WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

After a year-long process, the Oregon Global Warming Coalition (OGWC) voted to approve its Natural and Working Lands Proposal, which incorporated significant input by OCAP advocates. For the first time in our state's history, the report identified concrete goals for advancing carbon sequestration by Oregon's forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Specifically, the proposal recommends that Oregon sequester at least an additional 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO2e) per year in Oregon’s natural and working lands and waters by 2030, and at least 9.5 MMTCO2e by 2050. These goals are separate from and in addition to Oregon's greenhouse gas reduction targets achieved by transitioning off fossil fuels to clean energy.

As a first step in advancing the OGWC’s recommendations, the Natural & Working Lands Bill (SB 1534), which would lay the foundation for new programs to increase carbon sequestration and climate resilience in Oregon, was introduced for consideration during the 2022 legislative session.

In addition, the Board of Forestry unanimously approved its Climate Change and Carbon Plan (CCCP). OCAP forest policy stakeholders successfully engaged in the extensive public engagement process to secure new goals to reduce climate emissions, increase carbon sequestration, and positively benefit climate-impacted and resource-dependent communities. The CCCP positions Oregon as a regional leader in climate-smart forestry, including both climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

Following the Board’s adoption of the CCCP, ODF included carbon- and climate-specific goals within its Western Oregon State Forest Management Plan. ODF circulated a public survey and held numerous listening sessions with stakeholders. Due in part to the OCAP coalition’s advocacy efforts, ODF received more than 1,300 comments in support of carbon and climate considerations in forest management decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

In addition to the above progress, additional state agency progress on OCAP implementation includes:

- OWEB passed a Climate Resolution that commits to incorporating climate change into funding and policy decisions through an inclusive and meaningful engagement process.
• OWEB initiated a rulemaking process to include climate change criteria in their grantmaking decisions.

• OWRD received funding to establish a position for coordination, planning and outreach on earthquakes, drought, floods, climate change, and dam failures, and work on OCAP implementation, climate adaptation, and more.

• OWRD postponed the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, which is a key document for updating the long range focus on climate change.

• The Board of Agriculture is considering a climate resolution.

• The Oregon Department of Agriculture established a new Soil Health Specialist Position.

“It’s in my economic interest to be thinking about soil carbon. It’s literally what feeds the plants that feeds the cows.”
– Jared Gardner, owner, Nehalem River Ranch.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

While the goals themselves are worth celebrating, there is a long road ahead for Oregon to implement the recommendations set out in the OGWC’s Natural and Working Lands Proposal. This will require state policymakers to make significant investments in programs to increase adoption of climate-smart management practices, including technical assistance, incentives, data, research, and new rules and regulations.

There is also a role for the legislature to play in ensuring that our state agencies and commissions have the resources and capacity needed to continue making progress in advancing carbon sequestration and storage on our natural and working lands. This includes funding to:

- Support the OGWC in its role to coordinate state agency actions

- Make ODA’s Soil Health Specialist position permanent

- Create new climate research and policy positions at ODF

In addition, as OWRD moves forward with its newly-established Regional Water Planning and Management Work Group to develop a framework and path for state-supported water planning and management at the water region and/or basin level, there is a need to ensure climate considerations are central to water planning and management recommendations. Further, OWRD should more holistically assess how the department can best advance the recommendations in the OGWC’s Natural and Working Lands Proposal.

“We raised our voices to strengthen these recommendations and we were heard. We support nearly all of the recommendations in the Proposal and our producers are ready to be part of the solution.”
– Megan Kemple, Director of Policy Advocacy, Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network.