



OREGON
WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT BOARD

2023

Annual Tribal Report



Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360, Salem, OR 97301-1290



Agency Overview

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The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency that administers grants to organizations for voluntary conservation actions. Grant-funded projects improve overall watershed health and provide on-the-ground habitat restoration and conservation across the state. Agency responsibilities include:

- Grant management and administration for watershed protection and enhancement; and
- Assistance in the development and implementation of watershed-scale restoration initiatives; and
- Coordination and support for locally-led initiatives throughout the state to achieve voluntary cooperative conservation outcomes.

OWEB is led by an 18-member policy oversight and decision-making board. Board members represent the public, federally recognized tribes, five state natural resource agency boards and commissions, Oregon State University Extension Service, and six federal land management and natural resource agencies.

OWEB works with the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon to address watershed-scale restoration needs. OWEB operates grant programs that tribes can apply for to fund a variety of watershed management, protection, and restoration projects. Tribes can leverage those funds to meet their natural and cultural resource restoration goals and objectives.

On October 11, 2023, Oregon Governor Tina Kotek announced that OWEB’s Executive Director, Lisa Charpilloz Hanson, was selected to be the next director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Director Charpilloz Hanson began her new role on December 1, 2023. Deputy Director Stephanie Page will serve as OWEB’s Acting Director beginning December 1st. Tribal partners can expect the same level of tribal engagement and customer service during the transition in agency leadership.

Tribal Policy

In 2018, OWEB revised its [tribal policy](#) by working with the Legislative Commission on Indian Services (LCIS) and tribal input. In 2023, OWEB's leadership and tribal liaison continued to work together to communicate the intent of OWEB's Tribal Policy and identify opportunities for staff to work effectively with tribes.

Summary of Programs and Process for Involving Tribes

OWEB works closely with tribes and involves them in programs and decision-making processes at all levels of the organization. The following sections describe the agency's interactions during 2023 with the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon and the Nez Perce Tribe.

OWEB Board and Grant Programs Tribal Participation

Board Membership

The Governor appoints a tribal representative as a voting member of the OWEB Board. We have been extremely grateful for the tribal representation on the OWEB Board since 2000. The tribal representatives that have participated as Board members since 2000 are listed in the table below.

Board Member	Tribe	Period of Time Served
Delores Pigsley	Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians	01.01.2000 – 06.30.2001
Bobby Brunoe	Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs of Oregon	09.10.2001 – 06.30.2005 07.01.2005 – 06.30.2009
Eric Quaempts	Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation	07.01.2009 – 06.30.2013 07.01.2013 – 01.31.2017
Jason Robison	Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians	03.15.2017 – 07.28.2021
Kelly Coates	Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians	11.20.2021 – present

▲ *Figure 1. Summary of OWEB Board tribal representatives from 2000 to present.*

The position is currently occupied by Kelly Coates, Natural Resources Program Director of the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

Additionally, board member Lindsay McClary serves in a public voting position. Lindsay is the Restoration Ecologist/Fish & Wildlife Policy Analyst for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and her term began on March 1, 2022, following Senate confirmation. We are extremely grateful to have two bright and energetic tribal professionals participating on the OWEB Board. Kelly and Lindsay help identify opportunities for collaboration and ensure the OWEB board and staff are aware of their responsibilities to involve and consider tribal interests.



▲ Photo 1 (left to right). Kelly Coates, Courtney Shaff, Lindsay McClary, Representative Salinas, Sean Clements, and Annie McColaugh, Director of Federal Affairs for Governor Kotek.

In November 2023, Kelly Coates, Lindsay McClary, and Courtney Shaff traveled to Washington DC to speak with federal agency leaders, Senators, and Representatives about the importance of federal funding for watershed and salmon restoration. OWEB shared the benefits and successful results of federal investments – including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds (PCSRF) – in Oregon’s watershed restoration projects.



▲ *Photo 2. Pre-restoration conditions along Granite Creek, located in Grant County.*



▲ *Photo 3. Post-restoration conditions completed in 2023 by the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation along Granite Creek to increase channel complexity and floodplain connection.*

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP)

OAHP was established by the Oregon legislature in 2017 to provide voluntary incentives to support practices that maintain or enhance both agriculture and natural resources such as fish, wildlife, and water quality on agricultural lands. The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (commission) oversees the program and makes funding and policy recommendations to the OWEB Board. The commission consists of 12 members who are appointed by the OWEB Board—including one member selected by the OWEB Board who is a representative of tribal interests. This position is currently vacant because the previous tribal representative, Nathan Jackson, who manages the K Bar Ranches Corporation for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, voluntarily stepped down to move his family to Colorado.

In 2023, the legislature allocated money to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund to support grant making for the first time. In April, OWEB awarded the first nine OAHP grants (totaling \$4.3 million) to support the purchase of conservation easements and the development of conservation management plans. The program did not receive additional grant funding in OWEB’s 2023-2025 Legislatively Adopted Budget.

OWEB actively reached out to tribes to recruit a new tribal representative on the commission. As this report is being finalized, one Tribe has applied to OWEB for consideration. Once the application period closes on December 22nd, OWEB will review the applications to decide who they will appoint as the next tribal representative.

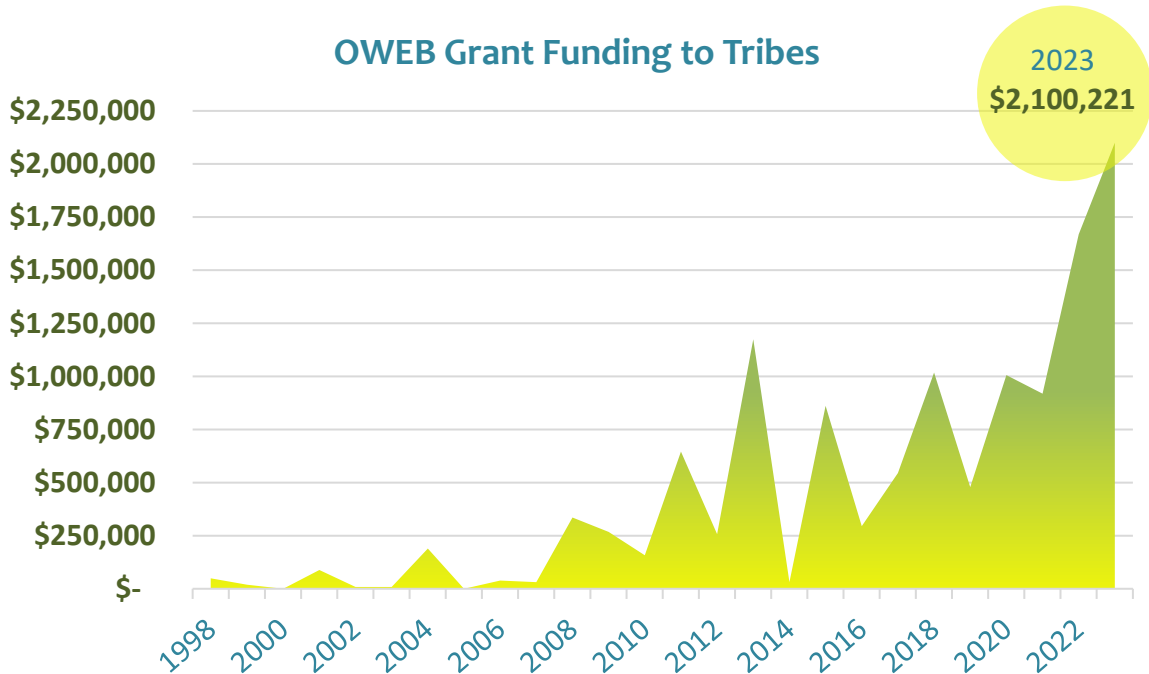


▲ *Photo 4. OWEB’s Coby Menton visits an OWEB funded restoration project along the Willowa River with Montana Pagano from the Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries Program.*

Grant Program

Grant Applicants

OWEB grants are available to a broad range of entities, including tribes [ORS 541.375(1)]. **Since 1998, OWEB has awarded \$12,192,810 in grants to tribal governments.** Across all grant programs, OWEB provided \$2,100,221 to tribes in 2023, which is an increase of approximately \$430K from last year. See graph below of annual OWEB funding provided to tribes since 1998.



▲ *Figure 2. Annual OWEB grant funding provided to tribes from 1998 to 2023.*

In addition to eligibility on their own, tribes are often members of, or partners with, local watershed councils. Oregon law describing watershed councils (ORS 541.388) specifically identifies “federally recognized Indian Tribes” as potential members of these local organizations. Tribes are critical partners in watershed restoration in Oregon and often contribute vital match funds to grant projects. In 2023, 12 completed grants included tribal contributions. **Across all grant programs, tribes provided \$1,682,209 in cash and \$76,683 of in-kind support to OWEB grants in 2023.**

Small Grant Program

In OWEB’s Small Grant program (OAR Chapter 695, Division 35), tribes are eligible to be members of Small Grant Teams in each of the state’s 28 Small Grant areas. These Small Grant Teams have access to \$100,000 per biennium to recommend grants of up to \$15,000 each for watershed restoration projects. Other team members include watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts.

Small grant teams are in the process of composing and organizing the teams for the 2023-2025 biennium. Tribes with reservation, tribal, ceded lands, or usual and accustomed areas located partially or entirely within the team's area are invited to participate on the small grant teams. Once all of the small grant teams are reorganized for the 2023-2025 biennium representatives from all nine of the federally recognized tribes in Oregon and the Nez Perce Tribe are slated to participate on the majority of the 28 Small Grants Teams. Some tribes sit on several Small Grant Teams and some Teams have more than one tribe participating.

Open Solicitation Grant Program

OWEB solicits grant applications twice a year through the Open Solicitation Grant Program. During 2023, five grants totaling \$764,172 were awarded to tribes:

- **Two grants totaling \$75,813** to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- **Two grants totaling \$470,631** to the Nez Perce Tribe
- **One grant for \$217,728** was provided to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

The Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation have also applied in the most recent grant cycle, for which awards have not yet been made.

OWEB's Regional Program Representatives (RPRs) have regular contact with appropriate tribal staff. They meet with interested tribes before grant application submission and throughout the life of each grant to ensure tribes can meet their goals and objectives. Tribes often partner with watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) by helping manage the projects and at times receive funding to implement projects as contractors. In 2023, 23% of the applications that were reviewed had tribal participation. Tribes participate in applications in several ways. They may be applicants, provide cash match funds, be landowners, contractors for project implementation, partners, board members of the applicant's organization, or supporters of the applicant (such as writing letters of support). In 2023, applications with tribal participation have a success rate of 78% (are funded) compared to applications without tribal participation which have a 62% success rate. This data demonstrates that projects that include tribal participation have a higher chance of being funded and are likely to make a meaningful impact on the health of our watersheds and communities in Oregon.

Open Solicitation Grant Program – Regional Review Teams

Applications received through OWEB's Open Solicitation Grant Program are reviewed by one of six Regional Review Teams, comprised of state, federal, and tribal natural resource professionals. All six regional review teams have at least one tribal natural resource professional participating in the review process. In 2023, seven tribal agency representatives participated in OWEB Regional Review Teams, including representatives from the Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Land Acquisition Grant Program

OWEB's land acquisition grant program provides funding for projects that acquire interests in land from a willing seller to address the conservation needs of priority habitats and species. OWEB notifies all tribes after receiving a land acquisition application to solicit input in the decision-making process. In addition, all tribes are notified when a public hearing date is set to include them in this part of the review process. Finally, OWEB notifies all the tribes once a funding recommendation has been made by OWEB staff allowing tribes to provide additional input before the OWEB Board's funding decision.

The Phipps Meadow property is an important OWEB investment—made through the land acquisition grant program in 2023—for land conservation and future restoration efforts. With an OWEB grant in the amount of \$818,550, the Blue Mountain Land Trust (BMLT) has purchased the 278.74-acre property in Grant County, 18 miles east of Prairie City. Phipps Meadow includes 1.58 miles of the John Day River, including the headwaters of the Middle Fork, and 108 acres of surrounding wet meadow. The Middle Fork of the John Day River provides spawning and rearing habitat to Mid-Columbia steelhead, Mid-Columbia chinook, and bull trout. BMLT plans to work with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Forest Service to restore and protect the property's riparian habitat, improve channel connectivity and complexity, raise the meadow's water table, improve soil health, and thin the overgrown pine uplands. In September 2023, OWEB Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson along with OWEB staff Amy Charette and Ken Fetcho, attended a field tour of this property to see the newly acquired land and hear from the partners on how they plan to proceed with stewarding and restoring this valuable property into the future.



▲ *Photo 5. Local partners discuss restoration potential along the Middle Fork John Day River at Phipps Meadow*

In 2023, OWEB started focused conversations with each tribe's natural resources staff to discuss OWEB's land acquisition grant program. OWEB staff would like to better understand each tribe's interest in this grant program and discuss any questions or concerns they might have to help identify barriers to tribes accessing these funds. It is anticipated that OWEB will continue to meet with all the tribes into the Spring of 2024 to gain their feedback, and

then meet internally with OWEB’s Executive Team to reflect on the feedback we have received to inform next steps. The intent of this work is to increase tribal access to OWEB’s land acquisition grant program in the future.

Water Acquisition Grant Program

OWEB’s water acquisition grant program provides funding for programs or projects that acquire an interest in water from a willing seller to increase instream flow. Like the land acquisition grant program, OWEB notifies tribes after a water acquisition grant application is received and once a recommendation has been made. This allows multiple opportunities to provide input during the decision-making process.

Focused Investment Partnership Program

In 2023, tribes continued to participate in the Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant program. Implementation funding provides opportunities for tribes and others to work collaboratively on long-term, landscape-scale programmatic restoration initiatives. These initiatives create measurable outcomes within priority areas that were identified by the OWEB Board.



▲ *Photos 6. Photos from a largescale floodplain restoration project that was initiated by the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians in 2023 in the Siuslaw River Estuary.*

The OWEB Board has \$11 million available in its 2023-2025 spending plan to award new FIP initiatives during this biennium. OWEB hosted pre-application consultations with

partnerships interested in submitting applications for this grant program. Applications were due to OWEB on October 16, 2023 and five FIP applications were received. Two of those applications from high-performing partnerships included tribes as core partners. A total of two tribes are involved in these partnerships. The Burns Paiute Tribe participates in the Harney Basin Wetlands Collaborative and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs participate in the Hood River Basin Collaborative. These applications will be reviewed by a technical review team composed of tribal, state and federal agency experts. Lindsay McClary, from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is participating on the expert review team to review and evaluate all of the FIP applications that were received and that will be awarded by the OWEB Board in April 2024.

Once FIP initiatives are awarded to high-performing partnerships, tribes that are part of the partnerships may pursue and receive grant funding from OWEB. During 2023, 4 grants totaling \$1,077,785 were awarded to tribes:

- **Two** grant **totaling \$277,785** awarded to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- **One** grant for **\$400,000** awarded to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- **One** grant for **\$400,000** awarded to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians– their first OWEB grant.

Focused Investment Partnership Technical Assistance Program

In 2019, the OWEB Board approved a new grant program which evolved from the previously offered Development FIP grant program. The new Partnership Technical Assistance grants offer two tracks:

1. **Partnership Development** to produce or enhance a Strategic Action Plan and governance documents.
2. **Partnership Capacity** to support Strategic Action Plan coordination and implementation.

Partnership Technical Assistance applications were received in December 2022 and were awarded by the OWEB Board in April 2023. Nine applications were received by the deadline, requesting a total of \$1.09 million. Four applications applied for Capacity funding and five applications applied for Development funding. Applications were submitted from three of OWEB's six regions. Five partnerships received grant funding and three of these funded partnerships include tribes as partners.

- **Upper Grande Ronde Partnership** includes the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- **Tenmile Lakes Basin Partnership** includes the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians
- **Umpqua Oak Partnership** includes the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

Post-Wildfire Immediate Response and Recovery Grant Program

Ongoing efforts to provide funding to the 2020 wildfire areas were expanded. Part of House Bill 5006 (2021) provided OWEB with a total of \$19.75 million in funding for grants to support natural resource recovery in areas impacted during the 2020 fire season. Funding was intended to support on-the-ground implementation activities focused on upland and

riparian replanting and floodplain restoration. Eligible applicants included tribes, among other entities. As of November 2023, 23 projects have been funded for 12 of the 14 fire areas. In addition to tribes partnering with applicants to help scope and implement projects, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs applied as lead applicant for a project and received an OWEB grant in the amount of \$199,470 to aid in post-fire recovery at the Little Sweden site in the Beachie Creek Fire area.

Additionally, during the 2022 Oregon Legislative Session, OWEB received a total of \$5 million in funding to provide grants to support natural resource recovery in areas impacted during the 2021 fire season. Funding was intended to support on-the-ground implementation activities focused on natural resource recovery in upland, riparian, and instream habitats. Eligible applicants include tribes, among other entities. As of November 2023, two projects have been funded for 3 of the 14 fire areas. Both projects include tribal participation.

Both 2020 and 2021 Post-fire Recovery grant programs utilized General Funds from the 2021-2023 biennium. In June 2023, legislative approval authorized carryforward of the funding into the 2023-2025 biennium. All funds obligated to existing grant agreements have been extended to June 30, 2025. No additional funding cycles are anticipated to occur for either program.

Drought Recovery Grant Program

OWEB developed the Drought Relief Grant Program that distributed \$10,476,698 in General Funds to address ongoing impacts of drought in Oregon. OWEB conducted extensive outreach with local partners, including tribes, reaching out to over 45 different groups, to assist in designing the Drought Relief Grant Program. The program focused offerings on:

- Soil conservation and invasive weed control on irrigated land in Jefferson County
- Off-channel livestock water and riparian habitat protection in Klamath County
- Irrigation modernization
- Drought resilience in Jefferson and Klamath Counties

OWEB staff participates in a monthly Klamath Livestock Water Working Group that meets to discuss solutions to provide livestock water wells and improve streamside vegetation through a collaborative approach. The group is comprised of representatives from agencies, non-profits, and the Klamath Tribes.

An interagency agreement between OWEB and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council supported the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative (DBWC) in the development of the draft Upper Deschutes River Basin Water Management Plan. The Plan provides a shared vision and implementation guidance for water allocation in the Upper Deschutes Basin. The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon was one of the original co-conveners of the DBWC and remains active as one of three chairpersons convening the group.

The collaborative work of the DBWC in the Upper Deschutes Basin has also played a critical role in many of the projects funded through the Drought Relief Grant Program, including: two large-scale irrigation modernization projects, a water bank transaction program, and an

economic and appraisal study focusing on improving irrigation resiliency for the North Unit Irrigation District.

Two engagement grants focused on drought resilience in Klamath County focused on the Sprague and Wood River watersheds to improve agricultural resiliency, river recovery, and relationship building. The work from these grants led to the development of the Sprague River Collaborative, which the Klamath Tribes is an active member, as well as the collaborative development of a US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) restoration grant made available through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The USFWS grant focuses on voluntary, incentive-based restoration, identifies the critical role of tribal land lands, and stresses the importance of supporting tribal knowledge and sovereignty.

Other Grant Program Involvements

The Upper Middle Fork John Day River Intensively Monitored Watershed (IMW) is a long-term, large-scale monitoring effort to evaluate watershed restoration projects. OWEB participates on the steering team and assists with securing funding for several aspects of the program. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs continues to be a key participant in the Upper Middle Fork John Day River IMW and received \$19,000 in funding this year to continue their important work in this long-term watershed monitoring effort.

OWEB staff also participates in the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP). The WWMP is the result of the State's 2010 agreement with Bonneville Power Administration for mitigation of the loss of fish and wildlife habitat due to the construction of 13 dams and reservoirs on major tributaries to the Willamette River from 1946-1964. Members from Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians participate in the WWMP, as they all have historic hunting, fishing, and trading areas in the Basin.



▲ *Photo 7. Restoration along Middle Fork John Day River, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, May 2, 2023.*

Promotion of Communication between OWEB and Tribes

Tribal Liaison

In conformance with OWEB's tribal policy, OWEB's designated staff person, Ken Fetcho, continues to operate as a tribal liaison for the agency. The tribal liaison is responsible for ensuring that OWEB's programs and policy development adhere to our tribal policy. This includes coordinating program and policy notices to tribal natural resource key contacts and providing training to staff as appropriate.

In 2023, OWEB's tribal liaison continued to notify OWEB employees of the provisions of ORS 182.162 to 182.168 and its tribal policy to emphasize the importance of OWEB's tribal policy to new employees and board members. Starting in 2019, each new employee and board member is briefed on the tribal policy and receives a copy of the current Annual Tribal Report. In addition, the tribal liaison presented at the January 2023 Board meeting to discuss the provisions of ORS 182.162 - 182.168 and highlight the accomplishments that were summarized in the 2022 annual tribal report. These provisions are also discussed at all-staff meetings when the request for information is released to write the annual tribal report and when the final report is presented to staff to celebrate the work we have done to engage tribes in OWEB's decision-making processes. OWEB staff and OWEB Board member Kelly Coates are planning to present at the January 2024 Board meeting an overview of the Government-to-Government relationship OWEB has with the Federally Recognized Tribes in Oregon.

The tribal liaison continued to meet with Calla Hagle, the Natural Resources Director of the Burns Paiute Tribe, to explore the potential for planning training for OWEB staff that would occur in the future. The purpose of the training is to learn more about the Burns Paiute Tribe and learn how OWEB can be a better partner in areas of mutual interest. OWEB is interested in learning more about how the Burns Paiute Tribe government is structured, their cultural and natural resource priorities, and how that might influence how they pursue our funding. This training was originally scheduled to occur in October 2023 but was rescheduled to 2024.

Oregon Water Data Portal

In 2023, OWEB continued work with several other state agencies on the Oregon Water Data Portal (OWDP). This is a project funded by the Oregon Legislature to help improve access to statewide data and information to make water and water infrastructure decisions. A [report summarizing Phase 1](#) of the project, including tribal listening sessions, was provided to the Oregon Legislature in early 2023. Phase 2 work is building upon outcomes from the listening sessions and will include additional opportunities for tribal engagement. For more information see the [OWDP Website](#).

Cultural Resources Protection

OWEB continues to emphasize the importance of grantees and grant project managers complying with regulations that protect cultural resources. OWEB grants pay for the expenses needed to comply with cultural resource regulations and to legally implement watershed improvement projects. In 2023, OWEB continued to work with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to negotiate a Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) Grant Program to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in Oregon. OWEB has participated in monthly meetings with NOAA and their contractor to discuss comments NOAA has received and how to address them as we work toward a final PA. OWEB anticipates signing the PA no sooner than July 1, 2024 and looks forward to implementing this PA in partnership with NOAA, SHPO, THPOs and our grantees.

To begin communicating the new review process for OWEB, we hosted an informational [webinar](#) for our grantees and interested applicants on September 21, 2023. The purpose of the webinar was to begin to describe the process to comply with the terms of the PA and to hear from our grantees what their questions are to help clarify the new process.

Additionally, OWEB with PCSRF funding from NOAA has created a new position to hire a Cultural Resources Specialist to coordinate this new process and document compliance with the PA. Interviews for this position will be held in December 2023 and we look forward to having this position on board in early 2024 to assist our agency. We envision this position working closely with our grantees, SHPO, and THPOs to ensure our restoration grantees are following state, tribal, and federal laws to protect cultural resources. This effort will provide

an opportunity to help OWEB further foster our relationships with the tribes in Oregon as we work on a topic that is of the utmost importance to tribal governments.



▲ Photos 8 (above). Photos of OWEB staff attending a field trip to visit She Who Watches and (below) OPRD staff teaching the class how to throw an atlatl.



In April 2023, OWEB staff attended the weeklong Cultural Resources and Archaeology Awareness Training that was hosted by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department in The Dalles. This training focused on assisting staff in understanding the importance of cultural resources protection to tribes. OWEB's Restoration Grant Program Manager, Eric Williams and 5 staff members attended this important training. This training program was designed to provide

an overview of cultural resources and archaeological issues as they affect lands in Oregon. An especially important aspect of the training is that it was held with tribal partners to broaden the cultural awareness of state employees and provide information on the tribal consultation process. Additionally, the training recognized both precontact and historic sites, and addressed the importance of cultural resources and archaeological preservation, along with applicable federal and state regulations.

Assessment of Grant Practices Impact on Tribes

In October 2021, OWEB partnered with a Portland State University (PSU) graduate student to perform an assessment of how OWEB's granting practices impact federally recognized Tribes' ability to apply for and receive grant funding to meet their watershed enhancement goals and objectives.

Results from this assessment are summarized in a [final report](#). The findings in the report were developed directly from interviews conducted with staff from each of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon, as well as the Nez Perce Tribe. Using these findings, the PSU student developed recommendations to address barriers identified through the assessment. In evaluating the recommendations, OWEB's leadership and tribal liaison determined that several of the recommendations could be addressed through communication and meeting to discuss the details more thoroughly.

In April 2023, OWEB staff organized a meeting with tribes regarding granting practices in response to recommendations in the assessment report. During this meeting tribes provided feedback on the future topics to discuss and included training topics on overall OWEB grant management. OWEB plans to work on offering this training in 2024 and hopes to include tribes in the process to attend the CONNECT conference. This conference is supported by OWEB and is often attended by Watershed Councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and Land Trusts. We are hoping to offer scholarships to increase tribal participation to help build relationships across partners to increase the scope and scale of restoration across the landscape.

Climate Resolution and Rule Making

In January 2022, OWEB's board adopted a [Climate Resolution \(OWEB Resolution 01-2022\)](#). The resolution states that OWEB will:

Integrate climate mitigation and adaptation in their budgeting, investing, and policy-making decisions by:

- Funding climate-smart adaptation and resilience for Oregon's watersheds, natural resources, people, and communities.
- Funding projects that include meaningful emissions reductions, carbon sequestration, and protection of carbon storage in enhancing watershed health and habitat restoration.
- Valuing project co-benefits and assessing the long-term sustainability of projects and acquisitions.
- Learn and apply diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and environmental justice principles when making funding decisions to address challenges arising from climate change to traditionally underrepresented and impacted communities.
- Engage traditionally underrepresented and impacted communities in processes to craft meaningful solutions that are integrated into funding decisions.

At the July 2022 board meeting, the OWEB board approved the agency to start the rulemaking process to add these criteria into its grantmaking rules. The agency successfully

recruited Helena Linnell, Biological Planning and Operations Manager for the Coquille Indian Tribe, to participate in the Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC). The RAC met from December 2022 through April 2023 and developed three climate criteria, which were adopted (with small modifications) by the OWEB board in July 2023. Criteria were added to OWEB's grant applications for the Fall 2023 open solicitation cycle. Tribes were invited to attend virtual and in-person trainings that were held across the state in the Fall 2023 to learn how to address these new criteria when writing grant applications to OWEB.

Small Grant and Drinking Water Source Protection Rule Making

In June 2023, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2010 that—combined with other legislation—allocates \$5 million to establish a new drinking water source protection land acquisition grant program at OWEB. At the July 2023 meeting, the OWEB Board approved the rulemaking process to begin for this newly established program.

This rulemaking process will include establishing a full scope of rules for the program—including but not limited to grant eligibility, grant application standards, evaluation criteria, and reporting requirements. [HB 2010](#) is available for viewing here if you would like to review the bill language. OWEB is in the process of inviting the federally recognized tribes in Oregon to serve as a member of the Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC) for OWEB's newly established Drinking Water Source Protection Grant Program to develop administrative rules that likely will be brought before the OWEB Board for consideration at its July 2024 meeting. Given the importance of water to the Tribes, we are hoping to have tribal representation to ensure tribal issues and concerns are included in this important grant program.

At their July 2023 meeting, the OWEB Board initiated rulemaking for OWEB's Small Grant Program. This rulemaking will include looking at broadening the eligibility in applying for small grants, as well as serving on the small grant teams. OWEB may also look at small grant project types and conduct some minor updates to the rules. OWEB formed a (RAC) to provide input on how these potential changes can be incorporated into the Small Grant Program administrative rules. All tribes were invited to participate on the RAC because tribal participation in the Small Grant Program includes all the 9 federally recognized tribes in Oregon and the Nez Perce Tribe. Annaliese Ramthun with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde is participating on this RAC. We value her time and input into this process, which will continue into 2024.

Renaming the Stakeholder Engagement Grant Offering

OWEB Board member Lindsay McClary raised the issue of the term 'stakeholder' in the stakeholder engagement grant offering during a Grants Committee meeting. She explained that historically, the term "stakeholder" refers to someone staking a claim to land, which can be offensive to tribal communities, reflecting colonial history. The committee agreed that OWEB should consider changing the name of the grant offering to something more appropriate. After discussion, the committee suggested calling the grants simply

“Engagement Grants” as this reflects the purpose and intent of the grant type and is inclusive of any type of engagement necessary for implementing eligible restoration or acquisition projects.

While board approval was not needed to name grant offerings, the committee decided to provide this recommendation for discussion at the October 2023 board meeting. There was consensus from the board on the name change, and staff implemented this new name change with the next Engagement Grant offering. The name will be changed in administrative rules as each section of rules referencing this grant type is subject to rulemaking updates.

Peer-to-Peer Learning Tribal Summit

The tribal liaison participated in a collaborative team to assist Lomakatsi Restoration Project and the Intertribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership in planning a Peer-to-Peer Learning Summit that was hosted in Sunriver November 14-16, 2023. OWEB was a proud sponsor of this event by providing a small sponsorship of \$1,000 to support the event and sent two staff to attend the Summit. The Summit invited tribal, nonprofit, and agency leaders to gather with the goal of increasing tribal inclusion in landscape-scale restoration initiatives through peer-to-peer learning. Speakers and panelists shared success stories, best practices, and lessons learned, supported by participant discussions.

The Summit provided a historic opportunity to establish a framework to support ongoing collaboration among tribes based in Oregon, tribes with ancestral geography in Oregon, and agencies and organizations working across the state to build ecosystem and community resilience to the mounting impacts of climate change, and empower partnerships to co-manage, co-invest, and collaborate on large, landscape-scale initiatives.



▲ *Photo 9. Tribal youth being honored at the Peer-to-Peer Learning Summit hosted by Lomakatsi Restoration Project and the Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership.*

The Tribal Liaison also continued to attend the State/Tribal Natural Resources Workgroup quarterly meetings in 2023 to provide relevant updates to tribes and to better understand issues of importance to the tribes.

Meetings with Tribes

In August 2023, Director Charpiloz Hanson, Deputy Director Page, and Liaison Fetcho met in person with natural resource program staff from the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians to tour their tribal lands and visit restoration projects that have been implemented on tribal and neighboring partners' lands. The visit included a tour of several restoration projects completed by the tribe including fish passage projects, instream habitat enhancement, and streamside vegetation restoration. The visit also included a tour of some lands recently restored to the tribe that burned during the Milepost 97 fire in 2019. This two-day meeting was valuable in establishing relationships with the Cow Creek natural resources staff and helping OWEB better understand the challenges and solutions to implementing watershed restoration projects across tribal, public and private lands.



▲ *Photo 10. Former Executive Director Lisa Charpilloz Hanson (center) and current Acting Executive Director Stephanie Page (third from the right) on a field trip of tribal lands with Kelly Coates and natural resource staff from the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, August 2023.*

We hope that establishing these relationships and exchanging information is mutually beneficial so we can continue to foster and develop relations between OWEB and each federally recognized tribe in Oregon. In order to promote engagement with tribes, OWEB staff have developed a [new Tribal Engagement webpage](#) to share information. OWEB is open to receiving feedback from the tribes on the language we are using and the items that are posted on this webpage. Please let us know if you have any feedback, so we can ensure it reflects our shared values on this important topic. OWEB looks forward to continuing to meet with the tribes on their lands in 2024 to visit their watershed enhancement projects and continue to learn.