



Internet Resources

Chicago Climate Exchange

<http://www.chicagoclimatex.com/content.jsf?id=23>

National Carbon Offset Coalition

<http://www.ncoc.us/>

The Climate trust

<http://www.climatetrust.org/>

EcoBusiness Links

http://www.ecobusinesslinks.com/carbon_offset_wind_credits_carbon_reduction.htm

There is a lot of activity recently around global climate change, atmospheric green house gas emissions, and the possibility of developing carbon credit markets that Oregon farmers, ranchers, and forest land owners might participate in. There is almost a modern day “Carbon Rush”, not unlike the former “Gold Rush” of the 1849’ers, as carbon brokers and aggregators seek to carve out a place in what may be an important future business.

Most of the earth’s carbon is currently not in the atmosphere. The majority is stored in carbonate rocks or in organic compounds. Although trees and other woody vegetation have received a lot of attention as carbon storage sites, most terrestrial organic carbon is stored as soil organic matter. The amount of carbon in the soil is the net effect of a balance between photosynthesis which adds carbon, and respiration and oxidation that remove carbon. Management actions such as replanting grassland onto croplands, afforestation, conservation tillage, and improved rangeland management can alter this balance and increase carbon storage until a new equilibrium is established under the new regime. The credits for this additional sequestered carbon may be sold provided there is an interested buyer and we can quantify how much carbon has been stored, and assure that this carbon will remain stored.

Currently, demand for carbon credits in the Oregon is limited by a modest demand for carbon credits to satisfy a State requirement that Oregon utilities limit their carbon emissions. There is no mandated national carbon emissions limitation. However, states such as Oregon are joining with other states and moving ahead to require CO₂ emissions reductions in the near future. These reductions will most likely be achieved by using a market-based cap and trade system in which current emitters will be issued carbon credits based upon their past level of emissions. Emissions over the allocated levels must be mitigated by purchasing credits on the carbon market or by reducing emissions from other sources. Any unused credits may be sold. Both the supply and demand for credits will be directly related to regulatory decisions of how many total credits to issue and what proportion of credits will be directly given to current emitters and what proportion will be sold at auction on the open market.

There are some local markets for small projects to sell carbon credits to individuals or organizations who would like to reduce their “carbon footprint”. However, most carbon trading will likely occur through the national carbon brokerage, The Chicago Climate Exchange (The CCX). The CCX only deals in large contracts, so individual land owners wishing to sell carbon credits through them will need to pool their land with others in order to get a large block of credits to sell as a single unit. This is the job of “aggregators”. Aggregators may be firms specializing in this service or may be existing rural organizations such as small wood lot owners associations, soil conservation districts, watershed councils, etc. It is important to remember that although the CCX will sell the credits to the buyer, they deal with the aggregator not the land owners. Land owner’s contracts are with the aggregator, not with CCX. Because all aggregator contracts must conform to CCX guidelines, the CCX website is a very good source for current information about what land management practices generate tradable credits, the rate of at which credits are generated, how land must be committed to projects, and other details of payment. The National Carbon Offset Coalition website is a convenient way to review this same CCX information.

For additional information about Carbon Cycling or other natural resource topics, visit DoctorRange.com - The Natural Resources Knowledge Site at [Http://www.DoctorRange.com](http://www.DoctorRange.com)