

Oregon 2022 Annual Report

A MESSAGE FROM OREGON STATE CONSERVATIONIST RON ALVARADO

Fiscal year 2022 (FY22) marks another successful year supporting Oregon's farmers, ranchers, and private forestland owners through Oregon's Strategic Approach to Conservation. This locally-led business model is the keystone of every conservation success in Oregon, all of which are grounded in strong partnerships, long-range planning and continuous collaboration.

In FY22, Oregon continued to face dynamic impacts due to extreme weather events. A significant portion of our conservation work targets climate resiliency, making forest stands resilient to withstand wildfire and producers better able to stretch limited water supply with upgraded irrigation systems.

Working through our locally-led process, the feedback we receive from landowners helps inform our Conservation Implementation Strategies (CISs) across the state. CISs are targeted projects that prioritize the greatest conservation investments for a specific area. In FY22, we implemented 68 CISs funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); 70% of these projects harnessed at least one climate-smart practice.

Under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership and Public Law 83-566 (PL-566) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention programs, we work with partners to address priorities larger in scope and scale.

In FY22, Oregon received a total of \$11M for four new RCPP projects, with partner matching funds of \$18.5M. All four projects target water or forest resiliency efforts.

Working alongside the U.S. Forest Service through the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Project, we prioritized healthy and resilient forests across the state with four projects for a total conservation investment of \$3M.

Through our PL-566 Watershed Protection

and Flood Prevention Program, we continued to support producers with a stable supply of irrigation water with large-scale infrastructure projects. We continued work on 28 PL-566 watershed planning efforts with 26 different sponsors.

We had noteworthy success with our easement program in the last year with a record number of applications received. Additional funding of \$6.7M for Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) will allow us to work with landowners to protect 14,736 acres of working lands. Additional Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) funding of \$22.7M will allow us to continue our work with The Nature Conservancy, private landowners and other partners to protect the remaining 10,735 acres of the 30,539 Sycan Marsh preserve in Klamath Basin. The preserve is home to thousands of birds, threatened fish and aquatic species.

Urban agriculture efforts in Oregon continue to grow. In August 2022, we commemorated Portland's People's Garden with a ribbon cutting event at Our Village Gardens alongside U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Oregon Farm Service Agency's State Executive Director Gail Greenman. Portland's People's Garden is one of 17 USDA-designated People's Gardens across the country.

I encourage you to read more about the successes we've achieved in fiscal year 2022 in this annual report. We appreciate your support in conservation.

Ron Alvarado



FY22 Investments in Conservation



Oregon's Strategic Approach to Conservation

NRCS Oregon had a total of **68** Conservation Implementation Strategies (CISs)

EQIP

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

449 landowner contracts

\$22.2M obligated

Across 142,637 acres



High Tunnel Initiative

Obligated \$450K
53 contracts



Sage Grouse Initiative

Obligated \$2.6M
28 contracts

INITIATIVES



Oregon's CIS

Obligated \$13.6M
301 contracts



National Water Quality Initiative

Obligated \$483K
3 contracts



Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Initiative

(Partnership with U.S. Forest Service)

Obligated \$3M
25 contracts



Conservation Incentive Contracts

Obligated \$1.1M
17 contracts



On-Farm Energy

Obligated \$164K
4 contracts



Air Quality

Obligated \$246K
3 contracts



Organic

Obligated \$470K
12 contracts

HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED PRODUCERS

245 contracts

Beginning Farmers
209 contracts
13.1M

Socially Disadvantaged
33 contracts
\$6M

Limited Resource
26 contracts
\$1.1K

Veterans
4 contracts
\$31K

RCPP

REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

21 active projects

75 landowner contracts

142,637 acres

Obligated over \$3.5M

Received \$11M for
4 new RCPP projects:

- Western Oregon Cascades Recovery Effort Climate-Smart Reforestation and Recovery Assistance
- Tualatin Basin Habitat Conservation Partnership
- Oregon Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy
- McKay Creek On-Farm Modernization

CSP

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

(INCLUDES CSP CLASSIC AND RENEWALS)

121 contracts

Obligated \$21.9M (\$8.6M
Renewals & \$13.3M Classic)

CSP Classic contracts spread
across 775,770 acres

ACEP

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM

Received 8 ALE applications to be
obligated for \$7.3M

Additional ALE award of \$6.7M

Additional WRE award of \$22.7M

PL-566

WATERSHED PROJECTS (INFRASTRUCTURE)

\$28M in PL-566 funding
requests

Allocated \$14.8M for
planning, design &
construction

26 sponsoring local
organizations

28 active watershed
planning efforts:

- 23 agricultural water management plans
- 3 dam rehabilitation plans
- 2 watershed protection



Commemorating Portland's USDA People's Garden

In August 2022, NRCS Oregon, U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Oregon Farm Service Agency commemorated Portland's People's Garden at

Our Village Gardens with a ribbon cutting event.

Located in North Portland, Our Village Gardens builds food resilience and community leadership alongside residents, communities of color and refugee and immigrant families impacted by economic and food inequity.

USDA People's Gardens are models of what local gardens can do to

build community, grow local and nutritious food, nurture greenspace and inspire people to grow and garden. People's Gardens benefit and educate the community, incorporate sustainable practices and are collaborative in nature.

Portland's People's Garden is one of 17 new USDA-designated People's Gardens across the country. Read more: bit.ly/PortlandPeoplesGarden



Saving the Sagebrush Sea

In the Warner Mountains near Adel, Oregon, a sea of sagebrush extends as far as the eye can see. Sagebrush rolls across hillsides and valley bottoms, providing productive land for livestock and wildlife which support ranchers, recreationists and rural communities.

The vast landscape supports wildlife; more than 350 species depend on the sagebrush ecosystem, including the iconic sage grouse.

After a century of fire suppression, trees like the western juniper have spread from the rocky ridges of

the Warner Mountains down into the sagebrush sea. In the past 20 years, more than one million acres of sagebrush have been lost to tree encroachment in the Great Basin.

Private landowners teamed up with NRCS Oregon, the Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and other state and local partners to conduct research and reclaim the disappearing sagebrush range.

Through NRCS' Working Lands for Wildlife program, landowners in sagebrush rangelands receive incentives to remove junipers on



Jeremy Maestas, NRCS Ecologist with local rancher in Adel, Ore., John O'Keeffe. (Credit: Jeremy Roberts, Conservation Media)

their property, helping sage grouse populations thrive.

Read the full story:
bit.ly/SavingTheSagebrushSea



Perry (right) in the greenhouse with COVR and NRCS Oregon staff.

Back to the Basics at the Central Oregon Veterans Ranch

Located in the heart of central Oregon between Redmond and Bend, Central Oregon Veterans Ranch (COVR) is a 19-acre working farm that "restores purpose and spirit to veterans of all ages and eras." To do this, COVR relies heavily upon community partners and partnership resources to offer free agriculture and peer-support programs to veterans.

Alison Perry, founder and Executive Director of COVR, is a Licensed Professional Counselor with a military family background. After her brother deployed to Iraq in 2003, Perry felt called to work with returning veterans,

pursuing a career with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Perry had a vision of an organic, community-centered model of care for veterans, one very different from what florescent, white-walled medical facilities could provide.

Perry's main goal was to provide education and therapeutic experiences for veterans while also growing and selling food locally. In 2019, Perry worked with NRCS Oregon to expand their growing space at COVR with a seasonal high tunnel, funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In 2021, Perry obtained EQIP Conservation Incentive Contract (EQIP-CIC) funding to modernize COVR's irrigation system.

Read the full story:
bit.ly/CentralORVeteransRanch

A Bounty of Pride at Side Yard Farm

Stacey Givens is farmer, chef and owner of The Side Yard Farm & Kitchen located in Portland. Her vision from the farm's inception was to create a space centered around food that was safe and inclusive for all. Givens wanted to create a space for people to get out and learn about farming, especially for the queer and BIPOC community.

Numerous events to include BIPOC & Queer Collaborative farmers markets, grief group dinners, yoga, movie nights and farm-to-table dinners keep Side Yard Farm vibrant and cultivate a safe space for many in the community.

Read the full story:
bit.ly/BountyofPride



Givens at Side Yard Farm. (Credit: Shawn Linehan)