



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program FY2020 Annual Report

Oregon

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is partnership between state agencies and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency. Through these partnerships, CREP provides financial incentives to farm landowners willing to voluntarily implement conservation measures on sensitive land in lieu of continued agricultural production. Conservation practices implemented under CREP (e.g., stream buffers, conservation plantings, restored wetlands) contribute to improved water quality, reduced water losses, increased water storage, and increased habitat quantity and quality for a variety of wildlife species; but are targeted towards specific State or nationally significant conservation concerns. Under the terms of CREP agreements, partners are required to submit annual reports that summarize progress towards meeting CREP agreement goals. This is the FY2020 report for the Oregon CREP Partnership.



Introduction

Oregon's Riparian Enhancement Initiative was approved by DAFP on December 9, 2004. This CREP Agreement restores, enhances, and maintains streamside acres along agricultural lands to benefit fish, wildlife, and water quality. Landowners receive annual rental payments and financial incentives to implement approved conservation measures, such as planting trees and shrubs in riparian areas, installing fencing, and developing livestock watering facilities.

FY2020 Summary

CREP Acreage Cap: 100,000
Acres Re-enrolled in 2020: 2,933
New Acres Enrolled in 2020: 4,152
Total Acres Currently Enrolled: 47,208

Federal Commitments

Federal CRP Rental Payments: \$4,193,081
Federal Signup Incentive Payments: \$33,303
Federal Practice Incentive Payments: \$400,141
Federal Cost-Share Payments: \$465,712
Other Federal Incentive Payments: \$0

Non-Federal Commitments

Oregon Water Enhancement Board - programmatic and technical assistance funds, Oregon Department of Forestry - programmatic funding, Oregon Water Resources Department - - programmatic funding, Oregon Department of Agriculture - - programmatic funding

Non-Federal Financial Commitments: \$607,076
Non-Federal Financial Commitments Directly to CRP Participants: \$291,849
Total Non-Federal In-kind Support: \$511,991
Total Non-Federal In-kind Support Directly to CRP Participants: \$0

Breakdown of Non-Federal In-kind Support

- 1:** State of Oregon - Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB) - funds and supports technical assistance positions throughout the state and provides programmatic coordination and training for CREP on behalf of the State of Oregon. – \$499,543
- 2:** The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) works with local CREP technicians to provide technical review and development of planting plans when needed. – \$9,152
- 3:** Oregon Water Resources Department - (OWRD) contributes staff time and expertise to the program in their analysis of instream water rights. – \$3,296
- 4:** Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) - contributes staff resources to the selection and evaluation of technical assistance (TA) programs. – \$0

Other Non-Federal Commitments or Support: n/a

Total Other Non-Federal Commitments or Support: \$0

Other Non-Federal Commitments or Support Directly to CRP Participants: \$0

GOALS

Goal 1: Restore 100% of the area enrolled for the riparian forest buffer practice to a properly functioning condition in terms of distribution and growth of woody plant species, filtration of nutrients and sediment from agricultural runoff, shade and stabilization of stream banks under normal non-flood conditions

Progress: Effectiveness Monitoring

In 2019, OWEB worked with 5 CREP technicians in Oregon to pilot a monitoring approach to track contract performance and inform management of CREP buffers. This monitoring approach, developed in coordination with OWEB-funded CREP technicians, includes completion of a CREP monitoring checklist and repeating the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP) on a subset of active contracts. OWEB elected to pilot the approach before implementing it statewide. The technicians will report their findings in early 2020, and OWEB will incorporate lessons learned from this pilot monitoring effort into a refined monitoring approach in 2020 and 2021.

Difficulties: Access to landowner property when using a consulting firm to perform effectiveness monitoring. Utilizing SWCD employees to conduct monitoring efforts has been successful since 2019 when it was determined that using contractors was an impediment to monitoring, since local landowners did not know those individuals.

Goal 2: Provide a way for farmers and ranchers to voluntarily meet the water quality requirements established under federal law and under Oregon's water quality act.

Progress: See response to first goal

Difficulties: See response to first goal

Goal 3: Attain enrollments for the following targets for a maximum of 100,000 acres enrolled in Oregon under CREP:

Coastal Basins - 1,250 acres of riparian forest buffer; 1,000 acres of restored wetlands = 2,250 acres

Columbia Basin - 8,000 acres of riparian forest buffers; 1,000 acres of restored wetlands = 9,000 total acres

Interior drainages - 3,500 acres of riparian forest buffers, 1,000 acres of restored wetlands = 4,500 total acres

The Tualatin Watershed Option implemented by Clean Water Services has worked to restore the Tualatin Watershed primarily through riparian forest buffer practices.

Progress: Based on our enrollment numbers, Oregon has achieved the goals set forth in the various regions outlined above for the state.

Difficulties: N/A

Goal 4: This is the primary goal that the listed goals 1-3 aim to address, while also providing additional benefits as listed in goals 1-3: A number of fish species native to Oregon have been either listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act. This Agreement for this Oregon CREP seeks to help alleviate some of these problems.

Progress: As a result of the nearly 48,000 acres that are enrolled in CREP, the water temperatures and shade provided by riparian buffer practices, in addition to filtering agricultural runoff, have provided improved habitat for a number of fish species located in the state.

Difficulties: N/A

Field Reviews

Field Reviews: Oregon's CREP is located in every county in the state. SWCD CREP technicians that are funded through OWEB TA grants conduct regular site visits to ensure that the cover has been established, and prior to signing off on establishment. In Addition, NRCS often plays a role in site visits, as does the FSA field staff. Contracts are often checked at the time for management

to occur, so the technician can assist the landowner with the appropriate activity for the ground. Spot check are conducted when landowners express interest in re-enrolling.

Field Review Findings: With 48,000 acres enrolled in Oregon, representing 1533 contracts there is not enough space to outline the findings in this report. If there is an issue with an existing contract, a contract at re-enrollment, or a contract that does not meet land eligibility, it is brought to FSA to handle procedurally.

Were Findings Reported to FSA? Yes

Outreach Activities

Outreach Activity 1: Outreach is done on an ongoing, continuous basis by SWCD staff and other partners listed in this report, as well as by OWEB. In addition, FSA announces any changes and new signup periods through the National office provided templates, which are shared with OWEB and other state partners.



Success Stories

Given the challenges posed by Coronavirus, the biggest success in 2020 was the fact that even with these challenges, Oregon enrolled and re-enrolled almost the same number of acres into CREP that were enrolled in 2019. This shows the dedication of OWEB employees, FSA and our various partners who believe in the CREP program and went above and beyond to ensure field visits were conducted, producers were met with, and contracts were signed.

Challenges

It has been a challenging year with Coronavirus and all of the associated challenges that has brought from funding, to staffing, to periodic office closures. Despite these challenges, Oregon maintains a robust CREP program that remains very popular to producers in the state.

Additional Information

We didn't see a place to record this, but in addition to the \$499,542.50 that OWEB expends in state technical assistance funds, there is an additional \$95,085.29 in funding that comes from federal sources that was also utilized by OWEB for CREP Technical Assistance expenses.

Date Completed: 1/5/2021

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