

Nature Unites Us

2023 OREGON IMPACT REPORT

From the Director



Derek Johnson
Oregon State Director



ON THE COVER Waves along Oregon's coastline © Brady Holden;
THIS PAGE Derek Johnson © Brady Holden

I was honored and humbled to step into the role of State Director earlier this year, following more than two decades working at The Nature Conservancy helping to manage everything from major land acquisitions to our day-to-day operations. During this time, I've seen firsthand the achievements that can result from the creative and purposeful collaborations between our partners, volunteers, trustees, donors, and staff working here in Oregon, across state lines and around the world.

Our work together has never been more urgent. Our planet faces the interconnected crises of rapid climate change and biodiversity loss, and we have years, not decades, to act for nature if we are to address these existential threats.

As pressing as the challenges are, the opportunities to create substantial and durable impacts that benefit nature and people are immense. Our resolve is built on a clear-eyed understanding of the problems before us, what it will take to solve them, and TNC's role to take direct action and catalyze change. Science tells us that together, we can slow the climate and biodiversity crises. Thanks to our long history of collaboration and finding solutions that benefit both people and nature, we are prepared to take this ambitious course for the future.

Drawing on the contributions of over 5,000 staff and projects in more than 70 countries and territories, The Nature Conservancy has created ambitious global goals, our 2030 Goals, to address the climate and biodiversity crises. Together, we are working to reduce carbon emissions; protect lands, oceans and waters; take action to help the people most at risk of climate-related disasters; and lend our support to local leaders and their visions for stewarding nature and healthy communities. Achieving these goals will require us to stretch in ways that will challenge each one of us and to deepen our partnerships with allies around the globe to achieve more than we could alone.

Our Oregon strategic plan is designed to address the most critical challenges for our state and our planet. The stories we're proud to share on the following pages reflect not only these local solutions, but the shared impact we seek to achieve worldwide. I hope you recognize the importance of your support and share in both the pride in what has been accomplished thus far and the hope for what is possible if we work together.

Oregon is a place that inspires, from our rugged coastline to the expansive high desert. Whatever the path that brought you to this place, we can find connection and common ground in nature and its power to sustain us all. Clean air and water, healthy habitats and working landscapes—what's good for nature is good for Oregonians.

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Global 2030 Goals

OUR WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Reduce or store 3 gigatons of CO₂ emissions yearly

We will use the power of nature and the strength of policy and markets to reduce emissions, support renewable energy, and store carbon to reach our goal of avoiding or sequestering 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year.

Benefit 100 million people

We will help 100 million people at severe risk of climate-related emergencies by protecting and restoring the health of natural habitats—from mangroves and reefs to floodplains and forests—that help protect communities from storm surge, extreme rainfall, severe wildfires and sea level rise.

Conserve nearly 10 billion acres of ocean

We will conserve 4 billion hectares (9.9 billion acres) of ocean through new and better-managed protected areas, global-scale sustainable fishing, innovative financing, and positive policy changes to how the world governs the seas.

Conserve 1.6 billion acres of land

We will partner with communities around the globe to conserve 650 million hectares (about 1.6 billion acres) of land. Together we will restore and improve management of working lands, support the

leadership of Indigenous Peoples as land stewards, and conserve critical forests, grasslands and other habitats rich in carbon and biodiversity.

Conserve more than 620,000 miles of rivers

We will conserve 1 million kilometers (621,000 miles) of river systems and 30 million hectares (74 million acres) of lakes and wetlands by engaging in collaborative partnerships, promoting innovative solutions, and supporting policies that improve the quality and amount of water available in freshwater ecosystems and to communities.

Support 45 million local stewards

We support 45 million people whose well-being and livelihoods depend on healthy oceans, freshwater, and lands. We will partner with Indigenous Peoples and other local communities to learn from and support their leadership in stewarding their environment, securing rights to resources, improving economic opportunities, and shaping their future.



OUR ESSENTIAL PILLARS

As we work to address the planet's greatest needs, we recognize that well-being of nature and people cannot be separated, and that how we work is as important as what we achieve. We are committed to examining all dimensions of our work through the lenses of three cross-cutting pillars:

Indigenous Lands and Communities

Our interactions with Tribes and Indigenous communities must honor their history and relationships with the land. We will learn and grow with traditional ecological knowledge, pairing it with Western science when invited, to strengthen conservation.

Equity in Science and Conservation

We aspire to be intentional and thoughtful about benefits and burdens, historic injustices, and unintended consequences to ensure that conservation actions are enhancing health and well-being rather than causing harm.

Policy and Advocacy

We bring a distinct voice to policy discussions, based on our on-the-ground expertise, demonstration projects and science. We will use that voice to maximize our impact for the collective good of people and nature in Oregon.

CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

We are working toward a future where everyone benefits equally from clean air and water, our state helps lead the way in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and our most critical lands and waters are connected, protected and managed to sustain people and nature in the face of climate change.

Climate Change

Climate Mitigation



Natural Climate Solutions
Climate Policy
Offshore Energy Siting

Climate Adaptation



Sustainable Water
Urban Tree Canopy

Healthy Lands, Oceans and Water

Terrestrial Health



Innovative Restoration
Resilient Rangelands
Dry Forests and Fire

Aquatic and Ocean Health



Estuary Restoration
Sustainable Fisheries

Trout Creek Ranch

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT VITAL HABITATS WHILE SCALING UP OUR WORK ACROSS THE WEST

In 2021, The Nature Conservancy supported Oregon Desert Land Trust in acquiring Trout Creek Ranch, a 16,645-acre property in southeast Oregon that includes livestock grazing permits on nearly 500,000 acres of public land. Since then, we've been working together to establish one of Oregon's largest conservation areas. This acquisition was only the beginning of our shared efforts to protect this special place while scaling up our efforts to improve sagebrush restoration, better manage critical water resources, and support healthy habitats through more sustainable grazing.

Sagebrush Restoration

TNC is working across six states to develop and test innovative restoration seed techniques that give native plants an edge and help break the cycle of wildfire and annual grass invasion. This fall, in partnership with the Land Trust and Bureau of Land Management, we planted a large demonstration of these seeds at Trout Creek Ranch. Planting these seeds in a working landscape like Trout Creek is an important demonstration for ranchers and land managers and will allow us to test the seeds with widely used equipment like a rangeland seed drill pulled by tractors, and to test the flexibility of our planting schedule.

Sustainable Grazing

A large portion of Trout Creek Ranch is public land, managed by the Bureau of Land Management and grazed by livestock. With its purchase came the permits to graze across this huge landscape, which, if unused, would be reassigned. Grazing these allotments sustainably is vital to the health of local economies as well as the many plants and animals

that depend on this area. To do so, we're working with the Land Trust to build strong relationships that foster collaboration and innovation between our organizations, leasing ranchers, and agency partners. Along with adjustments to livestock management, creative restoration of creeks, springs and meadows is rebuilding ecosystem resiliency. TNC can bring new tools to complement the on-the-ground experience of our ranching partners, and together, we will create shared goals that incorporate grazing rotations and periods of rest in the most important habitats. The tools we develop here will provide a common language and evidence base that can help enhance rangeland management across Oregon's entire sagebrush ecosystem.

Water Management

We have installed water measurement devices in areas of the ranch irrigated by the Land Trust, which allows us to compare different devices for cost, ease of installation, and—by comparing the results with remote sensing data—accuracy. Improving water management at the ranch will increase the long-term stability of these working lands in a hotter, more arid future. Monitoring water use in our own projects also helps us understand public funding availability and provide guidance for farmers across Oregon on how to best secure it, as well as informs our advocacy for sound water policy decisions at the basin and state level.



Before



After



Natural Climate Solutions

CHAMPIONING IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS TO STORE MORE CARBON AND REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES

Riparian Reforestation

Planting trees along rivers and streams—or riparian reforestation—is one of the most promising natural climate solutions in Oregon. To meet the challenge of climate change, we are working to increase the pace and scale of riparian reforestation projects across the state. As part of this effort, The Nature Conservancy is leading a study to better quantify the carbon benefits of riparian reforestation projects. The study, led by Dr. Rose Graves in partnership with University of Oregon postdoctoral fellow Dr. Regina O’Kelley, focuses on collecting data from on-the-ground projects to help us estimate long-term carbon storage potential and develop metrics for future projects. The study will also provide information on the effectiveness of revegetation projects for restoring

healthy riparian ecosystems and provide insight into which project characteristics and management practices lead to climate benefits and restored riparian function. Drs. Graves and O’Kelley, along with University of Oregon students and partners from Clean Water Services in Tualatin, collected extensive field data over the summer and fall at both TNC and partner restoration sites, measuring carbon stored in trees and shrubs as well as in the soil. In addition to providing an important foundation for TNC’s work, the study will support ongoing efforts by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to incorporate climate impacts in its programs statewide as well as work by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to evaluate the condition of streamside vegetation throughout Oregon.



30+

sites surveyed to collect carbon data by the end of this year



Coastal Forests of the Emerald Edge

We’re teaming up with our colleagues from TNC’s Emerald Edge program, which includes coastal temperate rainforests in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, and now Oregon. Together we’re identifying new opportunities to store more carbon through projects like riparian reforestation and improved forest practices. TNC scientists are in the final stages of publishing a comprehensive map of forest carbon across the Emerald Edge. The map will help guide future efforts by TNC, our partners and private land-owners to launch projects with the biggest carbon benefits.



The Omnibus Climate Package passed this year by the Oregon Legislature included \$10 million for natural climate solutions projects across the state.

Climate Policy

ADVOCATING FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION TO ENSURE THAT OREGON IS A LEADER IN CLIMATE MITIGATION

To address the challenges of climate change in Oregon, we're working with partners to advance policies that reduce emissions, increase carbon storage, and support acceleration of least-impact renewable energy development that works for habitats and communities.

Despite a challenging 2023 Oregon legislative session, the steadfast work of The Nature Conservancy and partners led to several legislative wins across our climate policy strategy that are worth celebrating. A Climate Resilience Package passed both chambers of the Oregon Legislature in the final days of the session, providing more than \$90 million to fund climate priorities in Oregon.

All of TNC's priority climate bills were included in this package—including bills addressing natural climate solutions and renewable energy siting—and we were excited to see these pass and be signed by Governor Kotek, along with many other beneficial provisions.

The Climate Resilience Package totaled 20 individual policy concepts and invests \$90 million to maximize the state's ability to leverage federal funding to meet climate goals and increase resilience from extreme weather events. The package reflects the breadth of climate action in Oregon, with provisions that will help communities reduce emissions from the built environment, invest in natural and working lands and provide support for planning and building a climate and community-focused state energy strategy.

TNC was an active leader in the coalition supporting Senate Bill 530, the successful legislation to establish state policy regarding natural climate solutions. This coalition included conservation groups, farmers, ranchers and other landowners. TNC funded polling of Oregonians across the state demonstrating to legislators the broad-based support for investing in natural climate solutions, and \$10 million was allocated to this policy in the Climate Package. TNC also stepped into a leadership role on House Bill 3181, initiating a process to identify the characteristics of least-conflict areas for solar siting in Eastern Oregon.

A TNC-SPONSORED
POLL SHOWED

72%

of Oregonians
support the state
investing \$30M

*to protect natural and
working lands and harness
their potential to address
climate change.*

Urban Tree Canopy

MOBILIZING EQUITABLE AND COORDINATED INVESTMENTS IN TREES ACROSS THE PORTLAND METRO AREA FOR IMPROVED HUMAN HEALTH

Trees can provide tremendous benefits to cities, such as helping to lower temperatures and improve air quality. But because of a history of racial injustice, many cities, including Portland, have fewer trees in overlooked and underinvested communities that have experienced persistent environmental inequity.

To improve the equitable distribution of trees and the many benefits they bring, a group of local partners—The Blueprint Foundation, The Intertwine Alliance and The Nature Conservancy—created an initiative called Connecting Canopies. We're working to bring together neighborhoods, government, partners and businesses to create inclusive and sustainable action plans for urban tree planting and stewardship. Our goal is for the Portland metro region to be on track to achieve and maintain at least a 40 percent cover of healthy tree canopy by 2030.

To support the planting and maintenance of more urban trees, The Blueprint Foundation is leading a pre-apprentice program that provides career training and opportunities for young and mid-career members of Black, Indigenous and other communities of color. Developed in partnership with Portland Fruit Tree Project, Friends of Trees and other community-based organizations, the curriculum also includes caring for fruit trees, restoring natural habitats and tending urban gardens in underserved communities. Nearly all participants of the first cohort have received job or internship offers upon completing the program, and building on that success, a second cohort launched earlier this summer.

SCIENCE IN ACTION | The Nature Conservancy is working to provide interactive maps and the data necessary to target tree planting, community outreach, and financial investments where they are most needed. By providing new data tools, we can help to better prioritize tree planting and care, improved local policies that address inequities in tree cover, and support for community-driven stewardship of green spaces.



“It’s just the most important thing—having people from every possible group, culture and ethnicity. It’s the same as biodiversity in nature. You need diversity. You’re better with diversity. It takes all groups of people working together and learning together if we’re going to make a real difference together.”

—CATA, Connecting Canopies cohort member



Sustainable Water

PROPELLING COLLABORATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOOLS AND POLICIES TO SECURE OREGON'S SUSTAINABLE WATER FUTURE

New Incentives for Sustainable Water Use

The Nature Conservancy participated in an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board technical team to secure \$65 million in federal and state funding to reduce water use in the Harney Basin. This voluntary program will compensate water users for permanently using less water, helping to mitigate the impacts of drought and saving more water for nature and communities. The program will save up to 40,000 acre-feet of water each year, which is roughly 20,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. This is the first federal incentive program that promotes sustainability for groundwater-dependent ecosystems.

Laying the Groundwork for Water Sustainability

To ensure that water is available for the more than 75% of Oregonians who rely on groundwater for drinking, we need a better understanding of how quickly groundwater is replenished to inform management decisions. Water stored in rock and sediment underground takes anywhere from months to millennia to be replenished; understanding how old it is can help us determine how renewable it is, and how fast groundwater can be withdrawn sustainably. TNC is leading a new project to estimate the age of groundwater across the state to help communities plan for a sustainable water future.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, we are sampling water from wells and springs to look at isotopes of hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon. These isotopes will help tell a story about when that water fell as precipitation. These origin stories matter for responsible water management: it's easier to achieve sustainable water use if the aquifers replenish quickly than if they take tens of thousands of years to replenish. Ultimately, the results of this work will inform community planning efforts by highlighting aquifers that are most likely to sustainably meet future domestic and agricultural needs.

528
SPRINGS and
38k
WETLAND ACRES

*potentially benefited
by the new conservation
reserve enhancement
program*





This year, the Oregon Legislature passed the Bipartisan Drought and Water Security Package (HB 2010), which included all but one of TNC's priority water bills, plus funding for seven different agencies. HB 2010 also includes new authority for Oregon Water Resources Department to require measurement and reporting of water use, which is an exciting and foundational advancement for water management in the state. The package provided more than \$160 million for drought resilience, which was distributed among HB 2010, agency budgets, and the end-of-session bill. Among those included in HB 2010 were several TNC-supported bills, including a new program for source water protection and a voluntary groundwater agreements pilot in Harney Basin.



Leveraging our Lands

ADVANCING CONSERVATION WITH ON-THE-GROUND ACTION AT TNC PRESERVES



Lessons Learned from the Bootleg Fire

Sycan Marsh Preserve has served as a critical living laboratory for fire research for nearly 20 years, but 2021's Bootleg Fire, whose 413,765-acre footprint included nearly 15,000 acres of the Preserve, has given researchers even more to learn. Recently, TNC and researchers from the University of Washington have released high-level preliminary findings on the effectiveness of dry forest restoration treatments on the severity and impact of the Bootleg Fire at Sycan Marsh Preserve. Researchers are now working toward a peer-reviewed publication in the coming months. Preliminary results support the initial observations made by frontline fire personnel during the Bootleg wildfire: areas previously treated with controlled burning, either alone or in combination with thinning, burned with lower severity and less damage than untreated areas or areas where thinning without prescribed fire had taken place.

Revisiting Preserve Names

As part of a TNC effort across North America, Oregon staff are digging into the histories behind the names of our preserves and their landmarks. Five volunteers have joined us to conduct in-depth research and assess whether the current names reflect TNC's values. Our onboarding and training process for volunteers was turned into a toolkit for other chapters to begin their own research processes.

Out in STEM at Willow Creek

In 2022, prescribed fire was applied at Willow Creek Preserve to improve prairie habitat. This year, we were joined by volunteers from the University of Oregon chapter of Out in STEM, a club that is working to create opportunities and build community for members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the sciences, to re-seed the burned area. Plantings like this one are critical to the success of Fender's blue butterfly, which was reclassified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from endangered to threatened earlier this year. Found only in the Willamette Valley, Fender's blue butterfly depends on a threatened wildflower called Kincaid's lupine. For decades, The Nature Conservancy has worked to enhance and restore native prairie on Willow Creek Preserve in Eugene for these and other native prairie species.

Climate and Culture Smart Workshop at Zumwalt Prairie

This summer, Conservancy staff hosted a "Climate Smart, Culture Smart" stream restoration workshop at Zumwalt Prairie. The workshop was developed by Camas to Condors, a restoration and conservation project focused on climate change adaptation in Nez Perce Tribal homelands. The project is a Tribal-led collaboration that includes the Nez Perce Tribe, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Greater Hells Canyon Council and Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands. Together, they are working to improve connectivity for wildlife and lands that support traditionally harvested plant foods. At the workshop, conservation practitioners learned about a new climate and culture toolkit developed by the Tribe and discussed ways to incorporate anticipated climate changes and cultural needs in stream restoration projects. As part of the workshop, participants applied the toolkit framework to upper Camp Creek, where a restoration project is planned to improve habitat and floodplain connectivity while also increasing carbon storage.

THIS PAGE Fender's blue butterfly © Matt Benotsch/TNC; OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Out in STEM gather at Willow Creek Preserve in Eugene, Oregon. © Charles Quinn; Wildflowers at Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in Wallowa County, Oregon © Carla Axtman; Conservation Canines from Rogue Detection Teams helped monitor the Washington ground squirrel population across thousands of acres at Boardman Conservation Area. © Cate Maxson; TNC scientists monitor fish populations at Willamette Confluence Preserve. © Mitch Maxson/TNC



Innovative Restoration

DEVELOPING NEW RESTORATION TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE RESEEDING SUCCESS IN SAGEBRUSH STEPPE HABITATS

Oregon's high desert stretches across nearly half the state and is largely public land. Rising temperatures and longer fire seasons have led to the increase of invasive annual grasses that degrade its habitat and fuel even larger fires. These fires threaten our communities, local economies and critical species, and the scale of restoration needed is massive. What began as small experiments with seed techniques to improve restoration success across this landscape has grown to a collaboration with TNC colleagues across six states and an industry partnership with Germain's Seed Technology to produce new seed technologies for public and private land managers.

Here in Oregon, we're helping to test new seed prototypes produced in collaboration with both public and private sector researchers. The most promising innovations are moving through lab and field trials and this fall, a larger scale demonstration pilot at Trout Creek Ranch (page 6). Together, this work all helps to build the practical expertise and scientific evidence needed to take these technologies to scale on public lands across the West. Publishing our data and analysis provides the evidence base needed by federal agencies to start using our seed technologies, and also helps spread the word about these advancements that can have broader applications in arid shrublands around the world.

6 states—

Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming—
are working together in The Nature Conservancy's Sagebrush Sea program to protect and restore this amazing landscape.



Resilient Rangelands

ADVANCING THE WIDESPREAD ADOPTION OF IMPROVED HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE GRAZING PRACTICES

New Comprehensive Survey of Trout Creek Ranch

At Trout Creek Ranch in southeast Oregon, we hosted two graduate students from the University of Vermont, Hayley Kolding and Dylan O’Leary. They compared satellite data with their own on-the-ground observations, surveying hundreds of wet meadows, springs, streams, upland sites, and vegetation survey plots. Their work helps form a full picture of this vast property—over 500,000 acres!—to inform future restoration plans. This comprehensive view is critical for our partnership with Oregon Desert Land Trust and their ability to make strategic decisions for the future of the ranch, including preserving and restoring the highest priority habitats while building a collaborative grazing program that supports a healthy rangeland.

Facilitating a New Collaborative in Southeastern Oregon

In spring 2023, Resilient Rangelands Strategy Lead Anya Tyson accepted the invitation from community members and local agency leaders to facilitate the Tri-corner Community Collaborative—a new entity focused on the working landscape within and between the Hart Mountain and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuges.

The collaborative seeks to acknowledge the local, regional and national significance of this area, uplift existing stewardship efforts, and pursue emerging opportunities that may be necessary to sustain the ecological, economic, cultural and social values of this landscape into the future. The first few meetings have been well attended and have elicited strong feelings about landscapes and livelihoods. Nevertheless, cautious optimism has prevailed alongside growing buy-in that local-level collaboration can provide a worthwhile path forward for people and nature.

Working Together for Sustainable Land Management

At Zumwalt Prairie in northeast Oregon, we have convened the Wallowa County Rangeland Assessment and Monitoring System Working Group, which includes partners from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon State University Extension Service, Wallowa Resources, and the U.S. Forest Service. This group worked to bring sustainable land management tools to a pilot program of landowners in the summer of 2023, including tools to implement a county-wide strategy to address invasive annual grasses.





Dry Forests and Fire

CATALYZING A SHIFT IN A RESTORATION AND FIRE MANAGEMENT TO RESTORE ECOSYSTEM BALANCE AND PROTECT COMMUNITIES

A New Federal Investment in Prescribed Fire

The Nature Conservancy has been awarded \$40 million by the U.S. Forest Service to increase our work in prescribed fire, primarily in the Western U.S. This funding, largely from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, will help support the USFS Wildfire Crisis Strategy over the next seven years, including work in nationally identified priority landscapes across the West in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

Here in Oregon, nearly \$8.5 million in IRA funding will support a five-year catalyst project, the Oregon Fire Partnership, to launch prescribed fire crews in three dry forest landscapes: southern Oregon, the east slope of the Cascades and the northern Blue Mountains. We will look to philanthropic leaders to help broaden this effort with private funding to build forest resilience across ownership boundaries. Participating in these crews will help build knowledge, skills, and capacity of the local fire workforce, which is critical to applying prescribed fire at the needed scale to maintain healthy forests and safer communities in the years to come.

These new prescribed fire crew positions, under the leadership of TNC prescribed fire experts, will provide opportunities for locally based

partners—including Tribal, federal, state, local agency and nonprofit fire practitioners—to gain prescribed fire experience and credentials. Together they will conduct ecologically based prescribed fire in critical areas, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire and building community capacity for better forest and fire management into the future.

Fire Managers from Across the United States and Canada Attend Prescribed Fire Training in Central Oregon

This spring, more than 40 participants from agencies, nonprofits and higher education institutions from across the United States, Tribal Nations and Canada came to central Oregon for a prescribed fire training exchange known as TREX. Hosted by TNC and the Deschutes National Forest, the TREX program is a component of the national Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together Cooperative Agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service and the agencies of the Department of the Interior.

The training provided the opportunity for fire practitioners, scientists and managers to work side by side while building experience and knowledge in prescribed fire practices, fire effects and monitoring, and conservation approaches to restoring dry forest resilience. Participants in the training also learned

THIS PAGE FROM TOP Anna Merritt, The Klamath Tribes, participates in a prescribed fire training at Sycan Marsh. © Brady Holden; A drip torch at a prescribed fire in central Oregon. © Mitch Maxson/TNC; OPPOSITE Professionals carefully manage a prescribed fire in central Oregon. © Mitch Maxson/TNC

about fire ecology, monitoring, Tribal perspectives on cultural uses of fire, and management of smoke from prescribed fires. They also interacted with local fire staff through classroom, field-based, and live-fire trainings. Together, participants conducted prescribed fires across 1,000 acres of the Deschutes National Forest during five days of the two-week exchange.

Partnering with The Klamath Tribes in Prescribed Fire and Forest Restoration

Building on many years of collaborative conservation, TNC and members of The Klamath Tribes joined together for prescribed fire training and burning at Sycan Marsh in the Klamath Basin. The reintroduction of prescribed fire is critical to reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire and restoring fire-dependent forest habitats for a wide range of ecological, social, and cultural values in many dry forests across the West, including across The Klamath Tribes' homeland. After a week of classroom learning, 74 people joined the burn, including multiple fire research teams from across the country and several members of the Tribes' newly created fire team. This video shares a glimpse at the training program and the burn that marked the first time in generations that members of The Klamath Tribes put fire back on their homeland.

West-wide Collaboration: Increased Impact Through Collective Action

Forest and fire staff from TNC chapters across the western United States are teaming up on a new Western Dry Forests and Fire Program. This is an exciting opportunity to work at scale across the 150 million acres of dry, fire-dependent forest in the West, leverage recent historic federal and state investments in this work, and accelerate ecological fire in these dry forests.



VIDEO

Scan this code using the camera app on your phone or tablet to view a video about our work with The Klamath Tribes to reintroduce more prescribed fire.

Healthy Estuaries

PROTECTING CRITICAL HABITAT, SPECIES AND CONNECTIVITY THROUGH ESTUARY RESTORATION

A New Acquisition on the Coquille River

Thanks to a generous donor and a partnership with The Bridges Foundation, The Nature Conservancy directed the acquisition of 528 acres of tidal wetlands in southern Oregon on the Coquille River. The property contains some of the highest juvenile coho salmon numbers in the Coquille Valley and is one of the most intact portions of the Coquille River. To further enhance the habitat, restoration of the property will begin next year with support for the design and engineering plans from TNC's Healthy Estuaries Catalyst Fund. The Coquille Indian Tribe leveraged that investment with a successful \$2.2 million public award to replace a large tide gate and ensure that diverse native plants are included in the riparian buffers for future traditional harvests.

Blue Carbon in Oregon

We often think about forests as the heroes of natural climate solutions, thanks to their ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. But coastal wetlands—tidal marshes, seagrass meadows and mangrove forests—sequester billions of tons of carbon from our atmosphere at concentrations up to

five times greater than terrestrial forests. TNC issued a report summarizing current knowledge about the climate mitigation potential of Oregon's coastal and marine habitat, led by Joanna Lyle, a natural resource policy fellow with Oregon Sea Grant.

Restoration at Kilchis Estuary Preserve

This summer, TNC embarked on the final phase of restoration at our Kilchis Estuary Preserve. The work focused on rebuilding tidal channels, improving broken infrastructure and removing culverts to return tidal flow to the site. In Tillamook, 90% of the historic tidal marsh and swamp habitats have been lost. Every acre of wetlands restored in this watershed matters and contributes to improved salmon habitat and flood attenuation.

New Acquisitions by the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians

TNC staff facilitated a yearlong process with staff from Lincoln County, McKenzie River Trust and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians to support the Tribe's acquisition of 27 acres on Cape Foulweather. The rocky shore coupled with important salt spray meadow and Sitka spruce forest habitat will be conserved for its ecological, and cultural, bolstering the resilience of the Tribe and coastal communities.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

John Conery

Volunteer John Conery brought his computer science expertise to our estuaries team in support of a new optimization tool. The software allows private landowners, funders and resource managers to see where updating infrastructure like tide gates will provide the greatest habitat benefits for the least cost. John is helping us develop a modern web-based tool that will be easier for our partners to access and use. We are grateful to John for sharing his highly creative and experienced technical skills on this priority project.

THIS PAGE FROM LEFT Kilchis Estuary Preserve near Tillamook, Oregon © Emma Browne; John Conery © Submitted by subject; OPPOSITE PAGE The creation of tidal channels (on the left of the image) helps return tidal flow into the Kilchis Estuary Preserve near Tillamook, Oregon. The area to the right was restored in a previous phase. © Emma Browne



Sustainable Fisheries

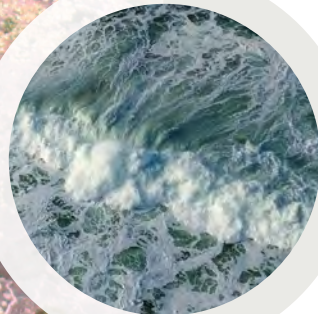
ENSURING FISHERIES ARE PREPARED AND MANAGED SUSTAINABLY IN THE FACE OF A RAPIDLY CHANGING CLIMATE

Exploring the Future of Aquaculture in Oregon

Earlier this year, The Nature Conservancy released a report investigating the opportunities and challenges for a restorative seaweed aquaculture industry in Oregon. Seaweed aquaculture can produce sustainable, climate-friendly products for a wide range of industries while also providing livelihoods for coastal communities and improving ocean health. The research shows that in-water seaweed production is legal under current regulations and suggests next steps to assess the potential for a robust and sustainable seaweed industry in Oregon. Based on the results of this report, we're working in collaboration with Oregon Aquaculture Association, Ecotrust, Oregon Kelp Alliance, and Oregon Sea Grant to build a suite of projects that will move coastal aquaculture forward in Oregon.

Mapping Kelp Habitat Off the Oregon Coast

TNC is leading a project to map kelp habitats off the Oregon coast and connect these habitats with the fish species that call them home. Kelp forests are critical to thousands of species, some of which become important in recreational and commercial fisheries as they mature. These essential habitats also store carbon, provide valuable services for coastal communities, and may locally mitigate the effects of ocean acidification. The mapping project, being conducted in collaboration with the Pacific Marine and Estuarine Habitat Partnership, will result in better data and allow for more strategic conservation restoration, which means better results and thriving kelp forests.



CELEBRATING
10
years
OF OREGON'S
MARINE RESERVES

This year marked the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of Oregon's marine reserves. Both ecologically important and stunningly beautiful, Oregon's marine reserves are vital to the health of our coastal habitat for seabirds, fish, marine mammals, and coastal life above and below the surface. The Nature Conservancy and many partners came together to launch a public education campaign about the benefits of our marine reserves, which ensured support for the program in the Oregon Legislature.



VIDEO

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Scan this code using the camera app on your phone or tablet to view a video celebrating the first 10 years of Oregon's Marine Reserves.



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Mount Hood from Jonsrud Viewpoint © Josemaria Toscano/Adobe Stock

We all benefit when we invest in nature—and TNC is using cutting-edge science, partnership, and practical solutions to conserve the natural resources on which we all depend.

Learn more at nature.org/oregonimpact

Interested in supporting conservation in Oregon? Contact Jan Kurtz at jan.kurtz@tnc.org

