



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

**Hybrid Board Meeting
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua
Tribe of Indians Reservation
April 28-29, 2026**



Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Meeting Agenda

April 28-29, 2026

Location of Meeting: Seven Feathers Casino (146 Chief Miwaleta Ln, Canyonville, OR 97417)

The public is welcome to attend all OWEB Board meetings, and may access the meeting virtually through the following methods:

YouTube: [Watch Meeting Livestream](#). *Please note that there may be a slight delay when streaming the meeting live. The recording can be found on YouTube and linked on the meeting website after the meeting.*

Zoom

- April 28: [Attend Meeting Virtually: Tuesday](#)
To call in to Zoom: Dial 1 669 900 6833, ID number 815 9025 9504, and passcode 340464
- April 29: [Attend Meeting Virtually: Wednesday](#)
To call in to Zoom: Dial 1 669 900 6833, ID number 882 0164 4872, and passcode 821819

Meeting Materials

The board materials are available on the [April 28-29, 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 in to the meeting at least 30 minutes before the approximate agenda item time.

Public comment

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

The deadline for submitting written comments and requests is **5:00 pm Thursday April 23, 2026**.

Written comments will be provided to the board before the meeting. Verbal comments are limited to three minutes and will be heard in the public comment periods (Agenda Items E and L).

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 board's procedures, please contact Nicole Bettinardi, OWEB Executive Assistant and Board Liaison, at 503-428-1804 or Nicole.BETTINARDI@OWEB.oregon.gov.

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.

All times in this agenda are in Pacific Time.

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Board Tour – 8:00 am

The board will conduct an on-site inspection tour of post-fire recovery monitoring and restoration projects conducted by the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. Due to access constraints in the tribe’s right-of-way agreement, this tour is not open to the public.

Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
10:30 am	Welcome and agenda overview
10:40 am	Item A. Board Member Comments Board representatives from state and federal agencies will provide updates on issues related to the natural resource agency they represent. This is also an opportunity for public and tribal board members to report on their recent activities and share information and comments on a variety of watershed enhancement and community conservation-related topics. <i>Information item.</i>
12:10 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	<u>Item B. Focused Investment Partnership Grant Program (FIP) Cohort 2 Report – Rogue Forest Partners</u> Senior Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein will introduce representatives from the Rogue Forest Partners who will update the board on their FIP initiative progress. <i>Information item.</i>
1:25 pm	<u>Item C. Director’s Updates</u> Executive Director Sara O’Brien and staff will update the board on agency business. <i>Information item.</i>
1:55 pm	<u>Item D. Plans for July OWEB Board Mini-Retreat</u> Executive Director Sara O’Brien will introduce Donna Silverberg, DS Consulting, who will discuss the work her firm has done with other state boards and commissions to support good governance and board culture and practices ahead of a mini board retreat in July. <i>Information item.</i>
2:15 pm	Break
2:30 pm	Item E. Public Comment This time is reserved for the board to hear public comments and review the written public comment submitted for the meeting. <i>Information item.</i>
3:00 pm	<u>Item F. General Board Business</u> This time is reserved for the board to act on routine items. Items for potential board action include adoption of the meeting minutes from January 2026. <i>Action item.</i>

Time	Agenda Item
3:05 pm	Item G. Partnerships Technical Assistance (TA) Grant Awards Partnerships Coordinator Denise Hoffert and Restorations Grants Manager Eric Williams will review the 2025 Partnerships TA grant offering and funding recommendations. <i>Action item.</i>
3:35 pm	Item H. OAHP Conservation Easement Grant Awards Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) Conservation Easement Specialist Robin Meacher, OAHP Coordinator Taylor Larson, and Acquisitions & Special Programs Manager Renee Davis will review the OAHP CE grant offering and funding recommendation. <i>Action item.</i>
4:05 pm	Break
4:15 pm	Item I. Land Acquisitions Grant Awards Land Acquisitions Coordinator Miriam Forney and Acquisitions & Special Programs Manager Renee Davis will review the 2025 Land Acquisitions grant offering and funding recommendation. <i>Action item.</i>
5:15 pm	Adjourn

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Time	Agenda Item
8:30 am	Welcome and agenda overview
8:35 am	Item J. Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Habitat Restoration Final Update Acquisitions & Special Programs Manager Renee Davis will introduce representatives from the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) and RES, KRRC's restoration contractor, for a presentation about status of the restoration work, next steps, and lessons learned. <i>Information item.</i>
9:20 am	Item K. Committee Updates Representatives from board committees will provide written updates on committee topics to the full board. <i>Information item.</i>
9:30 am	Break
9:45 am	Item L. Public Comment This time is reserved for the board to hear public comments and review the written public comment submitted for the meeting. <i>Information item.</i>
10:15 am	Item M. Water Acquisition Grant Awards Water Acquisitions & Capacity Coordinator Brian Wolcott and Acquisitions & Special Programs Manager Renee Davis will review the 2025 Water Acquisitions grant offering and funding recommendation. <i>Action item.</i>
11:15 am	Break

Time	Agenda Item
11:25 am	Item N. Water Acquisitions Grant Program Rulemaking Update Water Acquisitions & Capacity Coordinator Brian Wolcott and Senior Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein will update the board on current rulemaking for the Water Acquisition grant program. <i>Information item.</i>
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Item O. 2027-2029 Agency Request Budget Business Operations Manager Miriam Scharer and Deputy Director Stephanie Page will update the board on the agency's proposed 2027-2029 budget requests. <i>Information item.</i>
1:30 pm	Item P. Land Acquisition Grant Program Modernization Update Acquisitions & Special Programs Manager Renee Davis and Executive Director Sara O'Brien will provide an update on the land acquisition grant program modernization process in progress. <i>Information item.</i>
2:30 pm	Item Q. Other Business This item is reserved for other matters that may come before the board. <i>Information item.</i>
3:00 pm	Adjourn

Meeting Rules and Procedures

Meeting Procedures

Generally, agenda items will be taken in the order shown. However, in certain circumstances, the board may elect to take an item out of order. Additionally, topics not listed on the agenda may be introduced during the meeting.

Oregon's Public Meetings Law requires disclosure that board members may meet for meals when OWEB meetings are convened.

Voting Rules

The OWEB Board has 18 members. Of these, 11 are voting members and 7 are non-voting advisory members. For purposes of conducting business, OWEB's voting requirements are divided into 2 categories – general business and action on grant awards.

Action on General Business

For general business, a quorum is **6 voting members**. General business requires a majority of **all** voting members to pass a resolution (not just those present), so general business resolutions require affirmative votes of **at least 6 voting members**. Typical resolutions include adopting, amending, or appealing a rule, providing staff direction, etc. These resolutions cannot include a funding decision.

Action on Funding Decisions

Per ORS 541.900(4), special requirements apply when OWEB considers action on funding decisions such as grant awards. This includes a special **quorum of at least 8 voting members** present to act on grant awards, and affirmative votes of at least six voting members. Regardless of the number of members present, **if 3 or more voting members** object to an award of funds, the proposal will be rejected.

Executive Session

The board may also convene in a confidential executive session where, by law, only press members and OWEB staff may attend. Others will be asked to leave the room during these discussions, which usually deal with current or potential litigation. Before convening such a session, the presiding board member will make a public announcement and explain necessary procedures.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Membership

Voting Members

Elizabeth Agpaoa, *Board of Forestry*
Barbara Boyer, *Board of Agriculture*
Zavier Borja, *Public*
Raija Bushnell, *Public*
Kelly Coates, *Board Co-Chair, Public, Tribal Representative*
Russ Hoeflich, *Public*
Mark Labhart, *Fish and Wildlife Commission*
Lindsay McClary, *Board Co-Chair, Public*
Mark Webb, *Environmental Quality Commission*
Woody Wolfe, *Water Resources Commission*
Vacant, *Public*

Non-voting Members

Dan Brown, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
Aaron Curtis, *U.S. Bureau of Land Management*
Jessi Kershner, *Oregon State University Extension Service*
Brian Staab, *U.S. Forest Service*
Claire Tachella, *U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service*
Michele Zwartjes, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*
Annie Birnie, *National Marine Fisheries Service*

Contact Information

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OWEB Executive Assistant & Board Liaison –
Nicole Bettinardi
Nicole.BETTINARDI@OWEB.oregon.gov

2026 Board Meeting Schedule

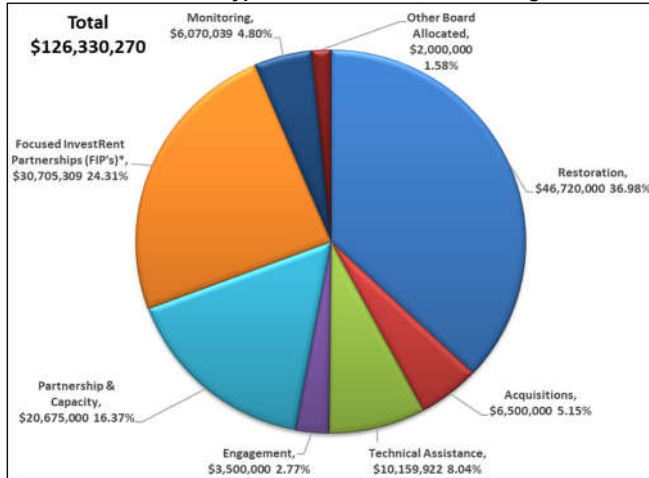
January 27-28 – Virtual
April 28-29 – Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe
of Indians Reservation
July 28-29 – The Dalles
Oct 27-28 – Burns

For online access to staff reports and other
OWEB publications, visit our website:
www.oregon.gov/OWEB.

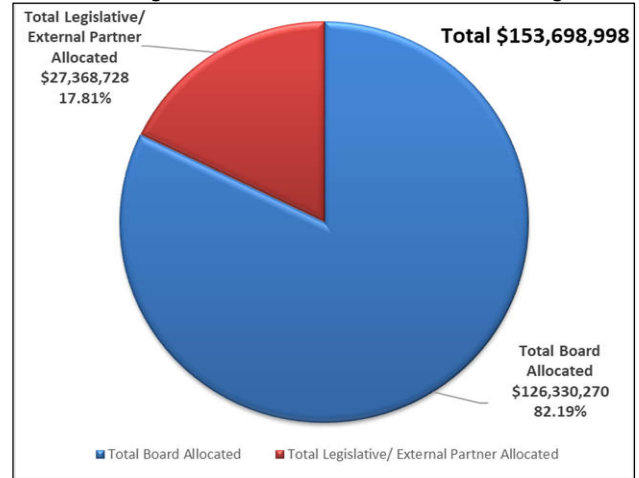
OWEB 2025-2027 GRANT FUNDS SPENDING PLAN

April 2026 Board Meeting

2025-2027 Grant Funds Spending Plan -
Grant Types in Board Allocated Funding



2025-2027 Grant Funds Spending Plan - Board Allocated Funding
and Legislative/External Partner Allocated Funding



	GRANT PROGRAMS	2025-2027 Spending Plan (As of January 2026)	Awarded to Date	April 2026 Proposed Awards	TOTAL Awards To-Date & Proposed Awards	Remaining Spending Plan after Awards
Board Allocated Funding						
1	Restoration					
2	Open Solicitation	37,380,000	\$ 12,596,927	\$ -	\$ 12,596,927	\$ 24,783,073
3	Weed Grants	3,500,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ -	\$ 3,500,000	\$ -
4	Small Grants	4,760,000	\$ 4,760,000	\$ -	\$ 4,760,000	\$ -
5	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership	330,000	\$ 330,000	\$ -	\$ 330,000	\$ -
6	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Prog (CREP)-Cost Share	750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ -	\$ 750,000	\$ -
7	Total Restoration	\$ 46,720,000	\$ 21,936,927	\$ -	\$ 21,936,927	\$ 24,783,073
8	Acquisitions					
9	Land and Water Acquisition	6,500,000	\$ -	\$ 4,656,273	\$ 4,656,273	\$ 1,843,727
10	Total Acquisitions	\$ 6,500,000	\$ -	\$ 4,656,273	\$ 4,656,273	\$ 1,843,727
11	Technical Assistance					
12	Open Solicitation	7,500,000	\$ 2,529,986		\$ 2,529,986	\$ 4,970,014
13	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) TA ⁽²⁾	1,629,961	\$ 1,629,961		\$ 1,629,961	\$ -
14	Tribal Project Development	1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -
15	Total Technical Assistance	\$ 10,129,961	\$ 5,159,947	\$ -	\$ 5,159,947	\$ 4,970,014
16	Engagement					
17	Open Solicitation	2,000,000	\$ 769,669		\$ 769,669	\$ 1,230,331
18	Strategic Implementation Areas ⁽¹⁾	1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -
19	Total Engagement	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 2,269,669	\$ -	\$ 2,269,669	\$ 1,230,331
20	Partnership & Capacity					
21	Capacity grants - Watershed Councils (WC)	9,900,000	\$ 9,899,792	\$ -	\$ 9,899,792	\$ 208
22	Capacity grants - Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)	8,700,000	\$ 8,700,000	\$ -	\$ 8,700,000	\$ -
23	Statewide Organizational Conservation Partnership Support	525,000	\$ 525,000	\$ -	\$ 525,000	\$ -
24	Partnership Technical Assistance	1,200,000	\$ -	\$ 590,048	\$ 590,048	\$ 609,952
25	Sage Grouse Conservation Partnership	350,000	\$ 350,000	\$ -	\$ 350,000	\$ -
26	Total Partnership & Capacity	\$ 20,675,000	\$ 19,474,792	\$ 590,048	\$ 20,064,840	\$ 610,160
27	Focused Investment Partnerships (FIP) ⁽¹⁾ :					
28	Cohort 3 - 3rd Biennium					
29	Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network	2,959,837	\$ 2,959,837	\$ -	\$ 2,959,837	\$ -
30	East Cascades Oak & Fire Partnership	2,177,000	\$ 2,177,000	\$ -	\$ 2,177,000	\$ -
31	Siuslaw Coho Partnership	4,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -
32	Coos Basin Coho Partnership	3,747,408	\$ 3,747,408	\$ -	\$ 3,747,408	\$ -
33	Oregon Central Coast Estuary Collaborative	2,390,250	\$ 2,390,250	\$ -	\$ 2,390,250	\$ -
34	Cohort 4 - 2nd Biennium					
35	Hood River Basin Partnership	3,503,414	\$ 3,503,414	\$ -	\$ 3,503,414	\$ -
36	Klamath Lake Forest Health Partnership	4,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -
37	Oregon Sage-Grouse Partnership	4,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -
38	Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative	3,927,400	\$ 3,927,400	\$ -	\$ 3,927,400	\$ -
39	Total FIP's	\$ 30,705,309	\$ 30,705,309	\$ -	\$ 30,705,309	\$ -

	GRANT PROGRAMS	2025-2027 Spending Plan (As of January 2026)	Awarded to Date	April 2026 Proposed Awards	TOTAL Awards To-Date & Proposed Awards	Remaining Spending Plan after Awards
40	Monitoring					
41	Open Solicitation	5,000,000	\$ 2,880,536		\$ 2,880,536	\$ 2,119,464
42	Quantifying Conservation Outputs and Outcomes	570,039	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 570,039
43	FIP Effectiveness Monitoring	500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -
44	Total Monitoring	\$ 6,070,039	\$ 3,380,536	\$ -	\$ 3,380,536	\$ 2,689,503
45	Other Board Allocated					
46	Governor's Priorities	2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -
47	Total Other	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -
48	TOTAL BOARD ALLOCATED	\$ 126,300,309	\$ 84,927,180	\$ 5,246,321	\$ 90,173,501	\$ 36,126,808
49	Percent (%) of OWEB Grant Funds Spending Plan total	82.19%				
50	Board Approved Unallocated Funds (as of July 2025)	13,325,337				
Legislative/External Partner						
51	Restoration					
52	Bureau of Land Management-Good Neighbor Authority ⁽¹⁾	5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -
53	US Fish & Wildlife-Coastal Wetlands Project (TBD)	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
54	Upper Klamath Water Quality Improvements-PacifiCorp IM11	5,709,407	\$ 5,709,407	\$ -	\$ 5,709,407	\$ -
55	Watershed Natural Climate Solutions Fund ⁽³⁾	1,497,476	\$ 1,497,476	\$ -	\$ 1,497,476	\$ -
56	Total Restoration	\$ 12,206,883	\$ 12,206,883	\$ -	\$ 12,206,883	\$ -
57	Acquisitions					
58	Water Acquisition - Flexible Incentive Account	5,000,000	\$ -	\$ 3,743,513	\$ 3,743,513	\$ 1,256,487
59	Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)	1,760,000	\$ -	\$ 1,610,216	\$ 1,610,216	\$ 149,784
60	Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) - Watershed Natural Climate Solutions Fund ⁽³⁾	752,524	\$ 752,524	\$ -	\$ 752,524	\$ -
61	Total Acquisitions	\$ 7,512,524	\$ 752,524	\$ 5,353,729	\$ 6,106,253	\$ 1,406,271
62	Technical Assistance					
63	USDA-NRCS Farm Bill Technical Assistance Amendment	363,722	\$ 363,722	\$ -	\$ 363,722	\$ -
64	Total Technical Assistance	\$ 363,722	\$ 363,722	\$ -	\$ 363,722	
65	Partnership & Capacity					
66	Forest Health Collaborative-Oregon Department of Forestry	350,000	\$ 138,899		\$ 138,899	\$ 211,101
67	Total Partnership & Capacity	\$ 350,000	\$ 138,899	\$ -	\$ 138,899	\$ 211,101
68	Monitoring					
69	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission-(PSMFC) Intensively Monitored Watersheds	264,597	\$ 264,597	\$ -	\$ 264,597	\$ -
70	Total Monitoring	\$ 264,597	\$ 264,597	\$ -	\$ 264,597	\$ -
71	Other Legislative/External Partner Allocated					
72	Oregon Dept of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW)-PCSRF(Federal Funds)	6,671,002	\$ 6,671,002	\$ -	\$ 6,671,002	\$ -
73	Total Other	\$ 6,671,002	\$ 6,671,002	\$ -	\$ 6,671,002	\$ -
74	TOTAL LEGISLATIVE/EXTERNAL PARTNER ALLOCATED	\$ 27,368,728	\$ 20,397,627	\$ 5,353,729	\$ 25,751,356	\$ 1,617,372
75	Percent (%) of OWEB Grant Funds Spending Plan total	17.81%				
TOTAL OWEB 2025-2027 Grant Spending Plan		\$ 153,669,037	\$ 105,324,807	\$ 10,600,050	\$ 115,924,857	\$ 37,744,180

⁽¹⁾ This program may include a variety of grant types (e.g. Restoration, Engagement, Technical Assistance, and Acquisition, etc.)

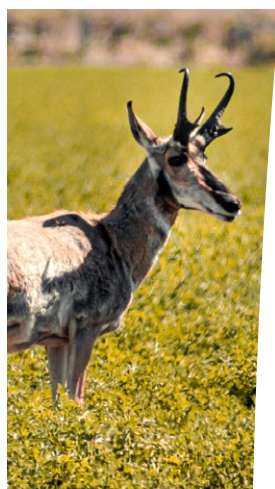
⁽²⁾ This includes NRCS CREP TA funds awarded of \$162,532

⁽³⁾ These funds total \$2.25M from the 2023-2025 OCAC allocation to OWEB



The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) provides grants to help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

Eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Tribes, Watershed Councils, political subdivisions of the state that are not state agencies, schools, community colleges, Oregon State institutions of higher education, and independent not-for-profit institutions of higher education. State and federal agencies are not eligible grantees but are often partners on OWEB-funded projects. In addition to those listed below, OWEB may offer grant types based on legislative priorities.

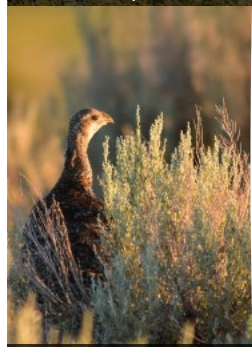


Land Acquisition

Acquisition

[Conservation Easement \(Ag Heritage\)](#)
[Drinking Water Source Protection](#)
[Land Acquisition](#)
[Water Acquisition](#)

Acquire interests in land or water from willing sellers. Acquisitions result in legally or contractually protected land or instream flow for the benefit of watersheds, habitats for native fish and wildlife, to protect drinking water, and to protect working lands.



Sage Grouse Conservation Engagement Grant

Focused Investment Partnership

[Focused Investment Partnerships](#)

Landscape-scale restoration investments that address board-identified priorities. Successful FIPs achieve clear and measurable ecological outcomes; use integrated, results-oriented approaches and are implemented by a high-performing partnership. Funds partnerships with up to \$12 million over 6 years.



Oak Woodland (FIP)

Engagement

[Engagement](#)

Communicate and engage with landowners, organizations, and the community about the need for, feasibility of, and benefits of eligible project(s) within an identified geography. Education projects are not eligible.

Monitoring

[Monitoring](#)

Monitor, gather, analyze, and share watershed data with the public. May describe current watershed conditions, establish trends about watershed conditions, or evaluate specific before-and-after effects of a project.

Partnerships & Capacity

[Operating Capacity](#)
[Organizational Collaboration](#)
[Partnership TA](#)

Support operations of SWCDs, WC, and other partnership organizations.

Restoration

[Coastal Wetlands](#)
[Invasive & Noxious Weeds \(ODA\)](#)
[Restoration](#)
[Small Grants](#)

Protect or restore watershed functions for instream, riparian, upland, and wetland or estuarine habitat.

Technical Assistance (TA)

[CREP TA](#)
[NRCS/OWEB Farm Bill TA](#)
[Technical Assistance](#)
[Technical Assistance and Conservation Management Planning \(Ag Heritage\)](#)

Develop a technical design or implementation plan for restoration, including consideration for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.



Coastal Wetlands Monitoring



Coho Habitat Restoration



Floodplain Restoration



OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Public Comment

Agenda Items E and L

Submitted written public comment will be published in a supplemental document after the board meeting and posted on the [OWEB April board meeting website](#)

Application Evaluations

For Agenda Items G, H, I, and M

Written Evaluations for all grant applications that will be considered by the board this meeting are published in a supplemental document and posted on the [OWEB April board meeting website](#)



OREGON
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Agenda Item B

Focused Investment Partnership

Cohort 2 Report – Rogue Forest Partners

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item B. FIP Cohort 2 Reporting – Rogue Forest

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Eric Hartstein, Senior Policy Coordinator

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #3: Use our funding to strengthen and leverage capacity of people and organizations to achieve healthy watersheds.

I. Introduction

At the April board meeting, representatives from the Rogue Forest Partners will update the board on progress with their FIP initiative.

II. Background

In January 2019, the board selected five partnerships for FIP funding beginning in the 2019-2021 biennium. These partnerships comprise OWEB's second cohort of FIP initiatives and include the Rogue Forest Partners. The first Progress Tracking Reports (PTRs) from the second FIP cohort were provided to the board at the March 2021 meeting, with the second PTR and a supporting presentation by partners in January 2023. The third PTR for the second cohort of FIP partnerships was provided to the board in January 2025.

The second cohort of FIP partnerships are now on the verge of completing their initiatives and are presenting to the board in 2025-2026.

III. April Board Meeting Presentation

In 2019, the board selected the Rogue Forest Partners for a \$6 million FIP initiative to increase diverse and healthy forest landscapes with strategic areas in southern Oregon. At the April meeting, representatives from the partnership will present progress to the board on their FIP initiatives.

The most recent progress tracking reports can be found on OWEB's website: [Rogue Forest Partners Cumulative Progress Report 2024](#).

IV. Recommendation

This is an information item only.



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

Agenda Item C

Director's Updates

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



This report provides the board updates on upcoming OWEB rulemaking efforts.

Background

Grant programs at OWEB are guided by administrative rules. Rules cover topics such as project eligibility, application requirements, evaluation criteria, technical review processes, and funding decisions for OWEB grant programs/types.

OWEB regularly conducts rulemaking to update existing rules and establish rules for new programs. Generally, rulemaking takes 12 months from board initiation to rule adoption. During those 12 months, OWEB staff recruit a Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC) through a process consistent with Oregon Administrative Procedures law (ORS 183.333) that requires the committee to be made up of entities most likely to be impacted by the rules, develop draft rule language, hold several RAC meetings to discuss rule language, and provide formal tribal and public notification to receive comments on draft rules. The schedule may be abbreviated in instances where a RAC is not involved in rulemaking.

The process begins when staff requests the board initiate rulemaking in an [OWEB rules division](#). At that time, staff will provide a high-level overview of what is intended to be accomplished with rulemaking and describe the draft schedule. For rulemaking efforts that involve a RAC, staff will provide the board a progress update on key emerging themes of the draft rules at a second meeting near the middle of the rulemaking. At a third board meeting, staff will bring a final draft set of rules for board consideration for adoption.

Rulemaking Schedule

The following table describes the tentative schedule for current and future OWEB rulemaking. It does not include rulemaking associated with the new Oregon Environmental Restoration Council established in SB 1561 (2024), but it is assumed that OWEB staff will also be involved in the development of rules for those programs in 2026. The timeframes in the table below may be adjusted due to workload.

Administrative Rules	Board Initiate Rulemaking	Board Consideration for Adoption - Proposed
Water Acquisition Grants (Division 46)	July 2025	July 2026
Land Acquisition Grants (Division 45)	July 2026-January 2027	July 2027-January 2028
Outcome-Based Watershed Council Operating Capacity Grants (Division 40)	July 2026	July 2027



This report provides the board with an update on the outcomes of the 2026 short legislative session.

Background

The 2026 legislative session began on February 2 and adjourned on March 6. The main bill of high importance to OWEB is related to the budget.

Budget

In the fall of 2025, state agencies were directed to prepare budget reduction options that the legislature could consider in the February 2026 session to address budget shortfalls. The budget shortfall ended up being less than anticipated and limited cuts were made to agency budgets. OWEB did not take any cuts to the 2025-2027 budget during the February 2026 legislative session.

The end-of-session budget bill, House Bill 5204, included budget adjustments for OWEB.

- OWEB received a \$35 million increase in Other Funds spending authority to allow the Oregon Environmental Restoration Program to spend existing funds at the direction of the Oregon Environmental Restoration Council.
- OWEB received increases in Lottery Funds and General Funds to cover cost of living increases and other negotiated increases. This is a standard adjustment that generally takes place during the February session each biennium.

In previous recent February legislative sessions, OWEB has received new grant funding and associated staffing for either new grant programs or for new investments in existing programs. OWEB did not receive any new investments this session for either new or existing programs or staffing.



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Jeremy Bochart BLM, cc

2025-2028 Strategic Plan

Quarterly Report to the Board | April 2026



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

Each quarterly report describes key accomplishments under Strategies that have been identified for each of the six Strategic Plan priorities. See the last page for the full list of Strategies, and a summary of when accomplishments were reported throughout the calendar year.



Priority 1

Build awareness of the relationship between people and watershed protection and restoration.



Executive Director Marko Bey and Tribal Partnerships Director Belinda Brown of Lomakatsi, Jaime Stephens, Director of Conservation at Klamath Bird Observatory, and CalLee Davenport of Oregon Habitat Solutions accepted the award on behalf of KSON.

Strategy 1.1 OWEB staff continue to share **updates on the website and social media**, including recent highlights on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's long-term watershed scale monitoring and restoration effort in [Meadow Creek via their GIS story map](#) and [Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network's award in DC](#).

Strategy 1.1 Two new **Telling the Restoration Story** projects completed.

- [Restoration in the Upper and Middle Rogue Basin's](#) storymap and restoration report cards tell the collective story of hundreds of restoration projects including 27 fish barriers removed, 46 stream miles restored, and 200 riparian miles restored.
- [Restoring Sun Creek's](#) storymap follows the reconnection of Sun Creek to the Wood River and resurgence of native bull trout.



View of Sun Creek reconnection.



Priority 2

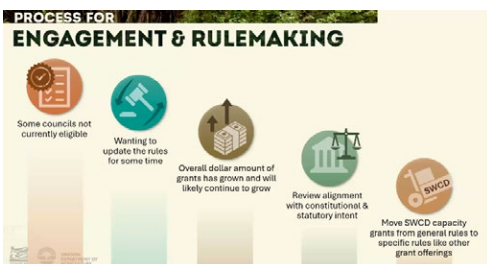
Engage the diversity of Oregonians in watershed enhancement work.



Replanting in the reservoir footprint post-dam removal.

Strategy 2.2 The **Oregon Lottery is running an outreach campaign** to highlight lottery-funded post-dam removal restoration work along the Klamath River that includes a [dedicated webpage](#), video, and social media posts.

Strategy 2.2 OWEB is partnering with ODA on **pre-rulemaking outreach for Watershed Council and Soil and Water Conservation District capacity grants**. Outreach efforts include a [kickoff webinar](#) about the process in early February; a combination of in-person and virtual [listening sessions](#) in March, April, and May; a presentation at the Connect+ conference; [FAQ guidance](#); and a [survey](#). Feedback gathered through this outreach work will help influence the rulemaking proposals.



Slide from kickoff webinar showing process of engagement and rulemaking.



Priority 3

Strengthen and leverage people and organizational capacity to achieve healthy watersheds.



Mary Halbleib, OSU, presents the keynote speech.

Strategy 3.2 OWEB's Technical Assistance grant is helping to fund the **Oregon Conservation Partnership's Connect+ Conference** where SWCDS, WCs, Land Trusts, and other conservation implementers learn from each other about techniques to successfully assess watershed conditions, implement restoration projects, and monitor the results to inform future work.



Priority 4

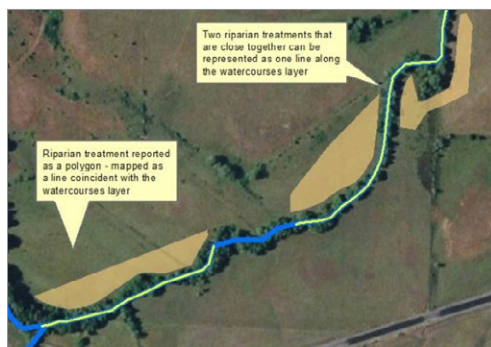
Advance learning about watershed restoration effectiveness through coordinated monitoring.



Before and after restoration at Camp Creek.

Strategy 4.1 Ken Fetcho, OWEB's Effectiveness Monitoring coordinator, co-authored **two journal articles describing outcomes from the Intensively Monitored Watersheds efforts** that were published February 2026. Both articles have a focus on the role of watershed science, adaptive management and partnerships. The articles can be found online here:

[Frontiers | Intensively Monitored Watersheds – A Tool to Help Us Understand How Ecological Processes Function and Are Effected by Stream and Watershed Restoration](#)



OWRI map guidance.

Strategy 4.3 In March, OWEB opened the [annual call for data](#) for the **Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI)**. OWRI celebrates 30 years of data collection under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Managed by OWEB staff, OWRI is the single largest restoration information database in the Western United States with submissions on over 20,000 projects completed since 1995.



Priority 5

Increase connection of urban and working lands to watershed health.



City of Port Orford Mayor Ann Vileisis (right) and OWEB DWSP Specialist Audrey Squires (left) touring the North Fork Hubbard Creek Watershed.

Strategy 5.1 [OWEB social media](#) highlighted the **Port Orford Drinking Water Source Protection grant**, which helped purchase 160 acres of the North Fork Hubbard Creek Watershed to protect the drinking water source.



Priority 6

Take bold and innovative action toward climate resilience.



Herb Winters, District Manager of Gilliam SWCD talks about using remote sensing technology for monitoring at Connect+.

Strategy 6.1 OWEB staff facilitated a session at [Connect+](#) where grantees presented about their use of remote sensing technology for monitoring restoration impacts and resilience following major disturbances.



[Recordings of the three-day design workshop](#) are available on OWEB's website and YouTube channel.

Strategy 6.2 OWEB and ODFW hosted a 3-day design workshop to define the climate resilience attributes under [EO 25-26](#). The intention is that the attributes of Oregon's lands and waters will become the "north star" for prioritization and coordination across natural resource agencies. OWEB and ODFW are now incorporating feedback from the public for submission to the Governor's Office in early May and from there, agencies will use the attributes to inform their 2027-2029 work planning.

Strategies Chart

July 2025 - April 2026

 accomplishments
 highlighted in quarterly update

 July
 October
 January
 April

1 Through our grantmaking, build awareness of the relationship between the people of Oregon and watershed protection and restoration

1.1 Elevate the story of how protection and restoration promote healthy watersheds				
1.2 Connect people around watershed work				
1.3 Increase use of OWEB's engagement grant offering to support grantees doing community engagement				

2 Leverage our position as an anchor funder to engage the diversity of Oregonians in watershed enhancement

2.1 Enhance OWEB presence throughout Oregon				
2.2 Increase diversity and inclusion through improving access to our programs				
2.3 Engage organizations, entities, and communities that have not traditionally been involved in watershed restoration work				

3 Use our funding to strengthen and leverage people and organizational capacity to achieve healthy watersheds

3.1 Support diverse funding opportunities to sustain the capacity of partners				
3.2 Expand training for partners				

4 Advance learning about watershed restoration effectiveness through coordinated monitoring

4.1 Facilitate learning through monitoring				
4.2 Learn, share and support efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge				
4.3 Communicate data-driven outcomes to guide restoration investments				

5 Increase investment connecting urban and working lands to watershed health

5.1 Promote value of multi benefit watershed projects				
5.2 Increase investment connecting of urban and working lands to watershed health				
5.3 Support and fund grantees building or expanding partnerships with urban constituencies				

6 Take bold and innovative action toward funding projects that advance climate resilience

6.1 Increase support for bold and innovative grant making in service to watershed restoration and protection				
6.2 Articulate the benefits of watershed protection and restoration for climate resiliency				



OREGON
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Agenda Item D

Board Update

Plans for July OWEB Board Mini-Retreat

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item D. Plans for July OWEB Board Mini-Retreat

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Sara O'Brien, Executive Director

I. Background

OWEB has long benefited from having a board that is unique among state agency boards and commissions: large, deeply connected to our agency's mission and partnerships, diverse in the roles and strengths individual members bring, and often uniquely collaborative in its work.

Any public body of this size, complexity, and diversity benefits from frank and clear communication around our expectations of each other, how we interact, what our contributions could and should be, and especially how we want to engage when we disagree.

Shared expectations and norms help us collaborate more effectively in our work, support collective accountability, and can be an especially important tool for new members who might otherwise find it challenging and time-consuming to learn the cultural habits of the board through observation.

II. The Opportunity

Donna Silverberg and her colleagues ([DS Consulting](#)) have been working with several of the state's natural resources boards and commissions to support good governance and board culture and practices and help facilitate public engagement around especially charged issues. They have also worked with OWEB's staff several times over our agency's history. Most recently they facilitated meetings with our executive team to assess our team culture and effectiveness, and they are currently providing communication, conflict management, and facilitation trainings to our staff.

As part of our time together in The Dalles in July, DS Consulting will design and facilitate a board mini-retreat. Donna and her team will meet with board co-chairs to inform this work, but we tentatively plan to focus the time on:

- Exploring how we work together as a board when we're at our best,
- Beginning to develop shared expectations and aspirations, and
- Working toward developing content for a concise document that lays out board best practices and meeting agreements, for the benefit of current and future members.

Donna will briefly join our April meeting to introduce herself and her firm, share a little more detail on the work she does with other state boards and commissions, and ask your feedback on some initial ideas for the July mini-retreat.

III. Recommendation

This is an information item only.



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Agenda Item F

General Board Business

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



MINUTES ARE NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD

January 27-28, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes

Virtual Board Meeting

Recording at: [January 27-28, 2026 Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS

Liz Agpaoa
 Annie Birnie
 Xavier Borja
 Barbara Boyer
 Dan Brown
 Raija Bushnell
 Kelly Coates
 Aaron Curtis
 Russ Hoeflich
 Jessi Kershner
 Mark Labhart
 Lindsay McClary
 Jamie McLeod-Skinner
 Brian Staab
 Claire Tachella
 Mark Webb
 Michele Zwartjes

OWEB STAFF

Nicole Bettinardi
 Amy Charette
 Greg Ciannella
 Renee Davis
 Katie Duzik
 Ken Fetcho
 Mark Grenbemer
 Heidi Hartman
 Eric Hartstein
 Denise Hoffert
 Taylor Larson
 Jillian McCarthy
 Robin Meacher
 Coby Menton
 Sara O'Brien
 Stephanie Page
 Liz Redon
 Linda Repplinger
 Miriam Scharer
 Courtney Shaff
 Eric Williams

OTHERS

Strayer Bartoshesky
 Kelley Beamer
 Matthew Bearden
 Ken Bierly
 Scott Bruslind
 Dave Bungi
 Joe Buttafuoco
 Denise Dammann
 Madison Di Lorenzo
 Chandra Ferrari
 Justin Ferrell
 Brett Golden
 Bernadette Graham-Hudson
 Miranda Grey

OTHERS

Geoff Huntington
 Leslie King
 Kris Knight
 Andrea Kreiner
 April McEwen
 Brandi Neider
 Rep. Mark Owens
 Terri Preeg Riggsby
 Terry Ruitter
 Neil Schulman
 Amy Schlusser
 Caley Sowers
 Karin Stutzman
 Kyle Sullivan-Astor
 Emily VanWyk

Minutes, January 27

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Kelly Coates: [Recording](#)

Timestamp	Agenda Item
0:08:15	Item A. Board Member Comments Board representatives from state and federal agencies provided updates on issues related to the natural resource agency they represent. Public and tribal board members also reported on their recent activities, shared information, and commented on various watershed enhancement and community conservation-related topics. <i>Information item.</i>
1:51:20	Item B. Updates from the Governor's Natural Resources Office Senior Natural Resources Advisor Geoff Huntington, Natural Resource Advisor Chandra Ferrari, and Natural Resources Climate Advisor Amy Schlusser updated the board on the Governor's Executive Order 25-26 on the Resilience of Our Communities, Natural and Working Lands and Waters. <i>Information item.</i>

Timestamp	Agenda Item
2:44:30	Item C. Directors Updates Executive Director Sara O’Brien and staff updated the board on agency business. <i>Information item.</i>
3:15:48	Item D. 2025 Annual Tribal Report Effectiveness Monitoring Coordinator & Tribal Liaison Ken Fetcho presented the agency’s 2025 Annual Tribal Report and OWEB’s Tribal Policy. <i>Information item.</i>
4:29:20	Item E. Public Comment This time was reserved for the board 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 OWEB's website. The following people provided verbal comments: • Rep. Mark Owens, Oregon Legislative District 60 • Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts • Terri Preeg Riggsby, Network of Oregon Watershed Councils • Neil Schulman, North Clackamas Watershed Council • Kris Knight, Deschutes Partnership • Ken Bierly
4:53:50	Item F. General Board Business This time was reserved for the board to act on routine items. <i>Action item.</i> Motion #1. Mark Labhart moved the board approve the minutes from the October 28-29, 2025, board meeting. Motion was seconded by Mark Webb. Liz Agpaoa, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Xavier Borja, Barbara Boyer, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe was absent. Motion passed. Motion #2. Russ Hoeflich moved the board extend the grant deadline for Pitchfork T (Grant No. 223-7105-22611) and Aspen Valley Ranch – Rim Tract (Grant No. 223-7106-22616) to March 31, 2027, with the condition that the Grantee provide an updated project schedule. Motion was seconded by Mark Webb. Liz Agpaoa, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Xavier Borja, Barbara Boyer, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe was absent. Motion passed. Motion #3. Mark Webb moved the board delegate authority to the Executive Director to award up to \$1 million (less any authorized OWEB indirect charges) in Coastal Wetlands grant funds to the Coquille Watershed Association for the Beaver Hill Wetland Reserve Enhancement Project, contingent upon a grant award to OWEB for the project from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Motion was seconded by Liz Agpaoa. Liz Agpaoa, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Xavier Borja, Barbara Boyer, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe was absent. Motion passed. Motion #4. Mark Webb moved that the CREP TA spending plan line item in the 2025-2027 Grant Funds Spending Plan be held at \$1.6 million, inclusive of any NRCS CREP TA funds received. Motion was seconded by Russ Hoeflich. Liz Agpaoa, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe, Xavier Borja, and Barbara Boyer were absent. Motion passed.

Timestamp	Agenda Item
5:02:25	Item G. Forest Collaboratives Grant Awards Senior Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein, Federal Programs Specialist Heidi Hartman, and Kyle Sullivan-Astor, Oregon Department of Forestry, reviewed the Forest Collaborative grant offering and staff recommendations. <i>Action item.</i> Liz Agpaoa moved the board award funds for the staff-recommended projects listed in Attachment B with an award date of January 27, 2026. Motion was seconded by Mark Webb. Liz Agpaoa, Xavier Borja, Barbara Boyer, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Russ Hoeflich opposed. Woody Wolfe was absent. Motion passed.
5:59:35	Item H. Committee Updates Representatives from board committees provided updates on committee topics to the full board. <i>Information item.</i>
6:05:30	Item I. Focused Investment Partnership Ecological Priorities Adoption Restoration Grants Manager Eric Williams, Partnerships Coordinator Denise Hoffert, Partnerships Coordinator Jillian McCarthy, and Senior Policy Coordinator Eric Hartstein presented the final draft revisions to the FIP ecological priorities for board adoption and requested board action on deciding the maximum FIP award per biennium for the upcoming 2027-2029 FIP solicitation. <i>Action Item.</i> Mark Webb moved the board approve the Final Draft Revised FIP Ecological Priority memos as provided in Attachment B. Motion was seconded by Russ Hoeflich. Liz Agpaoa, Barbara Boyer, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, and Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe and Xavier Borja were absent. Motion passed. Mark Webb moved the board set the maximum biennial award at \$5 million for FIP initiatives that begin in the 2027-2029 biennium. Motion was seconded by Mark Labhart. Liz Agpaoa, Barbara Boyer, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, and Jamie McLeod-Skinner, Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe and Xavier Borja were absent. Motion passed.
6:56:40	Revisit Item C. Director’s Reports – Conflict of Interest The board discussed in more detail the state’s policy on conflict of interest.
	The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 pm by Lindsay McClary.

Minutes, January 28

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Lindsay McClary: [Recording](#)

Timestamp	Agenda Item
0:01:55	Item J. Focused Investment Partnership Grant Program (FIP) Cohort 2 Report – Warner Basin Partnership Partnership Coordinator Denise Hoffert introduced representatives from the Warner Basin Partnership who will update the board on their FIP initiative progress. <i>Information item.</i> Representatives included Brandi Neider, Lake County Watershed Council, and Justin Ferrel, Lake County SWCD.
0:31:30	Item K. Public Comment This time was reserved for the board 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 OWEB's website. The following people provided verbal comments: • Joe Buttafuoco, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts • Ken Bierly, Natural Resource Consulting • Miranda Grey, Oregon State University • Kelley Beamer, East Multnomah SWCD • Leslie King, Sandy River Watershed Council
1:02:14	Item L. Summer 2025 Open Solicitation Grant Offering Board Awards Restoration Grant Program Manager Eric Williams, Regional Program Representatives, and Effectiveness Monitoring Coordinator & Tribal Liaison Ken Fetcho reviewed the Summer 2025 Open Solicitation grant offering and funding recommendations. <i>Action Item.</i> All written public comments can be viewed on the OWEB's website. Jamie McLeod-Skinner moved the board award funds for the staff-recommended projects listed in Attachment D, with the addition of #226-5025 Harney Groundwater Engagement 2025 and #226-3024 Kelly Creek Restoration Project with an award date of January 28, 2026. Motion was seconded by Russ Hoeflich. Raija Bushnell, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, and Jamie McLeod-Skinner voted in favor. Motion failed. Jamie McLeod-Skinner moved the board award funds for the staff-recommended projects listed in Attachment D, with the addition of #226-5025 Harney Groundwater Engagement 2025 with an award date of January 28, 2026. Motion was seconded by Mark Labhart. Liz Agpaoa, Barbara Boyer, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe and Xavier Borja were absent. Motion passed.
4:30:24	Item N. ODFW SWAP Update Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) Staff, Wildlife Division Administrator Bernadette Graham Hudson and Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator Emily VanWyk provided an overview on ODFW’s updated State Wildlife Action Plan. <i>Information item.</i>

Timestamp	Agenda Item
5:05:40	Item M. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC) Appointments Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Coordinator Taylor Larson reviewed the submitted applicants for the OAHC commission vacancies and recommend these applicants to the OWEB board for appointment to the commission. <i>Action item.</i> Mark Webb moved the board appoint John Deck and Nancy Duhnkrack to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission for terms ending January 1, 2030. Motion was seconded by Liz Agpaoa. Liz Agpaoa, Barbara Boyer, Raija Bushnell, Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich, Mark Labhart, Lindsay McClary, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, and Mark Webb voted in favor. Woody Wolfe and Xavier Borja were absent. Motion passed.
5:10:54	Item O. Land Acquisition Grant Program Modernization Update Acquisitions & Special Programs Manager Renee Davis and Executive Director Sara O'Brien provided an overview of the land acquisition grant program modernization process that is in progress. <i>Information item.</i>
6:19:10	Item P. Other Business This item was reserved for other matters that may come before the board. <i>Information item.</i>
	The meeting was adjourned at 2:59 pm by co-chair Kelly Coates.



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Agenda Item G

Partnerships Technical Assistance (TA)

Grant Offering Board Awards

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item G. Partnership Technical Assistance Grants

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Denise Hoffert, Partnerships Coordinator

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #3: Use our funding to strengthen and leverage capacity of people and organizations to achieve healthy watersheds.

I. Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of the 2026 Partnership Technical Assistance grant offering and funding recommendations. Staff request the board approve the funding recommendations outlined in Attachment B to the staff report.

II. Background

At the July 2025 meeting, the board adopted its 2025-2027 spending plan and allocated \$1.2 million for Partnership Technical Assistance grants. There are two project types within the offering: Development and Capacity.

Development grant recipients can use awarded funds to develop a strategic action plan (SAP), enhance an existing SAP, and/or elevate the partnership's performance through the development of governance documents. Capacity grant recipients must have a SAP already that aligns with OWEB's template and can use grant funds to support partnership coordination to implement the plan.

III. Summary of Solicitation and Review Process

Solicitation

In September 2025, staff solicited Partnership TA grants with a November 3, 2025, application deadline. Applicants could request up to \$150,000 for a project period of up to 3 years and projects must lead to eligible restoration or acquisition projects. The project match required for this offering is 5%.

Applications Submitted

Sixteen applications were received by the deadline, requesting a total of \$1.99 million. Five applications were for Capacity funding and eleven applications were for Development funding. Applications were submitted from all six of OWEB's regions – a map of the applications can be found in Attachment A to the staff report.

Review Process

Applications were evaluated based on the evaluation criteria included in the technical assistance rules OAR 695-030-0045(3): 1) partner engagement, 2) proposal clarity, 3) technical soundness, and 4) organizational capacity.

Reviewers provided funding recommendations and ranked the recommended applications. The application evaluations can be found in the [Application Evaluations](#) document.

IV. Funding Recommendation

Staff recommend the board award \$590,048 in Partnership Technical Assistance grants as shown in Attachment B with an effective date of April 28, 2026.

V. Attachments

- A. Applications Map
- B. Staff Funding Recommendations

Partnership TA application evaluations can be found in the [Application Evaluations](#) document.

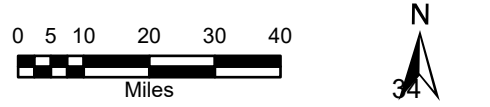
Partnership Technical Assistance Applications 2026

- Status**
- ▲ Staff Recommended for Funding
 - ◆ Below Funding Line
 - Not Recommended for Funding
 - Interstate Highways
 - Oregon State Highways



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Staff Recommended Partnership Technical Assistance Applications 2026

Application Number	Region	Applicant	Application Name	OWEB \$ Requested	Devel or Capacity	Rank
226-8315-24826	6	South Fork John Day WC	John Day Basin Partnership 25-26 Capacity	\$ 79,585	Capacity	1
226-8302-24812	2	Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC)	Rogue Forest Partners: Building Strategic Capacity to Scale Forest Restoration	\$ 149,931	Devel	2
226-8313-24824	2	Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers	South Umpqua River Coho Action Team - FIP Preparation and Development	\$ 63,812	Devel	3
226-8304-24814	5	The Nature Conservancy	Tri-Corner Community Collaborative: Nurturing Shared Vision & Action in a Sagebrush Stronghold	\$ 150,000	Devel	4
226-8312-24823	3	Institute for Applied Ecology	Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative Coordinator	\$ 146,720	Capacity	5

Total Recommended by the TRT and Staff \$ 590,048

Partnership Technical Assistance Applications Recommended by the TRT but Below the Staff Recommended Funding Line

Application Number	Region	Applicant	Application Name	OWEB \$ Requested	Devel or Capacity	Rank
226-8316-24848	2	Discover Your Northwest	Illinois Valley FROG Forest Ecology Stewardship Taskforce (IVFROG-FEST)	\$ 77,262	Capacity	6
226-8307-24818	2	Wild Salmon Center	Middle Umpqua Strategic Action Plan	\$ 117,070	Devel	7
226-8308-24819	4	Ducks Unlimited Inc	Lake County Watershed Resilience Collaborative Partnership Development	\$ 149,955	Devel	8
226-8306-24817	3	Greater Yamhill Watershed Council	Molalla-Yamhill-Pudding Watersheds Aquatic Restoration Partnership	\$ 133,251	Devel	9
226-8314-24825	1	Ducks Unlimited Inc	Strengthening OCCEC Coordination and Updated Action Planning	\$ 138,144	Capacity	10
226-8309-24820	4	Upper Deschutes WC	Deschutes Partnership Capacity and Technical Assistance	\$ 117,990	Capacity	11

Total Recommended by the TRT but not by Staff \$ 733,672

Partnership Technical Assistance Applications Not Recommended by the Technical Review Team

Application Number	Region	Applicant	Application Name	OWEB \$ Requested	Devel or Capacity	Rank
226-8301-24811	2	Curry SWCD	SCLC Regional Resilience Initiative	\$ 150,000	Devel	n/a
226-8303-24813	4	Willamette Partnership	La Pine Partnership TA Grant	\$ 149,999	Devel	n/a
226-8305-24815	4	Crooked River WC	Crooked River Water Quality Partnership Capacity Building	\$ 126,500	Devel	n/a
226-8310-24821	2	Remake Talent dba Firebrand Resiliency Collective	Firebrand Resiliency Collective: Strategic Planning for Wildfire Resilience in Southern Oregon	\$ 97,186	Devel	n/a
226-8311-24822	3	Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation	Strategic Planning For the Westside Wildlife Corridor	\$ 136,400	Devel	n/a

Total Not Recommended by the TRT \$ 660,085

Total All Applications

\$ 1,983,805



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Agenda Item H

OAHP Conservation Easement

Grant Offering Board Awards

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item H. OAHP Conservation Easement Grants

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
From: Taylor Larson, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Coordinator
Robin Meacher, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Easement Specialist
Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 5: Increase connection of urban and working lands to watershed health.

I. Introduction

This staff report provides an overview of the 2025 Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) working lands conservation covenant and easement grant offering and funding recommendation. Staff request the board approve the funding recommendations from the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC) outlined in Attachment A to the staff report.

II. Background

The OAHC consists of 12 members appointed by the OWEB Board, representing diverse areas of conservation and agricultural expertise. The commission is charged with providing the board with funding recommendations for the OAHP grant offerings based on the availability of funding from the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund.

The 2025 legislative session resulted in a \$2 million general fund appropriation to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund (\$1,760,000 for grants and \$240,000 for operations) through OWEB's budget bill (House Bill 5039). At its August 2025 meeting, the OAHC allocated all available grant funding to the OAHP Working Lands Conservation Covenant and Easement grant offering in its 2025-2027 OAHP spending plan.

The working lands conservation covenant and easement grant solicitation opened in September 2025 and closed on November 13, 2025. Six applications were received, requesting a total of \$2,775,702 in OWEB funding. There were no applications for termed covenants. Applications included projects located across Oregon, as depicted in the map in Attachment B.

III. Summary of Review Process

The working land conservation easement applications were reviewed in accordance with the administrative rules for the program, adopted in 2019 and updated in 2025. Per OAHP's statute and rules, staff's role in the application review is to facilitate a process where

applications are evaluated and ranked by a technical review team (TRT) with expertise relevant to the evaluation criteria for the grant offering. The review team does not make “fund/do not fund” recommendations on submitted applications based on merits of the proposed projects relative to the evaluative criteria. Rather, the review team’s ranking signals their expert opinion on alignment of proposed projects with program intent. Staff present the OAHC with the application ranking from the review team and the evaluations, along with a funding recommendation. The OAHC, per statute, reviews and considers these rankings and recommendations in the development of the commission’s recommendation to the OWEB Board.

Virtual site visits for each project were facilitated by OWEB staff for the benefit of the TRT and applicants. The purpose for the virtual presentations was for applicants to describe their proposed project to the technical reviewers directly and respond to any clarifying questions from the reviewers. The TRT then met to discuss, evaluate, and rank the applications. The TRT discussion of each project was summarized by staff and is presented in the evaluations along with the review team ranking to the commission (see the OAHP section of [Application Evaluations](#) for evaluations and Attachment A for the ranking).

Staff present the OAHC with the application ranking from the TRT, the evaluations, along with a funding recommendation. The OAHC, per statute, reviews and considers these rankings and recommendations in the development of the commission’s recommendation to the OWEB Board. Given this decisional space for the OAHC, the recommendation from staff to the OAHC stated where the line of available funding falls in the TRT’s ranking.

As this is the third solicitation and review for this grant type, many of the review team and soundness reviewers have had multiple opportunities to engage with the application materials. The review team generally found that all projects were “qualified” in terms of meeting basic OAHP CE program requirements and thresholds. They noted that more consistency and clarity related to application documents facilitates their review, particularly regarding accuracy of maps, consistency between and within title documents, and specificity of draft easements to the proposed project. OWEB staff will review program guidance prior to any future solicitation to identify areas where more precise direction to applicants would facilitate applicants better meeting the expectations of reviewers.

Those applications that ranked the highest were considered to have provided the most well-articulated and well-documented rationale for why the property and its values were significant, how the specific resources would be protected, and the threat facing the property. Higher ranking applications also were considered to address all the evaluation criteria for the OAHP conservation covenant and easement program to the best and broadest extent among the applications. The applications lower in the ranking, though acknowledged as meeting basic requirements for the program, were forwarded to the commission with some qualifiers. The TRT noted that these applications lacked sufficient justifications to persuade them that the property and the resources were significant to the point of warranting limited public funds be allocated to these projects ahead of higher ranked applications for which alignment with program intent was clearer.

Per administrative rule 698-015-0120, staff provided the governing bodies of cities and counties with jurisdiction in the area of the proposed covenant or easement acquisition, as

well as affected governmental agencies and federally recognized Tribes, with written notice of the projects.

IV. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Meeting

The commission met on March 19, 2026 to deliberate and make a formal funding recommendation to the board. Of the six applications submitted, the commission voted to fund the top three-ranked projects at the full amount requested, as was recommended by staff. In the project ranking table for the commission, staff noted that minor adjustments would be made to the requested indirect costs for some applications recommended for funding due to recent changes to Federally accepted de minimis cost rate. Staff worked with the applicant organization for two projects to update budget requests with the correct indirect rate. These changes are reflected in Attachment A.

V. Grant Conditions

Standard funding conditions specific to OAHP working lands conservation covenant and easement grants were developed by OWEB staff. The conditions are geared to working lands conservation easement transactions and require the grantee to perform required and typical due diligence tasks with the expectation of review and approval by OWEB prior to release of grant funds.

To help with clarity on expectations related to sequencing due diligence items and OWEB review, as well as to clarify expectations related to application-specific outcomes that factored into the TRT's ranking, limited project-specific conditions were developed for those project's recommended for funding. Those applicants were provided with funding conditions and met with staff to discuss them. Staff revised the funding conditions in accordance with any agreements with applicants. Funding conditions will be provided to the board just prior to the board meeting in Attachment C.

VI. Recommendation

Staff recommend the board award OAHP grants in the amount of the \$1,610,216 with an award date of April 28, 2026, as shown in Attachment A as recommended by the OAHC, with conditions detailed in Attachment C.

VII. Attachments

- A. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Funding Recommendations
- B. OAHP Conservation Easement Application Map
- C. OAHP Conservation Easement Grant Funding Conditions (*to be provided to the board before the meeting*)

OAHP application evaluations can be found in the [Application Evaluations](#) document.

ITEM H. Attachment A

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Application Number</i>	<i>Project Name</i>	<i>OWEB Request</i>	<i>Amount Recommended</i>
1	226-7103-24841	Seely Farms Phase 2	\$409,328*	\$409,328
2	226-7104-24840	Ginochio Ranch	\$430,332*	\$430,332
3	226-7105-24845	Aspen Valley Ranch: Heartbreak Tract	\$770,556	\$770,556
4	226-7106-24839	Willow-Witt Ranch Conservation Easement	\$546,000	\$0
5	226-7101-24836	Union Orchards Conservation Easement	\$296,759	\$0
6	226-7102-24842	Brewster Road Farm	\$325,643	\$0
-	-	Total OAHP Conservation Easement Applications Submitted	\$2,778,618	-
-	-	Total OWEB Funding Recommended	-	\$1,610,216

* Adjustments to total OWEB request was made for these two applications after OAHC recommendation based on needed corrections to requested indirect costs due to recent changes to Federally accepted de minimis cost rate.

Oregon Agricultural
Heritage Program
2026 Grant Applications

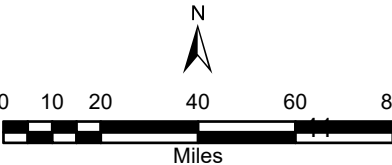
- OAHP Applications
- ▭ Counties



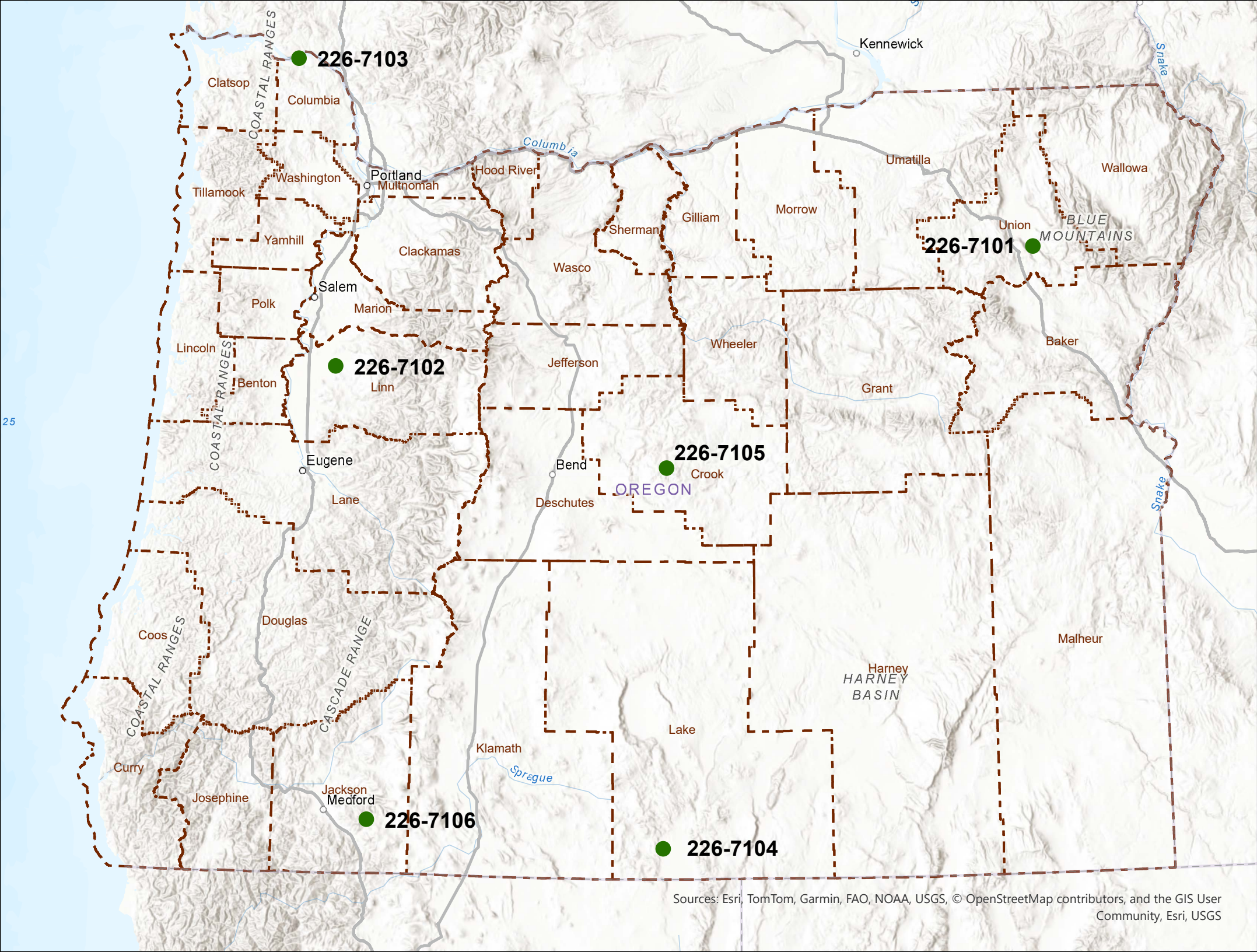
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<https://www.Oregon.gov/OWEB/>

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Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS



The following initial conditions will be inserted into Exhibit B of the Grant Agreement for all projects recommended for funding:

Initial Conditions

- Grantee meets with OWEB staff within sixty (60) days from the Effective Date to: (i) confirm roles and responsibilities; (ii) agree on preferred methods for sharing information; (iii) determine a regular check-in schedule, preferably monthly, but at minimum quarterly check-in meetings are required; (iv) discuss approaches to addressing Project challenges; (v) address other Project matters that would benefit from early discussions between Grantee and OWEB;
- Grantee provides OWEB with a current preliminary title report and title exception documents. Grantee provides an updated title exception analysis for all title encumbrances describing each encumbrance's impact on the Project Purpose. If any encumbrance conflicts with the Project Purpose as determined by OWEB's review of the title exception analysis and title documents, Grantee provides a plan to resolve the encumbrance in a manner that is acceptable to OWEB.
- Grantee provides an investigation of boundary conditions and the adequacy of the conservation easement's legal description prepared by a qualified professional and provides OWEB with 1) the results of the investigation regarding the legal description; 2) a plan to remedy any outstanding issues identified in the accuracy of the legal description or the boundary conditions on the property, or, the proposed legal description for the boundary if the investigation results in an adequate legal description. Grantee certifies it will provide a new or updated survey in any of the following circumstances:
 - Where legal descriptions do not close – i.e. the description does not describe a polygon that goes from point of origin around the property boundary back to the point of origin.
 - Where the title or other evidence indicates the boundaries are in dispute.
 - Where the conservation easement boundary involves part of a larger parcel
 - When the conservation easement will include distinct management zones
- Grantee provides a property-specific conservation easement draft within five (5) months of the award date that includes the required OWEB provisions, is consistent with protecting the resources as described in the grant application and as authorized for funding by ORS 541.984 and OAR chapter 697, division 15, and has been reviewed and agreed to by the landowner.
- Grantee certifies it will obtain OWEB approval of the conservation easement draft prior to finalizing an appraisal report.
- Grantee certifies it will provide all final project due diligence items (approved by the OWEB, the Grantee, necessary match sources, and the landowner, including but not limited to the conservation easement deed, baseline documentation report, and final title documents at least 90 days prior to the planned closing date.



OREGON
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Agenda Item I

Land Acquisitions

Grant Offering Board Awards

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item I. Land Acquisition Grant Awards

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Miriam Forney, Land Acquisitions Coordinator

Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 7: Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds.

I. Introduction

This staff report describes the September 2025 land acquisition grant offering and provides staff recommendations for grant awards.

The land acquisition grant program implements key statutory components that tier from Measure 76, including "Securing long-term protection for lands and waters that provide significant habitat for native fish and wildlife."

II. Land Acquisitions – September 2025 Offering Background and Summary

Spending Plan Background

The combined land and water acquisition line item in the board's spending plan currently includes \$6.5 million for the biennium. A total of \$8.5 million is estimated for the full biennium; however, that total is contingent on the mid-biennium spending plan adjustment resulting from OWEB's annual Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund grant award, which has not yet been secured.

Since 2023, water acquisition grant awards have utilized a separate line item in the board's spending plan supported by legislative funding that was allocated specifically to support OWEB's water acquisition grant program. Staff anticipate that those water acquisition funds will be fully utilized by the end of the current biennium, which could impact the combined land and water acquisition line item.

For the April 2026 land and water acquisition grant awards, only land acquisition grants will draw from the combined land and water acquisition line item in the spending plan.

Historically, the estimated total allocation for the biennium is divided by two to provide a target funding level for the board's annual land acquisition awards; in this year's case, the target is \$4.25 million.

Applications Submitted

The September 2025 grant offering is the first of two land acquisition grant cycles for the 2025-2027 biennium. Nine land acquisition applications were received in September 2025

requesting a total of \$12,152,811.

Review Process

Land acquisition application evaluation criteria are set forth in administrative rules for the program. The review process utilizes technical experts to evaluate ecological attributes, project soundness, and organizational capacity.

The ecological review includes assessing the significance of the project's ecological outcomes, as well as its consistency with the board's established priorities and principles and conservation priorities established in local, regional, or state plans for land acquisitions. Each ecological reviewer completed a project evaluation form after visiting the property proposed for grant funding and being given an opportunity to seek clarifications of ecological outcomes, in accordance with the program's established process. Staff summarized the input of all ecological reviewers for inclusion in project evaluations.

For project soundness review, a team consisting of staff, a land acquisition program due-diligence technical assistance contractor, and the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted a soundness review of the legal and financial terms of each proposed property transaction. The review included contractors seeking project soundness-related clarifications from the applicant on an optional basis in accordance with the program's established process, identifying project soundness concerns, and determining whether soundness matters appear to be resolvable in the 18-month timeframe allowed for closing transactions after the board awards funding. DOJ reviewed the work of the due-diligence technical assistance contractors and noted any potential soundness issues not raised by the contractors.

For organizational capacity review, a team consisting of staff and a land acquisition program due-diligence technical assistance contractor reviewed organizational capacity-related information for each application. This review considers the applicant's or holder's capacity to complete the acquisition of the property interest and to achieve and sustain the proposed ecological outcomes over time.

The process also includes summarizing community benefits or impacts from application information, providing opportunities for interested parties to submit public comments for applications, and conducting a public hearing for each project proposing the purchase of a fee simple interest in land. Applicants were given the opportunity to provide OWEB with written responses to issues raised at the public hearings and in written public comments, in accordance with the program's established process.

After information was gathered through the various components of review described above, an internal team of staff met to complete a review and ranking process for the proposed projects. Staff summarized the review outcomes in project evaluations. Evaluations were then provided to the applicants.

Staff Funding Recommendations

Attachment A outlines the results of the land acquisition review process, including project rankings. Those applications that ranked the highest were considered to have provided the most well-documented rationale for why the property and its values are important to native fish and wildlife habitat and how factors such as organizational capacity, project

soundness, and community considerations will contribute to the potential for the land transaction to close within the required 18-month period. Applications lower in the ranking were less successful in balancing the program's evaluation criteria.

Based on the results of technical reviews, land acquisition applications 226-9902-24762, Rush Creek Ranch Acquisition, and 226-9906-24767, Paulina Creek Preserve – East Parcel, are recommended for funding with conditions. The funding recommendation for these two projects totals \$4,656,273. This amount is slightly higher than the target funding level for this year's grant cycle. However, given increased demand this grant cycle after multiple years of lower demand, staff are comfortable recommending this slightly-higher-than-target funding level.

The board has authority to consider funding the next ranked project, Epstein Family Forest Easement, should it so desire. Adding this project would result in an award total of \$5,668,273 for the first land acquisition grant cycle of the biennium. Assuming the board's mid-biennium spending plan rebalance in July 2026 is able to add funding to reach the anticipated \$8.5 million level, awarding funding for these three projects during the 2025-26 grant cycle would result in \$2,831,727 remaining to support the second grant cycle of the biennium. Staff will be prepared to respond to questions from the board during its deliberation on potentially funding a third project during this grant cycle.

Funding Conditions

Applicants whose projects are recommended for funding (i.e., Blue Mountain Land Trust for Rush Creek Ranch Acquisition and Deschutes Land Trust for Paulina Creek Preserve – East Parcel) were provided with funding conditions and met with staff to discuss them. Staff revised the funding conditions in accordance with any agreements with applicants. In addition, in the event the board chooses to include the third-ranked project in its funding motion, staff also completed the aforementioned steps with the applicant for that project (i.e., Pacific Forest Trust for Epstein Family Forest Easement).

The funding conditions are less detailed than conditions for previous cycles, in response to feedback received from applicants during land acquisition modernization conversations. Less detailed conditions will necessitate collaborative communication and an iterative approach to solving due diligence issues as they arise. (Funding conditions will be provided to the board prior to the board meeting in Attachment B.)

Staff Funding Recommendation

Staff recommend that the board award funding for the land acquisition applications as specified in Attachment A, with project-specific funding conditions to be provided to the board in advance of the meeting and with an award date of April 28, 2026. The land acquisition grant funding recommendation totals \$4,656,273. Staff also have included in Attachment A an alternative funding line, should the board choose to fund the top three projects from this grant cycle.

III. Attachments

- A. Land Acquisition Project Ranking and Funding Recommendations
- B. Project-specific Funding Conditions (*to be provided to the board before the meeting*)

The application evaluations can be found in the [Application Evaluations](#) document.

Land Acquisition Project Ranking and Funding Recommendations

April 28-29, 2026, Board Meeting

Application Number	OWEB Region	Application Name	Ranking	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended	Funding Line Notes
226-9902-24762	6	Rush Creek Ranch Acquisition	1	\$3,256,273	\$3,256,273	Funding Line of \$4,656,273
226-9906-24767	4	Paulina Creek Preserve: East Parcel	2	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	
226-9903-24761	2	Epstein Family Forest	3	\$1,012,000	\$1,012,000	Alternative funding line of \$5,668,273
226-9908-24769	4	Rivers End Ranch	4	\$3,721,308	\$0	-
226-9905-24765	1	CIN Southern Clatsop Acquisition Project	5	\$614,420	\$0	-
226-9909-24771	1	Surf Pines Prairie South	6	\$311,140	\$0	-
226-9901-24763	2	Willow-Witt Ranch	7	\$696,000	\$0	-
226-9904-24766	1	Surf Pines Prairie North	8	\$286,670	\$0	-
226-9907-24768	2	Madrone Ridge Forest Protection Project	9	\$855,000	\$0	-
-	-	-	-	\$12,152,811	\$5,668,273	-

Rush Creek funding conditions

To be included in Exhibit F of the grant agreement:

- Grantee agrees, and has arranged with the seller that:
 - The life estate or life tenancy will be subordinated to OWEB's conservation easement and address matters including but not limited to leases and transfers.
 - Any rights of the seller's family to access the Property will be specific to named individuals, nontransferable, and limited to low-impact, short-duration uses consistent with the purpose of OWEB's land acquisition program as authorized by the Oregon Constitution at Article XV, Section 4b(2)(a).
- Grantee agrees that it will participate in a project coordination meeting after Closing. The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that pertinent Grantee and OWEB staff have a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities for completing the Management Plan.
- Grantee agrees that the Management Plan will include actions for ensuring that public use of the Property is implemented, monitored and managed and, if necessary limited, to protect the Conservation Values.

Initial Project-specific funding conditions:

- Grantee obtains OWEB's approval of the terms of the life estate or life tenancy as it relates to their consistency with OWEB's grant agreement and conservation easement, and any family access rights, and executes an option that includes the terms.

Secondary Project-specific funding conditions:

- Grantee obtains a complete title report and resolves related concerns, including but not necessarily limited to vesting; mineral rights; access; and any leases, permits, licenses, rental agreements, or similar agreements affecting the Property.
- Grantee contracts with a qualified professional to verify the Property's legal description, completes a boundary survey if the qualified professional demonstrates a need for it, and installs any Property boundary markers necessary to minimize impacts from adjacent land uses.
- Grantee confirms that it has accurately estimated annual stewardship costs for the Property and if necessary, updates its stewardship calculator to reflect revised estimates.

Paulina East funding conditions

To be included in Exhibit F of the grant agreement:

- Grantee agrees that it will participate in a project coordination meeting after Closing. The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that pertinent Grantee and OWEB staff have a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities for completing the Management Plan.
- Grantee agrees that the Management Plan will include actions for minimizing trespass and ensuring that public use of the Property is implemented, monitored and managed and, if necessary limited, to protect the Conservation Values.

Secondary Project-specific funding conditions:

- Grantee prepares baseline inventory documentation that includes a description of future conditions on the Property that will result from Grantee restoring the Conservation Values (“Description of Restored Conditions”).
- Grantee confirms that it has accurately estimated annual stewardship costs for the Property and if necessary, updates its stewardship calculator to reflect revised estimates.
- Grantee addresses title-related matters including but not necessarily limited to cemetery and boundary-related issues, water rights, and loan payoff and removal from title at closing.

Epstein funding conditions

To be included in Exhibit F of the grant agreement:

- Grantee agrees, and has arranged with the seller, that the parties will work with OWEB to revise the proposed conservation easement to: i) address items that are misaligned with the purpose of OWEB's land acquisition grant program as authorized by the Oregon Constitution at Article XV, Section 4b(2)(a), with revisions including but not necessarily limited to removing partition rights and limiting the size and location of the Development Zone; and ii) align provisions with OWEB's required conservation easement language for the land acquisition grant program, including but not necessarily limited to ecosystem services language.
- Grantee agrees that the conservation easement will be completed and approved by OWEB before Grantee obtains an appraisal, and the appraisal will comply with OWEB appraisal requirements including but not limited to requirements regarding seller involvement in the appraisal process.
- Grantee agrees that it will participate in a project coordination meeting after Closing. The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that pertinent Grantee and OWEB staff have a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities for completing the Management Plan.

Secondary Project-specific funding conditions:

- Grantee addresses title-related matters including but not necessarily limited to: mineral rights; water rights; vesting; and any leases, permits, licenses, rental agreements, or similar agreements affecting the Property. Work may include but not necessarily be limited to obtaining a mineral assessment, providing assurances that valid encumbrances do not pose a threat to the Conservation Values, removing title exceptions that do not pertain to the Property, and providing full documentation and maps regarding water rights that affect the Property.
- Grantee obtains a boundary survey for the easement's Development Zone and consults with a qualified professional to verify the Property's legal description and determine whether surveying and marking the Property's boundary corners is advised.



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Agenda Item J

Board Update

Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Habitat Restoration

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item J. Klamath River Post-Dam Removal Habitat Restoration Final Update

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #6: Take bold and innovative action toward funding projects that advance climate resilience.

I. Introduction

This report provides the board with a final update about the Klamath River post-dam removal habitat restoration investment made by the board in October 2022. At the April 2026 meeting, OWEB board and staff will be joined by representatives from the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) and RES, KRRC's restoration contractor, for a presentation about status of the restoration work, next steps, and lessons learned.

II. Background

PacifiCorp previously owned four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River, three in California and one in Oregon (J.C. Boyle dam). PacifiCorp and the Oregon Public Utilities Commission determined that it is in the best interest of the company and its customers to stop operating the dams rather than spending substantial amounts of money on improvements needed to continue generating power. KRRC is a private, independent nonprofit organization formed by signatories of the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA). Signatories of the amended KHSA – including the States of Oregon and California, local governments, Tribal nations, PacifiCorp, irrigators, and several conservation and fishing groups – appointed KRRC to take ownership and oversee the removal of the four Klamath River dams. Initial funding from a subset of these entities was committed in the amount of \$450 million for removal and watershed restoration.

The Reservoir Area Management Plan (RAMP) submitted by KRRC to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission described measures for restoration, monitoring, and adaptive management of the former reservoir areas exposed following dam removal, upland sites, and high-priority tributaries, including actions specifically planned for the former reservoir area upstream of J.C. Boyle dam in Oregon. The federal review process resulted in the need for the states and PacifiCorp to provide up to \$45 million in additional financial support for the project, divided equally among the three entities, to address contingencies.

On October 26, 2022, the OWEB Board committed \$15 million over a period of 3-5 years for Klamath River post-dam removal watershed restoration costs incurred by KRRC. The

agency utilized \$3,533,000 in Measure 76 Lottery funds and \$11,467,000 in competitively awarded Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Funds to support this investment.

III. Status Update

On August 1, 2025, OWEB completed the final payment to KRRC for work under the scope of the grant. Since the last written report to the board in July of 2025, KRRC and RES have completed the following work.

- In mid-2025, restoration activities at J.C. Boyle transitioned to focus on monitoring and adaptive management to ensure ongoing restoration success. As a reminder, RES has ongoing responsibility for restoration of the reservoir areas through the license surrender term.
- Following soil chemistry testing, RES found that pH levels in the J.C. Boyle reservoir footprint reduced revegetation regrowth. In fall 2025, RES began to spread limestone and added mycorrhizal fungi to the footprint to balance the soil chemistry and promote vegetation growth on 235.4 acres. They also seeded these acres.
- RES then began additional planting of trees and shrubs in the former reservoir area in January 2026. Species planted include White fir, Incense cedar, Grey rabbitbrush, Tall Oregon-grape, Lodgepole pine, Ponderosa pine, and Douglas fir. In total, 26,215 stems have been planted this year.
- RES will continue to monitor the key restoration sites at J.C. Boyle (i.e., reservoir footprint, previous power canal and scour hole areas, and Spencer Creek connection area) to evaluate if additional seedings, plantings, invasive exotic vegetation treatments, or construction activities may be required. They also continue responsibilities to ensure fish passage, per the Tributary-Mainstem Connectivity Plan and RAMP, through aerial drone monitoring, ground/river-based monitoring, and monitoring of fish presence.
- RES will begin irrigation of upland revegetation sites this summer, pending spring monitoring results and soil moisture conditions. Revegetation of these sites above the floodplain will support erosion control and general restoration.
- The connection from Spencer Creek to the mainstem Klamath River was found to be in good shape following reservoir drawdown. Rather than doing extensive restoration construction work at the tributary connection, RES determined that enhancing habitat in Spencer Creek would be most beneficial to support fish passage and habitat. They placed 66 large woody structures in Spencer Creek in 2024, and salmon began to use the habitat immediately following drawdown. KRRC is pleased to report that salmon used this habitat again in 2025.

IV. Recommendation

This is an information item only. Representatives from KRRC and RES will be available to answer questions at the board meeting.



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Agenda Item K

Committee Updates

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Committee Members

Dan Brown (co-chair), Kelly Coates, Russ Hoeflich (co-chair), Jamie McLeod-Skinner, and Mark Webb.

Meeting Summary

The Acquisitions, Restoration, and Emerging Topics (ARE) committee met on [March 6, 2026](#).

After a welcome by the co-chairs and introductions of participants, the committee received public comment. Written public comment was provided by Joe Buttafuoco, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT); Marc Hudson, Pacific Forest Trust; and Mark McLaughlin, North Coast Land Conservancy. Verbal public comment was provided by Joe Buttafuoco, COLT; Natasha Bellis, Deschutes Land Trust; and Jessica McDonald, Greenbelt Land Trust.

The committee heard updates about three grant cycles for which evaluations and funding recommendations will be before the board at its April meeting. Robin Meacher, Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) Conservation Easement Specialist, provided an update about the recent OAHP conservation covenant and easement grant cycle that will be discussed by the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission on March 19, with funding recommendations then advanced to the board. Next, Miriam Forney, OWEB's Land Acquisition Coordinator, talked with the committee about the in-progress cycle for land acquisition grants. Finally, Brian Wolcott, Water Acquisitions and Capacity Coordinator, presented information to the board about the recent water acquisition grant cycle. Staff responded to questions from the committee.

The committee received a brief status check regarding the land acquisition program modernization. Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager, described that the modernization process has addressed such topics as categories and degree of risk, use of conservation easements (CEs) to meet OWEB's statutory requirement for title restrictions (the first of four foundational questions to be addressed by the committee during the modernization process), and considerations around Tribal engagement with OWEB's land acquisition grant program. Discussion then transitioned to the two primary meeting topics.

Foundational Question #2, Significant Habitat and Future Conditions

Sara O'Brien, Executive Director, Renee Davis, and Miriam Forney reviewed the significant habitat and future conditions [memo](#) developed for the committee. This memo addresses the second foundational question for land acquisition modernization: "Should OWEB's land acquisition program incorporate an expectation of active restoration of properties acquired, or is a land transaction that solely protects land sufficient to meet OWEB's interpretation of Constitutional and statutory requirements, even if existing habitat values are more modest, limited, or marginal?" Staff walked through information about:

- Constitutional and statutory language regarding habitat requirements;
- Administrative rule language regarding habitat requirements, including such topics as evaluation criteria and funding conditions within grant agreements; and
- OWEB land acquisition program practice and implementation regarding habitat requirements, including such topics as conservation values, description of restored conditions that are articulated in CE language for some grants, and management planning, among others.

Staff delved into historical approach used for program implementation and clarified some areas of confusion around definitions (i.e., desired future conditions in management plans vs. description of restored conditions in CEs) and limitations vs. flexibility around such issues as management planning, timeline to required restoration, active management, and allowable uses. The committee then engaged in a discussion with staff about questions regarding the memo.

Early Ideas about Program Refinements and Committee Recommendations

From there, the committee began to identify early ideas about program refinements. Key areas of agreement included:

- Risk is inherent in property transactions. But not all risks are of equal concern to committee members. Refinements should explore how to identify areas of highest risk and then consider an applicant's capacity to address that risk.
- The committee indicated that considerations about the significance of habitat—both at time of application and into the future for funded projects—is an important component of evaluating projects. Some members felt that explicitly defining “significant habitat” would help build common understanding of expectations, including if/when any restoration requirement may be necessary.
- It is important to approach management planning as adaptive management, providing space for learnings and dialogue and with less prescription upfront by OWEB.
- Potential program changes should include a fresh look at where best to document different kinds of expectations and agreements; for example, what belongs in the easement itself vs. management plan or other documents. Also, it is important to consider if/how these non-easement documents and the associated drafting and review processes can be more flexible and adaptive.
- Ultimately, refinements should result in the program taking a “shoulder-to-shoulder” approach to customer service, acknowledging that transaction projects are inherently complex and dynamic. OWEB staff's role, then, is to help grantees navigate through unexpected challenges as effectively as possible while maintaining a public accountability focus on high-level project outcomes related to habitat benefits for native species. This approach may involve increasing agency risk tolerance, shifting of some risk management to grantees, and trusting in grantees to manage risks.
- Recommendations from the land acquisition modernization process must balance flexibility and accountability.
- To address ideas above, early suggestions for process refinements include changes to program guidance documents, the online grant application, conservation easement templates, and the management planning process.

The committee asked staff to bring draft recommendations for addressing the four foundational questions and associated program refinements to the June meeting. Staff and the committee noted that two remaining foundation questions—Other Uses and Risk Tolerance—also will be addressed at the June meeting.

To Be Presented at the Board Meeting By

Dan Brown and Russ Hoeflich



Committee Members

Liz Agpaoa, Xavier Borja, Barbara Boyer, Raija Bushnell, Aaron Curtis, Lindsay McClary (co-chair), and Woody Wolfe (co-chair)

Meeting Summary

The Partnerships and Capacity committee met on [March 10, 2026](#).

The committee heard an update on the pre-rulemaking engagement for capacity grant programs and previewed the Partnership Technical Assistance awards in advance of the April board meeting. Verbal public comment was provided by Terri Preeg Riggsby, Network of Oregon Watershed Councils.

Pre-rulemaking Engagement for Capacity Grants Update

Eric Williams, Restoration Grants Manager, Eric Hartstein, Senior Policy Coordinator, and Brian Wolcott, Water Acquisitions & Capacity Coordinator updated the committee on an engagement process that OWEB and Oregon Department of Agriculture have embarked on related to updating operating capacity rules. This winter, staff have begun hosting listening sessions that will run through the spring. In addition to an online survey, these listening sessions will help inform rulemaking for operating capacity grants. Preliminary themes that have been emerging through the engagement efforts relate to:

- Equal funding vs. performance -based funding for operating capacity grants
- Understanding the differences between the M76 Operating Fund and Grant Fund, and how 'project development' fits into operating capacity grants
- Concerns related to how indirect grant costs may change with rulemaking
- Exploring new methods to incentivize merging organizations

Partnership Technical Assistance Awards Preview

Denise Hoffert, Partnerships Coordinator, provided the committee an update on the Partnership Technical Assistance grant program, as well as the staff recommendation for grant awards that will be considered by the full board at the April meeting (see Item G).

Upcoming Agenda Items

At the June 2026 meeting, the committee will receive an in-depth update on capacity pre-rulemaking engagement and themes expressed in advance of asking the board to initiate rulemaking at the July board meeting, and an update on the ongoing Focused Investment Partnership solicitation.

To Be Presented at the Board Meeting By

Lindsay McClary and Woody Wolfe



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Agenda Item M

Water Acquisitions

Grant Offering Board Awards

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item M. Fall 2025 Water Acquisition Grant Awards

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Brian Wolcott, Water Acquisitions and Capacity Coordinator
Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 6: Take bold and innovative action toward funding projects that advance climate resilience.

I. Introduction

The OWEB Water Acquisition grant program implements a key component of Oregon Revised Statute 541.956 by “Acquiring from willing owners interests in land or water that will protect or restore native fish or wildlife habitats.” This staff report provides an overview of the Fall 2025 Water Acquisition grant offering process and requests board approval of staff recommendations for grant awards.

II. Background

During the 2022 Legislative session, \$10 million was appropriated for water acquisition grants and grant administration as part of a drought resilience package. Following this investment, a separate line item, “Water Acquisition – Flexible Incentive Account,” was added to the board’s spending plan; this line item is supported by the 2022 allocation. A different, long-standing “Land and Water Acquisition” line item, supported by Lottery funds, is also included in the spending plan. OWEB has prioritized spending of the “Water Acquisitions” line item for water acquisition grant awards since the 2022 allocation. In 2025, Legislative budget rebalancing included a \$3 million reduction to this account, resulting in \$5 million remaining in the Water Acquisition-specific line item.

Since the new investment in 2022, OWEB has offered three solicitations for water acquisition grant applications, with awards in July 2023, July 2024, and April 2025. OWEB received feedback from local partners that funding decisions about water acquisitions would ideally be available earlier in the year to better align with irrigation season. To be responsive to this feedback, staff accelerated opening of the Fall 2024 solicitation such that it would result in board awards in April of 2025. This accelerated schedule continued for the Fall 2025 water acquisition grant cycle.

III. October 2025 Grant Offering

A water acquisitions grant cycle was initiated in August 2025 with an application deadline in October 2025.

Applications Submitted

Five applications were received, and all five were determined to be eligible based on eligibility criteria in the program rules and guidance. The total funding request for the five applications is \$3,743,513.

Review Process

The water acquisition applications were reviewed in accordance with administrative rules, most recently revised in 2020. (OWEB currently has a Rules Advisory Committee underway for the water acquisition grant program ruleset; however, that process is still ongoing. See Agenda Item N for additional information.) The review process utilized regional and local technical experts—comprised of fisheries, habitat, and water management experts, along with water transaction specialists—to evaluate ecological outcomes, cost effectiveness, water right validity, watershed context, and organizational capacity for the proposed projects. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program, the review contractor for water acquisitions, conducted a review of organizational capacity, transaction soundness, and water rights valuation. OWEB staff convened a technical review team meeting to review the applications.

Public notification was completed through multiple pathways, including notices posted on the OWEB website, sent via GovDelivery, and e-mailed to the local county governments and federally recognized Tribes. A brief presentation about the water acquisition grant solicitation was provided at the OWEB Acquisition and Restoration Committee’s March 5, 2026 meeting. The committee meeting included a public comment period, but no comments about the water acquisition grant cycle were provided.

The application evaluations can be found in the [Application Evaluations](#) document.

IV. Staff Funding Recommendation

Staff recommend the board award \$3,743,513 for Fall 2025 water acquisition grant applications as specified in Attachment A, with an award date of April 29, 2026.

V. Attachments

A. Staff Funding Recommendations

Water Acquisitions application evaluations can be found in the [Application Evaluations](#) document.

Water Acquisition Project Ranking and Funding Recommendations

April 28-29, 2026, Board Meeting

Application Number	OWEB Region	Application Name	Ranking	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
226-9912-24801	2	Oxbow Ranch Deer Creek Irrigation Modernization and Flow Restoration Project	1	\$469,068	\$469,068
226-9913-24800	2	Big Butte Creek Water Acquisition and Irrigation Efficiency Project	2	\$331,612	\$331,612
226-9914-24803	2	Evans Creek Streamflow Restoration Leasing Project	3	\$92,144	\$92,144
226-9911-24804	4	Arnold Irrigation District: Main Canal Phases 3 & 4	4	\$2,777,940	\$2,777,940
226-9910-24802	6	Antone Ranch Flow Restoration Minimum Flow Agreement	-	Withdrawn	-
-	-	-	-	\$3,670,764	\$3,670,764



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Agenda Item N

Rulemaking Update

Water Acquisitions Grant Program

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item N. Water Acquisition Grant Program Rulemaking Update

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
From: Eric Hartstein, Senior Policy Coordinator
Brian Wolcott, Water Acquisitions and Capacity Coordinator
Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority #6: Take bold and innovative action toward funding projects that advance climate resilience.

I. Introduction

This report provides the board an update on rulemaking for the Water Acquisition grant program.

II. Background

OWEB's Water Acquisition grant program provides funding to acquire from willing sellers interests in water to maintain or restore streamflows for the benefit of watersheds and habitat for native fish or wildlife. The board last reviewed and adopted revisions to the Water Acquisition grant program in 2020, and following a five-year rule review, staff identified areas in the rules for refinement. In addition, in July 2025, staff requested board input on the strategic direction of the program, including rulemaking.

At the same board meeting, the board authorized rulemaking for the Water Acquisition grant program. Per ORS 183.333, a rulemaking advisory committee (RAC), made up of entities most likely to be impacted by the rules, was assembled to discuss all potential revisions to the Water Acquisition grant program rules. The RAC met five times between November and March, working with staff to develop a draft set of Water Acquisition grant program rule revisions. Each RAC meeting was virtual and open to the public, with opportunities for written and verbal comments.

III. Major Water Acquisition Grant Program Rulemaking Themes

In addition to minor updates, the draft rules to the Water Acquisition grant program include some substantive revisions, including but not limited to:

- Providing clarity on certain definitions in the rules and aligning language with existing statutes and rules;
- Clarifying eligibility for activities related to project planning and development, project design, and outreach;

- Clearly identifying how projects that use the Oregon Water Resources Department's Allocation of Conserved Water Program (or other Department-administered water conservation program to increase instream flow) may fit within the Water Acquisition grant program; and
- Refinements to the evaluation criteria and public involvement process.

While eligibility for grant applications proposing a groundwater project is not directly stated in the draft rules, the RAC did spend time discussing issues relating to potential groundwater projects. Given the complex nature of the groundwater topic—including considerations around science, regulatory frameworks, and measurement, among others—OWEB will identify a process for gathering additional information and creating space for learnings on this topic. Ultimately, this work could inform future guidance to applicants that are developing groundwater projects and interested in exploring eligibility and fit with OWEB's water acquisition grant program. These future discussions will occur subsequent to the rulemaking process.

IV. Next Steps

Following the April board meeting, staff will file rulemaking notice with the Secretary of State and seek Tribal and public comment on the draft rules. Staff will review and respond to comments received, including if the comment resulted in a change to the draft rules. Staff will bring the final draft rules to the board in July 2026.

V. Recommendation

This is an information item only. The final draft rules will be considered for adoption by the board at the July 2026 meeting.



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Agenda Item O

Board Update

2027-2029 Agency Request Budget

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item O. 2027-2029 Agency Request Budget

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

From: Miriam Scharer, Fiscal Officer/Business Operations Manager
Stephanie Page, Deputy Director

Supports all of OWEB's Strategic Priorities.

I. Introduction

Consistent with the instructions to state agencies from the Department of Administrative Services Chief Financial Office, OWEB is considering very minimal 2027-2029 budget requests. Agencies may only submit requests that are revenue-neutral – in other words, an agency must propose a corresponding reduction somewhere else or identify a fund source that does not require new state General Fund or Lottery Fund investments. Agencies funded through fee revenue may only propose fee increases if needed to sustain current services.

OWEB is proposing routine requests on the grants side of our budget. On the operations side, OWEB plans to make three requests for staff positions. These requests support customer service and succession planning in the agency's fiscal team, provide capacity if needed for Oregon Environmental Restoration Program staffing, and provide position authority for the agency to continue to administer several federal funding sources if additional funding is awarded to OWEB by our federal partners before the end of the 2025-2027 biennium.

II. Background

The Oregon Legislature approves budgets for state agencies on a biennial basis. First, each agency submits a requested budget (Agency Request Budget). Then the Governor releases a recommended budget, and the Oregon Legislature approves a final budget (Legislatively Adopted Budget).

State agencies will submit requested 2027-2029 budgets later this year. Agencies must specifically request additions to the base budget and justify the need for each addition. The requested additions to an agency's base budget are called Policy Option Packages (POPs).

By statute, agencies are also required to submit reduction options of 10 percent by fund type. Generally, these are presented in 5% increments.

OWEB's Base Budget – Current Service Level (CSL)

OWEB's CSL budget is the starting point for the 2027-2029 budget. OWEB's CSL budget includes:

- Operations:
 - 42 permanent staff positions funded with a mix of lottery operations funding, federal funds, other funds, and a very small amount of general fund.
 - Funding for expenses such as supplies and services, contracted services, legal fees, and staff training and travel.
- Grant Funding in Federal and Other funds

Grant funds are a mix of CSL budget and continuity of existing grant funding and new anticipated grant funding approved in the 2025-2027 Legislatively Adopted Budget.

Limited duration positions and the associated one-time services and supplies costs and some grant funding are not included in the CSL budget. They are authorized only for the 2025-2027 biennium.

Summary of OWEB's 2025-2027 Legislatively Approved Budget

Below is a table summarizing OWEB's 2025-2027 Legislatively Approved Budget. This summary includes adjustments to OWEB's budget made in the February 2026 legislative session.

	2025-2027 Operations (8.3%) Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB)	2025-2027 Grants (91.7%) Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB)	2025-2027 Total Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB)
Lottery Fund*	12,590,653	107,812,436	120,403,089
Federal Funds	3,758,443	57,970,114	61,728,557
Other Funds	4,947,828	75,765,582	80,713,410
General Fund	766,582	2,000,000	2,766,582
Total Funds	22,063,506	243,548,132	265,611,638
Positions	48	0	48
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	47.50	0	47.50

*Includes Lottery Bond Debt Service

III. Budget Proposals for the 2027-2029 Biennium

Pending approval by the Department of Administrative Services Chief Financial Office, OWEB will request three revenue-neutral POPs for staff positions as part of the 2027-2029 Agency Request Budget with available or anticipated funds in Other Funds and Federal Funds. These positions include:

- Fiscal Analyst – to provide critical support to the OWEB fiscal team and facilitate succession planning, enhanced customer service and added capacity for process improvements;

- Continuity of a limited duration staff position for potential program needs for the Oregon Environmental Restoration Program;
- Continuity of an existing limited duration Federal Programs Specialist position for administration of potential new federal funding if awarded from Bureau of Land Management and/or Natural Resource Conservation Service.

OWEB will also submit a standard set of revenue neutral POPs to include spending authority for continuity and potential new grant funds in the agency budget above CSL. These POPs will include:

- Federal Funds Grant Program Spending Authority Continuity
- Other Funds Grant Program Spending Authority Continuity
- Spending Authority for potential New Federal and Other Funds

IV. Next Steps

Staff will bring an updated list of POPs to the July 2026 board meeting as an information item. In past biennia, staff have presented a list of POPs to the board for approval, which had been recommended to ensure that the board was aware of the agency's budget requests. Going forward, staff recommend that we continue to present a draft and final POP list to the board as an informational item and gather feedback.



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Agenda Item P

Program Update

Land Acquisition

Grant Program Modernization

Board Meeting April 28-29, 2026



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 28-29, 2026 OWEB Board Meeting

Staff report – Agenda Item P. Land Acquisition Modernization Update

MEMORANDUM

To: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
From: Renee Davis, Acquisitions and Special Programs Manager
Miriam Forney, Land Acquisitions Coordinator
Sara O'Brien, Executive Director

Supports OWEB's Strategic Plan priority # 6: Take bold and innovative action toward funding projects that advance climate resilience.

I. Introduction

OWEB's Measure(M) 76 Land Acquisition grant program implements key statutory components including "Securing long-term protection for lands and waters that provide significant habitats for native fish and wildlife" (Oregon Revised Statute [ORS] 541.941) and "Acquiring from willing owners interests in land or water that will protect or restore native fish or wildlife habitats" (ORS 541.956). This staff report provides an overview of the land acquisition grant program modernization process that is in progress.

II. Background

OWEB's first land acquisition grants were awarded under the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, the precursor to OWEB. Administrative rules for the OWEB land acquisition grant program were first adopted in 2005. Since that time, three additional rulemaking processes have been completed to update and refine program rules. In addition to those rulemaking processes, at least five separate processes involving surveys, work groups, and/or facilitated processes have occurred. The intent of these processes — among other topics — was to identify challenges and opportunities to ensure the land acquisition grant program was well utilized to advance conservation outcomes.

The land acquisition modernization process was launched in early 2025 in response to both direction from Governor Tina Kotek and interest from Executive Director O'Brien in creating more sustainable staffing for the agency, a more integrated program structure, and a more accessible grantee experience across all OWEB grant programs. The modernization process approach is informed by touchpoints with applicants, grantees, and interested parties, including listening sessions co-convened by OWEB and the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) to obtain feedback about persisting issues and concerns related to the land acquisition grant program and multiple coordination points with federally recognized Tribes.

The modernization process aims to address ongoing concerns and challenges and identify refinements and alternative approaches to solve problems and improve program utilization. The process aims to address feedback sorted into three general categories associated with the land acquisition grant program: philosophical (or “foundational questions/issues”), cultural, and process. Modernization work includes four workstreams that were described at previous meetings; updates about each are described below.

III. Land Acquisition Modernization Workstreams and Status Updates

Board-Level Workstream on Foundational Issues

This workstream involves the Acquisitions, Restoration, and Emerging Topics (ARE) committee and, ultimately, the full OWEB board. It delves into four foundational issues: 1) use of conservation easements by OWEB to meet the statutory requirement for a title restriction; 2) significant habitat and future conditions; 3) other uses such as recreational, cultural uses, and working lands; and 4) risk tolerance (which connects to the cultural and process categories noted above). The ARE committee already has discussed risk considerations (including different types and severity of risks) and conservation easements as these related to foundational question #1, and has heard input from and engaged in dialogue with representatives from federally recognized Tribes about opportunities to improve Tribal engagement with the land acquisition grant program.

At the March 2026 ARE meeting, the committee delved into the topics of significant habitat and expectations regarding future conditions for OWEB funded land acquisition investments. The committee discussed content of the [habitat memo drafted by staff](#), including interpretation of statutory language regarding “significant habitat;” content and expectations related to conservation values, restored conditions, and prohibited uses in legal documents; and management plan development. See the ARE committee report in Agenda Item K for additional information.

Remaining foundational questions to be addressed by the ARE committee focus on Other Uses (e.g., recreational uses, cultural harvest, working lands) and concerns about the agency’s perceived low risk tolerance. It is important to note that discussions around risk tolerance have been woven throughout ARE discussions to date. The committee will tackle these remaining topics at the June 2026 ARE meeting. All committee meeting agendas, materials, and recordings can be found on [OWEB’s website](#).

At the request of the committee during the March ARE meeting, staff will be preparing draft recommendations for the committee’s consideration at the June meeting. These draft recommendations will:

- Capture thinking and perspectives from staff about each of the four foundational questions;
- Identify staff’s suggestions about the best point of intervention (e.g., program guidance, rulemaking, proposed statutory changes) to address various issues;
- Outline a mechanism by which the board would provide formal direction and guidance to staff that will serve as a “north star” for subsequent program changes; and

- Share ideas about the next steps in the process (e.g., convening of internal and external work groups to scope and determine updates to the materials and process for the land acquisition grant program) following board consideration of committee recommendations in July.

Tribal Workstream

This workstream specifically focuses on substantive and process issues of concern to Tribes. It builds on multiple past touchpoints—beginning in 2021—with federally recognized Tribes about challenges and opportunities they experience across OWEB’s grant programs and, in particular, with land acquisitions. OWEB completed work to identify legal options available to OWEB for land acquisition grants and possible policy options that could help address barriers to Tribal government access to the land acquisitions program. This information was described in a memo to Oregon’s nine federally recognized Tribes and the Nez Perce Tribe. A Tribal panel was convened during the December ARE committee meeting. The Tribal and ARE committee workstreams are merging to the degree possible, while recognizing the unique sovereign role of Tribes. Staff continue background research for Tribal-specific documents (e.g., grant agreement and conservation easement templates) for use with the program, including some additional ideas and models shared by participants of the Tribal panel. Following that, OWEB leadership will again reach out to Tribes to invite participation in a focused workgroup.

Workstream for Initial Streamlining Prior to 2025 Grant Offering

This workstream implemented near-term, relatively minor process refinements prior to launch of the 2025 land acquisition grant cycle. Staff continued to incorporate additional minor refinements throughout implementation of this grant cycle. See Agenda Item I for more information about the 2025 land acquisition grant cycle.

Given OWEB’s continuous improvement culture, staff are tracking learnings from implementation of the initial streamlining. These lessons learned will help inform larger program refinements following the modernization process.

Anticipated Rulemaking Workstream

This workstream is a placeholder as the ARE committee and full OWEB board discuss and provide direction to staff about modernization priorities. Some program refinements or alternative approaches emerging from the modernization process may be possible simply with changes to program guidance and procedures. However, it is anticipated that rulemaking may be required for some refinements or changes. More specificity about direction and timing for this workstream will be available in the coming months.

IV. Recommendation

This is an information item only.