

Ranchers

Working together, Oregonians have the opportunity to help restore clean water and wild salmon for the benefit of us all and for future generations. The suggestions in this guide are practical changes we can consider making in our daily land management, work and lives to support this statewide restoration effort. Each one will be site and situation specific, it may or may not work for you. These suggestions do not substitute for any local, state or federal legal regulations.

For more information on these and other ways we can modify our activities to help restore clean water and salmon, please contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture at (503) 986-4550 or the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service at (503) 414-3200.

This guide for ranchers is part of a series of lists targeting a wide variety of groups in Oregon. For information on other guides in this series, please contact the Governor's Natural Resources Office at (503) 378-3589.



THE OREGON PLAN
for salmon & watersheds

Ten ways ranchers can help restore clean water and salmon

riparian pastures

- If you are grazing in riparian areas, consider creating riparian pastures to allow you to manage specifically for riparian conditions.

timing of grazing

- Consider timing of grazing in riparian areas to manage for specific vegetation. If you have a riparian area that should be producing willow, alder, cottonwood or other shrub or tree species, then spring grazing will often allow them to reproduce. Livestock will generally prefer grasses, sedges, forbs and other nonwoody plants during spring and early summer. Later summer and fall grazing will often result in livestock browsing the shrub/tree sprouts which retards recruitments. Later summer/fall grazing will often work well in grass/sedge/rush meadows as long as sufficient soil moisture remains after grazing to allow regrowth, or as long as sufficient stubble height remains to protect the soil during winter/spring runoff.

electric fencing

- Consider using temporary electric fence to exclude portions of riparian areas to protect them if improvement is needed in management units that do not lend themselves to creation of specific riparian pastures. Electronic fence can be relatively inexpensive and can be moved to another location when livestock are not in the management unit or when it has achieved its purpose.

hardened crossings

- Consider developing hardened crossings for livestock to either cross or access water in streams. Well designed hardened crossings, with a possible need for some training, will often turn into a preferred access point for livestock. This can reduce impact along most of a stream by reducing bank sloughing and sediment inputs.

off-stream watering

- Consider developing off-stream watering sources for livestock. During winter especially, off-stream water will tend to attract livestock away from streams. On a year-around basis, off-stream

water will help improve livestock distribution that will reduce pressure on riparian areas.

providing shade

- Consider providing shade away from riparian areas. During the hot season, livestock often spend more time in riparian areas because they are more likely to have shade.

p.f.c. assessment

- Consider a Proper Functioning Condition assessment for your riparian areas. This will give a good idea of whether or not these areas are physically functioning properly. If they are not, the PFC assessment process can help determine whether or not a management change would provide an upward trend toward PFC. If you are at or approaching PFC, you are probably already managing for good riparian conditions which will benefit salmon and other riparian dependent organisms, including people.

ranch plan

- Consider developing a Ranch Plan with a water quality emphasis for your own management purposes. The University of California Extension Service has developed a ranch planning process for water quality. Your local extension office, soil and water conservation district, or Natural Resource Conservation office can help provide you with information to develop your own plan.

photo monitoring

- Set up a photo monitoring program to help keep track of how your riparian areas respond to management, climate, wildlife use, and various other influences on riparian conditions. Your local extension office can provide you with information on how to set up and run a photo monitoring program.

conservation reserve riparian buffer program

- Consider contacting your local NRCS office to have them help you determine whether or not their new Conservation Reserve Riparian Buffer program can work to your advantage.