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Engaging Oregonians in Conservation: Strategy Outreach, Conservation Education and Fish and Wildlife-Based Tourism

Overview

Connecting people to nature is an important element of successful Conservation Strategy implementation. Acquiring the basic functional knowledge, skills and motives to conserve Oregon's native fish and wildlife allows people to work together to take strategic actions for the benefit of current and future generations. Fostering broad participation in conservation will be critical to truly meet the Conservation Strategy's goals of maintaining Oregon's fish, wildlife and habitats. There are different ways to engage Oregonians in conservation. Elsewhere in this document, the Conservation Strategy describes ways people can get involved in on-the-ground projects and in citizen-based monitoring. This chapter describes additional opportunities:

Strategy Outreach – the need to tell people about the Strategy's goals, voluntary approach, and opportunities, and **Conservation Education** – provide opportunities for people to learn about their natural environment.

Fish and Wildlife-based Tourism – support existing and expand sustainable fish and wildlife-based recreation to increase support for fish and wildlife conservation and support local economies.

“Human Dimensions” Research – learn more about how people want to be involved in conservation and how to best support landowners in voluntary conservation.

These topics are inter-related and overlapping. For example, a “birding trail” - a well-organized and interpreted series of bird watching sites - can allow families to spend time outdoors together, enjoy wildlife watching, learn about bird identification and behavior, learn about conservation issues facing birds, and see habitat restoration projects that benefit birds.

Strategy Outreach and Conservation Education

Education and outreach are two components of a successful conservation strategy. According to the North American Association of Envi-

ronmental Education (www.naaee.org), conservation education should foster clear awareness of conservation issues; provide opportunities to acquire knowledge, interest, commitment, and skill; and can create new patterns of behavior. Many current education programs focus on building awareness, but knowledge and awareness of issues are just the first two steps. Conservation education programs need to serve all age levels, go beyond environmental sensitivity, and include action items to model behavior. Ideally, conservation education will provide Oregonians with an understanding of the various issues involved with species conservation and natural resource management so they can understand all sides of complex issues and support sound decisions.

There are several predictors of high quality conservation education:

- Fairness and accuracy
- Depth of knowledge
- Emphasis on skills building
- Action and orientation
- Instructional soundness
- Usability and applicability
- Life-long learning

In the context of this Conservation Strategy, conservation education and outreach around the state should be tied and targeted at Conservation Opportunity Areas identified within the Conservation Strategy. Education programs can be linked directly to on-the-ground conservation efforts throughout the state, and conversely, those conservation efforts should take every opportunity to incorporate education (e.g. citizen-based monitoring and interactive project-based nature programs). Delivery of education and outreach needs to be community-based and community driven, which implies partnerships between schools, conservation organizations, agencies, businesses, and others. Engaged communities are able to develop innovative and cooperative conservation actions, support strategic conservation investments, and

steward conservation areas effectively. Education partnerships should aim to inspire communities to create a better future for fish and wildlife and their habitats.

All species and habitats are connected. Fish and wildlife occur everywhere and are connected to people. Through fish- and wildlife-based recreation and through land management activities, people are connected to fish and wildlife. These are some of the messages Conservation Strategy implementers can use in outreach efforts. A statewide outreach effort might begin by developing broad messages, identifying discrete target audiences (both potential implementation partners for the Conservation Strategy and broader audiences), and refining the broad messages for each target audience. Outreach messages should be tied to an issue or an opportunity and presented as a positive vision for the future. Conservation Strategy implementers can then say, "Oregon has a strategy, a way to achieve this vision." Oregonians are proud of their culture, history, and people. Outreach could build from these strengths. In the past, present, and future people will take great strides or make sacrifices to further conservation. It is important to celebrate conservation successes and significant conservation attempts. Oregon is increasingly diverse, so conservation-related information needs to be readily available to and understandable for a broad array of audiences.

Implementing the Conservation Strategy will require new and broader coalitions of partners. One of these coalitions should focus on education and outreach, coordinating conservation education at the state level and creating demonstration projects as educational tools for target audiences. There is a need to recruit new conservation partners and engage conservation education providers in strategic conservation efforts.

Conservation education is beginning to embrace effectiveness monitoring to improve its efforts. Traditionally, conservation education has not been evaluated beyond the number of participants in a program. Conservation Strategy implementers and conservation education providers can promote the practice of formal evaluation and tracking of not only conservation education inputs, but outcomes as well. Conservation partners could provide model evaluation tools for conservation education providers.

Education and outreach is one type of conservation action, and will be most effective when linked strategically to other actions such as land management and habitat conservation, water management, or incentives for private landowners. Successful implementation of this Conservation Strategy depends on expanded involvement from a wide variety of people, agencies, and groups across the state. Effective outreach will be needed to share the goals, voluntary approach, recommended actions, and benefits of habitat conservation to diverse Oregonians and

partners. Equally important tasks are listening to input from diverse sources and providing opportunities for meaningful involvement and decision-making. Some important audiences are:

- *All Oregonians:* Help individuals, organizations, and communities understand statewide habitat conservation goals in both urban and rural areas, with a focus on locally occurring ecoregions, habitats, and species. Help people recognize habitats within local landscapes and understand the diversity of species that use these habitats. Provide information on the actions people can take to benefit species and habitats, including conservation programs, tools, and other available support. Build connections between the diverse communities of Oregon to help support a statewide commitment to conservation of Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats. In addition, both urban and rural landowners should get recognition for the contributions they are already making to species conservation. Farms, ranches, and forests provide a variety of fish and wildlife habitats, and many rural landowners are actively improving habitat through improved management practices or specific projects. Provide information about these contributions and the connections that all Oregonians have to agricultural and forest landowners who grow the food they eat and the other products they use. Introduce urban Oregonians to diverse products from rural landowners who use certification or marketing programs that support sustainable or habitat-friendly activities. Similarly, recognize positive efforts to address conservation issues and provide habitat within urban areas, such as sustainable building, invasive species control, "Naturescaping" in backyards, and maintaining natural park networks that support fish and wildlife habitat and improve the quality of life for people.
- *Federal and State Agencies and Other Conservation Partners:* Provide information about the Conservation Strategy and opportunities for coordination. Help diverse agencies and staff understand statewide and ecoregional habitat conservation goals and incorporate them into programs, policies, and priorities whenever possible. In addition to agencies, there are potential roles for landowners, land managers, non-profit organizations, universities and schools, business owners, local governments, elected officials, planners, consultants, and civic groups. Outreach efforts need to target all potential conservation partners.
- *Young Oregonians:* The future lies with Oregon's younger Oregonians, in both K-12 and higher education (colleges and universities), who are the decision-makers of the future. Young people, both in rural and urban areas, need to see good exam-

ples of real people integrating ecological and economic values on farms and in forests, and diverse and innovative partnerships for habitat conservation. The more exposure young Oregonians have to real people doing habitat conservation, the more likely they are to support these activities in adulthood. Programs for young people need to include opportunities to participate in habitat conservation projects, whenever possible. Opportunities include working with youth groups, local governments, schools, and service learning programs. This exposes students to different learning opportunities, helps them develop a sense of commitment to their community and local habitats, and may introduce them to possible careers in the field.

There are opportunities to work with educators to provide additional opportunities for teacher training on conservation education curriculum and instructional strategies at no cost to teachers or schools. Classroom-based conservation education programs can be integrated with state academic standards and linked with standards for reading, math and other subjects beyond science.

Research conducted by undergraduate and graduate students can be an important way to address information and monitoring needs for the Conservation Strategy. Colleges and universities are important partners for providing educational, technical expertise, monitoring and research assistance to landowners, Oregonians, agencies, and policy-makers.

Some Ongoing Efforts

The Conservation Strategy will build on existing efforts to conduct outreach and conservation education, expanding existing efforts partnerships. The following provides some examples of the ongoing efforts by many agencies, schools and organizations in Oregon:

- Interpretation presentations and educational program (such as campground talks, nature walks, skills workshops, hunter and angler education programs, games and other children's programs, exhibits)
- Informational signage, brochures, videos and other material (at agency offices, trails, campsites, wildlife refuges and other outdoor recreation sites)
- School-sponsored learning (such as outdoor camps, internships, restoration projects at schools, classwork)
- Special events (such as festivals, Oregon Zoo and Oregon Museum of Science and Industry field camps)
- Fish and wildlife viewing programs (such as whale watching, bird watching, elk viewing)

- "Living with Urban Wildlife" by the Audubon Society of Portland and other programs focused at reducing human/wildlife conflicts in urban areas
- Media relationships
- Booths at county fairs and other community events
- Volunteer programs

Also, citizen-based monitoring [for example, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program and the North American breeding bird survey (BBS)] can provide opportunities for Conservation Outreach and environmental education. Citizen-based science will be an important tool for monitoring within the Conservation Strategy and will be focused on monitoring priorities.

Opportunities

There are many opportunities to improve coordination, strategic implementation, and evaluation of conservation education in Oregon. Some recommendations include:

Build on existing efforts

- Inventory conservation/environmental education activities currently under way to determine which could help promote the Conservation Strategy.
- Work with local, state and federal parks, wildlife areas, campsites and other recreational programs to enhance interpretation programs
- Enhance effective partnerships with organizations whose primary mission is conservation education (e.g. non-governmental organizations, universities, agencies). Seek new conservation education partners in Oregon.
- Fold Conservation Strategy priorities into the education and outreach activities of federal, state and local natural resource agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other education providers.

Formal education

- Restore the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife commitment to "Project Wild" (environmental and conservation program for educators of K-12 students).

Marketing and promotion

- Develop education materials about the Conservation Strategy and for its promotion. Produce outreach materials addressing Strategy Species and Habitats, Conservation Opportunity Areas, and conservation actions and issues. Inform people about opportunities to weave conservation goals into ongoing planning,

greenspace acquisition and management, and neighborhood projects, educational programs, restoration programs and so on.

- Work with media partners to promote the Conservation Strategy and its implementation priorities and create messages which report/publicize successes achieved by the Conservation Strategy for nature conservation.
- Produce “virtual tours” on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife web site of particular areas of the state to promote Strategy Habitats and Species and link to websites of other partners.

Incorporate Outreach and Education into Other Voluntary Actions

- Produce informational brochures for landowners on Strategy Species and Habitats (also see the Voluntary Conservation Tools Chapter, pages 70 to 88).
- Develop educational tools that complement on-the-ground conservation actions and management for Strategy Species and Habitats.
- Work with the Oregon Invasive Species Council to develop a statewide invasive species awareness campaign, which will assess Conservation Strategy needs for education and marketing. Develop other tools for public participation for preventing introductions of new invasive species to Oregon.

Fish and Wildlife-Based Tourism

Because of its natural resources (diversity and beauty of its landscape and richness of its flora and fauna), Oregon is an outstanding state for its residents and visitors to enjoy and recreate in. When carefully planned and implemented, fish and wildlife-based tourism can promote fish and wildlife conservation through public outreach and support, diversify local economies, and provide rewarding experiences for a variety of people. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s approach is to support efforts to create and promote sustainable fish and wildlife-based tourism opportunities within the context of the Conservation Strategy’s larger conservation goals. In this discussion, the term “wildlife tourism” refers to recreational activities based on both fish and wildlife use and appreciation.

Objectives

1. In collaboration with Travel Oregon and other relevant government agencies, provide strategic direction and leadership on sustainable wildlife watching opportunities and education in Oregon.
2. In cooperation with relevant Oregon government agencies, promote sustainable tourism and tourism generated, economic development (including ‘product’ innovations for visitors) appropriate to Oregon’s regional communities and consistent with the values and principles underlying the Conservation Strategy.
3. In association with private industry and government, investigate potential sources of future income generation - resulting from sustainable wildlife tourism development and growth - that will benefit both local communities and the Conservation Strategy’s wider conservation goals.
4. In partnership with Travel Oregon, integrate sustainable tourism opportunities, where appropriate, into regional and state-wide programs developed as a result of the Conservation Strategy.
5. Where relevant, facilitate greater collaboration and cooperation over wildlife tourism opportunities in Oregon with interested regional and state tourism associations, Oregon’s destination management organizations, tourism industry operators and key stakeholders identified through the Conservation Strategy development process.

Joint Challenges and Opportunities

- Enhancing awareness of the workings and interests of the tourism industry and its relevant opportunity areas amongst the stakeholders, regional organizations and fish and wildlife programs, associated with the Conservation Strategy.
- Enhancing awareness of sustainable wildlife-based tourism opportunities and relevant conservation needs, interests and priorities within Oregon’s tourism industry – particularly its nature-based tourism sector.
- Aligning conservation programs and sustainable tourism development needs and opportunities of Oregon and its regions.

Background: Participation in and Value of Fish and Wildlife-based Tourism

National recreation surveys in the U.S. have provided useful information on popular activities in the U.S. They provide both valuable indicators of Americans’ outdoor recreation interests and potential pointers to their receptivity to offers and opportunities to enjoy such interests when visiting different places or destinations.

Wildlife tourism - growth and value

- Nationally in the USA, wildlife viewing is the third highest purpose for trips each year (671 million) after sightseeing (1037 million) and family gatherings (778 million). It is expected that wildlife activities will increase 61 percent nationally over the next 52 years to Year 2050.

- Wildlife viewing is an activity that can be enjoyed all year round by virtually all ages.
- Nature tourists involved in wildlife appreciation are almost evenly divided between men and women.
- 31 percent of Americans 16 years and older say they observe, feed or photograph wildlife.
- An estimated 94.1 million people made time to view wildlife or wildflowers.
- 69.4 million people watched birds.
- 32 percent of the U.S. adult population view or photograph birds.
- 42.8 percent view or photograph other wildlife.
- 45.2 percent view or photograph wildflowers and natural vegetation.
- 54.8 percent view or photograph natural scenery.
- An estimated 129 million people took the time to stop and observe the natural scenery around them.

Tourism trends

According to the Travel Industry Association of America, significant travel trends affecting Oregon’s tourism industry include:

- Oregon’s diverse regions – from the coast and mountains, to valleys and deserts – offer a rich variety of outdoor activities for everyone from the extreme sport participants to fishing enthusiasts to the family vacationer.
- Recreation and adventure interests and options range from the ‘soft’ (at the more relaxed, observational and passive end) to the ‘hard’ (more active and physical with an element of potential ‘danger’).
 - Outdoor recreation and/or visiting national or state parks is one of the top activities for U.S. travelers taking leisure trips within the U.S.
 - One in five (21 percent) leisure person-trips includes some

form of outdoor recreation and/or a visit to a national or state park.

- Half of all U.S. adults, or 98 million people, have taken an adventure trip in the past five years. This includes 31 million adults who engaged in hard adventure activities like whitewater rafting, scuba diving and mountain biking.
- Camping is the number one outdoor vacation activity in America. One-third of U.S. adults say they have gone on a camping vacation in the past five years. The average age of travelers who go camping is 37 and their median household income is \$43,000.
- One-fifth of U.S. adults attended a festival while on a trip away from home in the past year. One-third of festival travelers attended an arts or music festival in the past year; Twenty-two percent of festival travelers attended an ethnic, folk or heritage festival.

Participation rates– fishing and viewing wildlife

- During 2001, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife sold 303,635 hunting licenses and tags, and 689,669 fishing licenses and tags. Of those, 282,102 hunting licenses and tags were sold to Oregonians, and 517,666 fishing licenses and tags were sold to Oregonians.
- Licensed resident hunters make up 8.1 percent of the total state population. Licensed resident anglers make up 14.9 percent of the total state population. There is no method to track the percentage of wildlife viewers.

Participation rates by visitors in key nature-related activities:

- Over half of all Americans are adventure travelers, with about forty-five percent of these engaged in soft adventure travel.
- Almost 25 million Americans travel to watch wildlife.

Economic contribution of Fish and Wildlife based activities in 2001

- Results from surveys conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed that Oregon derived \$2.1 billion in revenue from all wildlife-related recreational activities in 2001. Of that amount, Oregonians spent \$1.7 billion.
- The USFWS found that Oregonians spent \$769.4 million on wildlife viewing in Oregon in 2001.

Spending Categories	Hunters	Anglers	Viewers
Food and Lodging	\$46.2 Million	\$99.9 Million	\$182.2 Million
Transportation	\$42.3 Million	\$84.8 Million	\$108.5 Million
Other Trip Costs *	\$20.2 Million	\$74.2 Million	\$14.4 Million
Equipment	\$232.5 Million	\$245.5 Million	\$340.3 Million
Other * *	\$23.7 Million	\$97.4 Million	\$124.0 Million

*‘Other trip costs’ include expenditures for guide fees, land-use fees, access permits and equipment rental.

** ‘Other’ expenses include expenditures for magazines, membership dues, contributions, stamps and permits.

Opportunities

All tourism opportunities promoted by the Conservation Strategy will be implemented in partnership with Travel Oregon. ODFW will work with willing landowners/managers, communities and other partners in developing projects and be sensitive to any concerns local communities may have. All proposed actions must review and consider any potential impacts to both species and habitats.

1. Planning, policy and project development - joint tourism marketing and market research opportunities: Under Brand Oregon, explore joint opportunities for cooperative marketing of key nature-based tourism themes (including wildlife watching). In addition, determine priority areas of joint need for undertaking cooperatively funded market research that will better inform the marketing and product development strategies adopted.
2. Determining regional priorities for tourism attention in relation to wildlife watching opportunities and their marketing and development: In relation to any regional program development criteria involving wildlife tourism initiatives, investigate the merits of applying two or more levels of developmental and marketing status for Oregon's eco/tourism regions.

Each level would be acknowledged to have different strategic and program support needs, which also might logically reflect different levels of investment. For example:

- ready proximity to visitor markets (and major ports/cities/ highways of entry);
- product/experience readiness;
- product quality;
- extent of products' visitor and market appeal
- extent of supporting amenities and services (including nearby accommodation options);
- the extent of other available experiences' of complementary importance to visitors

Some regions might be designated as 'emerging', and others as 'advanced' when evaluating comparative development and marketing opportunities.

3. Building on existing and recent wildlife-watching programs: Many fish and wildlife-watching programs exist and can be supported and expanded.
 - Work with Travel Oregon, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Audubon Society, and other partners to promote development of "birding trails" in Oregon, building on the current network of trails.

- Work with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to support existing whale watching programs and work with local groups to promote existing wildlife festivals.
 - Restore and enhance Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's leadership in the "Watchable Wildlife" program in Oregon to promote opportunities to provide fish and wildlife viewing; market Oregon as an outstanding fish and wildlife-viewing destination; provide interpretation for priority sites; enhance respect for Oregon fish and wildlife; and recreate strong partnerships with diverse constituents.
4. Determining a cost effective education and development approach to wildlife tourism in Oregon: Great benefits can result from adopting a tourism education and tourism development approach that draws on the success of others and the value of trialing new 'product' ideas through pilot projects selected for their high likelihood of success and their likely educational value. For example, in relation to privately owned and operated wildlife and nature-based tourism services/attractions, the successful case studies represented by Wanderlust Tours in Bend, and Marine Discoveries in Newport could be documented and distributed (possibly in association with Travel Oregon). Research the basis of success for such leading nature-based products and other international example of best practice in this interest area.
 5. Developing further highly innovative wildlife experiences (including outstanding interpretive facilities) that capture the imaginations of visitors as well as national and international recognition and publicity: Today visitors can choose from a world of competing leisure and entertainment options – with the form of these often crossing over from one traditional context to another (e.g. cruising, entertainment, food, on board rock climbing walls, etc). Visitors are far more discerning and aware of an explosive growth in these available options. Therefore in the context of beautiful natural environments and wildlife viewing opportunities, it is no longer simply the beauty and the animals alone that can constitute the extent of the experience, but the way in which the experience itself is provided and accessed. An example is the tree top canopy walks that have been designed around the world – some seemingly offering an intrinsic (but safe) sense of danger as part of their appeal. Another good example is the BLM Cascades Streamwatch (Wildwood Recreation Area) facility near Mt Hood – where the viewer can look into the side of the stream at young salmon in which they

are living. Exploring exciting new 'world standard' opportunities here for a range of suitable wildlife experiences (jointly with other agencies or private investors) is a serious investment option for regions and locations that possess the right mix of wider tourism destination, product and marketing qualities. The development of trails such as the Birding Trails of Oregon, warrants an exploration of the opportunities for innovation, but equally importantly very thorough implementation of the trail's on the ground (real life) features – signage, interpretation, supporting guide books, their distribution, their cross promotion of companion needs like accommodation and food, equipment supplies, etc.)

Potential focus areas for innovation could also include – innovative/best practice visitor interpretation developments, exciting new wildlife observation facilities and tours, or even new joint ventures with private industry over nature-based accommodation options adjacent to high interest natural environments.

6. Enhancing the impact of tourism-based marketing investments: The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website is comprehensive in relation to information on hunting fishing and other wildlife opportunities etc. However the tourism/visitor appeal component to these is largely implicit, not explicit. The explicit visitor appeal and service components ("how to's") to the Oregon options with wildlife should be more 'up front', and organized in a way to directly meet visitor needs as well as linking to related sites offering tourism assistance. For example, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife home page should have a direct message and 'click on window' for interested visitors to Oregon. The website could provide website links to other entities with natural resource tourism interests. Special maps that are designed to visually and readily address the tourism and travel needs of visitors could be developed and able to be printed. (Many existing road maps are focused purely on directional and place information, they are not tourist maps deliberately highlighting instantly helpful things of high likely interest to tourists.)
7. Adopting a proactive leadership role on sustainable wildlife tourism practices and opportunities in Oregon and exploring further related partnership and alliance opportunities: Investigate joint project possibilities of mutual interest. Identifying overlapping areas of visitor/community related policy, planning and development activity and exchanging research and policy insights - as well as knowledge of new development oppor-

tunities - normally proves highly productive for all parties to partner-based initiatives. Agencies' day-to-day policy decisions (e.g. timing of hunting and fishing seasons) can prove of great importance and benefit to tourism in Oregon. Regular liaison with Travel Oregon and Oregon's tourism industry (including regional Destination Management Organizations) could be helpful in addressing potentially unforeseen impacts to tourism.

Over time, partnership development with the tourism industry could generate sufficient revenues to some wildlife/nature based industry tour operators (e.g. whale/marine watching) to permit them to contribute to conservation and scientific activities surrounding those experiences. One example - hiring marine scientists by the licensed and lucrative Quicksilver boat tours to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. These scientists assist in furthering important studies of the reef and its eco-system and protection. Visitors can, in some circumstances, pay to have the special experience of contributing to scientific research efforts, on special sites that only they can access.

Further tourism and economic development options might include an exploration of how to advance partnerships with local and regional festivals with a nature or wildlife based theme – to help these become stronger in appeal and more successful for their communities and for the programs that support them.

Building closer working relationships with the convention/conference and meetings tourism sector to expand the available conference leisure options for business and other visitors is a further possibility. Partnering with tourism operators to build greater visitor and community awareness of conservation issues, practices and participation opportunities is another.

Partnering efforts with regions and communities can help allay their possible fears of the negative effects of tourism – fear of invasion or loss of quality of life. The TIA and National Geographic Traveler have identified a highly significant new values-based tourism market, "Geotourism" that treads lightly and values community concerns here. The key need is to manage the types of tourism sought – and focus on target markets that will benefit people and places, not harm them.

8. Planning for sustainable wildlife related tourism and growth: Affirm the known tourism industry and community desires in Oregon for a sustainable approach to tourism development in the State's regions and a planned approach to tourism growth.

In pursuing such a goal, consider the merits of adapting or utilizing an existing model of best practice (such as that developed for conservation based industry accreditation by Ecotourism Australia, who has also been providing similar policy development services to the World Tourism Organization.)

In accordance with industry feedback, consider developing an 'Oregon model' for wildlife tourism planning, along with a widely available charter identifying its key development values and principles. Sustainable tourism policy positions have been actively adopted by many leading destinations and states around the western world and beyond (e.g. Costa Rica). Their governments and industry leaders share the view, apparently strongly shared by the Oregon tourism industry that it is essential to protect significant community and tourism assets if the industry is to continue to prosper well into the future. Such policies also serve to maintain visitor satisfaction and community goodwill. Oregon's tourism industry leaders share the view that staying true to Oregon's natural and civic heritage and character will provide the best tourism opportunities.

Such a best practice model would be instrumental in helping retain Oregon's sense of distinctiveness (Keeping Oregon 'Oregon') and the essential qualities and way of life that makes the state and its regions so appealing to local communities and visitors alike. It would draw on and reflect these authentic qualities and Oregonians' most prized community values – including

their pride in the state's comparatively unspoiled natural beauty and protected wildlife.

"Human Dimensions" Research

Social research can support conservation by increasing understanding of what connects people to nature, how people view conservation, what conservation actions appeal to them and how to build public interest in stewardship. Cultural background influences all of these viewpoints, as well as how to best communicate with people. As Oregon becomes increasingly diverse, conservation outreach needs to consider a variety of cultural values.

Environmental education and fish- and wildlife-based tourism programs should be monitored to determine if they appeal to people, if they are meeting their goals, and how they can be improved. Lastly, it is important to better understand what landowners need and want to support voluntary conservation on their land. Conservation partners need to work with landowners in determining, design and evaluate conservation actions; in other words, how to make conservation work better on-the-ground.

"Human Dimensions in Wildlife" is an emerging field of study that blends sociology and ecology to answer these kinds of questions. The social sciences provide a variety of research methods including surveys and questionnaires, focal group discussions, and workshops. Partnerships with universities that do public policy and other social research can address some of these information needs.

