



Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission

Meeting Agenda

March 20, 2024

Business Meeting	March 20, 2024	10:00 am – 12:30 pm
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Virtual Meeting

The public is welcome to watch or listen to the meeting through the following methods:

- **YouTube Streaming/Recording:** www.youtube.com/channel/UC0dl-TOWlt4Sp--i1KEa_OA. There may be a slight delay when streaming the meeting content.
- **Phone:** Dial 1 669 900 6833, Meeting ID number: 895 4327 8461, Passcode: 084229
- **Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89543278461?pwd=NkV4YkRJSmJNdzhITW1pdGVVS2UzUT09>

Public comment

The OAHC welcomes written and verbal public comments on any agenda item. Written comments submitted by the deadline will be provided to the commission before the meeting.

Written comments and requests to make verbal comments should be submitted using the online [Public Comment Form](#). The deadline for submitting written comments and requests to make verbal comments is **4:00 pm Monday, March 18, 2024**.

Verbal comments:

- Limited to three minutes
- Will be heard in the public comment period

Provide the following information for virtual verbal comments:

- Your first and last name
- The topic of your comment
- The phone number you will use when calling the meeting.

If physical, auditory, language, or other accommodations are needed for this meeting, please contact [Nicole Bettinardi](#) as soon as possible, and at least 48 hours before the meeting.

Agenda

A. Welcome & Introductions (10:00 am)

B. Public Comment (10:30 am)

This time is reserved for the commission to hear general public comments and review the written public comments submitted before the meeting. *Information item.*

C. [Review Role of Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission \(10:40 am\)](#)

OAHP Coordinator Taylor Larson will walk the commission through the Commission Manual and facilitate a discussion about the role of the Commission. *Information item.*

D. [2024 Program Refinements \(10:50 am\)](#)

Program Coordinator Taylor Larson and Conservation Easement Specialist Robin Meacher will update the commission on refinements being made to the program for 2024. *Information item.*

E. [Legislative and Funding Update \(11:10 am\)](#)

Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager Renee Davis will update the commission on recent legislative and funding developments affecting the OAHP program. *Information item.*

F. [Conservation Management Plan Implementation Methodology Update \(11:30 am\)](#)

OAHF Coordinator Taylor Larson and Barbara Wyse from Highland Economics will walk the Commission through a near final draft of the Conservation Management Plan Implementation Methodology, solicit feedback and answer questions. *Information item*

G. [2024 Commission Work Plan \(12:15 pm\)](#)

Program Coordinator Taylor Larson will walk the Commission through a programmatic timeline with a focus on upcoming Commission activities in 2024. *Information item*

Contact Information

OAHF Program Coordinator – Taylor Larson

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OAHF Conservation Easement Specialist – Robin Meacher

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STAFF REPORT

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

March 20, 2024, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting



Tina Kotek, Governor

ITEM C – Reviewing the Role of the OAHC

To: Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC)
From: Taylor Larson, OAHP Program Coordinator
Renee Davis, OWEB Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Introduction

This staff report provides context relating to the role of the OAHC.

Background

All new OAHC members receive a manual that outlines their role on the commission as it relates to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP). Staff will walk the commission through the most current version of the OAHC Manual and facilitate a brief discussion as to the important role that the commission plays in the administration of the OAHP program.

Recommendation

This is an information item only.



STAFF REPORT

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

March 20, 2024, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting



Tina Kotek, Governor

ITEM D – 2024 Program Refinements

To: Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC)

From: Taylor Larson, OAHP Program Coordinator
Robin Meacher, OAHP Conservation Easement Specialist
Renee Davis, OWEB Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of refinements being made to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) grant offerings for 2024 as a result of work done by the OAHP Application Process Committee in May of 2023 and subsequent follow-up work by staff.

Background

In March 2023, the OAHC recommended funding for its first round of working lands conservation covenant and easement and conservation management plan grants. As a result of lessons learned during this initial grant solicitation, the commission appointed an Application Process Committee to consult with staff on how to adjust the application process to ensure that the commission has the information necessary to make sound funding recommendations and applicants understand how applications are evaluated. The Application Process Committee met in May of 2023. Staff presented draft updates of the application for the Working Lands Conservation Easement grant program and the committee reviewed the application refinements for consistency with administrative rule. The committee also discussed areas for further development prior to a future solicitation, including additions to the required documentation requested at time of application and revisions to the grant applications and program guidance. Other OAHP grant programs were not part of the discussion at the time.

2023 Funded OAHP Projects				
Project Name	Applicant	OWEB Award	Type	Status
Wahl Ranch	Wild Rivers Land Trust	\$2,702,395	Conservation Easement	In Progress
Aspen Valley Ranch – Rim Tract	Deschutes Land Trust	\$286,280	Conservation Easement	In Progress
Seeley Farm Phase 1	Oregon Agricultural Trust	\$276,297	Conservation Easement	In Progress
Pitchfork T	Deschutes Land Trust	\$129,175	Conservation Easement	In Progress

O’Keefe Ranch	Oregon Agricultural Trust	\$277,776	Conservation Easement	In Progress
Ferrell, Justin and Jayna	Oregon Agricultural Trust	\$223,056	Conservation Easement	In Progress
Hagen	McKenzie River Trust	\$289,233	Conservation Easement	In Progress
Baker and EOARC Wet Meadow Management Plans	High Desert Partnership	\$41,366	Conservation Management Plan Development	In Progress
Branch Road Farm Conservation Management Plan	Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council	\$24,942	Conservation Management Plan Development	In Progress

Refinements for 2024 OAHP Solicitation

Conservation Covenants and Easements -- Application Format and Process Revisions

OAHP staff began identifying and cataloging potential changes to the application and solicitation process for Working Lands Conservation Covenant and Easement grant applications during the application evaluations in 2022-23. This process resulted in reworking the application to center questions on gathering baseline information on the real estate and transaction items integral to evaluating readiness and likely success of a conservation easement project. Refinements include more questions designed to capture details from the applicant about the specific agricultural and natural resources the land supports and that the project seeks to protect. Examples include requesting more standardized data on soil types and distribution; applicable water rights; habitat and vegetation types, distribution, and quality; and how the specifics of the proposed project will result in long-term protection of those resources. The application also seeks to gather more details about current property management and whether/how those actions are expected to change as a result of the project. Application questions were also rewritten to closely track the information identified by the committee as most relevant to the evaluation criteria.

The next solicitation, which is tentative pending final outcomes of the 2024 Legislative Session, will involve a review process that utilizes a technical review team (TRT) consisting of agricultural, rangeland, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and land use experts. In addition, regional experts may be asked to provide specific knowledge regarding components of certain projects. The supplemental review team members will provide regional, project-specific feedback to OAHP staff, which staff will then relay to the TRT during the review team meeting. The TRT will evaluate and rank all project applications to inform the staff evaluations and funding recommendations presented to the commission. Site visits to each project will be required and attended by OWEB staff.

Conservation Covenants and Easements -- Program Guidance

The committee also suggested and discussed certain topics in the program guidance that would benefit from additional context. The program guidance accompanies grant applications as part of a grant solicitation cycle. In addition to suggestions from the committee, staff solicited feedback from all grantees on the level of clarity provided by the program guidance. Based on the adjustments to the

application and additional information from these feedback sessions with grantees, staff reworked the application and program guidance document to provide further detail on expectations around the type of information the applications are seeking to gather. These revisions present potential future applicants with the program's expectations on the level of completeness of certain foundational aspects of program design – including supporting documentation for the proposed purchase price, the level of detail in the title analysis, and the level of agreement on the terms and conditions of a proposed easement between the landowner and the easement holder. The revised program guidance document also speaks to expectations of the program post-grant award, so potential applicants and interested landowners can have an idea of what is required to bring a OAHF covenant or easement project to closing.

As part of the revision process for the program guidance, staff worked with Oregon Department of Justice to develop a conservation easement example that is better aligned with the program goals and needs. The easement example will be provided to potential applicants along with the other program guidance to demonstrate OWEB's expectations for requirements involving OWEB's administrative rights within any easement funded with OAHF funds. Potential applicants will be encouraged to consult with OWEB staff prior to submitting an application if they expect to present an easement draft that significantly departs from the required language presented in the easement example.

Conservation Management Plan and Technical Assistance – Revisions

As described in the Item E staff report, the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) grant program and associated Technical Assistance (TA) grants are receiving at least \$750,000 to develop and implement CMPs that have carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions reduction benefits. Before the solicitation can open, staff will need to conduct an outreach process to gather input from tribes, environmental justice communities, and other partners such as land trusts and agricultural organizations. Based on the results of this outreach, the CMP and TA applications for the 2024 solicitation will be updated to include questions that aim to understand the potential carbon sequestration benefits of the proposed project. The CMP application will also be adjusted to allow applicants to apply for development and initial implementation of CMPs in a single application.

Recommendation

This is an information item only.



STAFF REPORT

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

March 20, 2024, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting



Tina Kotek, Governor

ITEM E – Legislative and Funding Update

To: Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC)
From: Renee Davis, OWEB Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager
Taylor Larson, OAHP Program Coordinator

Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of recent actions taken by the Oregon Legislature, the Governor, and the Oregon Climate Action Commission that impact the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2024 and beyond.

Background

[House Bill 3409](#) was signed into law by the Governor on July 27th, 2023. The Bill established a Natural and Working Lands (NWL) Fund that is administered by OWEB and overseen by the Oregon Climate Action Commission. Money appropriated to OWEB from the fund is to provide incentives to help landowners, Indian tribes, land managers and environmental justice communities adopt practices that support natural climate solutions; and (b) Provide financial assistance for technical support for landowners, Indian tribes, land managers and environmental justice communities for the adoption of natural climate solutions.

Status Update

The Oregon Climate Action Commission has directed OWEB to use \$1,500,000 of the funds through the Open Solicitation grant program and \$750,000 of the funds through the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) for technical assistance and to develop and implement Conservation Management Plans that have carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions reduction benefits via a payment-for-climate-smart-practices approach. The Oregon Climate Action Commission also gave OWEB the option to increase the amount of funding to OAHP from Open Solicitation if the demand for OAHP exceeds the initial funds available.

Staff will seek the OWEB board's acceptance of the grant funds at the April 2024 board meeting. The bill states that priority shall be given to expenditures for technical assistance to environmental justice communities or tribes and for incentives for conservation management plan activities supported by an environmental justice community or a resolution of a tribe. OWEB envisions the rollout of funding opportunities involving the NWL funds—including funding for OAHP grant offerings--will include extensive outreach and engagement prior to launching grant solicitations.

As of the drafting of this staff report, \$5.161 million in funding for OAHP (\$4,541,680 for grants and \$619,320 for operations) was included in the end-of session bill (SB 5701). The bill passed out of both legislative chambers prior to adjournment of the 2024 Legislative Session. The bill now goes to the

Governor for consideration. At the March OAHC meeting, staff will provide an update about OAHP funding.

Recommendation

This is an information item only.



STAFF REPORT

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

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Tina Kotek, Governor

ITEM F – Conservation Management Plan Implementation Methodology Update

To: Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC)
From: Taylor Larson, OAHP Program Coordinator
Renee Davis, OWEB Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Introduction

This staff report provides context to the commission for a presentation of the near-final Draft Conservation Management Plan (CMP) Implementation Methodology by Highland Economics at the March meeting.

Background

The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) has authority to recommend grants funding the development, implementation and monitoring of CMPs as described in [ORS 541.989](#) and [OAR 698-010-0080](#).

At the recommendation of the OAHC, when the program was initially developed, the decision was made to structure OAHP incentives for CMP implementation as payments for the ecosystem services associated with the practices.

In 2022, staff solicited grant applications to fund Conservation Management Plan development and will open a grant solicitation to fund the development and implementation of CMPs in 2024 as described in staff report Item E. OWEB will be seeking OAHC guidance regarding the payment levels for ecosystem services provided by the CMP practices. In order to determine the payment levels for these ecosystem services, Highland Economics has conducted the economic analyses described below.

In 2019, on behalf of OWEB, [Highland Economics](#) completed a [Review & Feasibility Determination of Methodologies for Valuing Agricultural Conservation Management Actions](#) as a first step toward the development of CMP implementation methodology. In 2022, staff began working with Highland Economics to develop methodologies for OWEB to pay for the implementation of CMPs. In March 2023, Highland Economics presented an update to the commission on progress made and solicited feedback.

Barbara Wyse of Highland Economics will provide the commission with an update on the near-final draft of the CMP Implementation Methodology and engage in dialogue with the commission around desired near-term refinements and potential longer-term opportunities for adaptive management of the methodology.

Next Steps

Staff will work with Highland Economics to capture and incorporate commission feedback into a final version of the methodology that will be presented to the commission at the May meeting. The methodology will then be published along with other program materials associated with the upcoming CMP grant solicitation.

Recommendation

This is an information item only.



STAFF REPORT

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program

March 20, 2024, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting



Tina Kotek, Governor

ITEM G – 2024 Commission Work Plan

To: Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC)
From: Taylor Larson, OAHP Program Coordinator
Renee Davis, OWEB Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Introduction

This staff report summarizes the work schedule for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC) over the coming year.

Background

In 2024, the OAHC will need to adopt a recommended spending plan that provides direction to staff and applicants about allocation of available funding across the four grant types offered through the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP). Once applications have been received, reviewed, and ranked, the commission will make a formal funding recommendation to the OWEB Board. Over the coming year the commission will also need to serve in its capacity as a Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) to the OWEB Board, making recommendations on revisions to the administrative rules governing OAHP. For example, OAHP rule revisions will incorporate the climate evaluation criteria adopted by the OWEB Board in July 2023 and provide additional clarity to staff and applicants around the mechanics of the program.

Tentative 2024 OAHC Work Plan and Proposed Schedule

The table below offers a high-level overview of the work needed to be completed by the commission in 2024. It is important to note that this work plan is tentative in nature, pending outcomes from the 2024 Legislative Session (see Item E staff report). During the March meeting, staff will review the proposed schedule, update the commission about new developments related to programmatic and legislative topics, and facilitate a discussion with the commission about the work plan and schedule.

Proposed OAHC Meeting Schedule		
Purpose	Date	Location
Informational	3/20/24	Virtual
Spending Plan Adoption; Finalize Plan for Rulemaking; Finalize Conservation Management Plan Methodology	5/1/24	In-Person/Hybrid (TBD)
RAC Meeting #1; Update on OWEB outreach process for Natural and Working Lands (NWL) funding	6/5/24	Virtual
RAC Meeting #2 and Update on NWL Outreach	7/9/24	Virtual
RAC Meeting #3 and Update on NWL Outreach	8/7/24	Virtual
Tentative – Finalize OAHP Rule Revisions for Recommendation to OWEB Board; OAHC Deliberation and Approval of Funding Recommendations to the OWEB Board (for the January 2025 board meeting)	11/7/24	In-Person/Hybrid (TBD)

Recommendation

This is an information item only.