

A Feasibility Assessment for Conservation Finance in Coastal Oregon

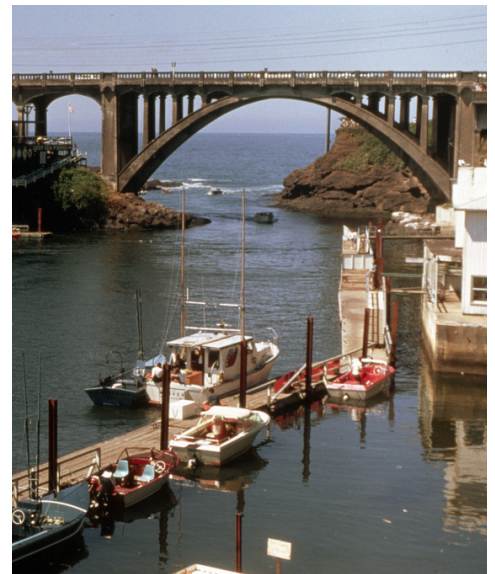
Estimates indicate that global investments totaling \$536 billion are needed for ecosystem protection and restoration projects each year. This figure far surpasses the \$133 billion invested in 2021 -- most of which came from public sources. Conservation finance is a tool that can help bridge this gap by attracting private capital and fostering collaboration to accelerate environmental outcomes.

What is Conservation Finance?

Conservation finance is the practice of raising and deploying capital from various public, private, and philanthropic sources to fund conservation initiatives that would otherwise be under-resourced. These tools can help bring additional resources to projects while also improving cash flow and supporting local restoration economies. Examples of conservation finance tools include, but are not limited to, environmental impact bonds, voluntary surcharge funds, carbon markets, and blended public and philanthropic funding. Conservation finance can play an important role in closing the gap between the funding that exists today and the funding required to protect the vitality and benefits of Earth's natural ecosystems.

Key Benefits of Conservation Finance

- **Accelerates the pace and scale of projects** by addressing the cash flow constraints of traditional conservation funding sources.
- **Fosters new partnerships** across diverse stakeholders that share a mutual interest in stewardship goals.
- **Expresses the value of ecosystem services** to encourage resource commitments among new beneficiaries.



Photos: Cape Perpetua (USFS), Marina Depoe Bay (USFS), and Suislaw National Forest (USFS)

Blue Forest is a mission-driven non-profit organization. We leverage financial innovation to create sustainable investment solutions to environmental challenges. Our principal financial product, the Forest Resilience Bond (FRB), deploys private capital to finance forest and watershed restoration projects on public and private lands.

Restoration for Coastal Resilience

Investing in our nearshore regions, coastal ecosystems, and communities

Potential Opportunities

Conservation finance in coastal Oregon would provide an opportunity to increase multi-agency collaboration, attract new funding sources to critical projects, and accelerate the pace and scale of planned action by providing up-front capital.

- **Project actions:** floodplain reconnection, bank armoring, and restoration and conservation of wetlands, tidal forests, tributaries, kelp, and seagrass habitats
- **Benefits:** climate regulation via carbon sequestration, flood and storm surge protection, fish habitat and passage, water quality protection, economic benefits to fisheries and shellfish growers, and recreation opportunities
- **Partners:** Oregon State Agencies, Federal Agencies, businesses like ports, shellfish growers and agricultural producers, and infrastructure owners like railroads and water agencies

Coastal Conservation Finance Feasibility

The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), and other local partners have laid the foundation for this work through previous stakeholder outreach, support of scientific research, and policy engagement. The relationships and knowledge that Pew and BEF bring to the table make this a unique opportunity to build on previous efforts and support these partnerships. Blue Forest's objective is to explore and assess the feasibility of conservation finance in coastal Oregon. Initial steps will be to meet with these partners to understand the problems and needs of coastal resilience and restoration projects and explore opportunities to support their work.



Photos: Cape Perpetua (USFS), Kelp Forest (NOAA), eelgrass bed with shorebird (DG/Hayes Getty Images).

For more information about the Coastal Resilience Feasibility Assessment, please contact: Tessa Maurer at tessa@blueforest.org