



For Release

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**Southern Oregon University Extends Sustainability Leadership Position  
Through Partnership with Bonneville Environmental Foundation**

*Student-led initiative makes SOU the first university to balance 100% of their water  
use*

**Ashland, Ore.** – April 9, 2013 – Southern Oregon University (SOU) and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) today announced SOU is the first campus in the nation to balance 100% of its water use through a five-year commitment to BEF's Water Restoration Certificate® program. Funded through a student-led Green Fund, the university will restore approximately 80 million gallons of water per year to the Klamath River Basin. The announcement was made during a student rally held on campus.

“As one of the original signers of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, SOU is dedicated to sustainability practices,” noted Mary Cullinan, President of SOU during the rally. “And now, again with powerful campus commitment, wonderful student leadership, and our partnership with BEF, SOU is the first higher education institution to balance 100% of our energy AND water consumption. This is amazing.”

SOU's cutting edge sustainability programs are driven through its student-led Sustainability Council. The Council champions the university's Green Fund which supports a wide-range of high-priority sustainability projects and initiatives through mandatory student fees – voted on and approved by the student body. Fees range from \$10 - \$15 per student per quarter.

Last year, while serving as director of sustainability for student government (ASSOU), Shaun Franks worked with BEF, student organizations (ECOS, Net Impact, and OSPiRG) and the President's Sustainability Council to renew the SOU Green Fund. Franks said, "We agreed that the best use of student funds would be to have a

direct and positive environmental impact in our local region. The students voted to renew the SOU Green Fund indefinitely to address local sustainability issues related to energy, water, and campus initiatives. I hope students across the U.S. follow SOU's example and work to improve the conditions of their local environments."

A portion of the Green Fund fees will be used to launch a new water flow restoration project for Sevenmile Creek in the nearby Klamath River Basin. Significant over-allocation of water resources in the upper Basin has resulted in inadequate stream flows and the degradation and/or loss of critical habitat to the 430 species of wildlife in the area. This flow loss has prevented adequate quality and volume of water from flowing through 17 miles of Sevenmile Creek to National Wildlife Refuge areas.

BEF launched the unique Water Restoration Certificate® (WRC) program in August 2009. WRCs are a voluntary, market-based program that provides economic incentives allowing water rights holders to devise new water management solutions to restore water to critically dewatered ecosystems. Each WRC represents 1,000 gallons of water restored to critically dewatered rivers and streams. All WRC projects are certified by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's strict set of criteria to ensure flow is restored to the environment in locations and at a time that will have optimum environmental benefit.

"We're proud to partner with an institution that is such a model for the higher education sector," said Todd Reeve, CEO of BEF. "Their holistic approach to environmental stewardship, championed by the student body, sets SOU apart."

### **About Southern Oregon University**

As the public liberal arts university of the West, Southern Oregon University focuses on student learning, accessibility, and civic engagement that enriches both the community and bioregion. The university is recognized for fostering intellectual creativity, for quality and innovation in its connected learning programs, and for the educational benefits of its unique geographic location. SOU was the first university in Oregon—and one of the first in the nation—to offset 100 percent of its energy use with clean, renewable power, and it is the first university in the nation to balance 100% of its water consumption. Visit [sou.edu](http://sou.edu).

### **About BEF**

At Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), we believe addressing the planet's most pressing environmental challenges requires innovation, creative problem solving and discovering a new way of doing business that values the natural resources we depend on. We are entrepreneurs for the planet. Through a full suite of innovative energy, carbon and water solutions we are helping our partners—from the farmer to the corporation—redefine how business gets done. We help our partners meaningfully balance their environmental impact, invest in clean energy and carbon reduction, educate the next generation of clean energy leaders, and effectively and sustainably restore the health of our freshwater resources.

Together with our partners, we have kept a combined total of more than 4.7 million metric tons of carbon from the atmosphere, generated 5.1 million megawatts of clean energy, reached more than 400,000 students with hands-on renewable energy education, restored 7.6 billion gallons of water to critically dewatered rivers and streams and have been a driving force in revitalizing 14 watersheds in 6 western states. Learn more at [B-E-F.org](http://B-E-F.org).

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