



STAFF SUMMARY

Coquille Wildlife Area Addition - 528 Acres

Background

At the September 18, 2026 meeting, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission will be asked to approve the acquisition of 528 acres adjacent to the Coquille Valley Wildlife Area (CVWA) (see Figure 1), expanding it from 696 acres to 1,224 acres.

The CVWA was established in 2013 following a land trade involving ODFW properties in western Douglas and northwestern Coos counties for lands in the Coquille River Valley. These lands provided greater opportunity for ODFW to fulfill its mission than the original properties. The current 696-acre wildlife area is one of the few tidally influenced wetland habitats in the Coquille River basin available for public use.

The CVWA is a critical stopover for migratory waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway. More than 90% of historic tidal wetlands in the Coquille River estuary have been lost, making remaining wetlands vital for waterfowl, neo-tropical migratory birds, and other wildlife.

The two parcels proposed for acquisition (see Figure 2) were purchased by the Bridges Foundation in 2022 as a short-term strategy to preserve the conservation value of the parcels. Mineral rights owned by a third party are not planned to be purchased as part of this acquisition. ODFW and the Bridges Foundation have worked together to determine an amount to offer for these mineral rights, however the proposed price from the owner is well above market value and it was decided to proceed without purchasing them.

The Foundation does not have long-term management capacity and intends to transfer the property to a permanent conservation owner.

The estimated acquisition cost is \$3,035,000 (\$5,750/acre). The Nature Conservancy contributed approximately \$1,320,000 toward the 2022 purchase, with the remaining balance financed through a conventional loan. ODFW proposes acquiring the property from Bridges, with TNC's contribution remaining in place. A NOAA grant of \$2,123,667 has been authorized to fund the remaining acquisition costs, ODFW's due diligence (appraisal, title, environmental assessment, survey), pay off the existing loan, and reimburse Bridges for holding costs.

Local and state officials have generally been supportive of the acquisition. ODFW intends to continue managing the property as "working lands," including grazing, in conjunction with conservation goals.

Public involvement

The acquisition is scheduled for review by the Public Lands Advisory Committee (PLAC) on July 23, 2026, as required by ORS 270.120(6). PLAC feedback will inform public sentiment and identify any emerging issues.

There may be engagement from the mineral rights owner or their attorney, as ODFW does not plan to purchase the mineral rights due to a proposed price well above market value.

ODFW is coordinating closely with DOJ on legal aspects of the transaction, including purchase agreements and title review. While major acquisition terms are settled, efforts are focused on minimizing risks to the State. Aside from mineral rights, no significant issues have been identified.

Overview of proposed Commission action

ODFW proposes acquiring 528 acres in Coos County adjacent to the CVWA, increasing its total acreage from 696 acres to 1,224 acres. The acquisition would:

- Protect and restore tidally influenced wetlands, riparian and aquatic habitats, and uplands.
- Support habitat management consistent with ODFW's mission and compatible with neighboring land uses.
- Expand public fish and wildlife recreation and education opportunities.
- Support tribal access to traditional foods and resources.

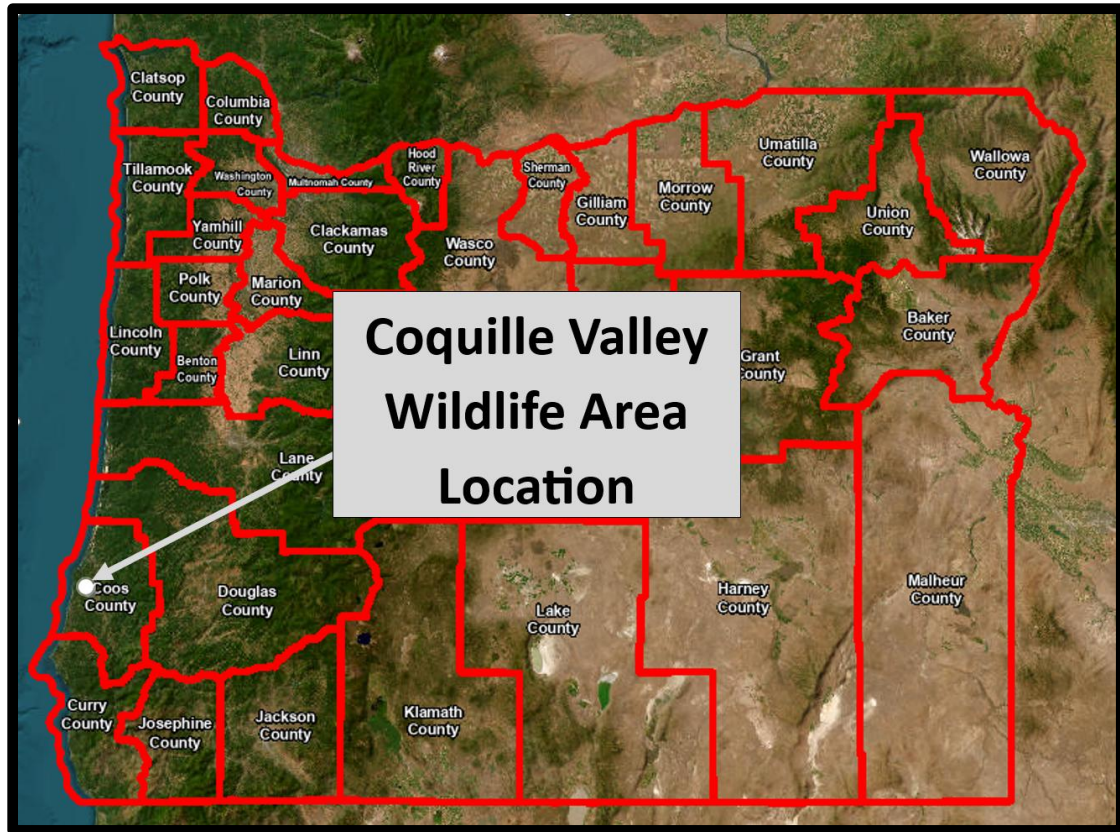


Fig.1. Location of CVWA.

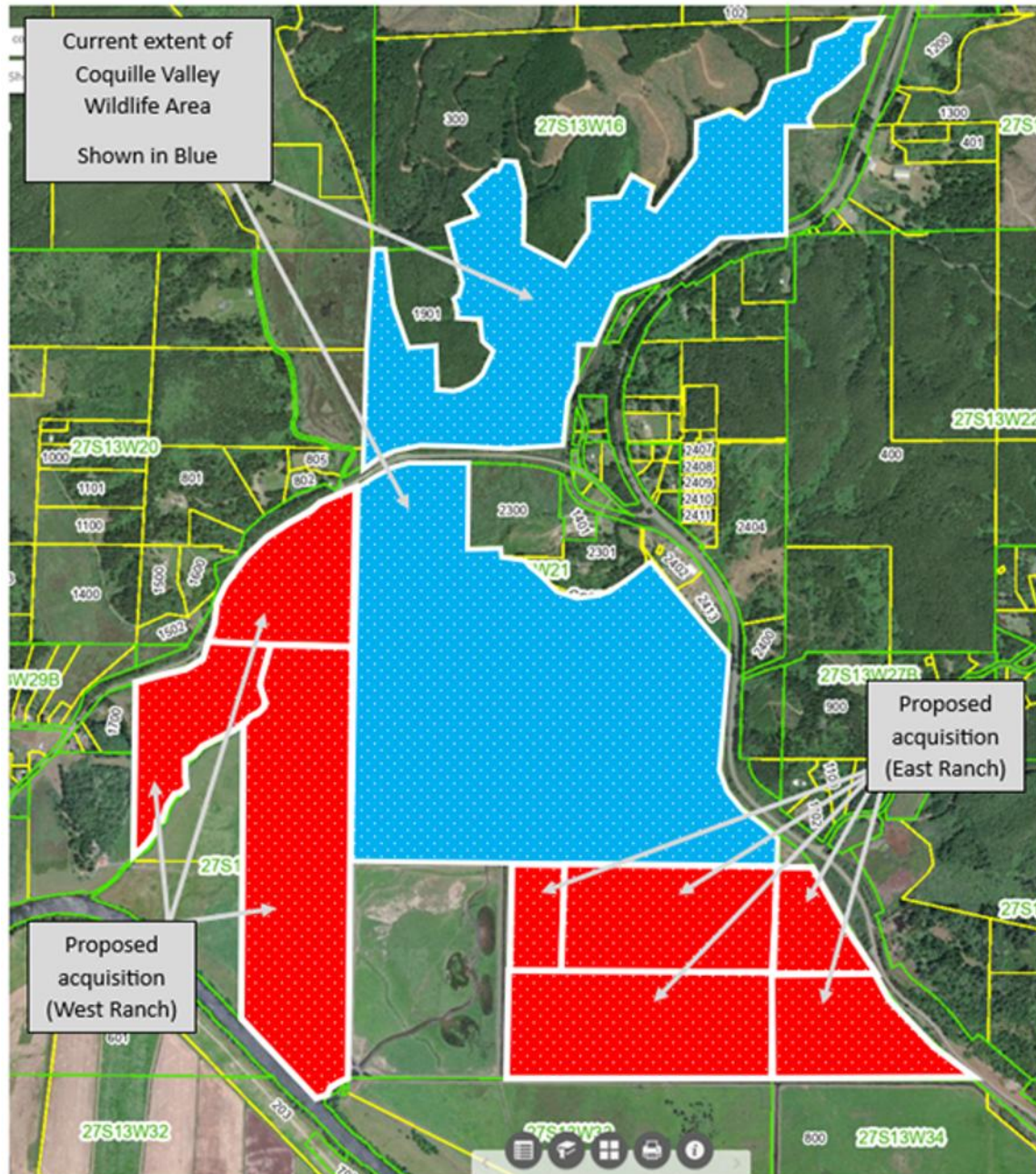


Fig. 2. Parcels planned to be acquired (in red).