

2023-2024 Report: Forest Legacy Program



Background

The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership with the United States Forest Service that addresses privately owned forestlands that face threats of conversion to non-forest use by development pressures such as urbanization, rural residential development, or parcelization. Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 526.065 authorizes the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to apply for and accept federal grants to accomplish the goals of the federal Forest Legacy Program.

The Oregon Forestry Legacy Program is a voluntary, application based program that provides funds for the purchase of development rights to eligible private forestlands through either conservation easement or fee-title acquisition into public ownership with the goal of promoting stewardship and sustainable management of private forest lands by maintaining working forests that conserve important commodity and non-commodity forest resource and conservation values including water flows and quality, fish and wildlife habitat, stores of carbon, public access and biodiversity. The Forest Legacy Program operates in areas where forests may be lost to non-forest uses and seeks projects that strengthen local communities through state, local and private partnerships in conservation. These areas are referred to as “Forest Legacy Areas” (FLAs) and are identified on the map on page two of the report. ORS 526.065 requires ODF to report the number and monetary amounts of grants applied for and awarded under the federal Forest Legacy Program as well as the location and disposition of areas affected by the program. This report captures this data for federal fiscal years (FFY) 2023 and 2024 which span September of 2022 through October of 2024.

Grant Applications and Outcomes

For federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023 two (2) applications were submitted for a total of \$20,000,000 and \$19,999,000 was awarded. For FFY 2024 two (2) applications were submitted for a total of \$38,820,000 in requested funds with \$13,810,000 ultimately being awarded. As funding decisions for FFY 23 were unknown at the time of the FFY 24 requests, a project funding request of \$10,245,000 was made in both FFYs and was ultimately awarded for FFY 23.

Project Descriptions

Minam Conservation and Connectivity Phase 2 | FLA: Blue Mountains | Status: Awarded \$9,754,000

The Minam Phase 2 fee simple acquisition will protect 10,964 acres of working forestland and a corridor along the breathtaking Minam River. Phase 1 (4,609 acres), funded through the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, was acquired by the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Together, Phases 1 & 2 (15,573 acres) connect the nationally designated Minam and Wallowa Wild and Scenic River corridors. Subdivision is the greatest threat to Phase 2, which has high development potential due to easy access, stunning views, river frontage, and world-class recreational opportunities. Had it not been funded, subdivision would have eliminated cohesive forest management, historic public access and fragmented critical fish and wildlife habitat. Phase 2 also protected scenic viewsheds on over 2.4 million acres of adjacent public lands, and helped ensure



clear-running streams will be available to support threatened Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

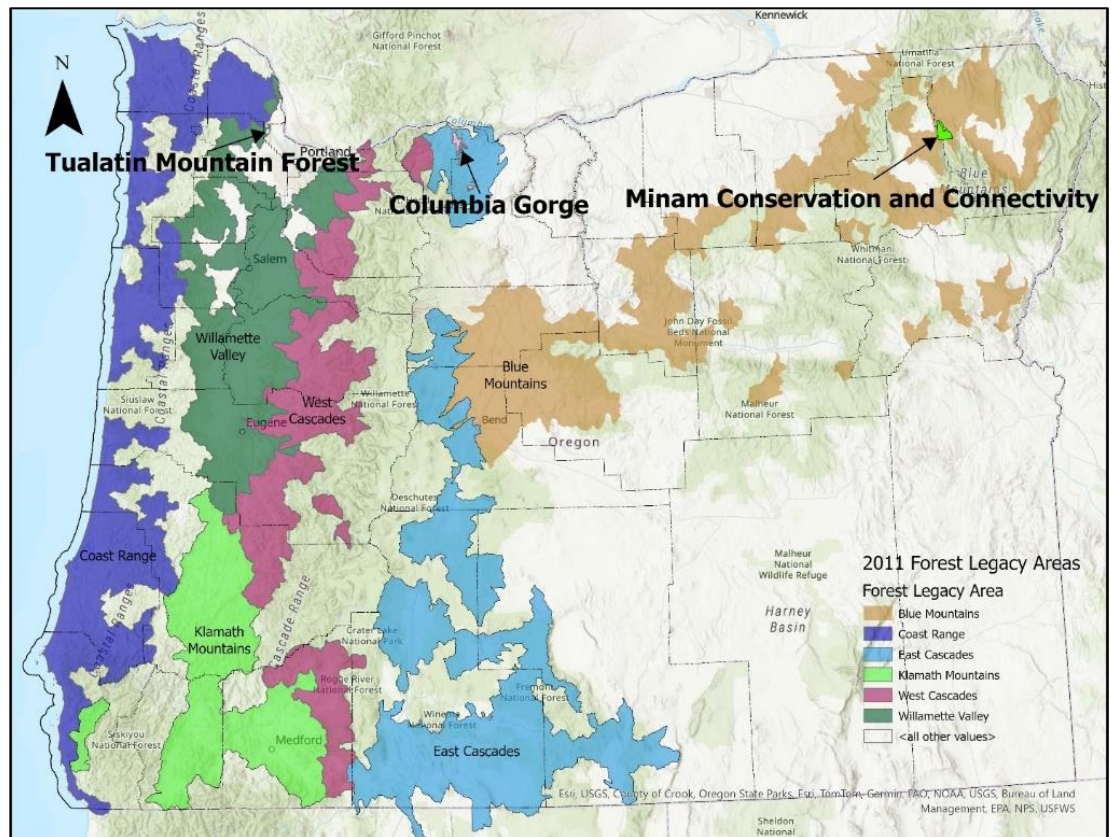
Tualatin Mountain Forest Project Phases 1-3 | FLA: Willamette Valley | Status: Awarded \$24,055,000

The 3,111 acre Tualatin Mountain Forest (TMF) will be acquired in fee simple by Oregon State University. 17 miles outside Portland, the TMF Project will be managed as a research forest and will benefit nearby disadvantaged communities and Portland Metro Area's recreation economy by creating new public access to over 20 miles of existing trails. TMF will serve as a national model of an actively managed research forest balancing financial productivity, carbon sequestration, healthy watershed, public access, recreation, and diverse plant and wildlife communities, including Oregon's diminishing oak woodlands.

Columbia Gorge Tracts 1 & 2 | FLA: West Cascades | Status: Unfunded Request of \$8,640,000

The Columbia Gorge Forest project was proposed to protect productive conifer forests as well as habit-rich and climate resilient oak woodlands on the east side of the Cascade Mountains in northern Oregon including 10,653 acres of timberland by conservation easement (Tract 1); 3,442 acres of habitat and drinking water by fee (Tract 2); and 1,965 acres of oak habitat by fee (Tract 3). The project would protect a continuous forested landscape that supports a thriving timber economy, an essential international migratory corridor for neo-tropical birds, vital winter range for big game, a vibrant recreation economy, and drinking water for the region's largest city, The Dalles. Centered on the largest remaining privately owned forest in Wasco County, it has 26 miles of shared borders with federal- and county- owned forestland. Preventing development would ensure complete municipal watershed protection for

The Dalles and maintain water flow essential for the recovery of federally listed salmon and steelhead along 60 miles of tributary streams. Located 1.5 hours from the Portland Metro Area and in the heart of a famously scenic landscape, it is at risk of parcelization, development, and loss of public access.



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