



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

## Department of Fish and Wildlife

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January 10, 2025

Michael DeBlasi  
Oregon Department of State Lands  
775 Summer St NE, Suite 100  
Salem, OR 97303

RE: APP0063610

Dear Mr. DeBlasi,

Thank you for the opportunity to review Portland Golf Club's permit application APP0063610, which proposes to dredge an irrigation pond on the golf course.

The mission of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (the Department) is to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations. The Department's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Policy (OAR 635-415) provides goals and standards to guide the Department's recommendations for avoiding, minimizing or mitigating the potential impacts of development projects on fish, wildlife and their habitat.

The Department reviewed application APP0063610 and offers the following comments and recommendations.

### **General Concerns**

The Department's preliminary assessment is that the proposed project would have negative, short-term impacts on wildlife and habitat, and the project has the potential for long-term impacts to both wildlife and habitat. The Department believes these impacts could be avoided by placing dredge material in an area that is already disturbed. An alternative location could also prevent the need to build a temporary access road through a wetland and could prevent contaminated water from seeping into a wetland.

The project would impact wetland and riparian habitats, two habitats identified as Strategy Habitats in the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS). The proposed location for the sediment disposal is adjacent to a palustrine emergent wetland (Wetland A). Numerous species of birds, amphibians and reptiles rely on seasonal wetlands, like Wetland A, for breeding habitat. Many wetlands in the Metro area have been lost through urbanization and direct fill for development, and those that remain have been significantly degraded.

The application indicated dredge material has been tested, but the test results were not included in the application. The water seeping into Wetland A from the sediment bags, as well as the sediment itself, could have significant impacts on wildlife and habitat. The applicant acknowledges the dredged material consists of decades of material accumulation in the irrigation pond. It is likely the dredged material contains residual herbicides and pesticides from decades of turf management, as well as high phosphorus levels from fertilizer applications.

The Department is concerned about the project's impact on special status fish, amphibians, and reptiles. The irrigation pond is connected to two fish bearing streams, Fanno Creek and Woods Creek. The

Department has documented winter steelhead (a Federally Threatened and State Sensitive Species) and coastal cutthroat trout (a Federal Species of Concern and State Sensitive Species) in Fanno Creek.

The Department believes the area of impact could be providing year-round habitat for Northern red-legged frogs, a Federal Species of Concern and a State Sensitive Species. Land use changes are among the most significant contributors to the declining population and this project would reduce the quantity and quality of the frog's habitat. It is probable Wetland A provides breeding habitat, and the area proposed to be covered with sediment bags is non-breeding habitat. The applicant could better define impacts by conducting surveys for Northern red-legged frog egg masses in February 2025.

The Department has documented Western painted turtles upstream and downstream of the Portland Golf Club. Western painted turtles are a State Sensitive Species and are identified as a Strategy Species in the OCS.

The project's impact on birds could be reduced if vegetation removal occurs outside of the primary bird nesting season (April 15 – July 31).

If the applicant is interested in long-term solutions to sedimentation, the Department recommends using natural solutions, such as increasing the number of native plants around the irrigation ponds and all other bodies of water on the property.

### **Recommendations**

ODFW recommends the following to comply with protections for federally threatened or state sensitive species:

- To minimize impacts to fish, and to comply with the in-water work window for the Tualatin River tributaries, conduct in-water work in Fanno Creek and Woods Creek between July 15 and Sept 30. If compliance is not possible, request a variance review from Kevin Stertz, District Fish Biologist (971-673-6044; [Kevin.A.Stertz@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:Kevin.A.Stertz@odfw.oregon.gov)).
- Plan and perform a fish rescue/salvage prior to dredging the irrigation pond and apply for an ODFW rescue salvage permit via our shared system with NOAA:  
[https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/license\\_permits\\_apps/#::~text=Fish%20Rescue%2FSalvage%20Authorization%20%2D%20A,potentially%20lethal%20impacts%20due%20to](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/license_permits_apps/#::~text=Fish%20Rescue%2FSalvage%20Authorization%20%2D%20A,potentially%20lethal%20impacts%20due%20to)
- Obtain an Oregon Wildlife Capture, Holding, Transport and Relocation Authorization from the Department to facilitate the capture and relocation of turtles or any wildlife encountered during the project. (Susan Barnes, Regional Conservation Biologist [susan.p.barnes@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:susan.p.barnes@odfw.oregon.gov) or 971-673-6010).
- Consult with DEQ to ensure water released from sediment bags into Wetland A complies with water quality standards.

### **Mitigation**

Impacts to habitat in Wetland A could be eliminated by placing sediment bags in an already disturbed upland site and avoiding the construction of a temporary access road through a wetland. If avoidance is not possible, or if testing of the dredged soil or water reveals materials that could negatively impact wildlife or wetland habitat, the Department recommends mitigation with a goal of no net loss of habitat quality or quantity. Mitigation could be completed on or off site.

Sincerely,

*Lauri Brewster*

Lauri Brewster

Acting Regional Habitat Biologist

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