



2025 Mid-Year 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 the first half of 2025 and plans for the rest of the year 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

OrCAN is building its inclusive, collaborative statewide [Soil Health Network](#) designed to promote soil health for climate resilience, with a focus on meeting the needs of historically marginalized and under-resourced producers, and our network grew significantly in the first half of 2025. Of the 1,134 people engaged in the network, 437 are farm service providers (those providing technical assistance, resources, education, or other support services to farmers and ranchers); 318 are producers; and the rest are a mix of non-profits, activists, academic institutions, researchers, and state and federal agencies – 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.

In January we hosted an in-person Key Partner Gathering with prospective Soil Health Network Leads to clarify Network roles and build a sense of statewide collaboration and enthusiasm.

As of July 2025, we have confirmed partnerships with 9 Regional Hub Leads:

- Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council (*South Willamette Valley*)
- East Multnomah SWCD (*East Multnomah County*)
- Harney SWCD (*Harney County*)
- Jefferson SWCD (*Jefferson County*)
- Marion SWCD (*Marion County*)
- Rogue Valley Food System Network, in collaboration with Jackson SWCD and OSU Extension (*Jackson & Josephine counties*)
- Tiichám Conservation District (*servicing Tribal producers within the ceded boundary of the Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla Tribes in Northeast Oregon*)
- Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District (*South Central Coast*)
- Union SWCD (*Union County*)

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We have also confirmed partnerships with 3 Auxiliary Support Organizations (ASOs) who are BIPOC-led farm service organizations supporting marginalized, underserved, and/or under-resourced producers. As of July 2025, we have confirmed the following ASO partners:

- Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (*serving Black and Indigenous producers in Portland Metro area*)
- Ecotrust (*serving BIPOC producers in Portland Metro area*)
- Adelante Mujeres (*serving Latine producers in Washington County*)

Intertribal Agriculture Council (*serving producers from the 9 federally recognized tribes in Oregon*) has expressed interest in the ASO role, but is not yet confirmed.

On January 22nd, 2025 OrCAN hosted the Oregon Soil Health Summit, the first state-wide gathering of Oregon's agricultural community to promote soil health for climate mitigation and resilience on Oregon's farms and ranches. This was a full-day Conference including two Keynote presentations, soil health science workshops, a producer panel, funding opportunities, resource tables, lots of networking time, and the launch of the Soil Health Network. .

Gathering in person built momentum and provided inspiration and connection among the ninety people who attended. Attendees included farm service providers, agricultural producers, researchers, others in OrCAN's network, and many new to our network, from all parts of the state. (View the [full Summit Program here.](#))



Soil Health Summit. Photo by Diane Choplin.

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

In March 2025, OrCAN hosted informational webinars for farm service providers and producers on how to access the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's [OAHP Conservation Management Plan \(CMP\)](#) grant, Oregon's new payment program for ag practices with ecosystem services benefits, including soil health practices. Following the Soil Health Summit, we shared a [resource document](#) where attendees can access the keynote recordings, workshop presentations, and additional resources from and related to the Summit. OrCAN created and updated a [SWCD Soil Health Programs Resource](#), including equipment, soil testing, and grant resources. We also promoted 19 funding opportunities, educational events, research collaboration opportunities and other resources to over 750 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. These included:

- Oregon Community Food Systems Network [Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant](#) for projects and practices that make farms more resilient to climate impacts such as heat, smoke and drought
- Zero Foodprint's [RestoreNW Grant](#) for carbon-sequestering agricultural practices
- Jefferson SWCD [Soil Health Testing Workshop](#) on March 11
- OSU Small Farms [Cover Cropping Incorporation workshop](#)
- [Building Healthy Soil Workshop - Clackamas SWCD](#)
- [Free Visual Soil Assessment Workshop](#)
- Ecotrust's [Rooted Resilience: Soil, Water, and Cultural Practice](#) event
- Benton SWCD [Soil Health Meeting: Pasture Maintenance and Renovation](#)

OrCAN is also working to better serve BIPOC producers and farm service providers by updating our communications. In the first half of 2025, we made extensive updates to our website to showcase Indigenous and ancestral soil health practices, while increasing inclusivity and cultural relevance, with changes including:

- 1) Our [Resources](#) page has more information related to honoring and promoting Indigenous and ancestral soil health practices, reduced text, and more photos of the communities we serve;
- 2) Our [Practices](#) page acknowledges that soil health practices are not new and go back time immemorial, with a list of Indigenous practices and quotes from BIPOC producers; and
- 3) Our [About Us](#) page now includes a land acknowledgement
- 4) A new online resource guide focused on [Indigenous and ancestral soil health practices](#), developed by OrCAN staff.

As a result, BIPOC producers and farm service providers have affirmed that our resources feel more culturally relevant, inclusive, and meet their needs.

3. Advancing Institutionalized Support for Soil Health

State Priorities

(Read more in [OrCAN's 2025 End of Session Report](#))

- 1) **Renewal at \$3.5M for the [Farmer Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants](#) through [HB 2979](#):**
OrCAN' advocacy focused on funding for Oregon's small and underserved producers to be more resilient to climate impacts such as heat, smoke and drought, within a larger bill that included disaster resilience funding for producers, farmers markets, and food hubs.
- 2) **Renewal at \$5M for the [Natural and Working Lands \(NWL\) Fund](#),** which provides incentives and technical support to help landowners, land managers, environmental justice communities, and Tribes adopt practices that support natural climate solutions on Oregon's natural and working lands, including farms and ranches.

OrCAN's primary role in both campaigns was engaging farmers and ranchers in advocating for the renewal requests and providing advocacy resources to partners. OrCAN's community played a huge role in generating support for our legislative priorities. Many Farmer Rancher Disaster Resilience (FRDR) grantees and members of our network took actions such as endorsing the campaigns, contacting their legislators, joining meetings with legislators, and providing verbal and written testimony at hearings. HB 2979 had nearly 300 endorsements, and our coalition met with 31 legislative offices, where we were joined by 16 constituents, including grantees and members of our network. The NWL Fund request had support from the Governor's office, state agencies, and broad support from the agriculture and natural resource community.

Although both had broad support from the agricultural community and the legislature, neither the programs included in HB 2979 nor the NWL Fund renewal request were funded by the Legislature. The uncertainty around pending federal budget cuts impacted the State's budget and how much leadership was willing and able to allocate to programs like these.

OrCAN's strategic and comprehensive advocacy efforts did not go unnoticed by legislators, however, and if it had been a year with a better economic outlook, we almost certainly would have had more success. Though factors beyond our control ultimately shaped the State budget, OrCAN's community successfully educated our legislators on the critical need for financial support for climate mitigation and resilience, including soil health, on Oregon's farms and ranches.

Federal priorities

OrCAN staff met with Oregon's Members of Congress (MoCs) virtually and in Washington DC to advocate for federal funding for (1) State Assistance for Soil Health (our highest federal priority) and (2) Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE). We asked our community to urge their MOCs to address the freeze and mass firings of USDA staff at the federal level. Together, we elevated stories about how the federal funding freeze was impacting farmers and other partners in Oregon. We kept our MoCs updated on the freeze's impacts and shared our concerns about the federal reconciliation bill's impact on Oregon agriculture.

Plans for the remainder of 2025

This summer, we're hosting a Soil Health Workshop facilitated by Peter Donovan, founder of Soil Carbon Coalition and consultant with Union SWCD. In this on-farm, participatory workshop, producers and farm service providers will engage in peer-to-peer learning through demonstrations of soil health principles with simple equipment. The full-day workshop will be held on August 25 at Belle Mare Farm in Yamhill County.

This fall, we're hosting a Soil Health Network orientation (early September) and a training series for Regional Hub Leads and Auxiliary Support Organizations (October - December). We will focus on soil health science, existing resources for soil health, communicating about soil health with producers, and inclusive producer outreach. And we'll create a dedicated webpage featuring: Soil Health Network Leads; organizations that support BIPOC producers with soil health practice implementation in Oregon; and state-wide soil health resource people.

For the remainder of 2025, OrCAN will 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. We'll also create a 3-5 minute video featuring BIPOC producers demonstrating that Indigenous and ancestral soil health practices are not new.

In the policy realm, we plan to host a farm visit for Members of Congress to demonstrate the need for federal funding for state soil health programs. And we'll advise on the State's work to advance natural climate solutions in Oregon, in our role on the Oregon Climate Action Commission's Natural and Working Lands Advisory Committee.

We have just secured 501(c)3 non-profit status! We will be getting our new organizational systems in place to transition from fiscal sponsorship to operating as a non-profit December 31st.

We're excited about the work ahead!

Thank you for your interest in, and support for, OrCAN's work!

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