

## **OACD NEWS**

## **June 2024**



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# Call for Presentations: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts Annual Conference

Hood River, Oregon

This year we are calling for presentations or full session proposals in the following areas:

- Success Stories from Districts
- Collaborating with Tribes examples, learnings
- Reaching the Community
- Telling your story making the most of your website, social media
- Planning for a changing climate
- Other

Presentations can be 10 - 20 minutes long, Sessions are 45 or 90 minutes long.

#### Dates to remember:

Presentation Proposal Submission deadline: July 15, 2024

Decision date: September 1, 2024

#### Submission guidelines:

Please submit you presentation or session <u>topic</u> with a <u>description</u> (500 word max) Include your name, affiliation, and length of time requested for presentation or session.

Submit your proposal to: <a href="mailto:andrea.kreiner@oacd.org">andrea.kreiner@oacd.org</a> with the subject line OACD Conference Proposal.



Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Spring 2024!

As our more intensive on-the-groundwork session begins in our districts, be sure to also take some time to enjoy the essence of this new season!

Meetings abound! If you look at the coming events Andrea provides in this newsletter, make sure to see the upcoming webinars both from the Oregon Conservation Partnership and other partners. And it is now time to prepare for our OACD Annual Conference, October 14-16<sup>th</sup> in Hood River. The Best Western right on the Columbia River is a great facility! See the call for presentations on page 1! Now is also the time for us to line up sponsors for the event. While we have ongoing support from NRCS and SDAO, let's make this an event where we bring in more of the companies we all do business with in our own districts. OACD has prepared an email talking about the conference and why this conference is an important venue for them to show their products and services, and levels of sponsorship. That is attached to the end of this newsletter, please feel free to share it with your contacts.

We are also active in rulemaking committee meetings: Eastern Oregon Solar Siting, DLCD; and Farm & Forest Protection, DLCD; among others. We are following proposed budgets of the natural resource agencies, as well as their new program proposals. The OACD Advocacy continues to meet monthly, contact Andrea for the link to meetings which are held the third Friday of the month at 9:30am (next meeting July 19) to learn more about the work. We are preparing for the upcoming long legislative session that begins in February 2025 that will set agency budgets for the future. We hope to go back to secure more funding for the Natural and Working Lands program that was originally funded in 2022.

Our Natural and Working Lands Committee has hired the contractor to create a natural climate solutions guide and is beginning a series of learning sessions on relevant topics. The committee's next meeting is June 3 at 2pm. Contact Andrea for the meeting link.

We are right around the corner from a new fiscal year for OACD beginning July 1. The board voted in April to maintain the same dues structure for the fiscal year July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. We will be conducting strategic planning to identify OACD's future goals and longer-term needs. W are happy to hear from you with your ideas and feedback on how we can best serve our members as we approach strategic planning for the organization.

Jan Lee, OACD President

janleewater@gmail.com 503-545-9420 cell



## **COMING EVENTS**

#### **Agency Meetings** (all events are hybrid; see details at link to websites)

- Oregon Water Resources Commission, June 13-14 in Bend
- Oregon Board Of Agriculture, June 4-6 in Burns
- Oregon Land Conservation And Development Commission, June 27-28 in Salem
- OWEB Committees
  - · Grants, June 6
  - DEIEJ, June 4
  - Water and Climate, June 12

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#### **OACD Board Meeting**

District participation and comments are encouraged. **June 25, 9am-11am.** Zoom link **HERE** 

### **Oregon Conservation Partnership – Upcoming Webinars:**

Registration for all Webinars is available on ConservationPartnership.org

- OWEB Cultural Resources Guidance June 27
- Private Forest Accord Grant Program July 16

### NACD Pacific & SW Region Meeting - September 11th-13th, 2024 in Anchorage, AK

The schedule will include training and skills-sharing for tribal and state-designated conservation districts, agriculture and habitat field tours, an Alaskan wild salmon bake dinner held at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and opportunities for USDA-NRCS staff and NACD leadership to learn from YOU about needs across the PAC/SW regions.

Event details and useful links can be found here.



NACD Summer Meeting - August 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in Boston, MA Register online by June 30, 2024 to save!

Event details and useful links can be found here.

### **FUNDING RESOURCES**

### **CZM Habitat Protection & Restoration Funding**

Oregon Coastal Management Program (OCMP) at DLCD is expecting the **2024 CZM Habitat Protection & Restoration BIL** competitive grant funding cycle to open on **June 17**, **2024** (date is dependent on NOAA releasing their Notice of Funding opportunity).



- Letters of Intent due to DLCD by July 17, 2024 (date is dependent on NOAA releasing their Notice
  of Funding opportunity). Specific application submission instructions will be released once NOAA
  releases their Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- DLCD is requiring all partners interested in applying for funding to schedule a 'Pre-application'
  Consultation meeting with our staff starting in May 2024 through when Letters of Intent are due
  to DLCD (July 17, 2024). Please contact Claire Fiegener to schedule a consultation
  meeting:claire.fiegener@dlcd.oregon.gov

Informational Webinar and Q & A about CZM Habitat Protection & Restoration Funding: Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 @ 11am - Please register for this informational zoom meeting by clicking on this link: <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpdu2tpjMrHtTXfWyxJOD9KkOUP4rzkkOB">https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpdu2tpjMrHtTXfWyxJOD9KkOUP4rzkkOB</a>. The webinar will be recorded an uploaded to OCMP/DLCD's Coastal Grants website.

This funding is to increase resilience through landscape-scale habitat restoration and conservation in coastal ecosystems nationwide and promote coastal resilience in underserved coastal communities as well as those most vulnerable to climate impacts. The restoration and land acquisition of ecologically significant ecosystems such as wetlands, headlands, and natural shoreline will help reduce the impacts of coastal hazards, including flooding and climate change, to property and infrastructure, while also providing economic benefits to coastal communities.

Local governments (cities/counties), other non-federal public entities, federally recognized Indian Tribal governments, and in some cases non-profits are eligible to apply for this funding. Eligible projects include habitat restoration, restoration planning and land acquisitions of coastal habitats – restoration projects must be conducted on lands owned/controlled by a non-federal public entity or Tribe and land acquisition projects must have final ownership held by a non-federal public entity or Tribe. Non-federal public entities or Tribes are eligible to submit grant applications with a budget of up to \$6 million for project costs. Match is not required, but cost sharing is an important element considered in the evaluation criteria.

Resources such as a <u>Program Fact Sheet</u>, the <u>2024 Application Process & Timeline</u>, the <u>2024 Pre-Application Consultation Meeting Fact Sheet</u> and more information/resources on this funding source are available on DLCD's <u>Coastal Grants webpage</u>.

## **NRCS/OWEB Technical Assistance Grant Applications**

OWEB **extended the application due date** for the <u>NRCS/OWEB</u> <u>Technical Assistance Grant Offering</u> to 5 pm PT on June 14, 2024.

The purpose of this grant offering is to provide funding for technical assistance to implement local Inflation Reduction Act programs for the conservation of natural resources. The Inflation Reduction Act has generated more need for technical assistance than the NRCS can provide to landowners.

#### **Available Funding**

There is \$743,110 available for this grant offering. Individual requests over \$50,000 will be granted as funds allow.

How to Apply:Grant applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm Pacific Time on June 14, 2024, through <a href="mailto:OWEB's Online Application System">OWEB's Online Application System</a>. If you do not have a login, please email Leilani Sullivan at <a href="mailto:Leilani.sullivan@oweb.oregon.gov">Leilani.sullivan@oweb.oregon.gov</a>.

## Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program Grant Offering – Working Land Conservation Covenants and Easements

OWEB is now accepting applications for the OAHP Working Land Conservation Covenant & Easements grant offering. The grant cycle **deadline is 5 p.m. on June 29, 2024**.

<u>Visit the OAHP web page</u> for additional information and an overview of the grant program. These grants are supported by General Funds from the Oregon Legislature and available Statewide.

**Questions?** If you have questions about applying to OWEB's Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program grant offering contact OAHP Easement Specialist, Robin Meacher at 971.301.1578, <a href="mailto:robin.m.meacher@oweb.oregon.gov">robin.m.meacher@oweb.oregon.gov</a> or OAHP Coordinator, Taylor Larson at 971.701.3248,taylor.larson@oweb.oregon.gov.

#### **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

**\$1.5** billion in funding will be available through RCPP this year, supported by funds from the Inflation Reduction Act. The funding will be split through 2 separate funding announcements.

- **RCPP Classic**: proposals due **July 2, 2024**. RCPP Classic projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and easements with producers, landowners, and communities in collaboration with project partners.
- RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements: proposals due July 2, 2024. Through RCPP AFA, the lead partner works directly with agricultural producers to support the development of innovative conservation approaches that would not otherwise be available under RCPP Classic.

For more information and upcoming webinars, click **HERE**.

#### Water Project Grants And Loans And Irrigation Modernization Funding

#### Application Deadlines: 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 10, 2024

<u>Water Project Grants and Loans</u> provides grants to evaluate, plan, and develop instream and out-of-stream water supply projects. This funding opportunity will invest in projects that meet water supply needs and result in public economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits. Projects require a 25% cost match.

- **Eligible Projects:** Water conservation, reuse, above-ground storage, below-ground storage, streamflow protection or restoration, water distribution, conveyance or delivery systems, and other water resource development projects that result in economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits.
- Anticipated Funding Available: \$5 million
- How to Apply: Application materials are available online.

Irrigation Modernization projects that improve water use efficiency of irrigation systems on currently irrigated agricultural lands. The project must leverage federal funds associated with NRCS's authorized watershed plans, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grants or U.S. EPA's grants that are eligible to be on the DEQ's Intended Use Plan. This funding opportunity will invest in projects that meet water supply needs and result in public economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits.

• Eligible Projects: A project that improves water use efficiency of irrigation systems on currently irrigated agricultural lands. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to: piping irrigation canals, ditches or laterals; lining irrigation canals, ditches or laterals; installing sprinkler or microirrigation systems; upgrading existing infrastructure, such as flumes or pipes; installing or upgrading pump stations, including variable speed pumps; installing measuring devices or soil moisture monitoring; installing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems; purchasing irrigation scheduling software; and upgrading turnouts.

- Anticipated Funding Available: OWRD has \$25 million available for 2024 awards, including for applications received in January. Projects may be awarded provisional funds from the additional \$25 million that will be available in 2025.
- **How to Apply:** Application materials are available <u>online</u>. See the application materials listed under "Irrigation Modernization Funding" on the WPGL webpage.

**Pre-Application Conference:** OWRD encourages all applicants to request a pre-application conference before applying. Staff will review your draft application and provide feedback. You must submit your draft application two weeks before the pre-application conference. To learn more, see the <u>pre-application conference form.</u>

For more information, please contact: Adair Muth | 971-301-0718 | OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov

#### Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program

Advancing on-farm sustainability solutions by funding innovative producer-driven research and outreach. This grant program involves agricultural producers (main applicants) and technical advisor(s) implementing projects to address identified needs in sustainable agriculture. See the call for proposals <a href="https://example.com/here-needs/here-need



### **NEWS and OPPORTUNITIES**

### Oregon NRCS Announces Greg Becker As State Conservationist



Becker began his NRCS career in 2001 as a soil conservationist technician in Wyoming. In 2006, he was selected as district conservationist and team lead in Idaho where he also served as Tribal liaison to the Kootenai and Kalispel Tribes. In 2021, Becker was selected as NRCS Idaho's assistant state conservationist - state resource conservationist. As a key leadership team member, he collaborated with federal and state partners and helped advance urban conservation, climate-related activities, wildfire prevention and restoration, technical services, Farm Bill programs, and workforce diversity. He co-led and developed a strategy for the Cheatgrass Challenge, an effort that continues to reduce invasive species in Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming and promote healthy rangelands.

In 2023, Becker served as the NRCS Nevada acting state conservationist. He contributed to expanding the agency's Tribal workforce; was integral in fostering federal, state, non-governmental, and congressional partnerships; and helped oversee implementation of Inflation Reduction Act and Farm Bill programs. Becker was recognized by U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV) for working with partners to enhance sagebrush ecosystem productivity.

Becker is a graduate of Colorado State University with a forest management degree.

Becker said, "Oregon NRCS has a great reputation. I'm incredibly excited and humbled to serve our staff, partners, and landowners as the new state conservationist."

### **Governor Announces New Agency Heads**

- Debbie Colbert ODFW
- Ivan Gall OWRD subject to Senate confirmation
- Sara O'Brien OWEB subject to Senate confirmation

#### **OWEB Cultural Resources Guidance**

In 2022, OWEB and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) began working to develop a Programmatic Agreement (PA) for Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Funds (PCSRF) projects to delegate some responsibilities of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) to OWEB. Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, fund, permit, license, or approve.

Following the signature of the PA, OWEB will be required to screen all PCSRF-funded projects—AND all Lottery-funded projects used as match funds to PCSRF—for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

OWEB Guidance on Cultural Resource Compliance can be found <a href="here">here</a>.

Note that this will be the topic of **the ORCP Webinar on June 27 at 1pm**. Registration will be available soon on <a href="http://conservationpartnership.org">http://conservationpartnership.org</a>.



## Soil & Water Conservation Districts Earn State Recognition From NRCS

The Partnership Awards recognize SWCDs who have excelled in helping NRCS implement Farm Bill programs and perform education and outreach related to conservation and natural resources.

The **Polk SWCD** has been working with NRCS on an

RCPP for Oak Habitat Restoration since 2020. The district was instrumental in securing \$1.25 million in financial assistance to private landowners. They work with tribal partners to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge into projects and measuring outcomes through supplemental agreements for bird and plant surveys before, during and after implementation.

NRCS District Conservationist, Evelyn Conrad said, "The district has assembled an army of volunteers, championing conservation and native habitat. The Polk SWCD board of directors has new members with a diversity of agricultural representation and is committed to being a leader in conservation as elected officials in their community."

NRCS Oregon also works closely with the **Grant SWCD**. Grant SWCD's focus is to build and foster relationships with the local community's producers and continues to provide benefits and technical expertise across eastern Oregon. Some direct results include spraying 65,000 acres of annual grass in the county over the past two years while providing NRCS, partners, and interested landowner two education and outreach events.

"The district has been instrumental in putting on community outreach events such as the Grant County Natural Resource Fair and the Southern Blues Partners Landowner/Contractors workshop," said NRCS District Conservationist Hannah Smith.

Also recognized in the presentation of awards was Pat Holliday of Grant SWCD. Pat has worked for the district since 1995 doing a variety of jobs including reporting, accounting, payroll, and conducting audits. Holliday was recognized with the outstanding Employee Partnership award because of her dedication and efforts.

#### Federal Government Finalizes Significant Changes to NEPA Regulations

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued the <u>Final Rule</u> implementing Phase 2 of significant revisions to NEPA regulations. Finalized May 1, 2024, CEQ describes these changes as enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental reviews while striving for regulatory certainty. The Final Rule implements the significant changes that require agencies to identify an environmentally preferable alternative, and undertake additional consideration of climate change and environmental justice in environmental analyses.

Key highlights of the Final Rule include:

- **Procedural Emphasis:** Reinforces NEPA as a framework for informed decision-making without mandating outcomes, while also identifying environmentally preferable alternatives.
- Climate Change Considerations: Mandates that federal agencies consider the effects of climate change in their environmental reviews.
- **Environmental Justice**: Requires analysis of health and environmental effects on communities with environmental justice concerns to ensure equitable decision-making.
- Public Engagement and Categorical Exclusions: Increases requirements for public participation and provides agencies with greater flexibility to determine activities exempt from detailed environmental assessment.

For more details and to see how this Final Rule may affect you, read our full write-up on the <u>Stoel Rives</u> <u>Environmental Law Blog.</u>

#### **ODA Training on Director Elections and Ballot Measures**

Eric Nussbaum and Sandi Hiatt will be conducting two trainings (one during the day and one during the evening) on June 12th for any staff or directors who wish to know more about what district staff and directors can and can't do to recruit new directors, assist potential candidates, advocate for or against candidates or ballot measures, and answer general questions about the election process.

#### June 12, 10-11am:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-

join/19%3ameeting\_NjliZTlxYTUtNzU3NS00YjE4LTkzMzMtM2Y2YTQ4OGJkYmE1%40thread.v2/0?context= %7b%22Tid%22%3a%22aa3f6932-fa7c-47b4-a0ce-a598cad161cf%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2220d329bb-fd35-4f15-a184-3736d629cb48%22%7d

#### June 12, 6:30-7:30pm

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-

join/19%3ameeting\_MDZjZDg1OGYtZTQ0Ni00NTRILTk4NTQtMzZiZTc5OTg2YTMy%40thread.v2/0?context= %7b%22Tid%22%3a%22aa3f6932-fa7c-47b4-a0ce-a598cad161cf%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2220d329bb-fd35-4f15-a184-3736d629cb48%22%7d

## **Tide Gate and Wetland Monitoring Handbook**

The Coquille Watershed Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership, in conjunction with OWEB, announce the official roll-out of the new <u>Tide Gate and Wetland Monitoring Handbook</u>.

This practitioner focused resource aims to establish a statewide standard for recordkeeping and monitoring that unites the restoration community under a single well-defined set of reporting standards, protocols, and procedures to monitor tide gate upgrade and replacement projects.

## Soil and Water Conservation Society Releases a New Resource to Integrate DEI in Conservation Efforts

The Soil and Water Conservation Society proudly announces the release of a groundbreaking guidebook "A Conservation Professionals' Guide to Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Conservation Delivery with Historically Underserved Producers and Communities."

This guidebook serves as a resource for conservation professionals and policymakers to understand the barriers historically underserved communities face in implementing conservation practices and how to equitably address these barriers to provide community-led conservation technical assistance that meets the specific needs of historically underserved producers and communities.

"Diversity strengthens conservation; inclusion ensures its reach. Conservation professionals play a vital role in weaving together a future where every voice matters and every ecosystem thrives," says Clare Lindahl, CEO of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. "This guidebook offers a meaningful entry point and actionable guidance towards a more equitable conservation delivery system."

Funding for this project was provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. SWCS and the Meridian Institute will make the guidebook accessible to the conservation community and will seek support and partners to implement its recommendations and expand conservation. The complete guidebook can be found at <a href="https://www.swcs.org/DElguidebook">www.swcs.org/DElguidebook</a>.

### **NRCS Organic Transition Initiative**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is partnering with Oregon Tilth and Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) to strengthen organic expertise for conservation programs and expand relationships among producers wanting to transition to organic. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing \$5 million in these five-year partnerships, which are part of USDA's Organic Transition Initiative (OTI), a Department-wide effort to support agricultural producers interested in transitioning to organic. Additionally, NRCS encourages organic and transitioning producers to apply for assistance through its conservation programs that currently have boosted funding from the OTI as well as the Inflation Reduction Act.

### Soil Health Field Days

Soil Health Field Day in Madras Tuesday, June 11th, 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

<u>Soil Health Field Day in Pilot Rock</u> Wednesday, June 12th, 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

On June 11, Sean Vibbert will host us at his Obsidian Seed Farm at Gateway north of Madras for discussion of both cropland and rangeland management. Over 25 years ago, his father started adding microbes and humates to the soil worn out by conventional farming. Sean credits this far-sighted thinking with keeping the farm viable and making it the second largest wildflower seed operation in the United States. His family wouldn't still be farming if they hadn't started on the path of soil health all those years ago.

Join us for the opportunity to hear from two of the most acclaimed soil health and regenerative grazing experts in the world right in your backyard. Ray Archuleta and Alejandro Carrillo will discuss the value of building healthy soils, using regenerative grazing concepts, and how to mitigate drought impacts on your land. The event is geared towards both large-scale and small-scale landowners with a vested interest in fostering healthy ecosystems and building more resilient soil. Whether you're a seasoned farmer or just beginning your journey, this field day will open your eyes to new possibilities in soil health and regeneration and it will test your

understanding of what can be achieved if we work together to build a new farming system focused on regenerative practices.

"Healthy functioning soils reduce the need for water, fertilizer, and other chemical inputs. Plus, more resilient against drought." Ray Archuleta

"You can beat the drought profitably: cracking the code." Alejandro Carrillo

Registration fee of \$100 pays for lunch and the expense of bringing these experts to us.

#### **Streamline Webinar Recordings – Social Media for Special Districts**

Recordings of the 3-part series are available Here



## Oregon Association of Conservation Districts P.O. Box 10527, Portland, Oregon 97296 www.oacd.org

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503-545-9420

#### OACD CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP EMAIL

#### Good afternoon,

The **Oregon Association of Conservation Districts Annual Conference** is the must-attend event for networking and learning for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout Oregon. Join us **Mon Oct 14 - Wed Oct 16, 2023** at the **Hood River Inn in Hood River, OR** for our annual meeting, insightful presentations, engaging discussions, and networking opportunities.

The Conference program will include:

- Funding Opportunities
- Planning for the 2025 Legislative Session
- District Manager and Director Roundtables
- Collaborating with Tribes examples, learnings
- Telling your story making the most of your website, social media
- Planning for a changing climate
- Exhibitors
- Evening Social Event
- and more...!

Sponsorship and exhibit opportunities are available:

- \$500 Conference sponsorship (without exhibit space), sponsor name will be added to conference materials
- \$1000 Conference sponsorship with exhibit space, sponsor name will be added to conference materials, 1 registration included
- \$2500 Conference sponsorship with exhibit space, sponsor name will be added to conference materials, 3 registrations included

For more information or questions, please contact me at Andrea.Kreiner@OACD.org or 971-988-9929

Register for the conference at: REGISTRATION COMING SOON

Register for your rooms at Hood River Inn (remember to mention that you are part of the OACD Annual Conference): <a href="https://hoodriverinn.com">https://hoodriverinn.com</a>