



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

**FROM:** Juniper Davis, Partnerships Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item F: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Technical Assistance (CREP TA) – Request for Additional Funding January 26-27, 2016 OWEB Board Meeting**

### I. Introduction

This report updates the Board on Oregon's investment in Technical Assistance (TA) for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and requests the Board delegate authority to the Executive Director to enter into appropriate agreements to accept up to \$75,000 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to support CREP TA activities. This report also requests the Board allocate up to \$75,000 in recaptured lottery funds to supplement the existing funds available for CREP TA grant agreements and delegate authority to the Executive Director to enter into the appropriate agreements.

### II. Background

CREP is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. The unique state and federal partnership allows landowners to receive incentive payments and conservation rental payments from the Farm Services Agency (FSA) for establishing long-term, riparian buffers on eligible land. The Oregon CREP was developed initially to address listed salmon streams; the program was later modified to assist in addressing stream water-quality issues (primarily temperature).

The Oregon CREP Agreement requires Oregon to pay for 20 percent of the overall program costs. CREP uses state funding for partial payment (25 percent) of all conservation activities (e.g., fencing, off-stream watering, site preparation, plant materials, planting). In addition to the direct landowner payments for conservation activities, OWEB provides funding for outreach, technical assistance, and program coordination. In recent years, NRCS has also provided funding through OWEB to support this work.

In federal fiscal year 2015, Oregon CREP was successful in enrolling 1,218.5 acres in the program resulting in a total of over 41,000 acres enrolled over the lifetime of the program in Oregon.

### III. CREP Technical Assistance and Associated Funding

CREP is managed by a multi-agency/organizational partnership. In addition to OWEB and FSA, the CREP partnership in Oregon includes NRCS, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts,

Network of Oregon Watershed Councils, and the Oregon Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources.

At the January 2015 OWEB Board meeting, the Board approved receipt of \$100,000 in supplemental funding from the NRCS to improve the local delivery of CREP in Oregon. These funds are being directed toward TA grants for 2016-17, CREP-related trainings, augmenting existing grant agreements to provide additional technical assistance in underserved areas, and the resolution of programmatic barriers in cultural resource review coordination. Subsequently, at the July 2015 OWEB Board meeting, the Board approved a spending plan that set aside \$750,000 in lottery funds for CREP TA grant agreements for 2016-17. In August 2015 NRCS provided an additional \$150,000, which the OWEB Board approved receipt of at its October, 2015 meeting.

On September 14, 2015, OWEB received 12 CREP TA applications for a total combined request of \$1,132,601. The review team met on October 7, 2015, to evaluate the applications against established criteria. Because the amount of the funding requested (\$1,132,601) exceeded the amount of funding available (\$942,000), the review team assessed the applications using an established scoring system. All 12 of the applications were recommended for funding based on the scoring system.

Subsequently in early November, OWEB and NRCS representatives met to discuss the recommended applications. Due to the strong need for CREP TA throughout the state, the partners recommended moving forward with all 12 proposed applications, including one at a reduced funding level. The funding table is Attachment A to this staff report. In order to fund all 12 proposed applications, OWEB and NRCS will need to contribute up to \$150,000 in additional funding. NRCS agreed to provide an additional \$75,000 in funding provided OWEB could come up with the remaining funding.

In December, OWEB recaptured approximately \$1 million in funding from projects where grantees did not expend all requested funds. This happens regularly, and those funds are generally redistributed into the spending plan. In July, the Board indicated that additional funds made available should be used for specifically identified spending plan line items wherever possible. CREP-TA is a technical assistance grant type in the open solicitation category. Because the request fits within the parameters outlined by the Board, staff request that up to \$75,000 of the recaptured funds be added to the spending plan line item for CREP-TA.

#### **IV. Recommendation**

Staff request the Board accept up to \$75,000 from the NRCS for supplemental CREP TA funding, allocate up to \$75,000 of recaptured lottery funds in support of CREP TA, and delegate authority to the Executive Director to enter into the appropriate agreements.

Attachment

A. CREP TA Funding Table

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program TA  
Applications Recommended for Funding by CREP TA Review Team  
September 14, 2015 Grant Cycle**

<b>Project #</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Requested Funding</b>	<b>Recommended Award</b>
<b>216-8100</b>				
12271	Umatilla SWCD	Umatilla County SWCD CREP Program	\$107,800	\$107,800
12272	Curry SWCD	Coos-Curry CREP TA 2016-17	\$115,297	\$115,297
12273	Morrow SWCD	Morrow County CREP Technical Assistance	\$23,610	\$23,610
12274	Elk Creek WC	Douglas County CREP Technical Assistance	\$119,180	\$119,180
12275	Sherman SWCD	Sherman County Riparian Restoration	\$39,083	\$39,083
12276	Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust	Southern Oregon Tri-county CREP	\$150,171	\$94,890
12277	Jefferson SWCD	Central Oregon Tri-county CREP Program	\$94,648	\$94,648
12278	Gilliam SWCD	Gilliam County CREP Technical Assistance	\$33,220	\$33,220
12279	Yamhill SWCD	Marion-Yamhill-Polk Riparian Partnership	\$149,335	\$149,335
12280	Wheeler SWCD	Wheeler County CREP TA	\$77,486	\$77,486
12281	Wasco SWCD	Wasco County Riparian Buffers	\$92,267	\$92,267
12282	Cascade Pacific RC&D	Upper Willamette Regional CREP Partnership Years 5&6	\$130,504	\$130,504
<b>12</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,132,601</b>	<b>\$1,077,320</b>