

# Latest Richard King Mellon Foundation Grants Will Aid DU Work in Upper Klamath Basin, Engage Young Conservationists

Two grants totaling \$405,000 will improve 100 acres of the montane meadow system in Oregon and continue to support Ducks Unlimited R3 initiatives across the country

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Green Diamond Resource Company Pilot Project land | Ducks Unlimited

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – May 27, 2026 – Ducks Unlimited (DU) was recently awarded a \$255,000 [Richard King Mellon Foundation](#) grant to restore approximately 100 acres of degraded montane meadow habitat in Oregon's Upper Klamath River watershed. Another \$150,000 grant will support Ducks University chapters with revitalizing chapter recruitment and scaling effective R3 (hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation) programs.

The \$255,000 grant will support the planning phase of a pilot project on Green Diamond Resource Company (Green Diamond) property, aimed at restoring approximately 100 acres of degraded montane meadow habitat in the Upper Klamath River watershed in Oregon. This location will serve as an anchor for subsequent projects along this tributary and others in the watershed, ultimately accelerating recovery throughout the basin following dam removal.

Montane meadows are high-elevation, non-forested ecosystems typically located between 7,500 and 8,500 feet, characterized by grass, wildflowers, and high biodiversity. Found in coniferous forests, they function as critical, water saturated habitats for wildlife, including birds and pollinators.

Planning for the project, slated to begin July 1, will improve stream flow and groundwater recharge, restore wet meadow hydrology, and provide a natural wildfire break. This project will also generate biodiversity credits, enabling companies to invest in conservation outcomes and offset negative environmental impacts. The Richard King Mellon Foundation grant will fund surveys, monitoring, engineering, and permitting, positioning the project for the implementation phase.

"This project tests whether market-based mechanisms can deliver real habitat improvement at scale. Biodiversity credits give landowners a direct financial incentive to restore degraded watersheds, improve habitat, and rebuild ecological function," said Douglas Reed, president and chair of Green Diamond. "The natural world needs rehabilitation at a pace and scale that governments and private philanthropy cannot accomplish alone. The fastest path to large-scale restoration is to mobilize the private landowners who steward much of America's working forests and watersheds, and biodiversity and water credits are the tools for this. We're proud to be working alongside

the Richard King Mellon Foundation and Ducks Unlimited to put this idea to the test."

In addition to supporting Ducks Unlimited conservation projects, the Richard King Mellon Foundation has a history of funding DU Youth Engagement programs.

Their latest \$150,000 grant will support DU in bolstering university chapter recruitment and R3 initiatives. It will also help DU expand its Youth Engagement Coordinator team by adding one staff member in the Western Region. While these roles facilitate all aspects of DU's R3 initiatives, their focus is on the Ducks University chapter program, which began in 1984. The program now includes more than 130 chapters.

The Richard King Mellon Foundation has invested in the nation's outdoors and environmental heritage since 1947, including generous gifts to Ducks Unlimited to advance wetland conservation projects across the Prairie Pothole Region and restore public wetlands through the Pennsylvania Wetland Habitat Initiative. The Richard King Mellon Foundation also invested capital to advance DU's growing mitigation banking program, which creates functioning wetland habitats in high-development areas within important landscapes for waterfowl and wildlife conservation across the country.

"Ducks Unlimited is proud to strengthen our collaboration with the Richard King Mellon Foundation, a visionary leader whose decades-long commitment to conservation has shaped landscapes across America," said DU Director of Development Ron Zega.

Ducks Unlimited Inc. is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing wetlands, grasslands, and other waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has restored or protected more than 20 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science, DU's projects benefit waterfowl, wildlife, and people in all 50 states. Learn more at [www.ducksunlimited.org](http://www.ducksunlimited.org)