



Oregon's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

2010 Annual Program Accomplishment Report
December 31, 2010





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.

Contact Us

www.oregon.gov/OWEB
775 Summer Street NE
Suite 360
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 986-0178

CREP Contact

Melissa Leoni
Senior Policy Coordinator
melissa.leoni@state.or.us
(503) 986-0179

Executive Summary

Accomplishments October 1, 2009—September 30, 2010

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 2010

Oregon added 81 contracts in the 2010 federal fiscal year to enroll 1,677.7 acres, bringing the cumulative total to nearly 37,000 acres. Oregon saw a peak in contract numbers and acres enrolled in 2008, followed by a decrease in both in 2009. In 2010, the number of acres enrolled continued to decline, although the number of contracts was up. Current indications for 2011 suggest that the number of contracts and acreage enrolled in the program are increasing.

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 2010, Oregon's CREP expenditures were \$1,253,456, while the estimated federal costs of the Oregon CREP contracts were \$3,652,194.

The FFY 2010 Oregon CREP expenditure is approximately half of the FFY 2009 amount. This is largely attributable to the reduction in cost-share payments made by OWEB in 2010, which were less than one-third of the amount made in 2009. Oregon has invested more than \$15.8 million in CREP since 1999.

On the cover:

Three photos of Fifteenmile Watershed, Wasco County, Oregon.

Left, willow cuttings being planted on Dry Creek a tributary to Fifteenmile Creek using a "stinger" mounted on the arm of a small track hoe, an essential tool for planting willow cuttings in cobble substrate. Right, two photos of riparian buffers along Fifteenmile Creek. Photos courtesy of Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Status of Enrollments



<i>Participation by County</i>					
County	Oct. 2009– Sept. 2010 Enrollment (Contracts)	Cumulative Enrollment (Contracts)	Oct. 2009– Sept. 2010 Enrollment (Acres)	Cumulative Enrollment (Acres)	Cumulative Water Conservation (cfs)
Baker	13	47	486.8	2482.8	0
Benton	5	31	110	665.9	0.39
Clackamas	4	18	24.4	97.5	0.016
Clatsop		3		23.9	0
Columbia		9		389.9	0
Coos	1/	30	n/a	238.8	1.43
Crook	1/	15	n/a	506.4	6.748
Curry	3	25	159.2	776.4	5.6
Deschutes		0		0	0
Douglas	4	89	37.3	1187.3	1.845
Gilliam	3	63	35.2	1689.6	4.67
Grant	3	49	190.2	2121.6	10.782
Harney		23		1314.6	0
Hood River		0		0	0
Jackson		4		264.8	0
Jefferson		10		430.1	0
Josephine		1/		n/a	0
Klamath		36		1348.2	13.85
Lake		0		0	0
Lane	1/	33	n/a	182.6	0.02
Lincoln		8		173.5	0
Linn	6	32	95	430.2	0
Malheur		4		276.6	0
Marion		18		194.9	1.24
Morrow	1/	71	n/a	1365.9	1.916
Multnomah		4		94.5	0
Polk		49		526.5	2.581
Sherman		86		4899.4	0
Tillamook		0		0	0
Umatilla	4	184	32	2456.9	0.876
Union	1/	59	n/a	1434.8	0
Wallowa	1/	69	n/a	1570.3	0
Wasco	14	244	265.4	7953.6	4.977
Washington	1/	43	n/a	285.9	0.682
Wheeler	3	28	66	727	3.404
Yamhill	8	59	54.4	415.8	0.024
TOTAL	81	1443	1677.7	36,526.2	61.051

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

Evaluation

Technical Assistance and Public Information and Education



In 2010, state funding was provided to support 13 CREP technical assistance positions located in soil and water conservation districts around Oregon to increase participation in conservation activities through the establishment of additional riparian buffers. The CREP technical assistance positions achieved the following outreach, technical assistance, and CREP implementation metrics.

CREP Technical Assistance Metrics	
<i>Federal Fiscal Year 2010</i>	
Implementation Activities	Metric
Landowners receiving Technical Assistance	514
New CREP Projects Enrolled	74
New CREP Contract Acres	1,407
Stream Miles in CREP Contracts	62
Watersheds in CREP Contracts Receiving Technical Assistance	188
Outreach Activities	Metric
Landowners Attending Workshops	523
Landowners Attending Presentations	2,091
Tours Conducted	19
Technical Assistance Activities	Metric
Landowners Contacted	2,042
On-Site Visits and Evaluations	355
Plans and Designs Receiving Technical Assistance	318
Acres in Plans and Designs	16,361

Discussions continue about how best to distribute technical assistance resources across the state. For example in Baker County, the CREP Technician is providing limited technical assistance to landowners in two other counties within the Snake River Basin that don't have their own technician. CREP technicians continue to need training and resources for completing conservation plans and supporting project implementation.

Evaluation

Continued



CREP Coordination

The Oregon CREP partners – OWEB, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Oregon Association of Conservation Districts – work together on program oversight and ways to improve the allocation and oversight of technical assistance. OWEB and ODA work together to coordinate training of technical staff, coordinate with USDA, report accomplishments, and track expenses.

CREP Instream Water Right Lease Evaluation

In 2009, OWEB contracted with Steven Parrett of GoldinWater Consulting to evaluate 20 CREP instream water right leases in Wasco, Klamath, and Grant counties to determine whether any of these leases are significant for flow restoration purposes and warrant an OWEB investment to convert the lease rights to permanent instream water rights. OWEB received the evaluation report from Mr. Parrett on March 27, 2010.

The report concluded that out of the 20 instream leases, there are seven that have a high potential ecological value and are large enough to justify pursuing a permanent instream transfer. The remaining 13 are too small, and/or too junior and/or in the wrong location to be worthwhile.

The report recommends pursuing only the five leases in Wasco County. The two in Grant County are very important, but are not likely to be transferred instream in the near future. OWEB partners in the Columbia Basin are currently working on implementing the instream transfer recommendations.

The report also recommended that OWEB consider funding additional evaluations of CREP-related instream leases in other counties and then compare the ranking of those lease rights relative to the three counties evaluated in this study. The report further recommended that OWEB and relevant partners consider updates to appropriate laws or rules to allow instream leases to coincide with CREP contract terms.

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 continued discussing its responsibilities to conduct a CREP annual monitoring program. OWEB has identified the need to conduct additional effectiveness monitoring of its riparian restoration investments and would like to integrate the monitoring of CREP with other riparian evaluation work.

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	\$577,852	\$9,031,785
OWEB Support	\$13,300	\$515,945
Dept. of Forestry Support	\$31,435	\$428,264
Dept. of Agriculture Support	\$35,000	\$196,946
Water Resources Dept. Support	\$4,650	\$26,203
CREP Support Activities- Research, Training, Outside Contracts, etc.	\$341,219	\$2,812,843
Watershed Technical Specialists (estimated)	\$250,000	\$2,812,500
TOTAL	\$1,253,456	\$15,824,486

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.

Effectiveness Monitoring Program

Over the next year, OWEB will work towards developing an effectiveness monitoring study plan, which will be designed 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.

Protection of Instream Water

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.



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