



CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

2015 CREP Annual Report

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 the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), soil and water conservation districts, watershed councils, and other regional partnership organizations. CREP restores, enhances, and maintains 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 implement other approved conservation measures.

2015 ENROLLMENT

Oregon added 63 contracts in the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 to enroll 1,218.63 acres, bringing the cumulative total to 41,015.4 acres.

FEDERAL AND STATE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

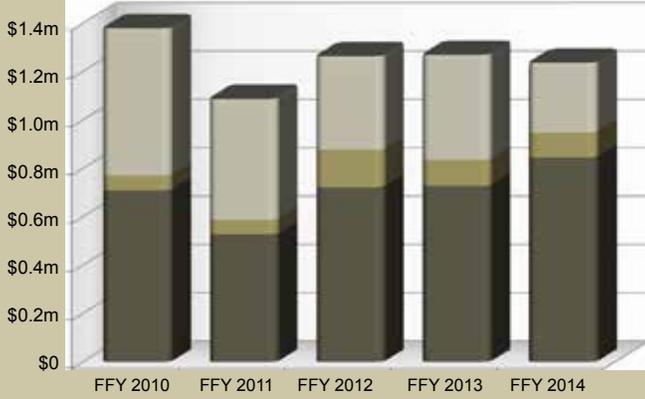
In partnership with Oregon's agricultural landowners, the State of Oregon and FSA have contributed significant resources toward riparian restoration through CREP. The approximate federal cost share for conservation practices in FFY 2015 was \$1,814,716, and the approximate annual rental payments and incentive payments totaled \$3,966,554. For the same time period, the State of Oregon's cost share contribution was \$288,318 and its total CREP expenditures were approximately \$1.24 million. The State has invested approximately \$22,077,000 in CREP since 1999.

CREP at work. This riparian buffer was part of the Trout Creek Channel Habitat Improvement Project (Nye Site), a large channel reconstruction including 2 landowners and spanning 8 miles.



The vegetation has matured over the years, making the channel stream bank stable and increasing instream habitat complexity.

Five Years of Contributions



From top to bottom on each bar:

- CREP Support Activities / Technical Assistance
- State Agency Programmatic Contributions
- State Cost-Share Payments to Landowners

Contribution Type	Contributions	
	FFY 2015	1999 to Date
State Cost Share Payments	\$288,318	\$11,727,566
State Agency Programmatic Contributions		
OWEB	\$69,234	\$680,230
Oregon Department of Forestry	\$28,485	\$685,088
Oregon Department of Agriculture	\$0	\$216,811
Oregon Water Resources Department	\$4,784	\$65,453
Support Activities / Technical Assistance		
CREP / Technical Assistance	\$447,119	\$4,172,612
Watershed Tech Specialists	\$400,000	\$4,529,500
Total	\$1,237,940	\$22,077,260

STATE COORDINATION OF OREGON CREP

Fostering effective technical assistance, coordination and partner communication is integral to the success of Oregon CREP. In addition to its contribution to the cost-share payments, the State of Oregon continues to support CREP in a variety of ways, some of which are described below.

STATE PROGRAMMATIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) funds and supports CREP technical assistance positions around the state, contributes a portion of the cost share payments for the implementation of conservation practices, and provides programmatic coordination on behalf of the State of Oregon. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) works with local CREP technicians to provide technical review and development of planting plans when needed. The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) contributes staff time and expertise to the program in their analysis of instream water rights. From the inception of Oregon CREP until approximately 2014, the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) had provided technical expertise, planning assistance and coordination with local soil and water conservation districts; these responsibilities have been redistributed to OWEB and other partners.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

In FFY 2015, OWEB continued the funding and management of eleven CREP Technical Assistance (TA)

grants, covering 22 counties. These grants are two years in duration. The TA grants provide staffing, training, and outreach support for local CREP technicians. These experts are a key element to implementing successful CREP projects. OWEB, ODF, ODA, FSA, and NRCS all contribute staff resources to the selection and evaluation of TA programs, while OWEB provides additional staff resources in partner coordination, grant management, and program oversight.

INSPECTIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

Funded by CREP TA grants, Oregon's local CREP technicians provide the program with project-level monitoring. Approximately 231 site inspections were reported by the CREP technicians during FFY 2015.

OWEB is responsible for conducting an evaluation of CREP projects throughout the State. In order to weigh the cost of CREP against its potential benefits, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices used in the program so that the partners can make appropriate adjustments for future projects. An advisory group has developed and guided a study to evaluate and report on the overall status and condition of currently enrolled CREP projects statewide.

In 2015, OWEB and FSA made progress on several fronts to initiate the CREP effectiveness monitoring project. The two agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2015 to facilitate information sharing that protects landowner privacy concerns and follows existing federal and state laws and policies. A contractor was hired in September 2015 to assist OWEB in finalizing the study design and field sampling protocols and to collect and analyze the field data. The on-the-ground data collection that will occur from May to September 2016 involves taking measurements of the vegetation and streambanks in the riparian buffers, and assessing the condition of project fencing. A final report summarizing the results of this study and any recommendations for Oregon CREP will be completed in the winter of 2017.

PROTECTION OF INSTREAM WATER



Total Water Leased Instream: 39.9 cfs
1 cfs ≈ 7.5 gallons per second

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 in instream flow which address significant aquatic resource limitations. In 2015, landowners leased 39.9 cubic feet per second (cfs) for instream flow benefits. The majority of these instream flow benefits have occurred in Klamath, Curry, Grant, Crook, and Gilliam Counties.

CUMULATIVE ACRE ENROLLMENTS BY COUNTY



PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

The state's CREP technicians provide the program with a strong, local outreach presence that fuels landowner interest and participation in the program. CREP technicians participate in regional events, organize direct mailings, develop outreach materials, and initiate contact with landowners. In FFY 2015, CREP technicians engaged in outreach to approximately 15,665 landowners.

A CREP-enrolled property in Klamath County.



Acres Enrolled and Water Conserved (*active leases*)

County	FFY 2015 Enrollment*		Active Cumulative		
	Contracts	Acres	Water CFS	Contracts	Acres
Baker	3	130.62		59	3,130.61
Benton	5	69.55		36	742.05
Clackamas	1	2.63		16	94.93
Clatsop	0	0		2	16.3
Columbia	0	0		7	264.40
Coos	1	5.70		26	175.60
Crook	3	43.58	3.785	23	755.88
Curry	2	4.50	5.740	28	748.30
Deschutes	0	0		1	198.80
Douglas	1	20.12	1.898	80	1,064.03
Gilliam	3	58.67	3.740	74	1,942.55
Grant	3	128.95	8.533	42	1,695.25
Harney	0	0		30	1,818.70
Hood River	0	0		0	0
Jackson	0	0		5	275.40
Jefferson	0	0		13	580.40
Josephine	0	0		1	1.50
Klamath	4	274.89	7.870	31	1,328.99
Lake	0	0	0	0	0
Lane	3	15.39		38	202.89
Lincoln	1	13.24		10	102.24
Linn	5	62.29		70	863.34
Malheur	0	0		4	271.50
Marion	0	0	0.310	18	122.63
Morrow	1	2.08	2.610	76	1,401.19
Multnomah	0	0		3	13.20
Polk	3	19.73	2.263	34	285.75
Sherman	1	5.34		94	5,367.99
Tillamook	0	0	0	0	0
Umatilla	4	62.38	1.420	212	2,695.95
Union	2	119.10		41	1,196.70
Wallowa	0	0		44	1,103.90
Wasco	5	82.33	0.711	285	9,868.73
Washington	5	48.67	0.762	67	434.87
Wheeler	2	24.12	0.214	42	926.18
Yamhill	4	13.65		63	375.77
Totals	62	1,207.53	39.856	1,575	40,066.52



Riparian buffer in Wheeler County, at time of planting (top), as trees are maturing (second), and in its broader landscape (third).

Wood placement (below) in the same buffer.

