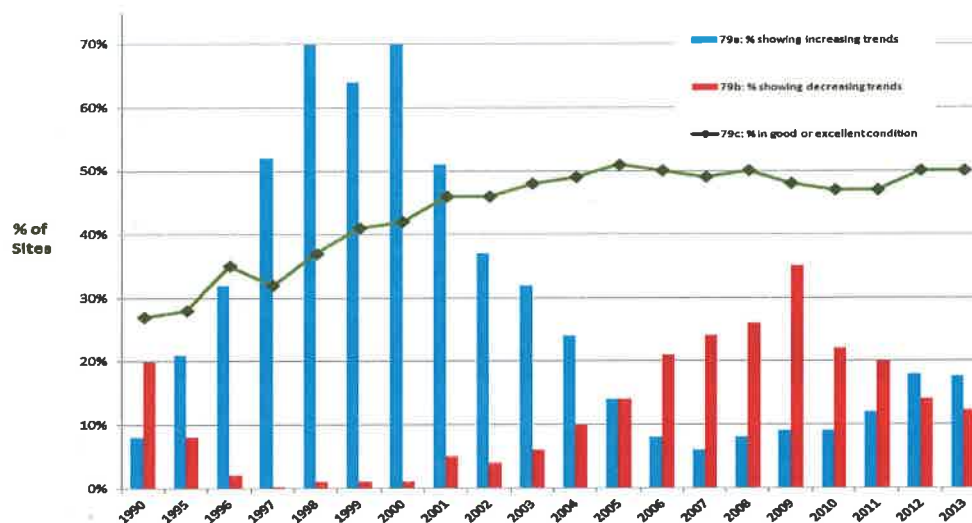


## 2015-2017 Governor's Budget for a Healthy Environment & Strong Rural Economy Initiative #2: Clean Water Partnership

Oregon Water Quality Status and Trends



**Problem:** Although Oregon's water quality improved steadily through 2005, since that time trends have flattened out and some areas of the state still have significant problems. Population increases and climate change will make it harder to attain further improvements in water quality that support fishing and swimming in all of our rivers and streams.

**Solutions:** Document water quality and trends, identify areas for directed conservation investment, and coordinate and direct existing federal and state conservation funding to areas that provide the greatest water quality and watershed health improvements. Expand water quality trading to avoid costly investment in water and wastewater treatment systems by creating markets for conservation improvements in Oregon's watersheds. Update existing water quality programs on forest and farm lands, and work to achieve healthy fisheries.

- ❖ **Directed Conservation – The Tools.** New monitoring methods can tell us what practices provide the greatest clean water improvements. The 2013-15 budget invested in development of new monitoring tools, but additional work remains. The 2015-17 Governor's Budget makes a coordinated investment through DEQ, ODA, DOGAMI, OWRD, OWEB, and ODF.
  - Issue an Executive Order to provide clear guidance and expectations for this effort, and to give landowners and other regulators a clear vision of where the state is headed.
  - Continue acquisition of LIDAR data to provide accurate baseline for prioritizing investments.
  - Invest in completion of modeling tools for temperature and nutrients.
  - Invest in IT infrastructure for sharing of data among agencies, and with the public.
- ❖ **Directed Conservation – The Investments.** The Natural Resources Conservation Service invests about \$40 million per year in Oregon, largely to pay farmers and woodland owners for conservation practices. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board invests nearly \$70 million each biennium on watershed restoration projects and the associated capacity and monitoring to implement and evaluate those investments. Other investors include ODFW, ODA, private foundations and other partners. This initiative builds on the existing Conservation Effectiveness Partnership among NRCS, OWEB, DEQ, ODA and partnerships among other agencies so conservation dollars go where they are most needed and most effective. Aligning these investments is particularly important in basins without major municipalities, and few opportunities for water quality trading.
  - Update Conservation Effectiveness Partnership Agreement.
  - Work with farm and forest landowners and local community groups to design and implement voluntary water quality and riparian projects, leading to measurable conservation improvements.
  - Align OWEB, NRCS, Farm Service Agency and other funding, focusing initially in the Upper Willamette and Klamath basins.
- ❖ **Water Quality Trading.** In the Tualatin, McKenzie and Bear Creek watersheds, municipalities avoid costly wastewater or drinking water treatment facilities by instead investing in programs that pay land managers to change their practices in ways documented to achieve equivalent or better water quality improvements. This initiative builds on those successes.

