

STEPS

for **HEALTHY & SUSTAINABLE**
RURAL LIVING on **SMALL ACREAGES** in

Oregon



Tools and Resources to Design a Customized Land Management Strategy for Your Small Acreage Property...



Helping Small Acreage Landowners Help the Land



www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

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HOW To Use the STEPS Worksheets

Reference TIPS brochure, pg. 1



About the STEPS Worksheets

The STEPS worksheets were developed as a companion piece to the *TIPS on Land & Water Management for Small Acreages in Oregon* brochure provided in this packet. The STEPS and TIPS publications were created to provide small acreage landowners with a starting point to develop their knowledge of natural resources and improve their land management skills.

Since each landowner—and each piece of land—is unique, it is up to you to decide how to use the STEPS packet. Some of the items, such as the *Soil Condition Assessment* worksheet, are useful for all landowners. Other worksheets may not relate to your goals or needs. Complete only the relevant worksheets.

STEP 1: Read the TIPS brochure.

Where applicable, the STEPS worksheets indicate corresponding pages in the TIPS brochure. The TIPS brochure provides additional information that may be helpful as you complete the STEPS worksheets.

STEP 2: Complete the Land Management Goals worksheet.

This worksheet was developed to help you focus your efforts. Each goal includes common considerations that you may need to address. Space is provided to add additional items specific to your unique situation.

STEP 3: Inventory the resources on your land.

Complete the *Property Map* and *Natural Resource Inventory* pages. These will provide a base of information for you to reference as you work through the other worksheets. Your property map and natural resource inventory will help you move forward in planning strategies, actions and improvements.

STEP 4: Complete the worksheets that relate to your land.

Each worksheet contains a set of questions to help you assess conditions and evaluate how your management decisions affect natural resources. The worksheets include alternative actions for improvement and resources for more information.

STEP 5: Identify the options and actions right for you.

On each worksheet, you will find management options, information resources and contact information. You may find you can make improvements on your own, or you may decide to obtain professional assistance for more intensive treatments, such as structural or engineered practices. Whatever options you choose, each section of the STEPS packet will help you find more information and assistance.



Land Management Goals



If you live in rural Oregon, you likely enjoy the peaceful countryside and scenic landscapes. You have a connection to your land, and you want to do all you can to care for it. The worksheets in this packet will help you identify strategies to maintain and improve the natural resources on your property. To begin, you should develop your vision for the future and how you want your land to look in the coming years. You may want to improve conditions or maintain the land as it is. Whatever your goals, planning for specific outcomes will help you make good decisions now and in the future. This is the first step to a land management strategy that is right for you, your family and your property.

Instructions: First, record your vision for the land in the coming years. Include what you want the property to look like and how you plan to use the land. Then, identify the specific land management goals that relate to your overall vision. Corresponding outcomes are provided on the right to help you focus and prioritize your efforts to reach each goal. Use the blank space provided to list more details relevant to your situation.

Site

Date

Vision for the Land in 5 to 10 Years

For example: *The water in our stream is clean and provides habitat for native fish. Blackberries and weeds have been eliminated and/or controlled on our property. We have established a productive pumpkin patch in the northeast field. We are able to keep and graze four horses while protecting the condition of our pastures and streams.*

Goals

Outcomes

Improve or maintain the aesthetic beauty of the property and the quality of life for your family.

- Selected land uses are carried out in a sustainable manner that helps you maintain a desirable quality of life over time.
- Plant and animal pests are kept in check.
- Healthy plant communities and a scenic landscape are maintained over time.
- Excess water from heavy rains does not damage structures, roads, streambanks, livestock or crops; runoff does not convey contaminants to ground and surface waters.
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Keep healthy horses, cattle or other livestock on the property.

- Animals stay healthy with proper diet and conditions.
- Animals have plenty of high quality forage to graze.
- Streams are protected from animal waste and trampled streambanks.
- Manure is properly handled and does not present a hazard to people, water bodies or animals.
- Livestock odors are managed appropriately for the area.
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Land Management Goals

Goals	Outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain healthy soil to support plants and animals as well as natural water and nutrient cycles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The soil is fertile and contains a healthy mix of organic matter to support plant growth. • Healthy plant communities provide cover at the appropriate times of the year. • Soil erosion is controlled. • Animals are rotated among pastures to prevent heavy traffic and overuse from causing soil compaction and poor infiltration of water. • •
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect the quality and quantity of water in local streams, groundwater sources and other water bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streambanks are protected from erosion with thick, diverse streamside vegetation. • Fertilizer and pesticide applications are managed to keep chemicals out of water bodies. • Those with an irrigation right use only the water needed at the right times to optimize plant health and conserve water in streams. • Irrigation systems are maintained and updated for maximum efficiency. • Floodplains, wetlands and unpaved natural areas help to recharge groundwater supplies and act as buffers for surface water runoff. • •
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide healthy habitats for native wildlife.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural cover and nesting habitat for desired wildlife species are provided by a variety of plants. • Food and water sources are available year-round. • Fish have plenty of clean, cool water to support migration, spawning and rearing. • Fish screens protect aquatic species from irrigation intakes. • Wildlife is not threatened by human activity, roadways or domestic pets. • •
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

The Next Steps

Congratulations! You have taken the first step in developing a customized land management strategy. As you work through the following STEPS worksheets, keep these goals and outcomes in mind and look for activities that will help you address these priorities.

COMPLETING Your STEPS Worksheets

Reference TIPS brochure, pg. 1

Worksheets



Once you have established your land management goals and have inventoried your property, you are ready to complete the STEPS worksheets on the following pages.

As you go through the following worksheets, keep in mind that helpful information can be found in the TIPS brochure. Also consider contacting local natural resource professionals and conservation groups to locate additional information that may be useful.

As you answer the questions provided on the STEPS worksheets, you will begin to assess conditions on your land and learn about a number of management options. Keep in mind that the alternatives provided are general in nature. The distinct features of your land—and the specific uses and goals you have for it—make each situation unique. As you begin to identify actions that may be appropriate, consider whether you can begin to make these improvements on your own. Many options will require specific considerations pertaining to the unique geography, hydrology, plants, wildlife and other features and conditions on your property. Some of these activities could require technical expertise; you may want to contact a natural resource professional for detailed assessments, conservation planning and recommendations. Sources for more information and assistance are listed in each section.

In addition, you should know that regulations and permit requirements vary depending on location, land use and other factors. As a landowner, it is your responsibility to learn about the regulations applicable in your area.

As you move forward with your land management goals, remember that an abundance of information and assistance is available through natural resource agencies and businesses.

If You Want to Go a Few More Steps

You may find that while the STEPS worksheets have helped you advance your land management goals, you would also like to address additional objectives or more complex issues.

More detailed evaluation processes are available through a variety of outlets. In addition, more comprehensive technical assistance is available through businesses and local, state, federal and non-profit entities. If you would like to additional assistance, contact one of the entities listed below:

- *Local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD):* www.oacd.org
- *Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):* www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

Additional information and assistance can also be found through the many other organizations listed in the worksheets and the **Resources** section on page 57.

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