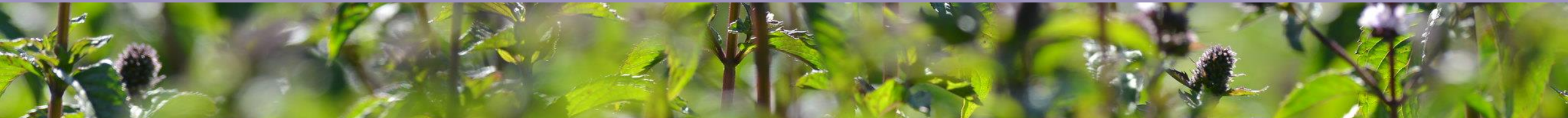


Natural and Working Lands Overview and Update

January 23, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire





Climate Benefits of Natural and Working Lands

- ❖ Nationally, Natural and Working Lands currently sequester 854 MMT CO₂/year
- ❖ There is potential to more than double this, while providing significant co-benefits
 - Community and ecosystem resilience
 - Economic benefits to producers
 - Health
 - Improved fish and wildlife habitat and water quality

Natural and Working Lands Proposal



Over 1000 Oregonians provided comments through surveys and focus groups



Includes:

- Summary of public input
- Identified Principles
- Draft N&WL Goals and Metrics
- Recommended Strategies for achieving the goal



Oregon
Global
Warming
Commission



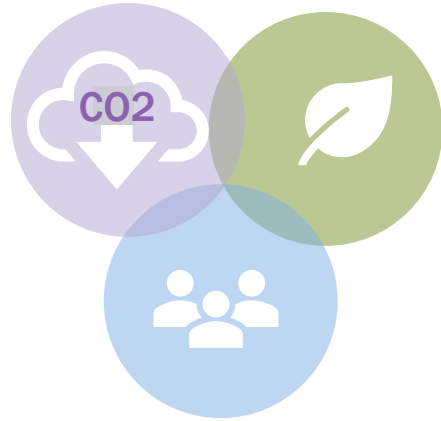
Natural & Working Lands Proposal
2021

HB 3409 – SECTIONS 53 - 67

- ❖ Defined Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) and Natural and Working Lands (N&WL)
- ❖ Declared that it is the policy of the state to advance NCS
- ❖ Directed OCAC to recommend net sequestration goals N&WL
- ❖ Directed agencies to develop and report on an inventory and metrics
- ❖ Gave Oregon Climate Action Commission (OCAC) authority to create a N&WL Advisory Group
- ❖ Directed OCAC to conduct Tribal consultation
- ❖ Directed the Commission to complete a workforce and training study
- ❖ Created a fund to invest in agency programs that support voluntary landowner and rights holder adoption of NCS practices



Definitions



“Natural climate solution”

means an activity that enhances or protects net biological carbon sequestration on natural and working lands, while maintaining or increasing ecosystem resilience and human well-being.



“Environmental justice community”

includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, Tribal communities, rural communities, remote communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.



Progress on OCAC Deliverables

- 🌿 N&WL staff hired October 2024
- 🌿 Contracting underway for the Inventory, Activity and Community Metrics and Workforce deliverables
- 🌿 N&WL Advisory Committee recruitment nearly complete
- 🌿 N&WL Fund allocations approved
- 🌿 Annual and Biennial reports submitted in September and December



Natural and Working Lands Fund

- 🌿 \$10 million to support natural climate solutions in 2023 session
- 🌿 Four eligible agencies (OWEB, ODFW, ODA, ODF)
- 🌿 Allocations made by Oregon Climate Action Commission in collaboration with the agencies



Purpose of the Fund

- Provide incentives, technical assistance, and financial assistance to advance natural climate solutions
- Prioritize the use of existing programs and seek to leverage federal investments
- Prioritize projects proposed by environmental justice communities and Tribes
- Optimize the social, health, ecological, climate resilience, and economic co-benefits of natural climate solutions



2024 OCAC Approved Investments

- ❧ Ambitious, cohesive proposal across the four eligible agencies – including 13 areas of investment
- ❧ Consistent with statutory direction
 - Coordinated proposal
 - Leverages significant federal funding
 - Largely based in existing programs
 - Supports environmental justice communities, Tribes, landowners and land managers

ODFW SUMMARY

- ❖ \$3.04 million to support diverse projects, including
 - Floodplain restoration with Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
 - Estuary restoration - Tillamook, Umpqua
 - Fire resilience in oak woodland with Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
 - Grassland Restoration - Wasco County
 - Natural Climate Solutions Biologists
- ❖ Co-benefits for working lands, carbon sequestration, and fish and wildlife habitat

ODFW UPDATE

- ❖ Floodplain restoration with CTGR: \$412,500; Federal & other match: \$1.6M
 - 30 acres scheduled for planting in February 2025
- ❖ Estuary restoration: 1.1M; Federal match: \$3.7M; Other state: \$2.3M
 - Tillamook: Implementation January-June 2025
 - Umpqua: 95% complete
- ❖ Fire resilience in oak woodland with CTWS: \$170,770; Federal match: \$200K
 - Beginning spring/summer 2025
- ❖ Grassland Restoration - Wasco County: \$750K; Federal & other match: \$350K
 - 4540 acres site preparation
 - 41,030 native shrubs --> planted Dec 2025
- ❖ Natural Climate Solutions Biologists: \$513K; Federal match: coming soon!

OWEB SUMMARY

- ❖ \$1.5M for Restoration/Technical Assistance grants on rangeland, forestland, urban areas, or blue carbon ecosystems
 - Funds natural climate solutions projects (i.e. improved forest management, restore deep rooted perennial grasses, etc.)
 - Supports co-benefits for Tribes and environmental justice communities
- ❖ \$750,000 for development and implementation of Conservation Management Plans on agricultural land
 - Eligible practices include climate-smart farming practices like cover crops, nutrient management, and riparian buffer areas
 - Designed to complement NRCS funding opportunities
- ❖ OWEB is applying existing rules to both programs

OWEB UPDATE

- ❖ 3-month public engagement process is complete, with feedback leading to:
 - Streamlined application process that matches other grant offerings
 - Reduced match requirements from 25% to 5%
 - Inclusion of additional eligible practices that were important to underrepresented groups
- ❖ Applications will open early February for all grant offerings, with awards made in July
- ❖ Outreach and training while grant offering is open and equity review planned for after applications close

ODF SUMMARY

Increase adoption of climate-smart forestry practices for sequestration and continued ecosystem function as forest types shift:

- ❖ \$1.5M for implementation of Climate-Smart Forestry as outlined in Climate Change and Carbon Plan
- ❖ \$1M to incentivize Climate-Smart Forestry in partnership with Tribes and traditionally marginalized landowners
- ❖ \$750k to build capacity for climate-ready seed and seedlings at existing ODF facility

ODF UPDATE

- ❖ Implementation underway at the J.E. Schroeder Seed Orchard
- ❖ Initial climate-smart forestry project getting ready with Tualatin SWCD with more anticipated around the state
- ❖ Implementation with Tribes along with the ODF Urban and Community Forestry Program
- ❖ Overall intent is to provide funds for place-based solutions at the local level

ODA SUMMARY

- ❖ \$530,000 for Oregon Native Seed Strategy, which ensures access to reliable supply of ecologically appropriate native seed collection, storage, and production
 - Includes \$100,000 for Tribal assistance/incentives
 - Native seedstock is critical to conservation and restoration of natural and working lands and the ecosystem services they provide
- ❖ \$360,000 for Rangeland Resilience/Invasive Annual Grass
 - 5-year project in partnership with NRCS
 - Healthy, functional rangelands are crucial to carbon sequestration, resilience to wildfires, and climate change

ODA UPDATE

Rangeland Resilience/Invasive Annual Grass

- ❖ Executed agreement with NRCS that leverages \$1.7M/5years
 - Hired first Rangeland Health Specialist
 - Second to be hired Q2 AY25
 - Technical Assistance, 20 yr goals, 10 yr actions
- ❖ Demand for TA and financial assistance is greater than ever due to 2024 wildfires
- ❖ Integrating HB3409 priorities with producer goals



ODA UPDATE

Oregon Native Seed Strategy

❖ Hired Contractors

- Technical assistance to Tribes and producers
- Infrastructure to facilitate adoption of Climate Smart Practices
- Seed Banking (7 species in 2024)
- Stakeholder engagement and partner outreach

❖ \$125,000 to 5 Tribal Grants awarded to support native plant programs, restoration and food security

❖ Additional \$3.5M match from NFWF America the Beautiful Program



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