



Hybrid Commission Meeting
May 14, 2026



Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting Agenda

May 14, 2026

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Meeting Materials

The meeting materials are available on the [May 14, 2026, meeting webpage](#).

For each agenda item, the time listed is approximate. Anyone interested in a particular agenda item is encouraged to give ample time and listen to the meeting at least 30 minutes before the approximate agenda item time.

Public comment

The OAHC welcomes written or verbal public comments on any agenda topic. All written comments and requests to make verbal comments to the commission should be submitted using [OWEB's Public Comment Form](#).

The deadline for submitting written comments and requests is **5:00 pm (PT) Tuesday, May 12, 2026**.

Written comments will be provided to the commission before the meeting. Verbal comments are limited to three minutes and will be heard in the public comment period listed on the agenda.

For additional information on [ways to provide public comment and tips for commenting in person](#), please refer to our website.

More Information

If you have any questions about this agenda or the commission's procedures, please contact Taylor Larson, OAHP Program Coordinator, at 971-701-3248 or Taylor.Larson@OWEB.oregon.gov

Oregon's Public Meetings Law requires disclosure that commission members may meet for meals when OAHC meetings convene.

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

Time	Agenda Item
1:00 pm	Welcome, Introductions, and agenda overview
1:05 pm	Item A. Public Comments This time is reserved for the commission to hear general public comments and review the written public comments submitted before the meeting. <i>Information item.</i>
1:15 pm	Item B. Review and Approval of Minutes Minutes from the March 19, 2026, OAHC meeting will be presented for Commission approval. <i>Action Item.</i>
1:20 pm	Item C. Scoring Rubric Staff will facilitate discussion around refinements to a draft scoring rubric, and the commission will consider a staff recommendation on adoption of the rubric for use during future conservation covenant and easement grant solicitations when funding is again allocated to OAHP. <i>Action item.</i>
1:50 pm	Item D. Other Business This item is reserved for other matters that may come before the commission. <i>Information item.</i>
2:00 pm	Adjourn

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Membership

Daniel Bigelow
James Robert Collins
Ed Contreras, *vice chair*
John Deck
Nancy Duhnkrack
Sara Evans-Peters, *chair*
Mark Labhart, *OWEB ex officio*
Jan Lee
Laura Masterson
John O’Keeffe
Mark Vargas
VACANT

Contact Information

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OAHP Conservation Easement Specialist –
Robin Meacher
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May 14, 2026 Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC) Meeting Meeting Minutes: March 2026 OAHC Meeting Minutes

MINUTES ARE NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

March 19, 2026, OAHC meeting minutes

Virtual OAHC Meeting

Recording at: March 19, 2026

OAHC MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Bigelow
James Robert Collins
Ed Contreras
John Deck
Sara Evans-Peters
Jan Lee
Laura Masterson
John O'Keeffe
Mark Vargas

OWEB STAFF PRESENT

Nicole Bettinardi
Renee Davis
Taylor Larson
Robin Meacher
Sara O'Brien

OTHERS

Nellie McAdams

Minutes

Timestamp	Agenda Item
	The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Sara Evans-Peters: Recording Welcome and Introductions The commissioners and OWEB staff introduced themselves
0:04:53	Item A. Public Comment This time was reserved to hear public comments and review the written public comment submitted for the meeting. <i>Information item.</i> All written public comments can be viewed on the meeting page of our website. The following people provided verbal comments: Nellie McAdams, Oregon Agricultural Trust
0:09:29	Item B. Review and Approve Minutes Minutes from the February 11, 2026, OAHC minutes were presented for approval. <i>Action item.</i> John O'Keeffe moved the commission approve the minutes from the February 11, 2026, OAHC meeting. Motion was seconded by Mark Vargas. Dan Bigelow, James Robert Collins, Ed Contreras, John Deck, Sara Evans-Peters, Jan Lee, John O'Keeffe, Mark Vargas voted in favor. Nancy Duhnkrack and Laura Masterson were absent. Motion passed.

Timestamp	Agenda Item
0:10:53	Item C. Conservation Easement Application Review and Funding Recommendation Staff provided an overview of the 2025 OAHP conservation covenant and easement grant offering solicitation process, and the commission made a funding recommendation to the OWEB board for consideration at its April 2026 meeting. <i>Action item.</i> John O’Keeffe moved the commission recommend the OWEB Board fund the OAHP Working Lands Conservation Covenant and Easement grants up to the recommended funding line as detailed in Attachment B. Motion was seconded by James Robert Collins. Dan Bigelow, James Robert Collins, Ed Contreras, John Deck, Jan Lee, Sara Evans-Peters, John O’Keeffe, and Mark Vargas voted in favor. Nancy Duhnkrack and Laura Masterson were absent. Motion passed.
1:16:00	Item D. Scoring Rubric Staff facilitated discussion around refinements to a draft scoring rubric and the commission considered adoption of the rubric for use during future conservation covenant and easement grant solicitations when funding is again allocated to OAHP. <i>Possible action item.</i> John O’Keeffe moved the commission adopt the scoring rubric, as amended March 19, 2026, for use in the next OAHP CE grant solicitation review process. Motion was seconded by James Robert Collins. During discussion the commission decided to table the motion until the next meeting.
4:49:27	Item E. Other Business This item was reserved for other matters that may come before the board. <i>Information item.</i>



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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May 14, 2026 Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item C. Scoring Rubric for Conservation Covenant and Easement Grants

MEMORANDUM

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

Introduction

This staff report provides the commission with background information pertaining to development and adoption of an evaluation scoring rubric for use in future Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) Working Land Conservation Covenant and Easement Grant solicitations. The report includes a staff recommendation for a scoring rubric, shown in Attachment A, to be considered for adoption by the commission.

Background about the Concept of a Scoring Rubric for Conservation Covenants and Easements

Grant applicants, the Commission, and some reviewers on the OAHP technical committee that reviews grant applications expressed interest in OAHP developing and utilizing a scoring rubric in coordination with the evaluation criteria in administrative rule. The intent of a scoring rubric is to better communicate program expectations to applicants and reviewers, and to clarify why projects fall in a certain ranked order as an outcome of the review process. At the December 2025 meeting of the OAHC, staff were asked to develop a draft scoring rubric that considers commissioner feedback collected through a previous survey on the weight each evaluation criteria should bear on an application's success. These evaluation criteria are codified in administrative rules for the program (OAR 698-015-0090).

In developing the scoring rubric, staff also considered the program's statute and rules. The program's statutes provide the authority to use OAHP funds to fund the purchase of working lands conservation covenants or easements for the "purpose of ensuring the continued use of the land for agricultural purposes while maintaining or enhancing fish or wildlife habitat, improving water quality or supporting other natural resource values on the land." (ORS 541.982(1)). This purpose is reflected in the evaluation criteria described in statute and further developed in administrative rule, that require applications to address how the project will benefit agricultural needs and fish and wildlife benefits. Similarly, staff considered the OWEB Board's climate evaluation criteria that apply to all OWEB administered programs including OAHP. These climate criteria also are codified in administrative rule and were adopted by the board after a multi-year process to create a climate resolution and, subsequently, rules (OAR 698-005-0045).

Part of the OAHC's role is to recommend policies and priorities for use by the OWEB board in evaluating both the farm or ranch values and the fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values on working lands in applications for funding under the working lands conservation easement and covenant offering (ORS 541.989(1)(c)). In addition, the commission is charged with recommending to the OWEB Board rules for the administration of all OAHP programs. The proposed scoring rubric is intended to provide greater clarity and transparency about weighting of the evaluation criteria that are adopted in rule.

Development of a Scoring Rubric

At the February meeting, commission members and staff discussed the importance of creating a throughline from statute to rule to the proposed scoring rubric, to ensure alignment with program intent and OWEB grantmaking expectations. The commission provided input and feedback on the draft scoring criteria, which led to staff developing additional language around definitions of scoring considerations ranges and a document that places each criterion and its associated score into one of seven buckets.

At the March meeting, staff facilitated a discussion about the draft rubric, leading to the development of the rubric presented in Attachment A. Ultimately, the Commission decided to table the vote to adopt the rubric, agreeing to meet May to consider adoption.

At the May meeting staff will summarize the revised draft of the scoring rubric that is included as Attachment A and recommended by staff for adoption, then facilitate the Commission's discussion leading up to a vote on its adoption.

Recommendation

Staff recommend the Commission adopt the revised scoring rubric as shown in Attachment A.

Attachment(s)

A. Revised Draft Scoring Rubric

Revised Draft Scoring Rubric

1) The regional significance of the agricultural, natural resource, and related social values of the working land that will be subject to the Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement **(20 points)**

(a) The potential viability of the property for agriculture, including but not limited to soil types, suitability for producing different types of crops, and water availability; **(1-5 points)**

(b) The land's contribution to long-term conservation of the region's agricultural land base; **(1-5 points)**

(c) The regional significance of the agricultural operation based on location, its associated infrastructure, and other relevant factors including supporting agricultural values important to the region; **(1-5 points)**

(d) Supporting implementation of local, regional, state, federal or Tribal priorities and plans that support fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values. **(1-5 points)**

(2) The extent to which the Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement would protect, maintain, or enhance farming or ranching on the working land **(20 points)**

(a) Reducing the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land; **(1-10 points)**

1- 3 points There is some discussion of the approaches the project will take to address the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surrounding working land.

4-7 points There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to address the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surround working land.

8-10 points There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to address the potential for future conversion or fragmentation of the property and surround working land **AND** the application clearly describes how the proposed conservation easement will address the issue.

(b) Maintaining or enhancing the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use that supports a viable agricultural operation. **(1-10 points)**

- 1- 3 points** There is some discussion of the approaches the project will take to maintain the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use.
- 4-7 points** There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to enhance the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use that supports a viable agricultural operation.
- 8-10 points** There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to enhance the ability of the land to be in productive agricultural use that supports a viable agricultural operation **AND** the application clearly describes how the proposed conservation easement will address the issue.

(3) The extent to which the Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement would protect, maintain or enhance significant fish or wildlife habitat, water quality or other natural resource values **(20 points)**

(a) Protecting, maintaining, or improving the quality and connectivity of plant or wildlife habitat on and around the working land; **(1-10 points)**

- 1- 3 points** There is some discussion of the approaches the project will take to protect or maintain the quality and connectivity of plant or wildlife habitat on and around the working land.
- 4-7 points** There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to protect, maintain, and enhance significant plant or wildlife habitat on and around the working land.
- 8-10 points** There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to protect, maintain, and enhance significant plant or wildlife habitat on and around the working land **AND** the application clearly describes how the proposed conservation easement will address the issue.

(b) Utilizing land stewardship practices that maintain or enhance soil health. **(1-10 points)**

- 1-3 points** There is some discussion of the approaches the project will take to promote land stewardship practices that maintain soil health.

4-7 points There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to promote land stewardship practices that maintain and enhance soil health.

8-10 points There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will take to promote land stewardship practices that maintain and enhance soil health **AND** the application clearly describes how the proposed conservation easement will address the issue.

(4) The extent to which the project supports the integrated management, maintenance or enhancement of the agricultural and natural resource values on the working land. **(9 points total)**

1- 3 points There is some discussion of the specific approaches the project will address integrated management, maintenance or enhancement of the specific resources that support the stated agricultural and natural resource values on the property.

4-6 points There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will utilize to address integrated management, maintenance or enhancement of the specific resources that support the stated agricultural and natural resource values on the property.

7-9 points There is extensive discussion and evidence provided of the specific approaches the project will utilize to address integrated management, maintenance or enhancement of the specific resources that support the stated agricultural and natural resource values on the property **AND** the applicant will include the specific stewardship practices in the terms of the conservation easement.

(5) The extent to which the Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement would protect agricultural outcomes or benefits from other related investments. **(9 points)**

1-3 points Benefits or outcomes are mentioned, but not described in any specific detail

4-6 points Benefits or outcomes are described and applicant makes reference to specific detail supporting the assertion of the outcomes

7-9 points Multiple benefits or outcomes are well described, applicant makes specific reference to the detail supporting the assertion of the outcomes **AND**

provides supporting evidence relative to the proposed or demonstrated benefits

(6) The capacity and competence of the applicant and the proposed Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement holder to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce a Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement **(15 points)**

(a) Accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, or implementation of standards and practices that are similar to an organization that is eligible for accreditation; **(1-4 points)**

(b) Inclusion of working land preservation in the organization's mission, vision or other organizational documents; **(1-3 points)**

(c) The financial capability of the organization to steward conservation Working Land Conservation Covenants or Working Land Conservation Easements over time; **(1-3 points)**

(d) Demonstrated relevant commitment, ability, expertise, and track record to purchase, accept, implement, hold, monitor, steward, and enforce Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement or other relevant projects. **(1-5 points)**

(7) The extent to which the benefit to the state from the investment may be maximized **(15 points)**

(a) The ability to leverage grant moneys with other funding sources; **(1-6 points)**

1-2 points The project meets the required 25% match requirement.

3-4 points The project meets or exceeds the 25% match requirement with some portion of the matching funds secured.

5-6 points The project exceeds the 25% match requirement with most of the matching funds secured.

(b) The duration and extent of the agreement, with a preference for longer term agreements; **(1-3 points)**

(c) The cumulative effect of similar conservation or agricultural investments in the community, including other OAHP funded plans, covenants, or easements; **(1-2 points)**

(d) Consistency with local comprehensive plans and statewide planning goals. **(1-4 point)**

(8) The extent and nature of the impacts of the Working Land Conservation Covenant or Working Land Conservation Easement on owners or operators of neighboring lands. **(3 points)**

1 point The application states whether there will be impacts and the extent of those impacts to owners and operators of neighboring lands.

2 points The application provides evidence to support the characterization of the impacts and nature of the impacts to owners or operators of neighboring lands.

3 points The application provides evidence to support the characterization of the impacts and nature of the impacts to owners or operators of neighboring lands and authentically addresses the identified impacts.

(9) The extent to which project will benefit the local area, as evidenced by engagement with and support from the local community and Tribes. **(3 points)**

1 point The application includes statements of benefits from the community and Tribes.

2 points The application includes a description of the engagement with local communities and Tribes and specific details on the anticipated benefits.

3 points The application includes detailed description of the engagement with local communities and Tribes and specific details on the anticipated benefits *directly* related to the *specific project*.

(10) The level of threat of conversion or fragmentation of the working land. **(12 points)**

1-4 points Low likelihood it will be converted to a use other than agriculture or fragmented from its existing configuration in a manner that degrades is suitability for agriculture and natural resources within the next five to ten years.

5-8 points Medium likelihood it will be converted to a use other than agriculture or fragmented from its existing configuration in a manner that degrades is suitability for agriculture and natural resources within the next five to ten years AND specific detail is provided to demonstrate that likelihood, such as specific land use trends in the immediate vicinity, potential sale of the property, succession planning needs

9-12 points Strong likelihood it will be converted to a use other than agriculture or fragmented from its existing configuration in a manner that degrades its suitability for agriculture and natural resources within the next five to ten years AND specific detail is provided to demonstrate that likelihood, such as specific land use or development proposals directly affecting the specific property, immediate potential sale of the property to a non-agricultural landowner, immediate succession concerns

(11) The soundness of the legal and financial terms of the proposed real estate transaction. **(15 points)**

1-5 points Application materials lack evidence to support the transaction details are thoroughly mapped out, vetted, and will result in the successful completion of the proposed project within the 24-month timeline required in an administrative rule

6-10 points Application materials reasonably identify issues that need additional resolution and appropriately maps the path toward resolving issues within the 24-month timeline required in administrative rule

11-15 points Application materials demonstrate there are few outstanding issues to resolve and the typical transaction steps can be completed within the 24-month timeline required in administrative rule

Climate Criteria from 698-005-0045 (9 points)

(1) How engagement with, and input from, local communities disproportionately impacted by climate change has informed or will inform the project. **(1-3 points)**

(2) How changing climate conditions are incorporated into the project and how the project will contribute to durable adaptation and resilience for ecosystems, including human communities. **(1-3 points)**

(3) How consideration of greenhouse gas emissions or long-term carbon sequestration or storage has informed the project. **(1-3 points)**

Total Points Available = 150