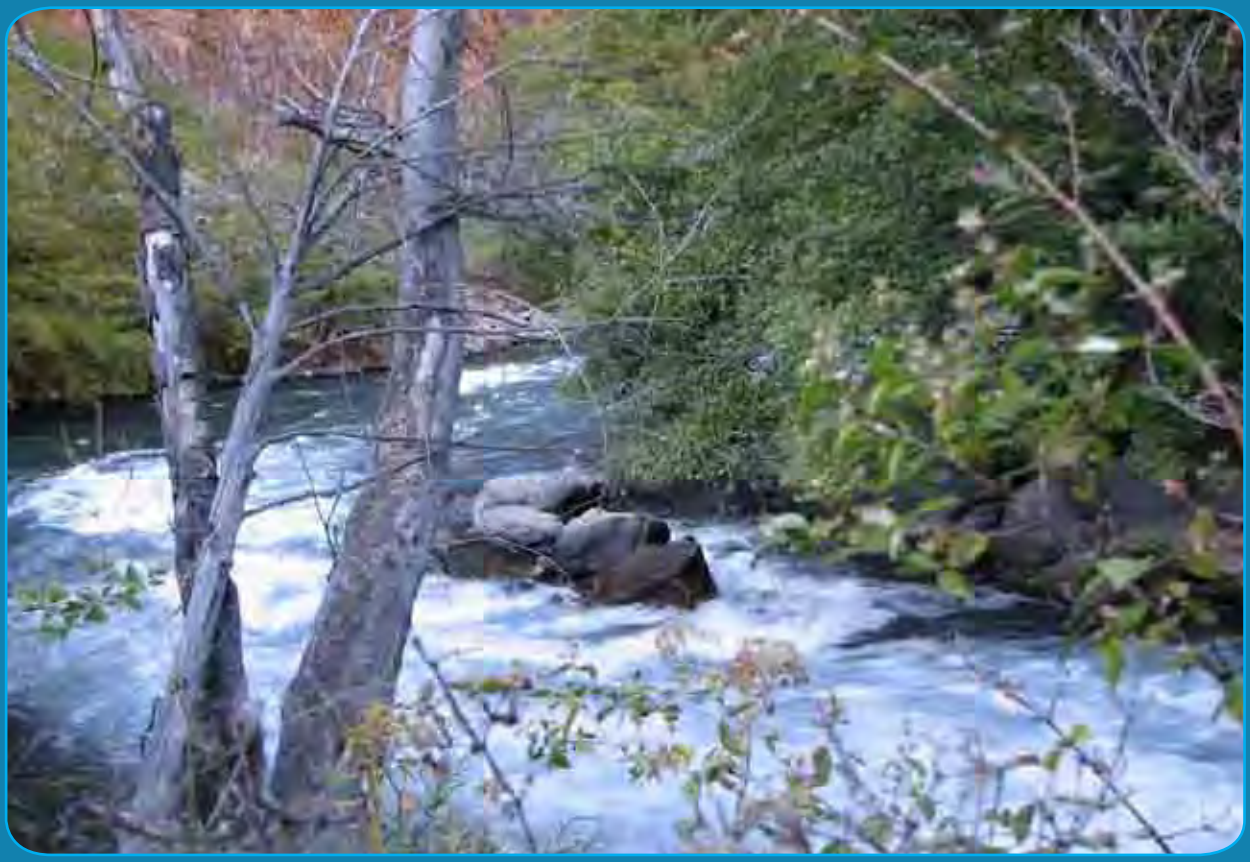

Oregon's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

2009 Annual Program Accomplishment Report
December 31, 2009

OWEB

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board is a state agency that operates a grant program that helps Oregonians restore and protect rivers, wetlands and habitat for clean water, native fish and wildlife. Community members and landowners use scientific criteria to decide jointly what needs to be done in the places where they live. OWEB grants are funded from the Oregon Lottery as a result of a voter initiative in 1998, and also by federal dollars and salmon license plate revenue. The state agency is led by a 17 member citizen board drawn from the public at large, tribes, OSU Extension, and federal and state natural resource agency boards and commissions. OWEB fosters collaboration and partners with citizens, local governments, state and federal agencies, tribes, industries and others to increase participation and involvement in these efforts.

Mission

To help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

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Executive Summary

Accomplishments October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009

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 (USDA) with support from local soil and water conservation districts. The purpose of the program is to restore, maintain, and enhance streamside areas along agricultural lands to benefit fish, wildlife, and water quality. Landowners enrolled in CREP receive annual rental payments and financial incentives (cost share) to install conservation measures such as planting trees and shrubs, installing fencing, livestock watering facilities, and other approved conservation measures.

Created in 1998, Revised in 2000 and 2004

Oregon and the USDA signed an agreement to create the Oregon CREP in 1998. Oregon and the USDA revised the agreement in 2000 and again in 2004 to make more streams eligible for the program, allow additional streamside restoration practices, and formalize an innovative partnership in the Tualatin watershed that provides additional incentives for restoration on high value farmland.

Enrollment 2009

As of September 30, 2009, Oregon added 58 contracts in the last federal fiscal year to enroll 1,789.2 acres, bringing the cumulative total to over 35,000 acres. The continued growth in the program has required significant additional cost share payments.

Federal and State Contributions

Along with Oregon's agricultural landowners, the State of Oregon and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have contributed significant resources toward riparian restoration through CREP. For 2009, Oregon's CREP expenditures were $2,475,105 the estimated federal costs of the contracts entered in Oregon CREP were over $2,978,922. Oregon has invested more than $14.5 million in CREP since its inception.

On the cover
Increased water flow in McKay Creek, a tributary of the Crooked River, due to a CREP water lease will improve habitat for salmon and steelhead.
Photo: Deschutes River Conservancy

Status of Enrollments

Participation by County					
County	Oct. 2008 - Sept. 2009 Enrollment (Contracts)	Cumulative Enrollment (Contracts)	Fiscal Year 2009 Enrollment (Acres)	Cumulative Enrollment (Acres)	Cumulative Water Conservation (cfs)
Baker	1/	34	n/a	1,996.0	0
Benton	5	26	141.4	555.9	0.944
Clackamas		14	0	73.1	0.016
Clatsop		1/	0	n/a	0
Columbia		8	0	387.8	0
Coos		27	0	231.9	1.370
Crook		13	0	459.2	6.125
Curry		22	0	617.2	5.240
Deschutes		0	0	0	0
Douglas	1/	83	n/a	1,150.0	1.845
Gilliam	4	60	45.7	1,654.4	3.910
Grant	4	46	248.6	1,931.4	10.782
Harney		23	0	1,314.6	0
Hood River		0	0	0	0
Jackson		5	0	264.8	0
Jefferson	1/	11	n/a	439.5	0
Josephine		1/	n/a	n/a	0
Klamath	1/	37	n/a	1,614.1	13.850
Lake		0	0	0	0
Lane		33	0	172.9	0
Lincoln		8	0	173.5	0
Linn	4	27	28.6	338.9	0
Malheur		4	0	276.6	0
Marion	1/	18	n/a	195.2	1.240
Morrow		70	0	1,360.9	1.916
Multnomah		4	0	94.5	0
Polk		49	0	526.5	2.091
Sherman	5		499	4,899.4	0
Tillamook		0	0	0	0
Umatilla	8		323	2,462.2	0.876
Union	1/	64	n/a	1,482.9	0
Wallowa	1/	67	n/a	1,541.6	0
Wasco	14	230	261.7	7,847.8	6.357
Washington	1/	41	n/a	247.5	0.682
Wheeler		25	0	661.0	2.414
Yamhill		51	0	361.4	0.024
TOTAL	**58**	**1,376**	**1,789.2**	**35,358.1**	**60.721**

1/ Data not available due to privacy restrictions required by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

Evaluation

Conservation practice with regard to salmon recovery

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires NOAA Fisheries to develop and implement recovery plans for conservation and survival of listed species. A recovery plan describes what needs to happen in order to restore ecosystems and secure their future so that a species' protection under the ESA is no longer needed. Recovery plans must describe specific management actions; establish objective, measurable criteria for delisting; and estimate the time and cost to carry out measures needed to achieve recovery. The Northwest Region has identified three recovery planning areas, or recovery domains, and has established technical recovery teams of scientists for each domain. Recovery plans in each domain will address all salmon species within that geographic area, and will involve stakeholders on a more local level.

The Oregon CREP program was structured to address two significant issues related to restoring ecosystems for the future security of endangered fish species: the loss of riparian forested vegetation and loss of stream flow from irrigation of farm land. This table provides a preliminary evaluation of the relationship between these watershed benefits and the Northwest Region recovery domains.

In Oregon, 55.25 square miles are enrolled in CREP, buffering more than 565 miles of stream on both sides.

Stream Buffers by Recovery Domain

Coast	Acres Enrolled	Estimated Stream Miles
CP-22 Riparian Forest Buffer	1,507.0	28.5

Interior Columbia	Acres Enrolled	
CP-21 Filter Strips	86.7	
CP-22 Riparian Forest Buffer	17,910.2	339.2
CP-23 Wetland Restoration	11,76.0	
CP-29 Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer	4,888.8	92.6
CP-8A Grassed Waterways	11.4	

Lower Columbia	Acres Enrolled	
CP-22 Riparian Forest Buffer	1,897.4	35.9
CP-23 Wetland Restoration	50.4	
CP-30 Marginal Pastureland Riparian Forest Buffer	34.9	0.7

Outside Recovery Domain	Acres Enrolled	
CP-22 Riparian Forest Buffer	3,423.7	64.9
CP-29 Marginal Pastureland Wildlife Habitat Buffer	173.2	3.3
CP-30 Marginal Pastureland Riparian Forest Buffer	34.1	0.6

Financial Contribution

State & local government and private contributions

Oregon continues to contribute to the CREP in a variety of ways. The program's conservation practices are cost-shared by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Program implementation technical assistance is overseen by the Oregon Department of Agriculture and state funding is provided to staff technical assistance positions at Soil and Water Conservation District offices in the state. Oregon Departments of Forestry and Water Resources also contribute staff time and expertise to the program.

Budget Category	Expenses ***10/1/08– 9/30/09***	Expenses ***To Date***
State Cost Share Payments	$1,688,890	$8,453,933
OWEB Support	$48,900	$502,645
Dept. of Forestry Support	$26,636	$396,829
Dept. of Agriculture Support	$25,000	$161,946
Water Resources Dept. Support	$4,347	$21,553
CREP Support Activities- Research, Training, Outside Contracts, etc.	$431,332	$2,471,624
Watershed Technical Specialists (estimated)	$250,000	$2,562,500
TOTAL	**$2,475,105**	**$14,571,030**

Success Story - Water Conservation

One of the unique elements of the Oregon CREP program is the linkage between irrigated land conservation rental and legal protection of water in-stream.

During the program development it was recognized that the availability of irrigation had a significant effect on land values and that there was an opportunity to provide streamflow benefits associated with CREP contracts. In order to receive irrigated land rental rights, the Oregon CREP requires that landowners lease water in-stream for the property enrolled for riparian buffer. This benefits the landowner through higher annual payments and benefits the public through incremental increases in streamflow.

This annual report looks back to see the cumulative benefit of this incentive in Oregon. To date, landowners have leased more than 55 cfs for instream flow benefits. The majority of the flow benefits have occurred in the John Day and Klamath basins. In both cases the flows protected by the CREP program address significant aquatic resource limitations. Stream flow is a significant factor affecting sucker populations in the Klamath basin. The additional flow in the Klamath basin contributes to sucker recovery and assists in the basin scale recovery efforts. Flow protection was identified as a factor in the recovery of mid-Columbia steelhead. The cumulative incremental flow in this basin is an important contributor to steelhead recovery in the John Day, Deschutes and Hood basins. Flow benefits in the South Coast drainages contribute to the recovery of Southern Oregon-Northern California coho salmon as well. The map below identifies the protected flow by basin associated with CREP projects.

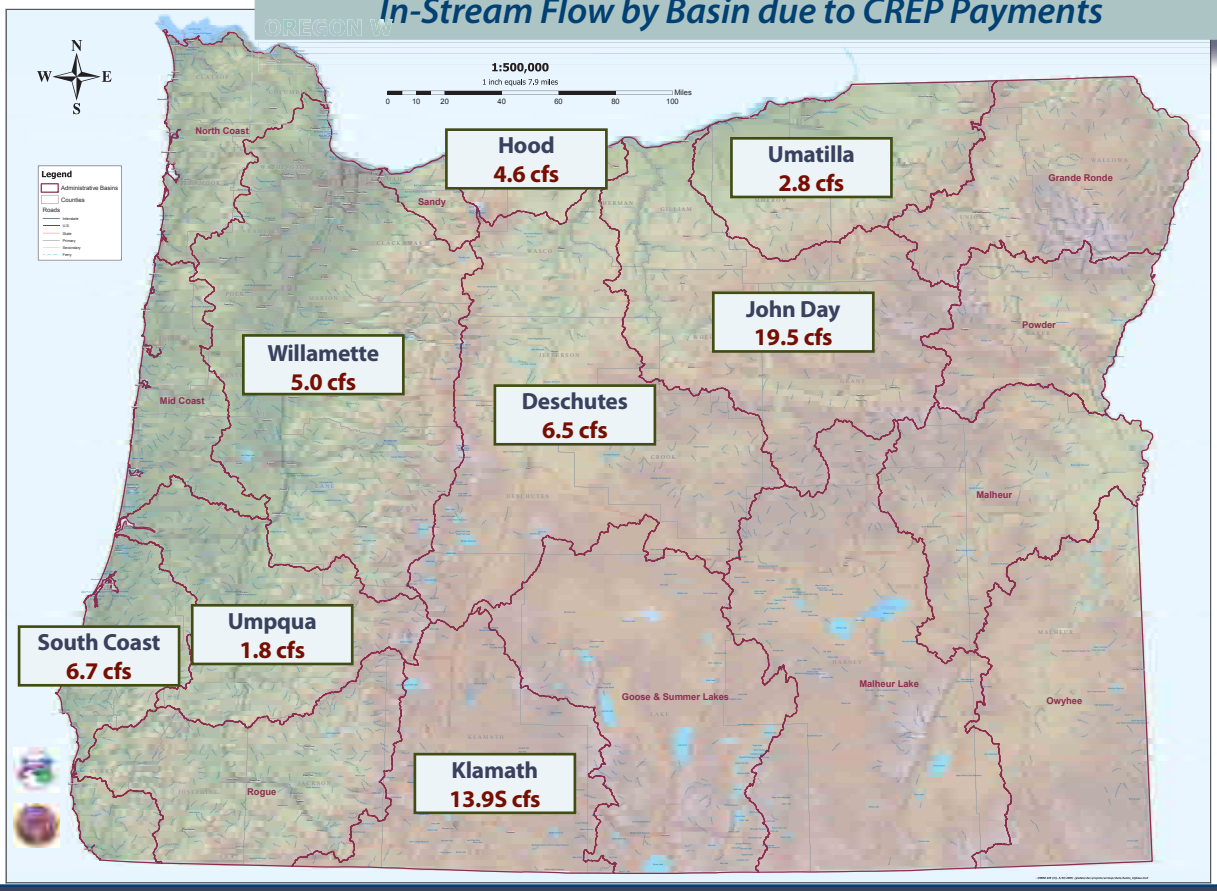
Total Water

Leased Instream

60.7 cfs

1 cfs is approximately 7.5 gallons per second

In-Stream Flow by Basin due to CREP Payments



Recommendations

Technical Assistance Resources

There has been significant discussion among the Oregon CREP partners about the allocation of technical assistance. CREP is dependent partially on state funding for technical assistance that engages landowners and assists in the development of conservation plans. OWEB will participate with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and others about the distribution and allocation of technical assistance resources over the coming year.

Protection of In-stream Water

OWEB will explore the benefits to streamflow from in-stream leases to evaluate the significance and opportunities for permanent benefits from the protection of in-stream water. The analysis will inform OWEB of opportunities for additional benefits from the program in Oregon.

Biological Opinion

Difficulties in development and completion of required Endangered Species Act documentation led to a delay in enrollments during the year. A stronger commitment on the part of Oregon to assist in program support is needed to ensure consistency of program implementation.

Cultural Resources

The conduct of cultural resource reviews has slowed implementation of a number of CREP projects. If Oregon wishes to facilitate CREP implementation, funding cultural resources reviews could increase the efficiency with which CREP projects are implemented in the state.

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