



# NATURAL & WORKING LANDS PROGRAM

## OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD



In 2023, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3409, establishing a Natural and Working Lands (NWL) fund. This fund provides financial incentives and technical support to help Tribes, landowners, land managers, and environmental justice communities implement natural climate solutions, ensuring that communities also benefit from the social, health, resilience, and economic co-benefits of these solutions.

### NWL Grant Offerings

#### **RESTORATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Grants that support **planning and implementing** a wide range of natural climate solutions.

#### **OREGON AG HERITAGE PROGRAM (OAHP)**

Support for the development of **conservation management plans and per-acre payments** for the implementation of ecosystem services on agricultural land.

### NWL Grant Cycle Timeline

- ▶ **February 5, 2025** Applications **open**
- ▶ **April 1, 2025** Applications **close**
- ▶ **July 22-23, 2025** Funding **decisions**

There is \$2.25 million available this round.  
Determination of future grant cycles will be made following the close of the current offering.

### Funding & Match

**\$500,000 max** Restoration or Technical Assistance Grants  
**\$200,000 max** Conservation Management Plan Grants  
**5% cash or in-kind match required** (non-OWEB)

### Definitions

**Natural climate solution:** An activity that enhances or protects net biological carbon sequestration on natural and working lands, while maintaining or increasing ecosystem resilience and human well-being.

**Environmental justice community:** Includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, Tribal communities, rural communities, remote communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities.

### Illustrative Program Example

OWEB has previously supported natural climate solutions and equity focused projects with other funding sources. In 2023, OWEB funded a tree planting project in Southern Oregon, where a wildfire burned 37% of the urban canopy, disproportionately affecting low-income residents. The loss of the tree canopy caused increased ground temperatures, increased storm water runoff, and increased nutrient and sediment loads. This replanting and wildfire recovery project is helping restore the urban forest and the ecological services it provides. The NWL funds will build on and expand OWEB's capacity to support programs that integrate climate solutions and human well-being.

### Contacts

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## Eligible Applicants

Like other OWEB grants, an applicant for NWL funding may be any Tribe, watershed council, soil and water conservation district, or not-for-profit institution. Applicants for Restoration and Technical Assistance grants include the above applicants as well as a school, community college, state institution of higher education, independent not for-profit institution of higher education or political subdivision of this state that is not a state agency.

A state agency or federal agency may apply for funding under this section only as a co-applicant with one of the other eligible entities.

## Grant Program Evaluation Process

Evaluation of NWL grant applications by technical review teams will be **based on the OWEB evaluation criteria** ([Restoration](#), [Technical Assistance](#), and [CMP](#)). Within that evaluation framework, applications will also be prioritized based on the following:

- Inclusion of environmental justice communities and partners in the program project design and implementation.
- Co-benefits of proposed activities for Tribes and environmental justice communities (i.e. clean air, clean water, improved wildfire resilience, job creation, tourism, human well-being, etc.).



## NWL Webpage & Additional Resources



For information about grant budgets, getting access to OWEB's Grant Management System, understanding insurance requirements, or using OWEB's online applications, see the video resources [here](#).

## Eligible Practices - Restoration and Technical Assistance

Projects with one or more of the following natural climate solutions are **eligible for funding**:

### Rangelands

- Prevent conversion of grasslands, shrublands, and savannas to juniper woodlands or invasive annual plant dominated systems
- Restore deep rooted perennial grasses to areas impacted by invasive species
- Restore functioning riparian areas

### Forest Lands

- Afforestation/Reforestation
- Improved forest management to reduce wildfire risk, increase overall age of forest, etc. (including prescribed or cultural burns)
- Increase the proportion of harvested wood products used for durable building materials

### Urban Lands

- Maintain and expand forest vegetation cover
- Improve fertilizer use in urban and suburban lands to reduce excess nitrogen releases

### Blue Carbon

- Tidal wetland conservation and restoration

## Eligible Practices - OAHP

Projects on agricultural lands with one or more of the following natural climate solutions are **eligible for Conservation Management Plan funding**:

- Increase riparian buffer beyond edge of field
- Stormwater runoff control
- Improve nutrient management and reduce nitrogen application
- Increase woody plant coverage
- Encourage no-till and reduced-till residue management
- Implement edge-of-field herbaceous (non-woody) conservation practices
- Improve grazing and pasture based management, including rotational grazing
- Cover crops
- Prescribed or cultural burns