

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

ISSUE 1

Coquille Valley Wildlife Area Expansion

BACKGROUND

The Coquille Valley Wildlife Area (CVWA-see Fig 1) 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. CVWA serves as an important migratory corridor for waterfowl and other species moving through the South Coast region and provides one of the few remaining areas of managed estuarine and tidal wetland habitat resources that have become increasingly limited due to historical land conversion and altered hydrology.

The wildlife area offers diverse public access opportunities, including wildlife viewing, waterfowl hunting, and educational use, supporting both conservation goals and community engagement. Its estuarine restoration areas, managed pastures, and tidal wetlands contribute significantly to fish and wildlife productivity within the basin. ODFW intends to continue managing the property as “working lands,” including grazing, in conjunction with conservation goals.

ODFW now has an opportunity to purchase adjacent properties that would expand and strengthen CVWA’s habitat footprint. These parcels provide continuity with existing habitat, improve management flexibility, and enhance long-term conservation outcomes for estuarine species, migratory birds, and other wildlife dependent on the Coquille system.

ODFW is therefore seeking Commission approval to complete the acquisition of these adjacent properties and formally incorporate them into the Coquille Valley Wildlife Area.

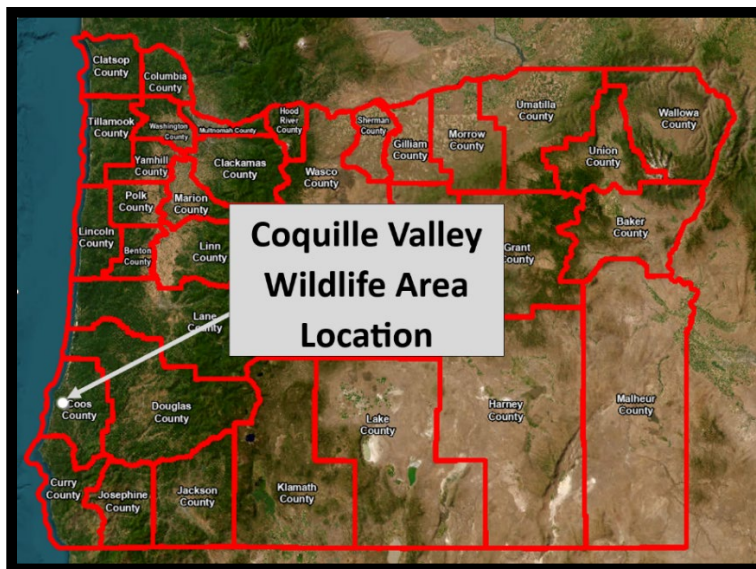


Fig.1. Location of CVWA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The acquisition was presented to the Public Lands Advisory Committee (PLAC) on July 23, 2026, as required by ORS 270.120(6). No public testimony was provided at the PLAC meeting and the project was approved unanimously.

This acquisition and expansion of CVWA have been discussed and supported by the Coquille Indian Tribe, members of the public, local and state agencies, and NGO groups. Letters of support can be found in Attachment 2.

Additionally, the public has an opportunity to provide comment prior to (in writing) or (orally) during the hearing that occurs at the Commission meeting.

ANALYSIS

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.

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.

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 held by the Bridges Foundation. ODFW proposes acquiring the property from the Bridges Foundation, with The Nature Conservancy's contribution remaining in place. A National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grant for \$2,123,667 has been secured to fund the balance of the acquisition costs, including costs to ODFW for due diligence (appraisal, title, environmental assessment, survey), pay off of the existing Bridges Foundation loan, and associated holding costs.

Summary of Due Diligence to Date

ODFW has completed the necessary due diligence documents and submitted them to NOAA as required for the Coastal Zone Management grant.

These include:

- Site maps and aerial photographs
- An appraisal review
- Purchase and sales agreement
- Preliminary evidence of title

- A registered survey
- Draft deed
- An environmental site assessment

Additionally, the property has mineral rights that are currently held by a third party. After a thorough review, ODFW determined that the likelihood of development is very low, the rights have minimal value, and any extraction would require the land to be restored to its original condition. Although ODFW and the Bridges Foundation attempted to purchase the rights, the offers were either rejected or did not receive a response. In consultation with NOAA, the agencies concluded that allowing the third party to retain ownership presents minimal risk and will not affect the acquisition.

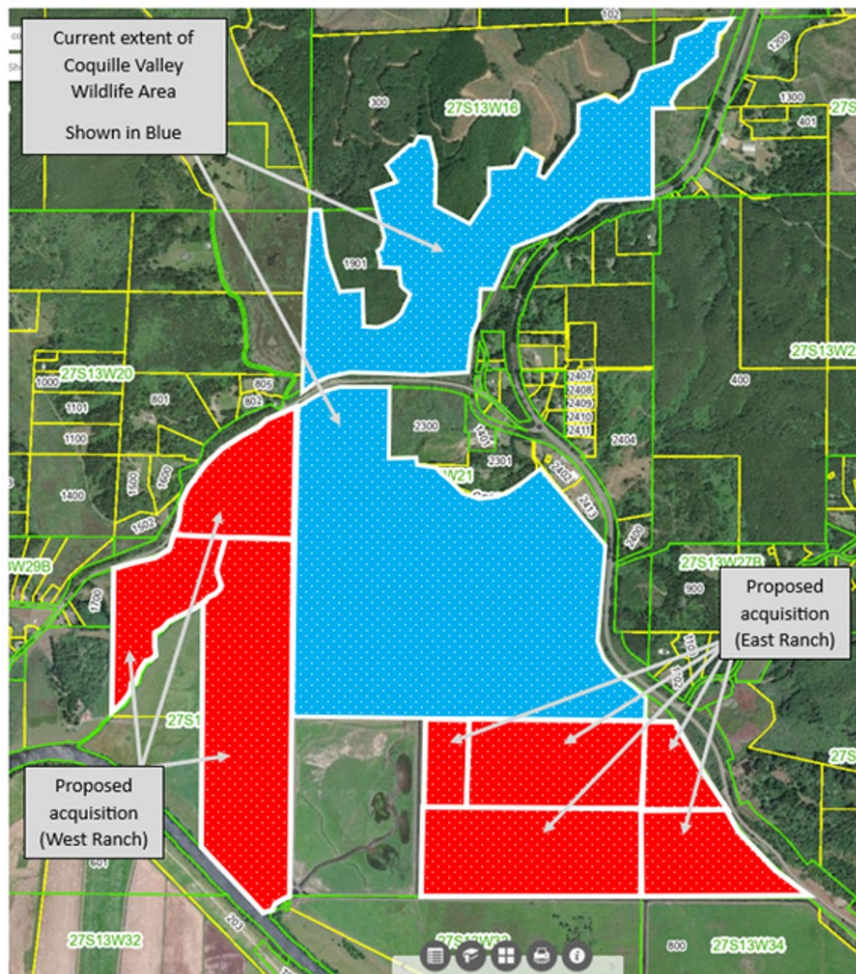


Fig. 2. Parcels proposed to be acquired (in red).

OPTIONS

1. Approve the purchase of the two parcels of land adjacent to CVWA totaling 528 acres.
2. Reject the purchase of the two parcels of land adjacent to CVWA totaling 528 acres.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: ISSUE 1

1. Approve the purchase of the two parcels of land adjacent to CVWA totaling 528 acres.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the purchase and incorporation of the 528 acres of land adjacent to the Coquille Valley Wildlife Area.

Effective Date: September 18, 2026