



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



NRCS – PROGRAMS

July 8, 2025

Erin Kaczmarczyk ASTC-Programs

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION

FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

7/8/2025 Programs OTAC Agenda

Program	Topic
EQIP	FY-24, FY-25 Numbers, NWQI, Source Water Protection, County Cost List
CSP	FY-24, FY-25 Numbers, Zoning, Payment Limitations
RCPP	LMR Awards, Renewals, Project Updates
ACEP	Rate Caps, Easement Compensation, WRE Ranking, Priority Areas
ALE	Refresher, FY-25 Funded, Deferred Apps, Ranking and GSS Updates

[Link to Oregon Programs' SharePoint site \(ACEP, CSP, EQIP and RCPP\)](#)



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



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EQIP 2024

Top 10 EQIP Funded Conservation Practices:

- 1. Forest Stand Improvement
- 2. Brush Management
- 3. Woody Residue Treatment
- 4. Watering Facility
- 5. Fence
- 6. Irrigation Water Conveyance
- 7. Irrigation Pipeline
- 8. Prescribed Grazing
- 9. Cover Crop
- 10. Range Planting

\$51.9M obligated
722 landowner contracts
Across 456,000 acres

EQIP 2025

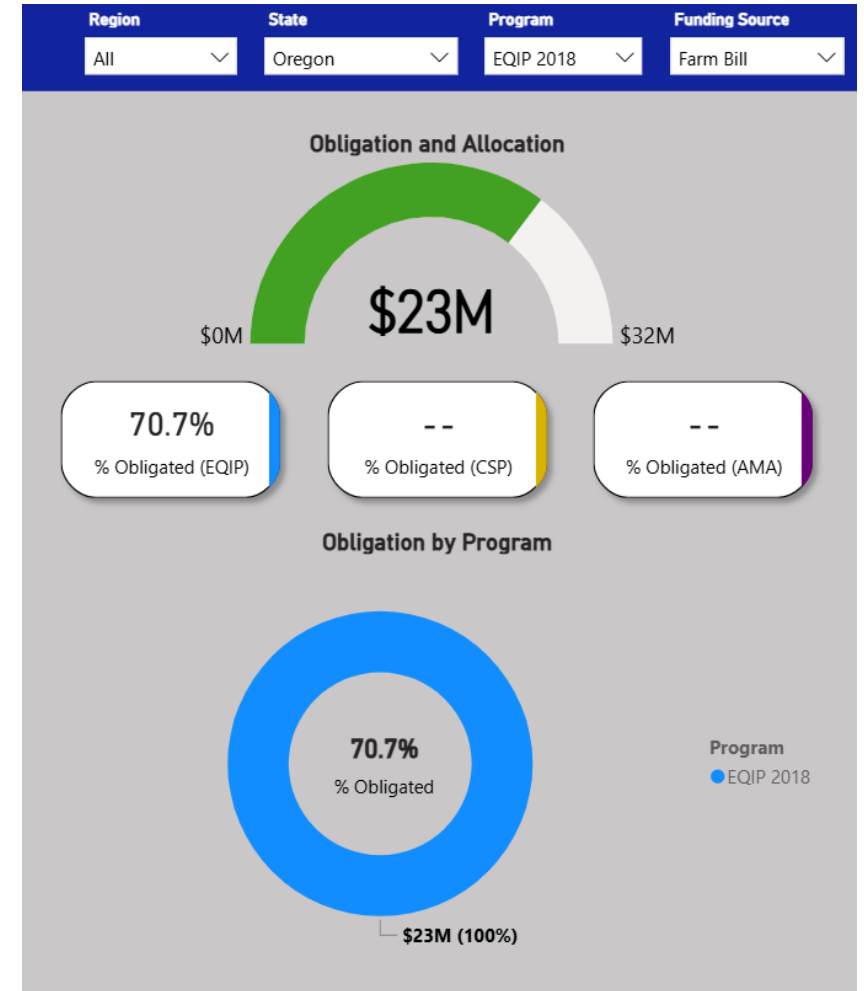
FY25 Allocation

- State and CIS Fund Pools = 96
- EQIP General and Initiatives
\$32,000,000
- EQIP Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)
\$27,267,827.00



EQIP 2025

\$22,430,673.36 Obligated
336 Landowner Contracts
184,251 Acres
6/30/2025



NWQI 2025

Oregon is funding four NWQI's for the Implementation phase:

- Baker = \$469,131.30
- Monroe = \$177,925.00
- Medford = \$583,095.80
- Molalla = \$349,444.70

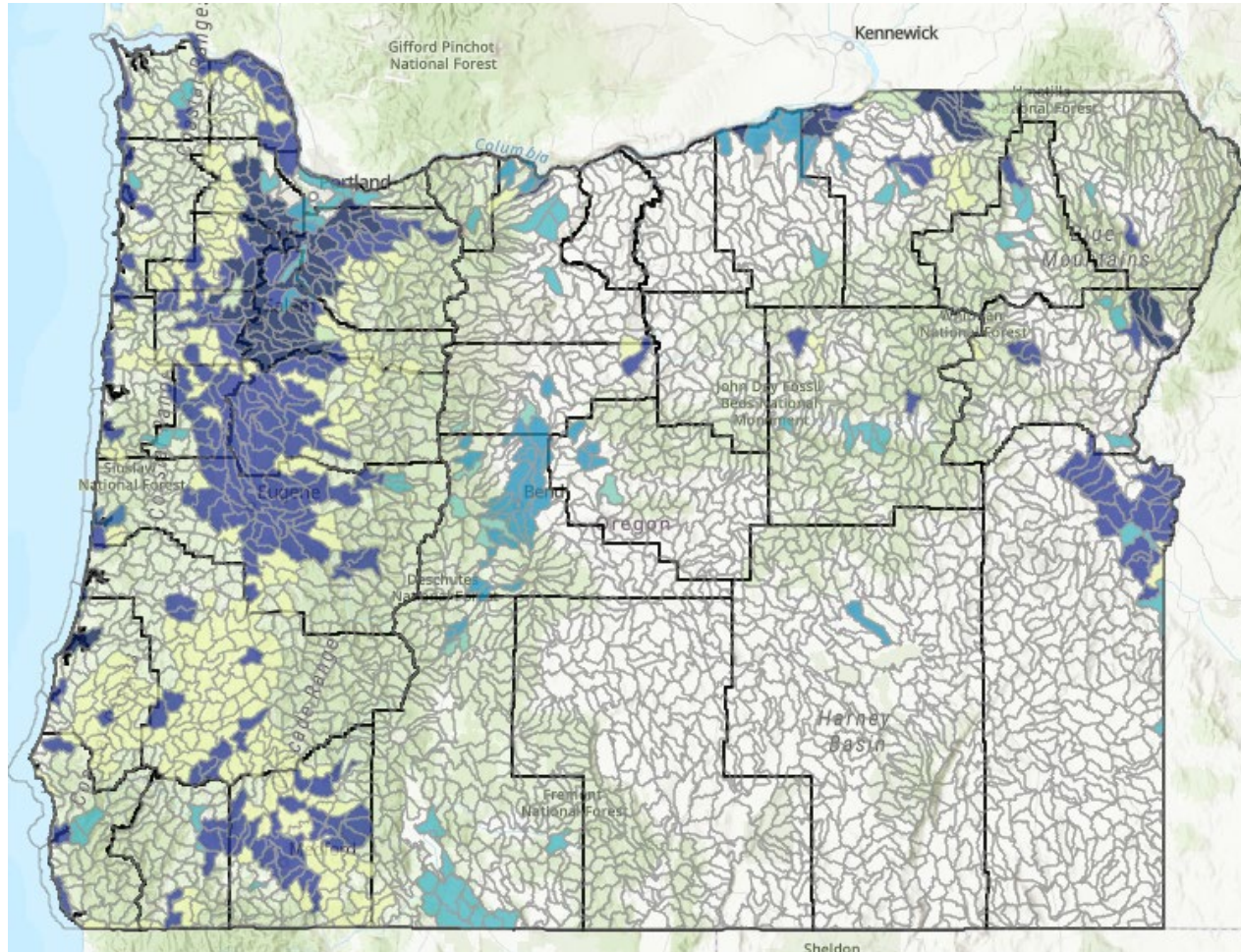
\$558,994.00 Obligated
6 landowner contracts
2395 Acres

One new NWQI was approved for the planning phase:

- The City of Bandon = \$50,000.00 for planning

Source Water Protection

- Source Water Protection High Priority Areas; FY2025 (includes all HUC12s in any shade of blue)



Update: County-based Cost List

- In FY2025 Oregon NRCS will be using county-based cost lists within Protracts to efficiently link conservation practices with the appropriate cost share rate.
- The Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) is automatically selected when selecting the county while entering in a new application
 - Affected counties: Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Yamhill, Clackamas, Polk, Marion, Benton, and Linn
- If the land under application resides or otherwise intersects any of the counties above the participant should receive the COLA rate.



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)



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CSP FY24/25 Numbers

FY-24 Allocation:

- Farm Bill = \$17,685,411.24
- IRA = \$11,709,200.22

FY 24 Obligated:

- Farm Bill = \$17,581,581.24
- 139 contracts
- IRA = \$11,709,200.22
- 112 contracts

FY-25 Allocation:

- Farm Bill = \$16,110,000
- IRA = \$4,094,539.20

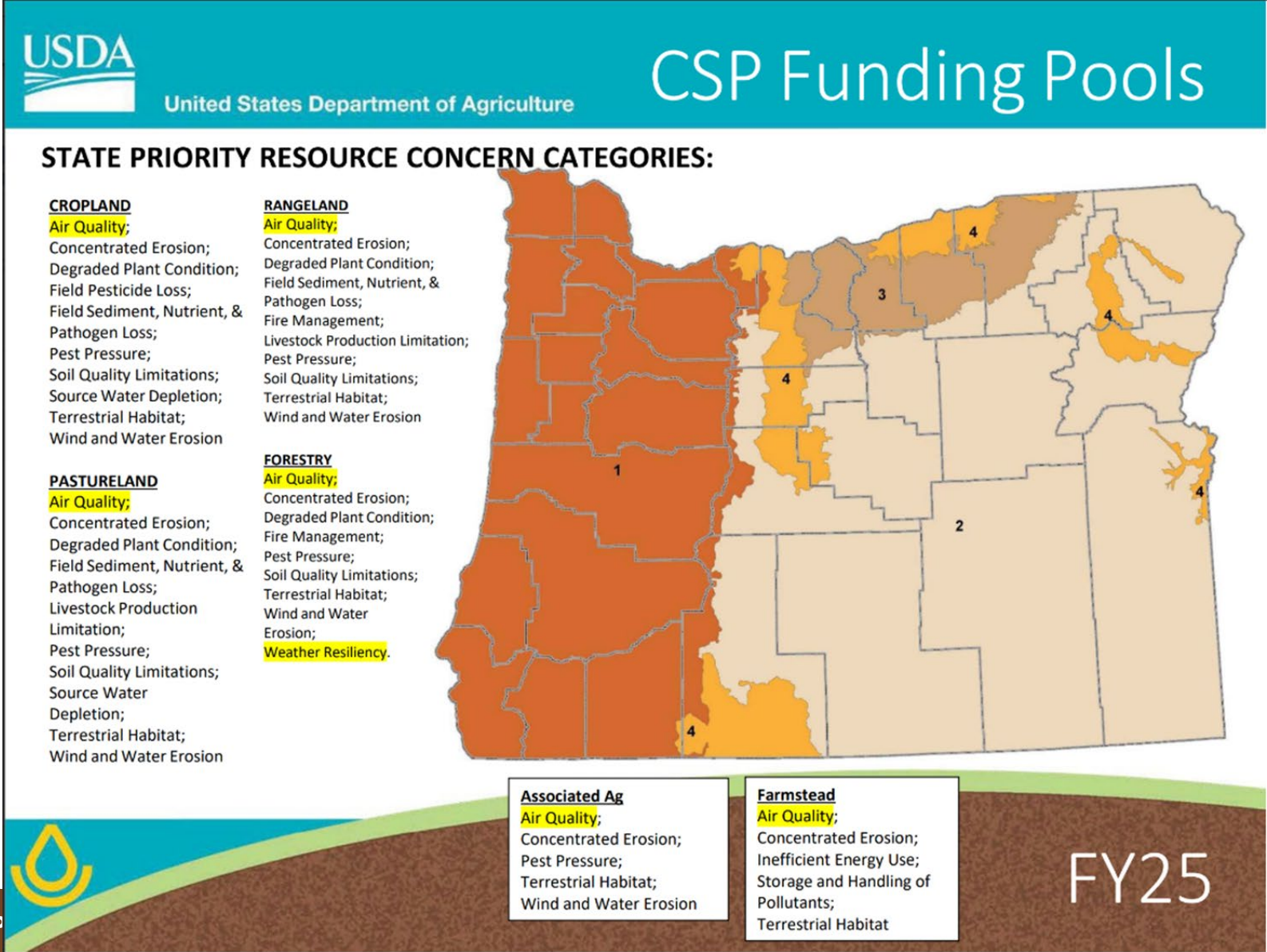
FY-25 Renewal Obligation

- Farm Bill = \$7,697,737.20
- 59 contracts
- IRA = \$ 4,089,539.20
- 24 contracts

FY-25 Classic

- Available Farm Bill funds = \$8,412,262.80
- 61 applications preapproved
- \$12,000,000 in additional Farm Bill funds

CSP Zones



CSP Zone Revamp

Proposed revamp CSP zones in Oregon

Several options:

Update current zones

- Divide out Zone 1
- Expand Zone 4

Zones based on land use

- Based on predominant land use
- Have east and west side pools

One state-wide Ag pool

- How many other states do it
- Ranking questions can divide out apps based on areas, predominant land use, how many RCC's met, etc....



CSP Payment Limitations

For FY-25 there are no individual payment limitations

The contract limitations still exist:

- \$200K for individuals, LLCs, Trusts, entities
- \$400K for general partnership, joint ventures



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)



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LMR Contract Status



167 Producer Contracts over 13 RCPP Projects



173 LMR Applications in FY25



Total Financial Assistance (FA) expended in RCPP18 \$21,039,371.36 through LMRs

Central
Coast/Upper
Willamette Basin
1 Project

21 LMR Contracts

John Day
Umatilla/Snake
River Basin
4 Projects

71 LMR Contracts

Lower
Willamette/North
Coast Basin
3 Projects

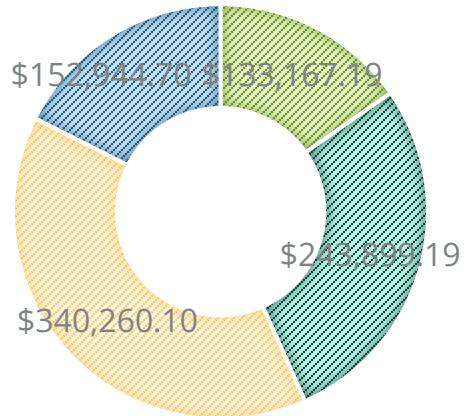
32 LMR Contracts

Deschutes/High
Desert Basin
5 Projects

22 LMR Contracts

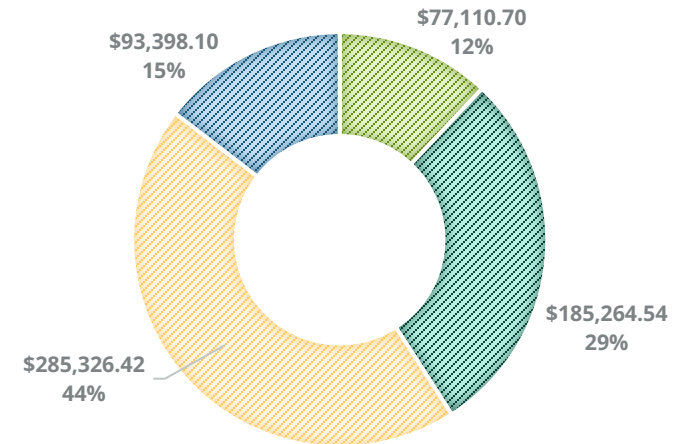
FA Funds Availability

FY25 FA ALLOCATION



- Central Coast/Upper Willamette & Southwest
- Deschutes/High Desert Basin
- John Day Umatilla/Snake River

3RD QTR. FA AVAILABLE



- Central Coast/Upper Willamette & Southwest
- Deschutes/High Desert Basin
- John Day Umatilla/Snake River
- Lower Willamette/North Coast Basin

Fiscal Year 2024 Award Rescissions

- The USDA announced the 2024 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project proposal selections on October 23, 2024. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) selected projects based on the criteria outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The conditional offer to award is hereby rescinded as the agency is not moving forward with any new awards using the supplemental funding provided by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) at this time.
- 4 Proposal offers rescinded

Proposal Title	Lead Partner	Funding Source	Project Type	Award Amount
Rogue Bear All-Lands Restoration Project	Lomakatsi Restoration Project	IRA	AFA	\$ 21,250,000.00
Protect-Ignite-Restore	Oregon Department of Forestry	IRA	AFA	\$ 9,940,000.00
Greater Waterman Landscape Resiliency Project	Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District	IRA	Classic	\$ 21,250,000.00
Expanding Resilient Working Lands in Harney County	High Desert Partnership	IRA	Classic	\$ 18,462,351.00

New Revised Selection Award

- 11 Proposals submitted, 1 Proposal selected for funding under the Revised Selection

Proposal Title		Lead Partner	Funding Source	Project Type	Award Amount
Pilot Butte Canal King Way Irrigation Modernization & Conservation		Deschutes River Conservancy	FB18	Classic	\$ 25,000,000.00
		Total Funds Awarded			\$ 25,000,000.00

Fiscal Year 2025 Renewals

- 5 eligible projects, 2 proposals submitted

Proposal Title	Lead Partner	Project Type	Requested Award Amount
South Fork John Day Upland Enhancements	South Fork John Day Watershed Council	Classic	\$3,304,878.00
North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration Partnership	Yamhill SWCD	Classic	\$6,665,854.00



Current RCPP Classic Projects

Project Name	End Year	Operation Type	Resource Concerns
Polk County Oak Habitat Restoration 2020	2025	Trees	long term protection of land and terrestrial habitat
South Fork John Day Watershed Restoration	2025	Forage/hay, trees, beef, wildlife, horses	concentrated erosion, degraded plant condition, livestock production limitation, source water depletion, terrestrial habitat
Lower John Day Canyons Restoration Initiative	2025	Beef, wheat	aquatic habitat, field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss, livestock production limitation, long term protection of land, terrestrial habitat, degraded plant condition
Tillamook Watersheds Conservation Partnership	2026	Dairy	aquatic habitat
East Oregon Forest Restoration	2026	Trees, beef, forage/hay, horses	aquatic habitat, degraded plant condition, fire management, long term protection of land, weather resilience
Klamath Basin Farming and Wetland Collaborative	2026	Barley, forage/hay, potatoes	aquatic habitat
Smith Rock Irrigation Modernization & Conservation	2026	Forage/hay, beef, horses	weather resilience, aquatic habitat
West Bear All-Lands Restoration Project	2026	Trees	degraded plant condition, fire management, storage and handling of pollutants
McKay Creek On-Farm Modernization	2027	No LMRs yet	aquatic source water depletion
Southeast Harney County, Oregon Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy	2027	Forage/hay beef	aquatic habitat, degraded plant condition, fire management, pest pressure, terrestrial habitat

Current RCPP Classic Projects (cont.)

Project Name	End Year	Operation Type	Resource Concerns
Restoring, Protecting, and Supporting Tribal Connection to Native Oak Habitat	2028	No LMRs yet	long term protection of land, terrestrial habitat
Stewarding the Working Wild in MT, OR, and CO: Non-lethal Predator Risk Management on Agriculture Operations	2029	No LMRs yet	field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss, livestock production limitation, terrestrial habitat
North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration Partnership	2025	Trees, wildlife, poultry, beef	terrestrial habitat, degraded plant condition
Wallowa North RCPP	2025	Trees, beef	degraded plant condition, source water depletion
TSID MC Pipeline/RCPP On Farm/Renewable Energy	2025	Forage/hay beef	aquatic habitat, source water depletion, weather resilience
Stinkingwater Area Medusahead Management Plan	2027	Forage/hay beef	degraded plant condition, fire management, pest pressure, terrestrial habitat
Pilot Butte Canal King Way Irrigation Modernization & Conservation	2029	No LMRs yet	source water depletion



Current RCPP AFA Projects

Project Name	End Year	Resource Concerns
Tualatin Basin Habitat Conservation Partnership	2027	Water quality degradation, Inadequate habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates
Western Oregon Cascades Recovery Effort Climate-Smart Reforestation and Recovery Assistance	2028	Degraded plant condition, water quality degradation, inadequate habitat for fish , wildlife, and invertebrates, soil quality degradation
Oregon Dairy Climate and Water Quality Partnership	2029	Water quality degradation, inadequate habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates, excess/insufficient water/drought



Expiring by the end of 2025

North Coast/Lower Willamette Basin

- 1904 Polk County Oak- 12/20/2025
- 2126 North Willamette Valley-9/29/2025

John Day Umatilla/Snake River Basin

- 1918 Lower John Day Canyons Restoration Initiative-12/17/2025
- 1923 South Fork John Day Watershed Restoration-12/14/2025
- 2139 Wallowa North RCPP-9/30/2025

Revised FY24 Selection and FY 25 Renewal

- Expedited Timeline- 60 days to complete negotiation of the Programmatic Partnership Agreement (PPA) and Supplemental Agreements (SA) to 100% obligation.
- Submitted no later than August 13, 2025.
- Failure to meet either deadline may result in NRCS withdrawing the award offer.



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

- NFO anticipated fall of 2025, closing by the end of the calendar year.
- Priorities and Criteria are expected to be different from previous years.
- Pre-Proposal Discussions will be needed to meet the expedited timeline.
- Negotiations completed
- Duties, responsibilities, and expectations established



Fiscal Year 2025 RCPP Notice of Funding

- March or April of 2025
(best guess)



Oregon Technical Advisory Committee

July 2025

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)



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ACEP-WRE

Topics Covered

- **FY '26 Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)**
- **FY '26 WRE Ranking**
 - **Removal of Climate Change questions**
- **FY26 Priority Areas**





ACEP-WRE Geographic Area Rate Cap GARC - FY26



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Reasons for our proposal to use Professional Appraisals rather than an Area Wide Market Analysis to determine a Fair Market Value

1. Oregon has had limited WRE enrollment with less than 10 applications past several years
2. Specific areas within Oregon have limited WRE enrollment (we have higher enrollment in targeted areas but not evenly over the entire state)
3. Oregon has areas with significant complexity that do not allow for a more general evaluation—Example: property by property values may differ due to water rights or extreme variability in values over a small area due to development pressure



Geographic Area Rate Cap Oregon FY '26

Oregon proposes that the GARC values for permanent easement offers will be 85% of the fair market value for each application based on the appraised fair market value (FMV).

It is proposed that the GARC be set at not to exceed \$5,000/ac for all enrollment types outside of the Willamette Valley. In the event there is an enrollment with a high likelihood of successful restoration that will provide habitat needs for federally listed Threatened and Endangered species within the Willamette Valley, the NTE will be \$10,000/ac. The NRCS will be responsible for making the determination of high likelihood of successful restoration. The GARC will be 85% of the FMV regardless of final dollar per acre valuation in the event there is potential for providing the habitat needs of T&E species.

Compensation for 30-yr easements and 30-yr tribal land-use contract easements will be set at 75% of the Rate Cap.

Sources and Considerations for ACEP-WRE Easement Compensation

- Our neighboring states, Washington and Idaho, are proposing the 85% FMV for their GARC for FY-26. This provides continuity for the Pacific Northwest
- Location of high priority areas that are included in Oregon's Conservation Implementation Strategies and Long-Range Plans.
- Oregon Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC) has supported the 85% FMV GARC since FY-17.

Easement Compensation

- Appraised Fair Market Value (FMV) of offered land – only the easement application's proposed boundary is appraised
- Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) is applied to FMV as determined by a professional appraisal

Appraised FMV	GARC	Permanent Easement	30 Year Easement	30 Year Contract
\$300,000	85% FMV	\$255,000	\$225,000	\$225,000

2026 WRE Ranking Pool

Ranking Pool Report

Ranking Pool Oregon FY 26 ACEP WRE GEN - DRAFT

Program ACEP-WRE

Template FY 2025 ACEP-WRE General

Last Modified By Eric Moeggenberg

Pool Status Active

Template Status Active

Last Modified 06/03/2025

Tags

National Pool No

Include States OR (Admin)





2026 WRE Ranking

Ranking Pool Report

Section: Resource		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Restored Hydrology - Future Condition - What is the extent of hydrologic restoration relative to historic conditions? Percent of the Eligible Acres on which the hydrology will be restored to historic conditions suitable for the needs of the native wetland-dependent wildlife species that occurred in the area and appropriate for the wetland functions and values that existed prior to manipulation.	90 to 100 %	50
	75 to 89 %	30
	50 to 74 %	20
	Less than 50%	0
Altered Hydrology - Present Condition - What is the degree of hydrologic alteration? Use Certified Wetland Determination or wetland inventory, with input from Resource Soil Scientist and specialists, to estimate the degree of departure from original hydrology. Choose the category representing the majority of the Eligible Acres that will have hydrology restored.	Original wetland hydrology is relatively unmodified or previous hydrologic modifications have largely deteriorated such that historic hydrology is present.	50
	Original wetland hydrology is moderately degraded or modified; or original wetland hydrology was previously restored. For example, functional, or partially functional, ditches, dikes, diversions, and tiles are affecting less than or equal to 50 percent of the Eligible Acres.	25
	Original wetland hydrology is significantly degraded or modified. For example, functional ditches, dikes, diversions, and tiles are affecting the historic hydrology.	0
Habitat for At-Risk Species - What species will benefit from the easement WRPO?	Offered acres have known use by State or Federally listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species	20
	Offered acres will restore, enhance, or create habitat for use by State or Federally listed Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate species.	10
	None of the above.	0



2026 WRE Ranking

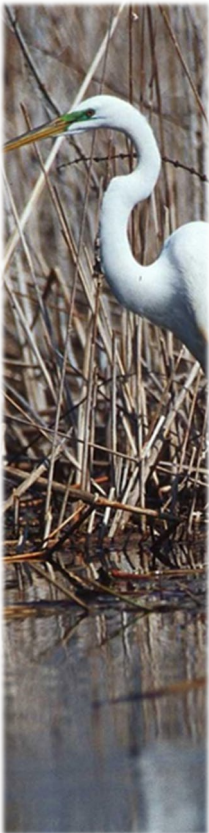
Native Plant Communities - What is the likelihood that the Total Easement Acres will return to a predominance of historic native vegetation after restoration? Take into consideration soil quality, hydrology, invasive weed vectors and existing seed bank, and logistics like plant material availability and access to site.	High Likelihood	10
	Moderate Likelihood	5
	Low Likelihood	0
Habitat Diversity - What will the post-restoration condition be within the easement? Utilize the Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States, AKA Cowardin classes. Identify the habitat types in the Prelim WRPO and the plan as existing or restored. Habitat types include Upland, Riverine, Estuarine, PFO, PEM, PSS, and Open Water.	3 or more types	5
	2 types	3
	1 type	1
Adjacent Protected Habitat - What is the proximity of proposed easement to an existing protected area? For example: other conservation easement, USFWS refuge, State or locally managed wildlife areas. List the protected areas in the Prelim WRPO.	Adjacent	15
	Less than 1 mile	10
	1 - 5 miles	5
	More than 5 miles	0
Floodplain Connectivity - Will the post restoration conditions support a functioning floodplain with river or creek having access to the floodplain?	YES	10
	NO	0
Duration of Enrollment - What will be the permanence of restored habitat?	Permanent Easement	10
	30-year Easement or 30-year Contract	5



2026 WRE Ranking

Ranking Pool Report

Section: Resource		
Question	Answer Choices	Points
Water Quality - Will the protection and restoration of offered area result in reduced transfer of pollutants, sediments, or nutrients to an adjacent water body which will result in an increase of water quality? For example, halting grazing or agricultural operations that were resulting in non-point source pollution inputs or vegetating bare soil/riparian areas.	YES	10
	NO	0
Carbon Sequestration - Will the restoration and management result in the establishment of permanent cover that will provide for long term carbon sequestration? For example, there will be minimal soil disturbance, low inputs from equipment, and establishment of woody trees or permanent grass stands.	YES	10
	NO	0
Climate Resiliency - Will the protection and restoration provide for climate resiliency and will the site be able to be specifically monitored and managed for climate resiliency?	YES	10
	NO	0





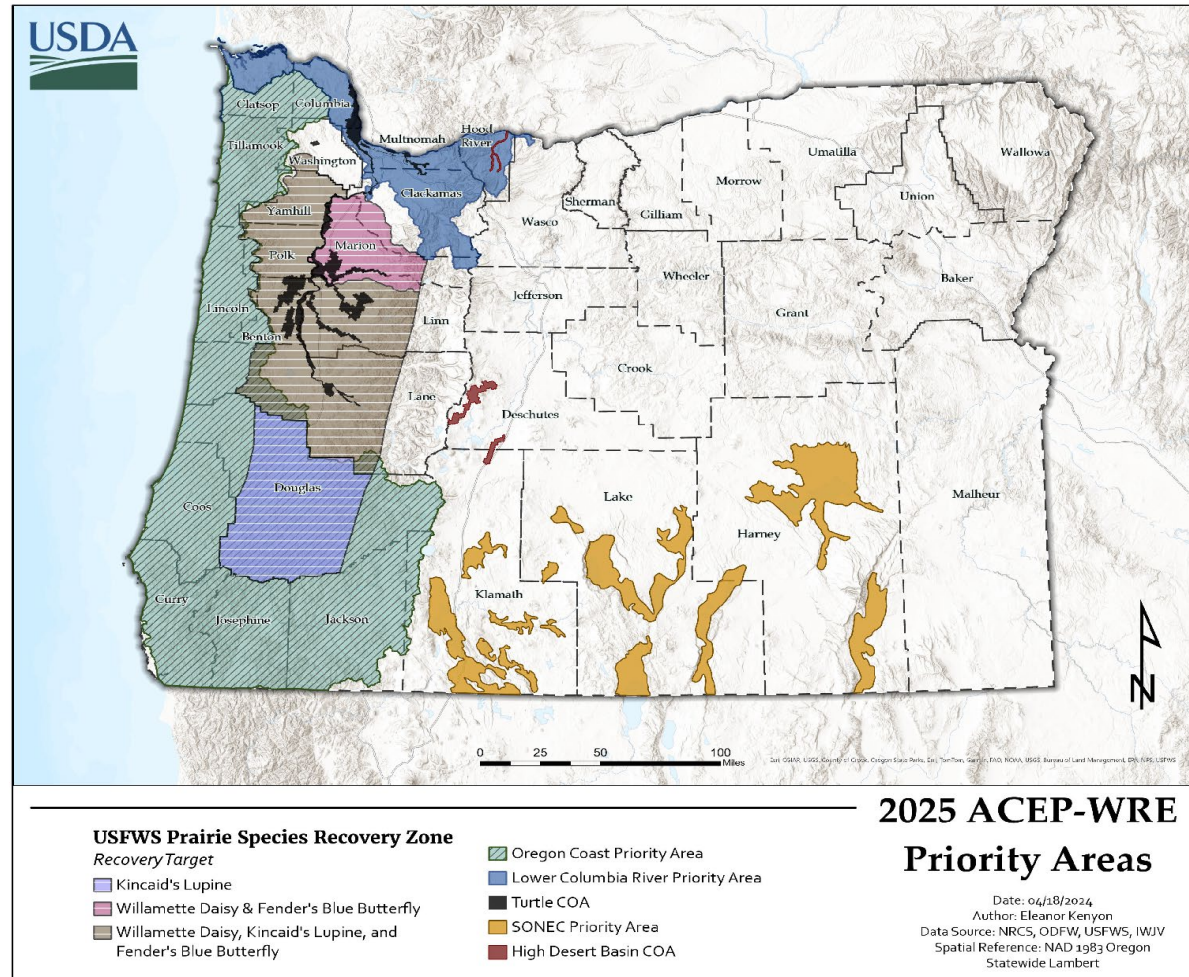
ACEP-WRE Priority Areas FY26



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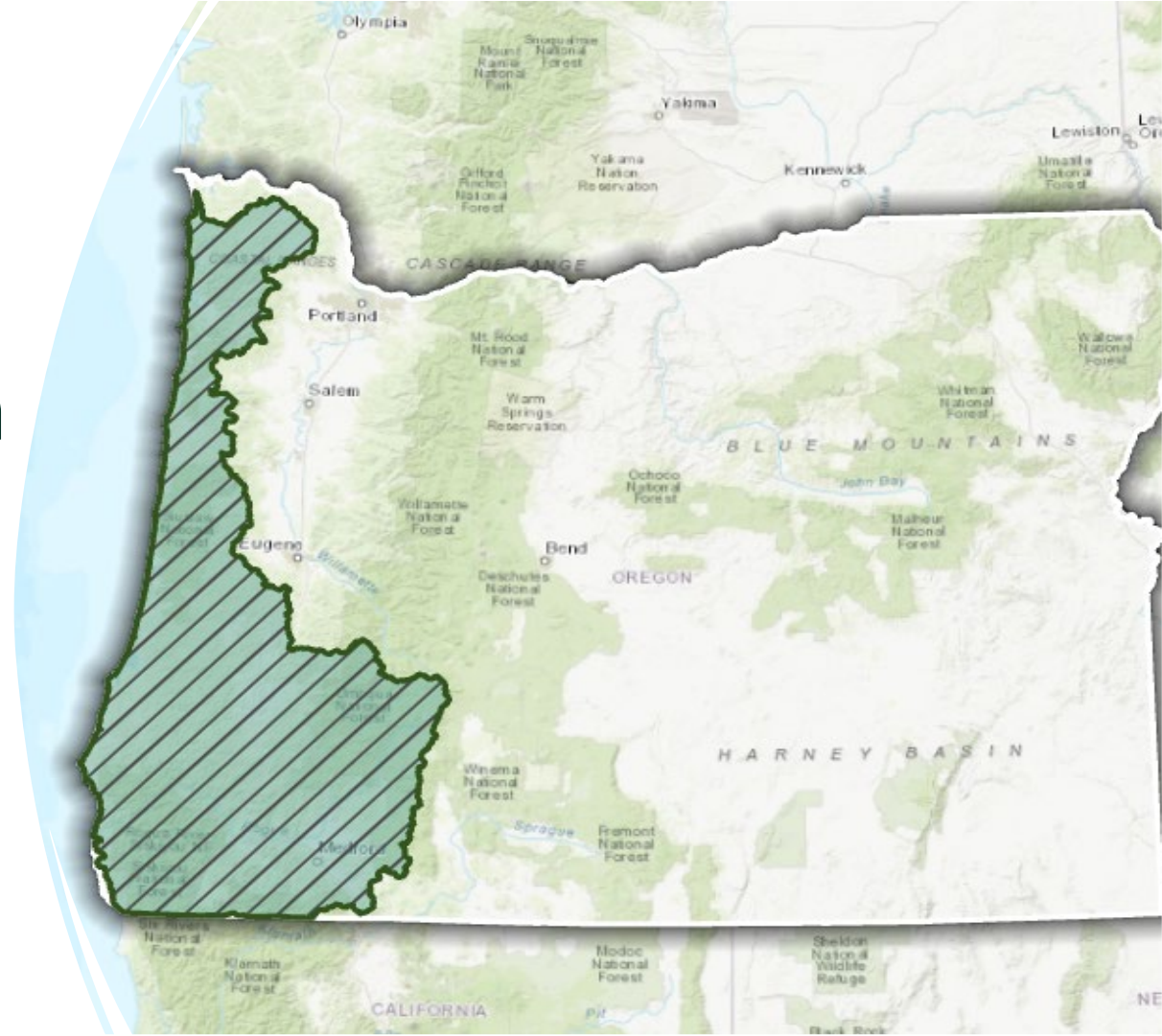


2026 ACEP WRE Ranking Priority Areas



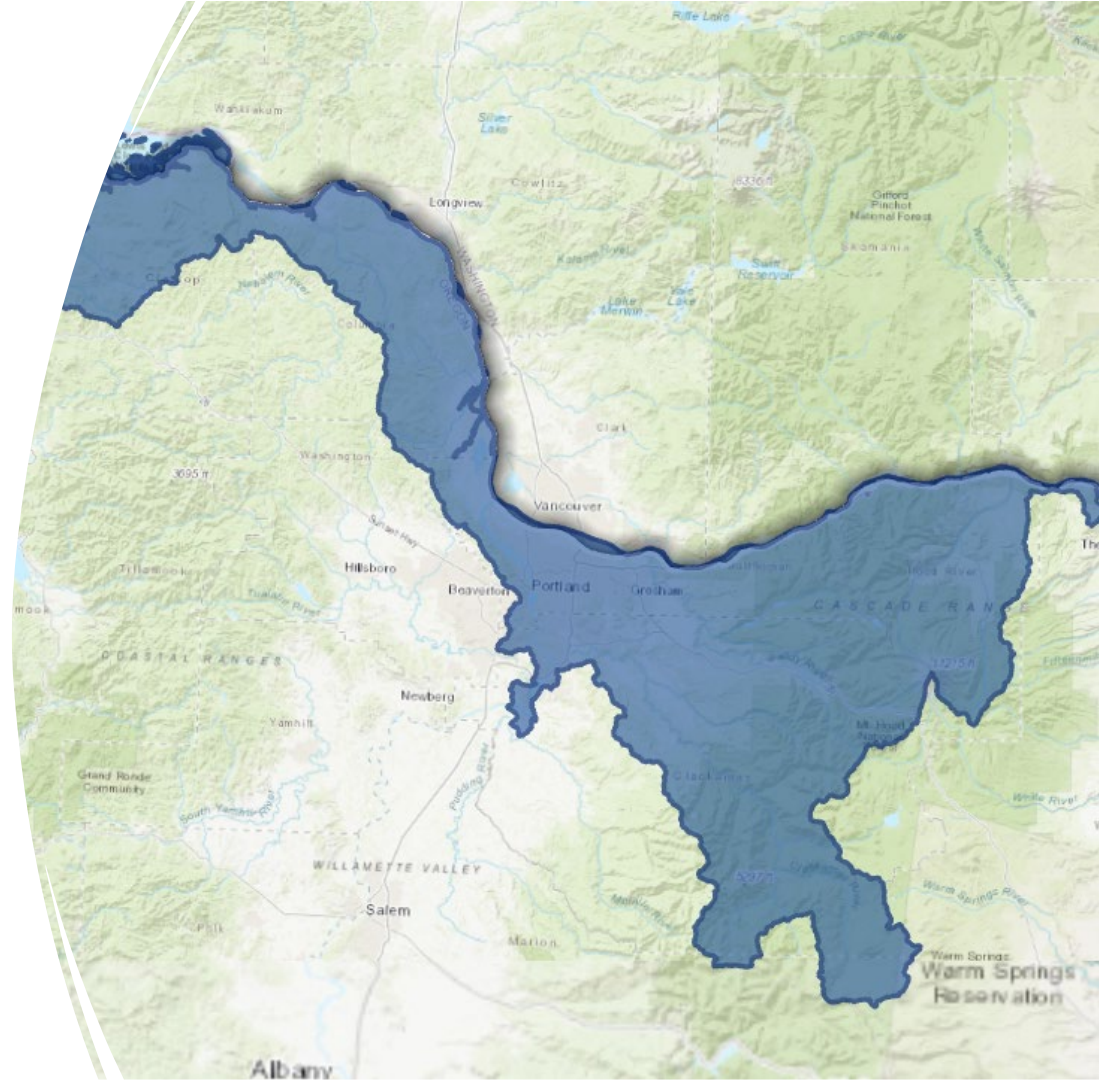
Coastal Priority Area

COHO Salmon



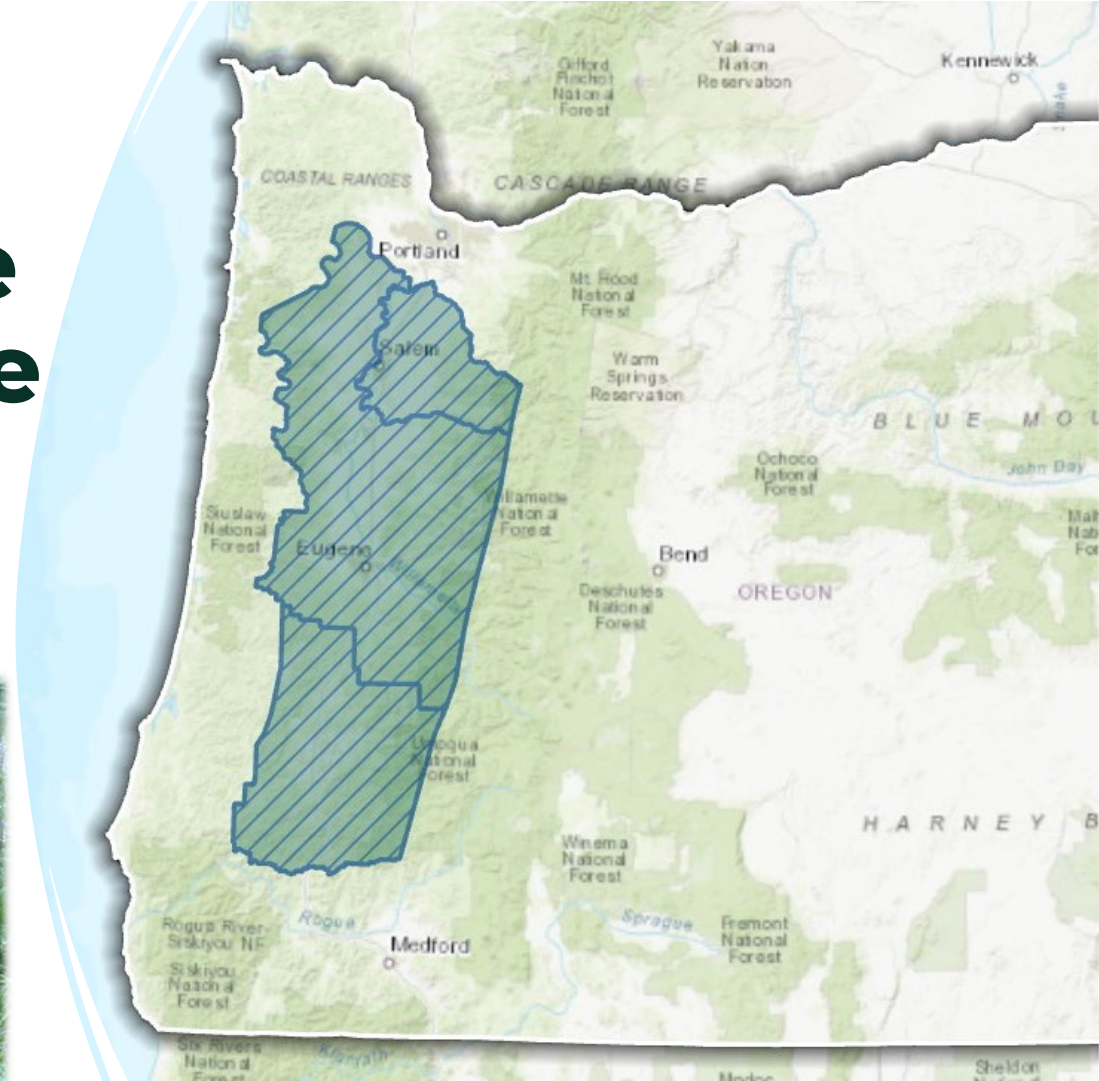
Lower Columbia River

- Chinook
- Coho
- Steelhead



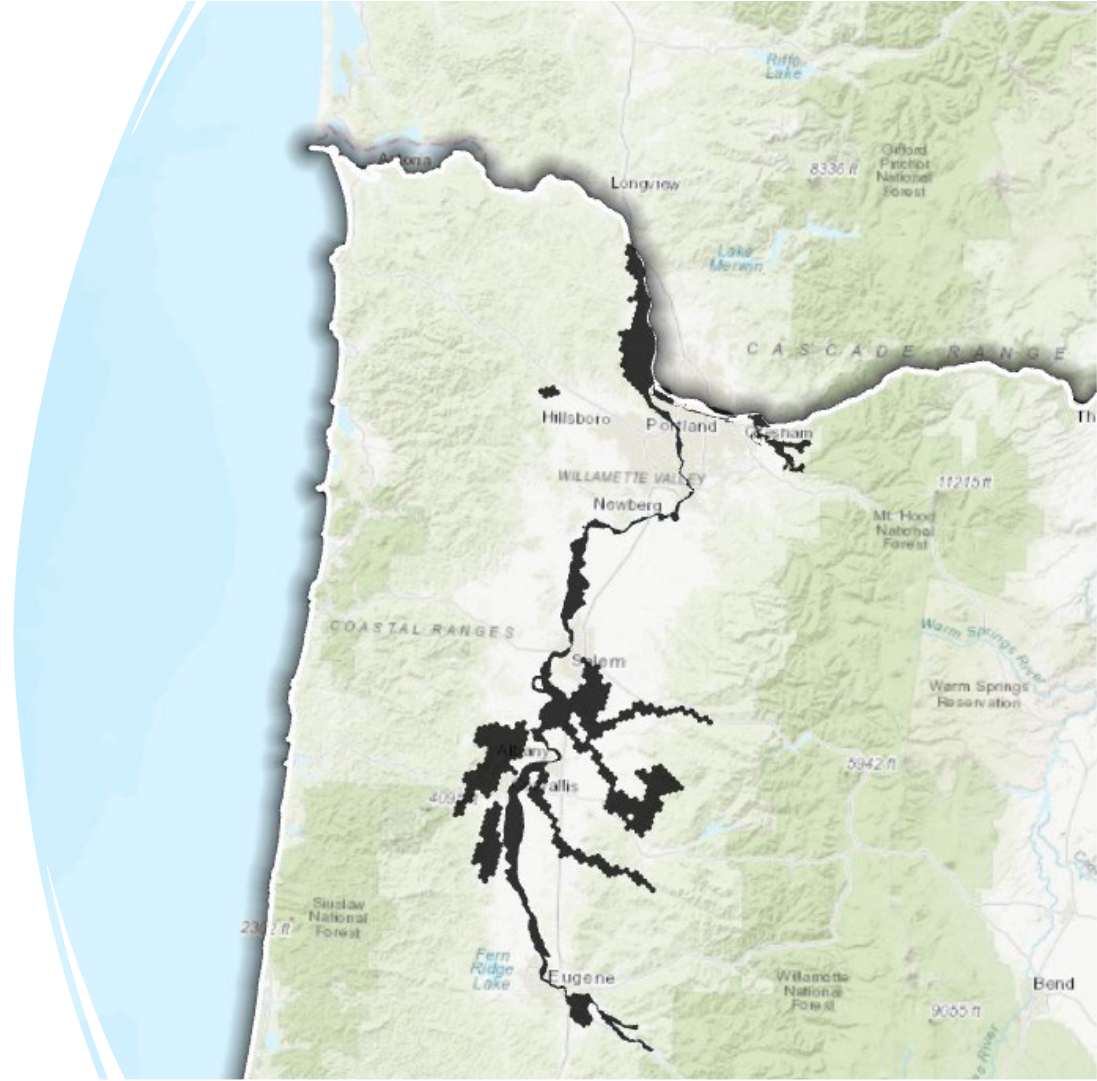
USFWS Prairie Recovery Zone

- Willamette Daisy
- Fender's Blue Butterfly
- Kincaid's Lupine



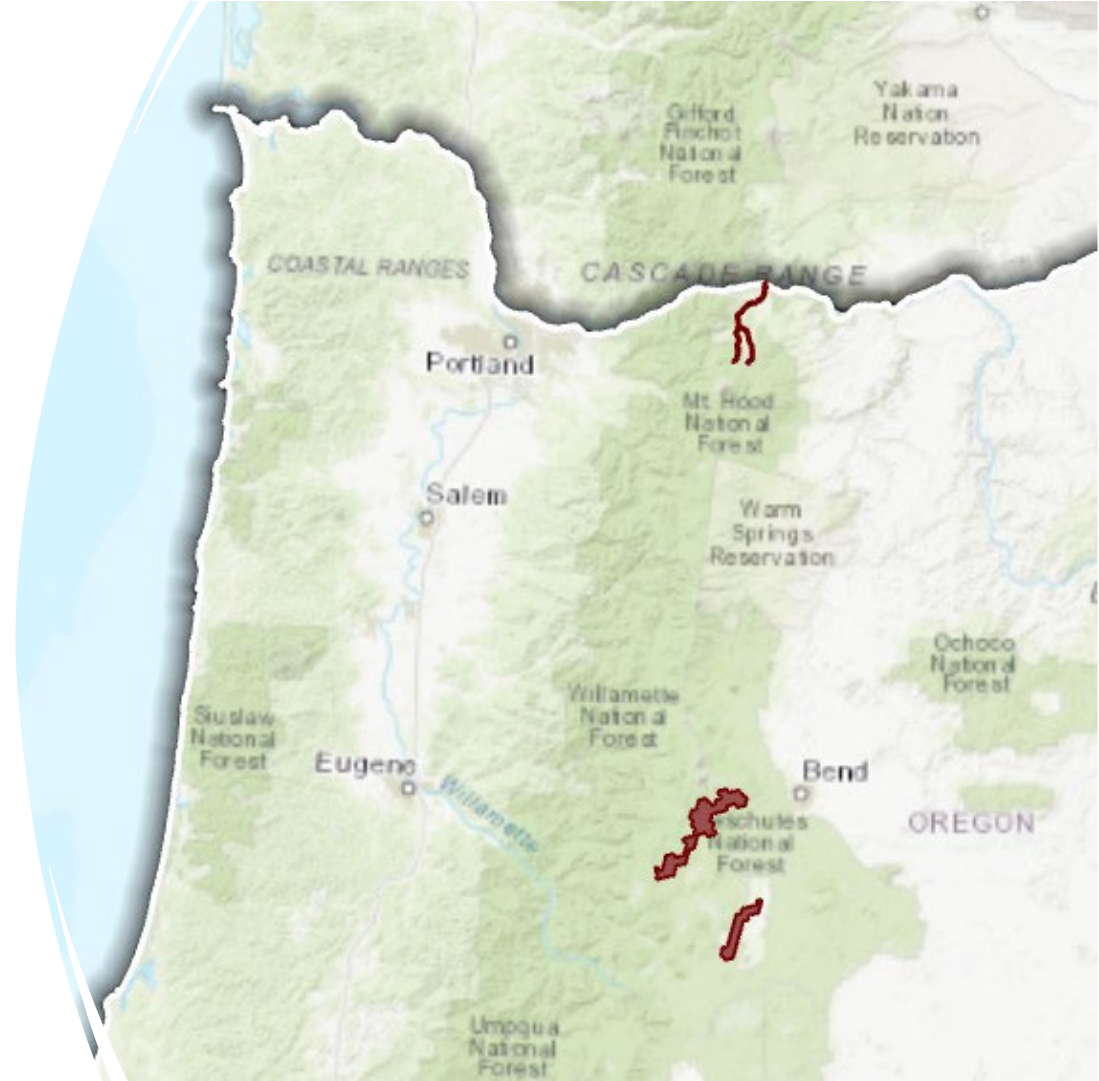
USFWS Turtle Recovery Zone

- Western Pond Turtle
- Northern Painted Turtle



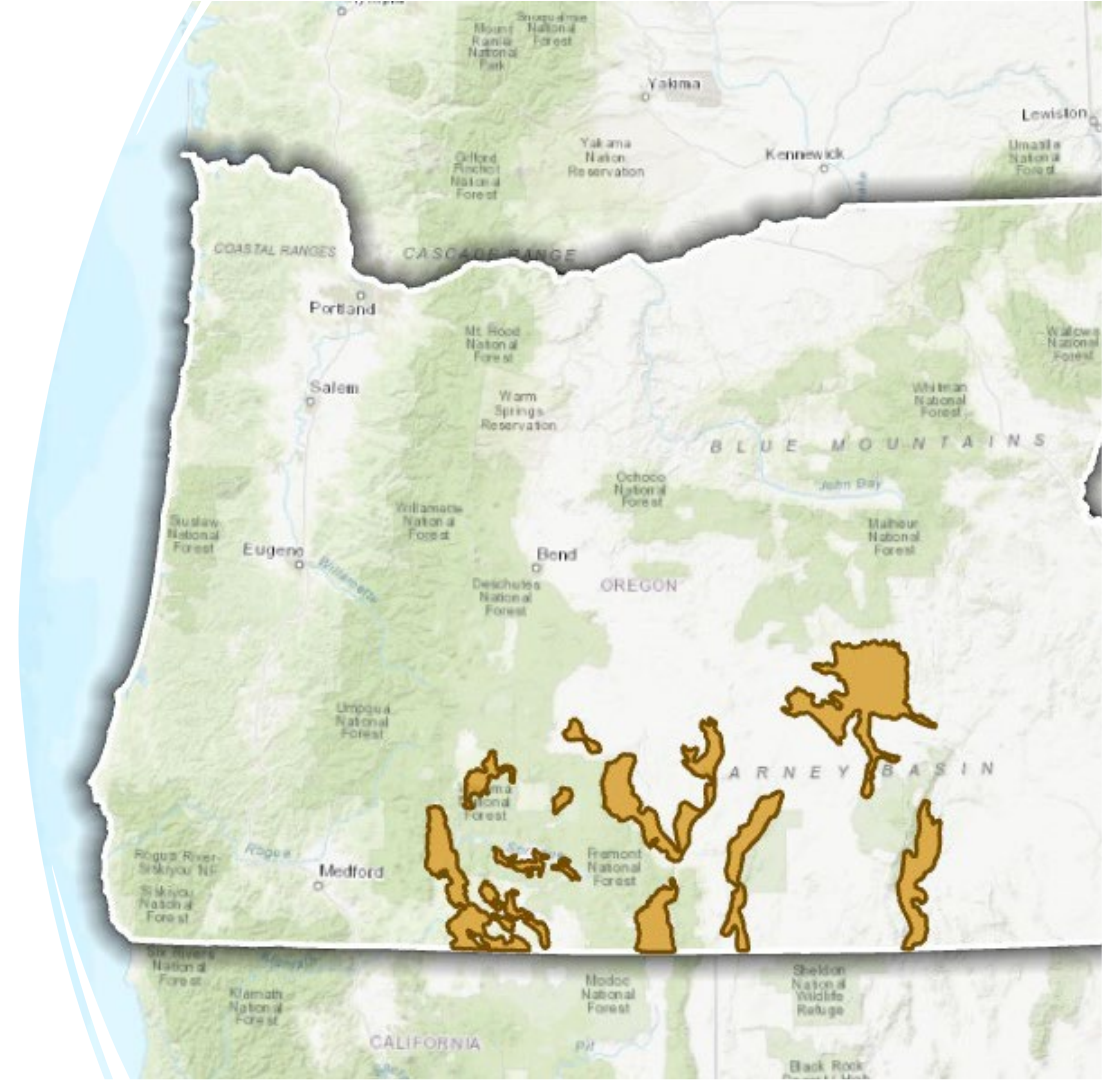
High Desert ODFW - Conservation Area of Opportunity

- Maintain or enhance in-channel function
- Maintain or restore riparian habitat
- Maintain or restore wetland & wet meadows
 - Hood River
 - Central Cascades
 - Little Deschutes River



SONEC Priority Area

- Working wet meadows for migrant dependent waterfowl





Questions?



Comments?



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

OTAC July 2025

Matt Penberthy, ALE Program Coordinator

Eric Moeggenberg, State Easement Program Manager



Topics Covered

- ACEP-ALE Purpose and Basics
- Closed ALE/ALE-like contracts and Active Parcel Contracts
- FY-25 ACEP-ALE Applications
- FY-26 ACEP-ALE General Enrollment Ranking Updates
- FY-26 ACEP-ALE Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance Updates

ACEP-ALE

Program Purpose: In summary - places an easement on the property to protect from non-agricultural uses

“To protect the agricultural use and future viability, and related conservation values, of eligible land by limiting nonagricultural uses of that land that negatively affect the agricultural uses and conservation values; and protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring or conserving eligible land.”

Program Basics:

- Requires an Eligible Entity (land trust, SWCD, Tribe, etc.) to apply, acquire, and manage the easement in perpetuity.
- NRCS can provide up to 50% cost-share assistance for the purchase of easement, paid to the Entity. GSS can provide up to 75% cost-share assistance.
- Entities are required to provide match funding for the purchase of the easement which can include philanthropic foundation grants, private donations, landowner donation of land value, and state government grants (i.e. OAHP)
- Applications typically batched in fall > if eligible, obligated following summer > may close anytime after that, dependent on Entity and EAB efficiency. Total process could be 3-6 years from application to easement closing. Management (monitoring, enforcement) in perpetuity by Entity.



Closed ALE / ALE-like Easements and Active Parcel Contracts





Closed Easements

Total closed easements: 13

- 4 ACEP-ALE
- 5 FRPP
- 4 RCPP-EHE

Total acres protected to date: 57,573.82



Active Parcel Contracts

Active Parcel Contract:

An eligible application that has been obligated funding becomes a Parcel Contract. Parcel contracts are active for 3 fiscal years from obligation with 2, 12-month extensions available.

Totals:

- 11 Parcel Contracts
 - FY-21 – 1
 - FY-22 – 6
 - FY-23 – 3
 - FY-24 - 1
- 12,021.50 acres
- Federal share obligated: \$8,602,253.00



ACEP-ALE: FY-25 Applications



FY-25 Application Overview

Initial ALE allocation: \$1,100,00 (IRA: ~\$5,900,000)

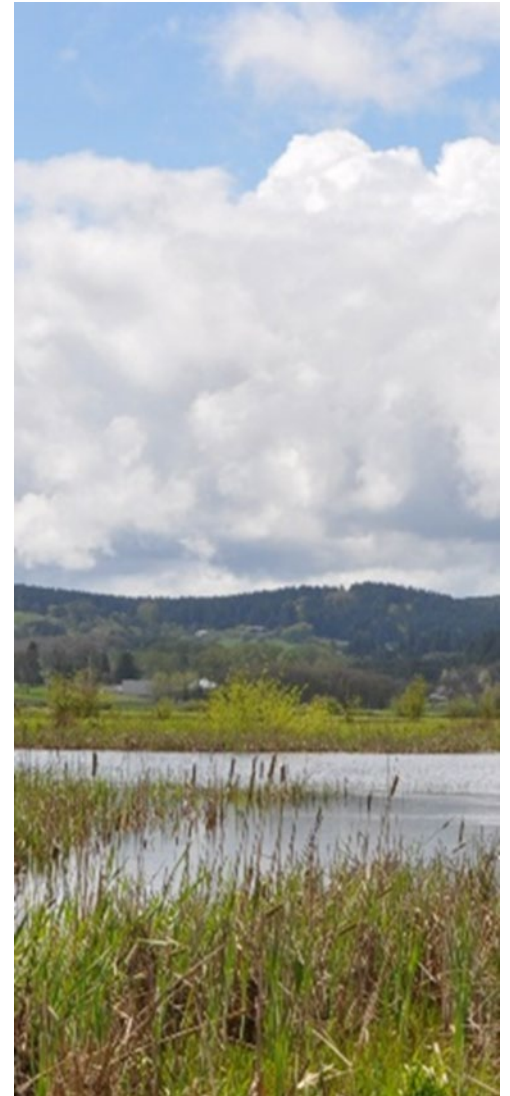
Application Totals:

- 9 applications
 - 4 General (50% Cost-Share)
 - 5 Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance (GSS, 75% Cost-Share)
- 24,270.52 acres
- Federal share requested: \$16,877,103.00

3 applications moving forward as of June 2025.

- Offered acres: 4,121.24
- Federal share: \$2,455,660

5 applications deferred to FY-26.



FY-24 Review and FY26 Projection

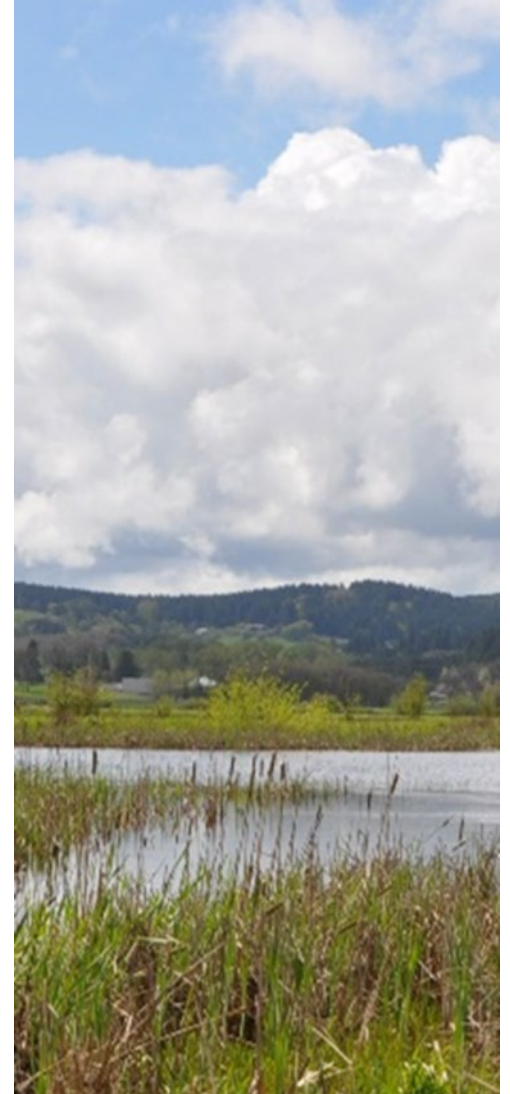
FY-24 Initial ALE allocation: \$1,100,00

FY-24 Applications:

- 4 applications
- 6929 acres
- Federal share requested: \$3,785,110
- Awarded/Obligated amount: 1 Contract, \$308,550

FY-26 Projection:

- 7-10 applications (including 2 RCPP-EHE)
- 19,801 acres or more
- Federal share requested ~\$13,506,143.00 or more



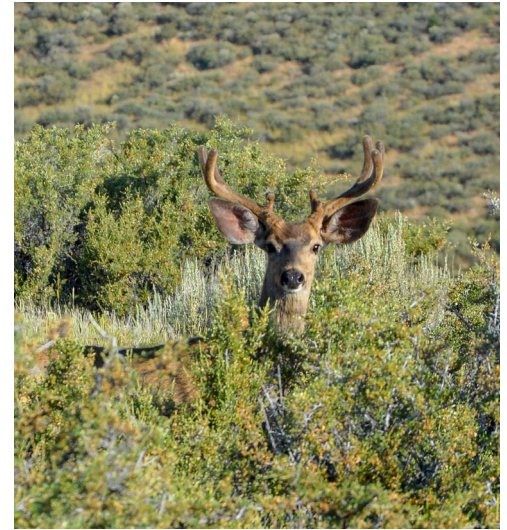


ACEP-ALE: FY-26 Ranking Updates



FY-26 Ranking Updates

- State (Resource) Ranking Criteria are allowed to be edited each FY. The specific question, answers, and ranking points can each be edited.
 - Points can total 200 at the **maximum**
- National (Program) Ranking Criteria are determined by NHQ. Points can be edited by the state each FY.
 - Points can total 200 at the **minimum**
- ACEP staff have held multiple meetings to review criteria. Staff have reviewed what is allowable by policy, other states' criteria, and researched the latest information related to criteria. Specifically, staff reviewed for:
 - Duplicative or multi-pronged questions that could be cut / simplified.
 - New information regarding priority areas and conservation strategies (SONEC, CIS, OWEB FIPs, ODFW COAs, Sage Grouse Priority Areas)



National Criteria

1. Based on enrollment type
 - A) Percent of prime, unique, and important farmland soils in the parcel to be protected.
 - B) Percent of grazing land, range land on the parcel to be protected.
2. Percent of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland in the parcel to be protected.
3. Ratio of the total acres of land in the parcel to be protected to average farm size in the county.
4. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of permanent grassland, pasture, and rangeland, other than cropland and woodland pasture, in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Ag Censuses.
5. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Ag Censuses.
6. Percent population growth in the county.

Continued on next slide



National Criteria

7. Population density (population per square mile) in the county.
8. Existence of a farm or ranch succession plan or similar plan established to address farm viability for future generations.
9. Proximity of the parcel to other protected land (multiple examples).
10. Proximity of the parcel to other agricultural operations and agricultural infrastructure.
11. Parcel ability to maximize the protection of contiguous or proximal acres devoted to agricultural use.
12. Land is currently enrolled in CRP in a contract that is set to expire within one year and is grassland that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement.
13. Land is grassland of special environmental significance that would benefit from protection under a long-term easement.
14. Percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement that is the eligible entities own cash resources for payment of easement compensation to the landowner and comes from sources other than the landowner.

State Criteria

1. **Revised** - Parcel is located in an Exclusive Farm Use zone.
2. **No change** - Property is within 3 miles of an Oregon population center (an Incorporated City or a Census Designated Place).
3. **No change** - Eligible entity has demonstrated performance in managing and enforcing easements by monitoring 95 percent or more of its easements each year
4. **Revised** – Proximity of the parcel to USFWS Designated Critical Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species.
5. **Revised** – Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of a NRCS Basin Conservation Implementation Strategy or within NRCS OR ACEP ALE Priority Area Maps (IWJV SONEC Spring Waterbird Priority Area, Mid-Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment).
6. **Revised** - Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of the 2023 ODFW Sage Grouse Habitat Map (core or low-density) and the parcel contains beneficial habitat to Sage Grouse.
7. **Revised** – Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of OWEB Focused Investment Priority - Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat and the parcel contains such habitat.



State Criteria

- 8. No change** - Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of an ODFW Conservation Opportunity Area.
- 9. No change but deleted a duplicative question** - Parcel contains historical or archaeological resources that will be protected by easement as described in 440.528.33 (Documentation must be provided to receive these points.)
- 10. Revised** – Does one or more eligible landowner(s) meet the definition per CPM440.528.190.
- 11. Revised** – Proximity of the parcel to shipping, processing, and farm market locations.
- 12. New** – In the past 5 fiscal years, the Eligible Entity has closed on ACEP-ALE funded easements within 24 months from obligation on average.

Details are available on the next slides as to why these changes are proposed.

State (Resource) Question #1

FY-25	Proposed FY-26
The location of a parcel in an area zoned for agricultural use. Parcel is located within agricultural zone, and is in the proximity of the other agricultural operations	Parcel is located in an Exclusive Farm Use zone.

Answers and Points remain the same:

Yes – 10

No – 0

Justification:

The previous question was two questions in one that asked the same thing. The edit specifies the question to the appropriate planning classification used in Oregon to protect farmland – Exclusive Farm Use.

State (Resource) Question #2 & 3

ACEP Staff did not make changes to these questions in FY-26:

2) Property is within 3 miles of an Oregon population center (an Incorporated City or a Census Designated Place). https://redistricting-geo.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/geo::cities-and-census-designated-places-2020/explore No change	YES	20
	NO	0
3) Eligible entity has demonstrated performance in managing and enforcing easements by monitoring 95 percent or more of its easements each year. No change	YES	15
	NO	0

State (Resource) Question #4

FY-25	FY-26
Proximity of Parcel to other permanently protected local, regional, state and federal lands such as parks, natural areas, forests, and grasslands that contributes to the habitat needs of species of concern in area. Includes other non-public permanently protected conservation lands such as a land trusts lands. Attach map of protected area in proximity to parcel, list species and habitat types, and describe needs being met by protecting the parcel and by being in close proximity to other protected parcel.	Proximity of the parcel to USFWS Designated Critical Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species. https://fws.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=9d8de5e265ad4fe09893cf75b8dbfb77
Answers and points: Within a ¼ mile – 25 Within a ½ mile – 15 Greater than a ½ mile - 0	Answers and points: Less than or equal to a ½ mile – 25 Greater than a ½ mile but less than or equal to 1 mile – 15 Greater than 1 mile - 0

Justification:

The FY-25 version is two questions in one. It also duplicates a national question (#10 above) asking about proximity to other protected land. However, the heart of the question is asking about at-risk species presence. The suggested FY-26 change asks for the core information about at-risk species habitat. The suggested FY-26 change is the same as NRCS-WA General ALE Ranking Criteria as well. Answers were changed expand the distance from a ½ mile to 1 mile.

State (Resource) Question #5

FY-25

Parcel is wholly within boundaries of **NRCS-OR Conservation Implementation Strategy** or within NRCS OR ACEP ALE Priority Area Maps (IWJV SONEC Spring Waterbird Priority Area, Mid-Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment)

FY-26

Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of a **NRCS Basin Conservation Implementation Strategy** or within NRCS OR ACEP ALE Priority Area Maps (IWJV SONEC Spring Waterbird Priority Area, Mid-Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment)

Answers and Points remain the same:

Yes – 30

No – 0

Justification:

Suggested FY-26 change made to further specify if the parcel falls within a Basin CIS rather than a statewide CIS.

State (Resource) Question #6

FY-25

Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of the SageCon Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan
<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/lit>

FY-26

Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of the SageCon Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan **and the parcel contains beneficial habitat to Sage Grouse**
https://hub.oregonexplorer.info/datasets/18951af9c9704feba45ee2befb2e6f91_58/explore?location=42.955865%2C-120.092129%2C7.91

Answers and Points remain the same:

Yes – 15

No – 0

Justification:

Adding the habitat qualifier to the question will help ensure that the enrolled parcel meets the goals of the Action Plan and is providing multifunctional conservation benefits as outlined in ACEP-ALE policy. This Y/N question would be supplemented by a question on the Parcel Application Packet asking the entity to describe, in addition to the land cover map, the habitat on the parcel to be protected.

State (Resource) Question #7

FY-25

Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of OWEB Focused Investment Priority - Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat.

FY-26

Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of OWEB Focused Investment Priority - Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat **and the parcel contains such habitat**

Answers and Points remain the same:

Yes – 15

No – 0

Justification:

Adding the habitat qualifier to the question will help ensure that the enrolled parcel meets the goals of the FIP and is providing multifunctional conservation benefits as outlined in ACEP-ALE policy. This question would be supplemented by a question on the Parcel Application Packet asking the entity to describe, in addition to the land cover map, the habitat on the parcel to be protected.

State (Resource) Question #8

ACEP Staff did not make changes to this questions in FY-26:

8) Parcel is partially or wholly within boundaries of ODFW Conservation Opportunity Areas https://www.oregonconservationstrategy.org/conservation-opportunity-areas/ <div>No change</div>	YES	15
	NO	0

State (Resource) Question #9

ACEP Staff did not make changes to this questions in FY-26:

9) Parcel contains historical or archaeological resources that will be protected by easement as described in 440.528.33 (Documentation must be provided to receive these points). <i>No change (but deleted a duplicative question)</i>	YES	15
	NO	0

However, ACEP staff deleted a duplicative question:

“Parcel is identified as a historically or culturally significant such as a Century Farm, located on the Oregon Trail, or in an Area of local Tribal significance, identified by a local Tribe through a letter to the Eligible Entity and NRCS.”

Justification:

Question 9 is the standard question that National recommends for awarding points for historical or archeological resources, which includes resources that the previous question called out. It awarded duplicative points essentially.

Note:

To receive these ranking points, Entities are required to include provisions in the easement deed regarding protection and stewardship of historic resources. This is true whether they apply for the Historic resource's eligibility category or not.

State (Resource) Question #10

FY-25

Does one or more eligible landowner(s) meet the definition of a historically underserved producer

FY-26

Does one or more eligible landowner(s) meet the definition per CPM440.528.190

Answers and Points remain the same:

Yes – 15

No – 0

Justification:

Removed the phrase historically underserved to prevent scrutiny from National. NRCS-WA has done the same.

State (Resource) Question #11

FY-25	FY-26
Proximity of the Parcel to other agricultural operations - access to markets and infrastructure	Proximity of the parcel to shipping, processing, and farm market locations

Answers and Points remain the same:

Within 10 miles or less of parcel	10
Within 11-50 miles of parcel	7
Within 50 - 100 miles of parcel	5
Greater than 100 miles of parcel	0

Justification:

Specifying “markets and infrastructure” aims to improve accuracy of information received from the Entity.

State (Resource) Question #12 - **NEW**

Question:

In the past 5 fiscal years, the Entity has closed ACEP-ALE funded easements within 24 months from obligation on average.

Answers and Points:

Yes – 15

No – 0

Justification:

- ACEP/RCPP generally require 50% funding match from the Entities. While this is required at the time of application, the 2018 Farm Bill removed the “teeth” in policy: required documentation to prove match funding. Entities now simply check a box on the 41A that they have match funds available.
- Once obligated, Parcel Contracts are active for three fiscal years. If the easement is not closed in that time, Entities can request up to two 12-month extensions. The majority of OR Parcel Contracts have needed extensions.
- In Fall 2024, ACEP staff and EAB discussed why OR Parcel Contracts continue to need extensions. Entities are not applying to ACEP-ALE with match funding for various reasons. Primarily, the state funding match, Oregon Ag Heritage Program (OAHP), is inconsistently funded.

State (Resource) Question #12 – **NEW**

Justification continued:

- This funding issue is not necessarily to an Entity's fault. However, incorporating this question may motivate some entities to obtain match funding before applying to ACEP-ALE. Doing so may help their **closing efficiency**.
- The national average to close on an ALE is 24 months from obligation.
- **Closing efficiency** is an allowable ranking criterion per policy. Further, closing efficiency is an eligibility requirement to become a Certified Entity within the ACEP-ALE program (Title 440 M Part 528.71(2)).
 - If an Entity would like to become certified, it behooves them to work efficiently now to become eligible for certification.



ACEP-ALE: Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance Update



New ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: GSS Overview

What is ACEP-ALE-GSS?

- Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance is an enrollment option that allows up to a 75% cost-share of the easement purchase. With the higher cost-share comes more stringent eligibility, deed terms, and entity responsibilities in managing the easement.
- Policy Definition “Grassland of special environmental significance, which is defined in 7 CFR Section 1468.3 as grasslands that contain **little or no noxious or invasive species**, as designated or defined by State or Federal law; are subject to the threat of conversion to non-grassland uses or fragmentation; and the land is—
 - Rangeland, pastureland, shrubland, or wet meadows on which the vegetation is dominated by native grasses, grass-like plants, shrubs, or forbs; or is improved, naturalized pastureland, rangeland, or wet meadows.
 - And the land provides, or could provide, habitat for threatened or endangered species or at-risk species, protects sensitive or declining native prairie or grassland types or grasslands buffering wetlands, or provides protection of highly sensitive natural resources as identified by the State”
- ACEP-ALE-GSS does not allow forestland or cropland, even if either are used for grazing purposes.
Eligibility is based on land cover/type, not land use.

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Need and Purpose

Need:

- Entity applicants do not have clear guidance to understand what GSS priorities are
- Onsite GSS determinations take NRCS State and Basin coordination to complete in a timely fashion before/during the application period.
- National reviewers have been increasingly scrutinizing land eligibility for GSS application (in several states, not just OR).

Purpose:

- The map would indicate which areas NRCS-OR will prioritize review of onsite eligibility of the offered easement area.
 - If no portion of the easement area touches the boundary of the map, NRCS will process the application but it will not be prioritized due to geospatial applicability when ranking.
- Entities can use the map to identify priority conservation areas and opportunities for outreach to landowners.

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Development Context

Summer 2024: ACEP staff began discussing map ideas with Soils/GIS team last summer. Researched NRCS-WA GSS map development process and met with WA to learn what datasets they chose and why.

Fall 2024: Continued to research the appropriate datasets with Soils/GIS and West National Tech Center. Narrowed down which to incorporate.

Winter 2024-25: Paused progress due to ALE application processing

Spring 2025: Reconvened, decided on which datasets and what subsets of data to include. Developed Draft Version 1. Identified gaps in SW OR and Coast, created Draft Version 2.

Contributors:

Steve Campbell, Soil Scientist, West National Technology Support Center

Marty Chaney, Pasture Management Specialist, NRCS-WA

Erik Dahlke, Soil Data Quality Specialist, NRCS-WA

Carlee Elliott, Easement Programs Manager, NRCS-WA

Supriya Kukreti, GIS Specialist, NRCS-OR

Kari Litrell, State Rangeland and Grazing Management Specialist, NRCS-OR

Sarah Michehl, State GIS Coordinator, NRCS-OR

Eric Moeggenberg, Easement Programs Manager, NRCS-OR

Matt Penberthy, ALE Program Coordinator, NRCS-OR

Jericho Winter, State Soil Scientist, NRCS-OR



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Next Steps

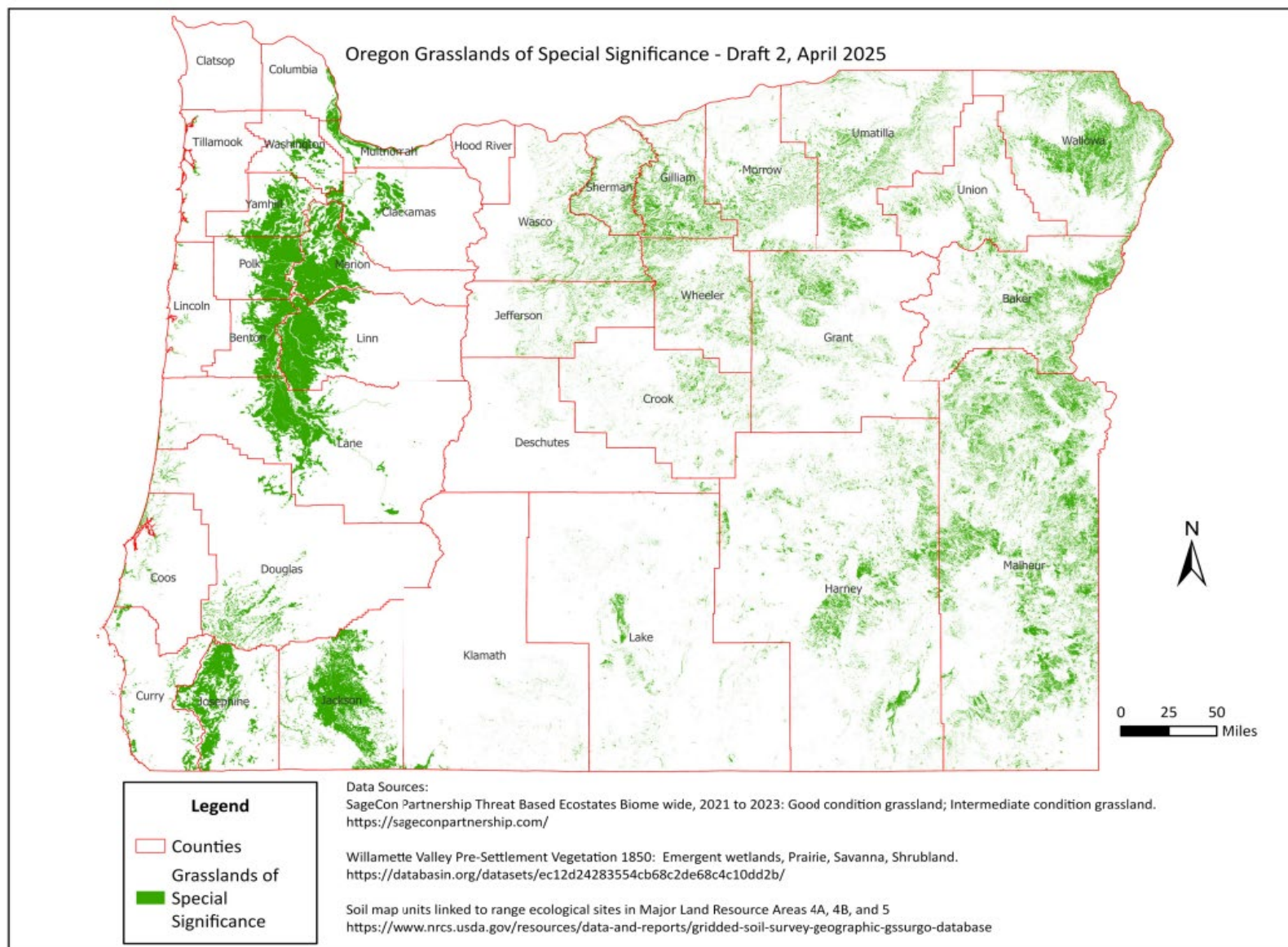
Convening a Working Group to help finalize the GSS map. Working group includes NRCS-OR contributors mentioned previously in addition to several Field Office staff.

If you are interested to learn more about the Working Group and provide feedback on a final version, please contact Eric and Matt:

eric.moeggenberg@usda.gov

matthew.penberthy@usda.gov

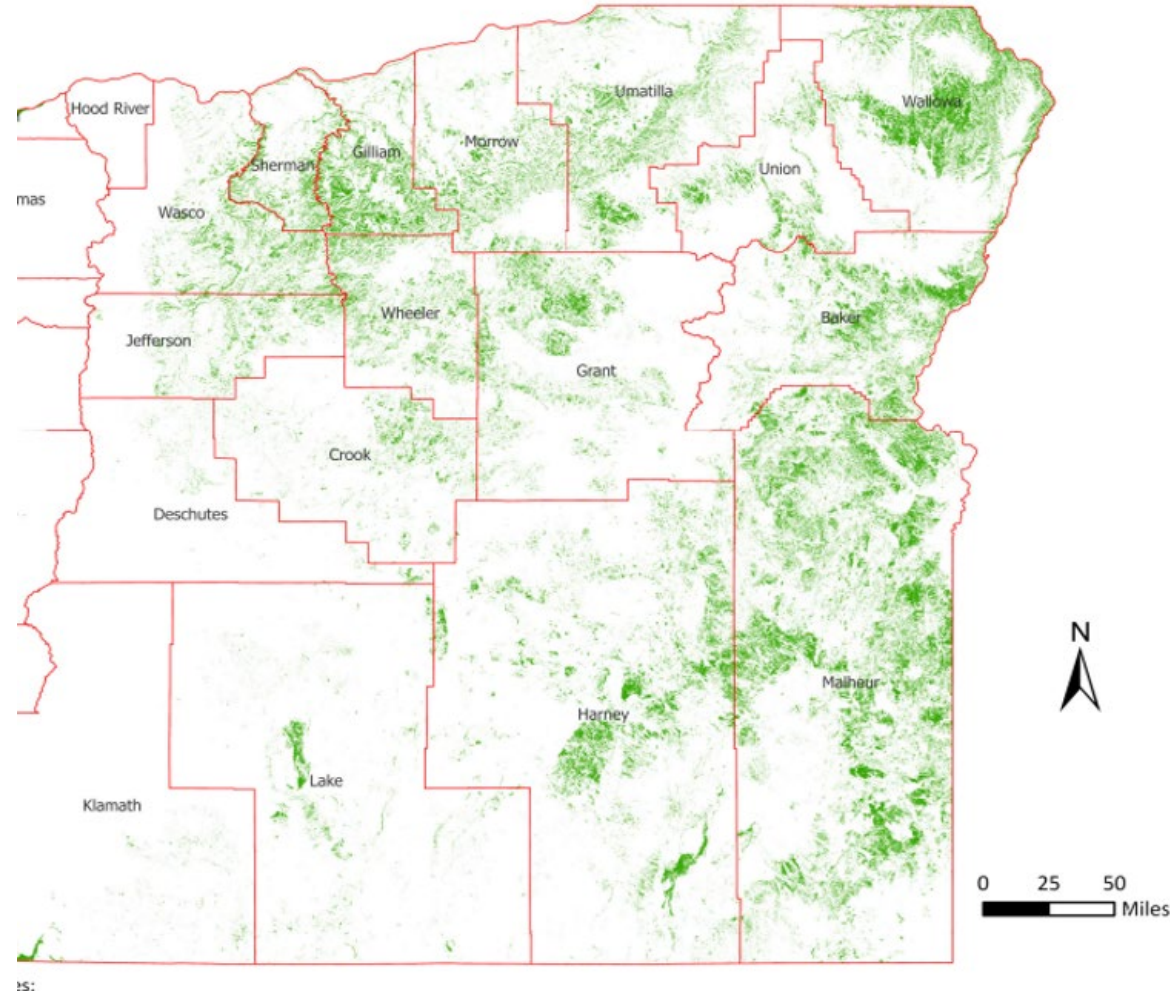
ACEP-ALE-GSS Draft Version 2





ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Eastern Oregon

Grasslands of Special Significance - Draft 2, April 2025



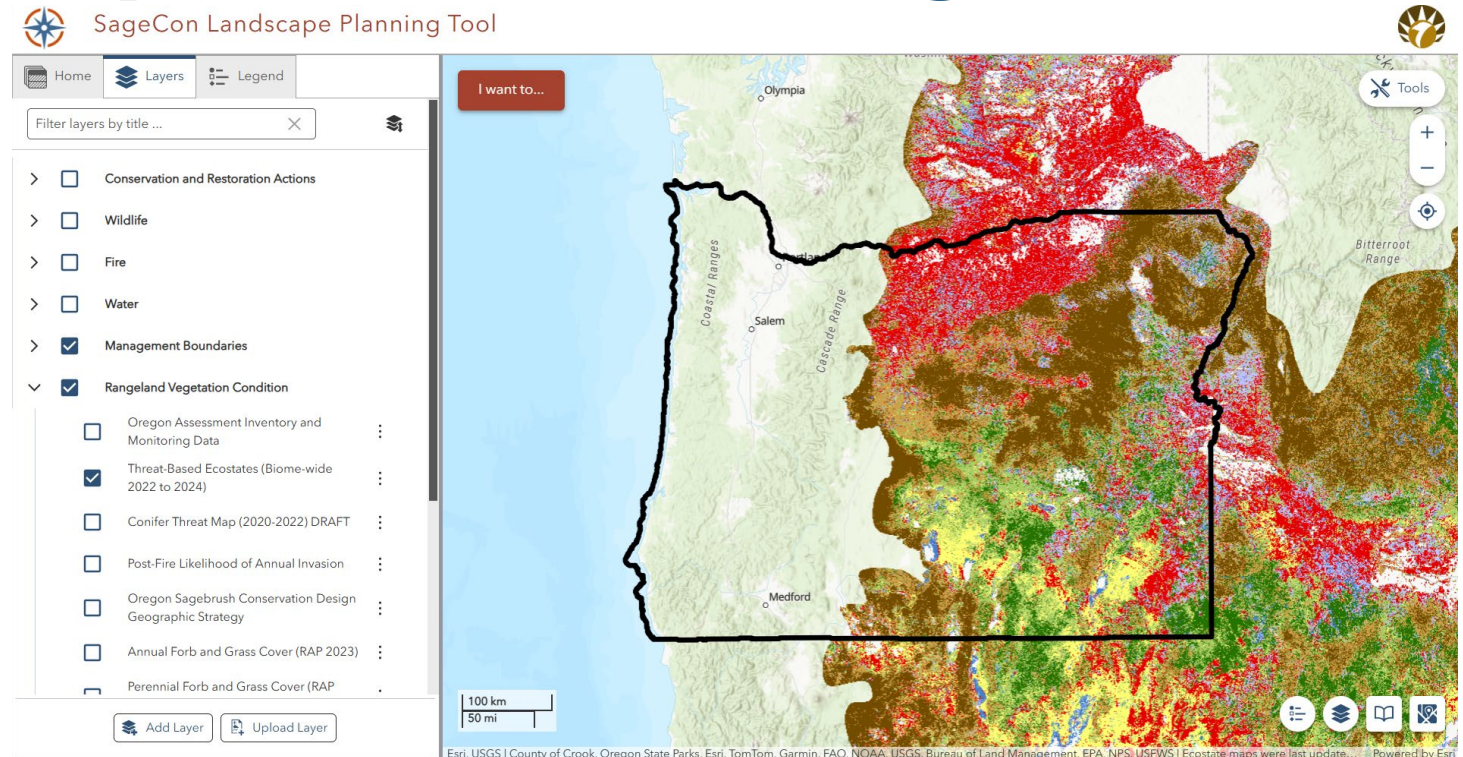
ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Eastern Oregon

Dataset:

Threat-based Ecostate Map, Ver. 3, produced by the Institute for Natural Resources at OSU.

Summary:

Provides a spatial depiction of rangeland condition across public and private land in eastern Oregon and across the sagebrush biome. Rangeland condition is described by ecological states (ecostates) that express current vegetation composition and level of threat from invasive annual grasses, wildfire, and juniper encroachment based on the cover of key rangeland functional groups and the severity of threats present.



Reference Links:

Main PDF, additional links included:

https://oe.oregonexplorer.info/externalcontent/sagecon/Ecostate_Time_Series_Map_v4_Documentation_2025.pdf

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Eastern Oregon

Threat-based Ecostate Map, Ver. 3

Map Data Origin:

- Data for this map originally comes from the Rangeland Analysis Platform. The RAP includes satellite imagery and thousands of ground measurements. The RAP is updated annually.
- Each pixel from the annual RAP datasets (which are images called rasters) represents a 30m x 30m square of land - an area roughly the size of a baseball diamond.

Map Methodology (how the map was produced):

- Averages the RAP data over three years to produce a map for the current year. For example, Version 3 averages data from 2021-2023 to produce the map for 2024.
 - Why? This method accounts for season-to-season variability in plant growth
- Removed areas of crop production and human development. This is ideal for GSS use as GSS does not allow crop production.
- OSU updates the map each year with the latest 3-year averages. Version 4 was published after we produced Draft 2 of the GSS map.

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Eastern Oregon

Threat-based Ecostate Map, Ver. 3

Map is best used for:

- Analyzing long-term trends and landscape scale planning. **This works well for the GSS map because we are not automatically considering something eligible if it is within the GSS boundary. This helps identify prioritize sites which NRCS-OR will ground-truth by conducting an onsite determination.**

Map limitations / should not be used for:

- Short-term or very site-specific planning. This is not the intended use for GSS in Oregon.
- A note about south facing slopes: Annual invasive grasses are spreading quickly up south facing slopes. Scientists have ground-truthed the map and have revealed, in some areas, south facing slopes are natural community types with lower veg cover and more bare ground.
 - Takeaway – Ground-truthing, as NRCS-OR does, is important!
- Map is potentially missing early signs of juniper encroachment.
 - Again – Ground-truthing is important!

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Eastern Oregon

Threat-based Ecostate Map, Ver. 3

Subset of data that is included on Draft GSS Map Version 2

Good:

- Good condition grassland
 - Few trees (cover less than 5%)
 - Shrub cover (less than 12%)
 - Perennial herbaceous cover exceeds annual herbaceous cover by at least 3:1
- Intermediate condition grassland
 - Few trees (cover less than 5%)
 - Shrub cover (less than 12%)
 - Perennial herbaceous cover is slightly greater than or co-dominant with annual herbaceous cover (PFG:AFG ratio is between 1:1 and 3:1)

Why: Definition of GSS is focused on native grasses, grass-like plants, shrubs, or forbs



Intermediate:



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Eastern Oregon

Threat-based Ecostate Map, Ver. 3

Subset of data that is not included of Draft GSS Map Version 2:

Poor condition grassland

- Few trees (cover less than 5%)
- Shrub cover (less than 12%)
- Annual herbaceous cover exceeds perennial herbaceous cover (PFG:AFG ratio less than 1:1)

Intermediate condition shrubland

- Few trees (cover less than 5%)
- Shrub cover greater than 12%
- Perennial herbaceous cover is slightly greater than or co-dominant with annual herbaceous cover (PFG:AFG ratio is between 1:1 and 3:1)

Tree low to mid cover

- Tree cover 5-20%
- Shrubs and herbaceous vegetation are not used in the ecostate determination.

Good condition shrubland

- Few trees (less than 5%)
- Shrub cover greater than 12%
- Perennial herbaceous cover exceeds annual herbaceous cover by at least 3:1

Poor condition shrubland

- Few trees (cover less than 5%)
- Shrub cover greater than 12%
- Annual herbaceous cover exceeds perennial herbaceous cover (PFG:AFG ratio less than 1:1)

Tree high cover

- Tree cover greater than 20%
- Shrubs and herbaceous vegetation are not used in the ecostate determination

Why: These land covers likely include invasive species. Forestland is not an eligible land cover.

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Willamette Valley



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Willamette Valley

Dataset:

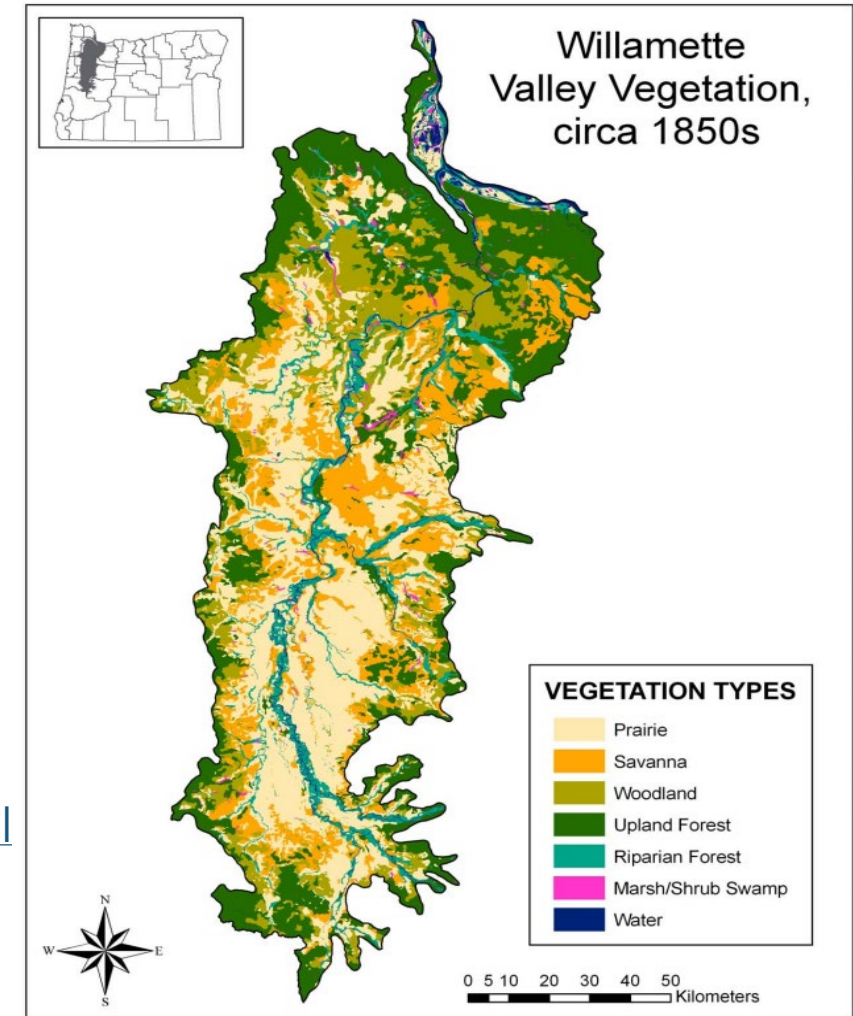
Willamette Valley Pre-Settlement Vegetation (1850)

Summary:

Provides a spatial depiction of over habitat type as a result of 10,000 years of indigenous settlement of the WV, in the midst of transition to Euro-American settlement. Prairie (31.4%) and savanna (18.2%) dominated the landscape largely due to indigenous burning to enhance production of plant species for food and fiber. Euro-American farming and logging comprised ~4% and 0.5%, respectively, at this time.

Reference Links:

- Research Paper: <https://bioone.org/journals/northwest-science/volume-85/issue-2/046.085.0202/Historical-Vegetation-of-the-Willamette-Valley-Oregon-circa-1850/10.3955/046.085.0202.full>
- OSU Data link: <https://inr.oregonstate.edu/mapping-natural-vegetation/historical-vegetation-mapping/available-historical-vegetation-maps>



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Willamette Valley

Willamette Valley Pre-Settlement Vegetation (1850)

Map Data Origin:

- Data for this map originally comes from land surveys collected by the General Land Office (GLO) between 1848 and 1910. Surveyors recorded land conditions and ecosystems at the time.

Map Methodology (how the map was produced):

- This map was produced over many years of extensive scientific research and published in 2011 by Portland State University.
 - Transcription of GLO survey notes
 - Classified vegetation described by the surveyors
 - Utilized several other sources of data/info to confirm the survey areas: township maps, US Coast Survey maps, modern soils data, and 1930s aerial photographs.



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Willamette Valley

Willamette Valley Pre-Settlement Vegetation (1850)

Map is best used for:

- Landscape-scale planning. **This is ideal and aligned with the intention of the GSS map in identifying priority sites because NRCS-OR will ground-truth and conduct an onsite determination.**

Map limitations / should not be used for:

- The map is best scientific estimate of the original occurrence, location and extant of vegetation. It should not be used for site-specific planning.
 - Important to ground-truth

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Willamette Valley

Willamette Valley Pre-Settlement Vegetation (1850)

Subset of data that is included on Draft GSS Map Version 2

- Emergent Wetlands - Marsh, swamp, or wetland. These areas may have been continually or frequently inundated with water and have herbaceous plants emerging from the water and would have incorporated both dry upland prairies and warm wet prairies. **These areas of historical wetland may now feature wet meadows or grasses, as allowed in GSS.**
- Prairie – Upland prairie and wet prairie, dominated by grasses and sedges, **as allowed in GSS.**
- Savanna – Includes White (Garry) Oak savanna and Douglas Fir Savanna. The understory was usually open, with grassy or herbaceous vegetation but few or no shrubs, **as allowed in GSS.** Surveyors often described savannas as “open,” “openings,” and “scattered timber.” **Ground-Truthing is important to ensure that savanna is indeed not a closed forest.**
- Shrubland – Often described as “brush” or “thicket.” Some species included manzanita, rose, vine maple, willow, beaked hazelnut. Upland stands most likely originated after forest fires, while those in wetlands were generally too wet to support trees. May support grasses today.



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: Willamette Valley

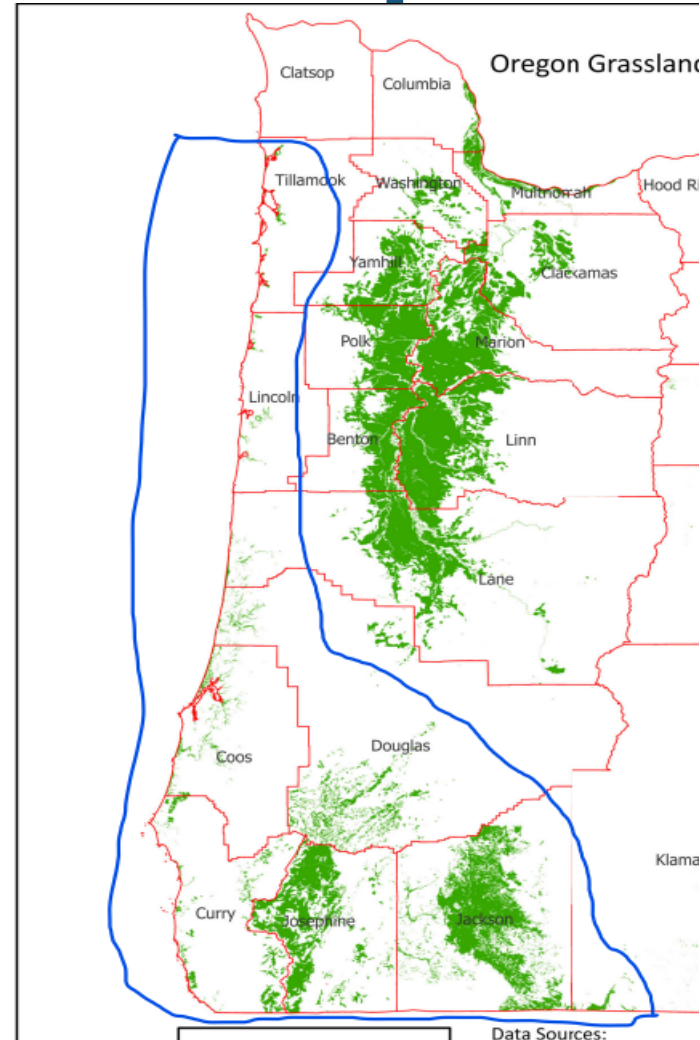
Willamette Valley Pre-Settlement Vegetation (1850)

Subset of data that is not included on Draft GSS Map Version 2

- Woodland – mix of shrubs and trees, typically younger oaks.
- Upland Forest – closed canopy forest

Why: Forestland is not an allowable land cover for GSS.

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: SW OR and Coast



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: SW OR and Coast

Dataset:

Rangeland Ecological Sites

Major Land Resources Area (MLRA)

Summary:

Ecological Sites Descriptions provide a consistent framework for classifying and describing rangeland and forestland soils and vegetation. They are delineated by site characteristics (climate, soils, etc.) and plant communities (species, veg states, etc.) Rangeland ecological sites are delineated in areas where tree production was not significant in the reference plant community. The reference plant community is the plant community that existed at the time of European immigration and settlement.

MLRA delineates unique resource regions across the United States. Areas 4A (Coast – Sitka Spruce), 4B (Coast, Coastal Redwood), and 5 (Siskiyou-Trinity) were used.

Reference Links:

MLRA - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/major-land-resource-area-mlra>



ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: SW OR and Coast

Rangeland Ecological Sites and Major Land Resource Areas

Map is best used for:

- Landscape-scale planning. **This is ideal and aligned with the intention of the GSS map in identifying priority sites because NRCS-OR will ground-truth and conduct an onsite determination.**

Map limitations / should not be used for:

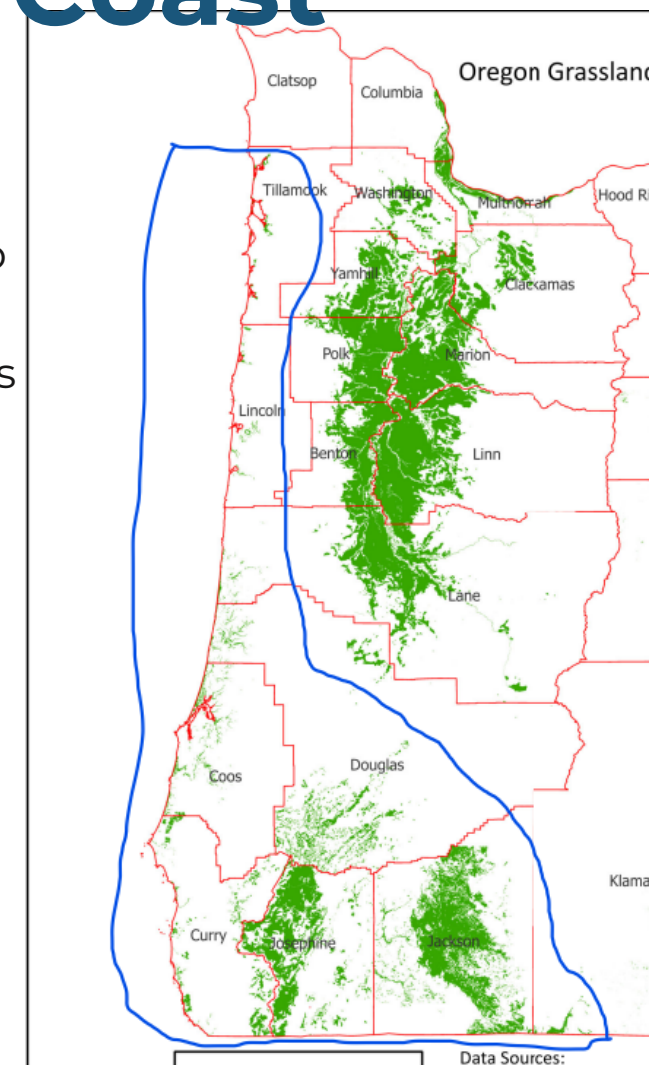
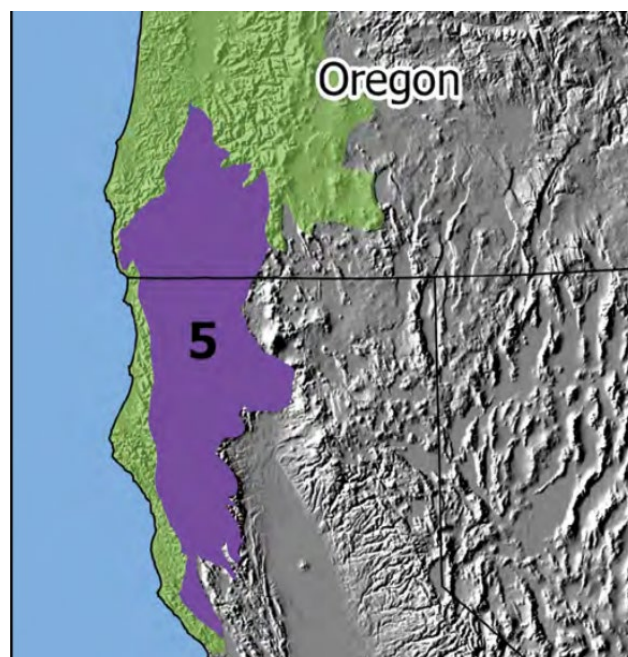
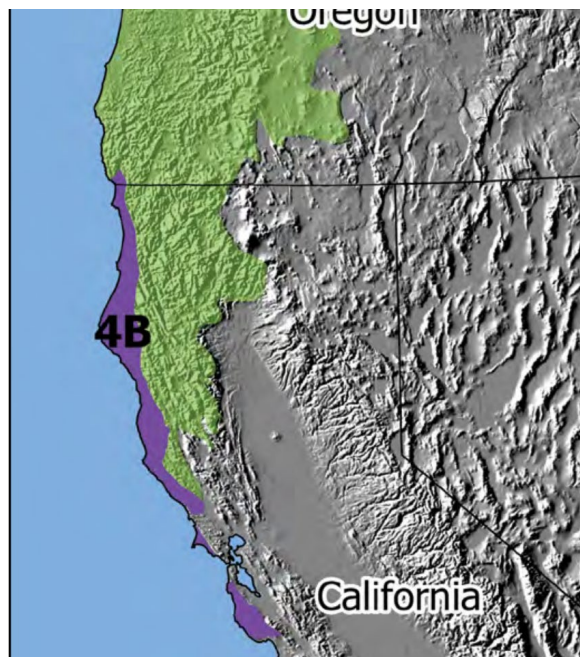
- Site-Specific planning. Again, important to ground-truth

ACEP-ALE-GSS Map: SW OR and Coast

Rangeland Ecological Sites and Major Land Resources Areas

Data that is included on Draft GSS Map Version 2

- The GSS Map, SW OR and Coast, features the Rangeland Ecological Sites clipped to Major Land Resource Areas 4A, 4B, and 5 (below).
- **NOTE:** ACEP staff recognize that most of the areas in Jackson/Josephine counties is public land. Coast is more private land.



Data Sources:



Questions?

Thank You!

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Matt Penberthy, ALE Program Coordinator

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