

## About

The OWEB Board established the Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP) grant program in January 2016 with an initial \$13.7 million commitment for the 2015-2017 biennium. Since then, the OWEB board has awarded an additional \$13.3 million to support partnerships with both implementation and development grants. The OWEB Board approves funds for partnerships for 6 years of funding, and each biennium those funds are reviewed and approved as part of the spending plan.

The OWEB Board created the FIP grant program to invest in a conservation approach that strategizes restoration actions among partners and measures ecological outcomes. In the Open Solicitation grant program, measuring ecological and social benefits can be difficult as projects typically do not include coordinated monitoring in a watershed context. The FIP grant program encourages local partners to collaborate, plan, prioritize, implement, and monitor projects around a common purpose and monitoring framework.

A FIP is an OWEB investment that addresses a board-identified ecological priority, achieves clear and measurable outcomes, uses integrated and results-oriented approaches identified in a strategic action plan, and is implemented by a high-performing partnership with a formal decision-making process.

**FIP Implementation grants** provide up to \$12 million over 6 years for high-performing partnerships that have an existing strategic action plan and are ready to implement projects.

## Board-Identified Ecological Priorities for Oregon

The Board approved the following ecological priorities of significance to the State in 2015, and updated these priorities in 2019. They require Board approval at least every 5 years and are determined with public input and scientific rigor.

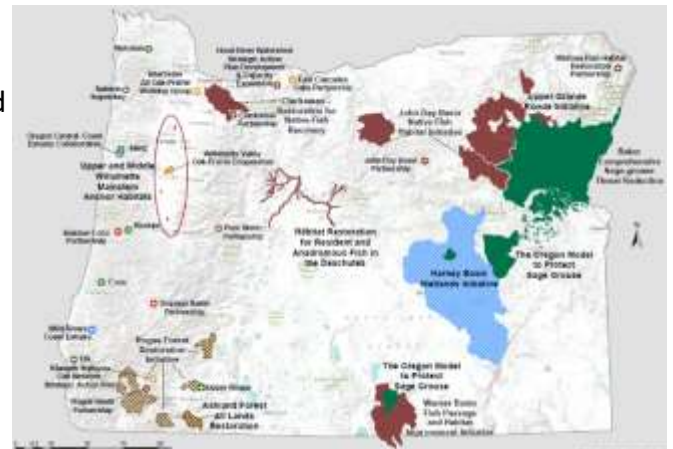
1. Coastal Estuaries
2. Aquatic Habitat for Native Fish Species
3. Closed Lake Basin Wetlands
4. Coho Habitat and Populations along the Coast
5. Oak Woodland and Prairie
6. Sagebrush/Sage-Steppe
7. Dry-Type Forest Habitat

## Rationale

### Strategic Action Plan

Each FIP also holds, or develops, a Strategic Action Plan that identifies goals and activities for collaborative work and coordinated action over the long term (10+ years). It outlines a monitoring framework to measure near- and long-term outcomes. Key components of the plan include:

- Definition of goals and outcomes
- Identification of conservation strategies, metrics, milestones, and benchmarks
- A communication strategy that includes non-profit, agency, private landowner, and community partners



FIP Investments 2015-2021

## High-Performing Partnerships

A fundamental aspect of the FIP program is the support for high-performing partnerships that have a formal governance structure and leverage additional resources beyond OWEB funding. When organizations work together collaboratively, rather than individually, they achieve more. To be eligible for FIP funding, high-performing partnerships must have:

- Defined relationships that outline roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- Capacity to operate under a common vision, implement work at a scale larger than a single project, and realistically achieve identified ecological outcomes.
- A clear link that shows how outcomes relate to each organization's mission and scope.
- A strong record of conservation achievement by partners individually and collectively.

## Measuring Progress Towards Goals

To measure progress in achieving goals, each FIP develops a theory of change and results chain within their Strategic Action Plan. The theory of change is a description of the logical causal relationships among a strategic approach. It outlines a step-by-step process for how the partnership intends to achieve their goals. A results chain is a diagram or graphic representation of a theory of change.

## Programmatic Lessons Learned

### Resources to Support Partnerships

Partnerships are dynamic and require time and resources to grow. This collaborative work often takes more time than expected by partners and requires financial and technical support. Professional facilitators play a role in fostering relationships and ensuring contributions by all partners are recognized. Memorandums of Understanding provide decision-making processes and address partner needs more formally. Engaging landowners in strategic action planning is challenging due to time constraints and diverse business models.

### Time to Develop a Monitoring Plan

Strategic action planning allows for the development of a shared monitoring framework among partners to measure trends over time. As they get to know each other's work, it takes time for partnerships to develop an appropriate monitoring plan that accounts for all the different types of restoration projects in a FIP. To measure effectiveness, monitoring must take place before and after project implementation.

### Measuring Ecological Outcomes May Take Decades

Ecological outcomes take time to achieve; it could take 20 or more years to see tangible results. For example, it requires decades for tree planting projects to mature and achieve measurable stream-shading benefits. A large financial investment in monitoring over a decade or more is required across a portfolio of projects in a watershed to put indicators in place that detect environmental trends. These challenges are partly due to the inherent variability of natural systems. This variability makes it difficult to find true differences – often many things are changing at once.

#### Strategic Action Plan

Outlines collaborative actions among partners to achieve and measure the desired impact

#### Strategies

Strategies to reduce the threat and restore conditions for species/habitats to thrive

#### Outputs

Collaborative actions based on strategies and monitoring metrics

#### Ecological Results

Includes near-term and long-term outcomes and outlines the response of target habitat or species

#### Desired Ecological Impact

Conditions are now improved for Ecological Priority

This diagram is based on [Conservation Action Planning/Open Standards](#) planning approach and provides a generic example of the process and core components of a results chain.

