

# GREATER SAGE-GROUSE MITIGATION PROGRAM MANUAL

## Summary for Credit Generators



### Overview and Intent

The Sage-Grouse Habitat Mitigation Program is part of Oregon's approach to sage-grouse management and recovery. This program was developed under the State's Sage-Grouse Conservation Partnership (SageCon), as part of a collaborative approach to balancing economic development and healthy rangeland ecosystems in central and eastern Oregon.

The mitigation program is part of a set of local, state, and federal commitments to ensure that development actions that occur in the range of the greater sage-grouse in Oregon:

- **Avoid** impacts to the most important sage-grouse habitat whenever possible.
- **Minimize** the habitat impacts of development projects that do go forward in sage-grouse habitat, through design, siting, and operation measures.
- **Compensate** for any remaining impacts to sage-grouse habitat by investing in habitat restoration and protection, to ensure healthy sage-grouse populations and rangeland ecosystems into the future.

The "compensate" step of this sequence creates a unique opportunity for funding voluntary habitat restoration and protection work on private lands. Many of these actions support overall rangeland health and can be consistent with ranching practices, sometimes even improving forage conditions over time.

However, compensatory mitigation can be challenging, because although the impacts of development actions on habitat tend to be predictable, the outcomes of restoration efforts often are not. In order to make sure that the

### Who can create mitigation credits, and how?

Any private individual or organization with the ability to restore, enhance, and/or protect sage-grouse habitat may be eligible to create credits.

Potential credit generators can propose projects through the state's in-lieu fee program, receive ODFW approval to create credit for private sale to a third-party (credit banking), or in order to meet the project proponents own mitigation responsibilities for a development project (permittee-responsible mitigation).

A mitigation crediting project must be approved by ODFW's program administrator *before* project implementation begins in order to meet sage-grouse policy requirements and be registered in the state's system to become available for use or purchase.

ODFW provides guidance on priority areas and actions, as well as the standards which credit projects must meet. For example, all projects must have a legal protection element (a permanent or term easement), as well as active habitat restoration or enhancement components.

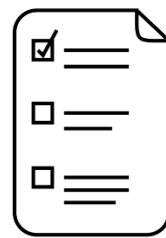
The mitigation program is required by state law to contribute to sage-grouse recovery by providing a net conservation benefit for sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat. It aims to do so in a way that is **predictable, transparent, fair, science-based, and coordinated** across public and private land ownerships and authorities.

state's program achieves a net benefit to sage-grouse (as required by state law), crediting projects must follow specific procedures and standards outlined in detail in the Mitigation Program Manual. These standards also help limit the risk to credit generators that mitigation projects could not meet financial expectations.

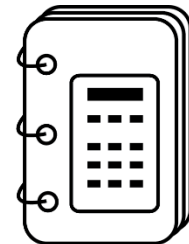
## How Does Credit Generation Work?

1. **Use a simple pre-proposal process** to propose a crediting project directly to ODFW's program administrator, either through a regular ODFW request for proposals through the state's in-lieu fee fund, or as a private bank or permittee-responsible mitigation.

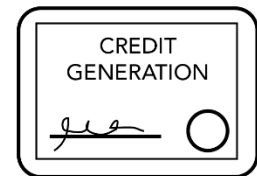
2. Work with the program administrator to **develop a full credit project proposal, including site-specific plan and other needed documents**, and to estimate how many credits may be produced by the project.



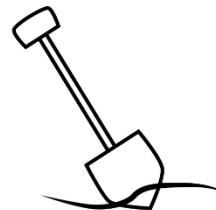
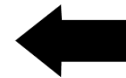
Use a Pre-Proposal Process



Develop a Full Credit Project Proposal



Develop and Sign Credit Generation Agreement



Project Implementation

3. **Develop and sign a credit generation agreement** with the program administrator. This binding contract describes how the credit site will be protected and managed, how many credits are anticipated, how and when credits and funds will be released, and what will happen if the site fails to produce expected outcomes.

4. **Project implementation begins** once this contract is signed. The program administrator verifies that key project milestones are met, and **registers and issues credits and payments** accordingly. Especially for in-lieu fee projects, a large initial payment for early implementation actions may be followed by smaller stewardship payments to support long-term site management.

### Additional Resources

**Mitigation Manual** – for additional details on mitigation debiting and crediting

**Development Siting Tool** – for an initial screen on how project siting may affect mitigation requirements

**Habitat Quantification Tool Scientific Methods Document** – outlines scientific basis for the state's approach to quantifying mitigation credits and debit

## Contact

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