

2023 COLT Policy Platform

COLT Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives (COLT 2020-2024 strategic plan)

Strategic Priority #1 - Advocate on behalf of land trusts

- Increase public funding for land trust acquisitions, stewardship and operations through existing and new sources.
- Advance and defend policies and programs that support land trust work at the state and national levels.
- Continue education with agencies and lawmakers about land trust impacts and needs.
- Ensure all COLT members have active relationships with state and federal elected officials.

STATE POLICY PRIORITIES (80% of advocacy effort)

In state and federal policy issues, we represent the interests of land trusts and work to advance conservation in Oregon. COLT will track all legislation in the 2023 Oregon legislative session to defend land trust interests.

Advancing Land Trust Interests through Agency Budgets

6 Policy Option Packages that are included in Agency Budget Requests for '23-'25. Links and details available in Appendix A.

- **Continue funding for Oregon Ag Heritage Program (OAHP) in Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB):**
 - **POP 115:** \$800,000 for administration of the OAHP
 - **POP 215:** \$10 million in general funds for OAHP grants
- **Build Oregon's Forest Legacy Program in Oregon Department of Forestry**
 - **POP 100:** Increase Forest Legacy Program Coordinator position from .75 FTE to 1.0 FTE
- **Grow capacity for the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund in ODFW**
 - **POP 112:** Make permanent the OCRF Coordinator position and deposit \$3 million in general funds for the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.
- **Support Tribally-led restoration strategies within Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)**
 - **POP 112:** Creates a position that would develop relationships with Tribes to engage in tribal water issues and the work of the agency.
 - **POP 115:** Invests in three complex basin coordinator positions to coordinate with internal staff, other agencies, and stakeholders on complex issues around groundwater and surface water resources that are shared with other states.

Private Forest Accords Rulemaking

- Support COLT committee representative on the Adaptive Management Program Committee to ensure the program supports land trusts as private landowners in Oregon.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)

- Convene interested land and easement holders to identify opportunities to improve the acquisitions program and strategies for making those improvements.
- Continue engagement and relationship building with OWEB to support the first purpose of M 76 to protect fish and wildlife habitat through land acquisition.

Source Water Protection

- **HB 2813** (Helm/Owens): Support the establishment of a new grant program to assist communities in protecting source water.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?
COLT will lead in an effort to increase member relationships with local and state legislators through identifying existing relationships and mapping out legislative changes and shifts through the November elections.

Supporting Role: the following are priorities that COLT will track

Oregon Department of Forestry Forest Plan

- Review, provide comment, and testify on behalf of the land trust community when the ODF Forest Plan is released.

Climate Legislation

- Remain nimble for opportunities to support climate-related legislation relevant to land trusts in the 2023 legislative session.
 - Update to [SB 1534, "The Natural and Working Lands Bill."](#)

SB 762: Fire Resilience

- Support continued funding granted through SB 762 for fire resilience.
 - \$20M: Landscape Resiliency Program
 - \$5M: Smart Forestland Grant Program
- Monitor development of wildfire resilience programs and engage as appropriate to expand opportunities for land trusts to work with local communities and address stewardship needs on conserved lands.

FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES (20% of advocacy effort)

COLT will proactively work to advance the following Federal policy priorities by demonstrating the need and impact in Oregon. Additional federal programs and policies COLT will track are listed in Appendix A

- Recovering America's Wildlife Act (TNC leading)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - Support an additional \$450 million in funding for the FY24 Presidential Budget
- Forest Legacy Program
 - Support an administrative pathway to open up eligibility for land trusts and Tribes for fee ownership and conservation easements (PFT leading)
 - Support an additional pot of funding reserved for Tribes (TPL leading)
- Support continued funding for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund
 - 20% of OWEB's budget

- Engage around the 2023 Farm Bill and priorities for Oregon implementation and funding (OAT leading)
 - Increasing national ACEP-ALE funding.
 - Improving regulations and guidance to improve efficiency.
 - Increasing Oregon's funding allocation.

This appendix captures additional federal legislative priorities that COLT will continue to monitor and may engage with depending on capacity. It also includes detailed information on the state-level Policy Option Packages we are supporting in 2023-2025 Budgets.

Columbia River Basin Migratory Bird Conservation Act

Lead: Ducks Unlimited

Toplines: Develop federal legislation that authorizes funding for grants and technical assistance to nonprofits, Tribes, private landowners and government entities and agencies to plan, design, permit and implement projects that primarily benefit wetlands-dependent migratory birds within the Columbia River Basin, including all tributaries and their watersheds.

This bill would create a Columbia River Basin Migratory Bird Conservation grant program, housed in the US Fish and Wildlife Service, that would provide grants and technical assistance to multiple entities to enhance, maintain, and restore habitats for shorebirds, waterfowl, and other wetland-dependent birds in the Columbia River Basin.

Pacific Northwest Coastal Migratory Bird Conservation Act

Lead: Ducks Unlimited

Toplines: Develop federal legislation that authorizes funding for competitive matching grants and technical assistance to nonprofits, Tribes, private landowners and government entities and agencies to plan, design, permit and implement projects that primarily benefit wetlands-dependent migratory birds along the Washington and Oregon coasts and tributaries, including the Puget Sound.

Grasslands Conservation Act

Sponsor: Senator Wyden

Toplines: Establishes a flexible Grassland Conservation Grant Program for voluntary, incentive-based conservation of grasslands, including projects to restore degraded grasslands, increase carbon sequestration, improve grassland and rangeland health, mitigate the threats of wildfire and drought, improve biodiversity and support habitat connectivity, and restore watersheds. It also establishes the first-ever North American Grassland Conservation Strategy.

State Policy Option Packages Details

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)

- [**Agency Request Budget: POPs 115 and 215**](#)

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

- [**Agency Request Budget: POP 100 Climate Change**](#)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

- [**Agency Request Budget: POP 112**](#)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)

- [**Agency Request Budget: POPs 112 and 115**](#)