



OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

WORKING TOGETHER *for* HEALTHY WATERSHEDS

STRATEGIC PLAN

JANUARY 2010

MISSION

TO HELP PROTECT AND RESTORE HEALTHY WATERSHEDS AND NATURAL HABITATS
THAT SUPPORT THRIVING COMMUNITIES AND STRONG ECONOMIES.

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No matter where you live in Oregon, you're in a watershed.

Introduction

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) recently marked ten years as a state agency helping local communities take care of Oregon's streams, rivers, wetlands and natural areas. During that period, OWEB grants have funded thousands of projects to protect clean water and restore fish and wildlife habitat across the state. These projects involve voluntary partnerships that empower people to work together to solve problems in ways that create local jobs and result in healthier watersheds.

The OWEB Board has updated its strategic plan to guide grant investment priorities and deliver effective and accountable programs for our partners and the public. We encourage you to read our latest strategic plan. The five goals and nine strategies that follow represent high priority strategic guidance to continue our work on behalf of Oregon citizens.

Oregonians from many different walks of life are helping keep watersheds healthy—giving us clean water, healthy habitats and jobs. OWEB is proud to support this part of Oregon's ongoing conservation legacy.

We invite you to get involved in improving watershed health in your community.

www.healthywatersheds.org



About Us

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) operates a grant program that helps Oregonians restore and protect rivers and wetlands – providing clean water and healthy habitat for native fish, wildlife and people. OWEB also monitors investments, manages watershed information, supports research, tracks progress in protecting clean water and restoring habitat, and reports on implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

OWEB 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.

OWEB grants are funded with a small portion of Oregon Lottery dollars, federal dollars and salmon license plate revenue. By collaborating with citizens, volunteers and landowners in communities throughout the state, OWEB helps Oregonians care for Oregon's watersheds. Grant funds support projects that employ local contractors and labor crews and utilize local resources to create community and provide maximum value for public dollars.

Vision

OWEB is a leader in the conservation of Oregon's natural resources and enjoys strong public support for its contributions to community-based conservation, watershed health, and local economies.

OWEB supports voluntary efforts that result in:

- Projects that restore and protect natural processes and functions of watersheds;
- A statewide network of watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and other local groups that develop and implement restoration projects;
- Citizen awareness of watershed issues and participation in restoration and protection actions;
- Strong and lasting partnerships to address complex natural resources issues; and
- Jobs and the purchase of goods and services in local communities.



Data from 1999-2010.



Goals and Strategies

The OWEB Board has established the following goals and strategies in support of OWEB's mission and vision. The five goals and nine strategies that follow represent high priority strategic guidance to continue our work on behalf of Oregon's citizens. In order to effectively consider and implement the strategies and actions identified below, OWEB staff have developed work plans and aligned staff workload to achieve vision-driven priorities. Measures of progress and success will be developed, and aligned with currently required reporting measures.

Goal 1

Adaptive Investment

Restore and sustain resilient ecosystems through investments that enhance watershed functions and support community needs.

Strategies

1. Maintain and enhance restoration and protection programs that focus on watershed and ecosystem functions and processes, support sustainable working landscapes, and empower community-based conservation to address economic, social and environmental health.
2. Implement monitoring and research programs to build knowledge and strengthen feedback about OWEB investments and critical uncertainties to support adaptive management for outcome improvements.

OWEB funds a mix of programs and projects across the state with many partners. Population growth and climate change will affect communities around the state and the watershed processes and functions upon which those communities (and fish and wildlife) depend. These driving forces are significant and their impact is uncertain. The key to achieving OWEB's vision is an adaptive, principled and well-structured investment strategy. OWEB has developed tools to assist partners in the strategic development of restoration or conservation projects, such as the priorities for land acquisition developed in 2004. In 2003, the Board adopted a far-reaching and long-term strategy to guide coordinated monitoring efforts under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, which led to the implementation of effectiveness monitoring. OWEB also manages the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI), which has tracked completed restoration work since 1995. OWEB will continue to improve its data systems with a specific focus on data sharing with project partners and the public.



Goal 2

Local Infrastructure Development

Support an enduring, high-capacity local infrastructure for conducting watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.

Strategies

1. Establish and articulate policies related to the support and development of a diverse local infrastructure for watershed restoration.
2. Evaluate and adjust watershed council support grant review and funding processes to build local capacity, provide base funding, and promote strategic partnerships.
3. Provide technical assistance to build capacity, secure additional funding and increase local organizational resilience.

Watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, land trusts, and other non-governmental organizations are key partners in implementing OWEB programs. They play a critical role in working with interested landowners to design projects, apply for grants, implement projects, monitor results, and provide local watershed education. The work of all these partners also provides significant community and economic benefits. Success of OWEB's mission and vision requires these partners to have sufficient capacity and funding to continue and enhance their work. OWEB continues to explore the best ways to help support a high-capacity infrastructure.

Goal 3

Public Awareness and Involvement

Provide information to help Oregonians understand the need for and engage in activities that support healthy watersheds.

Strategies

1. Make Oregonians aware of the importance of healthy watersheds and inform them, in broad strokes, of what has been accomplished on their behalf through the work of OWEB and others.
2. Encourage and facilitate greater exploration and knowledge for those Oregonians who seek greater involvement in watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.

All Oregonians appreciate and recognize the value of clean, abundant water. Few Oregonians recognize that clean, abundant water depends on functioning watersheds or identify the critical link between investments in watershed conservation and clean, abundant water and healthy populations of fish and wildlife. It is important to expand the awareness that land and water management actions can improve and/or protect water quality. Healthy watersheds require an informed public that supports fish and wildlife habitat protection, well-managed river corridors, agricultural and forest land stewardship and urban land and water management. OWEB has over a decade of projects and programs that illustrate the linkages between ecosystem health and community and economic sustainability. The more people know about the public investments in watershed health and the benefits of those investments, the more they will value them and support continued funding of those efforts.



Goal 4

Partnership Development

Build and maintain strong partnerships with local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and private landowners for watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.

Strategy

1. Identify new and expand existing strategic partnerships that leverage OWEB funds and knowledge to achieve healthy watershed and community outcomes.

OWEB complements the regulatory and land management programs of state and federal agencies and local governments with voluntary watershed restoration by private landowners and others. OWEB's grant-based, non-regulatory program requires a high level of coordination and collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, and organizations. Partnerships are a required element for all OWEB investments. Partnerships range from the matching funds for individual grants to institutional arrangements to implement federally developed programs. Criteria for evaluating formal partnerships has been developed and adopted by the Board.

Goal 5

Efficient and Accountable Administration

Ensure efficient and accountable administration of all investments.

Strategy

1. Continue to evaluate, explore and implement grant administrative processes to maintain and enhance efficiencies at all levels.

OWEB's core function is the administration of a competitive grant program, which has experienced significant growth in the number of grants and funding award amounts over the past ten years. The timely, accurate, and transparent administration of all aspects of the program is an everyday activity for all OWEB staff. This approach benefits the agency and its partners by providing streamlined processes and necessary resources to carry out watershed and habitat restoration and conservation in a prompt and responsible manner. OWEB will continue to focus on this important goal and look for opportunities for advancement and improvement while balancing and supporting flexibility, innovation, and adaptive management. OWEB is in constant communication with staff to determine the most effective ways to carry out its business. A staff review is conducted following each grant cycle to develop recommended improvements. In addition to internal processes, OWEB also benefits from third-party reviews of its work. OWEB's grant process, files, and expenditures are audited every other year by the Secretary of State, and OWEB has received a favorable audit each time.



More Information

What is a watershed?

A “watershed” is an area of land that drains into a lake, wetland, stream or river. In Oregon, no matter where you live, you’re in a watershed.

Watersheds even exist where water doesn’t flow into a stream or river. In desert areas, watersheds drain into lakes and wetlands providing important habitat for plants and animals. Throughout Oregon, healthy watersheds are vital to people, fish and wildlife. What happens upstream has a direct impact on all of the water downstream.

Oregon’s Conservation Legacy — A Unique Approach

Oregonians should be proud of their unique approach to enhancing and maintaining the state’s watersheds. Their collective care and appreciation for the state’s natural places and working landscapes has created a strong and enduring legacy of conservation in Oregon. Looking back, Oregon’s conservation legacy is embodied in milestone actions involving incentives for recycling (the bottle bill), protecting unique and special places for the public to enjoy (the beach bill), and the development of land use planning laws to protect important land uses and prevent unchecked urban sprawl.



OWEB’s investments are the critical link between investments in watershed conservation and clean abundant water and healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Cooperative Voluntary Conservation

The most recent expression of Oregon’s conservation legacy has been quietly and effectively taking place in communities around the state for over a decade. Local groups—primarily watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts—are engaging farmers, ranchers, foresters, and other landowners to voluntarily work with other partners to take actions on their properties that help restore and protect our natural environment. Together, these local cooperative actions are writing the most recent chapter to Oregon’s conservation legacy.



OWEB

*No matter where you live in Oregon, you're in a watershed.
Our lakes, rivers and streams are the lifeblood of our environment.
OWEB helps Oregonians restore and protect our watersheds.*

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