



County's land purchase sets stage for big estuary restoration project on Tillamook Bay

Tillamook County's acquisition of a key river delta property late last year marked the first major step in a project to restore more than 300 acres of tidal wetlands around the southern end of Tillamook Bay.

The 154-acre purchase, negotiated by the Trust for Public Land, came after Tillamook County Commissioners voted unanimously in November to approve the deal. The commissioners also authorized the Tillamook County Performance Partnership to move ahead with plans to buy conservation easements covering about 200 acres of wetlands on adjacent properties.

The properties are on a diked peninsula where the Trask and Wilson rivers enter Tillamook Bay. A management plan developed by a local advisory committee calls for breaching levees to return the area to tidal wetlands. A new levee would be constructed at the upper end of the peninsula to protect upstream lands from tidal flooding.

Restoring tidal wetlands is one of the top priorities of a comprehensive conservation plan completed in 1999 by the Tillamook Bay National Estuary Project. The Tillamook County Performance Partnership is working to implement the plan.



South Tillamook Bay wetlands

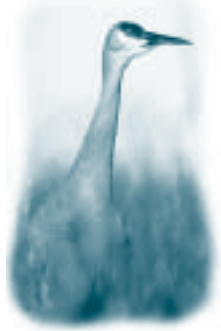
Tidal wetlands like those found at the mouth of the Trask and Wilson rivers provide important habitat for juvenile salmon. The area also supports a variety of other wildlife, including wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, and bald eagles.

The \$445,000 purchase of the property on the Trask River side of the peninsula was the first big expenditure of funds awarded to the Tillamook County Performance Partnership in late 1999 under a federal Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant. The grant package included \$750,000 from the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service and \$280,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

Under the plan developed by the local advisory committee, the lands and easements purchased through the grant will be held by Tillamook County. The wetlands will be managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Tillamook Soil and Water Conservation District will manage the remaining upland pasture lands to generate revenues for maintenance.

Contact: Rich Felley, Tillamook Performance Partnership, Box 493, Garibaldi OR 97118; 503-322-2222; rfelley@co.tillamook.or.us



Sandhill crane

USFWS/Tupper Ansel Blake

TCPP/Don Best

Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture
1637 Laurel Street
Lake Oswego OR 97034
503 / 697-3889
503 / 697-3268 fax
Website:
wetlands.dfw.state.or.us

Executive Director
Bruce Taylor
Btaylorwet@aol.com

This issue

\$1 M Lower Columbia Grant -----	2
Kilchis Point Purchase -----	2
Wetlands Reserve Unfunded -----	3
Funding for W Eugene Wetlands -	4
Willamette Valley Survey -----	5
Circle 5 Ranch...A Thirty-Year Restoration Project -----	6

Trust for Public Land's purchase protects Kilchis Point

The Trust for Public Land's purchase of more than a mile of undeveloped shoreline near Bay City will protect the last large block of forested wetlands on Tillamook Bay.

The non-profit land conservation organization bought the scenic 137-acre property at Kilchis Point in late February. An anonymous donor provided funding for the \$970,000 purchase. The Trust for Public Land will add deed restrictions to prevent future development and transfer the property to the Tillamook Pioneer Museum, which plans to build a new museum on an adjacent property.

The Kilchis Point purchase compliments the Trust for Public



Kilchis Point

Land's work with other Joint Venture partners at the mouth of the Wilson River a few miles to the south (see page 1). The Wilson River project will restore a large block of tidal wetlands that were long ago diked off for agricultural use.

The Kilchis Point purchase will

protect the last big remnant of the forested wetlands and tidal marshes that historically lined Tillamook Bay's eastern shore. The property, which extends from Kilchis Point to Goose Point, includes a 1.3-mile stretch of cobble beach and extensive tidal marshes where three small streams enter the bay.

Kilchis Point was the site of the largest Indian village on Tillamook Bay, with up to 400 inhabitants. The first white settler in Tillamook County, Joe

Champion, took up residence in a hollowed out spruce stump near the village when he arrived in 1851.

Contact: Chris Beck, Trust for Public Land, 1211 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland OR 97204; 503-228-6620; chris.beck@tpl.org

Ducks Unlimited to receive another \$1 million for projects along the Lower Columbia River

Ducks Unlimited and a diverse group of partners have teamed up to get a federal grant of almost \$1 million for a package of wetland projects along the lower Columbia River.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant is the third awarded to Ducks Unlimited since 1995 to protect and restore habitats in the wildlife-rich bottomlands that line the river from Portland to the estuary. Ducks Unlimited also helped put together a fourth grant awarded to the Columbia Land Trust two years ago under the same program.

Like the previous North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, the current package includes more than \$7.5 million of investments by other partners to match the \$997,000 in new grant funds. The dozen partners include three federal agencies, four state agencies from both Washington and Oregon, four private non-profits, and an individual private land-owner.

Most of the new grant will be used for habitat acquisition and restoration work. Projects slated to receive funding include:

Grays River estuary. Purchase two parcels totaling 243 acres, almost all of which will be restored to forested wetlands at the lower end of Grays River in Washington.

Sauvie Island. Restore or enhance 96 acres of freshwater marsh on the state's Sauvie Island Wildlife Area.

Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge. Restore 90 acres of freshwater marsh, 55 acres of grassland, and 80 acres of forest in the first phase of a larger effort to improve habitats on Tenasillahee Island, about 20 miles upriver from Astoria.

Scappoose Lowlands. Enhance 59 acres of freshwater marsh and 10 acres of riparian habitat on private land along Teal Slough near Scappoose.

Tide Creek. Restore 73 acres of freshwater marsh on private land about eight miles north of St. Helens.

Klaskanine River. Restore 28 acres of forest wetland adjacent to an earlier wetland restoration project south of Astoria.

Contact: Steve Donovan, Ducks Unlimited, 1101 SE Tech Center Drive, Vancouver WA 98663; 360-885-2011; sdonovan@ducks.org



Wetlands Reserve Program remains unfunded – for now

There's bad news and good news for landowners interested in signing up for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wetlands Reserve Program.

The bad news is that there's no money available for new projects this year, and President Bush is proposing zero funding for the popular program again next year.

The good news is that Congress is moving toward enactment of a new Farm Bill that will almost certainly reopen the Wetlands Reserve Program next year, if not sooner.

Landowners are encouraged to sign up for the program in the meantime, and there's a chance that some money could become available later this year.

The Wetlands Reserve Program purchases conservation easements and helps pay for wetland restoration on current and former wetlands with a history of agricultural use. Administered by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the program has been the single largest source of funding for wetland conservation in Oregon at about \$4 million annually in recent years. Since 1994, the program has enrolled 72 Oregon properties totaling more than 23,750 acres.

The program, last reauthorized by Congress in 1996, ran up against a nationwide cap on enrollment last year and has been on hold since, awaiting final action on the new Farm Bill.

Both the House and Senate have approved different versions of the new Farm Bill. The House version

would extend the Wetlands Reserve Program through 2011 and allow enrollment of up to 150,000 acres per year. The Senate version would allow enrollment of up to 250,000 acres per year through 2006.

Although Bush did not include any funding for the program in his 2003 budget proposal, his administration has supported reauthorization of the program.

For more information about the Wetlands Reserve Program, contact a local office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Got pond turtles?



Pond turtle habitat

The Western Pond Turtle Working Group (a consortium of natural resource agencies) is updating a database of turtle locations in the Willamette Valley. If you've seen turtles anywhere in the region from Portland to Cottage Grove, including foothills of the Coast Range and Cascades, please describe locations, with information on how you can be contacted in case clarification is needed. Locations will be kept confidential.

Even if you haven't seen turtles, please get in touch if your property contains a slow river or large pond and you would like it checked for turtles, for free, this summer. Note that no freshwater turtle species in Oregon are legally listed as Threatened or Endangered.

Contact: Dr. Paul Adamus, Consulting Wildlife Biologist, 6028 NW Burgundy Dr., Corvallis, OR 97330 (phone 541-745-7092; email: adamus7@attbi.com).



Ducks Unlimited poll tests wetland support

Results of a recent nationwide survey conducted for Ducks Unlimited. Based on random sample of 1,000 adult Americans (18 or older), with a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percent.

- 46 percent said there are "too few" wetlands in North America; 26 percent said there are "the right amount."
- 64 percent said it is "very important" to protect and conserve wetlands; 27 percent said it was "somewhat important."
- 80 percent would be "more likely" to support waterfowl and wetland conservation if they knew that some endangered species were dependent on wetlands.
- 81 percent would be "more likely" to support waterfowl and wetlands conservation if they knew wetlands help reduce pollution by purifying water.

Federal funding aids West Eugene Wetlands Partnership

The West Eugene Wetlands Partnership will have another \$2.5 million to put into land acquisition this year.

Part of the funding – \$1.5 million for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management – was the latest allocation in a decade of congressional funding for the West Eugene Wetlands Project. The city of Eugene secured the rest of the money through a nationwide competitive grant program.

The \$1 million award from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant program will help fund The Nature Conservancy's purchase of a 310-acre parcel along Coyote Creek south of Fern Ridge Lake and the city's purchase of two properties totaling 73 acres in the Amazon Creek system in West Eugene. The Bureau of Land Management will use its funds to acquire additional wetland properties in West Eugene.

The Bureau of Land Management, the city of Eugene, and The Nature Conservancy are part of the West

Eugene Wetlands Partnership, a group of federal, state, local, and private partners that has protected more than 2,500 acres of wetlands over the past decade.

Originally focused primarily on urban wetlands, the partnership has expanded its efforts in recent years to the larger wetland system that extends downstream to Fern Ridge Lake, a Corps of Engineers reservoir five miles west of Eugene.

The Bureau of Land Management has provided the bulk of the money over the years for land purchases in west Eugene, but the agency has nearly completed its planned acquisitions. Partners say they hope to get one more year of congressional funding in 2004, but they are already pursuing other state and federal funding sources for work in the Long Tom River system.

The Coyote Creek tract targeted for purchase under the federal grant is adjacent to a 240-acre parcel recently acquired by The Nature Conservancy

with funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The two properties include extensive riparian habitat along Coyote Creek and more than 400 acres of cropland that will eventually be restored to seasonal wetlands.

The Coyote Creek properties are just upstream from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fern Ridge Wildlife Area, which encompasses more than 5,100 acres around the reservoir. The area is one of the most important in the Willamette Valley for migrating and wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds.

The other two properties proposed for acquisition with the federal grant funds are located along Amazon Creek in West Eugene and are adjacent to a 400-acre wetland restoration project undertaken by the city and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Contact: Scott Duckett, City of Eugene, 1820 Roosevelt Blvd., Eugene OR 97402; 541-682-4842; scott.duckett@ci.eugene.or.us

Around the state

The Western Rivers Conservancy purchased 240 acres of floodplain habitat on the Willamette River last fall and transferred the property to the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation. The property, 10 miles north of Albany near Luckiamute Landing, includes one of the best "gallery forest" stands of bottomland hardwoods in the Willamette Valley. ■



Sprague River oxbow

one of the most important waterfowl habitats in the Willamette Valley. The study area includes more than 700 acres of the historic lakebed and the floodplain of the Tualatin River downstream toward Forest Grove. ■

An ambitious package of projects in the Sprague River Valley collapsed last fall when three of four landowners who had applied for the

federal Wetlands Reserve Program opted not to accept easement offers from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Oregon Watershed

Enhancement Board had approved more than \$750,000 in state cost-share for the conservation easements, which would have covered 2,340 acres. One project involving 385 acres is going forward, and one or more of the others may still be revived in one form or another. A local couple is purchasing one of the properties with plans to restore wetlands as part of a demonstration project for sustainable ranching strategies in the upper Klamath Basin. ■

The Natural Resources Conservation Service approved its first large riparian conservation easement under the Wetlands Reserve Program in Oregon, a 900-acre project along Drews Creek, a tributary of Goose Lake in Lake County. The agency also okayed more than 1,350 acres along the Little Silvies River in Harney County for enrollment in the program.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has begun planning for a possible new wildlife refuge at Wapato Lake in western Washington County, historically

Willamette Valley Survey Results

2002 mid-winter waterfowl aerial survey

(Eugene to McMinnville), January 8 & 10, 2002

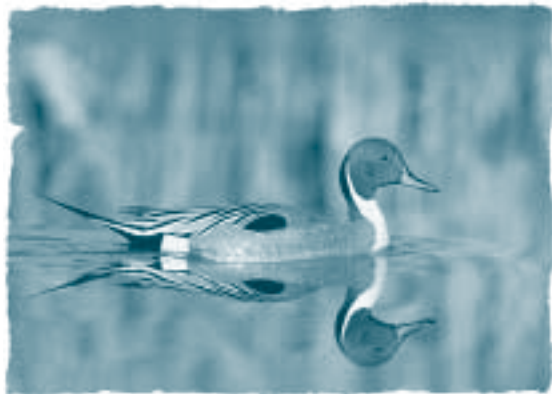
Mallard _____	23,569
Gadwall _____	119
Wigeon _____	16,854
Green-winged teal _____	24,196
Shoveler _____	4,540
Pintail _____	25,399
Wood duck _____	368
Canvasback _____	29
Scaup _____	521
Ring-necked duck _____	2,468
Bufflehead _____	817
Mergansers _____	173
Unidentified ducks _____	3,307
Canada Geese _____	72,512
Brant _____	1
Tundra swan _____	208
Unidentified swan _____	1,031
Total waterfowl _____	176,112

Compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Contact: Jim Houk or Jock Beall (541-757-7236).

Comments: "Ground counts of pintail on Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge on January 9, the day after the aerial survey of that location, estimated 26,000 pintail, indicating a possible significant undercount of approximately 10,000 pintail on the refuge... The aerial survey [also] resulted in a possible undercount of Canada geese, based on flyoff counts from night-time roost areas on three Willamette Valley national wildlife refuges... Canada geese were not found... in several of the traditional locations... and were difficult to detect from the air on the dark saturated soils found in perennial grass crops." – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2002 Winter Waterfowl Survey Report.

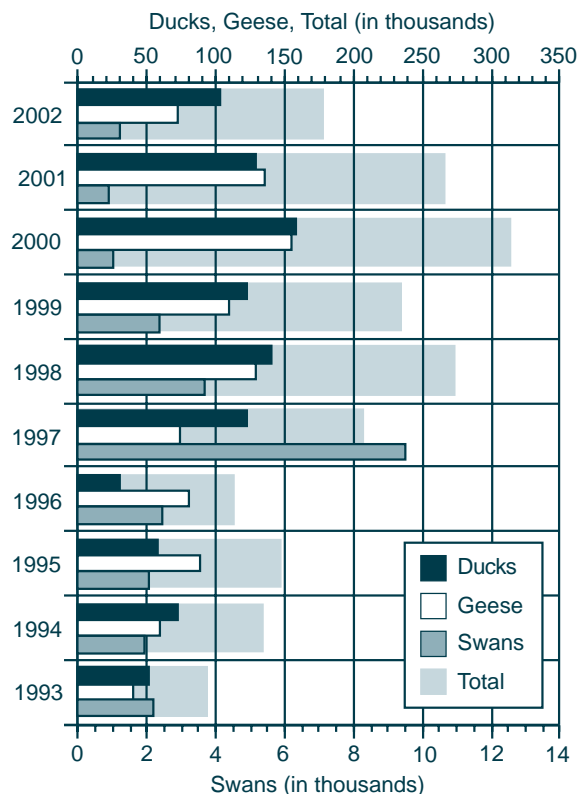
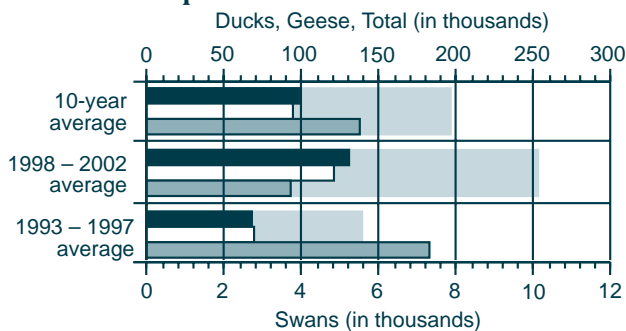
Trends in mid-winter surveys

(Eugene to McMinnville), 1993-2002



USFWS/Dave Menke

Northern pintail



Rancher looks back on 30 years of wetland restoration

By Esther Lev
The Wetlands Conservancy

At age thirteen, Louis Randall moved to the Langell Valley, outside of Bonanza, Oregon – the backdrop for Zane Grey’s book *Forlorn River*. After 58 years of ranching and farming, he is busy reclaiming over 1,000 acres of wetland on his 10,000-acre Circle 5 Ranch.

Changes to the land, rivers and hydrology of the valley began in 1868, when the Langell family settled along the banks of the Lost River and rechanneled it to reclaim 4,000 acres of farmland. By 1904, as more families settled in the valley, the network of canals and irrigation ditches expanded in all directions, transforming arid sagelands to bountiful fields of grain and irrigated pasture.

The biggest change for the Circle 5 Ranch was the 1950s Bureau of Reclamation project that channelized and rerouted Lost River through the swamplands to promote irrigation. The reconstruction dewatered the valley.

“It was all wetlands before the Bureau of Reclamation started moving things around,” explains Randall. “We used to cut hay on the high ground, and then in

1945 we ‘broke up’ 640 of the 2,000 acres of wetlands.” He spent the summer plowing and preparing the land and the following year, planted it in oats.

“After a couple of years of good yields, the swamp land was never very productive,” continues Randall. People had always hunted ducks on the ranch. “So in 1970, in order to make up for the economic loss of farming the marginal soggy ground, I decided to restore the wetland,



Madeleine Blake

Louis and Marr Randall

improve the waterfowl habitat, and start a hunting club.”

So began his first restoration effort. He was a true pioneer, recreating the wetlands on his own long before any of the federal wetland enhancement incentive programs existed. Using his own

machinery, Randall dug a drain ditch for two center pivots and built a dike around the drainage ditch to keep the poorest soils wet.

“It was a lot easier back then. You didn’t have to get everyone’s permission and all kinds of permits to change around your land,” recalls Randall. “Today it’s a different story.”

As the habitat improved, the number of ducks and geese increased. Louis started up the club and charged people \$10 to hunt in the wetland.

In 1989, Randall entered his first partnership with a federal agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. He received funds for a 400-acre wetland restoration on the property near the Lost River. In 1996, he received additional funding to fence livestock from some spring-fed ponds.

Randall saw that traditional ranching needed to move forward and that the marshlands were providing more income as a duck club than from crop production. He decided to put portions of the wetland into a permanent easement. In 1994, he enrolled 700 acres in the Wetland Reserve Program and in 1997 added an additional 311 acres.

It was a lot easier back then. You didn’t have to get everyone’s permission and all kinds of permits to change around your land.

(continued on the next page)

...along Lost River in Klamath Basin's Langell Valley

Although he was able to benefit from a variety of federal technical assistance and financial programs, the process was not without frustration. Randall is no stranger to water and natural resource management and policies, and has spent much of the past few decades sitting on the local Soil and Water Conservation District and irrigation boards. At one time, he was head of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and a founding member of a group of ranchers interested in practicing ecologically sustainable ranching practices.

All those experiences with boards, bureaucracies and policies didn't prepare him for the exasperation of navigating through the compliance part of the federal grant and permit programs.

"Lucky for me, Jim Hainline of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a cast of others were there to shepherd me through the Corps of Engineers permits and archeological clearances," sighs Randall. He also had some differences of opinion with the Natural Resource Conservation Service about active management activities such as mowing and burning. "Anymore, a person can't change or decide how to manage their land without asking for permission," says Randall, "and the permission adds up to a lot of paperwork, permits and multi-agency scrutiny."

In February 2001, he completed restoration and enhancement of 700 acres of moist soil wetlands, and 200

acres of adjacent uplands on land previously used for hay production and livestock grazing. Much of it took place on the land he had previously enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program.

The restoration funding was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, and a North American Wetland Conservation Act grant. It supported construction of levees and water control structures to restore the historic hydrology in three independent wetland areas. The water

control structures have also improved the capability to manage water on the existing wetlands.

Midway through the construction process, Randall had one more setback. Until he received a pond permit from the Oregon Water Resources Department, he could not direct water into the newly restored wetland. He was a bit confused why he needed a permit. Prior to the restoration, the same land, then in farm fields, ponded water in the much the same way. A year later Randall and the wetland patiently wait for approval to let the water flow.

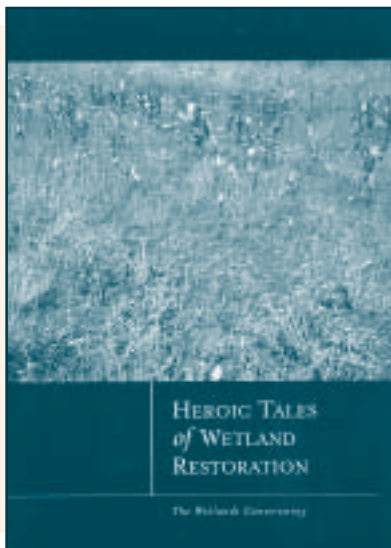
[Editor's update: Randall did get his permit, the water finally flowed, and the wetland is now working just fine.]

The Circle 5 Ranch shows how private landowners can integrate wildlife protection into agricultural operations. Thirty years of habitat restoration have attracted a variety of waterfowl, sandhill cranes, tricolored blackbirds, bald eagles, and northern harriers to the wetland. "I'm proud of returning the land to how it looked when I moved here as a teen," Randall says.



Cinnamon Teals

USFWS/Dave Menke



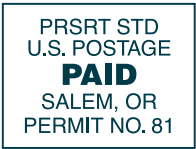
Heroic Tales

This article is excerpted from *Heroic Tales of Wetland Restoration*, by Esther Lev. Published by The Wetlands Conservancy in November 2001, the book profiles a dozen landowners from across Oregon who have undertaken wetland restoration projects. Illustrated with numerous color photos and wonderful black-and-white portraits of the landowners, the

book also provides advice and information for people considering similar projects. The 75-page book is available at Powell's Books, Audubon Bookstore, Borders, Annie Bloom's, Oregon History Center Museum Store, amazon.com and a number of independent bookstores throughout the state, or by calling The Wetlands Conservancy at (503) 691-1394.



Visit our website at: wetlands.dfw.state.or.us



About the Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture

The Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture is a coalition of private organizations working with government agencies to protect and restore important wetland habitat.

The Joint Venture helps put together partnerships for a variety of wetland-related projects, including habitat restoration and enhancement on private and public lands, acquisition of key areas for permanent protection, and development of educational and interpretive programs.

The Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture

coordinates state-level activities for two regional partnerships under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international effort to conserve wetland habitat for waterfowl and other fish and wildlife.

The ***Pacific Coast Joint Venture***, created in 1991, includes all of western Oregon, as well as coastal British Columbia, Washington and northern California. The ***Intermountain West Joint Venture***, started in 1995, covers eastern Oregon and portions of nine other western states.

This newsletter is published by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on behalf of the Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture. Publication and mailing costs are covered in part with funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Pacific Coast Joint Venture) and Ducks Unlimited.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife prohibits discrimination in all of its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against as described above in any program, activity or facility, please contact the ADA Coordinator, P.O. Box 59, Portland, OR 97207, 503-872-5262.

This material will be furnished in alternate format for people with disabilities if needed. Please call 503-872-5260 (voice) or 503-872-5259 (Portland TTY) to request.

Steering Committee

Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
Greenbelt Land Trust
McKenzie River Trust
National Audubon Society
North Coast Land Conservancy
Oregon Duck Hunters Association
Oregon Farm Bureau
Oregon Trout
South Coast Land Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy
The Trust for Public Land
The Wetlands Conservancy
Western Rivers Conservancy

Cooperating Agencies

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Division of State Lands
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Oregon Department of Transportation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Forest Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Natural Resources Conservation Service
METRO

Executive Director

Bruce Taylor

Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture
1637 Laurel Street
Lake Oswego OR 97034
503 / 697-3889
503 / 697-3268 fax