

# OREGON Watershed Enhancement Board



Photo by Baker County Tourism, cc

## 2018-2028 Strategic Plan

Quarterly Report to the Board | April 2024



Mission: To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.



# Priority 1

## Broad awareness of the relationship between people and watersheds



OWEB conducted small group sessions at an in-person all-staff meeting and virtually.

OWEB continues gathering information on areas of focus for the upcoming **2024 Strategic Plan refresh**—including a series of in-depth staff meetings to provide tactics to fulfill priorities.



OWEB continues to share information about OWEB, watershed terminology, project examples, and announcements on **social media and video**.



# Priority 2

## Leaders at all levels of watershed work reflect the diversity of Oregonians



People of Color Outdoors provides safe opportunities for people of color to enjoy and connect with the outdoors.

OWEB's leadership **met with several new, and developing partners** in the last quarter, including:

- Conservation community, ag organizations, and organic ag/food organizations (continued regular quarterly meetings).
- Follow-up meeting with [People of Color Outdoors](#) to share information about OWEB's land acquisition grants.
- Founders of [Fortaleza Atravez Barreras](#) about their vision to serve Latine communities in the Santiam Canyon.
- Staff from [Partners in Diversity](#) to understand the membership services that they offer.
- [Verde](#) to learn more about their water-focused work.
- The new Executive Director of the [Oregon Seed Council](#).
- The Executive Director of [Zero Foodprint](#).



Zero Foodprint provides grants to farmers, ranchers, and local conservation experts to build healthy soil and restore carbon.

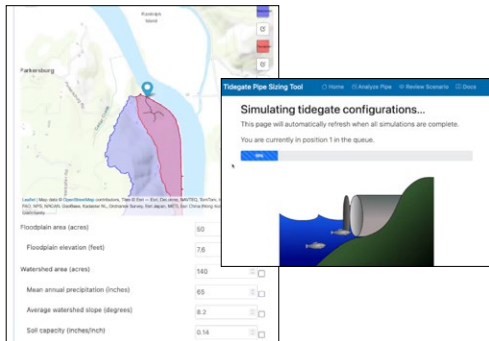


## Priority 3

### Community capacity and strategic partnerships achieve healthy watersheds



A [list of eligible activities](#), including cover crops, is displayed on the NRCS and OWEB websites. Photo by NRCS.



An [instructional video](#) goes over the tool.

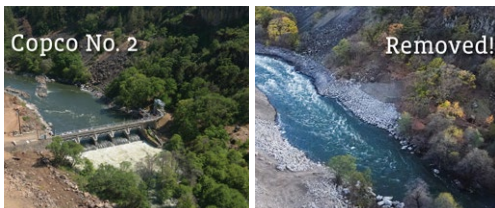
OWEB announced the **NRCS/OWEB Inflation Reduction Act Technical Assistance Grant Offering**, with applications due April 30, 2024. As described in the program announcement, the goal is to provide funding for Technical Assistance to help implement local conservation programs. Eligible applicants include Tribes, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Watershed Councils based in Oregon. OWEB held an informational webinar on March 8th.

OWEB, in collaboration with the Oregon Tidegate Partnership published access to a **Tide Gate Pipe-sizing Tool** on the [Tidegate Partnership website](#) that will assist landowners in calculating the size and elevation for replacement tidegated culverts in tidally influenced bays and rivers on the Oregon coast and lower Columbia River.



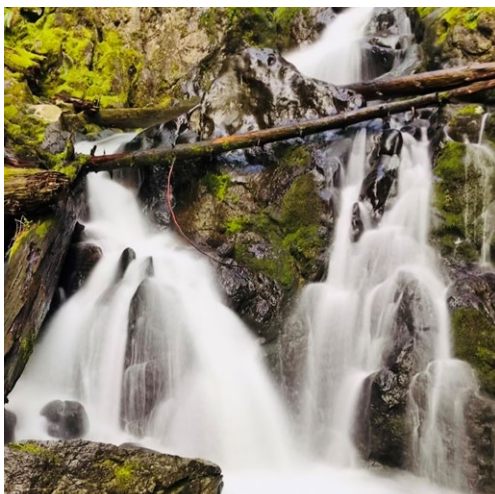
## Priority 4

### Watershed organizations have access to a diverse and stable funding portfolio



Photos by Shane Anderson of Swiftwater Films.

OWEB's Board approved receipt of **PacifiCorp grant funding** for improvements in the Klamath Basin. As a result, over 6 million dollars will be made available for nutrient reduction projects to improve water quality in the mainstem Klamath River.



OWEB collaborated with the Governor's Office, ODA, ODF, and ODFW to propose a spending plan to the **Oregon Climate Action Commission for Natural and Working Lands funds**. OWEB received \$2.5 million for restoration, technical assistance, and conservation management planning and implementation in Open Solicitation and Oregon Agricultural Heritage programs.

OWEB continued to work on establishing a grant program to provide funding to water suppliers for the **protection of drinking water sources**, per [House Bill \(HB\) 2010](#). OWEB convened a [Rulemaking Advisory Committee \(RAC\)](#) and organized three meetings within the past quarter, assisting with the development of rules to define the program's administrative requirements.



## Priority 5

### The value of working lands is fully integrated into watershed health



Photo of OAHF grantee [Pitchfork T Ranch](#). Photo from website.

During the 2024 Legislative session, thanks to the efforts of many OWEB partners, **OAHF was allocated \$5.161 million for operations and grants.** The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission held its first meeting of the year in March 2024 and received an update on this funding.



Photo by Baker County Tourism.

OWEB submitted an article about OWEB grants and how restoration benefits working lands to the **Oregon Cattlemen Magazine.** The article provided an introduction to OWEB, described examples of voluntary projects funded by OWEB and accomplished by local organizations in partnership with farmers and ranchers, and described local partners who can work with farmers and ranchers to design and complete projects.



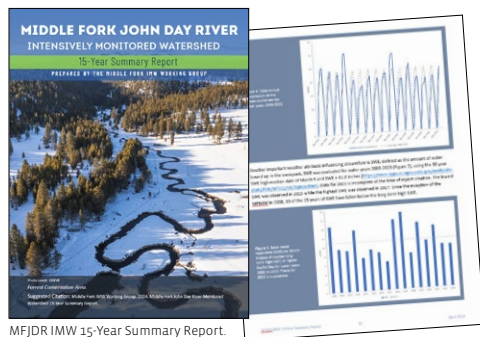
## Priority 6

### Coordinated monitoring and shared learning to advance watershed restoration effectiveness



Ken Fetcho-OWEB and Kasey Bliesner-ODFW, at poster presentation, [River Restoration Northwest Symposium](#).

At the **2024 River Restoration Northwest** symposium, OWEB and ODFW staff co-presented a poster on “Applied Lessons Learned within the Middle Fork John Day River Intensively Monitored Watershed.” The many complex restoration projects implemented along the Middle Fork John Day River have improved access to 135 miles of habitat, supported instream water leases that provide over 6 cfs of flow, and implemented riparian enhancements along 39 stream miles.



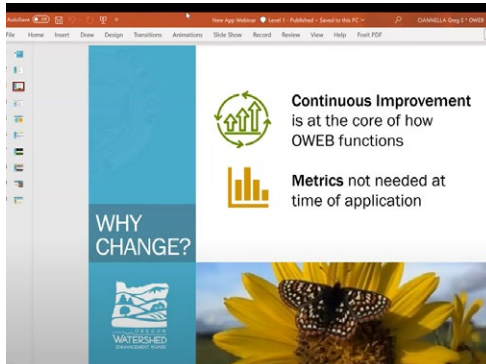
MJDR IMW 15-Year Summary Report.

OWEB collaborated on an extensive **15-Year Summary Report of the Middle Fork John Day River Intensively Monitored Watershed** with ODFW, OSU, U O, North Fork John Day Watershed Council, ODFW, Cole Ecological, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and CASM Environmental LLC. The 2024 paper summarizes long-term monitoring results and describes how partners use the information to refine restoration and address factors limiting fish habitat.



# Priority 7

## Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds



OWEB held [webinars](#) to cover the new online applications and held open office hours.

OWEB launched new, more streamlined grant applications for the spring 2024 Open Solicitation cycle. The shorter application reflects over a year's worth of effort from teams of staff who explored how to reduce the application length while still gathering needed information for technical review and project reporting.



OWEB continues to explore specific methods to **support and upgrade the unique technology behind the agency's databases**. During the past quarter, work continued on programming to support the agency's [online application system](#) and processing data for the annual [Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory](#) update. Project managers also participated in internal training specific to the agency's systems.



Sucker Brook Restoration by the [Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration](#). Still from [video](#).

OWEB leadership was invited to present a "101" on Oregon's approach to watershed restoration as part of a panel convened by the **Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration**. Some east coast states take a different approach to restoration. For example, in Massachusetts, the state leads planning, design, and implementation of restoration projects, rather than local partners.











 accomplishments  
 highlighted in quarterly update

 July  
 October  
 January  
 April

## Strategies Chart January - April 2024

### 1 Broad awareness of the relationship between people and watersheds

1.1 Develop and implement broad awareness campaigns and highlight personal stories to tell the economic, restoration, and community successes of watershed investments.				
1.2 Increase involvement of non-traditional partners in strategic watershed approaches.				








### 2 Leaders at all levels of watershed work reflect the diversity of Oregonians

2.1 Listen, learn and gather information about diverse populations.				
2.2 Create new opportunities to expand the conservation table.				
2.3 Develop funding strategies with a lens toward diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)				


















### 3 Community capacity and strategic partnerships achieve healthy watersheds

3.1 Evaluate and identify lessons learned from OWEB's past capacity funding.				
3.2 Champion best approaches to build organizational, community and partnership capacity.				
3.3 Accelerate state/federal agency participation in partnerships.				





















### 4 Watershed organizations have access to a diverse and stable funding portfolio

4.1 Increase coordination of public restoration investments and develop funding vision.				
4.2 Align common investment areas with private foundations.				
4.3 Explore creative funding opportunities and partnerships with the private sector.				
4.4 Partner to design strategies for complex conservation issues that can only be solved by seeking new and creative funding sources.				

### 5 The value of working lands is fully integrated into watershed health

5.1 Implement the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program.				
5.2 Strengthen engagement with a broad base of working landowners.				
5.3 Enhance the work of partners to increase working lands projects on farm, ranch and forestlands.				
5.4 Support technical assistance to work with owners/managers of working lands.				
5.5 Develop engagement strategies for owners and managers of working lands who may not currently work with local organizations.				

### 6 Coordinated monitoring and shared learning to advance watershed restoration effectiveness

6.1 Broadly communicate restoration outcomes and impacts.				
6.2 Invest in monitoring over the long term.				
6.3 Develop guidance and technical support for monitoring.				
6.4 Increase communication between and among scientists and practitioners.				
6.5 Define monitoring priorities.				
6.6 Develop and promote a monitoring framework.				

### 7 Bold and innovative actions to achieve health in Oregon's watersheds

7.1 Invest in landscape restoration over the long term.				
7.2 Develop investment approaches in conservation that support healthy communities and strong economics.				
7.3 Foster experimentation that aligns with OWEB's mission.				