

## Oregon Plan Background

The Oregon Plan <http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/541.html> was established by the Legislature to be a comprehensive program for the protection and recovery of species and for the restoration of watersheds throughout the state. The following is a short summary of the statute as it relates to the purpose of the *Stream Restoration Partnership*: to deliver enhanced and accelerated restoration projects for landowner coordinators and private landowners.

The mission of the Oregon Plan is to restore the watersheds of Oregon and to recover the fish and wildlife populations of those watersheds to productive and sustainable levels in a manner that provides substantial ecological, cultural and economic benefits.

Two key goals of the Oregon Plan meant to guide the citizens of Oregon in achieving the mission of the Plan include:

- Coordination of activities and programs among federal, state and local governments and other entities, and
- Use of voluntary and collaborative processes to achieve the mission of the Oregon Plan whenever possible.

The Oregon Legislature clearly supports voluntary restoration actions and *found* that:

“Management techniques and programs for the protection and enhancement of watersheds can be most effective and efficient when voluntarily initiated at the local level. Cooperative partnerships between affected private individuals, interested citizens, tribes and representatives of local, state and federal agencies may improve opportunities to achieve the protection, enhancement and restoration of the state’s watersheds.”

The policy of the State of Oregon is “Voluntary programs initiated at the local level to protect and enhance the quality and stability of watersheds are a *high* priority of the state and should be encouraged”. Many of our restoration successes to date grew out of the Legislature’s direction encouraging state agencies to respond cooperatively to local watershed protection and enhancement efforts and coordinate their respective activities with other state agencies and affected local, regional, tribal and federal governments and private landowners to the greatest degree practicable (ORS 541.343 et seq).

The Oregon Plan statutory language also recognizes and suggests incentives for landowners to provide for conservation, restoration and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat or water quality. This includes doing more to:

- coordinate, facilitate and memorialize a landowner’s compliance with the requirements of state and federal regulatory schemes; and
- combine or coordinate multiple incentive programs among agencies and levels of government to:

- (A) Improve the delivery of financial and technical assistance to landowners engaged in conservation activities;
- (B) Reduce redundancy among programs;
- (C) Simplify application procedures;
- (D) Leverage the investment of federal funds;
- (E) Make more efficient use of technical assistance funds;
- (F) Provide greater incentives for landowners;
- (G) Foster partnerships and improve cooperation with nongovernmental organizations;
- (H) Provide greater environmental benefits;
- (I) Tailor and more effectively target conservation programs administered by federal, state and local governments to the unique conservation needs of, and opportunities presented by, individual parcels of eligible land; and
- (J) Give landowners an increased level of regulatory certainty.