



2024 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.

2024 Oregon Legislative Session

In state policy issues, we represent the interests of land trusts and work to advance conservation in Oregon. The 2024 Oregon short legislative session will last approximately 35 days, and COLT's top legislative priority is securing funding for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program. The remainder of our work will focus on defending land trust programs & policies, and engaging in agency rulemaking to represent land trust priorities & interests.

State Policy Priorities (80% of advocacy effort)

LEGISLATION

- **Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program**
 - Secure \$10.8 million for grants and administration for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program for the 2024 grant cycle.
- **Recreational Immunity**
 - Work in coalition to advance legislation that addresses the *Fields vs City of Newport* decision to update the Public Use of Lands Act.

AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

- **Source Water Protection**
 - Engage in rulemaking for the new source water protection grant program to represent land trust priorities and interests.
- **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)**
 - Address current barriers in OWEB's land acquisition program & increase acquisition funding for land trust projects.
 - Work with OWEB staff to improve OAHP easement template & application process.
 - Work to remove the conservation easement overlay on land that will be conveyed to tribes.

- Advocate for appointment of OWEB executive director and board members with strong conservation commitment and credentials.
- **Private Forest Accords**
 - Support the COLT committee representative on the Adaptive Management Program Committee (AMPC) to ensure the program supports land trusts as private landowners in Oregon.
 - Ensure PFA Mitigation Grant Program includes acquisitions & easements in the 2024 grant offering.
- **Forest Legacy Program**
 - Work with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to increase coordination & build a pathway for the state to hold easements under the Forest Legacy Program.

STATE POLICY PRIORITIES: HOW DO WE GET THERE?

COLT will lead in an effort to increase member relationships with local and state legislators & agency officials. Working with Thorn Run Partners, we have an experienced team of lobbyists supporting COLT's priorities in Salem.

SUPPORTING ROLE

The following are priorities that COLT will track.

- **Natural and Working Lands**
 - Engage in the development of & rulemaking for the Natural and Working Lands Fund, passed in the 2023 Legislative Session through HB 3409, the Climate Resilience Package.
- **Wildlife Omnibus Legislation**
 - Support the 2024 short session wildlife omnibus package (Representative Helm D-27).

Federal Policy Priorities (20% of advocacy effort)

- **Forest Legacy Program**
 - Support efforts to improve and enhance the Forest Legacy Program.
- **2023 Farm Bill**
 - Engage in 2023 Farm Bill development, supporting:
 - Increased funding for **ACEP-ALE & RCPP**, improved regulations and guidance, and state capacity to increase Oregon's funding allocation.
 - National efforts to ensure that **Buy-Protect-Sell (BPS)** transactions can be executed to help improve land access for beginning farmers.
 - Support national efforts to include the **Forest Conservation Easement Program (FCEP)** in the Conservation Title of the 2023 Farm Bill, with mandatory funding.
- **Appropriations**
 - Work with the LWCF Coalition to ensure there is no rescission of prior unobligated Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding in FY24 Appropriations.
 - Support continued funding for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund for FY25.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

COLT will continue to monitor and engage in advocacy for the following legislation.

- **Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)**
- **NW Wetlands Enhancement Tools Act (NW WET Act)**