



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2023 Legislative Session was a long session, running from January to June. OFS started the session off strong, with invitations to testify on informational panels to support our two proactive bills. HB 2610 would have provided \$1 million to Oregon State University's IR-4 program, and HB 3098 would have created a Farmworker Outreach Program within the Oregon Department of Agriculture to increase education to farmworkers. While both bills passed out of their policy committees with unanimous support, neither bill was funded by the legislature. Nonetheless, the effort provided great opportunities for outreach and education to legislators on OFS and our priorities and mission.

Some of the main concepts we worked to amend or oppose during the 2023 session included those related to pesticides, biotechnology, and right to farm. OFS opposed SB 426, which attempted to shift authority on School IPM programs from Oregon State University to the Oregon Department of Education, and would have created an advisory group on school pesticide use filled with parents and other non-experts. This bill failed.



OFS was also very engaged on SB 789, which as drafted would have permanently restricted canola production to 500 acres in the Willamette Valley. As amended and passed, it will eventually lift the 500-acre cap and support co-existence with new rules for pinning and other best practices to protect against cross-pollination.



We also worked with a large coalition on SB 85, which imposed new permitting restrictions and water access limits for new and expanding livestock feeding operations or "CAFO's." HB 3409 became an omnibus "climate package" containing a number of sweeping policies on topics OFS had engaged on during session, including carbon sequestration on natural and working lands. The bill also gives Department of Environmental Quality new authority and funding to address harmful algal blooms, but lacked the collaborative, scientific approach we advocated for.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS



INCREASING OUR REACH TO SERVE OREGON'S NATURAL RESOURCES SECTOR

- 8 tours across 7 counties engaging over 200 guests including Oregon's elected officials
- 20 Outreach booths/speaking events
- 1,249 pesticide recertification credit hours provided to 584 Oregon and Washington applicators
- 30,000 people reached through OFS communications including newsletters and social media



2023 REGULATORY RE-CAP

OFS was engaged in a number of major regulatory issues in 2023, many of which will continue into 2024. With the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), OFS continues to highlight serious issues with Oregon's Pesticide Stewardship Partnership and the way the data is being analyzed, interpreted, presented, and used to support decision-making. This year, we called for a formal, written data handling and analysis plan to be developed to ensure that agency staff are following established scientific practice for analyzing pesticide monitoring data.

Following legislation passed in 2021 to create a producer-funded recycling program, OFS has engaged extensively with DEQ on behalf of our product-producing members to encourage them to align with other states in exempting pesticide and fertilizer containers, and to ensure that existing, industry-funded recycling programs such as the Ag Container Recycling Council are exempted by the new system. This work will continue into 2024.

The 2023 session funded several new positions for DEQ related to groundwater, including a new "groundwater coordinator," a soil scientist/agronomist for permitting and land application assessments, and a water quality analyst to work on harmful algal blooms. OFS will be working with partners to engage with new staff and programs, and to ensure that ODA maintains clear oversight over agricultural water quality. DEQ is also developing a "nutrient strategy," which will be their approach to reducing nutrient pollution in Oregon's waterways. This could include changes to permitting as well as water quality standards such as TMDLs for nutrients. OFS remains engaged as DEQ shares more about their intentions.

Working with ODA, OFS served on a Rulemaking Advisory Committee to create a new, non-commercial license to cover non-agriculture, non-forestry applicators who are currently licensed as commercial applicators but who are not applying commercially. This stems from legislation passed in the 2022 session which OFS was engaged on, HB 4062.

OFS also wrapped up a long series of meetings with ODA regarding the process and policies surrounding pesticide complaints and investigations. Working with members of Marion County Farm Bureau, we worked with ODA on several key improvements to the complaint and investigation process that provides important protections for those being investigated.

Finally, OFS worked with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to help many of our members who are now required to report into the new e-notification system for aerial applications in forestry (resulting from SB 1602, passed in the 2020 1st Special Session). OFS organized a forum to provide feedback to ODF on issues with the system that could be improved. Notification has become a major issue with respect to herbicide use in forestry, where community members receive notifications without any context or education. OFS will continue working with partners on ways to address this issue.

UPDATES ON EPA PROPOSALS

The US EPA had a busy 2023. We saw a number of new proposals released to address impacts to endangered species, largely in response to the settlement of a large lawsuit filed many years ago by environmental groups.

Proposals included a draft "Vulnerable Species Pilot," a draft strategy for herbicide mitigations, and proposed decisions which would change uses for a list of rodenticides named in the settlement. Draft strategies for mitigations for insecticides and fungicides are expected in 2024.

OFS is heavily engaged with members, state and national partners, and Oregon's Congressional Delegation to ensure that EPA does not impose harsh and unnecessary burdens on Oregon's producers.

We have made some significant progress on the Vulnerable Species Pilot, with EPA appearing to move away from proposed areas where pesticides would not be allowed – but our work on this will continue well into 2024.





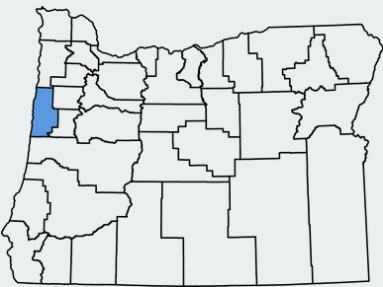
INITIATIVE PETITIONS: COUNTY & STATE

OFS continues to track and engage on a county-level petition, the **Lane County Watershed Bill of Rights**, which would establish “legal rights for watersheds,” enforced through private lawsuits. Proponents are currently gathering signatures to qualify it for the Lane County ballot; they have two years to gather 11,000 signatures. OFS is working with a large group of partners and has helped grow a strong coalition in opposition of this misguided measure.

OFS also serves on the advisory committee for **IP28 (formerly IP3)**, a proposed statewide ballot initiative petition driven by extreme animal rights activists. If passed, this initiative would criminalize any killing of animals before the end of their natural lives, including commercial and recreational hunting, fishing, and trapping, pest control, and a wide array of animal husbandry practices including breeding and of course the harvesting of animals for food.

With the exception of self-defense or veterinary care, any actions that would involve the intentional death of an animal would become a criminal offense if this measure were to pass. The proponents of IP3 re-filed this petition as IP 28 and appear to be aiming for 2026. OFS is working with a broad coalition to inform and educate on the dangers of this petition and any future versions.

LINCOLN COUNTY ISSUES



Local residents once again stirred up controversy in Lincoln county over a proposed and legal herbicide application.

Residents received notice of the application through Oregon Department of Forestry’s notification system and engaged local and state elected officials over the planned application. OFS worked with our grassroots members on the coast and industry partners to provide increased education for public officials regarding the role of herbicides in forest management and the regulatory framework that ensures safe and effective use both aerially and by ground.

We provided support to the small landowner at the center of the controversy, and organized an aerial application demonstration which drew in legislators and local water district management. OFS will continue to stand up for Oregon’s extensive protections and the need to ensure that science, not fear, stays at the center of these discussions.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

2024 Legislative Calendar

- January 9th-12th** - Legislative Committee Days
- February 5th** - Legislative Session Convenes
- February 7th**- Revenue Forecast
- February 19th** - First Chamber Deadline
- February 29th** - Second Chamber Deadline
- March 10th** - Sine Die

OFS is already in full swing preparing for the upcoming short session, which is set to begin February 5th, 2024. With so many new legislators continuing on, we remain focused on outreach and education to support natural resource industries.

An issue we are paying attention to includes the implementation of recommendations from ODA’s workgroup to support brassica coexistence (addressing concerns over canola).



Additionally, we are tracking proposed research on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) levels in soils and crops following land applications of biosolids.

The broader coalition will be focused on a suite of bills covering issues related to water, labor, tax, and wildlife. While we won’t have official information on bills for a few more weeks, it is already clear that this short session will attempt to cover much more than simple budget fixes!



OFS represents you by promoting:



Science-based regulation and policy



Innovation



Stewardship

GRASSROOTS STRONG

OFS is proud to support local grassroots groups that help educate local communities about Oregon's natural resources sector.

In May, Tillamook Working Lands and Waters Cooperative hosted a watershed tour for newly elected county commissioners from across the state, this time in North Tillamook County. These tour stops are designed to follow the watershed and emphasize the community organizing, partnerships, research, and protection measures implemented to protect and improve Tillamook County's water quality.

Partnership for Lincoln Lands and Waters hosted a well-attended tour to showcase how the fisheries, farming, and forestry industries embrace innovation to sustain the future. Guests included city and county government staff as well as other local leaders representing education, banking, finance, and sanitation.

In June, Lane Families for Farms and Forests, in partnership with the Lane Chapter of Oregon Small Woodlands Association, hosted a Water Quality tour focused on the McKenzie Watershed. This was an insightful experience that highlighted the extensive work and ongoing collaborations that sustain working lands and protect and improve water quality and drinking water.



Clatsop Working Watersheds Cooperative partnered with Oregon Women in Timber hosted the 2nd annual Natural Resource Dinner & Auction and raised \$140,000 for Clatsop County High School FFA, Fisheries, Career Technical Education (CTE), and Forestry classes. The Clatsop Grassroots group also host their first ever natural resources tour for local community leaders.

We are looking forward to witnessing these communities embark on another very productive year!



ANNUAL CONFERENCE and Fields & Forests Gala

The OFS Annual Conference and Fields and Forests Gala was held November 1st at the Salem Convention Center. We had 145 attendees throughout the day and evening. Presentations covered topics including forest management and biodiversity, crop coexistence, drone technology, and key legislative and regulatory updates.

This growing event is a unique opportunity to hear updates on a wide range of topics and make connections across industries that rely on pesticides, fertilizers, and biotech and share common goals of prioritizing science, innovation, and stewardship. About 1/3 of our Conference attendees received recertification credits for their attendance – and in total participants received around 200 credit hours for various certifications.

2023 OFS Fields & Forests Gala Awards & Recognitions



David Wells, Tillamook Working Lands and Waters Cooperative - Steadfast Award
Jack Ficken, Clatsop Working Watersheds Cooperative - Community Connector Award
Theresa Hausser and Kate McMichael, Lane Families for Farms and Forests - Above and Beyond Award
David Yamamoto, Tillamook County Commissioner, Retired - OFS Natural Resources Champion

THANK YOU to our OFS Board Members!

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Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat Growers League
Bill Hoyt, Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Nicole Mann, Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers
Elin Miller, Umpqua Nut Farm
Colleen Nihen, Associated Oregon Hazelnut Industries
Charles Ortiz, Oregon Seed Council

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James Curry, Bayer
Greg Ego, Rasmussen Spray Service
JP Mischkot, Glass Tree Care & Spray
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Annette Price, Pacific Power
Ben Sacher, Syngenta
Alec Shebiel, Umatilla Electric Cooperative
Caroline Silveira, Corteva Agriscience
Craig Smith, Far West Agribusiness Association
Maggie Stith, Valent USA
Larry Treleven, Oregon Pest Control Association
Paul Washburn, Western Helicopter Services
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Butch Bernhardt, Western Wood Preservers
Luke Bergey, Miami Corporation Management
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Jerry Risk, Roseburg Forest Products
Chris Sexton, Lone Rock Timber Management
Laura Wilkeson Hampton Lumber

Ex Officio:

Kim Anderson, Oregon State University Dept. of Environmental and Molecular Toxicology