



Oregon State Planning Board Agency History

By Gary D. Halvorson, 2008

The Oregon State Planning Board was a fact finding and advisory body created in 1935 to study and make recommendations for the conservation and development of Oregon's resources.

The board was preceded by the Reconstruction Advisory Board, which was created in 1933 to prepare and present applications for loans from the Reconstruction Financing Corporation and to supervise the construction and management of subsequent projects. The Reconstruction Advisory Board consisted of engineers, architects, and economic and professional experts with the governor as chairman of the board.

In 1935 the Reconstruction Advisory Board was abolished and replaced by the nine-member Oregon State Planning Board, which exercised broader functions. Duties of the Oregon State Planning Board included:

- Advising the governor and legislature of the findings from studies and investigations conducted, and submitting reports, recommendations, and plans.
- Cooperating with local planning commissions, furnishing them with technical assistance, and coordinating their activities on a statewide basis.
- Registering Oregon's needs with federal agencies, thus correlating state projects with regional and national development programs.
- Fostering the cooperation of diverse interests through open discussion and presentation of facts.
- Informing the people of their resources, problems, needs, and opportunities, according to research findings.

The board completed more than 40 studies on such subjects as public welfare, public works, public lands, land classification and use, agriculture, and forest resources. It also issued reports concerning mineral and water resources, power, recreation, roadside protection, wildlife, economic problems, and governmental administration.

These studies were researched and written by a combination of legislative, research, and agency volunteers serving as committee members or technical advisors. Copies of the reports

were distributed to official agencies, civic organizations, and citizens concerned with the problems addressed by each study.

During this period, 45 other states used planning boards and the Oregon State Planning Board exchanged studies and recommendations with these entities. Moreover, the board contributed to national surveys and programs submitted to the President and to the United States Congress.

The Oregon State Planning Board ceased to exist in 1939 when it was repealed by the Legislative Assembly (Chapter 557, Oregon Laws, 1939). A bill was introduced that same year to transfer many duties of the board to a State Department of Research and Development but it was not enacted.
