



Oregon's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a cooperative venture between the State of Oregon and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) with support from local soil and water conservation districts, watershed councils, and other regional partnership organizations. CREP restores, maintains, and enhances streamside areas along agricultural lands to benefit fish, wildlife, and water quality. Landowners receive annual rental payments and financial incentives to plant trees and shrubs in riparian areas, install fencing and livestock watering facilities, and other approved conservation measures.

2013 Enrollment

Oregon added more than 50 contracts in the 2013 federal fiscal year to enroll 861.1 acres, bringing the cumulative total to approximately 42,000 acres. The majority of the new contracts were designed to enroll acres into riparian buffers and wildlife habitat buffers, with a smaller acreage enrolled into wetland buffers, filter strips, and wetland restoration.

Federal and State Financial Contributions

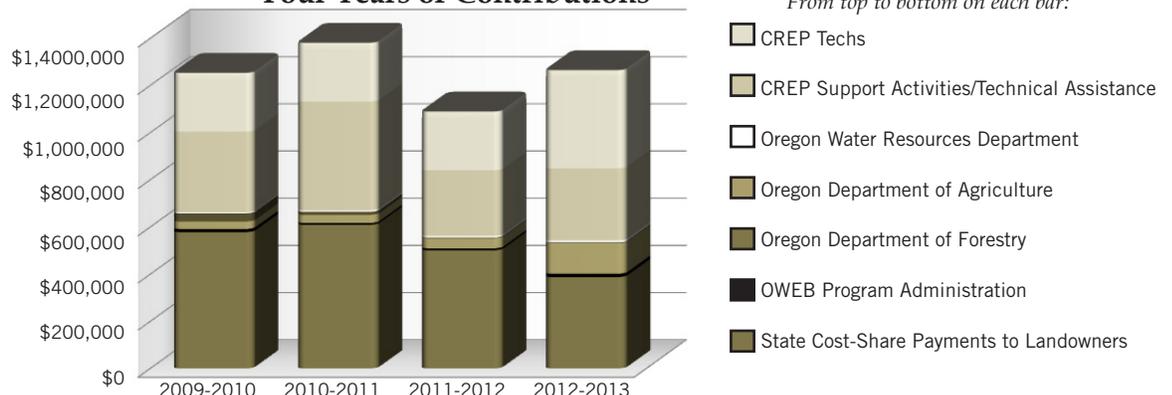
Along with Oregon's agricultural landowners, the State of Oregon and the FSA have contributed significant resources toward riparian restoration through CREP. The federal cost share for conservation practices in the 2013 federal fiscal year was \$671,552. For the same time period, the State of Oregon's cost share was \$387,000 and its total CREP expenditures were nearly \$1.27 million. The State has invested \$19.58 million in CREP since 1999.

State and Local Government and Private Financial Contributions

Oregon continues to support CREP in a variety of ways. OWEB contributes the state's portion of the cost-share payments to landowners for the implementation of conservation practices. State funding supports and funds technical assistance positions around the state and the Oregon Department of Agriculture and OWEB provide program implementation and coordination services. The Oregon Departments of Forestry and Water Resources also contribute staff time and expertise to the program.

Budget Category	Contributions	
	10/1/12-9/30/13	1999 to Date
State Cost Share Payments	\$387,000	\$11,004,058
OWEB	\$14,390	\$546,294
Oregon Department of Forestry	\$129,680	\$643,028
Oregon Department of Agriculture	\$2,900	\$215,971
Oregon Water Resources Department	\$8,036	\$47,126
CREP / Technical Assistance	\$306,000	\$3,396,941
Watershed Tech Specialists	\$417,000	\$3,729,500
Total	\$1,265,006	\$19,582,918

Four Years of Contributions



2013 CREP Annual Report

Acre and Water Enrollments by County

Acres Enrolled and Water Conserved (active leases)											
County	FFY 2013 Enrollment		Cumulative		Water	County	FFY 2013 Enrollment		Cumulative		Water
	Contracts	Acres	Contracts	Acres	CFS		Contracts	Acres	Contracts	Acres	CFS
Baker	3	50	59	3095.4		Lake					
Benton	3	59	34	740.9	0.42	Lane	4	14.5	40	208.6	
Clackamas	1	2.5	18	97.1		Lincoln			13	198.0	
Clatsop			3	23.9		Linn	6	30.3	63	900.2	0.02
Columbia			10	397.6		Malheur			5	293.2	
Coos	1	9.7	29	244.2	0.06	Marion	3	22.2	23	232.5	1.27
Crook			20	712.3	5.296	Morrow			76	1451.2	0.37
Curry	2	27.3	28	818.9	6.15	Multnomah			4	94.5	
Deschutes			1	198.8		Polk			47	524.0	2.248
Douglas			91	1322.9	2.586	Sherman	1	44	90	5417.2	
Gilliam	1	39	76	1992.8	3.97	Tillamook					
Grant	1	1.9	43	1623.9	0.75	Umatilla	2	33.3	206	2830.3	1.58
Harney	1	33.2	29	1813.9		Union	5	66.9	52	1364.0	
Hood River						Wallowa	3	91.8	53	1329.0	
Jackson			6	281.1		Wasco	8	285	278	10064.5	1.427
Jefferson			11	454.3		Washington	4	28.2	62	388.6	1.068
Josephine			1	1.5		Wheeler	2	9.9	43	999.6	0.214
Klamath	1	12.3	34	1476.1	7.76	Yamhill			71	482.9	1.604
						Totals	52	861.1	1619	42,073.9	36.792

Note: FY2013 data on contracts and acres enrolled have not been finalized or confirmed by forthcoming FSA national reports.

Monitoring Effectiveness

Across Oregon, the lack of healthy riparian vegetation has been identified as a limiting factor to achieving improved water quality and habitat for native fish and wildlife species. Riparian areas also provide important watershed processes and functions. OWEB has conducted preliminary analyses of completed CREP projects to determine if they attained riparian cover, stream shade, and bank stability objectives. These early studies also evaluated current riparian vegetation structure found on the project sites. The findings provide important background and early indicators as the agency moves forward with a more comprehensive CREP effectiveness monitoring project in 2014 with local partners and FSA.

OWEB is in final stages of designing this statewide effectiveness evaluation and it currently consists of three tiers:

1. Assess existing CREP projects utilizing existing information.
2. Perform an extensive post-treatment assessment of existing projects.
3. Establish a Before-After-Control-Impact (BACI) study to track changes associated with newly enrolled contracts over a 10-year period.

The agencies will analyze existing CREP projects, including the contract, compliance reviews, and mid-term management activities. OWEB is working with local CREP experts to determine what types of field data are currently available from evaluations of contract compliance and site conditions. FSA and OWEB are drafting an MOA to ensure that landowner privacy concerns and existing Federal and State laws and policies pertaining to information sharing are followed during the term of the effectiveness monitoring project.

CREP Project Highlights

Umpqua Watershed, Susan Applegate's "The Grove." Story provided by Donna Fouts



Susan Applegate's 125-acre historic cattle ranch in Douglas County, Oregon is part of the Umpqua Watershed. The perennial Elk Creek, however, was being silently invaded by non-native blackberries. Armed with a machete, clippers, and a positive attitude, Susan fought back to reclaim the land. With the help of CREP, Susan has successfully managed blackberries and other noxious invasive weeds to restore the riparian zone along Elk Creek, a stream critical for Coho and winter run steelhead. Susan currently has 10.3 riparian acres contracted in CREP and a Conservation Plan is being prepared for an additional 2 acres. "[Susan] recognizes the importance of water quality and balances active agriculture while preserving the natural resources on her ranch," notes Donna Fouts, CREP Technician with Douglas SWCD and Elk Creek Watershed Council. "The removal of invasive blackberries and other noxious weeds have made way for native vegetation to reestablish along the banks of Elk Creek."

The Upper Willamette Watershed. Story provided by Erika Lang



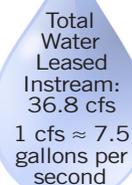
Formed in 2011 to increase coordination of CREP projects, the Upper Willamette Regional CREP Partnership includes FSA, Cascade Pacific RC & D, SWCDs, and local watershed councils. Over the past two years, partners in Benton, Lane, and Linn counties have worked together to develop and coordinate outreach methods and materials; enhance communication through a shared tracking tool; and increase efficacy of the planning process from sign-up through implementation.



Particular attention has been paid to tributaries that are part of the Meyer Memorial Trust's Willamette River Initiative and Bonneville Environmental Foundation's Model Watershed Program throughout the three-county region. Many landowners have agreed to protect and restore sensitive riparian areas, which leads to improved water quality, decreased erosion, and enhanced fish and wildlife habitat. More than five miles of habitat on the main-stem South Santiam River and tributary Hamilton Creek have been enrolled. Riparian areas along prioritized tributaries of the Calapooia, Marys, Long Tom, and the North Santiam Rivers are also being restored. Additionally, landowners whose properties are not eligible for CREP are taking notice and working with local partners to restore even more acreage.

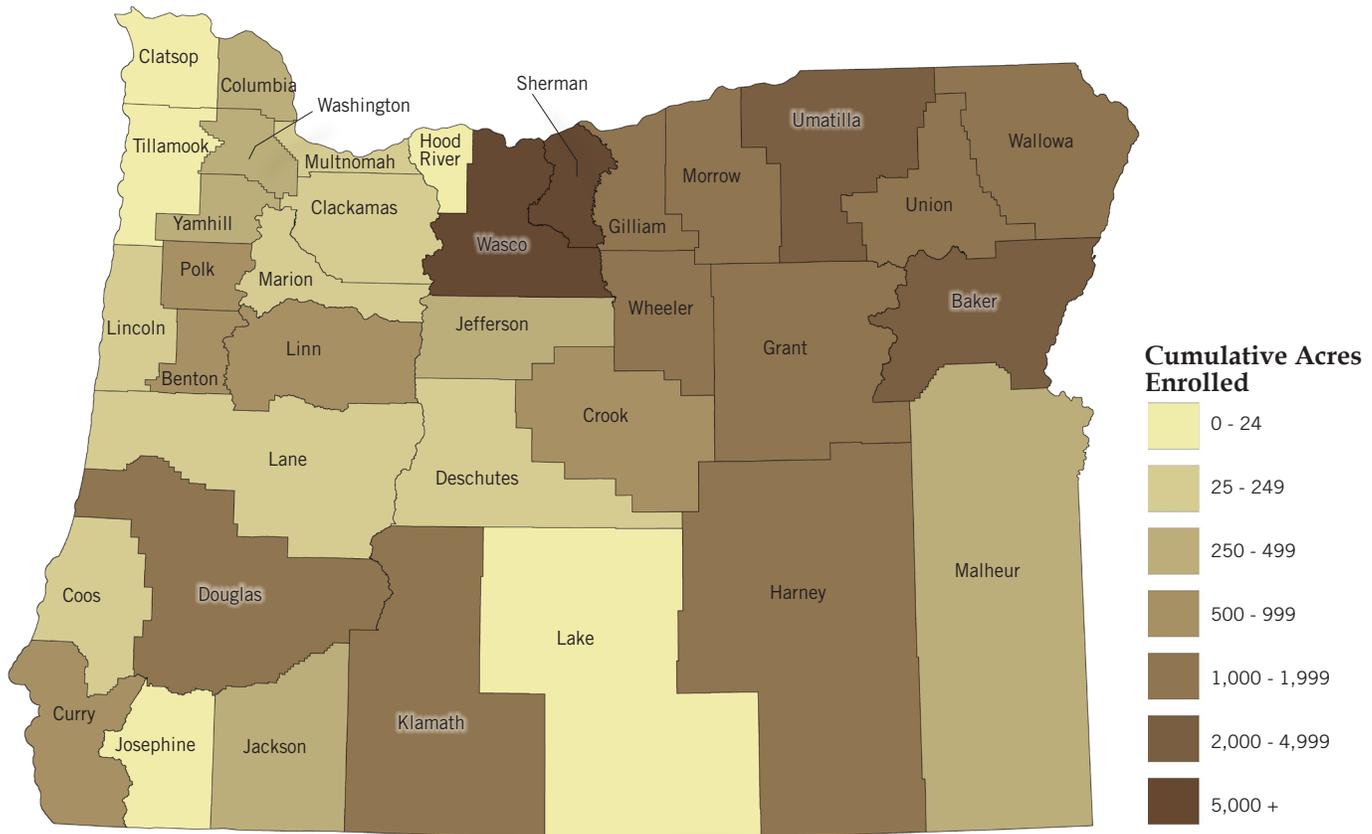
Protection of Instream Water

One of the unique elements of the Oregon CREP program is its ability to link the conservation of irrigated land with the legal protection of instream water. To receive irrigated land rental rights, the Oregon CREP program requires that landowners also lease water instream for the property enrolled for riparian buffers. This benefits the landowner through higher annual payments and benefits the public through incremental increases instream flow which address significant aquatic resource limitations. In 2013, landowners leased 36.8 cfs for instream flow benefits. The majority of the instream flow benefits have occurred in the John Day, Klamath, Willamette, and Deschutes basins.



Total
Water
Leased
Instream:
36.8 cfs
1 cfs \approx 7.5
gallons per
second

Cumulative Acre Enrollments by County



Practitioner Recommendations

OWEB granted and oversaw eleven CREP Technical Assistance (TA) grants from January 2012 to December 2013. These grants provide staffing, training, and outreach support for local CREP technicians throughout Oregon. These experts are a key element to implementing successful CREP projects. In their final reporting for the CREP TA grants, the technicians supplied OWEB with program and project-level recommendations, some of which are summarized below.

Programmatic

- Provide the program with a base level of funding for outreach targeting select individuals or entities with a strong likelihood of participation.
- Partner and agency communication is crucial for building and maintaining the relationships necessary for effective implementation of the CREP program. CREP Technical Assistants should: have regular, structured meetings; use shared tracking tools; have follow-up; use consistent messaging; provide updates; revise planning documents; respond quickly to inquiries; have a facilitator to coordinate efforts among all partners; document everything; listen; ask participants their expectations and have them sign agreements.

Project Implementation

- Plant shrubs a number of years after trees so that the shrubs are provided with shade.
- Require unused fencing to be removed during site preparation.
- Use different evaluation criteria for projects rather than “area contracted.”
- Encourage efficiencies in cultural resource reviews processes as they currently create project delays.