

**OTAC Minutes**  
*February 22, 2007*  
*FSA Office, Tualatin*

**Next Meetings: May 15 (Aurora Experiment Station), August 8 (TBD)**

**\*\*Note:** *If PowerPoints were used for presentations, or if handouts were provided, they are attached to the minutes, rather than included directly in the minutes text. Key points are included below where appropriate.*

<b>2007 Farm Bill Update/Outlook</b>	Bob Graham, NRCS Larry Frey, FSA	Information
<p>See attached handout (FSA) and PowerPoint Presentation (NRCS).</p> <p>Key Points: Administration's proposal was presented. Current congressional timeline proposed: Farm Bill complete and to President by September. Administration's proposal provided in attached handouts/PowerPoint.</p>		
<b>OTAC/Basin Work Group/Local Work Group Structure</b>	Facilitated session with: all OTAC members, NRCS Basin Team Leaders	Recommendation: Present proposal for OTAC consideration at next meeting
<p>See attached handout for overview of current OTAC/BWG/LWG structure.</p> <p>Three breakout groups were formed, containing both NRCS basin team leaders and OTAC members. Groups provided recommendations on: agenda items, attendees, meeting structure and timing of meetings.</p> <p>Information gathered during the breakout sessions will be developed into a proposal for OTAC consideration at the May meeting</p>		
<b>Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Process/Policy Review</b>	Todd Peplin, NRCS	Recommendation: OTAC recommends subcommittee formed to design state-level CIG program. Will provide recommendation at next OTAC meeting.
<p>See attached PowerPoint presentation.</p> <p>Key points – National funding categories for which OR can apply: Natural resources (\$10m), Technology (\$5m). In Oregon, 17 applications totaling 4.4 million dollars were submitted to NRCS national head quarters to be considered for funding. Due to a high interest in the CIG program NRCS is considering a state CIG program .State program considerations: reduce competition for OR proposals, opportunity to target state resource priorities, can promote innovative technologies in Oregon, will increase administrative time for CIG program, and reduce EQIP dollars available for on-farm agreements. CIG funding for a state-level program will come from existing state-level EQIP funds (up to 10% can be used for a state CIG program = approx. \$1.2 million in OR)</p> <p>OTAC recommended that OR NRCS consider a state CIG program and designated a subcommittee to develop details. Subcommittee will report at next meeting.</p> <p>Sub-Committee Members: Cheryl Hummon – Defenders of Wildlife, Mace Vaughn – Xerces Organization, Derek Johnson - The Nature Conservancy, Jay Gibb – NRCS          Dave Dishman – NRCS, Sam Asai – FSA State Committee, Meta Loftsgaarden - NRCS</p>		

<b>Alternative Energy Presentation</b>	Mark Kendell, OR Dept. of Energy	Information
<p>See attached PowerPoint presentation.</p> <p>For more information, contact: Oregon Dept of Energy, 800.221.8035, <a href="http://www.oregon.gov/energy">www.oregon.gov/energy</a></p>		
<b>Rural Development Programs</b>	Jeff Deiss, USDA Rural Development	Information
<p>See attached PowerPoint presentation.</p> <p>For more information, contact: Jeff Deiss, Business and Coop Program Director 503.141.3367, <a href="mailto:jeff.deiss@or.usda.gov">jeff.deiss@or.usda.gov</a>, <a href="http://www.rurdev.usda.gov">http://www.rurdev.usda.gov</a></p>		
<b>Use of EQIP Funds for Waste Storage Covers</b>	Dave Dishman, NRCS Jim Krahn, OR Dairy Farmers Assn. Bob Pedersen, NRCS	Information
<p>Key Points: Jim Krahn – Discussed the language for a program of voluntary best management practices at large Oregon dairies. No later than September 1, 2007, the Department of Environmental Quality and State Department of Agriculture shall establish a program to promote and monitor the voluntary adoption of best management practices for the control of emissions of air pollutants at large Oregon dairy farms. We are putting numbers together for a form for Oregon air emission control of Best Management Practices (BMPs).</p> <p>Bob Pederson – Discussed the Tillamook County Air Quality Project. Project is in its infancy. Strong support from Tillamook Dairy Association. To assist the local work group put together an air quality technical committee. The committee addressed an area of concern. Three pools of money we can use regular surface and water (storage tanks, nutrient management, and practices) pool of money to develop CNMPs. Both of the above have been highly successful.</p> <p>Dave Dishman - See attached PowerPoint presentation.</p> <p>Tillamook County NRCS is willing to cost share on tank covers with 2007 EQIP funds.</p>		

<b>Additional CRP Management Practice</b>	Lois Loop, FSA	Concurrence requested. Decision: subcommittee formed to review proposed practice in more detail. Will provide recommendation to OTAC at next meeting
<p>Key Points:          The Wasco County Committee requests authority to use brush piles as an eligible wildlife management practice for CREP contracts. Brush piles can be a valuable cover for quail and other small animals throughout Wasco County. NRCS has developed specifications under Practice Code 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management, to be used by planners when the practice is included in the Conservation Plan.</p> <p>The State Technical Committee has already approved this request, but needs OTAC committee approval.</p> <p>Initial proposal: consider only under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Certain conditions</li> <li>2. Certain practices</li> <li>3. Control of noxious weeds</li> </ol> <p><b>INFORMAL QUESTION:</b> Is this a worthwhile project to consider further?          Yes – 8, No = 4</p> <p>Russ Hatz – Create a subcommittee to further investigate this issue and come up with some provisos for approval.</p> <p><b>DECISION</b> – Refer to a subcommittee to put the parameters on the recommendation form Wasco - Brush Pile Subcommittee          Subcommittee Members: <i>Tom Hilken – USFS, Sam Asai – USDA/FSA, Russ Hatz – USDA/NRCS, Bruce Campbell – ODFW, Lois Loop – USDA/FSA</i></p>		
<b>CREP Tour Presentation</b>	Lois Loop, FSA	Information
<p>Hard copy of tour report is available on request from Lois at the FSA office (<a href="mailto:lois.loop@or.usda.gov">lois.loop@or.usda.gov</a>)</p> <p>Key Points: From August 21-24, 2006 a tour of CREP installations was undertaken by state and regional representatives from FSA, OR Dept of Agriculture, NRCS and the OR Dept. of Forestry. Tour purpose: determine the success for the current methods being used to implement riparian buffers, assess the monetary input, and determine if cost-share rates are justified. Counties visited: Umatilla, Morrow, Wasco, Klamath, and Linn. A total of 20 sites were selected, ranging from new plantings to 5-yr projects. Report includes an administrative overview of the findings, and technical observations and analysis.</p> <p>Action Recommendations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ODF and NRCS will work together to develop training on riparian restoration. Training will be made available to CREP partners.</li> <li>- ODF/NRCS will explore means to provide training to contractors.</li> <li>- ODA will develop a process to inform NRCS when new CREP technicians are hired so that NRCS and ODF can provide training.</li> <li>- NRCS will conduct a cost analysis of the different technical means used to install and maintain CREP plantings in various settings.</li> </ul>		

<b>WHIP Subcommittee Report</b>	<a href="#">Todd Peplin, NRCS and WHIP Subcommittee members</a>	<a href="#">Information</a>
<p>Sub-Committee Members: <i>Todd Peplin, Andy Horstman, Cheryl Hummon, Bruce Taylor, Steve Vaught, Bruce Campbell, Derek Johnson, and Deborah Virgovic</i></p> <p>Key Points: Intention is to help administer the program in Oregon and assist basin work groups. The team worked on the WHIP wildlife plan and assisted in creating the NRCS web page. This group has great input on what is happening statewide. The group met on January 19<sup>th</sup> at the NRCS State Office in Portland.</p> <p>Comments: 1) Need to determine what decisions are made at Basin Work Group meetings in order to assist in wildlife issues. 2) Some contracts cancel out at the last minute. Need a way to keep the dollars in Oregon and not send back to NHQ. Committee is looking at creative ways to partner between agencies. Funding levels between basins need to be adjusted. Also discussing ideas on contract and cost share (move from 75 to 50% - what are the ramifications). The state wildlife strategy was discussed – developed by a large list of stakeholders – identifies priority eco-region and habitat area. These are ones that need attention. All agencies can tie into and focus the efforts. The next meeting is tentatively going to be sometime the first week in April.</p>		
<b>EQIP/WRP/CSP FY07 Program Direction</b>	<a href="#">Bill White</a>	<a href="#">Information</a>
<p>Key Points: CSP: It was announced last month that the CSP sign-up for 2007 and 2008 would not occur. In addition, based on the continuing resolution, modifications or additions to CSP contracts are currently on hold.</p> <p>FRPP: will be announced in the near future. OR will have approximately \$320,000 available this year. Last year we had no contracts. There were three agreements in FY04 and FY05. The sign-up will probably run from until the latter part of April. There will be information posted on our web page and grants.gov (not in the federal register).</p> <p>EQIP – WHIP: looking at commitment, contract development and the obligation of funds. WHIP projects are ample in the John Day/Umatilla. EQIP - 59 contracts are obligated and the rest are in the pre approved stage.</p> <p>WHIP subcommittee next year should have someone from the BWG there for the discussion and vote.</p>		
<b>Other Key Discussion Items/ Announcements</b>	<a href="#">All OTAC Members</a>	<a href="#">Information</a>
<p><b>Jeannie Berg (Congresswoman Hooley's office) – ANNOUNCEMENT:</b> Specialty Crop Farm Bill Form to be hosted by Congresswoman Hooley and Congressman Cardoza (CA-18) on February 26 at the NW Viticulture Center in Salem</p> <p><b>Todd Peplin and Hal Gordon</b> are working with the field offices in basin to develop payment schedules. Will be different format than the cost share lists. It will be a different way for payments to be determined. Yellow book appraisal process is here to stay.</p> <p><b>Chris Schreiner</b>, Oregon Tilth are building working relationships between USDA Cooperative Extension, Oregon State University, NRCS, and farmer cooperators in Oregon to address obstacles to organic farming systems through federal, state, and privately supported research. More information can be obtained from website: <a href="http://www.tilth.org">http://www.tilth.org</a></p> <p><b>Mace Vaughn</b> – National Academies of Science have published a report about pollinator trends (<a href="http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=11761">http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=11761</a>). Extended invitation to provide technical training for field staff on pollinators, links to buffers and habitat.</p>		

**Daulton Straus** - Over 70,000 plants went out the door last weekend at the annual district plant sale.

**Dan Long** -Point of interest, in the next Farm Bill, there is a proposed name change, combining CSREES and the Research Education Service to the Office of Science under USDA. Pendleton is developing a new project at trying to increase the revenue scale on ranches and farmers converting straw to energy and precision Ag boost protein in wheat.

**Lois Loop** -There will be no general CRP signup this year. Not intending to sign up retired land. But will continue to sign up for continuous and CREP.

**Larry Frey** - Disaster funding - there is a proposal to put a permanent disaster bill into the new Farm Bill.

**Bob Graham** -As always, if there are other presentations that you would like to see at these meetings, please let us know. National technical center is working on interesting projects. The Remote Sensing Lab, both located on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor in our building, are doing some amazing resources inventory project with high tech equipment. Russ Hatz is working with OSU with an on-line conservation planning program for producers.

**In attendance: Co-Chairs:** Bob Graham, **NRCS State Conservationist**, and Larry Frey, **FSA State Director; NRCS:** Meta Loftsgaarden, Cec Cullison, Bill White, Todd Peplin, Russ Hatz, Tom Makowski, Dave Dishman, Lisa Greber, Pedro Ramos, Kevin Conroy, Jay Gibbs, Greg Kuehl, Jeff Goebel; Leo Preston, Scott Zimmerman, Theresa McGovern (Acting), Bob Pederson; **FSA:** Lois Loop; **Congresswoman Hooley's Office:** Jeannie Berg; **Farm Service Agency State Committee:** Sam Asai and Daulton Straus; **Oregon Habitat Joint Venture:** Bruce Taylor; **OSU Cooperative Extension Service:** Bill Braunworth; **US Fish and Wildlife Service:** Lee Folliard; **Oregon Small Woodlands Association:** John Poppino; **Conservation Districts:** Stan Christensen; **The Nature Conservancy:** Derek Johnson; **Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center:** Dan Long; **Oregon Department of Energy** - Mark Kendall and Robin Straughan; **USDA/Rural Development:** Jeff Deiss; **Oregon Wheat Growers League:** Jerry Rietmann; **The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation:** Mace Vaughn; **Defenders of Wildlife:** Cheryl Hummon; **Oregon Department of Forestry:** Steve Vaught; **US Forest Service:** Tom Hilken; **Oregon Tilth:** Chris Schreiner; **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife:** Bruce Campbell; **Oregon Dairy Farmers Association:** Jim Krahn