

Investing in Resilient Communities

Southeast Oregon

Lake, Harney & Malheur Counties

Climate change is already impacting Southeast Oregon. Higher temperatures, wildfires, declining snowpack and extreme weather events are disrupting farming, ranching, wildlife and traditional livelihoods. For Oregon's Outback to adapt and prosper, it is important to identify areas of risk and invest in solutions that restore natural resources, protect communities and enhance the region's economy.

AGRICULTURE & IRRIGATION

Climate impacts in Oregon's basin and range region reduce stream flows and groundwater available for irrigation, disrupt traditional agricultural and ranching practices, and compromise the quality of forage for livestock. Prolonged higher temperatures affect the health of ranchers, farmworkers, and livestock.

- **Invest** in water conserving irrigation infrastructure and more efficient on-farm systems.
- **Prioritize** strategies to restore and sustain the quality and capacity of the region's groundwater resources.
- **Assist** farmers and ranchers with cost-saving measures to reduce energy use and with the installation of off-grid solar and battery storage, wind, biofuels, in-conduit hydropower and geothermal power.
- **Invest** in soil health and carbon sequestration, and in the health and productivity of rangelands.

WATERWAYS & WILDLIFE

Higher temperatures, declining snowpack and drought are reducing water in rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. Wetlands in southeastern Oregon are essential to migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. Higher temperatures and poor water quality impact fish and wildlife habitat and increase the risk of toxic algae blooms.

- **Fund** restoration and enhancement of rivers, lakes and watersheds to enhance water quality, streamflow, flood water retention, and groundwater recharge.
- **Implement** practices to prevent toxic algae outbreaks and public information to reduce exposure.
- **Engage** adjoining states and Tribal governments to assess the impacts of declining snowpack on the Owyhee and Malheur Rivers and to plan for the region's water future.

LANDSCAPES & WILDFIRE

Range and forest lands in Lake, Harney and Malheur Counties are threatened by more frequent and intense wildfires.

- **Reduce** wildfire fuels on public and private lands, foster interagency and multi-jurisdictional cooperation to prevent and manage wildfires, and assist homeowners and landowners to implement fire risk reduction strategies.
- **Manage** invasive species and the expansion of western juniper.
- **Support** strategies and capital investments for technological innovation and develop markets for wood derived from wildland fuels management.

LIVABILITY & SECURITY

Climate change impacts require investments to support the people who call Southeast Oregon home.

- **Collaborate** with the Burns Paiute Tribe to protect shared natural resources and invest in community resilience.
- **Prioritize** economic diversification, job creation, skills training and workforce support for disrupted industries including agriculture, ranching and tourism.
- **Invest** in projects, facilities and programs to mitigate climate change impacts on tourist destinations and attractions such as Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, the Owyhee River, and Steens Mountain Wilderness Area.
- **Provide** health services and programs that address climate-induced health risks.