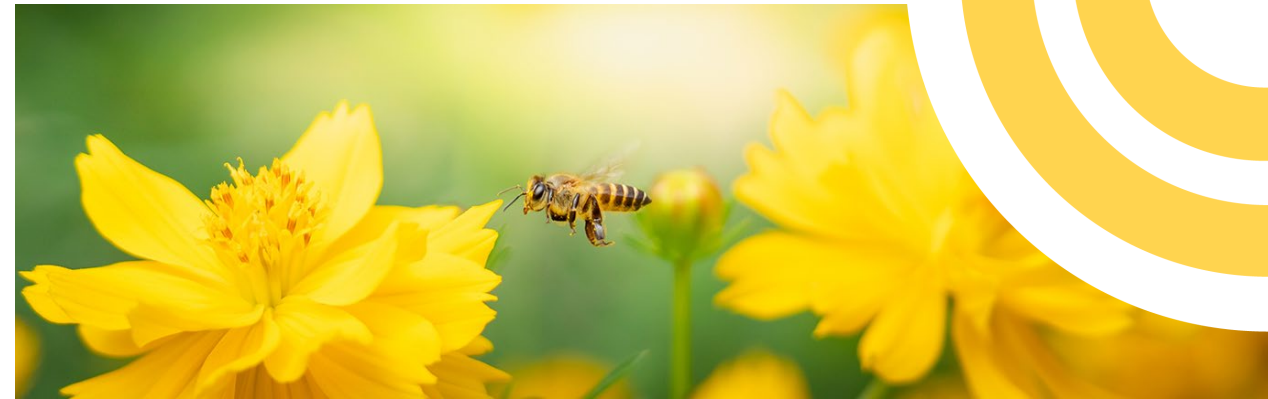




Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

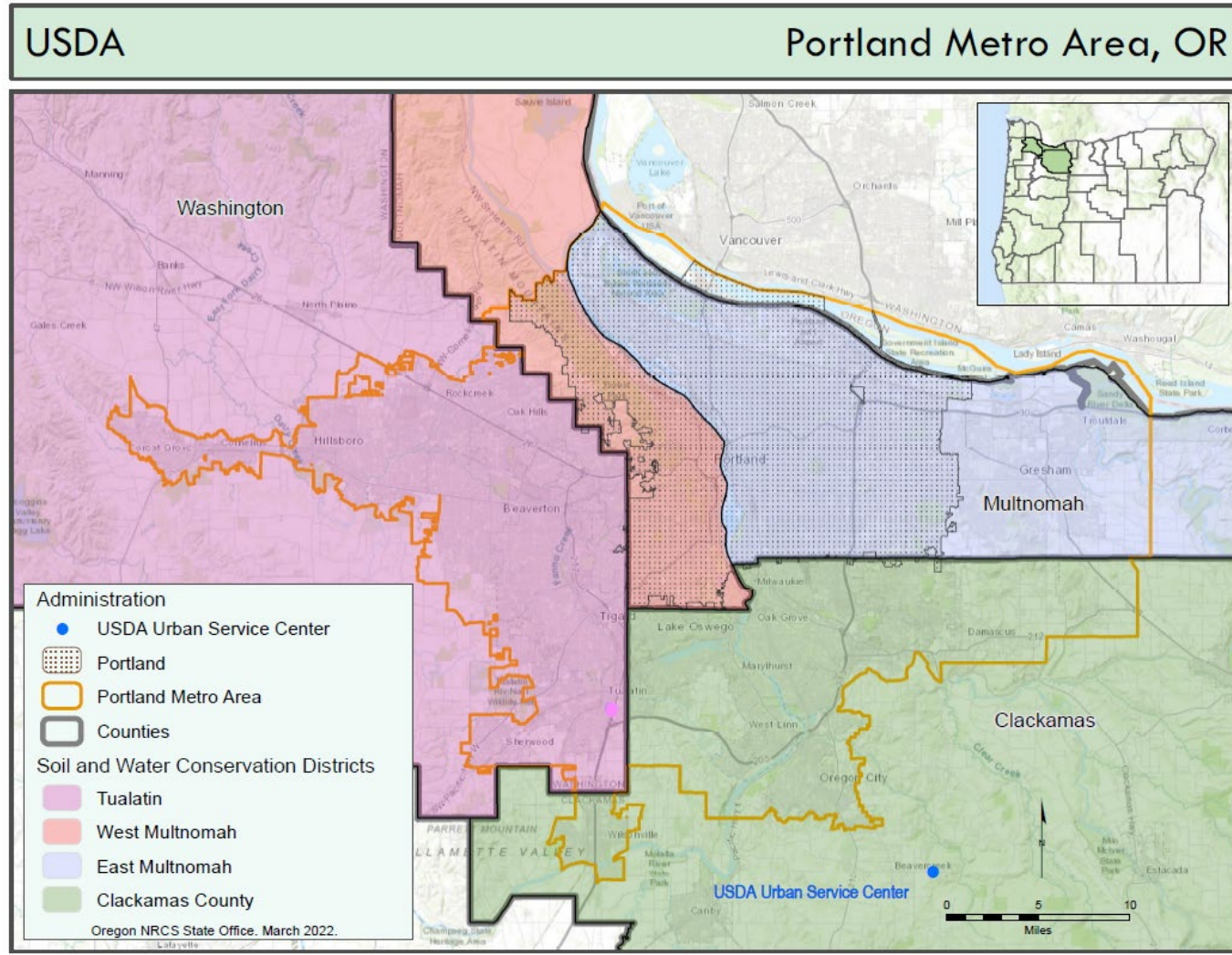


Portland Metro Local Work Group Meeting | 2025

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center



USDA Urban Service Center



NRCS

Stephanie Payne, *Urban Conservationist*

FSA

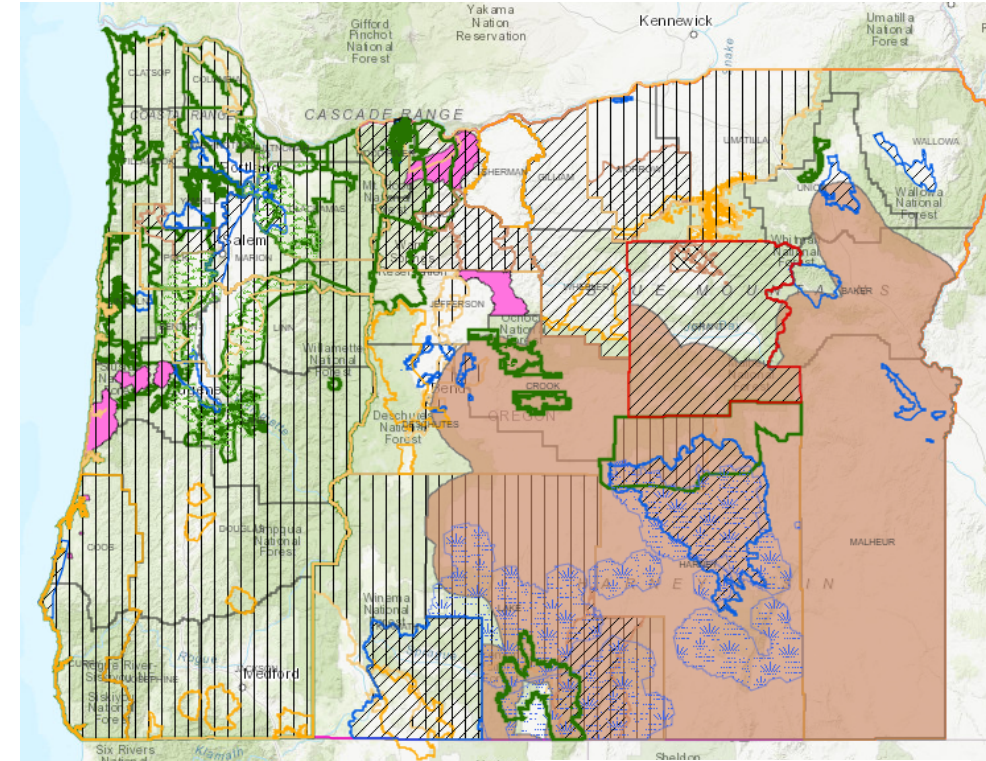
Amanda Welker, *County Executive Director*

John Wagner, *Program Assistant*

1 of 27 in the nation

The Local Working Group Process & Today's Goals:

1. Share previous year's work
2. Highlight financial & technical assistance opportunities through NRCS and partners for urban farmers
3. Get feedback on how NRCS can better serve urban farmers and how future funding should be directed towards natural resources



bit.ly/ORProjectMap





PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

Brian Guse

Director of the Office of Urban
Agriculture and Innovative
Production

bit.ly/USDA-Urban



OUIAP

- The [Innovative Production at a Glance](#) documents many of the USDA program and agencies with innovative programs and highlights resources that are focused on production methods such as hydroponics, aquaponics, etc.
- The [Urban Agriculture at a Glance](#) documents 36 USDA programs and agencies with urban and innovative agriculture programs and highlights resources for producers, community organizations, school groups, non-profits, organizations and collaborative partnerships that are focused on food system issues.

Financial Assistance Programs:

- **Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production competitive grants** program funds planning and implementation activities, with priority for areas facing food and nutrition insecurity. Min-Max \$100,000 to \$250,000 as of 2025. Eligible entities: non-profits, local government, tribal organizations, and schools K-12.
 - [UAIP Home page](#)
 - [FY25 UAIP Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (**Applicants must submit their applications through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. eastern time on March 10, 2025.**)

People's Garden Brochure: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/peoples-garden-brochure.pdf>

Learn more about OUAIP at farmers.gov/urban. Please [sign up for updates](#) regarding our awards as well as other news from our office.

USDA Announces Grants and Technical Assistance Funding for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production



USDA is providing a total of \$14.4 million in grants and technical assistance through two separately funded projects to support urban agriculture and innovative production. USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP) is making available \$2.5 million for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) grants, building on \$53.7 million invested in UAIP grant projects by OUAIP since 2020. In addition, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which oversees OUAIP, is providing \$11.9 million in funding through an interagency agreement with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to promote the hiring of Urban Agriculture Conservation Extension Educators through the Cooperative Extension programs at Land-grant Universities.



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Our Village Gardens | Portland, OR – A USDA People's Garden

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center



PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

Amanda Welker

FSA Urban County
Executive Director

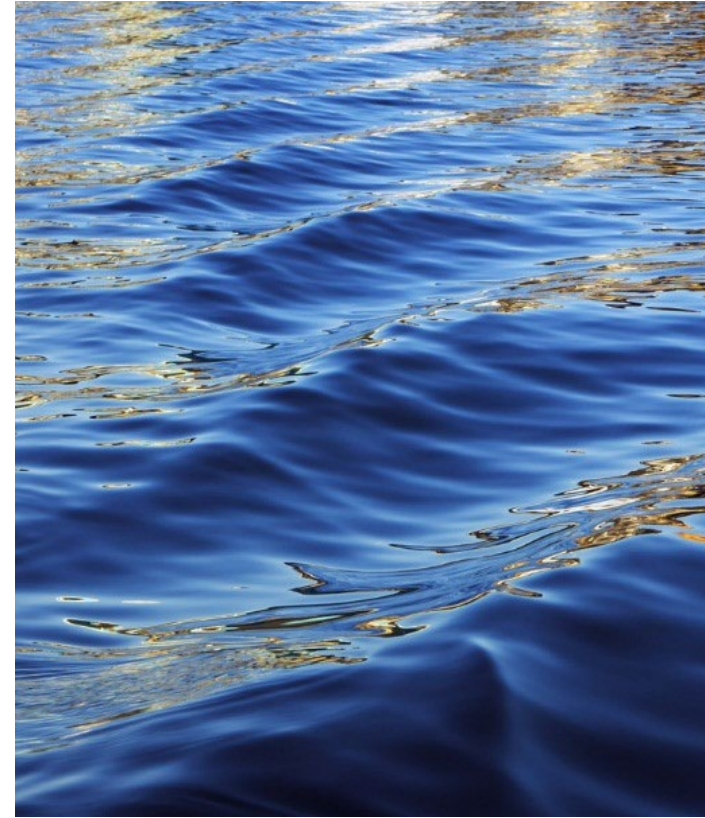
bit.ly/FSAOregon





Oregon FSA Office of Urban Agriculture

Amanda Welker, Urban County Executive
Director
NRCS Urban Workgroup January, 2025



Overview

- What is Urban Agriculture?
- Overview of Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area
- Urban County Committee Overview
- FSA Programs for Urban Farmers
- USDA Resources
- Get in touch!



Noble
Rot
rooftop
garden
Portland,
Oregon

Urban Agriculture Definitions

Urban agriculture, is city and suburban agriculture that takes the form of backyard, roof-top and balcony gardening, community gardening in vacant lots and parks, roadside urban fringe agriculture and livestock grazing in open space. (EPA)

Urban agriculture includes the cultivation, processing and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban areas. Community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and vertical production are all examples of urban agriculture. Tribal communities and small towns may also be included. (USDA)

While urban agriculture is not defined by U.S. law, the 2018 Farm Bill refers to the urban farming demographic as urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural production.

USDA Mission Area: Farm Production and Conservation



Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) is the Department's focal point for the Nation's farmers and ranchers and other stewards of private agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest lands. FPAC agencies implement programs designed to mitigate the significant risks of farming through crop insurance, conservation programs, farm safety net programs, lending, and disaster programs.

Sister Agencies:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Risk Management Agency (RMA)
- No wrong door!

27 Urban Service Centers: National Pilot

National FSA Urban Agriculture Program Development



Urban County Committee

USDA Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections

Tribal Agricultural Landowner
VOTING ELIGIBILITY

FSA County Committee Elections
The United States Department of Agriculture county committees (COC) impact the administration of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) within a community. They help make determinations on farm programs such as disaster assistance, hiring decisions and assist with outreach. County committee members can impact producers through their decision making and help shape the culture of a local FSA office. They also ensure the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties and are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA county committee elections are held annually for representation in county Local Administrative Areas (LAAs). Nominations are open each summer; voting occurs each fall.

Tribal Agricultural Landowner Voting Eligibility
For purposes of FSA county committee elections, every member of an American Indian tribe is considered an agricultural landowner if the land on which the tribal member's voting eligibility is based is tribally owned or held in trust by the United States for the tribe, **even if the individual does not personally produce a crop on that land.**

Tribal agricultural landowners 18 years and older can contact their local USDA Service Center to register. After you provide FSA with your contact information, including a current mailing address, you will be updated as an eligible voter in the election database. Contact your local FSA office with any questions.

Urban Committees key responsibilities:

- Represent ranchers, farmers, and producers
- Administer, advocate and make recommendations for USDA Programs
- Provide public information/outreach
- Ensure Equal Opportunity
- Perform administrative duties for Farm Service Agency Programs

Potential Programs for Urban Producers

- Registration and Certification
- Set up a farm number
- Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops
- Organic Cost Share
- Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops
- Disaster Assistances Programs
 - Specialty crops and livestock
- Conservation (CRP and CREP)
- Emergency Livestock Assistance Program
- RMA- Microfarm Insurance
- Lending
 - Farm Storage Facility Loans
 - Microloans
 - Farm Ownership Loans
 - Farm Operating Loans
 - Youth Loans
 - Loan Guarantee



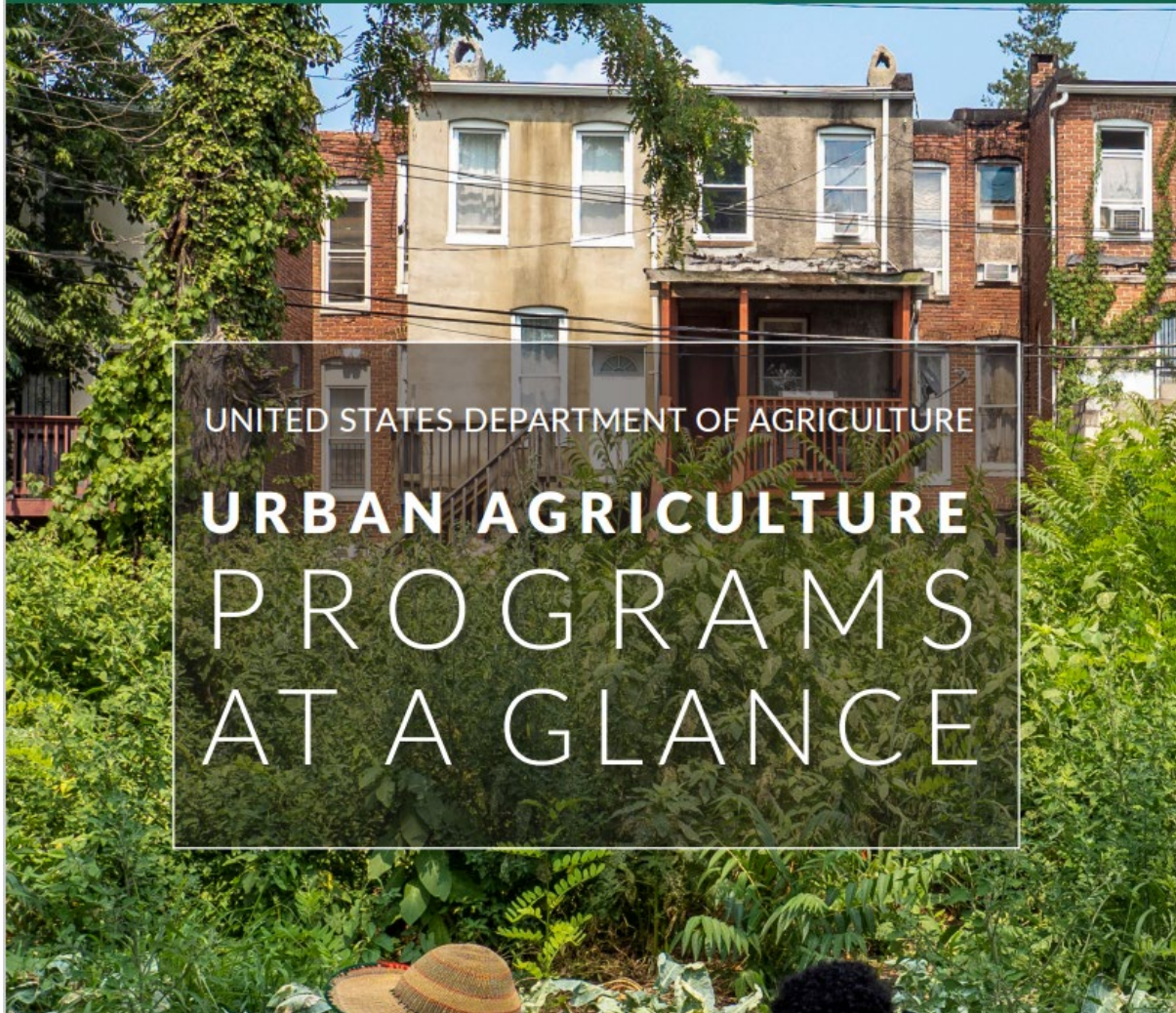
Microloans for urban producers

- Debt consolidation
- Short timeline
- Establish History
- NRCS cost share





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



USDA Programs

- FSA
- NRCS
- AMS
- Forest Service
- Rural Development
- NIFA
- Agricultural Research Service
- Food and Nutrition Services
- And more...

Questions and Contact

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Urban County Executive Director

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503.210.6037

John Wagner

Urban Program Technician

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503-376-6036

[Farmers.gov/urban](https://farmers.gov/urban)





PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

Eric Rodriguez

Director of Food Equity
at Ecotrust



www.ecotrust.org



NRCS Urban Service Center Portland, OR

2024 Accomplishments

2024 Contracting Work

➤ **EQIP**

- 19 Applications
- 12 Contracts Obligated
- \$350K

➤ **CSP**

- 13 Applications
- 11 Contracts Obligated
- \$430K

Total: \$780k went to 14 urban producers
in PDX in 2024



Portland metro NRCS Long Range Plan

USDA-NRCS URBAN SERVICE CENTER

PORTLAND, OREGON

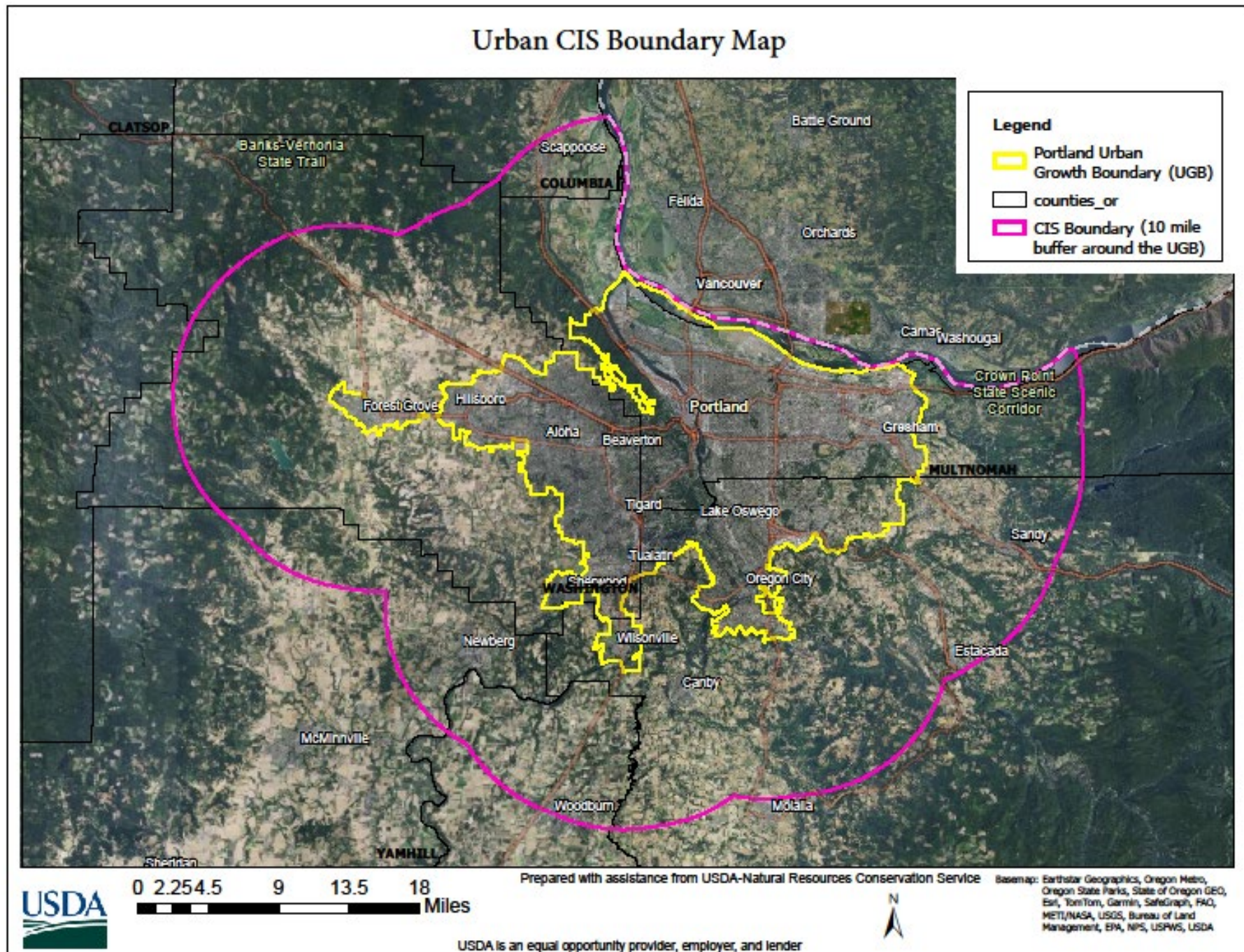
LONG RANGE CONSERVATION PLAN 2024

bit.ly/PDXMetroLRP



Created 2
new urban
fund pools:

1. Urban Resiliency Initiative
2. Rainwater Harvest Initiative





Rainwater Harvest Initiative

- Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management (217)
- Pumping Plant (533)
- Roof Runoff Structure (558)
- Structure for Water Control (587)
- Underground Outlet (620)
- Water Harvesting Catchment (636)
- Heavy Use Area Protection (561)
- Irrigation System, Microirrigation (441)
- **Irrigation Water Management (449)**
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Irrigation Pipeline (430)



bit.ly/RainwaterHarvestInitiative



Urban Resiliency Initiative

- Site Assessment and Soil Testing for Contaminants Activity (207)
- PFAS Testing in Water or Soil (209)
- **Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management (217)**
- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
- Cover Crop (340)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Soil Carbon Amendment (336)
- Mulching (484)
- **Low Tunnel Systems (821)**
- Raised Beds (812) – for contamination/debris avoidance
- Amending Soil Properties with Lime (805)
- Conservation Cover (327)



...and more!

Hosted internal pilot Urban Soil Health training

Acquired a pXRF: heavy metal detection

Hired a new soil conservationist to support Urban Service Center workload

Initial stages of working on new cultural practices now available





NRCS Urban Service Center Portland, OR

In Progress

2025 Contracting Work

- **EQIP (application deadline was Nov 2024)**
 - 23 applicants
 - 33 Applications (up from 19 applications last year)
 - Estimated cost share (“demand”) = \$417,000



Current Funding Opportunities

EQIP, ACT NOW fund pools

- Urban Resiliency Initiative - Application deadline is 3/14 or until funding runs out
- CPA, DIA, CEMA - Application deadline is 1/31

CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program

- Application deadline is 2/28

...and more!

- Working on obtaining a mobile office unit
- Working with OSU on supporting an Urban Extension Agent
- Exploring a possible RCPP with Tryon Creek Watershed Council



BREAK



There are no minimum number of acres to qualify for funding.



Subsistence growers may be considered agricultural producers and subsistence lands may be eligible for funding.



Gardening/horticulture may be farming/agriculture. If someone is producing food, fiber, or livestock, they may qualify for NRCS funding.

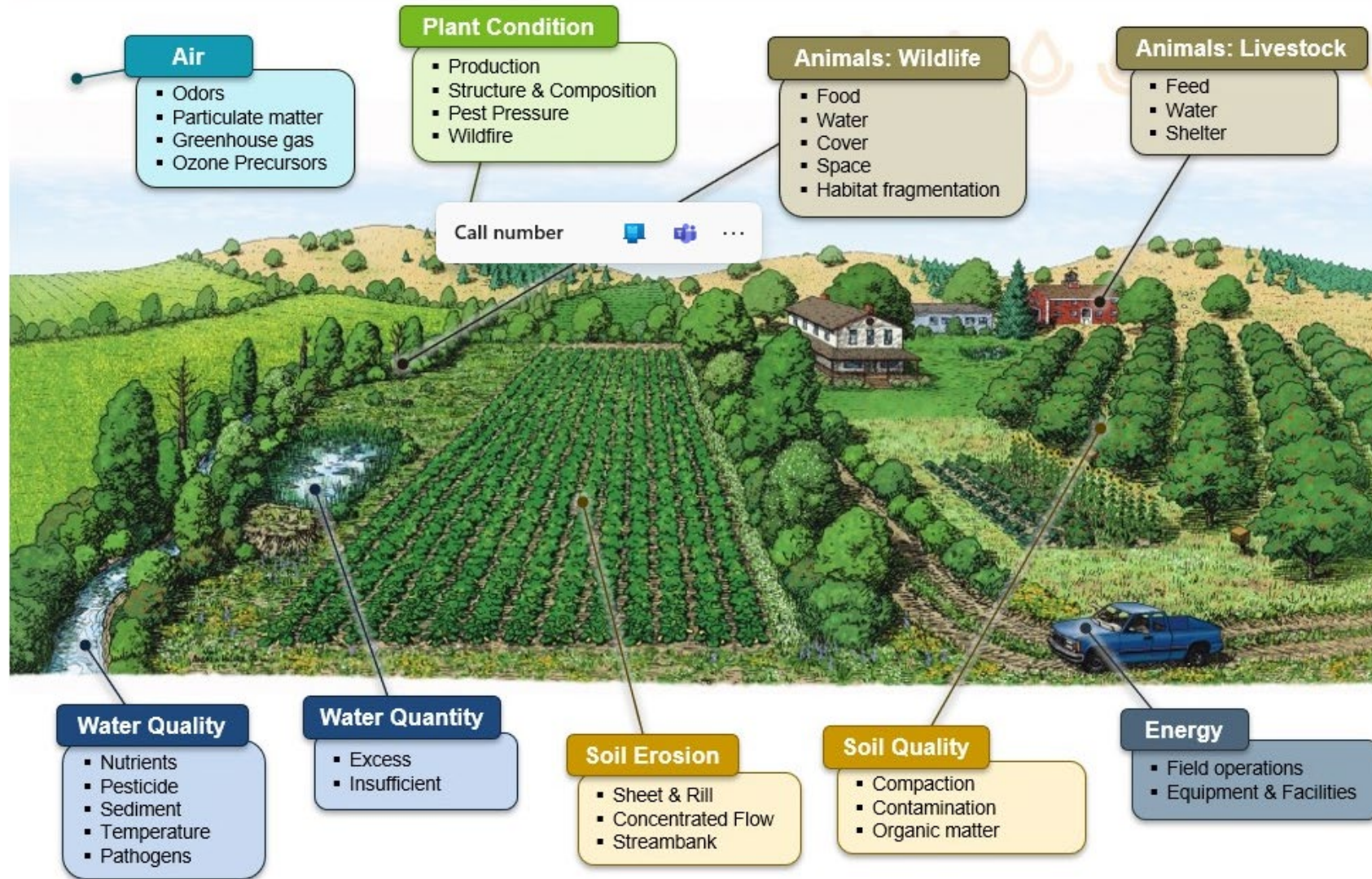


Community agriculture and backyard/small plot gardens may be considered an eligible form of production.

Discussion Set-Up

- No support for perimeter fencing on cropland
- No support for security systems
- No support for equipment purchases/leases (unless you're going electric)
- No land access facilitation (unless you want to explore easements)
- Engineering timelines are long
- Water right verification is required for irrigation related projects

NRCS Natural Resource Concerns



Things on Steph's mind...

- Finding partners that are willing and able to conduct soil sampling for contaminants, nutrients, and soil health
- Finding engineers/vendors experienced in rainwater harvest catchments systems that can help with design work
- Is there an opportunity for NRCS to help with Building Integrated Agriculture? What does that look like?
- CEMA 222 and 825 Culturally Significant Plantings
- soilSHOP – soil contamination testing event



OPEN DISCUSSION

What are your priority natural resource concerns?

What are your ideas for how NRCS can support urban growers?

What are some challenges and opportunities to implementing conservation on urban growing spaces?

Are there any potential partnership opportunities?

Is there anything else you think NRCS should know about or be a part of?



Contact Info

Stephanie Payne

Urban Conservationist – Portland Metro

stephanie.payne@usda.gov

541-219-2141 (cell)



Ranking Questions - Rainwater

Is the applicant located within the Portland Metro Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)?

Is the applicant located within 10 miles of the Portland Metro UGB?

Is the applicant selling or donating food grown on the operation to markets located within the Portland Metro UGB?

Will planned activities redirect and control runoff from farm structures?

Will roof runoff be captured and re-used for irrigation on cropland?

Will planned practices reduce the use of municipal water for irrigation on cropland annually by: a. <25%, b. 25-50%, c. 50-75%, d. >75%



Ranking Questions – Urban Resiliency

Is the applicant located within the Portland Metro UGB?

Is the applicant located within 10 miles of the Portland Metro UGB?

Is the applicant selling or donating food grown on the operation to markets located within the Portland metro UGB?



Cost-share rates

- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-12/fy24-oregon-eqip.pdf>

soilSHOP

- Soil Screening, Health, Outreach and Partnership
- A soilSHOP can be a stand-alone event or can be combined with other events. For example, a soilSHOP could be part of:
 1. An annual lead prevention/awareness week
 2. An Earth Day event
 3. A community focused art program
 4. A community-based urban gardening program
 5. A farmer's market event in a community
 6. School-based programs