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# ANNUAL REPORT



# The power of our Oregon story

**As the holiday season approaches,** we are reminded of the enduring power of stories. We share stories to laugh, to commiserate, to bond, and to carry traditions and values forward. Historian Yuval Noah Harari has credited storytelling as contributing to our societal evolution; it is one of human beings' superpowers.

But there are growing threats to our ability to share stories, to find real connection and community, and to distinguish what is true and what is false. Pew Research Center notes that a majority of Americans receive their information from digital platforms like social media, where disinformation and division can spread rapidly.

Now more than ever, it is vital to slow down, to really listen and connect with each other, and to cultivate durable solutions that can create a better Oregon for everyone. We can't—and won't—be pitted against one another. Instead, we remain focused and determined to improve the lives and livelihoods of all Oregonians through tangible policies and funding our communities.

In this year's Annual Report, you'll see what can happen when communities come together, share stories, and organize. They fight—and often win—to protect agricultural and forest lands. They forge new coalitions to deliver transportation solutions. They envision and enact policies that create more livable communities for everyone. In all of these stories, you will see that individual well-being is linked with the well-being of our communities, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the landscapes and ecosystems that carry us.

These collective efforts reflect the simple truth that **Oregon is worth fighting for.**

After celebrating our 50th anniversary last year, we spent time hearing ideas, concerns, and questions from hundreds of supporters as part of our creative discovery process. Ultimately, we adopted a new strategic plan with five core areas: **For Our Democracy, For our Prosperity, For Our Communities, For Our Land, and For Our Humanity.**

As we fight for an Oregon that we can be proud to call home, we invite you to bring your perspective to this cause—whether it's at our Oregon Arts and Agriculture Holiday Market in December, or one of the many workshops, meetings, tours, and other gatherings we have lined up for 2026 (keep an eye on friends.org/events). We know that the best Oregon Story is one that is created together.

Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season. We'll see you soon, friends!



*Sam Diaz*  
**Sam Diaz**  
Executive Director



*Gil Kelley*  
**Gil Kelley**  
Board President

## A vision for stewarding Oregon: 2025-2030 Strategic Plan

After sourcing hundreds of perspectives from supporters, 1000 Friends' board of directors voted on our shared vision for the next five years of stewarding Oregon's landscapes and communities. Through this collaborative process, we built our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, with five key focus areas—**For Our Democracy, For Our Prosperity, For Our Communities, For Our Land, and For Our Humanity**—that anchor all of our organizational decisions for the next five years. Thank you for shaping and strengthening this cause to create an Oregon we can be excited and proud to call home!

View our  
2025-2030  
Strategic Plan



## 2025 OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

1000 Friends of Oregon doesn't do anything alone. Our impact is possible because of collaboration with our coalition partners, affiliate network, Forestry and Agriculture Advisory Committee, members, and our growing list of land use champions across the state. Help us make an impact for Oregon.

<b>26,500</b> <i>Acres protected from runaway sprawl</i>	<b>56</b> <i>Articles quoting or mentioning our staff</i>
<b>450+</b> <i>Bills tracked in the 2025 long session</i>	<b>2,768</b> <i>Advocacy messages we helped supporters send to policymakers</i>
<b>114</b> <i>Land use champions trained</i>	<b>27</b> <i>Educational presentations given to audiences across Oregon</i>
<b>\$2 billion</b> <i>Amount of Chips &amp; Science Act awards confirmed with 0 acres of working lands sacrificed</i>	<b>\$250,000</b> <i>Average price point savings between new missing middle housing vs. single-detached housing due to our advocacy</i>

## 1000 FRIENDS OF OREGON

**Sam Diaz** | Executive Director  
**Mary Kyle McCurdy** | Associate Director and Managing Attorney  
**Omar Abdelmegeid** | Salesforce Data Coordinator  
**Ben Asher** | Operations Associate  
**Blair Batson** | Senior Staff Attorney  
**John Butterfield** | Staff Attorney  
**Jenni Denekas** | Communications Manager  
**Eve Goldman** | Staff Attorney  
**Jim Johnson** | Working Lands Policy Director  
**Anna Kemper** | Membership Experience Manager  
**Jacky Lee** | Oregon for Everyone Manager  
**Lou Ocampo** | Operations Manager  
**Cassie Wilson** | Legislative Manager  
**Robb Wolfson** | Legal Apprentice  
**Sarah Yeoman** | Digital Communications Manager

**Gil Kelley** | Board President  
**Meriel Darzen** | Board Vice President  
**Baker Lyon** | Board Secretary and Treasurer  
**Nellie McAdams** | Policy Committee Chair  
**Justin Pabalate** | Board Membership Experience Committee Chair  
**Margaret Jane Harris, Ken Hayes, Edward B. Hill, Alana Kenagy, Jeff Mapes, Rod Park, Victor Platt, Christian Richmond, Albert Roberson, Ben Williams, Libby Wilson, Anita Yap** | Board Members  
**Forestry and Agriculture Advisory Committee (FAAC)**  
**Anna Jesse** | Cochair  
**Dan Keeley** | Vice Cochair  
**Nellie McAdams** | Cochair  
**Shelley Wetherell** | Vice Cochair



# OREGON IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

This year, 1000 Friends joined with local farmers and ranchers to continue our challenge to Deschutes County's rezoning of a one-square-mile tract of rangeland for a sprawling residential development. The property is in the middle of a large block of agricultural land zoned for exclusive farm use west of Redmond.

The property-by-property rezoning of agricultural land for residential development has been accelerated by a rule from the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) that allows developers to hire private soils scientists to challenge the state-level agricultural lands designation of properties. In turn, these case-by-case rezonings are regularly approved by

counties, and also upheld by appellate courts who defer to the counties' choice.

Our staff attorneys Blair Batson, John Butterfield, and Eve Goldman represented 1000 Friends and Deschutes County ranchers William and Elizabeth Buchanan and their commercial beef operation.

Oregon Property Owners Association (OPOA) filed an *amicus curiae* brief in support of the developers. They opposed our local farmers and ranchers who believe this land should be maintained for agricultural use.

The case is now in the unfortunate posture of trying to overturn an adverse lower court ruling. So, while we continue to join with local farmers and ranchers to fight these rezonings in court, it is an uphill battle. We need to correct these rules in order to halt this devastating loss of agricultural land in Oregon.



## VICTORY: OREGON SUPREME COURT WIN KEEPS HOTELS OFF FARMLAND

On July 3, 2025, the Oregon Supreme Court issued a decision in *Friends of Yamhill County v. Yamhill County*.

This decision upheld the Court of Appeals' remand of Yamhill County's decision to allow a bed and breakfast hotel to be operated as a "home occupation" within a 10,500-square-foot structure the applicants described as a farm operator's dwelling. The so-called "dwelling" has nine guest suites—plus an innkeeper suite—and is owned and operated by

the Foley Entertainment Group, which manages a luxury hospitality portfolio that includes resorts and restaurants across the globe.

The Supreme Court found the applicant had failed to demonstrate the structure was the home of a farm operator. The Supreme Court also remanded the decision for a de novo determination of whether the structure was consistent with local code requirements for a single-family dwelling versus a hotel.

Yamhill County winemaker Jason Lett, Hood River County orchardist Mike McCarthy, and Douglas County vintner and sheep farmer Shelley Wetherell participated in the appeal, represented by Crag Law Center.

This is an important victory for Oregon farmers and ranchers. Together, we are continuing this fight against the conversion of Oregon's world-class agricultural land for elite entertainment and hospitality venues.



▲Above, top: Farmer Gary Harris.  
▲Above: Forestland owner Gwen Farnsworth and farmer Christopher Fields testify to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire.  
◀Previous page: EFU land in Deschutes County in the cross-hairs of rezoning. Photo courtesy of Central Oregon LandWatch.

## Farmers ask legislature to improve farmland protections

In 2025, farmers, ranchers, and timberland owners from across Oregon came to Salem seeking change. They testified in support of legislation to close statutory loopholes causing the gentrification and displacement of our agricultural and forest communities. These lands are being lost to the development of luxury homes and elite hospitality and entertainment venues in farm and forest zones.

Farmers like Jefferson County seed grower Gary Harris testified that luxury "replacement" homes, extravagant lodging, dining and event venues, and boutique grocery stores

posing as "farm stands" undermine the integrity of the agricultural land base the industry needed to operate.

While the Oregon Property Owners Association (OPOA) and other members of the sprawl industry blocked reform legislation in 2025, we are proud of our members' hard work in Salem. Their advocacy lays the groundwork for continued collaborative efforts to improve protections for Oregon's limited supply of agricultural land in the face of increased threats from luxury resorts, data centers, shopping centers, disconnected subdivisions, and more.



## Implementing Goal 10: Moving forward on housing for all

1000 Friends organized a statewide coalition of land use groups—Thrive Hood River, Better Housing Together, Portland: Neighbors Welcome, and Central Oregon Landwatch—to support a suite of housing bills that further our goal of ensuring housing for all, in every neighborhood.

Thanks to a new partnership, **1000 Friends was able to hire housing expert and organizer Julia Metz**, who worked with associate director and managing attorney Mary Kyle McCurdy to create a seamless legislative campaign in and out of the Capitol building. This kept our coalition informed about the progress of housing legislation. We provided testimony training, created one-pagers about each bill, included on-the-ground stories from around the state on the importance of the legislation, and met with key legislators.

*Together, we were successful in passing four bills, on a bipartisan basis:*

**HB 2138** This bill helps everyone live closer to schools, stores, parks, and jobs by removing barriers to building the types of homes—like duplexes, three- and fourplexes, cottage clusters, townhomes, and accessory dwelling units—that give people more diverse and affordable home options in every neighborhood.

**HB 3145** This bill advances the development of innovative housing construction materials and methods in Oregon, including modular and mass timber homes. These options enable housing to be built and sited quickly and affordably, especially housing for people with moderate and lower incomes.

**HB 3031** Oregon's cities have thousands of residential acres inside their urban growth boundaries (UGBs), but many of these lands lack some or all infrastructure—roads, sewers, water, sidewalks—and some need upgrades. This bill establishes a state-level structure to provide loans, grants, or forgivable loans to cities of all sizes and tribal governments for infrastructure development and improvement on vacant residential land (pursuant to a formula to ensure both small and large cities benefit). The housing must meet specified minimum densities, and affordable housing will receive the funding in grants. This program launched with a small budget, which we hope will receive additional funds in the future.

**SB 51** Many of the homes built for those with low and very low incomes are aging. Repairing and upgrading existing buildings is more cost-efficient than building new ones. These investments also keep people in the homes, schools, and communities they know, rather than uprooting them. This program launched with a small budget, which we hope will receive additional funds in the future.

Many of us also worked on this successful bill:

**SB 684** This bill launches a new revolving loan fund for mixed-income housing projects, which has been effective in other cities and states but is new in Oregon—bringing together both public and private investments, this housing integrates affordable, work-force, and market-rate units, while providing long-term affordability for the affordable units. The fund would be self-sustaining, with the loans being repaid and then reinvested into new projects.

## OREGON FOR EVERYONE

When it comes to building homes, state legislation is only as strong as local action. That's why we've launched the new **Oregon for Everyone** program, designed to support organizing and education around housing policy at the local level.

We welcomed a new team member to run Oregon for Everyone: **Jacky Lee**, who has spent a good part of the past six months traveling around the state getting to know the housing issues facing locals. Jacky, who lives in Corvallis, has a background in community organizing and activism, especially around climate policy and housing justice. They are excited to be a part of 1000 Friends' Great Communities team and the wider movement for resilient Oregon communities.

The Oregon for Everyone program is an exciting development for 1000 Friends; not only are we **doubling the size of our housing team**, we are also increasing capacity to work with community partners around the state. Jacky is particularly interested in building relationships in rural, small-town, and medium-sized communities.

Through conversations across Oregon, we have learned a lot about the diverse challenges facing different cities—especially those in eastern Oregon, southern Oregon, and the Oregon coast. While every community is unique, there are also patterns and opportunities for collaborative learning. Oregon for Everyone is a program that will work to identify and share information about different

policy and implementation strategies so that communities can learn from each other's successes and challenges.

As we grow our program and hear from more groups about what type of support they need, we have been compiling and developing resources to support education around housing policy and community organizing.

## HOUSING SNAPSHOT: LA GRANDE

In the past few years, La Grande has developed exciting new housing projects, including several cottage cluster projects and a veterans' village (pictured).

**Gust Tsiatsos**, a local developer, has been leading the way to find innovative pathways to fund and develop these needed housing types. He has also partnered with the local high school to create a career and technical education program in homebuilding—a win-win for the community and students.

By removing unnecessary barriers to development within their urban growth boundary (UGB), they are promoting infill housing, strong communities, and good land use.







◀Left: MOF's advocacy day.  
▼Near below: Testifying on the transportation package during the legislative session.  
▼Far below: Transit Talks filming with Portland City Councilor Candace Avalos.



In honor of Week Without Driving, we premiered Transit Talks: A video series where we talk with elected and community leaders about transportation and land use while riding public transit.

Many people who are in positions of power and influence on transportation policy are people who primarily drive to get around. We believe it is critical for our leaders to experience travel outside of a car to help them better understand the experiences of the approximately 30% of Oregonians who can't or don't drive, and consider them when deciding on policy and investments.

Transit Talks is hosted by Legislative Manager Cassie Wilson and filmed and edited by Digital Communications Manager Sarah Yeoman. So far, we have interviewed Portland City Councilor Candace Avalos, Metro Councilor Christine Lewis, and transit advocate Jordan Del Valle Tonoian, and we look forward to having more discussions about transit on transit.

## MOVE OREGON FORWARD

We partnered with transportation safety and environmental justice organizations across the state to form the **Move Oregon Forward coalition (MOF)**, which advocates for transformative investments in how Oregonians move.

In summer 2024, we tracked over **1,100 public comments** during the legislature's listening tour, and in January 2025, we published a report highlighting what the majority of engaged Oregonians asked for: funding for transit, clean air, and safe streets. This report was used by MOF, transit agencies, and legislators to hold policymakers accountable to the needs Oregonians raised.

In April, MOF hosted an **advocacy day** in Salem with over 100 constituents participating in meetings with 45 legislators. At the beginning of session, proposals for transit and safety funding were woefully inadequate. By the end of session, our advocacy moved the needle toward what would have been a historic investment in transit, Safe Routes to School and Great Streets.

While the only thing the legislature got across the finish line in 2025 was a stopgap budget fix for operations and maintenance and public transit, we are confident that our work this session will put us in a better position for advocacy in future legislative sessions.



The 2025 LULI cohort at Headwaters Farm



▲Above: Our staff and board in Garibaldi during our annual retreat.  
▼Below: Visiting partners Thrive Hood River in Hood River.



▲Above: Executive Director Sam Diaz in the dunk tank during the Queers from the Country event.

Whether you joined us at one of our membership events, testified on major land conservation and development issues or opportunities, took part in our 2025 Land Use Leadership Initiative, chatted with us at a tabling event, or joined us at the return of our Affiliate Conference, we thank you! Oregon is better when we are all able to shape success for ourselves, our communities, and our future with sound science, smart land use planning, and strategic investments.



▲Above: Touring Winter's Hill Estate during our April member event.  
▲Center: Meeting with Washington County farmers.

▲Above: Getting a firsthand look at the new Portland International Airport from Zena Forest Products.





*"I first connected with 1000 Friends as a participant in the Land Use Leadership Initiative program (LULI), and that experience deepened my commitment to community and land use planning. This organization's dedication to helping others continues to inspire me.*

*Being away from Oregon now, in a more densely populated area, I've come to appreciate and miss the beauty of home in such a tangible way. It's made me even more determined to help protect it for future generations."*

**— Delaney Brown**

***Southern Willamette Valley LULI graduate, 2021 cohort***

*"I know this organization will be here long after I'm gone, carrying forward the values I want my children to grow up with. Including 1000 Friends in my legacy plans isn't just a gift to the state; it's also a gift to my kids, something they can celebrate as part of our family's story."*

**— Nellie McAdams**

***Fifth-generation farmer in Gaston, 1000 Friends board policy committee chair and FAAC cochair***



◀ **SPRING ORCHARD IN MOSIER**

*Photo by Paloma Ayala, winner of our first-ever Working Lands Photo Contest*



# Welcome new staff, board, and Gerhardt intern

We are proud to report that our team is growing; **we welcomed five new staff members in 2025.** We also welcomed two new board members: **Alana Kenagy**, a fourth-generation farmer in Albany, and **Albert Roberson**, assistant vice president for equity and compliance at Portland State University.

The Paul Gerhardt Jr. Internship also brings in fresh perspectives from planning students each year. **Our 2025 Gerhardt intern is Roman McCoy**, a bachelor’s of urban planning student at the University of Gloucestershire in the United Kingdom.

Roman studied the financial benefits and costs to Oregonians in different development scenarios—sprawl, infill development, and redevelopment—with a focus on case studies of Oregon cities and towns of various sizes and geographic regions. Keep an eye out for Roman’s research on this timely question.



**John Butterfield - he/him**  
**Staff Attorney**  
As a deputy attorney general in California, John worked to defend the state’s innovative resource protection programs and deter polluters through civil prosecutions. As a new Oregonian, John loves exploring the outdoors when he’s not working—especially Portland’s Forest Park and the Columbia River Gorge.



**Jenni Denekas - she/her**  
**Communications Manager**  
Jenni returns to 1000 Friends after interning with our communications and development teams from 2015–2017 and graduating from LULI in 2017. Since then, Jenni built a career in nonprofit strategic communication and earned a master’s in multimedia journalism from the University of Oregon.



**Eve Goldman - she/her**  
**Staff Attorney**  
Eve comes to 1000 Friends from Tualatin Riverkeepers, where, as staff attorney, she engaged in state and local land use processes and water quality issues. Eve spends as much time outside as she can, whether running in Forest Park, skiing at Mt. Hood, or biking and hiking all over Oregon.

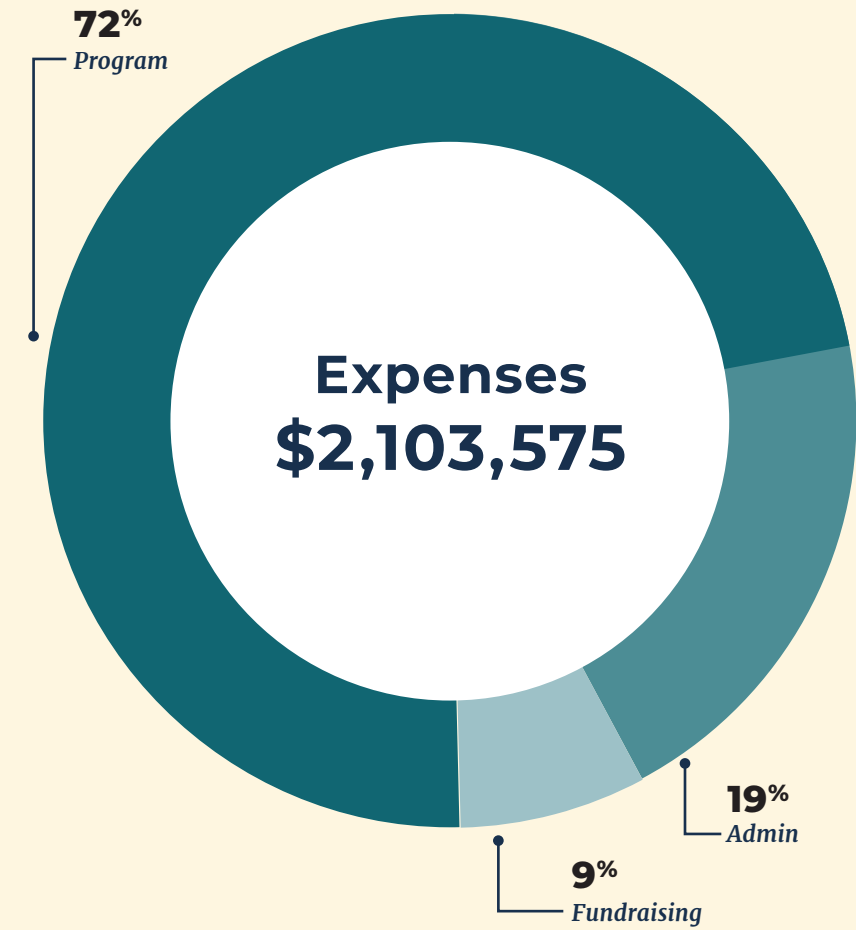
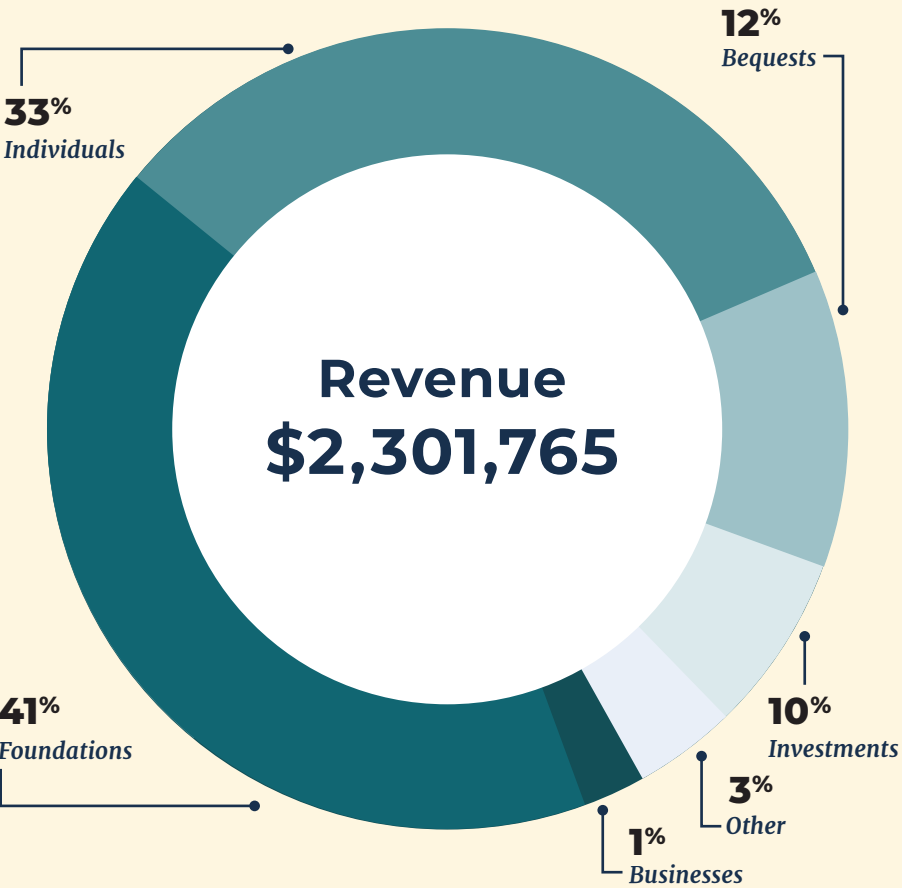


**Jim Johnson - he/him**  
**Working Lands Policy Director**  
Jim has a long and distinguished career as land use planner in Oregon and Washington. His professional career has bridged local, state, and regional perspectives, including 28 years as the land use and water planning coordinator at the Oregon Department of Agriculture.



**Jacky Lee - they/them**  
**Oregon for Everyone Manager**  
A 2021 LULI alum based in Corvallis, Jacky has dedicated their energy and expertise the past five years to community organizing around climate and housing justice issues. They also campaign-managed a six-person City Council slate in 2024; two young progressive organizers were elected.

# LAST FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



## FINANCIAL MEMO

Our fiscal year ended on March 31, 2025; 1000 Friends of Oregon closed the year in a strong financial position. We recorded a year-end surplus due to market performance positively impacting our invested funds. This year’s financial picture reflects both stability and growth in our core areas of support.

We value financial transparency and are always happy to answer questions from our members, partners, and donors. To see our 990 and audited financial statements, please visit [friends.org/financials](https://friends.org/financials).



1000 Friends of Oregon is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our tax ID is 93-0642086. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



## WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2026

As a trusted supporter, enjoy a sneak peek of our 2026 priorities:

- ▶ Through our Report a Land Use Issue form, we will continue to assist Oregonians around the state to respond to, and, if appropriate, represent them on, land use decisions.
- ▶ Continue to partner with our Forestry & Agriculture Advisory Committee (FAAC) to protect our farms, forests, and watersheds from runaway sprawl.
- ▶ Help Oregon cities and towns build and rebuild inside their urban growth boundaries to transform the thousands of acres of vacant lots and the double-digit percentage of empty buildings into Climate-Friendly Areas.
- ▶ Rewrite some of the outdated rules on housing to make sure that people of all ages and abilities have housing options.
- ▶ Make sure Oregon is part of federal discussions to unlock critical resources for housing, agriculture, transportation and transit, and more with our renewed partnership with Smart Growth America.
- ▶ Graduate another 30-person cohort from our flagship leadership development program, Land Use Leadership Initiative (LULI), to hit a major milestone: more than 400 graduates!
- ▶ Through our new role on the Future Vision Commission, we will work to position the Portland metro region for long-term livability and success.
- ▶ Connect Oregonians with critical resources to plan and build wild-fire-ready communities.
- ▶ Build community and share knowledge about land use planning with year-round programming—including our 2026 Affiliate Conference, farm and ranch visits, and webinars with featured speakers.
- ▶ Make it easier for all Oregonians to easily and quickly understand major land conservation and development decisions with our planned launch of the Land Use Resource Center, our Housing Solutions Center, and our continued assistance through our Report a Land Use Issue form.
- ▶ Build a diversified economy of the future that takes care of Oregonians, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soils that nourish us.
- ▶ Earn a "Top 100 Nonprofit to Work For" rating for the fourth time in the last five years.
- ▶ Recruit and retain a talented, supported team to serve all of Oregon.

# Ways to give

Contribute now at [friends.org](https://friends.org)



## BECOME A MEMBER

Become a member of 1000 Friends of Oregon by making a gift of \$35+ today!

## HONOR GOV. McCALL



Members of the McCall Society carry Governor Tom McCall's legacy forward by providing annual support of \$1,000 or more.

## SHARE 1000 FRIENDS

Give the gift of a one-year membership.



## MAKE A PLANNED GIFT

Legacy Circle members build a brighter future for Oregon by including 1000 Friends of Oregon in their estate plans.

## SIGN UP TO GIVE MONTHLY

Monthly giving is a great way to ensure we stand at the ready to address land use threats wherever and whenever they arise.

## GIVE THROUGH YOUR BUSINESS

Business partners enjoy year-round recognition and additional sponsorship and partnership opportunities.





340 SE 6th Ave  
Portland, OR 97214

#### 2026 KEY DATES

January 12: LULI applications open | February 2: First day of the 2026 legislative short session

#### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[facebook.com/1000friendsoforegon](https://facebook.com/1000friendsoforegon)  
[linkedin.com/1000friendsoforegon](https://linkedin.com/1000friendsoforegon)  
Instagram: @1000Oregon  
BlueSky: @1000Oregon

#### SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER TO GET THE LATEST UPDATES

[Friends.org/newsletter](https://Friends.org/newsletter)

 UMATILLA COUNTY