

## **Landowner Assistance Programs for Conservation Work February 2009**

### **Land Easement and Retirement programs**

#### **NRCS: Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**

The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. There are three enrollment options: *Permanent Easement*, a *30-year Easement*, and *Restoration Cost-Share Agreement*. For more information on this NRCS-administered program, go to: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov).

#### **FSA: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

CREP is a program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, and restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. By using a partnership between producers, tribal, state and federal governments, sensitive areas are enrolled under a 10 to 15-year rental agreement to keep lands out of agricultural production. CREP provides payments to participants who offer eligible land. See [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) for more information as this is a Farm Service Agency administered program.

### **Natural Resource Protection/Enhancement**

#### **NRCS: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. Contracts can be 1 to 10 years in length with a cost share of up to 75% (generally falling into the 50% cost-share range). A sub-category to EQIP is the Conservation Innovation Grants. These are competitive grant awards to stimulate innovative approaches to environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. For more information, go to: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov).

#### **NRCS: Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

WHIP provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property. A noted difference between WHIP and other programs such as EQIP is that each application is ranked at the state level and is competing with other applications from across the state. For more information, go to: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov).

#### **ODFW: Access and Habitat Program (A&H)**

The goals of this program, funded solely by hunting licenses, are to 1) increase wildlife habitat, 2) help mitigate for damage caused by wildlife, and 3) increase hunters' access. Project grants are typically under \$100,000 and no match is required. Applications are accepted quarterly, and decisions are made by the F&W Commission. Contact your local ODFW wildlife biologist (541-296-4628) or state program coordinator Matt Keenan (503-947-6087) for assistance in drafting a proposal.

#### **NRCS: Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

CSP rewards those who already act as model conservationists rather than helping producers to fix resource problems. It also pays qualified producers to do further environmental enhancements. The program is on a rotation and enrollment was offered as the Conservation *Security* Program in Hood River County in 2005. The next time it will be offered in Hood River County is unknown. For more information, go to: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov).

**NRCS: Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)**

A program to help landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, shrubland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. Emphasis is on support for working grazing operations. For more information, go to: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov).

**OWEB: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant program**

OWEB provides a variety of grants. Project types include restoration, land acquisitions, education/outreach, technical assistance, and local innovation. All grants require at least 25% match. Grant application deadlines vary by project type; check OWEB's website at <http://www.oregon.gov/OWEB/GRANTS> for detailed information and applications.

OWEB's small grant program is designed for on-the-ground restoration projects. Grants up to \$10,000 are available, with a 25% match. Applications can be submitted six times a year, and are evaluated by a local review team. Applications and information on the small grant program can be obtained from the Hood River SWCD at [hrrswcd@gorge.net](mailto:hrrswcd@gorge.net) or call (541) 386-4588.

**US Forest Service: Title II program**

Under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, funds were allocated to watershed restoration projects. The amount of funding available each year is determined by the Hood River County Board of Commissioners. Project types include road/trail maintenance, forest health, watershed restoration, fish and wildlife habitat improvements, noxious weed control and native species reestablishment. There is no match requirement, but projects must provide a benefit to natural resources on federal land. The local contact for applications is Gary Asbridge at (541)352-6002 ext. 625 or [gasbridge@fs.fed.us](mailto:gasbridge@fs.fed.us). This program was re-authorization by Congress in 2008 for an additional four years but overall amounts available are diminishing each year.

The Act also authorized County Projects under Title III. Project types include search and rescue operations, community service work camps, easement purchases, forest-related education, fire prevention, county planning, and community forestry. The amount of funding available each year is determined by the Hood River County Board of Commissioners. The county contact is Mike Schrankel at (541) 387-7104 or [mike.schrankel@co.hood-river.or.us](mailto:mike.schrankel@co.hood-river.or.us). Continued funding for this program is also dependent on re-authorization by Congress.

**USFWS: Partners for Fish & Wildlife (PFW)**

This USFWS program can provide up to 50% of the cost, with a maximum of \$25,000 per project, for work that improves habitat for fish and wildlife that are listed on the Endangered Species Act, or are proposed for listing. Project types include restoring fish passage, screening diversions, riparian restoration, fencing, off-stream water troughs and wetlands restoration. The program also funds improvements to habitat used by migratory songbirds and other non-aquatic wildlife. Application period is open; contact the program coordinator 503-231-6179.

**Forest Stewardship Program**

This ODF program provides a 75% cost share reimbursement for development of a forest management plan. Cost-share must be approved by ODF *prior* to creation of stewardship plan. There is a 10 acre minimum; contact the ODF office in The Dalles at 541-296-4626 for more information.

**Forest Resource Trust (FRT)**

This ODF program provides 100% financial assistance for reforestation of under-productive land. The landowner commits to a long-term contract and repaying the loan at the time of future harvest. There is a 10 acre minimum; contact the ODF office in The Dalles at 541-296-4626 for more information.

**Oregon's 50% Tax Credit (Underproductive Forestland Conversion Tax Credit)**

This ODF program provides a 50% state tax credit for reforestation of underproductive forestland. Some fees may be required. Brushlands, grasslands, or very poorly-stocked forestlands may be eligible. There is a 5 acre minimum; contact the ODF office in The Dalles at 541-296-4626 for more information.

**ODF: Bark Beetle Mitigation (BBM)**

This Oregon Dept. of Forestry program provides cost-share funds for pre-commercial thinning, slash treatment and burning of overstocked conifer stands susceptible to, or showing signs of, bark beetle infestation. There is a 10 acre minimum; contact the ODF office in The Dalles at 541-296-4626 for more information.

**National Fire Plan Grants**

This program provides funds for wildland fuels treatment adjacent to structures as well as surrounding landscape. Grant funds are only available for specified treatment areas, currently only in Cascade Locks region of Hood River County. Contact the ODF office in The Dalles at 541-296-4626 for more information.

**Instream and Streamside Improvements****ODFW: Fish Screening and Passage Program**

Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife will provide up to 60% of the project costs when installing a fish screen, up to \$75,000. An Oregon State tax credit is also available. Dam removal and fish passage components can also be funded, but not fish screen maintenance or culvert replacement. Applications are accepted at any time, but a contract must be established before funds can be spent on project work. ODFW can access federal funds to help with the cost-share, but they like to have the water user put in at least 10% of the match. The local contact for the program is Bob Hair in The Dalles at 541-296-8026 and [bob.r.hair@state.or.us](mailto:bob.r.hair@state.or.us).

**ODFW: Riparian Lands Tax Incentive**

The Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program offers a property tax incentive to property owners for improving or maintaining qualifying riparian lands. Under this program, property owners receive complete property tax exemption for their riparian property. This can include land up to 100 feet from a stream. A landowner and ODFW must sign a riparian management plan and agreement. A management plan must detail measures the landowner will implement to preserve, enhance or restore the riparian area. For more information, contact program coordinator Patty Snow at 503-947-6089 or visit the website at [www.dfw.state.or.us](http://www.dfw.state.or.us).

**OWRD and OWT: Instream Leasing, Conserved Water Program and Waiver of Fees and/or Mapping Requirements for Fish-friendly Transfers**

The Oregon Water Resources Department's (OWRD) Instream Leasing Program provides a voluntary means to aid the restoration and protection of streamflows. This arrangement provides benefits both to water right holders and to instream values by providing water users with options that protect their water rights while leasing water for instream benefits. Water users who are at risk of forfeiture of their water rights due to non-use may find instream leases to be a good

management option. Instream water rights provide flows for fish and wildlife, scenic values, and improved water quality.

The Conserved Water Program allows a water user who conserves water to use a portion of the conserved water on additional lands, lease or sell the water, or dedicate the water to instream use. The Conserved Water Program allows water users to use up to 75% of the saved water, if at least 25% is left instream. The local contact for OWRD is Watermaster Bob Wood, 541-506-2650 or [Robert.L.Wood@wrld.state.or.us](mailto:Robert.L.Wood@wrld.state.or.us).

Oregon Water Trust (OWT) is a nonprofit organization that restores streamflow by compensating willing landowners to leave all or a portion of their water right instream in lieu of using it for out-of-stream purposes. Oregon Water Trust may compensate landowners for their water rights leased or transferred instream, in high priority basins. Contact David Pilz at Oregon Water Trust, 503-222-9091 x16 or [david@owt.org](mailto:david@owt.org) for more information.

#### **DEQ: Nonpoint Source Pollution 319 Grants**

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) accepts proposals from government agencies, tribal nations and nonprofit organizations to address non-point sources of pollution affecting coastal, river, lake, drinking and ground-water resources of the state. About \$1.6 million of federal grant dollars are available each year under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act. The application period runs from early September through October each year. Nonpoint source water quality and watershed enhancement projects should address the priorities in the Oregon Water Quality Nonpoint Source Management Plan. For more information contact DEQ at [www.deq.state.or.us/WQ/nonpoint/grants.htm](http://www.deq.state.or.us/WQ/nonpoint/grants.htm) or Water Quality Planner Bonnie Lamb at 541-633-2027.

#### **CTWS: Habitat Restoration Projects**

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation (CTWS) is actively restoring fisheries resources in the Hood River basin. They can provide funding and technical assistance for a variety of projects such as irrigation system upgrades, riparian fencing, culverts, and instream / upland habitat improvement projects. The focus is on waterways with anadromous (ocean-going) fish species. Tribal staff can assist with project planning and implementation. The local contact for this program is Joe McCanna at (541) 352-9326 and [jmccanna@hrecn.net](mailto:jmccanna@hrecn.net).

#### **ODFW: Restoration and Enhancement Program (R&E)**

The goal of this program, funded solely by fishing licenses, is to fund projects that benefit sport fisheries. Applicants must be a public or private non-profit entity, or Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) organization. Typical project award is under \$100,000 and there is no match requirement, although matching funds are highly encouraged. For more information, contact the state R&E coordinator at 503-947-6259 or check the ODFW website at [www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/RE/](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/RE/). The application can be completed on-line via the website; grants are awarded quarterly.

**Listed above under Natural Resource Protection/Enhancement programs, the following also fund instream projects:**

- OWEB: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant program – large and small grants
- US Forest Service: Title II program
- USFWS: Partners for Fish & Wildlife
- NRCS: Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

#### **Other Grant Opportunities**

There are a number of other governmental agencies, foundations and other entities that provide funding for watershed health projects. The Bureau of Reclamation has grants available through the Water for America Initiative. Check out [www.usbr.gov/wfa](http://www.usbr.gov/wfa) for more information.

The Oregon State Noxious Weed grant program is overseen by the Oregon State Weed Board. The program is part of the Plant Division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Information can be obtained from the ODA website under the Plant Division, or call Shannon Brubaker at 503-986-4622 or email [sbrubake@oda.state.or.us](mailto:sbrubake@oda.state.or.us).

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has various grants. Information about them and a host of other grants can be learned at <http://www.fws.gov/grants/>.

### **Recommendations for where to look first for project funding:**

#### **Streamside Fencing**

- BPA/CTWS – the Tribes have set aside a portion of their funds each year for fencing projects. Contact Joe McCanna at (541) 352-9326.
- OWEB small grant program. Contact the Hood River SWCD at (541) 386-4588 or the Hood River Watershed Group at (541) 386-6063.
- CREP – Contact Hood River SWCD at (541) 386-4588.
- WHIP – Contact the Hood River NRCS at (541) 386-2815

#### **Manure Management**

- EQIP - Contact Hood River NRCS at (541) 386-2815.
- OWEB small grant program. Contact the Hood River SWCD at (541) 386-4588 or the Hood River Watershed Group at (541) 386-6063.

#### **Culvert Upgrades**

- BPA/CTWS – if the culvert is on a stream used by salmon and steelhead, contact the Tribal office at (541) 352-9326.
- OWEB large grant program. Contact OWEB at <http://www.oregon.gov/OWEB/GRANTS> for detailed information and applications.

#### **Screening for Water Diversions**

- ODFW – The Dalles screen shop. Call (541) 296-8026 for small diversions.

This list is by no means comprehensive, but meant to help interested landowners and agencies by directing them to potential sources of funding for a variety of watershed restoration projects. Other agencies and the internet can provide additional information.

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