

Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT)

12/13/2022



Photo: Scott Carpenter

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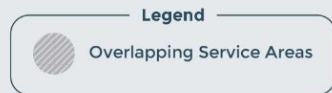
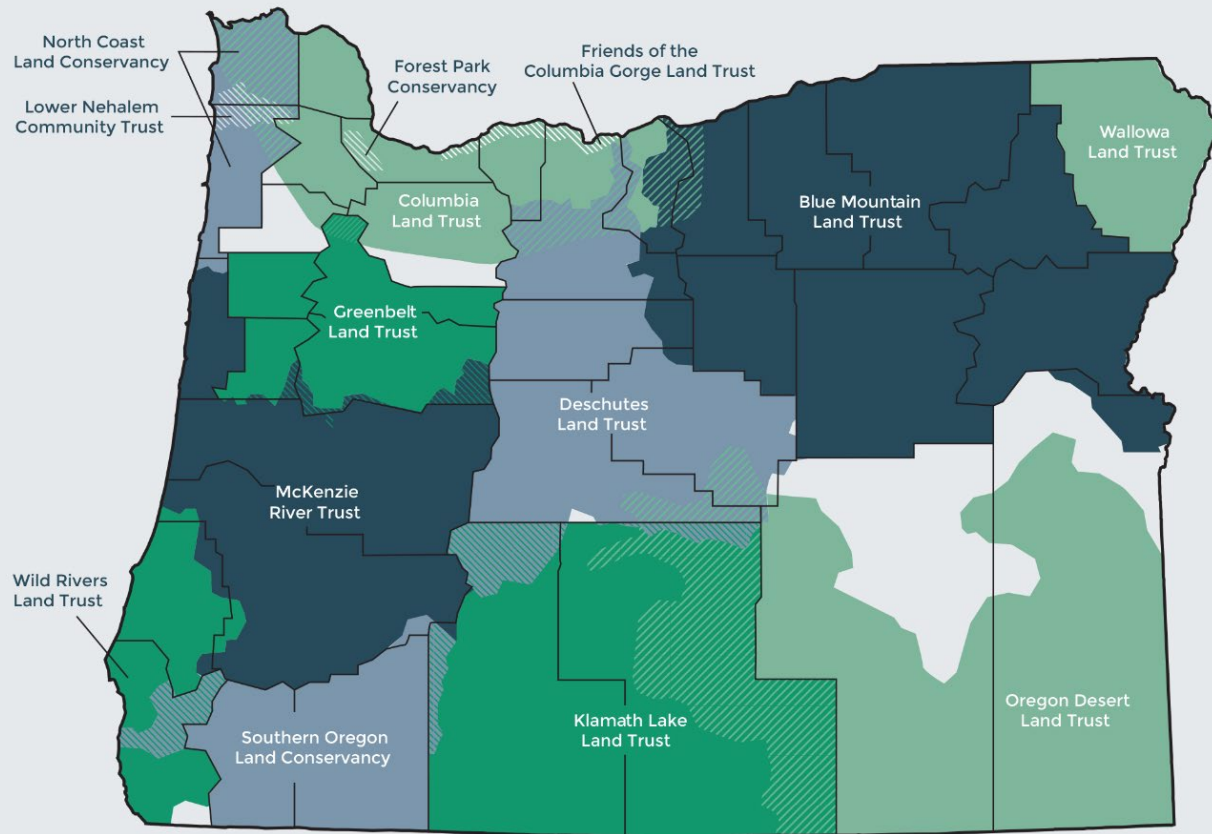
Kelsey Kuhnhausen
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REGIONAL WORK

Blue Mountain Land Trust
 Columbia Land Trust
 Deschutes Land Trust
 Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust
 Forest Park Conservancy
 Greenbelt Land Trust
 Klamath Lake Land Trust
 Lower Nehalem Community Trust
 McKenzie River Trust
 North Coast Land Conservancy
 Oregon Desert Land Trust
 Southern Oregon Land Conservancy
 Wallowa Land Trust
 Wild Rivers Land Trust

STATEWIDE WORK

Center for Natural Lands Management
 Ducks Unlimited
 Pacific Forest Trust
 The Conservation Fund
 The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
 The Trust for Public Land
 The Wetlands Conservancy
 Western Rivers Conservancy

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Black Oregon Land Trust
 Cerro Gordo Land Conservancy
 Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District
 East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
 Helvetia Community Association
 Northwest Rangeland Trust
 Oregon Agricultural Trust
 Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District
 View the Future
 Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District

OUR MISSION

We serve and strengthen the land trust community in Oregon.

We do that by building connections and advancing policies that help protect our natural world—our water, wildlife and open space—for all people, forever.



BUILDING CONNECTIONS



ADVANCING POLICIES



LOCATION: WALLOWA COUNTY
LAND TRUSTS: WALLOWA LAND TRUST, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
PARTNERS: WALLOWA RESOURCES, NRCS, LOCAL LANDOWNERS
MAJOR FUNDING SOURCE: NRCS'S REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



www.oregonlandtrusts.org

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“There’s much uncertainty in our future, but assuring that agricultural lands will continue to be productive is a small step in eliminating the unknown.”

—JOE DAWSON, FARMER



FOCUSING ON FARMERS

HELPING LANDOWNERS THROUGH EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

For those who make their living off the land, Wallowa County has everything: rich soils, abundant water, and stunning natural beauty. But farmers and ranchers here and across Oregon are facing unprecedented pressures. Not only are Oregon’s farmers the oldest in the nation, but an astounding amount of farmland is expected to change hands over the next two decades: more than 10 million acres, an area the size of Massachusetts and Vermont. Combined with routine economic uncertainty and land management puzzles, Oregon agriculture today faces complex challenges.

In response, Wallowa Land Trust joined forces with The Nature Conservancy and another local stewardship organization, Wallowa Resources, to apply for funding from the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service. In 2016 they were awarded a \$3.2 million grant through NRCS’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program to offer tools and incentives

to willing landowners that will improve soil health, enhance irrigation efficiency, and conserve more than 16,000 acres of farm and ranch land in Wallowa County.

Along with expanding rotational grazing and pivot irrigation, the project will help land trusts purchase conservation easements on farms and ranches, with the goal of keeping agricultural lands in production while protecting important habitat for native plants, fish, and wildlife.

Joe Dawson of Diamond D Farm & Ranch understands how he and other farmers will benefit. “These types of investments in our agricultural lands are vital for our future. They assist in succession planning as well as infrastructure, to make sure the land stays productive and viable for future generations.

“There’s much uncertainty in our future,” Dawson adds, “but assuring that agricultural lands will continue to be productive is a small step in eliminating the unknown.”

Collaborative and creative efforts like these in Wallowa County will go a long way to help family farmers.

Wallowa County ranch lands. Above: Wallowa farmer Woody Wolfe leads a tour of his farm protected with a conservation easement.

THE CHALLENGE



25%

Oregon land in
farms & ranches



64%

will change hands
in 20 years



60

average age of
farmers & ranchers



81%

of farmers & ranchers
have no succession plan

OAHP Design Process

Work Group convened by
Governor's office

Six diverse nonprofits, OWEB,
one farmer, one rancher

Passed in 2017

Rules and Commission in place

Allocated \$5M in 2022





OAHP Elements

Four Grant Programs

- 1) Permanent easements & termed covenants
- 2) Conservation management plans
- 3) Succession planning education
- 4) Capacity building for grantee orgs

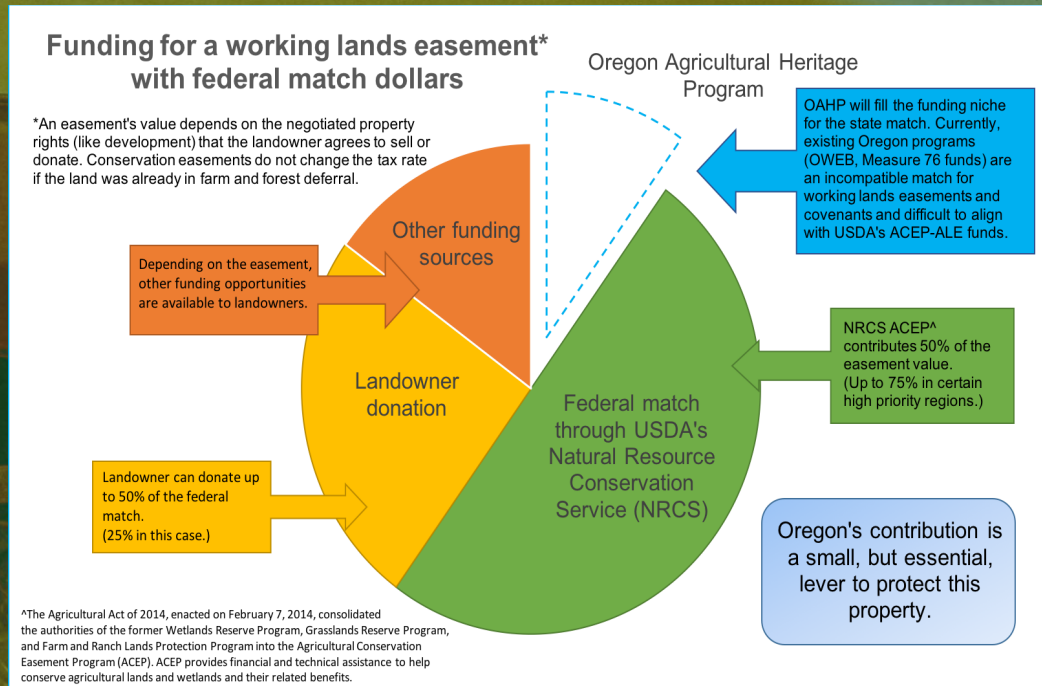
*Operated by OWEB, overseen by
Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission*

OAHP Brings Federal Dollars

States with *funded* match programs bring in 3.7x as much funds

Oregon has only received 0.4% of ACEP-ALE funds.

In 2022, \$5M in state funds leveraged \$6.7M in federal \$\$



COLT's Priorities



PROTECT

WILDLIFE & WILD
PLACES



DEFEND

WORKING FARMS
& FORESTS



PROVIDE

RECREATION &
PARKS



CHAMPION

CLEAN WATER
FOR ALL



DRIVE

CLIMATE &
SCIENCE



ENGAGE

COMMUNITIES

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)



This session, support Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) POPs 215 and 115: \$10 million for grants & \$800,000 for program administration for OAHP.

Background

In 2022, the Oregon legislature approved \$5 million in funding to administer the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) – the first programmatic appropriation for OAHP since it was created in 2017.

This program has enjoyed significant bipartisan support, and its purpose is to protect farm and ranch land, keep it in production, and enhance its natural resource values.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) has now opened grant applications for the working land easement and covenant program and the conservation management plan program, but renewed funding is needed to protect working farm and ranch lands and their natural resources, and bring federal dollars to Oregon.

Oregon Farmland and Food Security are Threatened

Farmers and ranchers are at the heart of Oregon's economy. With over **37,000 active farms and ranches throughout the state**, our working lands support **\$50 billion** in annual economic impact and support thousands of agricultural-related jobs.

However, **64% of our working lands** (10.45 million acres) will change hands over the next 20 years, and more than 80% of Oregon farmers and ranchers do not currently have succession plans in place.

OAHP Grant Programs



WORKING LAND EASEMENTS

Compensate farmers and ranchers for protecting their land and its natural resource values. Working land easements are **voluntary contracts** between a landowner and an entity like a land trust or soil and water conservation district that remove development rights that conflict with agriculture and conservation. Landowners are compensated for the monetary value of the development rights and **the land remains in production.**



CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

Compensate landowners for implementing practices that conserve soil and water, enhance existing habitat, and **support agriculture.**



SUCCESSION PLANNING

Help landowners pass their land onto the **next generation.**



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Help non-state organizations implement the grant programs.

Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that Oregon lost **340,000 acres** from agricultural production from 2012-2017, some of which was urbanized.

In American Farmland Trust's business as usual projection, Oregon could lose up to **109,000 acres** of agricultural land between 2016-2040.¹

¹Based on AFT's Farmlands Under Threat 2022 report

Benefits of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)



LEVERAGES FEDERAL DOLLARS

Last session's commitment of funds to the OAHP almost immediately leveraged a 1,100% increase in federal funding for Oregon in NRCS's Agricultural Land Easements program - an increase to \$6.7 million in 2022. This brings Oregon in line with the 26 other states that have matching working lands easement grant programs that protect farm and ranch land from development.



KEEPS FARM AND RANCH LAND IN PRODUCTION

Easements and conservation management plans enhance both agricultural and natural resource values and do not necessarily remove water rights. Succession planning helps with intergenerational transfers.



SUPPORTS RURAL BUSINESSES

Allows farmers to get cash from their real estate while still keeping it in agriculture. This is vital for creating financial buffers in tough times and making farmland more affordable to the next generation.



REDUCES CARBON EMISSIONS:

An acre of farmland produces 58-70 times fewer greenhouse gas emissions than an acre of urban land and provides opportunities for activities that sequester carbon. Protecting farmland while growing cities in a compact manner reduces 33 tons of GHG emission per acre per year when compared to sprawl development.



BENEFITS RURAL COMMUNITIES with dollars that recirculate in rural economies.



BENEFITS THE STATE by supporting the state's 2nd largest economic sector (agriculture) and the rural communities, open spaces, and fish and wildlife habitat that depend upon it.

Please Support OWEB POPs 115 & 215

POP 115: \$800,000 for OWEB administration and 3 Permanent FTE

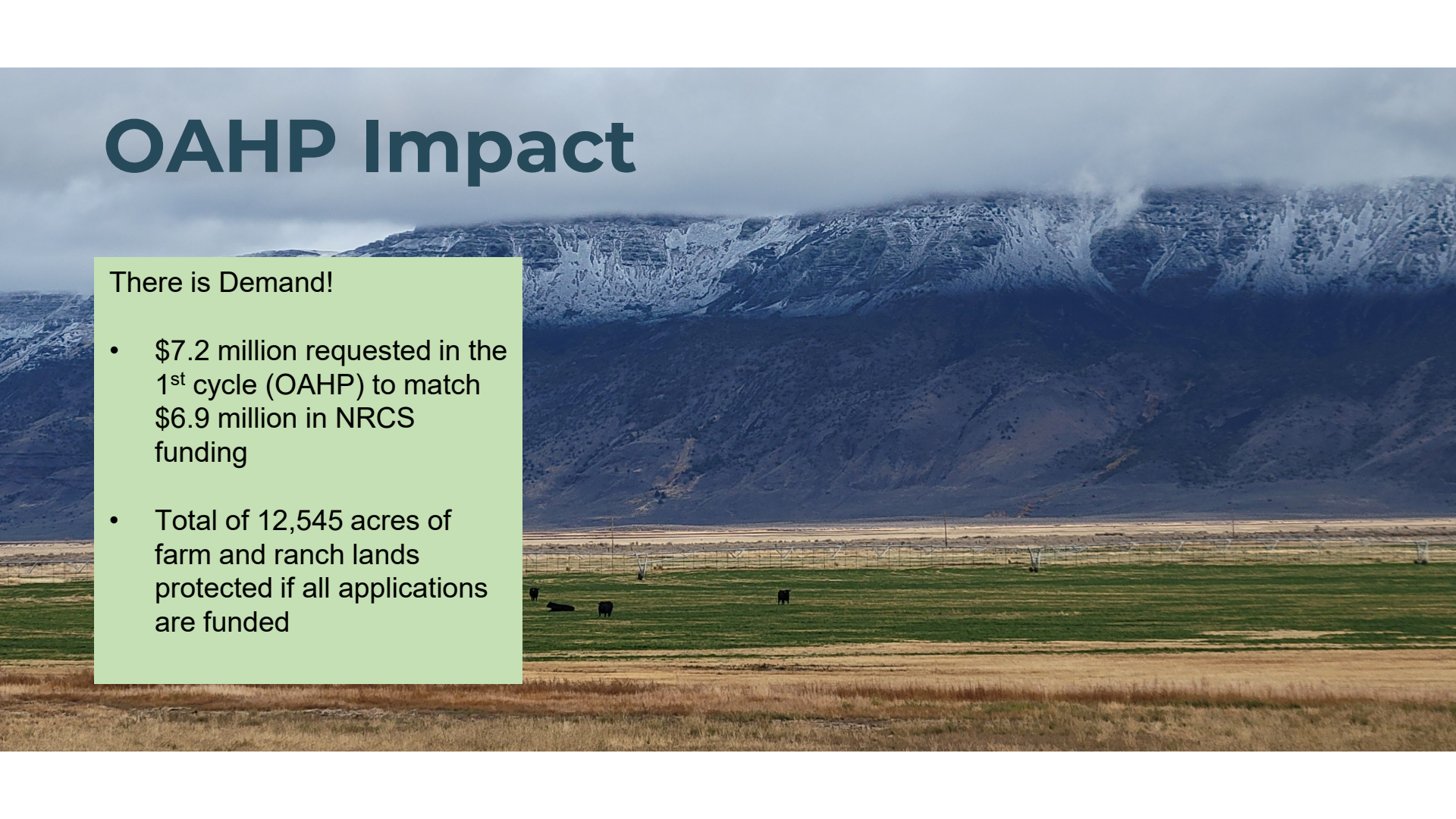
POP 215: \$10 million for OAHP Grants in 2023-2025 to continue distributing funding for working land easements/covenants and conservation management plans and to stand up technical assistance and succession planning grants

- There is great demand for this program. In 2019, OWEB received **28 letters of interest** from across Oregon to protect 76,000 acres.
- This funding would allow OAHP to leverage a federal match for 50% of the value of a project through the federal NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), permanently protecting that land and its natural resources.
- The current Farm Bill allocates \$450 million per year in federal match funding for agricultural easements. To maximize Oregon's ability to leverage current and future funds, we need to continue to provide a **sustainable state match.**

Supported by: Oregon Agricultural Trust, Sustainable NW, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregon Environmental Council, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Ducks Unlimited, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, American Farmland Trust, Organically Grown Co., and more.

Photo by Nick Wagner.

OAHP Impact

A landscape photograph showing a mountain range in the background under a cloudy sky. In the foreground, there is a green field with a fence, and several cows are grazing. The overall scene is a mix of natural and agricultural elements.

There is Demand!

- \$7.2 million requested in the 1st cycle (OAHP) to match \$6.9 million in NRCS funding
- Total of 12,545 acres of farm and ranch lands protected if all applications are funded

COLT Priorities

- Working forests & Private Forest Accord
- Wildfire and climate resilience
- Source water protection
- Land access and justice
- Other federal priorities



370,677 TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED IN OREGON

That's about 528 land acquisition projects over time

23

New land
acquisition projects
in 2021

That covers
32,800 acres!

32

Member
Organizations

304

Oregon
Employees

252

Board
Members in
Oregon

4,486

Active Oregon
volunteers

38

Places dogs
are welcome

5

Places that
are ADA
accessible

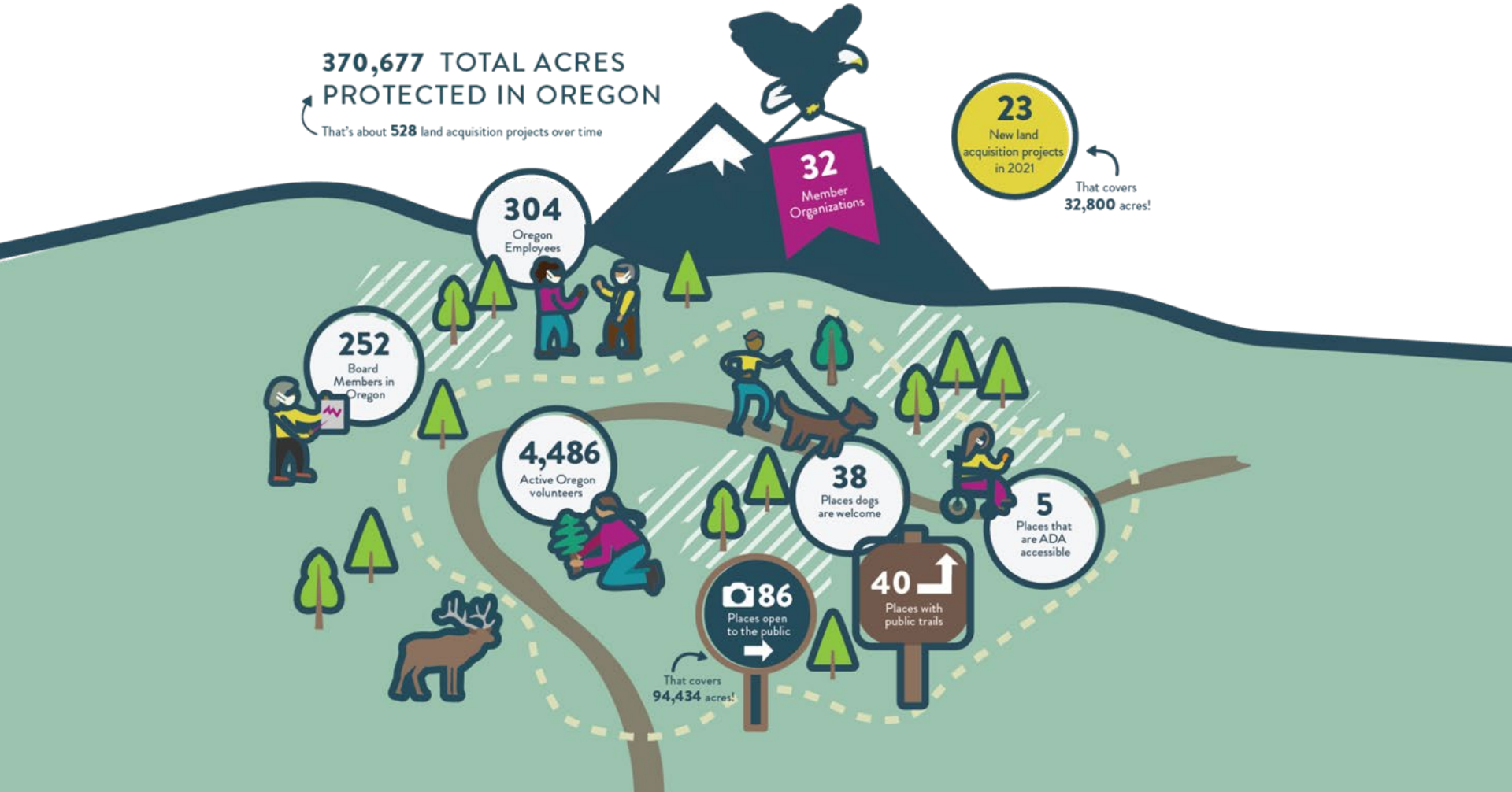
86

Places open
to the public

40

Places with
public trails

That covers
94,434 acres!



Thank you!



Photo by Brian Chambers.