

OTAC Minutes
August 12, 2009
Red Lion on Market Street, Salem OR

NOTE: The next OTAC meeting will be held November 10, 2009 at the OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center in Aurora

Check the following link for presentations identified below:

<http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/otac/index.html>

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| OTAC 101 | For additional information: Meta Loftsgaarden, 503-414-3236; meta.loftsgaarden@or.usda.gov | Rule and Policy Update – for latest local work group and basin work group meetings, check: http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/schedule.html |
| <p>Check link above for copy of presentation. An update was provided on new Farm Bill rules and Federal register standard operating procedures for State Technical Committees. Attached presentation also outlines roles and responsibilities of state technical committee, state conservationist, local work groups and individual technical committee members. For clarification, most local work groups meet once or twice yearly. Information about local, basin and state meetings is posted to the NRCS website (see address above). OTAC members requested that NRCS keep the website current and provide link quarterly.</p> | | |
| Conservation Stewardship Program Update and OTAC Concurrence | For additional information: Bill White, 503-414-3085 Bill.white@or.usda.gov | Program Update – See attachments posted under the list listed above for use in promoting program (fact sheet, news release) |
| <p>Check link above for copy of presentation. The new Conservation Stewardship Program sign-up started August 10th. To be considered for Fiscal Year 2009 funding, applications must be received by September 30. Oregon will have three ranking pools for funding – a west-side agriculture, east-side agriculture and statewide private, non-industrial forestland. Additional information on the Stewardship Program can be found on the NRCS Website at: http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/index.html. Questions from OTAC members included detailed questions about how the payments would work. NRCS does not have that information available at this time, but will provide it through local avenues and the website when it becomes available.</p> | | |
| Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) awards – state and national | For additional information: Todd Peplin 541-923-4358 x 131 Todd.peplin@or.usda.gov | Oregon CIG Grant recipients announced (8 awardees) – Check link above for list of recipients and press release |
| <p>NRCS announced the eight recipients for this year’s Conservation Innovation Grant program (see attached list). NRCS also announced the two grants awarded under the National CIG component they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burnt River SWCD “Baker County Grass Bank Project” - The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation “Developing and Testing Habitat Job Sheets for Six Regions of the U.S” <p>The Conservation Innovative Grant program is to stimulate development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investments in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. NRCS Oregon set aside 5% of the states EQIP allocation to pilot this new program. This new program received an overwhelming response garnishing 25 applications with a total request of 1.2 million dollars.</p> | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) / Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) | For additional information: Meta Loftsgaarden , 503-414-3236; meta.loftsgaarden@or.usda.gov | Program Update – Check link above for copy of map for approved projects, including Conservation Technical Assistance Projects |
| <p>Check link above for copy of map. Oregon received funding for 8 national Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the second highest number of applications nationwide. All proposals are moving forward with local partners. The announcement came late in the year, so staff are working with local partners to make sure funds are invested in contracts prior to the end of the fiscal year. In addition, Oregon selected four Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative projects to fund. The total investment through both programs is over \$4 million.</p> | | |
| Watershed Pilot Update | For additional information: Tom Makowski , 503-414-3106 Tom.makowski@or.usda.gov | Program Update |
| <p>Check link above for copy of presentation. Local NRCS staff and conservation partners developed and submitted ten project proposals for watershed planning assistance through NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) funding. The NRCS Water Resources Planning Team, and other technical specialists, will assist local conservation partnerships develop implementation strategies to achieve sustainable watershed health through conservation implementation. Watershed plans and Implementation Strategies will be held in an Oregon NRCS portfolio of Investment Opportunities to be implemented as conservation funding becomes available</p> | | |
| STEPS Conservation Workbook Presentation | For additional information: Jill Rees 503-414-3273 Jill.rees@or.usda.gov | Request for Input & Participation regarding the review process, steering committee, & distribution of STEPS Workbook |
| <p>Check link above for copy of presentation. NRCS in cooperation with a number of additional partners is working to revise the NRCS developed STEPS for Healthy and Sustainable Rural Living on Small Acreages workbook. This workbook was developed to educate rural landowners about conservation issues and provide strategies for identifying solutions. Oregon State University-Extension and Oregon Department of Forestry provided updates about their intended use for the workbooks and participation on the committee. The workbook can be viewed at: http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/news/factsheets/steps_2008.pdf. To provide input or participate in the Small Acreage Steering Committee please contact Jill Rees at jill.rees@or.usda.gov or call at 503-414-3273.</p> | | |
| Irrigation System Upgrade/ Replacement Policy | For additional information: Dave Dishman Dave.dishman@or.usda.gov 503-411-3252 | Decision: Move forward provisionally with proposed Policy and establish a review committee for further feedback and direction |
| <p>Check link above for copy of the draft. NRCS presented a policy for OTAC consideration that would clarify what projects qualify for funding for irrigation system upgrades and/or replacements. The goal is to ensure that practices covered with these payments are not typical ‘operations and maintenance’ functions that are not allowed to be paid by EQIP. Questions from OTAC for clarification included: is there a way in the future to make these types of practices outcome-based? Is the 14% irrigation efficiency gain identified the right amount? Is there a way to also assess additional benefits to IWM, economics, fish and wildlife? How are energy components addressed? OTAC recommended to move forward with the policy provisionally, but with the opportunity for interested OTAC members to provide review provisional policy and make recommendation to OTAC for permanent acceptance of policy.</p> <p>Note to OTAC Members: we have been unable to locate the signup list. If you signed up or would like to participate in a further review of the attached policy, please contact Dave</p> | | |

| | | |
|--|--|-------------|
| Dishman. | | |
| Healthy Forests Reserve Program and Safe Harbor Agreement Update | For additional information: Meta Loftsgaarden Meta.loftsgaarden@or.usda.gov 503-414-3236 | Information |
| Oregon Department of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service and NRCS have entered into a partnership to improve spotted owl habitat on working forestlands in Oregon. ODF and USFWS have been working on a Safe Harbor Agreement, which provides participating landowners with assurances under the Endangered Species Act if they follow a stewardship plan and agreement. NRCS is providing easement opportunities for landowners in a five-county area in SW Oregon that has been identified as key for spotted owl habitat. The program has received exceptional response in the first year, and NRCS is moving forward on appraisals for six properties, totaling nearly 1,000 acres in those counties. The federal register notice for the spotted owl SHA is posted at the link listed above. | | |
| Basin Team Leader Update | For additional information: Gina Kerzman Gina.kerzman@or.usda.gov 541-823-4358 x138 | Information |
| <p>Check link above for copy of the RFP. Gina provided an update on the approach the Deschutes basin is taking to invest 25% of their EQIP funds through strategic projects proposed by local partners. The RFP closes at the end of this week. The Basin Work Group will then review proposals and select projects for funding. Priorities for basin investment are water quality/quantity, energy and plant production. Gina also gave an update on the EQIP, WHIP, AWEP, CCPI and GRP programs in Deschutes Basin, and commented that the EQIP organic sign-up was very successful. She thanks Oregon Tilth for their help in providing organic cross-training between Oregon Tilth and NRCS employees. She briefly mentioned the Shitike Creek WHIP project on the Warm Springs Reservation, which is using state of the art engineering design work to improve the watershed. In addition, she mentioned the Northwest Horse Coalition being spearheaded by the Warm Springs Reservation to deal with the feral horse issue. The NWHC includes tribes from all over the northwest, as well as tribes across the nation that are dealing with the feral horse issue. NRCS will hopefully play a role in the restoration of the grazing lands effected by these animals.</p> | | |
| OTAC Member Updates | All OTAC members | Information |
| <p>NOTE: A number of updates were provided that are not included below. Information below includes dates to remember and other specific reference items for OTAC members.</p> <p>Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife – working on major revision to Oregon Conservation Strategy. Mid-term revision will include references to climate change as well as additions to reflect wildlife habitat updates (sage grouse, wolf conservation)</p> <p>Oregon Association of Counties – Emily Ackland asked that her contact information be provided to OTAC membership: Emily Ackland, Environmental Coordinator, Oregon Association of Counties, 1201 Court St NE, Salem OR 97301, 503-585-8351</p> <p>Oregon Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils – will be holding their annual meeting in coordination with the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts. The meeting will be in Pendleton, November 4-7. OTAC members are invited and welcome to attend. Registration information will be available at www.cascadepacific.org.</p> <p>Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board – fall board meeting is September 15-16 in Enterprise. Part of the agenda will include a two-year report on the Special Investment Partnership in the Deschutes.</p> <p>OSU Extension – will be releasing new Shrubs of Oregon publication – a companion to the Trees of Oregon guide</p> | | |

Oregon Tilth – October 14-20 is ‘Organically Grown in Oregon’ week as designated by the Governor. EQIP allocation for organic program in Oregon exceeded \$1.2 million in applications this year.

Network of Oregon Watershed Councils – will hold their biennial conference October 27-30 in Klamath Falls at the Running Y. Information is available at <http://oregonwatersheds.org/>.

Oregon State University – has a new dean for the College of Agriculture - Sonny Ramaswamy.

Members Present:

In attendance: Chair: Ron Alvarado, **NRCS State Conservationist; Livestock Producer Representative:** Dalton Straus; **Oregon Department of Forestry,** Lanny Quackenbush, **DEQ:** Koto Kishida, Gene Foster; **OSU, Cooperative Extension Service:** Bill Braunworth & Jim Johnson; **US Fish and Wildlife:** Lee Folliard; **Oregon Tilth:** Chris Schreiner; **Oregon Tree Farm Society:** K.C. Van Natta; **USDA-ARS:** John D. Williams; **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board:** Ken Bierly; **Oregon Cattlemen’s Association:** Kay Teisl; **Oregon Association of RC&D Councils:** Karl Morgenstern; **Bureau of Land Management:** Robert Hopper, **Oregon Farm Bureau:** Gail Greeman & Jennifer Shmikler, **The Nature Conservancy:** Derek Johnson, **Clean Water Services/Willamette Partnership:** Bobby Cochran, **Oregon Small Woodlands Association:** David Ford, Jen Reins; **OSU Extension:** Melissa Fery, **Oregon Department of Agriculture:** Michael Powers, **Forest Service Region 6:** Tom Hilken, **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife:** Michael Pope, **EPA:** Joel Salter, **Oregon Association of Counties:** Emily Acklund; **NRCS:** Meta Loftsgaarden, Sara Magenheimer, Jill Rees, Todd Peplin, Bill White, Tom Makowski, Gina Kerzman, Kevin Conroy.