



## DECLARATION OF COOPERATION

### **Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center**

**February 16, 2006**

#### **Purpose**

Changing consumer demand is creating both new market opportunities for agricultural producers and evolving requirements for access to major markets. The Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center is established to draw together the education, information, and technical support needed by Oregon farmers and ranchers who wish to capture the opportunities and meet the requirements. We, the undersigned, comprise a diverse group of public and private interests united in our support of this purpose.

#### **Background**

In early 2002, representatives of the member-growers of NORPAC Foods, Inc. formed a Stewardship Committee to develop and formalize NORPAC grower sustainability and stewardship guidelines. Guidelines were developed with four areas of focus: Soil and Water Conservation, Using Integrated Pest Management; Safe and Fair Working Conditions; and Wildlife Habitat Conservation. These guidelines were intended to define NORPAC's commitment to stewardship and be a tool for all members to operate their farms with attention to sustainability. Increasingly, the application of such guidelines is being required of suppliers to major food wholesalers and retailers. Recognizing that a focused source of education, technical information and support for sustainable agriculture does not exist in Oregon, NORPAC requested that Governor Kulongoski designate the creation of such a source as an Oregon Solutions project. The Governor designated the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center (OSARC) as an Oregon Solutions project in December 2004. Thayne Dutson, Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Oregon State University was appointed as the convener of the project.

The mission of Oregon Solutions is to develop sustainable solutions to community based problems or opportunities that support economic, environmental, and community objectives simultaneously through partnerships between government, business, and non-profit organizations. The Governor assures participation of his staff and appropriate state agencies with other partners through the designation of an Oregon Solutions project. The Oregon Solutions Team is charged to make efficient use of available resources, overcome



potential impediments early on, raise awareness of the project on a statewide level and bring effective partners to the table. The Team commits resources and time to an integrated action plan focused on a successful, sustainable project outcome.

### *Mission*

**The mission of the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center is to serve as a source and a clearinghouse for education, information and technical support that is used by resource professionals and by agricultural producers seeking to operate their farms and ranches with a focus on stewardship and sustainability. This mission supports producers as they respond to changing market demand and evolving requirements for market access.**

### *Vision*

**OSARC serves Oregon agricultural producers as they qualify under certification programs and voluntarily participate in public and private assistance programs. Outcomes include more economically and ecologically sustainable farms and ranches; a more resilient rural economy; stronger bonds between rural, urban, and suburban residents; and a healthier environment for all Oregonians.**

### *Team Members*

OSU Institute for Natural Resources  
OSU Extension Service  
OSU College of Agricultural Sciences  
NORPAC, Inc.  
Tillamook County Creamery Association  
Wilco Cooperative  
Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc.  
Oregon Cherry Growers, Inc.  
Agricultural Cooperative Council  
Food Alliance  
Salmon-Safe  
Oregon Tilth, Inc.  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Oregon Water Trust  
Xerces Society  
Celilo Group Media, Inc.  
Eugene Water and Electric Board  
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Oregon Department of Agriculture



Oregon Department of Energy  
Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division  
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife  
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
Oregon Water Resources Department  
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
Governor's Economic Revitalization Team

### ***The Focus on Stewardship and Sustainability***

The market is reflecting a growing focus on stewardship and sustainability that incorporates a variety of interests and features. Among the driving forces are:

- The desire by producers and consumers to differentiate among otherwise similar agriculture products.
- The desire to develop markets for products with particular production and /or quality attributes.
- The desire of consumers to “shop their values.”
- Public willingness to provide incentives and rewards to producers who supply public amenities, such as reduced erosion, higher quality and quantity of surface and groundwater, cleaner air, fish and wildlife habitat, and greater energy efficiency.
- The need to strengthen and diversify Oregon’s rural economy.
- The need to strengthen the bonds among rural, urban and suburban Oregonians.

### ***Structure***

OSARC will be structured to accomplish its purpose of providing complete, timely and organized education, information and technical assistance to Oregon farmers and ranchers as they response to, and capture the opportunities afforded by, the drivers listed above.

At this time it is envisioned that OSARC will comprise:

- An **Administrative Council** to act as a board of directors and to take fiduciary responsibility and approve policy for OSARC,
- **Technical groups** to develop and manage the delivery of educational programs and technical information and assistance, and
- A **grant writing group** to pursue federal, state and private grants to forward the work of OSARC.

Agricultural producers and resource professionals become frustrated when there are inconsistencies in regulations, procedures, and qualifications between government agencies. The **Administrative Council** will also serve as a forum that identifies and works to resolve such inconsistencies.

### ***Initial Technical Subject Areas***

The following are suggested as initial technical subject areas. These areas are common to many current certification programs responding to markets forces. Other areas may be added in the future.

*(The following are descriptive, but not exhaustive examples of the subject areas)*

#### **Soil and Water Conservation**

Enhance soil quality and control erosion by a systems approach of agronomic and/or mechanical practices such as plant cover, crop rotation, cover crops, and other methods. Protect water quality by conservation tillage, maintaining healthy functioning buffer and riparian zones, and through proactive animal waste management. Adopt irrigation methods that conserve water and energy. *(revised by Administrative Council on June 12, 2006)*

#### **Pest and Disease Management**

Employ prevention and management methods that are least harmful, ecologically disruptive and have minimal environmental impacts. Strategies may include biological, cultural, mechanical and chemical methods. *(revised by Administrative Council on June 12, 2006)*

#### **Safe and Fair Working Conditions**

Provide safe and healthy working conditions for employees and family members through pesticide handler/applicator safety, hazardous materials management, sanitation and general safety. Provide fair working conditions through employee input, grievance policies and procedures, labor/management communication, hiring practices, non-discrimination, work force development, compensation practices, worker housing, and family support services.

#### **Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation**

Conserve and enhance habitat for native fish and wildlife, with a focus on at-risk species and habitats. On working lands, modify management activities to provide vegetative cover, food, and water. In natural areas and on retired lands, provide landscape connectivity, structural complexity, and restore or protect wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains, prairies, woodlands, and other at-risk habitats.

### *Cooperative Activities*

To carry out the mission of OSARC, we the undersigned cooperating public/private partners agree to:

- **Cooperate** in providing educational materials and programs to target audiences of producers.
- **Cooperate** in providing technical information and support responding to producer requests.
- **Cross-reference** regulation and government program standards with the standards of the various certification programs for the benefit of producers who wish to participate in these programs.
- **Provide staff and resources** to accomplish the above.
- **Seek recurring funding** to establish and staff OSARC.

### *Declaration*

**Oregon State University**  
**Institute for Natural Resources**  
**Extension Service**  
**College of Agricultural Sciences**

Oregon State University will host the development of OSARC to be housed within the Institute for Natural Resources with the assistance of the public/private partnership. Development will proceed as committed resources allow. Within OSU, OSARC will draw together faculty and staff, educational materials and programs around the focus on agricultural stewardship and sustainability. OSU will provide leadership for the Administrative Council and assign staff to each of the technical groups as they are established. OSU will cooperate with partners in the development and distribution of OSARC materials, incorporate OSARC materials and partners in its educational programs, respond quickly to producer requests, and put producers in contact with appropriate OSARC partners. OSU will commit staff and financial resources to the establishment and maintenance of OSARC as recurring resources become available.



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Gail Achterman, Director, OSU Institute for Natural Resources



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Scott Reed, Dean and Director, OSU Extension Service



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Thayne Dutton, Dean and Director, OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Agricultural Experiment Station

**NORPAC Foods, Inc.**

NORPAC will further the work of OSARC by assigning staff and member-grower representatives to the Administrative Council and technical groups, by continuing its financial contributions and encouraging others to do the same, and by building political support for the programs of OSARC in the agricultural community and the legislature.

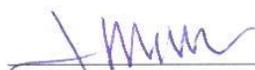


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Rick Jacobson, President and CEO

**Tillamook County Creamery Association**

The Tillamook County Creamery Association will support the Mission of the Oregon Solutions project and the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center by allocating staff to the Administrative Council and technical groups, by contributing financially to further the work of OSARC and by promoting OSARC within the dairy community and the legislature.



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Jim McMullen, President and CEO

**Wilco Cooperative**

Wilco will support the Mission of the Oregon Solutions project and the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center by allocating staff to the Administrative Council and technical groups, by contributing financially to further the work of OSARC and by promoting OSARC within the community and the legislature.



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Doug Hoffman, President and CEO

**Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc.**

Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc will support the Mission of the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center by committing to promote OSARC to our producer members in dryland and irrigated agriculture and active livestock producers in our trade area. PGG will further the work of OSARC by assigning staff to the Administrative Council and technical groups and provide ongoing financial and technical contributions.



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Al Gosiak, President and CEO

**Oregon Cherry Growers, Inc.**

Oregon Cherry Growers, Inc. will support the mission and work of OSARC and commits to contributing resources in the form of representatives to the Administrative Council and technical groups and financial contributions. In addition we will promote the mission and practices to our membership, the grower community and the legislature.



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Ed Johnson, President and CEO

**Agricultural Cooperative Council**

The Agricultural Cooperative Council will actively participate as a team member with the Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center by allocating staff to further the work of OSARC; by promoting OSARC within the agricultural cooperative community; and by participating in legislative efforts that enhance the work of OSARC.



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John McCulley, Executive Secretary

**Food Alliance**

Food Alliance will assign a member to the Administrative Council and advocate for additional funding for OSARC. Food Alliance offers its certification standards as an organized listing of well-accepted “best practices” for sustainable agriculture, covering most crop and animal production systems.

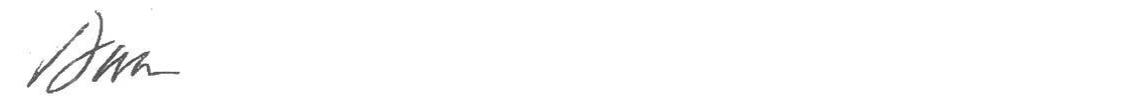


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Scott Exo, Executive Director

**Salmon-Safe**

Salmon-Safe offers its certification standards as a set of field-tested and market-proven best management practices for ecologically sustainable agriculture, particularly with respect to protection of water quality and wildlife habitat. Salmon-Safe also will advocate for additional funding for OSARC and participate in technical work groups as needed.



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Dan Kent, Managing Director

**Oregon Tilth, Inc.**

Oregon Tilth will assign a staff representative to the Administrative Council. As a USDA-accredited certification agent under the National Organic Program, Oregon Tilth will assist the work to cross-reference USDA organic standards with other government programs, regulations and private certification programs. Oregon Tilth will link its web-based resources with those developed by OSARC.



John Foster, Executive Director

**Defenders of Wildlife**

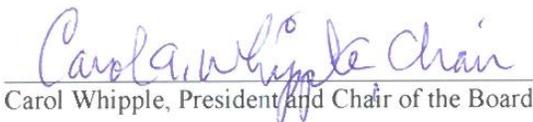
Defenders of Wildlife will assign a staff representative to the Administrative Council and provide leadership to the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation technical group. Defenders will solicit funds to develop the fish and wildlife component of OSARC and will advocate for additional funding for OSARC. Defenders will link and integrate its resources with those developed by OSARC.



Sara Vickerman, Director, Northwest Office

**Oregon Water Trust**

Oregon Water Trust will assign a representative to serve on the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation technical group and on the Soil and Water Conservation group if appropriate. The person responsible for ensuring our participation will be the Executive Director, Fritz Paulus. OWT will provide technical support and landowner assistance regarding cooperative, free-market approaches to restore surface water flows for healthier streams in Oregon.



Carol Whipple, President and Chair of the Board

**Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation**

The Xerces Society will serve on the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation technical group, providing information on the conservation of native pollinator insects in agricultural landscapes and management expertise for the conservation of endangered invertebrates. Xerces will advise the Administrative Council concerning these subject areas as needed.



Scott Hoffman Black, Executive Director

**Celilo Group Media, Inc.**

Celilo Group Media will be an active participant on the Administrative Council. Celilo Group Media will support OSARC’s efforts by fundraising for, creating, publishing and distributing the annual *Farming Sourcebook* – a publication directly complementary to OSARC’s mission. Celilo Group Media will coordinate with team members of each technical group in the production of content for the *Farming Sourcebook*. Technical groups will have ability to review and suggest changes to relevant content. Each partner of OSARC will have access to an online version of the *Farming Sourcebook* to post on their websites. Partners will also have access to printed copies of the *Farming Sourcebook* to distribute directly to farmers and ranchers, agricultural professional, staff and others. Celilo Group Media asks to be considered as a contractor when OSARC is ready to create its website.

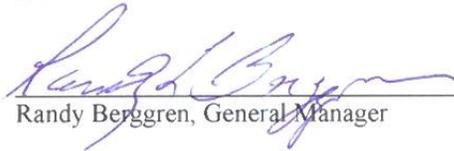


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Nik Blosser, President

**Eugene Water and Electric Board**

The Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) will assign a staff representative to the Administrative Council and the Soil and Water Conservation and Pest and Disease Management technical groups. In addition, EWEB will advocate for additional funding for OSARC through collaborative efforts in the McKenzie Watershed. EWEB will strengthen OSARC through development of the McKenzie Agriculture and Water Management System (MAWMS) as a mechanism to support growers in the transition to sustainable agriculture. MAWMS will be an interactive website that creates a market-like environment to coordinate regional food demand with McKenzie grown crops. MAWMS provides growers easy access to technical information, markets and financial assistance to enhance existing crop production through sustainable practices or transition to other crops to take advantage of favorable local market conditions. OSARC will be able to incorporate its vision into MAWMS and learn from the implementation of this tool in the McKenzie Watershed.

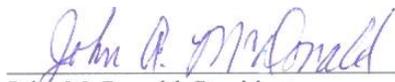


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Randy Berggren, General Manager

**Oregon Association of Conservation Districts**

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts will participate as a member of the Administrative Council and on the technical groups as appropriate. OACD will cooperate with OSARC partners in educational programming and will assist in the development and dissemination of OSARC materials.



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John McDonald, President

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide leadership to the Soil and Water Conservation technical group. NRCS will assign staff to the other technical groups and Administrative Council as appropriate; link its web-based resources through OSARC; and help identify potential USDA NRCS grant opportunities to support the work of OSARC. NRCS will also provide technical consultation to the grant writing group on an as-needed basis.

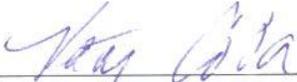


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Bob Graham, State Conservationist

**Oregon Department of Agriculture**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture will provide \$3,000 toward the development costs of OSARC. ODA will provide leadership to the Pest and Disease Management technical group and assign staff representation to the Administrative Council and the Soil and Water Conservation and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation technical groups. ODA will link its resources and programs through OSARC and assist the work to cross-reference regulation and government program standards with the standards of the various certification programs.



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Katy Coba, Director

**Oregon Department of Energy**

The Oregon Department of Energy will provide \$5,000 toward the development costs of OSARC and assign a staff representative to the Administrative Council. ODE will participate and contribute to the energy aspects of the soil and water conservation technical group and the pest and disease management technical groups. ODE will advise and assist the grant writing group in pursuing funding for the energy conservation aspects of the work of OSARC.



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Michael Grainey, Director

**Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division**

The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division will provide leadership to the Safe and Fair Working Conditions technical group. Oregon OSHA will provide staff resources to jointly provide training, assistance and guidance in the development of publications and links on OR-OSHA’s website to other web resources.



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Michael Wood, Administrator

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will appoint a representative to the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation technical group. The person responsible for ensuring our participation will be Eric Rickerson, Wildlife Habitat Program Manager in our Salem Headquarters. ODFW staff, through the leadership of Eric Rickerson and Chris Wheaton, Northwest Regional Manager, will provide information about and technical assistance for ODFW’s landowner assistance programs. These programs promote voluntary conservation of Oregon’s fish and wildlife resources.



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Roy Elicker, Interim Director

**Oregon Department of Environmental Quality**

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will assign a member to the Administrative Council and help identify potential EPA grant opportunities to support work in the development of information for OSARC. DEQ will assist with seeking grant funds from identified potential opportunities, including assistance with development and review of grant applications. DEQ will provide technical consultation to the grant writing group on an as-needed basis. Potential EPA grant opportunities may include Clean Water Act Section 319 grants, Environmental Education Grants, and others.



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Stephanie Hallock, Director

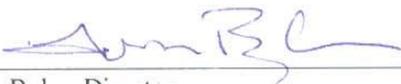
**Oregon Water Resources Department**

The Oregon Water Resources Department will assign a member to the Administrative Council and will participate in the Soil and Water Conservation technical group. WRD will also provide technical assistance on water resource issues to other technical groups and the Administrative Council as needed.

  
Phil Ward, Director

**Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board**

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board will assign a member to the Administrative Council and entertain grant applications for OSARC programs that further the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

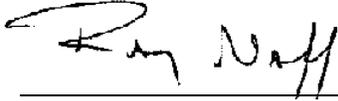


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Tom Byler, Director

**Governor’s Office and the Economic Revitalization Team**

The Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center is an excellent example of a lasting solution that simultaneously addresses economic, environmental, and community well-being. The Governor's Office created the Oregon Solutions approach to help address complex issues with sustainable solutions. To this end, Governor Kulongoski's Office will continue to support OSARC in concept and is interested in developing and assisting with needed administrative policy. The Governor's Willamette Valley Economic Revitalization Team coordinator or his designee from the Willamette Valley ERT will participate on the Administrative Council.



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Ray Naff, Director

## Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center - Oregon SolutionsTeam Members

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Tillamook	Shawn Reiersgaard	<a href="mailto:sreiersgaard@tillamookcheese.com">sreiersgaard@tillamookcheese.com</a>	503-815-1338
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