

**Washington State Conservation  
Commission Meeting**  
January 2026



***Thurston***  
**Conservation  
District**

  
**EST 1948**



# Project Leads

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## Acknowledgments

- **Thurston Conservation District:** Mara Healy, Nora Carman-White, & Jae Townsend
- **Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife:** Max Lambert
- **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:** Riley Andrade, Nick George, & Alan Yanahan
- **Aquatic Species Restoration Program**
- **Residents of Thurston County**





# Think About

**How could this model be used to inform and strengthen projects and programs your organization administers?**

**Listen to landowner barriers to working with government programs.**



# Project Overview

- **Partners**

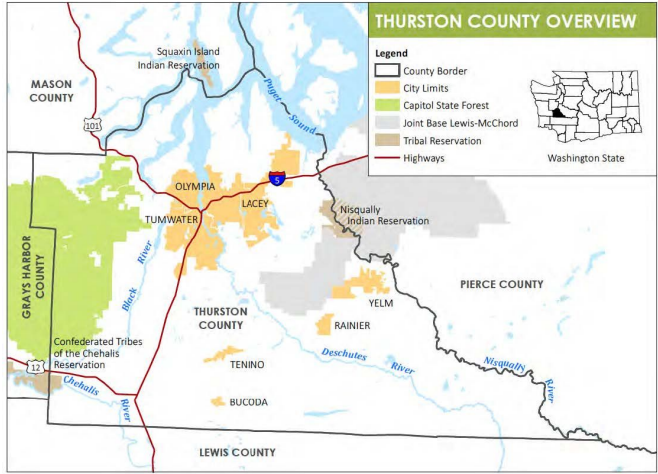
- Thurston Conservation District (TCD)
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Chehalis Basin Strategy

- **Components**

- Habitat Suitability Model
- Community Outreach & Engagement
- Social Science Research



# Thurston County, Washington



A community dedicated to  
agricultural sustainability &  
habitat conservation





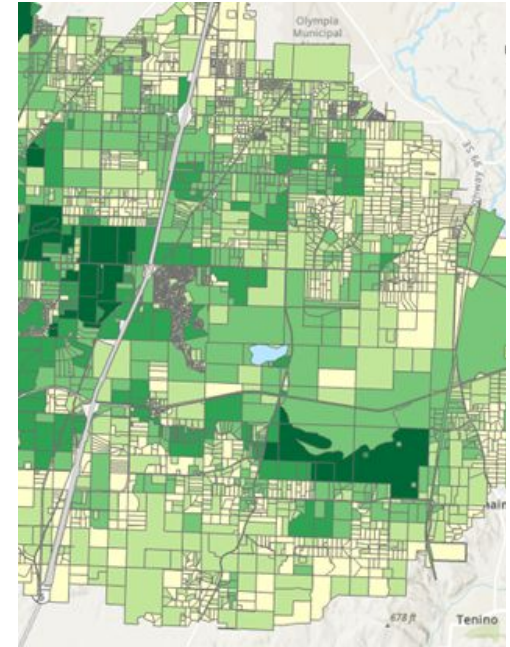
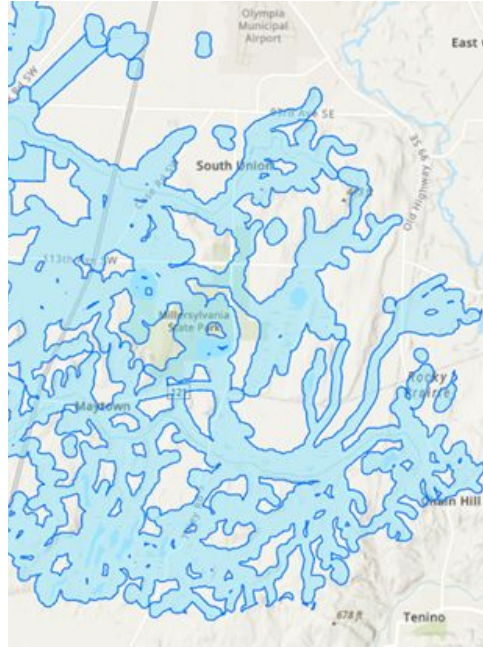
# Oregon Spotted Frog (*Rana pretiosa*, OSF)



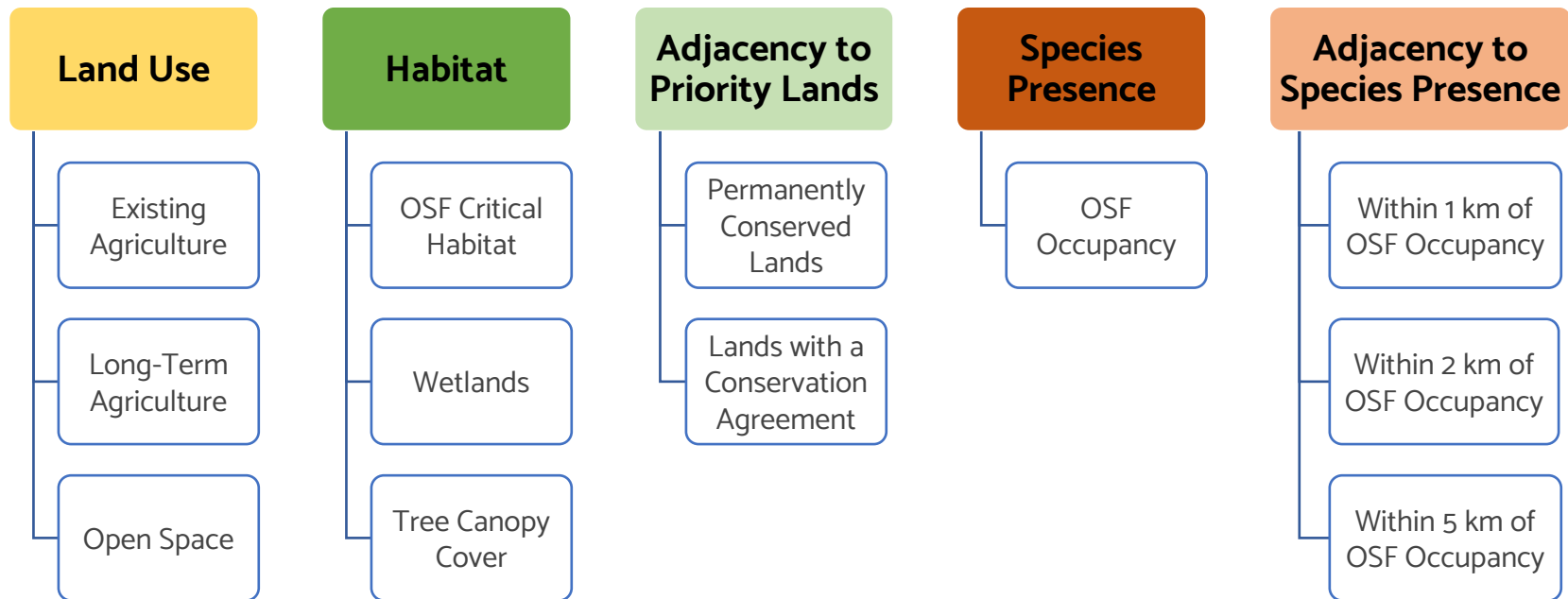
- Requires permanent water and shallow, seasonally inundated areas for breeding
- Impacted by habitat loss, non-native species, and hydrology changes
- Grazing is a cost-effective, sustainable management practice

# Habitat Suitability Model

- Prioritizes specific areas within the Black River watershed for OSF conservation
- Guides habitat enhancement and restoration efforts



# Model Structure







# Engaging with Landowners

- Better understand concerns, preferences, and barriers
- Build trust & inform program design
- We engaged and listened:
  - Educational workshop
  - Landowner survey
  - Listening session

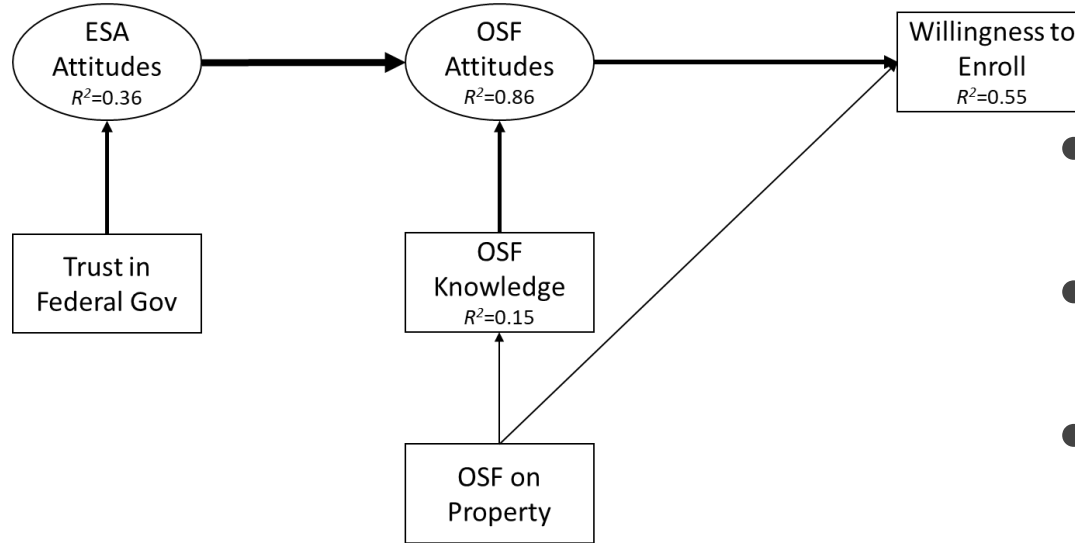


# Lessons Learned

- **53% of participants are willing to participate**
- **Barriers to participation**
  - Loss of property value
  - Concerns about regulation
  - Government involvement
- **Priorities and needs**
  - Stewardship & habitat enhancement
  - Decision making authority
  - Awareness & education
  - Regulatory assurance



# Lessons Learned

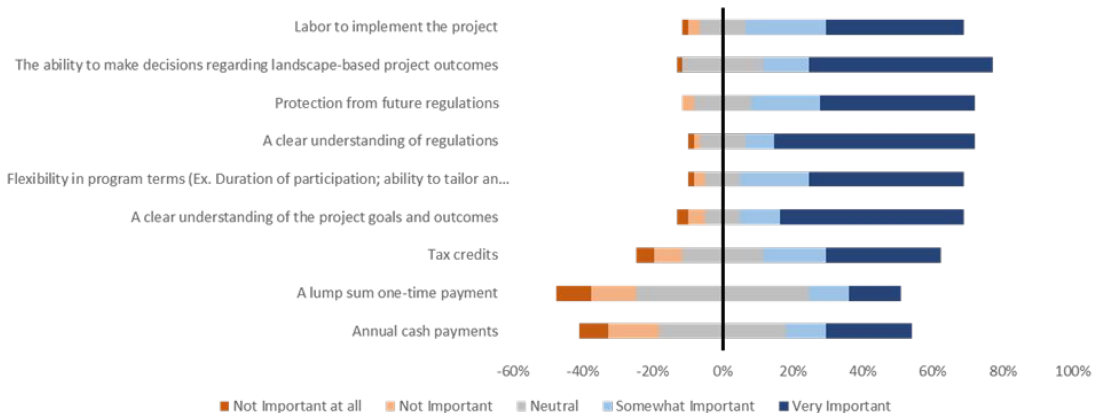


- Willingness is strongly driven by attitudes
- Trust in federal government is connected to attitudes
- Familiarity with OSF shapes positive attitudes

# Lessons Learned

## *Motivations and Barriers*

**We want to understand what components of an Oregon spotted frog habitat stewardship program would be most important to you. What would make it easiest for you or increase your likelihood of participate in such a program?**



- Regulatory and program clarity
- Implementation support
- A clear understanding of regulations
- Financial support is a secondary barrier



# Lessons Learned

## *Collaborative Conservation*

- Interest in working with non-regulatory agencies
- Need for increased decision making authority, respect, and communication



# Next Steps for Frogs & Beyond

- **Continued partnership on landowner education & engagement opportunities**
  - Raising awareness, raises willingness
- **Collaboration on the development of a Conservation Benefits Agreement**
  - Supporting landowners need for regulatory assurances
- **Coordinated on-the-ground project implementation**
  - Partnering with landowners and each other to facilitate OSF conservation







## **Key Takeaways**

- **Trust is cumulative.**
- **Engage landowners in program development.**
- **Regulatory assurances and program guidelines are necessary.**
- **Education and relationships are important.**
- **We have a proven model to engage landowners.**



# Reflect

**How could this model be used to inform and strengthen projects and programs your organization administers?**

**What was new, surprising or important to you about the landowner feedback, attitudes, barriers of working with government programs?**

**How can this define our collective approach - voluntary and regulatory - so that we can maximize the conservation work on the ground?**

## Thank You

Sarah Moorehead, Executive Director

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