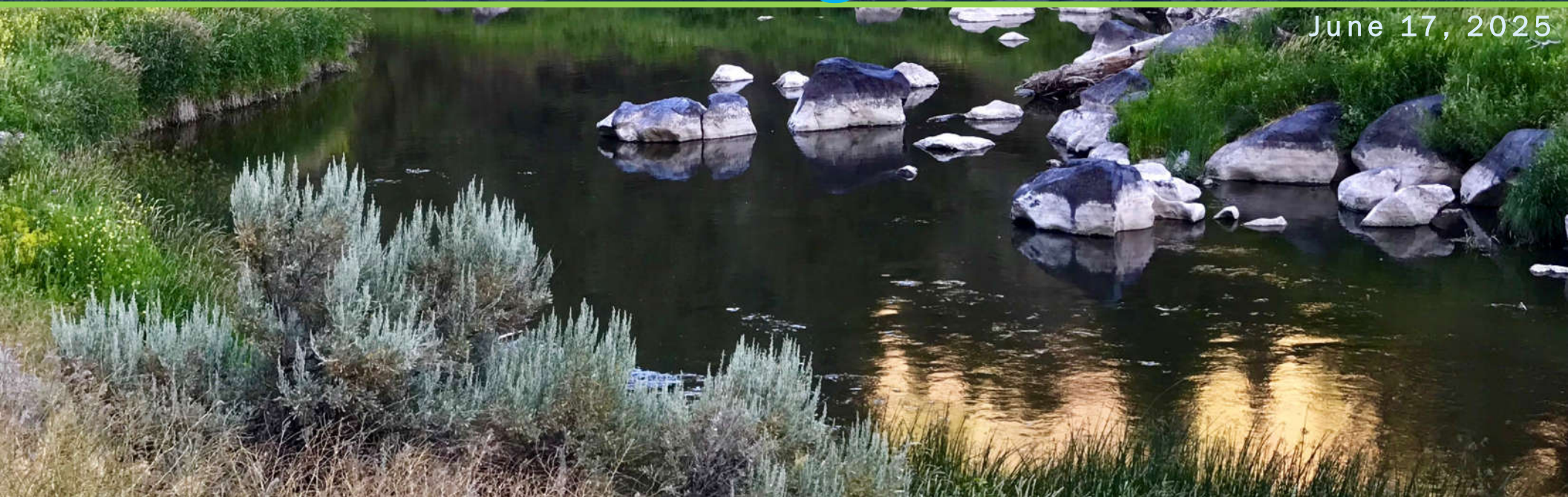




# CREP Technical Assistance Grant Program Webinar

June 17, 2025





# Who is OWEB?



**Our 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.

**Our Mission:** To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency that provides grants to help Oregonians take care of local streams, rivers, wetlands, and natural areas. The majority of OWEB grants are funded from the Oregon Lottery, federal dollars, and salmon license plate revenue. We're led by an 18-member citizen board with representation from the public, tribes, and federal and state natural resource agency boards and commissions.



# What is CREP?



## Background

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary program for agricultural producers on private lands. This state and federal partnership allows producers to receive incentive payments from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) for establishing long-term, riparian buffers on eligible land.

## Purpose

Restore, maintain, and enhance streamside areas along agricultural lands to benefit fish, wildlife, and water quality. Participants enrolled in CREP receive annual rental payments, incentive payments, and cost share payments to implement conservation measures such as planting riparian trees and shrubs, installing fencing, or installing livestock watering facilities.



# Program Partnership Responsibilities



The Oregon CREP is jointly administered by state and federal agencies.

## ***Federal***

- USDA FSA is the lead federal agency responsible for administering contracts, providing 50% cost-share on eligible restoration practices and providing rental rate payments and other financial incentives.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance for planning and design of CREP practices.

## ***State***

- OWEB is the lead state agency responsible for administering state contracts to provide 25% state cost-share on eligible restoration practices.
- Oregon Departments of Forestry, Agriculture, and Water Resources and CREP Technicians provide technical assistance, public outreach and financial assistance.

# Program Partnership Responsibilities



## *Shared*

The state and USDA are both responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of CREP in restoring watersheds and threatened and endangered species habitat.

# CREP Technical Assistance Grant Program



## Program Goal

Provide funding for technical assistance to implement local CREP programs.

## Program Structure

- *Eligible applicants:* any tribe, watershed council, soil and water conservation district, not-for-profit corporation, school, Oregon institution of higher education, independent not-for-profit institution of higher education, or political subdivision of this state that is not a state agency involved in a CREP Program.
- *Eligible Projects:* Project outreach, planning, designing and monitoring for CREP or other riparian enhancement projects that: plant native vegetation to improve water quality, control soil erosion, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.



# CREP Technical Assistance Grant Program



## Program Structure

- *Grant Term:* 2-year lifespan beginning January 2026
- *Funding:* Max request: none; Match requirement: 5%
- *Application deadline:* July 17, 2025 at 5PM
- Costs may include staffing, travel, training, outreach, planning, and contract monitoring associated with local CREP implementation
- Climate questions in application
- Grants are competitive and statewide
- Grants will be assessed using the Technical Assistance Evaluation Criteria
- Grant awards will be made by the OWEB Board at the October 2025 meeting



# CREP Monitoring



## Monitoring and Reporting that is required at interval of your choice on a subset of CREP contracts:

1. Tracking of conservation practices using the contract monitoring checklist (available upon request) to inform adaptive management of the buffer in communication with the producer
  2. Measuring qualitative outcomes by repeating the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP2)
  3. Final report summarizing SVAP2 scores and providing lessons learned at end of 2-year grant following standardized template (available upon request).
- Applicants are encouraged to consider and refine their scope of work and budget to accommodate monitoring
  - Think through the number of existing CREP contracts and when and how many to monitor them at key milestones across 10 or 15 year contract. Split this over two year period with monitoring happening each year.

Contact Ken Fetcho if you have questions on contract monitoring and reporting requirements  
[ken.fetcho@oweb.oregon.gov](mailto:ken.fetcho@oweb.oregon.gov) or 971-345-7018





# A CREP TA provider ...



- Is a non-NRCS employee, doing NRCS work
- Uses NRCS procedures and tools (software, protocols, etc.)
- Follows NRCS policy to provide TA for an FSA program
- Needs familiarity with FSA program rules/limits and with NRCS standards/requirements
- Co-location in NRCS office is a BIG HELP depending how the TA is used by the local partnership
- SWCD agreements to house staff are often already in place
- Technical oversight by NRCS is crucial to success for a new local CREP program

# Typical CREP Technician Duties



- Education and outreach about the program and about riparian buffers on agricultural lands, ag water quality
- Workshops, articles, meetings, site visits, partner strategies & communication
- Determine need and feasibility of each individual CREP project. Referrals to partners to address other resource concerns
- Write NRCS-approved specifications for planting, fencing, watering facilities, crossings, weed control ...
- Create an NRCS-approved Conservation Plan for each contract, based on a complete 6-part planning file of assessments and designs
- Support and troubleshooting as landowners implement their projects
- Inspect and sign off each installed practice; certify for cost-share
- Project tracking: **Each 10- to 15-year landowner contract requires 4 status reviews on approved forms**
- NRCS planner training, continuing education to maintain Job Approval Authority, Planner certification, etc.
- Daily interaction with NRCS is appropriate, may depend on local partnership arrangement
- ... and help FSA find and address problems as they arise (CREP competes for attention with >30 programs in some FSA offices)

# CREP Tech & local Oregon CREP partnership



## NRCS

Technical oversight:  
**CREP Techs do NRCS work** with NRCS tools, procedures, policies, and equipment (planning software)

### ASK!

Does your local NRCS office want a CREP program manager, or a technician under close supervision? Willing to house/train/supply ?

## FSA

FSA administers the CREP program and each individual landowner contract. (money and rules)

CREP Tech provides contract support & project development, helps develop budgets and track implementation, project status reviews, etc.

### ASK!

Can your local FSA support more CREP contracts, or do they just want help managing existing contracts?

## Employer/ grantee

Traditionally, an SWCD provides TA under an agreement with NRCS to supplement NRCS staff.

Multi-county desirable, needs agreement

Other partner entities have expressed interest in promoting the CREP program and providing TA.

Employer is the supervisor of the CREP TA staff, needs to have a relationship with local NRCS to ensure adequacy of performance and products

## OWEB/State of Oregon

OWEB: Co-administrator, Partner and TA grantor

Provides a 25% cost-share on top of the Federal through individual cost-share agreements.

OWEB created the OREGON CREP with FSA to enhance the federal CRP program's ability to address our concern: riparian buffers (salmonid habitat).

ODF writes or reviews planting plan, helps troubleshoot tree problems

ODWR for irrigated rental rates

ODFW always helpful, habitat advice

## Landowners/ Operators

Riparian buffers are great for pastures and cropland ... operational advantages as well as ecological lift.

Is there landowner interest in the Oregon CREP? Is there more work to be done to create community interest?

Community groups interested in helping to promote?





# Questions?

Heidi Hartman, OWEB Federal Programs Specialist,  
[heidi.hartman@oweb.oregon.gov](mailto:heidi.hartman@oweb.oregon.gov), 971-707-0226



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# CREP Technical Assistance Grant Program



## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

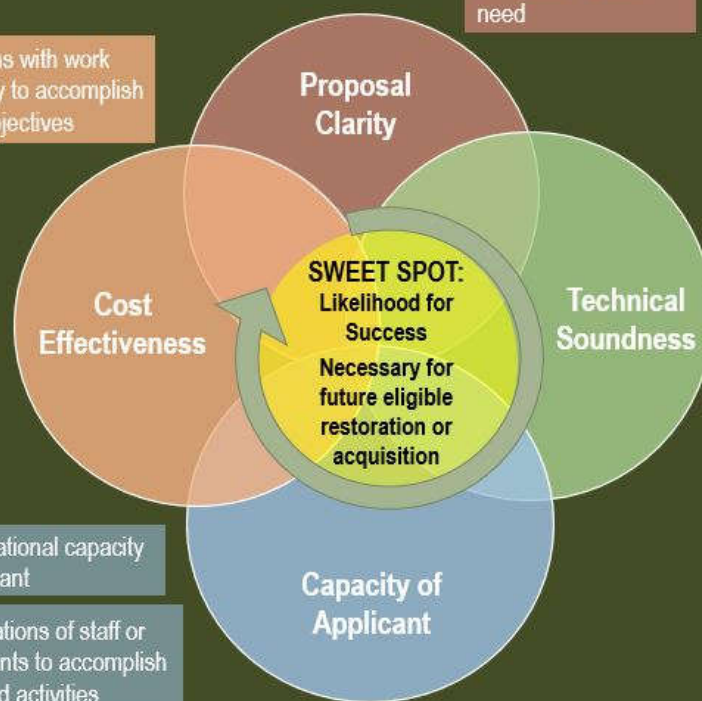
Evaluation Criteria  
OAR 695-030-0045

### Resource Assessment & Planning

= information about existing water quality or habitat conditions and processes at an identified scale, and relates those conditions and processes to actions that will directly lead to desired future conditions within a specified timeframe.

Cost aligns with work necessary to accomplish project objectives

Describes a clear need



Organizational capacity of applicant

Qualifications of staff or consultants to accomplish proposed activities

Engages appropriate audiences

Engages & applies input from local communities disproportionately impacted by climate change

### Resource Assessment & Planning

- Scope & scale is feasible, & partners have demonstrated ability in collaborative work at this scale
- Process by which data will be managed & shared with partners
- Professionally accepted methods & parameters will be used
- Incorporates changing climate conditions & contributes to durable adaptation & resilience for ecosystems
- Consideration of greenhouse gas emissions or long-term carbon sequestration or storage