Oregon Council Conservation Grants

Guidelines & Procedures

Introduction

The Oregon Council of the International Fly Fishing Federation (ORCFFF) has funds budgeted to help member clubs conduct conservation projects directed at the restoration, improvement, and/or maintenance of environmental conditions that enhance the habitat of Oregon fish and fisheries. In addition, the National FFF usually has matching funds available for these same purposes. (Applications for both sources of funds must directed through, and officially sponsored by the ORCFFF, as explained below.) The following guidelines, rules for application, as well as the process and criteria to allocate these funds to those projects most likely to fulfill the above mission represent the current best effort of the ORCFFF Conservation Committee to establish a process that is fair, efficient, and congruent with the requirements of the National FFF. Because the efforts of both National and ORCFFF are works in progress, we expect improvements in both processes over time; nevertheless, the following guidelines and rules will apply strictly to all applications to the ORCFFF until amended.

Communication

The ORCFFF Conservation Committee makes every effort to communicate efficiently with ORCFFF member clubs. Timely email updates are sent regularly to those contacts for member clubs that are on file at the ORCFFF. Each member club is required to keep the President or the Membership Chairperson of the ORCFFF current with this contact information, especially with respect to their delegated representative and to the club member in charge of conservation programs for that club. The general guidelines and application forms for these conservation grant applications are available at the website of ORCFFF http://fedflyfishers.org/Councils/Oregon/ORCFFFGrants.aspx, which is a sub-site of the National FFF http://www.fedflyfishers.org. All correspondence and communication regarding applications to the ORCFFF for conservation grant funding must flow through the Chairperson of the ORCFFF Conservation Committee at grantorcccff@gmail.com.

Indeed, applicants and potential applicants for conservation funding are strongly encouraged to contact the current Chairperson for guidance before submitting an application. However, the lobbying of Conservation Committee members after the application is submitted is strongly discouraged. Every effort should be made to make and support the case for that proposal within the written application itself. Moreover, at each meeting of the Conservation Committee to consider conservation grant applications the applicant, or one member of the sponsoring club will be invited to make the case briefly for their proposal, as described below in item 7.

While funding decisions by the ORCFFF Conservation Committee are final after their approval by the Executive Board of the ORCFFF, unsuccessful grant applications will be anonymously critiqued by members of the Conservation Committee, and those written comments passed on to the unsuccessful applicants in an effort to encourage the resubmission of revised, improved applications where this is appropriate. While it is neither practical nor fair for the application process to be undisciplined, the ORCFFF Conservation Committee seeks to encourage applications and to facilitate the process by strongly advocating advance communication between applicants and the Committee via its Chairperson, well prior to the application deadline.
And since all unfunded applications remain for consideration in competition with subsequently submitted applications through the January 15 deadline, there is no disadvantage to submission by May 1.

In most cases, funding from the ORCFFF will be available shortly after the funding decision date. Matching funds from the National FFF are usually available about 1-2 months after the ORCFFF funding decision date. While every effort will be made to adhere to this schedule for actual funding, these are estimates rather than guaranteed outcomes.

**Application Forms**

Application forms are available at the National FFF website at: xxx Applicants are instructed to use the forms on this website for submission of applications to the ORCFFF. The national guidelines here also apply, in addition to the guidelines outlined here. If the applicant downloads the PDF file of the ORCFFF application form, it can be filled out and revised on the applicant's computer, saved to the applicants hard drive, and submitted by email to the ORCFFF Conservation Committee at its email address (grantorcfff@gmail.com). While the spaces in the application form appear small, they are designed to expand as typescript is added to allow for the inclusion of the information requested. Applicants are also encouraged to provide additional, supplemental information and documentation to support their application. (See guidelines, below.) Applications are due by midnight of the due date. The preferred method is email, but snail mail must arrive by midnight of the due date.

**Criteria for Evaluation of Applications**

Each Application will be judged primarily by the Committee's best estimate of its potential impact on fish and their habitat, and the cost-effectiveness of the proposed project. (In some cases educational projects can be judged to have an impact on the environment.

A. A major influence on such an evaluation is the evaluation of the significance of the problem/issue to be addressed.

B. A major consideration will be how effectively and completely, the proposed project will address that problem/issue.

C. Another important consideration is an estimation of the likelihood that the proposed projected will be completed as planned and achieve its stated goals. To evaluate this the Committee will focus on the completeness of advanced planning, the qualifications and the experience of those designated to carry out the work, the availability of materials and personnel, the consideration of alternate approaches to overcome potential obstacles, the support and cooperation of appropriate government and private conservation organizations, and the acquisition of requisite permitting when such is required. Applicants that do their homework before applying and document well thought out planning will necessarily have an advantage in the competition for funding. A track record of the successful completion of previous projects of a similar nature provides additional support for the likelihood of a successful completion of the newly proposed project.

D. The cost effectiveness of the project will have a major bearing on its evaluation by the Committee. Intelligent, lean, and well-documented budgets will necessarily confer an advantage. Unclear, unusual, or unusually priced budget items should be solidly justified and their costs documented by supporting material. Applications that take advantage of cost sharing with other sources of funding will naturally have a major advantage, as they effectively multiply the impact of limited ORCFFF (and of National FFF) funds. Where such cost-sharing is available, its availability should be well documented, for example by a letter of commitment from the other funding source(s) or its equivalent.

E. The timeliness of the proposed project should be evident from a clear schedule for its execution and an estimated realistic completion date.
Mechanics of Prioritization of Funding

The money available to fund conservation projects is necessarily limited, and applications must be evaluated and ranked for priority for funding. Unfortunately, often worthwhile projects cannot be funded.

At each of the three annual meetings of the Conservation Committee to consider applications, each grant will be evaluated beforehand by the Chairperson for completeness and appropriateness for competitive consideration by the Committee as a whole for conservation funding. Incomplete, inaccurate, or inappropriate applications will not be considered further. (For example, a very worthy application for the funding of a wonderful educational program in fly casting should be re-directed to the appropriate source of such funding.) This is one of many reasons that applicants are strongly advised to consult with the Conservation Chairperson well prior to the application deadline for guidance, especially for applications where such qualification might be in question.

Once the applications have been received and approved for consideration, they are distributed by email to the members of the Conservation Committee for advanced evaluation, well prior to the meeting. In some cases questions will arise from Committee members, who will then direct those questions to the applicant through the Conservation Chairperson, but not by direct contact with the applicant.

At the time of the meeting, one advocate for each proposal will be allowed a brief period to make a succinct case for that proposal, and to respond to questions from the Committee members during the conference call. That advocate must them absent themselves from the subsequent Committee discussion and voting. Each eligible member of the Committee shall have one vote, whereupon he/she will assign a numerical score from 1.0 to 5.0, in 0.5 increments, where 1.0 signifies the highest (best) score and 5.0 the lowest.

Members of the Conservation Committee are not allowed to vote on proposals from clubs in which they are members. While these scores will used to prioritize the applications for funding, they are each given on an absolute scale, without reference to the other applications. The Chairperson will then average the votes of the members to obtain a final score for that application.

Funding will be awarded in accordance with the score. Applications approved for consideration, but not funded will retain their priority score throughout that funding year (through the January 15 application deadline) so as to remain competitive with applications submitted for consideration at subsequent meetings of the Committee within that fiscal year. If applicants choose to revise and resubmit an unfunded application for future consideration, it will replace the old application, and receive a new score at the next meeting of the Committee following its resubmission. In many cases applicants will choose to respond to the written, anonymous criticisms of the Committee to improve their application, and this is to be encouraged.

In all cases, decisions of the Conservation Committee are final, although subject to the approval of the ORCFFF, via its Executive Board, before execution. It would be unusual for the recommendations of the Conservation Committee to be overruled by the Council, and the direct lobbying of officers of the Council is strongly discouraged. Once these guidelines, application criteria, and procedures have been approved by the ORCFFF as a whole, they are generally applicable to all members.

Reporting Requirements

It is the fiduciary duty of the ORCFFF, and of its Conservation Committee, to exercise due diligence in the management of its funding of conservation projects. To that end, it is required that the individual indicated in the application as the responsible party for that funded project submit a final written report to the Conservation Committee upon completion of the project, within 30 days of the date cited in the approved application for such completion. In cases where the responsible party has been replaced by another, or when the project’s completion has been delayed, a full report and explanation of these changes is required within 30 days of the change, or not later than 30 days following the above defined completion date, whichever date is earlier.

When projects cannot be completed as planned the Conservation Chairperson must be notified immediately, and a written report filed within 30 days. All unexpended funds must be returned to the ORCFFF Conservation Fund, and
are not available for use by that member club for other purposes, including other conservation purposes.

Questions

E-mail: grantorcfff@gmail.com