



OREGON AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM (OAHP)

Presenters

Nellie McAdams, Executive Director
Oregon Agricultural Trust

Mary Anne Cooper, Vice President for Government Affairs
Oregon Farm Bureau

Jim Wood, Veterinarian & Rancher with easement
Aspen Valley Ranch in Post, Oregon



OAHP Elements

Match grants for voluntary conservation

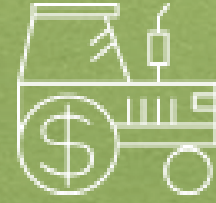
- **Permanent easements**
- **Temporary covenants**
- **Conservation management plans**

Succession planning workshops

Capacity building for grantee orgs

***Operated by OWEB, overseen by
Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission***

WHAT OAHP DOES



**Keep farms and
ranches in production**



**Support associated fish
and wildlife habitat**



**Leverage largely
untapped federal dollars**



\$8.2 BILLION

Agriculture is Oregon's 2nd
largest economic driver.

THESE “WORKING LANDS”
ENCOMPASS MORE THAN

25%

OF OREGON’S
63 MILLION
ACRES.



AGRICULTURAL LANDS

OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS,

64%

**OF OREGON'S
AGRICULTURAL LANDS
WILL CHANGE HANDS**



**81% of Oregon farms are sole proprietorships,
suggesting they have not done thorough
planning for succession.**



**AS A RESULT,
PARCELIZATION &
CONVERSION
OCCUR**




More Fragmented
Into Parcels



Converted to
Non-Farm Uses



Harder for
Beginning Farmers



**Land Use
alone is
not enough**

Oregon's unique land use program has slowed development of open space

But 500,000 acres have been removed from agricultural use and 65,500 acres from EFU since the program was created

There are over 60 non-farm uses allowed on EFU



Easements & Covenants

A conservation easement is a

- voluntary legal agreement
- between a landowner and land trust or government agency that
- permanently limits use of the land to protect its conservation values
- landowner retains land ownership!



Easements & Covenants

“Working lands easements” are conservation easements designed to keep land in ag/forestry production

Covenants are 20-50 years

**Invigorate rural communities
Colorado found \$2.19 in rural economic activity for every \$1 in easement funds**

OAHP Would bring in Federal Dollars

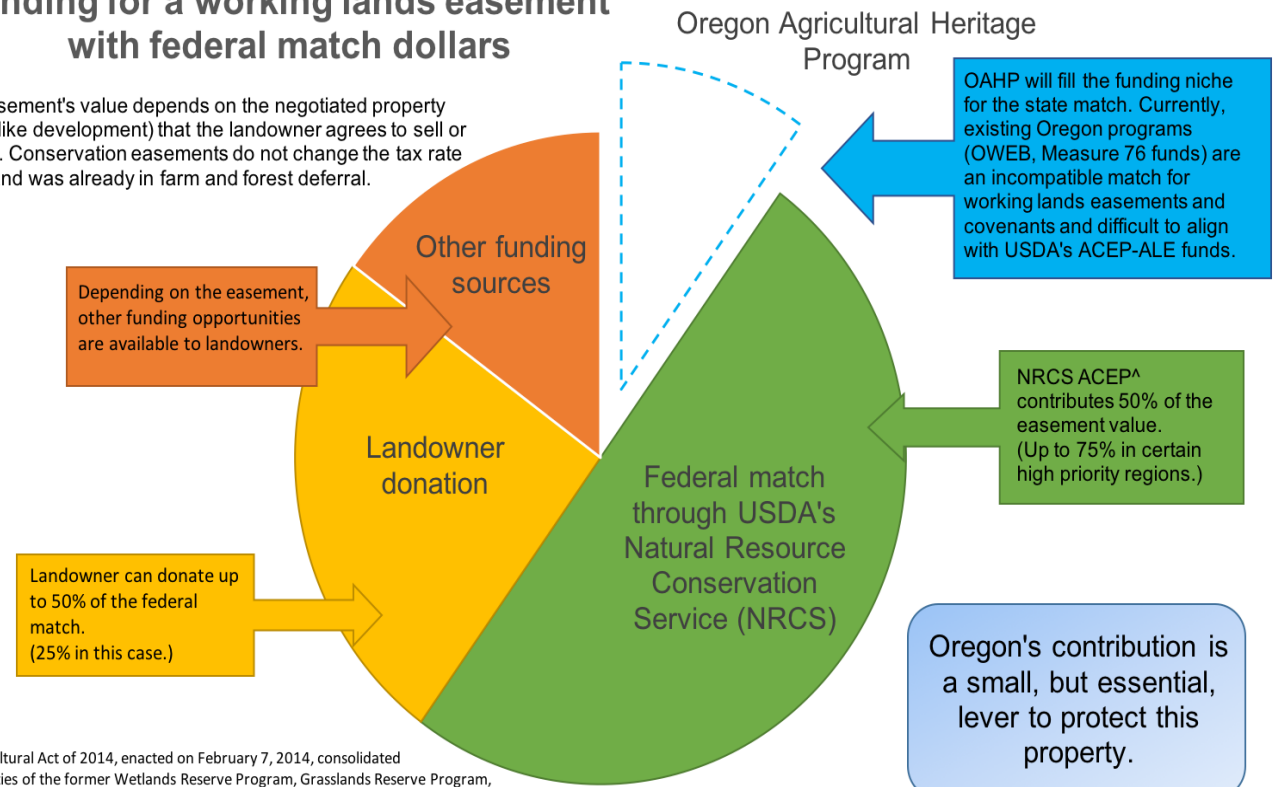
NRCS ACEP-ALE matches working lands easements 50-75%

States with funded match programs bring in 3.7 times as much \$

Oregon has only received 0.4% of ACEP-ALE Funds.

Funding for a working lands easement* with federal match dollars

*An easement's value depends on the negotiated property rights (like development) that the landowner agrees to sell or donate. Conservation easements do not change the tax rate if the land was already in farm and forest deferral.



^The Agricultural Act of 2014, enacted on February 7, 2014, consolidated the authorities of the former Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, and Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program into the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). ACEP provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits.



Easement Opportunities

**2019 - 28 projects around Oregon
would have protected 76,000 acres**

**2018 Farm Bill allocates \$450M/year
2021 Spending package allocates \$1.7B
2023 Farm Bill – advocating for more**

**NRCS will be more likely to allocate
to Oregon if we have a funded match**



Conservation Management Plans

Voluntary tool

**Establishes strategies for
property management**

**Separate from, but complementary
to easements and covenants**

**Helps prevent need for environmental
regulation, e.g. species listing**

Conservation Benefits of Agricultural Land

An aerial photograph of a lush green landscape. On the left, there is a large, vibrant green field, likely a rice paddy. To the right, a river flows through a dense forest of tall, green trees. The overall scene is a mix of agricultural and natural habitats.

Riparian areas and forest habitat

Migratory corridors

Foundation for water quality efforts

Safeguarding Investments

An aerial photograph of a lush green landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, vibrant green field, possibly a cornfield. In the background, a dense forest of tall, green trees covers a hillside. The overall scene is bright and verdant, suggesting a healthy, natural environment.

**Easements and covenants protect
public investments in conservation**



OAHP Elements

Match grants for voluntary conservation

- **Permanent easements**
- **Temporary covenants**
- **Conservation management plans**

Succession planning workshops

Capacity building for grantee orgs

***Operated by OWEB, overseen by
Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission***



OAH Fund

**For program elements and
administration**

Separate from OWEB

Administered through OWEB



OAH Commission

Develops rules

Oversees program and investments

Separate and advisory to OWEB

**11 members: agriculture, OSU,
natural resources, and Tribes**

2022 Budgetary Ask

\$5 Million for:

- OWEB program administration
- Working lands easements and covenants
- Conservation management plan implementation

This cannot wait another session

Opportunities will be irrevocably lost if funding is not secured in 2022.

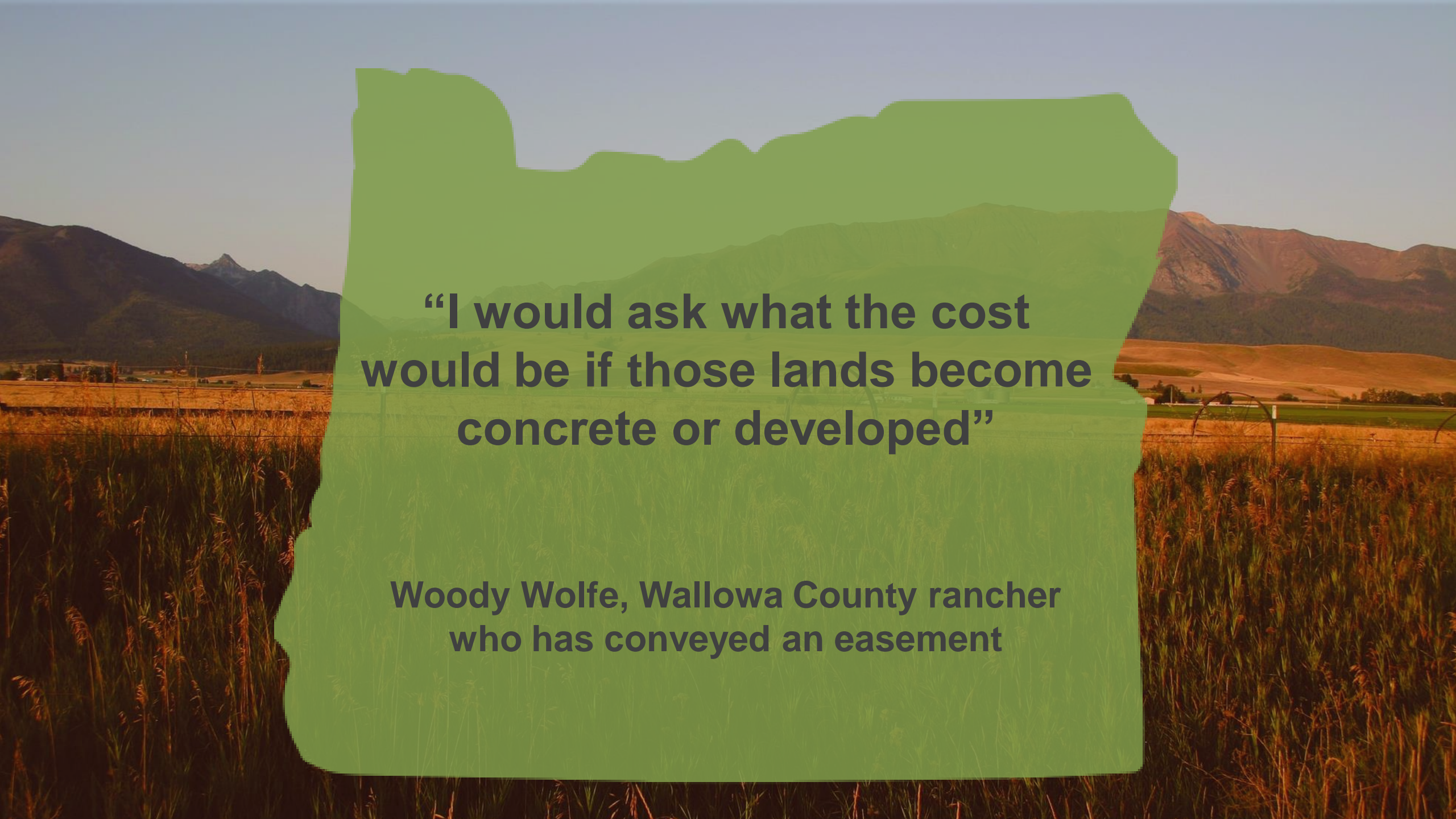
We cannot slow the changing hands of Oregon agricultural land.

Once it is fragmented, it is rarely re-consolidated.

Once it is sold to investors, it rarely comes back to family ownership.

Once it is developed, it never returns to agriculture and open space.





**“I would ask what the cost
would be if those lands become
concrete or developed”**

**Woody Wolfe, Wallowa County rancher
who has conveyed an easement**

OAHP Design Process

Work Group Convened by
Governor's office

Six diverse nonprofits, OWEB,
one farmer, one rancher

Passed in 2017

Rules and Commission
established

