



## Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network’s 2024 Annual Report

**OrCAN’s vision** is a future where healthy soils are the foundation of thriving food systems in Oregon – reconnecting healthy ecosystems, economies, and communities.

**Our mission** is to convene an inclusive, producer-centered network to promote soil health and climate resilience across Oregon through collaboration, education, and advocacy.

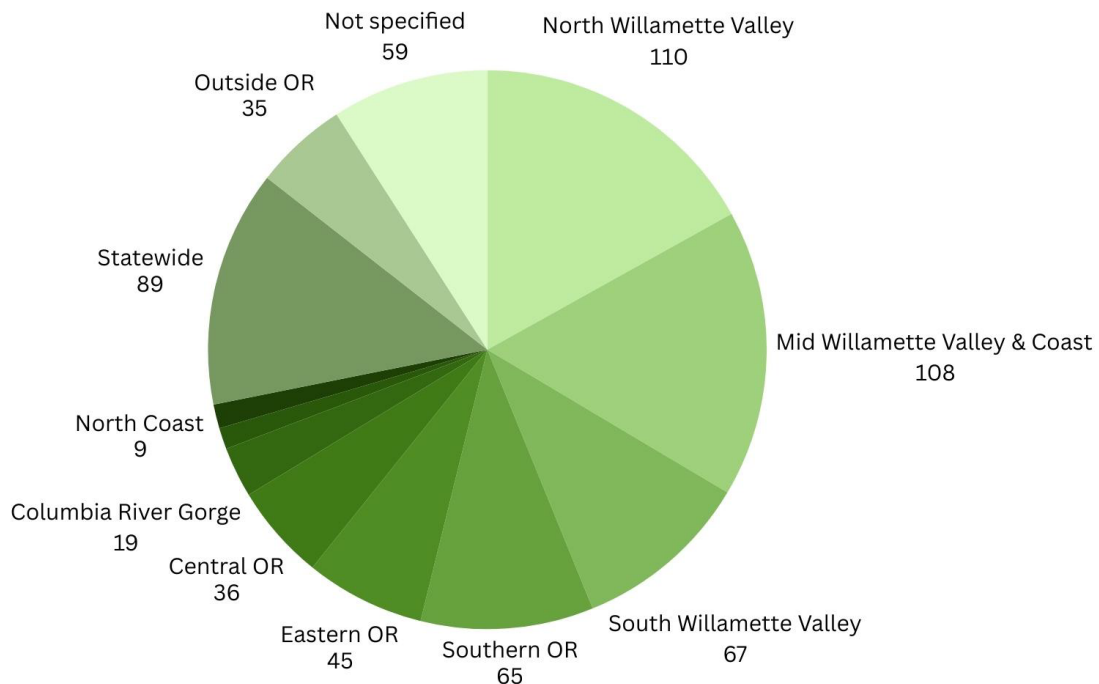
This is an update on OrCAN’s work in 2024 and plans for 2025 to continue:

- (1) **building an inclusive, collaborative state-wide soil health network**
- (2) **catalyzing place-based technical assistance with improved information and tools** and
- (3) **advancing institutionalized support for soil health**

### 1. Building an Inclusive, Collaborative State-wide Soil Health Network

There are now nearly 1,000 people engaged in OrCAN’s growing network. Over 400 are farm service providers (those providing technical assistance, resources, education, or other support services to farmers and ranchers), over 200 are producers, and the rest are a mix of researchers, state and federal agencies, university or college and non-profits -- many of whom hold more than one role. We have determined that the best strategy to reach producers is to work with the existing ecosystem of farm service providers, including trusted, culturally appropriate or peer service providers, and influential producers.

**Region for Farm Service Providers and Producers**

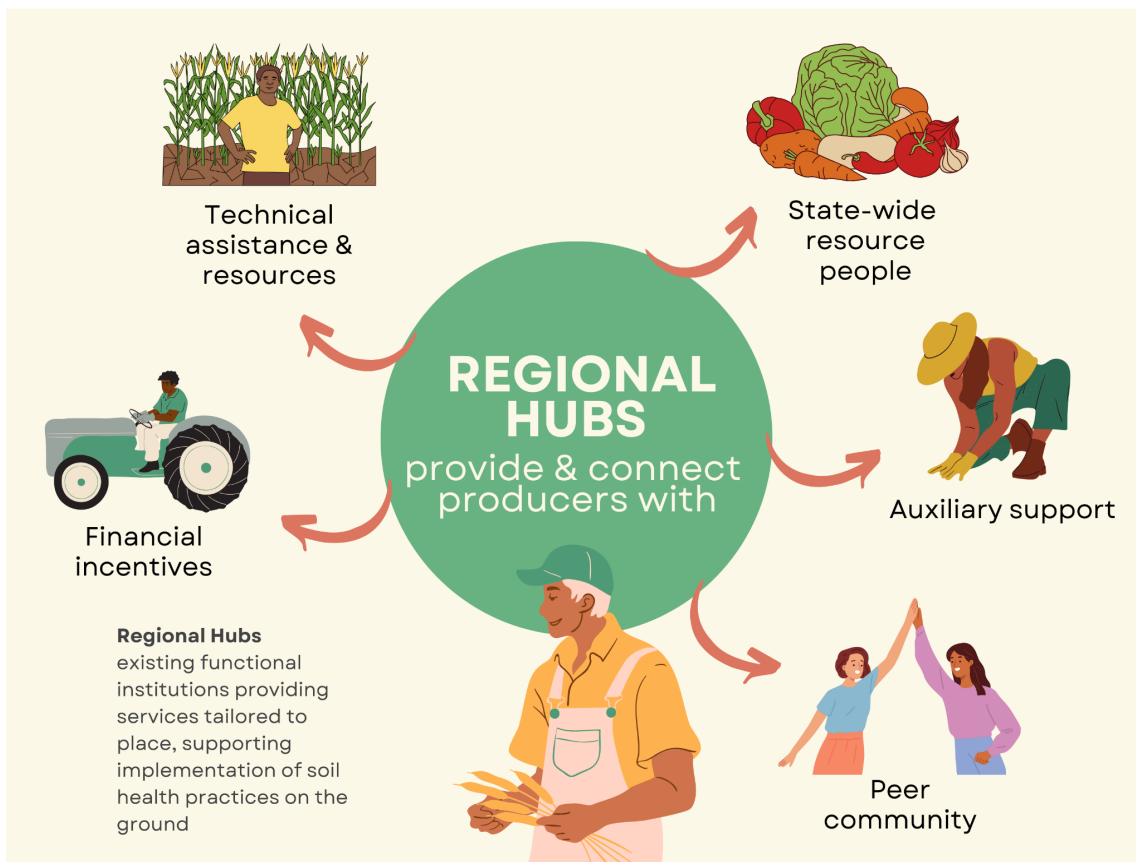


## Oregon Climate & Agriculture Network: 2024 Annual Report

From January-May 2024, OrCAN led twenty-five Oregonians through a process to clarify the structure of an inclusive, collaborative statewide network designed to promote soil health for climate resilience, with a focus on meeting the needs of historically marginalized and under-resourced producers. The process resulted in this [Soil Health Network Plan](#) which reflects the network's purpose, strategic approach, structure, roles and responsibilities, and governance, and lays out a process for building the network.

Our community has identified several key elements in healthy soil practice implementation: adequate technical assistance (TA), financial resources, a network of supportive peers, and land tenure. We are creating an inclusive, collaborative statewide Soil Health Network to support Oregon producers' access to these elements through a *Regional Hub structure* that will offer place-based, bioregion-specific resources, including:

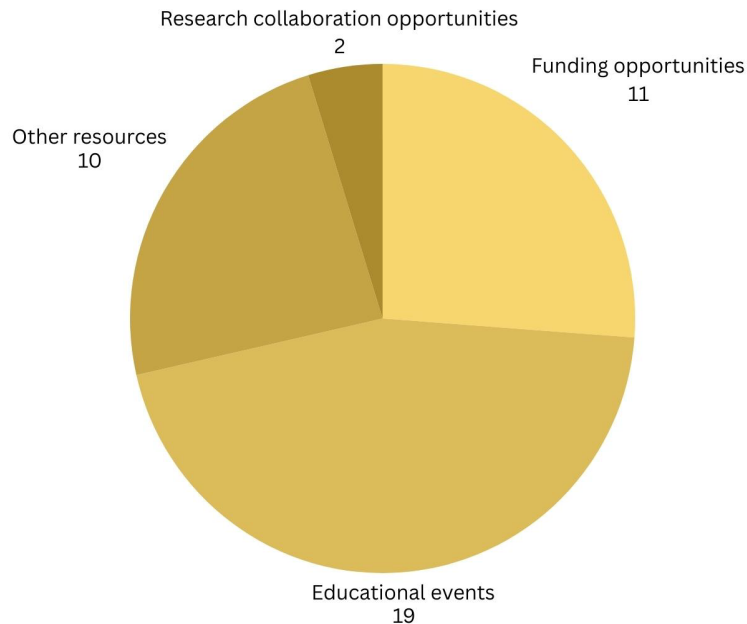
- **Technical Assistance** via 1:1 consultation and on-farm education events
- **Information and Tools** including access to resources, equipment & soil testing
- **Financial Incentives and Resources** such as implementation grants and grant writing
- **Peer Community** to share successes/challenges, support, and inspiration
- **Auxiliary Support** for underserved producers



In 2024 we identified prospective Regional Hub Leads and Auxiliary Support Organizations, solicited funding, and prepared to launch the Soil Health Network at the Soil Health Summit in January 2025.

### 2. Catalyzing Place-based Technical Assistance with Improved Information and Tools

In 2024, OrCAN hosted two informational webinars for 44 farm service providers and 53 producers on how to access NRCS's [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) funding for soil health and other climate-smart mitigation activities (funded through the Inflation Reduction Act). We also promoted 44 funding opportunities, educational events, research collaboration opportunities and other resources.



These included:

- Oregon Community Food Systems Network [Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant](#) which has made \$2.6M available for projects and practices that make farms and ranches more resilient to climate impacts such as heat, smoke and drought
- Zero Foodprint's [RestoreNW Grant](#) for carbon-sequestering agricultural practices
- Regenerative Ag Farm Tours in Madras and Pilot Rock, with internationally recognized experts Ray Archuleta and Alejandro Carillo
- Benton County [Ag Soil Health Meeting](#)
- [Climate Resilience Course](#) for farmers/ranchers in the West

These resources were provided to over 600 farm service providers and producers in OrCAN's network to increase their capacity to promote or implement soil health practices on Oregon's farms and ranches. We also curated an updated resource webpage with 35 resources.

And we prepared to host the January 2025 [Oregon Soil Health Summit](#) – the first-ever statewide gathering of Oregon's agricultural service providers to promote soil health for climate resilience on farms and ranches!

### 3. Advancing Institutionalized Support for Soil Health

#### *Oregon's Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) Funds*

The \$10M Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) Funds provide incentives and technical support to implement natural climate solutions on natural and working lands, including soil health practices on farms and ranches. In 2024 OrCAN focused on ensuring that the financial incentives and technical assistance provided by the State are equitable and effective for farmers and ranchers in Oregon. We coordinated with the Governor's office, the Oregon Climate Action Commission, and state agencies on proposed uses of the NCS Funds and were successful in advocating for an increase in the allocation of funding to the [Conservation Management Plan Grants](#), the State's new payment for agricultural conservation practices with carbon sequestration benefits including soil health. We also engaged with farmers and ranchers in providing input on development of that grant program including rule-making, listening sessions, surveys, which resulted in inclusion of cover cropping and rotational grazing as eligible practices for the grants, and clearer, more accessible grant guidelines.

#### *Oregon's Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants*

OrCAN helped to develop and promote this [new grant program](#), funded by the legislature in 2023, which has made \$2.6M available for projects and practices that make farms and ranches more resilient to climate impacts such as heat, smoke and drought. OrCAN provided input on the grant guidelines and materials, promoted the grant and served on the grant review committee, which awarded \$1.6M to 114 small-scale farms across Oregon in the first round of funding, with a preference for BIPOC producers.

#### *Oregon's Agriculture Heritage Program (OAHP)*

OrCAN was part of a coalition that successfully advocated for \$6M in base funding for OAHP during Oregon's 2024 short legislative session. We called on our community of producers to advocate for funding to implement conservation practices on farms, including those that improve soil health. OrCAN co-hosted a legislative tour at Creswell Oaks, a ranch in Lane County, to demonstrate the value of the program.

#### *Federal priorities*

OrCAN engaged our community, and spoke at a press conference, calling on Congress to protect IRA funding for climate-friendly ag practices. We coordinated with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition on federal election results and Farm Bill strategy and contacted Members of Congress about our priorities. We have been one of the lead advocates for the creation of federal grants to states for implementation of soil health programs. Both the House and Senate draft versions of the Farm Bill include this new program, with bipartisan support, which is promising!

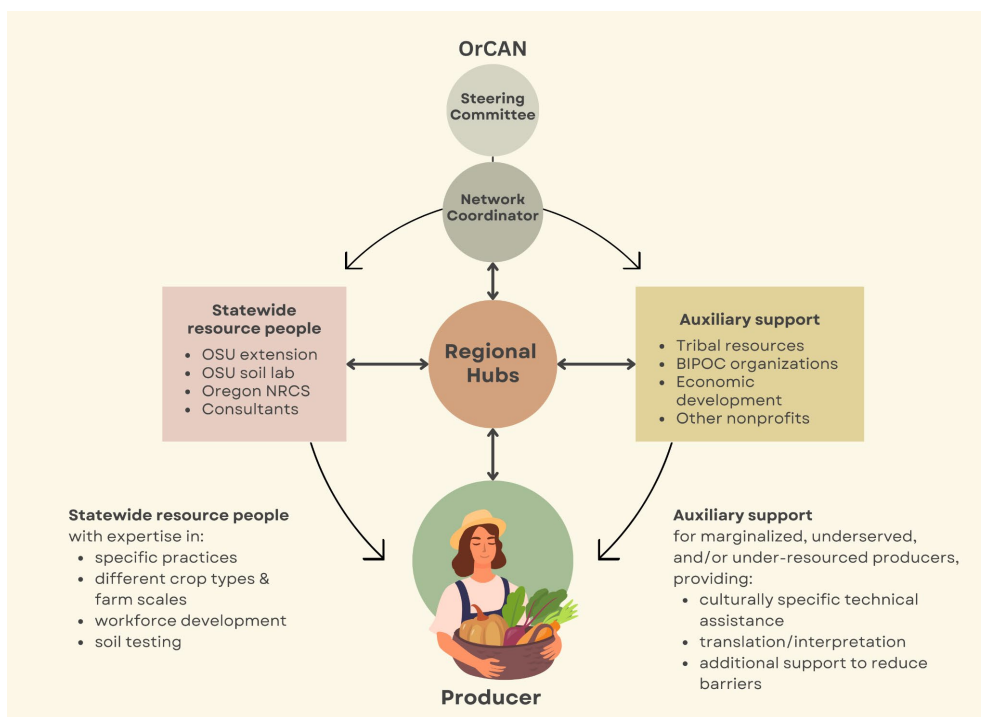
#### *Preparing for the next legislative session (January-June 2025)*

In preparation for the 2025 legislative session, we met with the Governor's office, secured sponsorships, and coordinated with our legislative champions and coalition partners. Our [legislative priorities](#) are focused on renewal and expansion of funding for the state-funded programs described above.

## Plans for 2025

We have already made great progress building an inclusive, producer-centered network this year, with the [Oregon Soil Health Summit](#) on January 22. This was a full-day in-person, state-wide conference with nearly 100 attendees with keynotes, workshops, a producer panel, resource sharing and networking opportunities, with farm service providers as the primary audience. At the Summit we launched [Oregon's Soil Health Network](#)! Our next steps to build out the Network are to:

- Identify and facilitate statewide resources, support, learning opportunities, and connections;
- Launch pilot Regional Hubs hosted by identified, trusted farm service providers; and
- Develop/formalize partnerships with BIPOC-led farm service organizations to provide auxiliary support for marginalized, underserved, and/or under-resourced producers.



We'll continue to promote events, resources, and funding opportunities to increase our network's capacity to promote or implement soil health practices on Oregon's farms and ranches, and we will be revamping OrCAN's communications to better honor indigenous and ancestral soil health practices.

Our [legislative priorities](#) for the 2025 legislative session (January-June 2025) are focused on renewal and expansion of funding for the state-funded programs described above, especially the Natural Climate Solutions Funds.

We are transitioning from a fiscally-sponsored project to an independent non-profit, so we'll be submitting our 501(c) application to the IRS and getting our new nonprofit systems in place.

Overall, 2025 is shaping up to be an exciting year for soil health in Oregon! Thank you for your interest in, and support for, OrCAN's work!