendations addressed in the plans.

b. How is the agency hoping to improve integrating environmental justice considerations in short term and long-term operations?

By the end of 2024, ODFW has published the first ever version of the sportfishing regulations in to Spanish. The detailed jargon associated with hunting and fishing requires cocreation rather than just translation to ensure that readers receive adequate information to understand the regulations and comply with the laws. This process of creating the Spanish language regulations will make it more efficient to do the same with the hunting regulations in 2025 and future ODFW publications.





Environmental Justice Council

To ensure the agency is accurately and consistently applying the terms ‘environmental justice’ and ‘environmental justice communities’, the agency will work on adopting the definitions provided in ORS 182.535 Section 4. The agency will also work on improving staff comprehension and application of environmental justice considerations into policies, plans, and actions. ODFW does not have staff positions focused on environmental justice and is currently looking for funds to support creation of a position that would assist the agency and staff better understand, implement, and engage with environmental justice issues and communities.

ODFW hopes to improve the agency’s integration of environmental justice considerations by implementing the policies, plans, and actions described in this report. For example, the ODFW Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan recognizes that the customers the agency serves are not representative of the diversity in Oregon and provides examples of what the agency is doing, or planning on doing, to address the issues, including:

- Listen to different segments of the public to better understand their views on fish and wildlife and their habitats.
- Outreach to local community organizations.
- Reflect diversity in outreach materials including images, languages, and personal stories.
- Collaborate with other public organizations to foster diversity and inclusion.
- Foster relationships with outdoor recreation sponsors that support diversity and inclusion.
- Promote opportunities in locations and/or communities that are underserved.
- Advertise diversity outreach events widely.
- Develop multilingual signage and materials for customers.





Environmental Justice Council

ODFW also plans to continue to elevate the role of tribal governments as partners in meeting ODFW's mission, especially in issues that each tribe self-identifies as important to them. For example, ODFW staff have deeply integrated five tribes in western Oregon in to the ODFW process of evaluating current and future opportunities and needs for Oregon's fish hatchery system. Maintaining operation and function of fish hatcheries has been identified as an important consideration by all five of these tribes. ODFW has also supported nine staff attending the Portland State University Certificate in Tribal Relations program over the last nine years. These staff are working together to create new opportunities to share information about interacting with tribal members and tribal governments with as many staff as possible.

ODFW will continue to work to identify communities that may be affected by ODFW's operations and rulemaking activities and incorporate them into the decision-making process. The agency will also continue to identify and prioritize efforts in areas where natural resource issues and underserved communities overlap.

c. What does your agency need to further develop and implement environmental justice policies at the agency?

Funding for an environmental justice staff position at ODFW is vital for successfully developing and implementing environmental justice policies consistently across the agency. In recognition that the agency has been unsuccessful in finding funding for dedicated staff position over multiple biennia, in 2024 the agency repurposed existing position authority to create a Community Engagement Coordinator. This position will be a key stimulator of action to develop and implement environmental justice policies at the agency.

Educational references and tools are needed to improve staff comprehension and consideration of environmental justice issues and communities in planning processes, program implementation, and outreach efforts.

5. Agency Environmental Justice Mapping Tool Involvement

(ORS 182.550 Section 5: Utilize the environmental justice mapping tool developed under section 12 of this 2022 Act)

a. How is the agency participating in the development of the environmental justice mapping tool?

ODFW submitted the agency's inventory of datasets that relate to climate change and associated impacts for consideration into the environmental justice mapping tool. The agency can provide information on how climate change is impacting stream flow and temperature, ocean temperature and hypoxia, and the impacts of the changing climate on fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.



6. Agency Environmental Council Engagement 2025

a. How would the agency like to engage with Environmental Justice Council in 2025?

The agency will continue to act as a liaison to the Environmental Justice Council. An ODFW representative will participate in Council and liaison meetings, provide requested input and annual reports, and utilize the resources that are produced by the Council.

7. Agency Environmental Justice Council Legislation Citations

a. Please share agency impacted legislation where Environmental Justice Council or Environmental Justice Task Force engagement is cited in the legislation.

None

8. Agency Meaningful Engagement Related Legislation

a. Please share agency impacted legislation that includes language regarding meaningful engagement.

Examples of legislation that emphasize meaningful engagement and impact agency operations are outlined below.

House Bill 2993 requires any rule advisory committee appointed by an agency to represent interests of persons and communities likely to be affected by the rule.

The Racial Justice Council Codification Bill (**HB 2167**) includes requirements for state agencies to engage with BIPOC communities as part of their budget and policy development process.

Senate Bill 770 directs state agencies to promote government-to-government relations with Oregon's federally recognized tribes, and to develop and implement policies that include the consideration of tribal interests in the development and implementation of state programs that may affect tribes.

Senate Bill 1501 (SB 1602, 1502, HB 4055) includes language directing ODFW to expend Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund moneys toward specific activities, including improving educational outreach and engagement of the public, including diverse and underserved communities, related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife, and habitats.



DEFINITIONS

Environmental Justice:

(ORS 182.535 Section 3)

“Environmental justice” means the equal protection from environmental and health risks, fair treatment and meaningful involvement in decision making of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, immigration status, income or other identities with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn and practice spirituality and culture.

Environmental Justice Community:

(ORS 182.535 Section 4)

“Environmental justice community” includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, tribal communities, rural communities, remote communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.

Meaningful Involvement:

(ORS 182.535 Section 7)

“Meaningful involvement” means:

- (a) Members of vulnerable populations have appropriate opportunities to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment or health;
- (b) Public involvement can influence a decision maker’s decision;
- (c) The concerns of all participants involved are considered in the decision-making process; and
- (d) Decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of members of vulnerable populations

Environmental Burdens:

(ORS 182.535 Section 2)

“Environmental burden” means the environmental and health risks to communities caused by the combined historic, current and projected future effects of:

- (a) Exposure to conventional pollution and toxic hazards in the air or in or on water or land;
- (b) Adverse environmental conditions caused or made worse by other contamination or pollution; and
- (c) Changes in the environment resulting from climate change, such as water insecurity, drought, flooding, wildfire, smoke and other air pollution, extreme heat, loss of traditional cultural resources or foods, ocean acidification, sea-level rise and increases in infectious disease.