



## Partnerships nurture Ladd Marsh expansion

**W**ith little fanfare, a diverse group of partners are transforming a corner of the Grande Ronde Valley near LaGrande into one of northeast Oregon's most important wetland complexes.



Ladd Marsh

Ten years ago, the state's Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area consisted of one 400-acre marsh – the last remnant of a shallow lake that formerly sprawled across 10,000 acres at the south end of the valley – and a few smaller wetlands. Most of the 3,200-acre wildlife area was farmland, planted to corn and other crops to provide food for waterfowl during fall migration.

Today, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's ownership is poised to expand to more than 4,000 acres, and more than half of the area will be back in wetlands within the next few years.

Restored seasonal wetlands are already providing important habitat for a wide variety of breeding and migrating birds.

Improved water quality and increased late-season stream flows promise to benefit salmon, steelhead and bull trout populations that are among the most endangered in Oregon.

And hunters and bird-watchers alike are enjoying more and better opportunities to pursue their interests in one of the most accessible sites in the Blue Mountains.

The price tag: more than \$2.5 million, so far – virtually all of it from the ODFW's partners.

The state agency has been struggling with limited budgets for years and its portfolio of wildlife areas has remained static for several decades.

But the Ladd Marsh renaissance – a succession of individual projects that have grown into one of the largest habitat restoration efforts in Oregon – is testament to the power of partnerships.

More than a dozen agencies and organizations have joined in the effort, attracted by the opportunity to leverage their contributions off other partners' resources. The result has been to expand the scope of the restoration efforts far beyond the scale any of the partners could have undertaken on their own.

The Nature Conservancy has been handling the real estate work. The conservancy purchased three properties totaling 844 acres and will transfer the parcels to ODFW at no cost this spring. Funding from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service and Bonneville Power Administration will cover most of the costs, with The Nature Conservancy covering the balance.

Ducks Unlimited has taken the lead on habitat restoration, coordinating design, engineering, and construction management for projects that will eventually transform more than 1,500 acres, most of it marginal agricultural land, into a mosaic of productive wetlands, grasslands and riparian habitats.

Funding for the projects has come from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

### This issue

<i>Follow the Money</i> .....	2
<i>All-bird strategy</i> .....	3
<i>Grasslands protected</i> .....	3
<i>\$1 million for Willamette</i> .....	4
<i>Shorebirds in the valley</i> .....	5
<i>Clatsop land donation</i> .....	6
<i>Coos Bay restoration</i> .....	6
<i>Whalen Island purchase</i> .....	6
<i>Coastal waterfowl survey</i> .....	7
<i>State of Environment</i> .....	8
<i>Wetlands Reserve Program</i> .....	9
<i>Blue Mountains grant</i> .....	10
<i>Sycan Marsh expansion</i> .....	11
<i>New book on Klamath Basin</i> .....	11

(continued on page 10)

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# Follow the money: a round-up of recent funding for Oregon wetland projects

**J**oint Venture partnerships have tapped a wide variety of federal, state and local funding sources to support wetland acquisition and restoration efforts in Oregon. Some of the big investments in recent months include:

### North American Wetlands Conservation Act

In September, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-administered program awarded grants for wetland acquisition and restoration at:

- *Willamette Valley*: \$1 million to Ducks Unlimited for projects involving 10 other partners and 1,600 acres of habitat.
- *Blue Mountains*: \$530,000 to Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation for projects involving 11 other partners and 4,630 acres of habitat.
- *Sycan Marsh*: \$500,000 to The Nature Conservancy for projects involving more than 7,500 acres and 10 other partners.

### Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded funding in December for:

- *Leeds Island*: \$298,000 to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for a partnership effort with Ducks Unlimited and others involving about 200 acres in the Umpqua River estuary near Reedsport.
- *Smith River*: \$139,000 to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for a partnership to restore 80 acres of tidal wetlands near Reedsport.
- *Siuslaw River*: \$995,000 to South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve for partnership with Ducks Unlimited and others to protect and restore 500 acres of tidal wetlands near Florence.

### Wetlands Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture funded 21 Oregon projects totaling more than \$4.4 million in 2000. The program, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, funded conservation easements and wetland restoration on more than 3,300 acres from coastal Coos County to Union County in northeastern Oregon.

### Congressional funding

Oregon's congressional delegation helped secure federal funding for 2001 for several proposals backed by Joint Venture partners:

- \$1,850,000 in land acquisition funds for the Bureau of Land Management's West Eugene Wetlands Project.
- A \$2 million increase in funding nationwide for joint ventures, including the Pacific Coast and Intermountain West joint ventures' work through the Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture.
- \$40 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant program (see above for Oregon projects), up from \$14.9 million in 2000.

### U.S. Forest Service

The agency's Pacific Coast Watershed Partnership contributed \$500,000 last year to coastal wetland restoration projects in Oregon and Washington through a partnership with Ducks Unlimited.

### Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Grants awarded in recent months from lottery funds allocated to habitat conservation under 1998's Ballot Measure 66 include:

- *Whalen Island*. \$900,000 toward State Parks' \$2.8 million purchase of a key 180-acre property in the Sand Lake estuary in Tillamook County.
- *West Eugene*. \$900,000 to the City of Eugene for a partnership to acquire 317 acres targeted for wetland restoration.
- *Luckiamute*. \$382,000 to the River Conservancy for acquisition of 236 acres of floodplain habitat in Benton county near the confluence of the Luckiamute, Santiam and Willamette rivers.
- *Coffin Butte*. \$20,000 to the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation for a 47-acre addition to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area north of Corvallis.
- *Sam Daws Landing*. \$415,000 to the Sam Daws District Improvement Co. for a demonstration project to restore floodplain habitats on four farms along the Willamette River between Harrisburg and Corvallis.
- *McKenzie Confluence*. \$105,000 to the McKenzie Watershed Council to develop plans for floodplain restoration at the confluence of the McKenzie and Willamette rivers north of Eugene.
- *Willamette Forks*. \$73,000 to the Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah for floodplain habitat restoration at the confluence of the Coast and Middle forks of the Willamette River south of Eugene.



**Leeds Island**

## Joint Ventures seen as vehicle for "all bird" conservation strategy

The joint venture organizations originally set up to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan are now being asked to take on other bird conservation efforts as well.

At the national and international level, proponents of the emerging "North American Bird Conservation Initiative" are looking to the waterfowl joint ventures as the vehicle for similar efforts on behalf of shorebirds, colonial nesting waterbirds, and songbirds and other landbirds.

The focus has never been limited to waterfowl in Oregon, where partners first began working under the umbrella of the Pacific Coast Joint Venture in 1991, expanding east of the Cascades with the Intermountain West Joint Venture in 1994,

The Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture, the state-level operating arm for the two regional joint ventures, has emphasized conservation of wetland habitats for a broad range of native fish and wildlife, including waterfowl, salmon, and a variety of rare, threatened, and endangered species.

As such, the movement toward an "all bird" focus at the national and international levels won't lead to radical changes in the joint ventures' activities in Oregon.

Most of the Oregon partners say they will continue to focus on wetlands but will also be looking for ways to address other bird conservation needs as opportunities arise.

In many cases, habitat priorities identified by Partners in Flight – which focuses on "neotropical migrant" birds, including songbirds and most other landbirds – and the waterbird initiatives dovetail closely with the joint venture's wetland conservation efforts.

In the Willamette Valley, for example, restoration of bottomland hardwood forests, native grasslands and oak habitats – all priorities for Partners in Flight – are important components of most large-scale wetland restoration projects. Seasonal

wetlands, the most common target for joint venture restoration projects in the valley, provide essential habitat for migrating and wintering shorebirds.

The joint venture's plans for the Closed Basin (Harney and Lake counties) and Klamath Basin both incorporate habitat priorities for shorebirds, colonial nesting waterbirds, and riparian habitats. The Willamette Valley plan, now being

prepared, will include habitats that offer opportunities to address priorities for all of the bird conservation initiatives.

*For more information on Partners in Flight and its landbird conservation plans, go to <http://www.gorge.net/natres/pif.html> or contact Bob Altman, American Bird Conservancy, 18000 SE Vogel Road, Boring, OR 97009; 503 658-2537; alt8bird@aol.com*

## Big land deals protect habitat for grassland birds

Loss of native grassland and shrub steppe habitats has been among the biggest contributors to declines of many bird species in Oregon.

But big chunks of two of the largest and most important remaining blocks of these dwindling habitats gained new protection late last year.

In September, The Nature Conservancy purchased the 27,000-acre Camp Creek Ranch north of Enterprise in northeastern Oregon's Wallowa County. The \$11.6 million purchase includes some of the best native grasslands on Zumwalt Prairie – at 140,000 acres, the largest remaining palouse bunchgrass prairie in North America. The area supports one of the continent's highest concentrations of breeding birds of prey and 28 at-risk species, including a dozen at-risk birds.

In December, WaterWatch, Defenders of Wildlife, Oregon Trout, and other groups involved in a long-running dispute over



**Zumwalt Prairie**

agricultural development on state-owned lands near Boardman negotiated a settlement that protects 23,000 acres of native habitat. The plateau lands above the Columbia River, part of a 93,000-acre tract formerly leased to Boeing Corp., are home to more than a half-dozen at-risk bird species, ranging from long-billed curlews and ferruginous hawks to burrowing owls and sage sparrows, and the endangered Washington ground squirrel. As part of the settlement, Boeing's successor as leaseholder, BAIC Inc., transferred management of the protected lands to The Nature Conservancy in early January 2001.

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# Ducks Unlimited gets \$1 million for Willamette Valley



**W**illamette Valley wetland restoration efforts are getting a million-dollar boost from the federal government's North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant program.

Ducks Unlimited has been awarded \$999,124 to help pay for a package of projects that involve acquisition, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands at eight sites throughout the valley.

Partners include a half-dozen federal, state, and local agencies, two conservation organizations, and seven private landowners.

The federal grant includes \$350,000 to purchase conservation easements on wetlands in the Coffee Lake area in Wilsonville and the Lake Labish area northeast of Salem.

Almost \$550,000 will help pay for habitat restoration projects involving 96 acres at Coffee Lake; 95 acres at Lake Labish; 100 acres on the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge south of Corvallis; and 459 acres on four private ownerships in Yamhill, Linn and Lane counties.

Another \$100,000 will pay for installation of a fish ladder and improved water control structures to enhance wetland habitats at the city

of Portland's Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge on the Willamette River near Sellwood.

Coffee Lake is an unusual "scabland" wetland system that was

*Lake Labish's rich peat soils have made it some of the most valuable farmland in the valley, but falling land and commodity prices have encouraged some owners to consider wetland restoration programs in recent years*

formed during the Missoula floods and historically supported extensive marshes and forested wetlands. The Wetlands Conservancy in 1999 donated a 29-acre property to Metro, which already owned 69 acres in Coffee Lake. The federal grant will be used to purchase an easement on 30 acres that connect the two parcels and fund restoration work on a portion of the property.

Lake Labish, one of the valley's most important areas for wintering and migrating waterfowl, is an old abandoned channel of the Willamette River that extends from Keizer northeast to the Pudding River. The old lakebed's rich peat soils have made it some of the most valuable farmland in the valley, but falling land and commodity prices have encouraged some owners to consider wetland restoration programs in recent years.

Grant funds will be used to purchase easements and help pay for wetland restoration on three sites totaling 95 acres at Lake Labish. At two sites, the Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide the additional restoration dollars through the Wetlands Reserve Program. Marion County will provide matching funds to help purchase an easement and restore wetlands on another 45-acre site.

Other grant money will be used for restoration work at McFadden Marsh on Finley National Wildlife Refuge and supplement the Natural Resource Conservation Service's funding to restore floodplain wetlands on private lands enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program.

Included in the package is funding for a large tractor and heavy-duty stubble disk for use in restoration projects on public and private lands in the Willamette Valley. Control of non-native reed canary grass in many wetlands requires periodic use of a heavy disk to plow through the dense vegetation and clear the ground for re-establishment of native plant communities. The equipment will be operated by a partnership between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

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# Shorebirds find critical winter habitat in Willamette Valley

By Susan Haig, Oriane Taft, Peter Sanzenbacher  
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Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University

**W**illamette Valley residents have grown accustomed to the sight and sounds of large flocks of Canada geese during the winter. But perhaps the most overlooked group of birds are the tens of thousands of small, nondescript shorebirds that use the valley as a winter refuge from Arctic breeding sites and other areas.

The most abundant shorebirds in the Willamette Valley include dunlin, killdeer, common snipe, long-billed dowitchers, and least sandpipers. Their numbers fluctuate greatly but can run as high as 60,000 individuals or more in the winter. In some areas, clouds of tens of thousands of dunlin can be seen swarming above a wetland for hours each day. The valley also serves as an important regional winter site for killdeer, once a common species whose numbers appear to be declining throughout North America.

In addition to using traditional wetlands (i.e., edges of ponds), shorebirds in the Willamette Valley also forage and roost on flooded agricultural fields. These fields can be quite ephemeral. Thus, it is important for shorebirds to have multiple habitat choices so they can move among them as conditions change. Because some habitats are used for roosting while others are used for foraging, shorebirds need a diversity of habitats as well.

## *Movement of Shorebirds in the Valley*

Monitoring of radio transmitters on dunlin and killdeer reveals quite different patterns of habitat use

Radio-tagged dunlin help researchers track movement of flocks around the valley.



and home range. Killdeer principally occupy agricultural fields in flocks of 10-100 and tend to stay in the same group of fields for weeks. They may eventually move to other sites but are rather sedentary until they migrate. In fact, some killdeer remain in the valley to breed and do not move far from their breeding site throughout the year.

Dunlin occur in flocks of hundreds to tens of thousands and have incredibly dynamic habitat and space use patterns. Starting the morning at a group roosting site adjacent to a pond, they may move 10-50 kilometers during the day to forage at several different agricultural fields before returning to the roost site. Their movements throughout the valley can be quite extensive depending on wetland availability, weather, stage in migration, etc. Some individuals fly to the coast and return to the valley several days later.

*This article is adapted from a longer version that appeared in the Winter 2000/2001 edition of Wetlands Update, published by Oregon Division of State Lands.*

For the past three years, researchers Susan Haig, Oriane Taft, and Peter Sanzenbacher have examined shorebird use of wetlands in the Willamette Valley as a means of classifying different types of wetlands and understanding the needs of shorebirds in the winter. Their project is now synthesizing information about shorebird movements, habitat use, the spatial availability of habitat and how that varies over time into a model that can be used to predict shorebirds needs and assess management strategies in the Willamette Valley.

## *Shorebird Plan*

**T**he U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan is a partnership effort being undertaken throughout the United States to ensure that stable and self-sustaining populations of all shorebird species are restored and protected.

The plan was developed by a wide range of agencies, organizations, and shorebird experts who helped set conservation goals for each region of the country, identified critical habitat conservation needs and key research needs, and proposed education and outreach programs to increase awareness of shorebirds and the threats they face.

For more information, go to:  
[www.manomet.org/USSCP.htm](http://www.manomet.org/USSCP.htm)

## County donates 3,400 acres to Lewis & Clark refuge

**S**ome 3,400 acres of islands in the Columbia River estuary are now formally part of the Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge, thanks to a donation from Clatsop County.

The lands donated by the county are in the heart of the refuge, which encompasses more than 40 percent of the Columbia River estuary. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's ownership now totals about 42,000 acres, including numerous islands and sandbars and extensive mudflats, tidal marshes, and tidal swamps. An important habitat for juvenile salmon, the area is a major stopover



Lewis & Clark NWR

for migratory waterfowl and hosts large numbers of wintering ducks and geese. Shorebird populations reach peaks of 150,000 birds.

The county lands had been managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service under a 25-year agreement dating from the time of the refuge's establishment. The agreement expired several years ago, and Clatsop County commissioners approved the transfer to refuge ownership last summer.

*Contact: Charlie Stenvall, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 3888 SR 101, Ilwaco WA 98624; 360-484-3482; Charlie\_Stenvall@fws.gov*

## Coos purchase creates opportunity to expand estuary

**A** watershed association and a pair of land trusts have teamed up to acquire a property on Coos Bay's Catching Slough, laying the groundwork for one of the biggest tidal wetland restoration projects ever undertaken on the southern Oregon coast.

The Coos Watershed Association, working through the South Coast

Land Conservancy, purchased the 182-acre former dairy at a sheriff's auction last summer for \$210,000. The local land trust then turned it over to The Wetlands Conservancy, which agreed to hold the property while long-term restoration and management plans are worked out.

Funding for the purchase came from an \$820,000 Coastal Wetland

Conservation Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board received the grant last year, added \$324,000 in state match, and is passing the money on to the Coos Watershed Association and other partners.

The bulk of the property, located about four miles southeast of Coos Bay on the upper reaches of one of the bay's major sloughs, is diked former tidelands. At least one of the three small streams that run through the bottomland, Matson Creek, supports coho salmon and cutthroat trout, and the others could following restoration.

Removal of tidegates and restoration of full tidal flows could recreate about 110 acres of estuarine habitat.

The South Coast Land Conservancy and The Wetlands Conservancy are now working with a number of federal, state and private partners to develop restoration plans for the property.

*Contact: Anne Donnelly, South Coast Land Conservancy, 125 Central Avenue #380, Coos Bay OR 97420; 541-266-7202; adonnelly@harborside.com; or Esther Lev, The Wetlands Conservancy, Box 1195 Tualatin OR 97062; 503-239-4065; estherlev@aol.com*

## New state park protects tidal marshes

**T**he Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board awarded \$900,000 to complete the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's \$2.8 million purchase of Whalen Island in Tillamook County. The



180-acre property includes extensive tidal marshes in the middle of Sand Lake, one of Oregon's most natural estuaries. The Trust for Public Land negotiated the sale and helped put together the funding package.

Whalen Island

# Wetlands Data

## Wintering waterfowl on the Oregon Coast

Results of annual Winter Waterfowl Trend Survey conducted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, January 2-3, 2001. Includes coastal areas from Nehalem Bay (Tillamook County) south to Garrison Lake (Curry County).

Group	number observed	change from last year
Coots	8,397	+71%
Swans	165	-29%
Geese	4,335	+46%
Ducks	51,485	+83%

Most abundant species (in descending order):

- wigeon
- scaup
- bufflehead
- pintail
- mallard
- green-wing teal

Greatest diversity:

- Tillamook Bay (19 species)

Most diving ducks:

- Siltcoos Lake (7,749)

Most dabbling ducks:

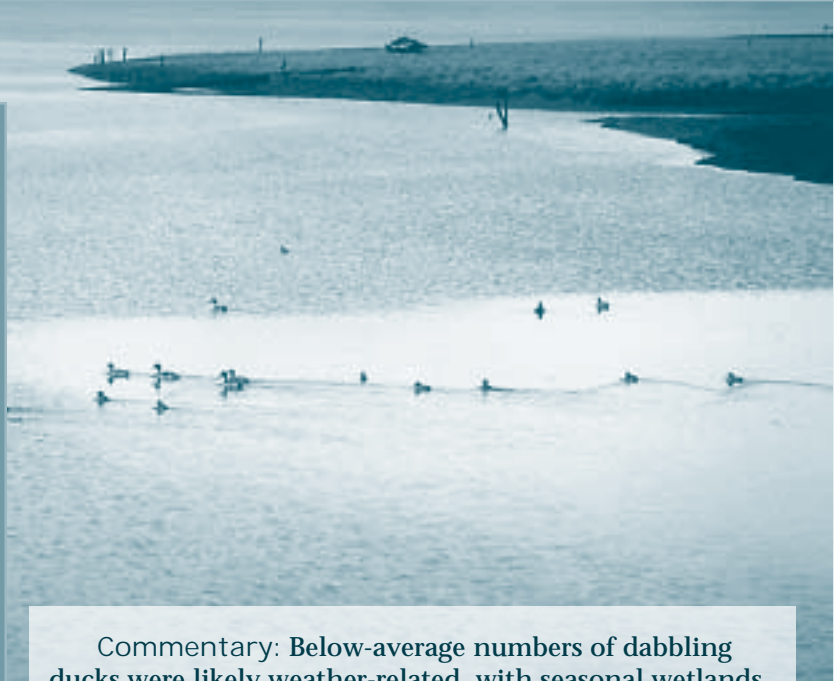
- Coos Bay (9,410)

Most swans:

- Umpqua River (65)

Most geese:

- Nestucca Bay (1,544)



Commentary: Below-average numbers of dabbling ducks were likely weather-related, with seasonal wetlands and field-flooding almost non-existent. The Coquille Valley, largest winter area for dabbling ducks on the Oregon coast, was essentially dry except for the "Winter Lake" area. The number of wintering brant (694) along the coast remains low, but the 319 brant recorded on Tillamook Bay is the highest number recorded there during the winter waterfowl trend survey in several decades.

Contact: Roy Lowe, Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2127 SE OSU Drive, Newport OR 97365; 541-867-4550; roy\_lowe@fws.gov

# State of the Environment Report checks wetland status and trends

By Janet Morlan, Oregon Division of State Lands

**T**outed as the “first scientifically credible, comprehensive assessment of Oregon’s environment,” the Oregon State of the Environment Report 2000 was initiated by the Oregon Progress Board in 1998 to assess the status and health of Oregon’s environment. A science panel chaired by Oregon State University President Paul G. Risser completed the report in September 2000. Summary findings for freshwater wetlands and estuarine wetlands are provided below:

## Freshwater Wetlands

- Oregon has lost an estimated 38 percent of its original wetlands. In the Willamette Valley, approximately 57 percent of wetlands have been lost, and a recent study shows that the valley continues to lose more than 500 acres per year. The Klamath Basin has lost an estimated 75 percent of original wetlands, primarily due to government-sponsored conversion to agricultural production.
- Statewide, 29 percent of native wetland plant communities identified to date are ranked as imperiled (vulnerable to extinction). Only a few have been studied in detail, like the Willamette Valley wet prairie (99 percent lost) and the Agate Desert vernal pools (more than 40 percent gone).
- 24 percent of wetland-dependent amphibians are ranked as imperiled.
- Extensive modification of rivers and streams has reduced wetland area and complexity and permanently altered wetland types and functions.
- Water quality standards for wetlands have not been established, but wetland water quality condition and trends may roughly parallel poor stream condition.
- Existing regulatory programs have slowed wetland loss substantially but are not sufficient in themselves to halt the loss of wetland acreage and functions.
- New wetland restoration incentive programs are helping to reverse wetland loss trends and improve wetland ecosystem health, particularly in agricultural regions.
- Principal threats to wetland ecosystem health today include continued pressure to convert wetlands to other economic uses, and the cumulative impacts from human activities—such as pollution, sedimentation, and invasion of nuisance species—on wetland condition.



## Estuarine Wetlands

- Historical loss of tidal wetlands is high, but restoration of diked former wetlands is reversing loss trends, increasing habitat availability for juvenile salmon and other estuary-dependent species and improving the functionality of estuaries.
- Estuarine habitats are well protected from some potential disturbances like dredging, filling, and other major physical alterations.
- Aquatic nuisance species are already well established in most Oregon estuaries; new arrivals and potential introductions pose unknown threats to native species and estuarine ecosystem function generally.
- Freshwater inflow to estuaries is below historic levels, particularly during summer months, when demand peaks. The ecological impacts of lower inflow is not known, but projected growth in coastal population and water use suggest the need for research to determine impacts and the need for minimum estuary inflows.
- Water quality is insufficiently monitored to draw conclusions about the present conditions and the risks associated with the increasing point source and runoff pollution that can be expected as population grows.
- Principal threats to estuaries today are continued physical alterations, mostly shoreline modifications for upland development and dredging for navigation projects; invasions of aquatic nuisance species; excessive sediment and runoff pollution from local and watershed sources, and other pressures associated with population and tourism growth.

*Copies of the State of the Environment Report are available from the Oregon Progress Board, 775 Summer Street NE, Suite 300, Salem, OR 97301-1283; 503-986-0039. Check the board’s web site ([www.econ.state.or.us/opb](http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb)) for ordering information or to view a copy of the Statewide Summary.*

*The Freshwater Wetlands and Estuarine Ecosystem resource chapters are on the Oregon Division of State Lands’ web site (<http://statelands.dsl.state.or.us>).*

*For a printed copy of either chapter, contact Linda Collins at 503-378-3805 x276.*

## Wetlands Reserve looks at higher caps on easement payments

The U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service is considering increasing the maximum rates it will pay qualifying Oregon landowners for conservation easements purchased under the Wetlands Reserve Program.

The easement payments are based on the agricultural value of the lands enrolled in the program, which pays landowners to restore wetlands under permanent and 30-year conservation easements. But the per-acre price the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will pay for an easement is subject to regional "caps" based on analysis of agricultural land values.

The new maximum rates are generally a little more than 10 percent higher than the old rates, which were established in 1995. The only exception is in the Willamette Valley, where the cap could increase to \$3,000 per acre based on the recommendation of the State Technical Advisory Committee.

Most easements purchased under the Wetland Reserve Program are appraised at levels below the maximum rates, so the caps don't come into play. However, Ducks Unlimited, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other partners say the cap rate has hindered the program in the Willamette Valley, where agricul-

tural land values in some areas substantially exceed the old cap's limits.

The new rates may make the Wetlands Reserve Program more attractive to owners of highly productive floodplain lands where targeted wetland restoration could produce disproportionately greater benefits for fish, wildlife, and water quality.

### Proposed Wetlands Reserve Program "cap" rates (subject to approval)

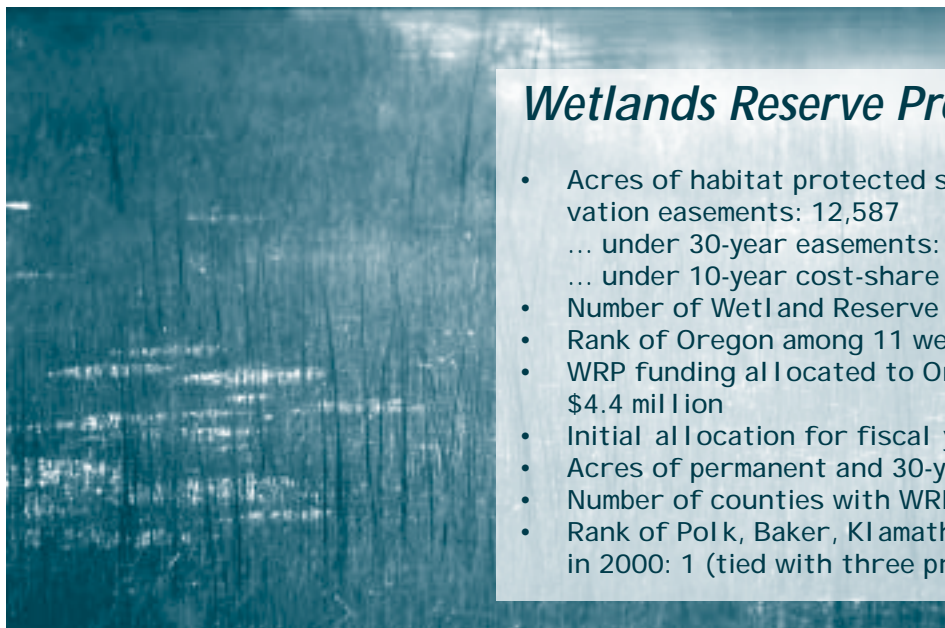
Region	Old rate	New rate
Coast	\$1,400	\$1,550
Willamette Valley	\$2,300	\$3,000
Southern Oregon	\$2,000	\$2,200
Columbia Basin	\$1,400	\$1,550
Northeast Oregon	\$1,100	\$1,250
Central Oregon	\$850	\$950

### Bush budget: 0 for WRP

President Bush's proposed federal budget would end funding for the popular Wetlands Reserve Program.

Although details of the president's 2002 budget weren't scheduled for release until April, the budget message Bush transmitted to Congress in February indicated that no funding was proposed for the Wetlands Reserve Program. The budget proposes to eliminate a number of agricultural programs set to expire at the end of this year.

Congressional supporters are pushing to reauthorize the Wetlands Reserve Program for another five years through the next Farm Bill, which may not be completed until next year, and will likely seek a short-term extension of funding through 2002.



### Wetlands Reserve Program in Oregon

- Acres of habitat protected since 1994 under permanent conservation easements: 12,587
  - ... under 30-year easements: 4,337
  - ... under 10-year cost-share agreements: 1,195
- Number of Wetland Reserve Program contracts in Oregon: 65
- Rank of Oregon among 11 western states in total WRP acres: 3
- WRP funding allocated to Oregon projects in fiscal year 2000: \$4.4 million
- Initial allocation for fiscal year 2001: \$4 million
- Acres of permanent and 30-year easements funded in 2000: 3,319
- Number of counties with WRP projects funded in 2000: 12
- Rank of Polk, Baker, Klamath among counties in projects funded in 2000: 1 (tied with three projects each)

## Ladd Marsh (continued from page 1)

Service, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Ducks Unlimited, and ODFW.

Other partners in the habitat restoration work include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Union County, and the City of LaGrande, which is piping its treated wastewater out to the wildlife area to feed into the restored wetlands.

Besides re-establishing part of the marshes that historically spread across the south end of the Grande Ronde Valley, the series of restoration projects now under way will recreate about three miles of natural stream channel for Ladd Creek, until recently little more than a series of ditches through the wildlife area.

Wetland restoration has already boosted waterfowl production on the wildlife area, but the seasonal wetlands are benefiting far more than ducks and geese. Shorebird numbers increased dramatically last year. Nesting sandhill cranes now total more than 10 pairs, up from two in the 1970s. And a portion of Ladd Creek that usually dries up flowed throughout the summer for the first



**Elk tracks dot the edge of a restored seasonal wetland at Ladd Marsh. The newly constructed shallow-water impoundments also attracted large numbers of shorebirds last year.**

time in years.

Rare plants found on some of the recently acquired properties are being nurtured to provide seed for restoration of native wetland and grassland plant communities.

Dave Larson, ODFW's manager, says the habitat restoration work should eventually triple waterfowl production on the wildlife area and provide more than a three-fold increase in the number of acres available for public hunting. Wildlife viewing opportunities will include an auto tour route along the dike among some of the wetlands and walking trails and viewing blinds in other areas.

The future could bring even more. The city of LaGrande is purchasing additional land to expand the wildlife area's wetlands as part of its wastewater treatment project. In the meantime, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is working with a local landowner to protect 1,800 acres on the western slopes of the valley adjacent to the wildlife area as a critical migration corridor for the 300-400 elk that winter on the marsh. Plans call for a portion of those lands to be transferred to ODFW as well.

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## Federal grant aids Ladd Marsh, other projects in Blue Mountains

**H**abitat restoration at Ladd Marsh is one of a half-dozen wetland projects that will receive federal funding under a \$530,000 North American Wetland Conservation Act grant awarded to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation.

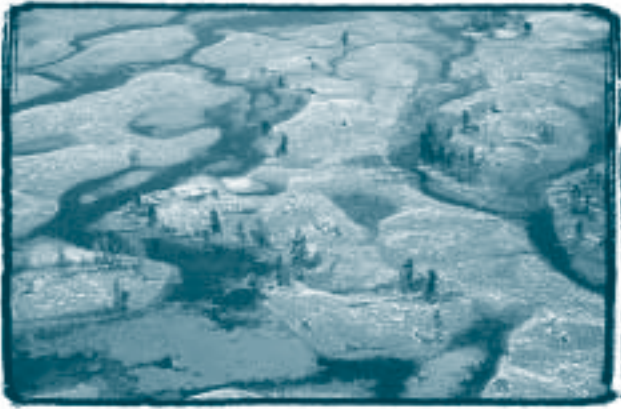
The Umatilla tribe's grant, developed in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, will also help fund restoration and enhancement of wetland, riparian and grassland habitats at McCoy Meadows in the upper Grande Ronde River basin, in the Baker Valley, along the lower Powder River, and in Logan Valley.

Fifteen partners provided almost \$4.8 million in matching funds and in-kind contributions for the grant package.

Except for the Ladd Marsh project, most of the habitat restoration will be on tribal and private lands. The Umatilla tribe has been working with a private landowner to restore wet meadows and riparian habitats at McCoy Meadows for several years now. The Logan Valley project involves lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service and the Burns Paiute Tribe. The Baker Valley and Powder River projects involve private lands enrolled in the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetlands Reserve Program, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.

*Contact: Carl Scheeler, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Box 638, Pendleton OR 97801; 541-278-5298; carlscheeler@ctuir.com*

## Nature Conservancy adds to Sycan Marsh Preserve



Tupper Ansel Blake

Sycan Marsh in winter

marsh that spreads across 32,000 acres in southeastern Oregon's Lake County.

A \$500,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant will cover almost one-third of the \$1.6 million purchase price. Other elements of the project include restoration of about 1,600 acres of wetlands on the east side of the marsh and 1,000 acres of upland and wetland forest on the recently acquired lands.

The restoration work includes filling a large 2.5-mile drainage ditch known as the Chocktoot Drain that bisects the eastern half of the marsh. Thinning of degraded and overstocked young forests is expected to improve habitat values and improve hydrology and water quality on lands buffering the west side of the marsh.

Contact: Mark Stern, The Nature Conservancy, 821 SE 14th Street, Portland OR 97214; 503-230-1221; [mstern@tnc.org](mailto:mstern@tnc.org)

**T**he Nature Conservancy has added another 2,845 acres to its Sycan Marsh Preserve near the headwaters of the Klamath Basin.

The additions, which include wet meadow, riparian and forest habitats, span the western edge of the mile-high

## Balancing Water

**P**hotographers Tupper Ansel Blake and Madeleine Graham Blake have teamed up with writer William Kittredge to produce a beautiful book on the Klamath Basin.

***Balancing Water: Restoring the Klamath Basin*** (University of California Press 2000; \$39.95, available at most book stores) is about the basin's water and wetlands, the natural and human communities they sustain, and the difficult reconciliation of the conflicting values they evoke.

Tupper Ansel Blake's spectacular color photos capture the seasonal magic of the basin's wetlands and wildlife at scales large and small. His wife, Madeleine Graham Blake, contributes sympathetic black and white portraits of the people in this story. William Kittredge's extended essay mixes an outsider's clear-eyed view of the issues with a local's understanding of the culture of the Klamath Basin. Together, their collaboration makes for a fine book, as good-looking as it is thoughtful.

— Bruce Taylor



Tupper Ansel Blake



Tupper Ansel Blake



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## About the Oregon Wetlands Joint Venture

**T**he 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.

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National Audubon Society  
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Oregon Duck Hunters Association  
Oregon Farm Bureau  
Oregon Trout  
River Conservancy  
South Coast Land Conservancy  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Trust for Public Land  
The Wetlands Conservancy

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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

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