



## STRATEGIC PLAN • 2013-2017

WE ARE CHARTING A COURSE for the future. To create our strategic plan, The Wetlands Conservancy shared stories to surface the core values that underpin our mission and collaborative approach. We reflected on the forces shaping our environment and identified our desired outcomes and strategies. Finally, we created a set of actionable milestones that we will update annually. Our intent is to have a *living* plan that helps us stay accountable to ourselves and our stakeholders across the state.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Our History

Founded in 1981, The Wetlands Conservancy is the only organization in Oregon dedicated to working in partnership with communities statewide to permanently protect, conserve and restore Oregon's greatest wetlands. With boots in Oregon's wetlands for more than 30 years, we have a significant record of accomplishment.

- Working with local communities, including public and private sector partners, we have conserved some of Oregon's greatest wetlands within Yaquina Estuary, Beaver Creek, Alsea Estuary, Closed Lakes Basin and the Willamette Valley. Our work has also included ownership, enhancement and stewardship of 500 acres of wetlands in the Portland Metro region.
- As a leader in wetland conservation and restoration, we have created the Oregon Wetlands Explorer, a data-rich tool for wetlands mapping, assessment, planning, and education. We have also completed regional biodiversity and conservation plans that have guided public and private investments toward wetland conservation.
- Our work has furthered the science and practice of habitat restoration and protection. Today we own and steward 31 preserves encompassing more than 1500 acres across Oregon.
- We have influenced public policy critical to our mission, including long-term wetland protection through state wetland banking regulations, which now require a conservation easement on each completed wetland bank.

### Why We Care About Oregon's Wetlands

Wetlands are vital to our health and the health of our environment. They clean and recharge our water supply, provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, and protect our communities from floods. Wetlands are beautiful to look at and magical to experience. They also offer the most biologically rich and productive lands in our state.

Despite the collective gains we have made with our partners in wetlands conservation and restoration, *we are losing the exceptional biological diversity that Oregonians cherish*. Our ocean fisheries are being depleted, estuary habitat is disappearing, demands are growing for water from our rivers, and critical wetlands are being converted and fragmented faster than they can be protected and restored. We have more work to do.

## MISSION AND CORE VALUES

### Our Mission

To partner with communities across our state in conserving, enhancing and restoring the physical and ecological values of Oregon's greatest wetlands for current and future generations.

### We Value

- **INTERCONNECTION.** We are dedicated to conserving and promoting wetlands to support fish and wildlife, clean water, open space, public safety, and people's appreciation of nature. We work at different scales—from an individual property to a regional landscape—to support these interconnected systems.
- **COMMUNITY.** We build community, creating strong, long-lasting relationships within our organization and with our diverse partners. We believe respectful collaboration, rather than adversarial confrontation, leads to innovative and long lasting solutions.
- **SCIENCE.** We implement our mission through the best available science and research. Along with our partners we collect, analyze and disseminate critical data to support wetlands conservation, restoration and education.
- **LEARNING.** We empower people to explore and discover how wetlands play a vital role in their everyday lives, inspiring them to protect and preserve wetlands throughout Oregon. We collect and share the stories of Oregon's greatest wetlands, making room for people of all ages to participate.
- **RESILIENCE.** Within our organization and the partner network that makes wetlands stewardship possible across Oregon, we are continually learning, experimenting and adapting—enhancing the capacities of human and natural systems to adapt and thrive as conditions change.
- **LEGACY.** Taking the long view, we create conservation and restoration opportunities through proactive leadership and planning. We develop the science, the restoration plan, and the partnerships that create a legacy and instill a commitment to wetlands stewardship in future generations.

## **OUTCOMES**

Within our broad mission, The Wetlands Conservancy is focused on achieving the following outcomes in the next three to five years:

- Conservation goals are established and achieved with sound science and dynamic community partnerships.
- We are the “go to” resource for wetland science, conservation and best practices in Oregon.
- People in our conservation areas across the state are stewarding Oregon’s greatest wetlands.
- Public awareness of wetlands has increased among stakeholders in our conservation areas.
- We are continually expanding the network of protected and conserved wetlands throughout Oregon with existing and new partners.
- Our volunteers and donors are engaged and informed, leading to increased participation and financial support.
- Our staff, Board members and committees are energized and effective.
- Our accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance is maintained and serves as a touchstone for excellence in governance and operations.

## **STRATEGIES**

To achieve these outcomes, we have adopted a set of broad strategies:

- Conserve and restore Oregon’s greatest wetlands;
- Share the stories of Oregon’s greatest wetlands;
- Serve as a trusted leader and guide for wetland conservation and restoration;
- Build financial resources and resource development capacity;
- Strengthen organizational infrastructure; and
- Nurture our learning community.

Each of these strategies is associated with specific, actionable milestones (See pages 4-5) that will be updated annually and drive the work plans developed by our staff, Board of Directors and committees.

STRATEGIES <span style="float: right;">▶</span>	MILESTONES for 2013-2014
<p><b><i>Conserve and restore Oregon's greatest wetlands</i></b></p>	Oregon's Greatest Wetlands Status and Trends Report completed (for 10 years: 2003-2013)
	2-year evaluation completed for our conservation areas: Coos Bay, Central Coast, Closed Lakes Basin, Willamette Valley; meaningful metrics are defined (based on lessons learned from the 10-year report)
	Site plans are in place for all active projects, incorporating site-specific goals that are co-determined with partners
	Protocols are established with the criteria by which we prioritize additional projects for acquisition and/or support
<p><b><i>Share the stories of Oregon's greatest wetlands</i></b></p>	Existing media channels are optimized: website, e-blasts, printed newsletters, event-related collateral
	Initial social media strategies are evaluated and implemented; emphasis is on humanizing existing work and supporting volunteer / donor engagement via blogging, Facebook, Twitter
	Mainstream media coverage is secured for major events and/or accomplishments
<p><b><i>Serve as a trusted leader and guide for wetland conservation and restoration</i></b></p>	Wetland science and analysis is improved. Examples include: regional conservation plans, state transition models for wetlands, and continued updates of Oregon's Greatest Wetlands and Oregon Wetland Explorer
	Supportive public policies are advanced, e.g., through advocating as issues and opportunities arise that impact Oregon's greatest wetlands
<p><b><i>Build financial resources and resource development capacity</i></b></p>	Fundraising plan is adopted by Board of Directors; 100% Board giving, and 100% Board participation in fundraising
	Fundraising Committee is chartered and effectively shepherding plan implementation including: cultivation, solicitation, recognition and stewardship
	Event fundraising targets achieved (Wetlands and Wellies, Aqua Plate, other)
	Capacity building and project grant opportunities are identified with proposals initiated

	Analysis is conducted to assess the potential for generating revenue via fee-for-service contracts

<b>STRATEGIES</b> ▶	<b>MILESTONES for 2013-2014, <i>continued</i></b>
<b><i>Strengthen organizational infrastructure</i></b>	Compliance with accreditation standards and practices is regularly monitored; issues are addressed
	Financial system review is completed with recommendations implemented
	Our staffing plan is updated with additional capacity in day-to-day management, resource development, communications, and science / ecosystem services
	Our committee structure is making effective use of the time and talents of Board, staff and other community members
	Annual performance review is implemented for staff and Executive Director
	Board development practices are codified – recruitment, orientation, Board member agreement, and annual evaluation
<b><i>Nurture our learning culture</i></b>	Our practices and peer network are strengthened with continued participation in the Land Trust Alliance
	Through bi-annual review sessions, we monitor progress, celebrate accomplishments and update plans

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Wetlands Conservancy thanks the following individuals for their active participation in our strategic planning process.

### **Board of Directors**

Officers:

John van Staveren

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### **Strategic Planning Team**

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