



Oregon's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

2011 Annual Program Accomplishment Report December 31, 2011

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board is a state agency that provides grants to help Oregonians take care of local streams, rivers, wetlands and natural areas. Community members and landowners use scientific criteria to decide jointly what needs to be done to conserve and improve rivers and natural habitat in the places where they live. OWEB grants are funded from the Oregon Lottery, federal dollars, and salmon license plate revenue. The agency is led by a 17 member citizen board drawn from the public at large, tribes, and federal and state natural resource agency boards and commissions.

Mission

To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

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Photos: a rare lupine is a larval host plant for a rare butterfly. They both thrive on a CREP buffer in Yamhill County.

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.

Enrollment 2011

Oregon added 97 contracts in the 2011 federal fiscal year to enroll 2,369.5 acres, bringing the cumulative total to nearly 40,000 acres.

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 2011, Oregon's CREP expenditures were \$1,380,981 while the estimated federal costs of the Oregon CREP contracts were \$5,264,795. Oregon has invested more than \$16.7 million in CREP since 1999.



Financial Contribution

State and Local Government and Private Contributions

Oregon and CREP

Oregon continues to support CREP in a variety of ways. Conservation practices implemented through CREP contracts are cost-shared by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and OWEB provide program implementation and coordination services. State funding is provided to support and fund technical assistance positions at soil and water conservation district offices around the state. The Oregon Departments of Forestry and Water Resources also contribute staff time and expertise to the program.

<i>Budget Category</i>	Expenses 10/1/09–9/30/10	Expenses 1999 to Date
State Cost Share Payments	\$609,126	\$9,640,911
OWEB Support	\$7,645	\$523,590
Oregon Department of Forestry	\$34,038	\$462,302
Oregon Department of Agriculture	\$13,125	\$210,071
Oregon Water Resources Department	\$6,249	\$32,452
CREP Support Activities/Technical Assistance	\$460,798	\$2,812,843
Watershed Tech Specialists (est.)	\$250,000	\$3,062,500
Total	\$1,380,981	\$16,744,669

Monitoring Effectiveness

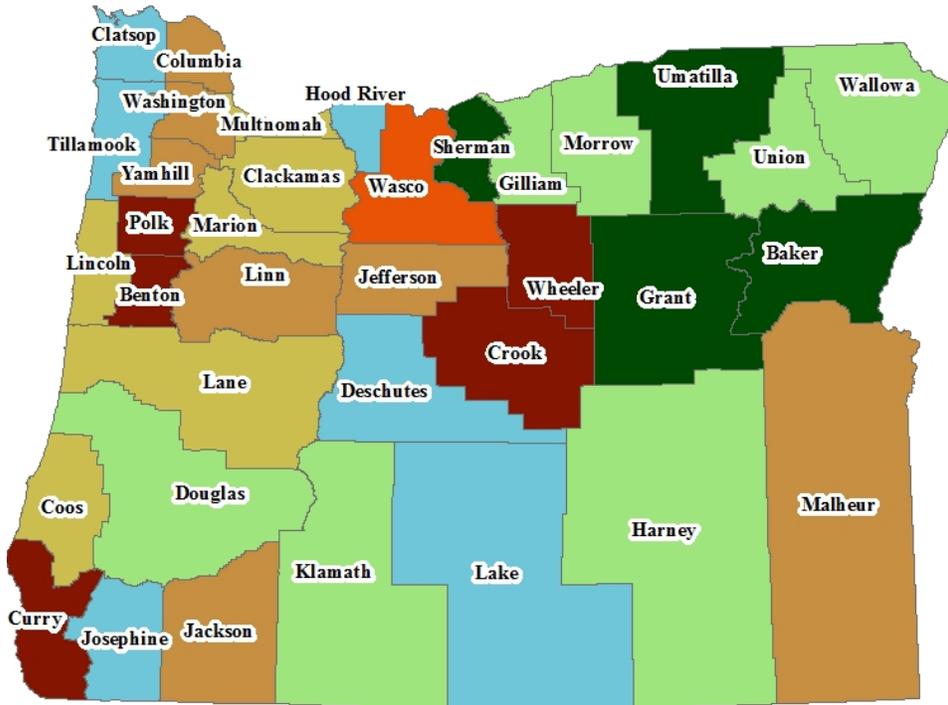
Working toward developing a monitoring plan

Effectiveness Monitoring Program

OWEB initiated an effectiveness monitoring project in 2008 to compare two approaches to riparian buffers: Oregon's cumulative impact bonus buffers; and the traditional, shorter riparian buffers. Further study is needed; the information generated from this project is preliminary because only a handful of projects were sampled and the projects were not yet mature.

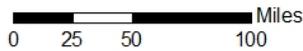
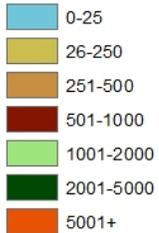
OWEB has identified the need to conduct additional effectiveness monitoring of its riparian restoration investments and is planning to integrate the monitoring of CREP with other riparian evaluation work. OWEB has developed an effectiveness monitoring study plan to provide meaningful information on the status and report on the outcomes of CREP in Oregon. It is anticipated that the study will take place over the next ten years and will also include information on previously completed CREP projects. Potential parameters for this study include stream temperature, stream shading, aquatic macroinvertebrates, fish habitat, and water quality. OWEB hopes to begin a pilot implementation of that study plan in 2012.

Status of Enrollments



Legend

Cumulative Acres Enrolled



Acres Enrolled and Cumulative Water Conserved

October 2010-September 2011

County	FFY 2011 Enrollment		Conserved Water CFS
	Contracts	Acres	
Baker	6	323.4	
Benton	1/	na	0.58
Clackamas	1/	na	0.02
Coos			0.73
Crook	1/	na	4.44
Curry			6.05
Douglas	9	122.8	3.05
Gilliam	4	74.7	3.97
Grant	1/	na	7.52
Klamath	1/	na	15.50
Lane	1/	na	0.02
Lincoln	4	16.7	
Linn	11	323.7	
Malheur	1/	na	
Marion	1/	na	0.96
Morrow	1/	na	1.92
Polk			3.16
Sherman	6	427.9	
Umatilla	15	145.3	1.64
Union	1/	na	
Wasco	17	503.5	3.04
Washington	3	10.3	0.63
Wheeler	6	98.1	1.20
Yamhill	1/	na	1.60
Total	97	2,369.5	56.01

Table includes only those counties with CREP enrollment. Counties not participating currently include: Clatsop, Columbia, Deschutes, Harney, Hood River, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Lake, Multnomah, Tillamook, Wallowa.

Recommendations

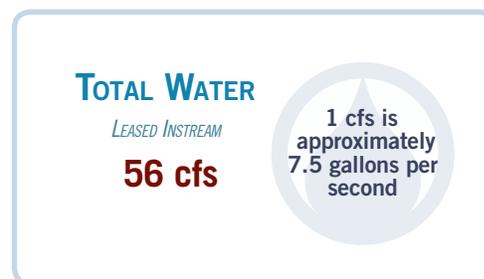


Technical Assistance Resources

There has been significant discussion over the past year among the Oregon CREP partners about the future allocation of technical assistance for CREP. Local delivery of CREP technical assistance has been partially provided by soil and water conservation districts with funding from OWEB. This technical assistance can be critical to engaging landowners and completing conservation plans. The Oregon CREP partners – OWEB, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Oregon Association of Conservation Districts – will continue to work together to refine and improve the allocation and oversight of local technical assistance resources.

Protection of Instream Water

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 buffers. This benefits the landowner through higher annual payments and benefits the public through incremental increases in streamflow.



To date, landowners have leased more than 56 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. The additional flow in the Klamath basin contributes to sucker recovery and assists in the basin scale recovery efforts, while the additional flow in the John Day basin contributes to the recovery of mid-Columbia steelhead. And in the South Coast, additional flow contributes to the recovery of Southern Oregon-Northern California coho salmon.

OWEB will continue implementing the recommendations from the evaluation of instream water right leases associated with CREP in order to achieve additional conservation benefits from the program in Oregon. OWEB, the Oregon Water Resources Department, and other partners will discuss options to allow instream leases to coincide with CREP contract terms.

Cultural Resources

The conduct of cultural resource reviews continues to slow implementation of a number of CREP projects. OWEB and the Oregon CREP partners will continue to explore options for funding cultural resource reviews to increase the efficiency with which CREP projects are implemented in the state over the next year.