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NRCS Programs Update

November 2023

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FY23 (IRA and General) and FY24 (IRA and General)

- FY23 budget includes \$2million IRA EQIP, \$4.5million IRA CSP
- FY24 budget includes \$20.8million IRA EQIP, \$11.7million IRA CSP

Program – FY23	Obligated/Contracted
EQIP	\$31,800,000
CSP	\$20,000,000
ACEP	\$5,500,000

Program – FY24	Obligated/Contracted
EQIP	\$38,800,000
CSP	\$29,400,000
ACEP	\$5,200,000

Reminder- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

- No IRA funds will be disbursed after 9/30/2031
- Provides \$20 billion to support USDA's conservation programs that yield climate-related benefits while building resilience in agricultural operations. *(For practices, enhancements and activities that improve soil carbon, reduce nitrogen losses, or reduce, capture, avoid, or sequester CO2, methane, or NOx emissions associated with ag. production)*
 - \$8.45 billion for the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)
 - FY23- \$250 million
 - FY24- \$1.75 billion
 - FY25- \$3.0 billion
 - FY26- \$3.45 billion
 - \$3.25 billion for the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#)
 - FY23- \$250 million
 - FY24- \$500 million
 - FY25- \$1.0 billion
 - FY26- \$1.5 billion
 - \$1.4 billion for the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) (for easements or interests in land that will most reduce, capture, avoid, or sequester CO2, methane or NOx emissions associated with land eligible for the program)
 - FY23- \$100 million (EPD said most of this FY's \$ would be pushed to FY24)
 - FY24- \$200 million
 - FY25- \$500 million
 - FY26- \$600 million
 - \$4.95 billion for the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (shall prioritize partnership agreements that support the implementation of conservation projects that assist...)
 - FY23- \$250 million
 - FY24- \$800 million
 - FY25- \$1.5 billion
 - FY26- \$2.4 billion
 - \$1 billion for conservation technical assistance
 - \$300 million to measure, evaluate, quantify carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emission reductions from conservation investments

IRA Law <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ169/PLAW-117publ169.pdf>



Oregon-Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Forecast

- *IRA funding is in addition to OR's regular FB funding*
- *Financial Assistance funds dispersed to states FY23-FY26*
 - *Funds will be expended by 9/30/2031*

➤ Environmental Quality Incentives Program- Financial Assistance

- FY23- \$2.1 million
- FY24- \$20.8 million
- FY25- \$23 million
- FY26- \$26 million

➤ Conservation Stewardship Program- Financial Assistance

- FY23- \$4.8 million
- FY24- \$11.7 million
- FY25- \$15.2 million
- FY26- \$23 million

➤ Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (for easements or interests in land that will most reduce, capture, avoid, or sequester CO2, methane or NOx emissions associated with land eligible for the program)

- FY23- \$0
- FY24- \$0
- FY25- \$6.7 million
- FY26- \$8 million



IRA uses Climate- Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities

NRCS climate-smart agriculture and forestry mitigation practices are divided into mitigation categories and delivered through NRCS programs such as EQIP and CSP

- **Soil Health** – Reducing emissions and enhancing soil carbon sequestration.
- **Nitrogen Management** – Implementing the 4Rs of nitrogen management and reducing nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas. The 4Rs are Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time and Right Place.
- **Livestock Waste Management** – Reducing potent methane emissions from manure.
- **Grazing Land Management** – Reducing emissions and building soil carbon stocks in grazing systems.
- **Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat** – Building carbon stocks in perennial biomass and soils.
- **Restoration of Disturbed Lands** – Improving the quality of previously mined or degraded lands to increase soil and perennial biomass carbon stocks.
- **Rice Production** – Reducing methane emissions from rice fields by minimizing methane production during the growing season.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/climate/climate-smart-mitigation-activities>

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Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List for FY2024



Highlighted activities have been added to the list in FY2024.
 *Noted activities are added to the list as "provisional."^[1]

Mitigation Categories ^[8]	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ^{[2] [3]} (practice unit)	Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Enhancement Activities
Soil Health	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects ^[2]
			E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328E	Soil health crop rotation
			E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and incre
			E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
			E328O	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
			E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)		None Available
	336	Soil Carbon Amendment (acres)*		None Available
	340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and s
			E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil organic matter
			E340D	Intensive orchard/vineyard floor cover
			E340E	Cover crop to minimize soil comp
			E340G	Cover crop to reduce water nutrients
			E340H	Cover crop to suppre
			E340I	Using cover
E340J				
345			Residue and Tillage	E345A

IRA supported Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF)

The full CSAF list can be viewed here:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/climate/climate-smart-mitigation-activities>

Highlighted activities have been added for FY2024, some examples include:

- Soil Carbon Amendment
- Fuel Break
- Irrigation Pipeline
- Irrigation System- Micro and Sprinkler
- Pumping Plant

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FY24- Revised Top 10 Priority Practices

530.403E EQIP Planning High Priority Practice

1) NRCS, with input from the State technical committee, may designate up to 10 practices to be eligible for increased payments for conservation practices that—

- I. Address specific causes of ground or surface water impairment relating to excessive nutrients;
- II. Address the conservation of water and declining aquifers, and mitigate drought;
- III. Meet other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans; or
- IV. Are geographically targeted to address a natural resource concern in a specific watershed.



Top 10 Priority Practices- 90% cost share rate; regardless of location



314	Brush Management
315	Herbaceous Weed Treatment
384	Woody Residue Treatment
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler
430	Irrigation Pipeline
533	Pumping Plant
587	Structure for Water Control
590	Nutrient Management
595	Pest Management
666	Forest Stand Improvement



Top 10 Priority Practices- Cont'd

530.406 EQIP Payments and Payment Limitations

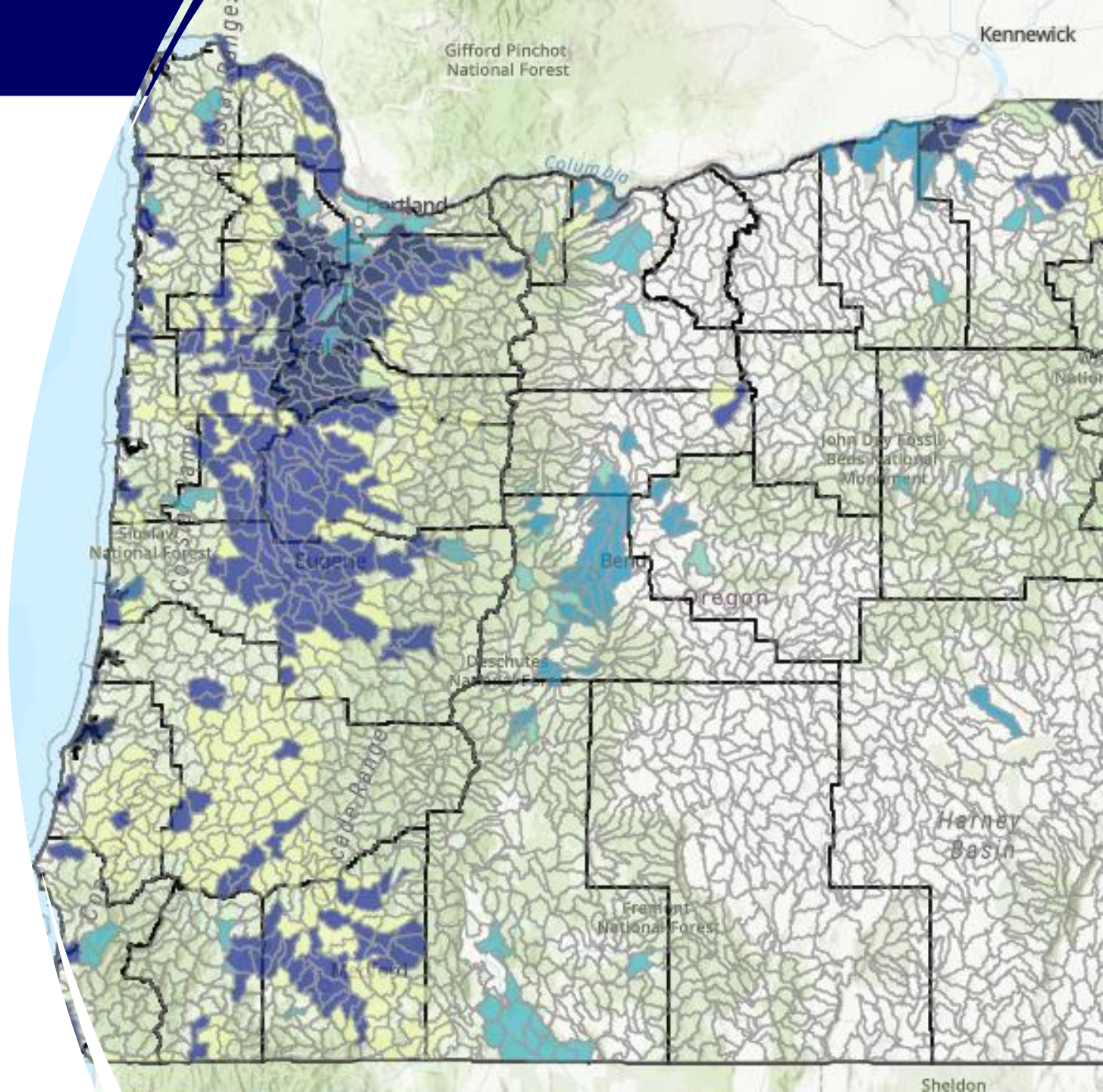
Cost Category	General Percentage	HU Percentage	High Priority Practice	Source Water Protection
Materials	75%	90%	90%	90%
Equipment for installation	75	90	90	90
Labor	75	90	90	90
Mobilization	75	90	90	90
Acquisition of technical knowledge	75	90	90	90
Income forgone	100	100	100	100

Note: HU participants must receive the HU designated rate



FY24 Watershed Priority Practices (WP)

- <https://gis-states.sc.egov.usda.gov/portal/apps/opdashboard/index.html#/407a36b274b148d6b9c252b5b94efbb6>



Source Water Protection Practices (WP)- 90% costshare rate



313	Waste Storage Facility
317	Composting Facility
327	Conservation Cover
328	Conservation Crop Rotation
329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
340	Cover Crop
342	Critical Area Planting
345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till
367	Roofs and Covers
380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover
391	Riparian Forest Buffer
422	Hedgerow Planting
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation
443	Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface
449	Irrigation Water Management

484	Mulching
512	Pasture and Hay Planting
521	Pond Sealing or Lining, Geomembrane or Geosynthetic Clay Liner
528	Prescribed Grazing
550	Range Planting
558	Roof Runoff Structure
561	Heavy Use Area Protection
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment

Note: HU participants must receive the HU designated rate





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Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)



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ACEP Components



Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE)

- NRCS provides cost-share assistance to eligible entities for the purchase of agricultural land easements on eligible land from eligible landowners. *Entity holds the easement.*

Purpose of ALE

- Protect the agricultural use, viability and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses.
- Protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving eligible land.



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ACEP Components



Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)

- NRCS purchases easements directly from eligible landowners through a reserved interest deed on eligible land to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands and associated habitats. *NRCS holds the easement.*

Purpose of WRE

- Restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on eligible land while maximizing wetland wildlife habitat.



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FY 2024 IRA ACEP



ACEP Enrollment Options	Deed Terms	IRA Target Areas
ACEP Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)	Standard ACEP-WRE Warranty Easement Deed	Soils high in Organic Carbon meeting designated thresholds (including certain wet histosols, soils with histic epipedons, aquolls (wet mollisols), soils with umbric epipedons)
	ACEP-WRE with Reservation of Grazing Rights	
ACEP Agricultural Land Easements – Grasslands (ACEP-ALE–Grasslands)	Grasslands of Special Environmental Significance	Grasslands located in the NRCS-WLFW Great Plains Grassland Biome
	Grasslands with no agricultural intensification	

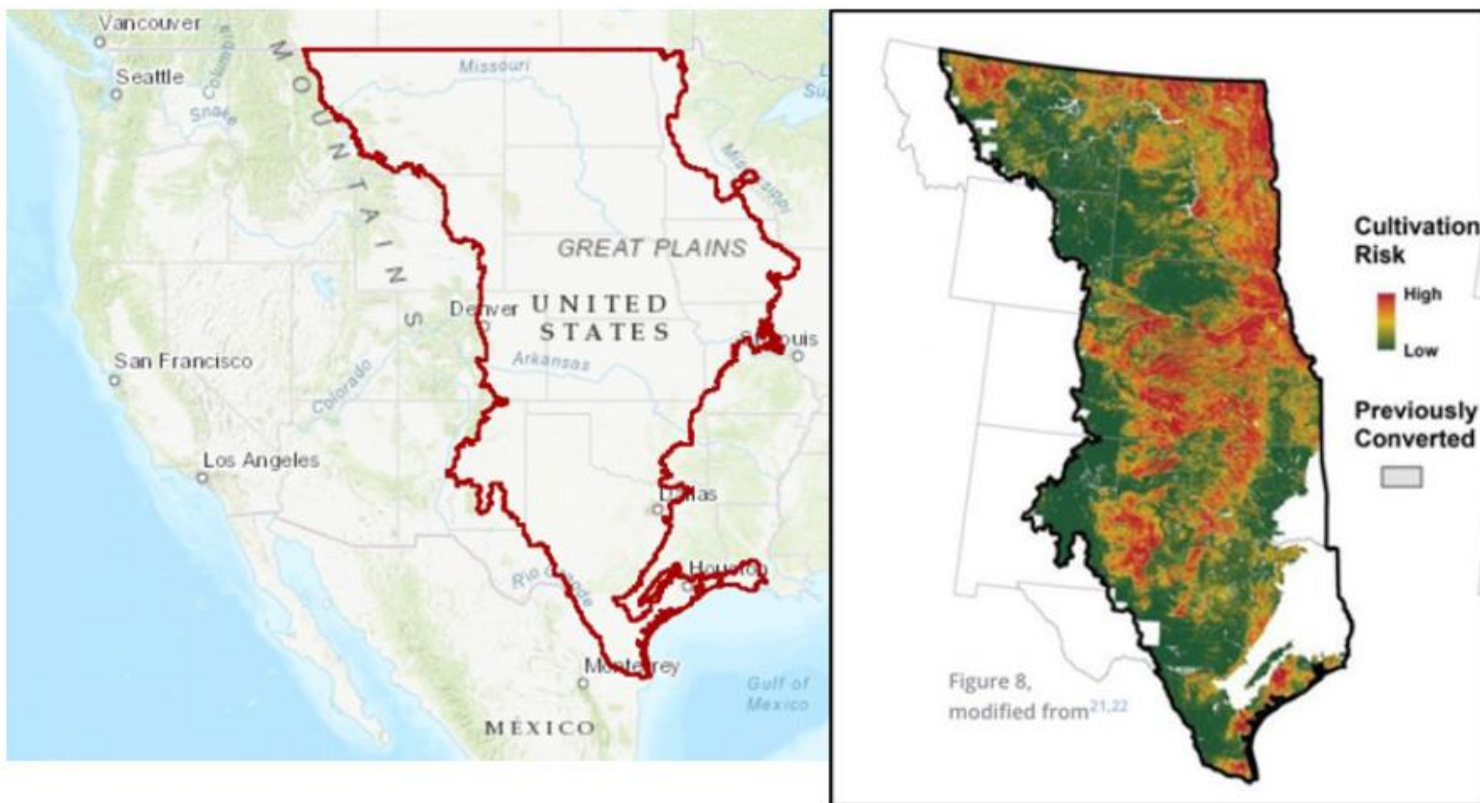


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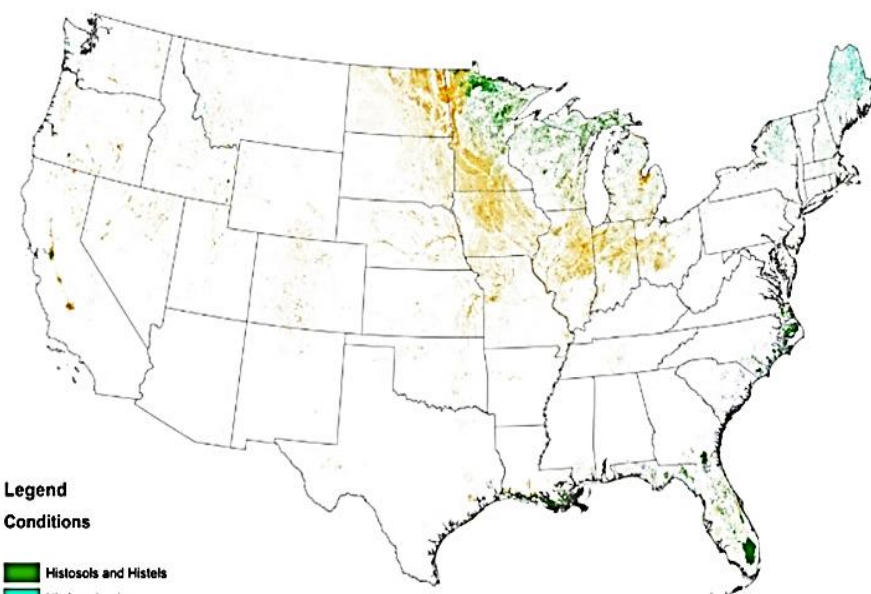
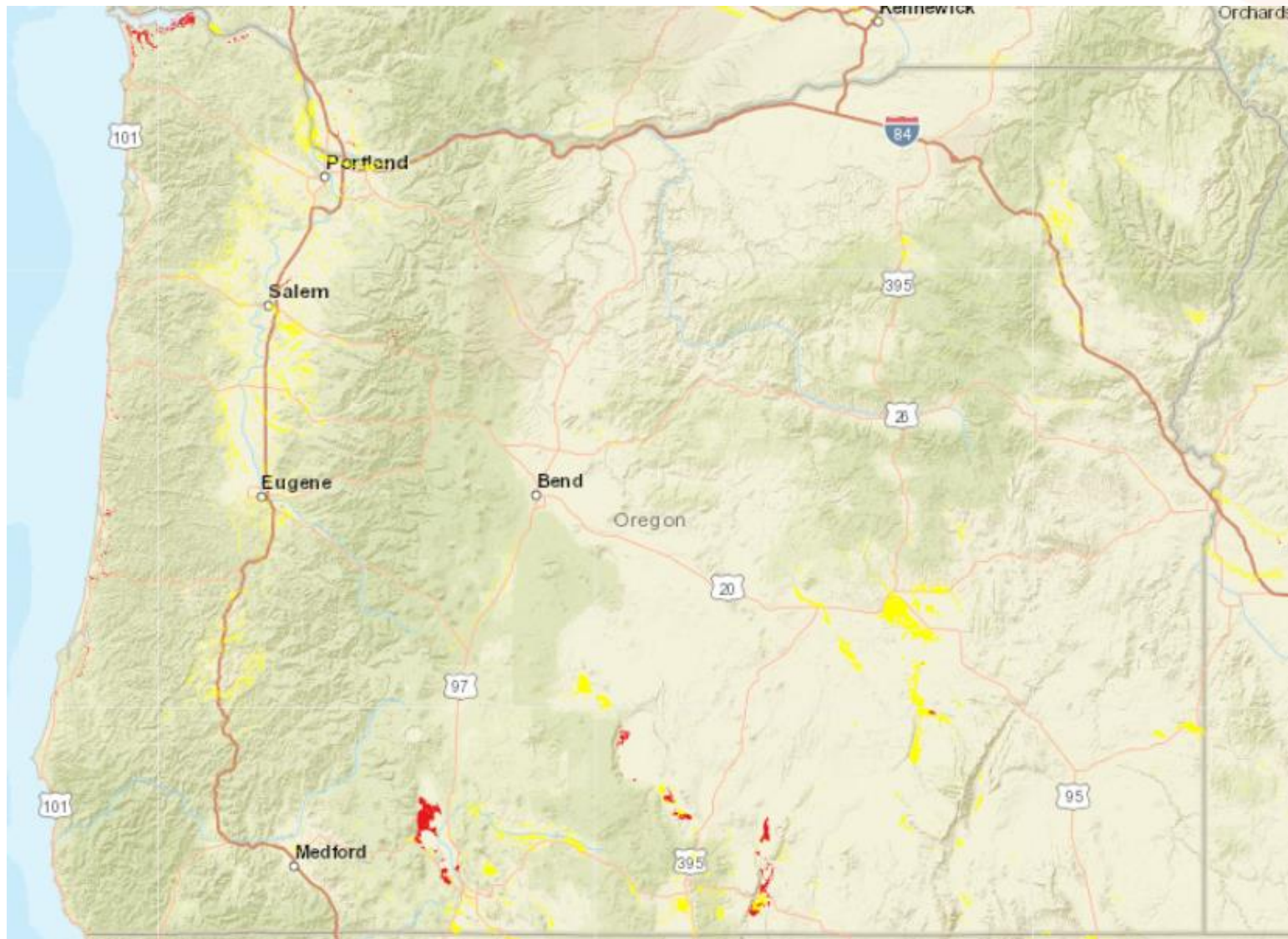
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FY 2024 IRA ACEP-ALE Prioritization



FY 2023 IRA ACEP-WRE Prioritization



Legend
Conditions

- Histosols and Histels
- Histic epipedon
- Aquolls
- Wet umbrics

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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) - Updates



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IRA National Funds



Inflation Reduction Act--RCPP

- **FY 23--\$250 million**
 - **FY 24--\$800 million**
 - **FY 25--\$1.5 billion**
 - **FY 26—\$2.4 billion**
-
- **15 awards per FY for AFA/grants is removed**



Oregon RCPP - Highlights

In Oregon, We have a portfolio of projects that are making an impact at landscape & watershed scales.

RCPP 2015-2023

- 35 Projects
- \$130 million in NRCS funding allocated
- ~\$130 million in partner contributed funds
- = > \$260 million invested in strategic conservation

Current RCPP

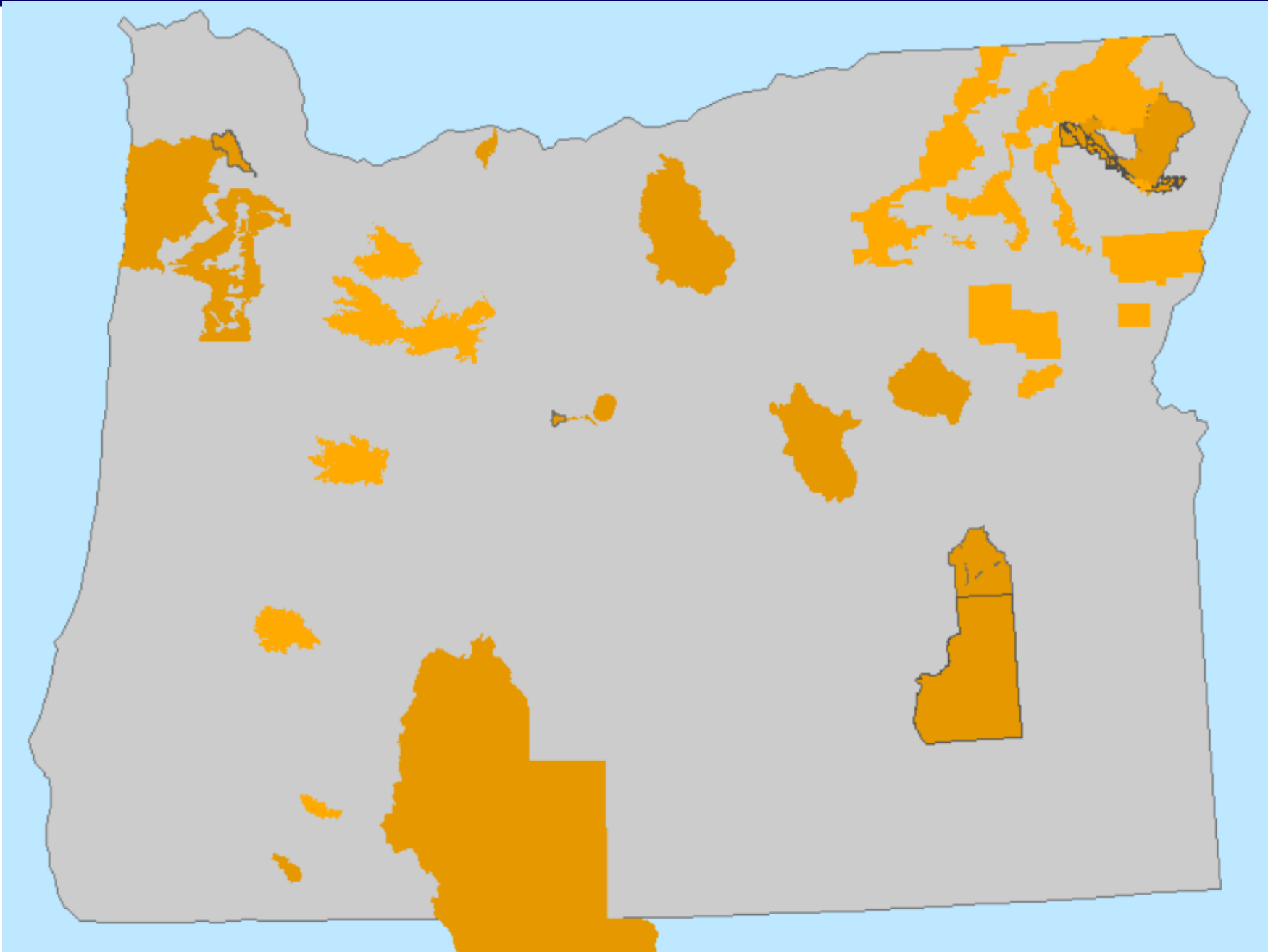
- **22 Projects**
- **\$100 million in NRCS funding, \$103 million partner contributions**





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Current Projects in Oregon



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NFO Highlights



- **\$500M total for Classic and AFA projects**
- **\$50M set-aside for AFAs with Tribal Entities**
- **Project maximum increased to \$25M**
- **1:1 partner contribution requirement removed**
- **Replaced 70/30 FA &TA split with a 25% cap for TA**
- **Entity-Held easement maximum federal share is 25/50/75, based on US ROE & benefit to HU landowners**
- **Allows use of covered program deeds**
 - US-Held easements may use WRE, HFRP, or other deed templates for US-held easements
 - Entity-Held easements may use ACEP-ALE template



OR: 2 New Projects Funded in FY23, 1 Partner State

Nationally, This year, more than \$1 billion is being invested to advance partner-driven solutions to conservation on agricultural land through 81 projects. See below for the awarded projects:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/regional-conservation-partnership-program-2023-awarded-projects>



Restoring, Protecting, and Supporting Tribal Connection to Native Oak Habitat

Restoring, Protecting, and Supporting Tribal Connection to Native Oak Habitat

Lead Partner: Oregon Agricultural Trust

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Western Waters

Lead State: OR

Total Funding Request: \$9,232,000.00

Oregon's biodiverse oak savannas and woodlands hold immense ecocultural value. This project's three interrelated goals are to 1) restore native oak habitat by reintroducing traditional disturbance regimes, 2) permanently protect private agricultural lands with associated oak habitats from development and fragmentation and 3) facilitate access to restored and protected properties for Native people for harvest, cultural purposes and stewardship. The Oregon Agriculture Trust's priority area for this project are Oregon's Lane and Linn Counties in the Upper Willamette Valley.



Oregon Dairy Climate and Water Quality Partnership



Oregon Dairy Climate and Water Quality Partnership

Lead Partner: Tillamook County Creamery Association

Project Type: AFA

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: OR

Total Funding Request: \$4,000,000.00

The Oregon Dairy Climate and Water Quality Partnership project will assist dairy producers in Clatsop and Tillamook, OR counties interested in adopting NRCS conservation practices focused on manure management. By enrolling 22+ producers representing a target of 10,000 cows this project will result in lasting improvements to water quality of impaired watersheds by tracking reductions of bacterial loads caused from livestock and field runoff. This will also result in reduced methane emissions by approximately 5,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents.



Stewarding the Working Wild in MT, OR, and CO: Non-lethal Predator Risk Management on Agriculture Operations

Stewarding the Working Wild in MT, OR, and CO: Non-lethal Predator Risk Management on Agriculture Operations

Lead Partner: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: S/M

CCA (if Applicable): N/A

Lead State: MT

Total Funding Request: \$16,664,634.00

The Stewarding the Working Wild project will help producers address some of the many threats they currently face, including drought, soil degradation, invasive species, wildlife displacement, conversion pressure, and commodity market fluctuations. The Heart of the Rockies Initiative, and other contributing partners will provide a holistic approach to incentivize producers to implement solutions that benefit land, livestock, and wildlife. This project will support the biologically diverse working lands that produce food and fiber, sustaining both rural and urban communities; enhance ecosystem services including clean water, biodiversity, and carbon storage; and maintain connected lands that provide essential habitat and migratory corridors.

RCPP Improvement Process



- Streamlining RCPP agreements for fiscal year 2023 awards and moving to one programmatic agreement to begin implementing the RCPP projects awarded under the fiscal year 2024 notice of funding opportunity. This will allow partners to more quickly begin implementation of their RCPP projects.
- Entrusting program management and negotiation to the State Conservationists, who lead NRCS programs in each state, further encouraging the locally led process and ensuring the necessary technical needs and costs were realized before project proposal submission.
- Establishing parameters and expectations for easement negotiations, including availability of easement deed templates and established program processes to reduce partnership agreement negotiation and implementation timeframes.
- Improving RCPP guidance and training, ensuring RCPP policies and procedures are communicated in a uniform and consistent manner.
- Enhancing existing business tools to improve the user experience while beginning development of new business tools that, through integration and automation, will reduce the time required for agreement negotiation, processing obligations and making payments to partners.