

Investing in Resilient Communities

Northeast Oregon

Grant, Union, Baker & Wallowa Counties

Climate change is already affecting Northeast Oregon. Trends towards higher temperatures, drought, lower seasonal stream flows and wildfires disrupt the region's agriculture, forests, fish and wildlife habitat, tourism and outdoor recreation. For communities to adapt and prosper, it is important to identify areas of risk and to invest in solutions that safeguard and restore natural resources, protect communities and enhance the region's economy.

LANDSCAPES & WILDFIRE

Forests and range fires are becoming more frequent and intense due to increased fuel loads in forests caused by invasive species, insect-killed trees, past management practices, higher temperatures and drought.

- **Decrease** the prevalence and intensity of forest and range wildfires by reducing fuel loads and controlling the expansion of western juniper and invasive plants.
- **Promote** interagency and multi-jurisdictional cooperation to prevent and manage wildfires.
- **Invest** in rural fire protection districts' firefighting capabilities.
- **Invest** in the carbon storage potential of forests, rangelands, wetlands and riparian areas.

WATERWAYS & WILDLIFE

Decreasing seasonal stream flows, periodic drought and higher temperatures reduce clean water needed for agriculture and domestic use. This harms fish and wildlife and increases the potential for expansion of invasive species, water borne pathogens, and toxic algae blooms.

- **Fund** watershed restoration to improve water quality, stream flows, flood water retention and aquifer recharge.
- **Modernize** irrigation infrastructure to improve water conservation and fish habitat.
- **Invest** in practices to prevent outbreaks of toxic algae and other water-borne pathogens.
- **Monitor** aquifers to ensure their continued viability for agricultural, domestic and natural resource uses.

AGRICULTURE & IRRIGATION

Hotter, drier summers, declining snowpack and unpredictable weather pose risks for farmers and ranchers. Some traditional crops may not respond well to those changing conditions.

- **Invest** in technology and innovation to create more efficient irrigation systems.
- **Assist** farmers and ranchers with cost-saving measures to reduce energy use and with the installation of off-grid solar and battery storage, and alternative power such as wind, biofuel, in-conduit hydropower and geothermal.
- **Invest** in soil health and carbon sequestration of carbon in farm and rangeland soils.
- **Control** western juniper and invasive plants to reduce wildfire risk and improve soil moisture.

LIVABILITY & SECURITY

Quality of life for residents of Northeast Oregon is at risk from climate change.

- **Engage** with Nez Pearce and regional Tribes to protect shared natural resources and invest in community resilience.
- **Invest** in projects and programs to mitigate climate change impacts on wilderness and other recreation areas and big game habitat.
- **Provide** health services and programs that address climate-induced health risks.
- **Develop** products and markets for materials derived from wildland fuel management and in jobs associated with forest, watershed and rangeland restoration and alternative energy development.
- **Prioritize** economic diversification, job creation, skills training and workforce support for disrupted industries including agriculture, ranching and tourism.

[OCCRI Fourth Oregon Climate Assessment Report \(2019\)](#); [Oregon Global Warming Commission - 2018 Biennial Report to the Legislature](#); [Oregon Water Atlas \(2017\)](#)