

# Session Notes

## Palouse Local Work Group Work Session

Farm Bill Program Review, Prevalence of Conservation Needs & Local Priorities

Public Works Conference Room A, 310 N. Main, Colfax

February 16, 2011 – 9:00 am to 3:30 pm

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### Session Objective:

- Review FY11 Farm Bill accomplishments, review natural resource data, including the most prevalent natural resource conservation issues to be addressed in the LWG area with various programs, review and revise (if needed) the EQIP ranking priorities, Marketing to land managers not participating, LWG membership and operating procedures.

### Overview of the Local Work Group Members, Role & Operating Procedures:

See Appendix A

### Feedback & Discussion:

- Going away from conservation with new CRP signups – having to tear up and reseed – no benefit to conservation, wildlife habitat – need to look at policy and rules (FSA and NRCS) – partly caused by the signup and part by rules
- Beginning farmers rules (5% designation) – had an example where not enough funding...sent letter to Chief and it eventually was funded
- CRP takeout program funding as state priority last year...this year we need to bring forward from LWG input...interest by producers in takeout for production
- Wildlife – federal programs are anouras and reviews taking too long...especially in grazing areas in low rainfall areas, cost share working OK but not getting results in the rental programs...not sufficient to get incentive
- Gap between EQIP and CSP...conservation farmers not qualified for EQIP in particular...struggling with CSP applications
- Direct Seed cost share...crawl, walk, run...a good way to start out...moving conservation step at a time...coupled with mentoring program...would be good to have NRCS program (AWEF) boost for mentoring (\$10 per acre)...could we move to entire LWG area
- Cost share program with forestry...strong demand...demand higher than current funding available
- EQIP for forestry easier to get than DNR funding (one example) below cutoff line - EQIP in Spokane County is working...district forester helping out
- Ability to piggyback federal and state funds...example steps in conservation
- Collaborating within Extension regarding what to do about CRP takeout (example Lacrosse)...consider CIG...organic farming and weed control...
- Cultural resources investigations are better because of the practice listing...but still work to be done...need to be done more timely...some areas working well
- Agony of signing up for programs...NRCS personnel learning a program while giving the applicant guidance
- Water quality issue on Spokane River...bill in state legislature for levels of phosphorus in lawn fertilizer
- CRP keeps going for the whole farm bids...sometimes good...need a way to stop the whole farm bids

## Past Year - Farm Bill Program Accomplishments:

### EQIP 2011 Preliminary

29 no. Contracts @ \$705,676 Pre-approved

#### I. Cropland:

12 applications @ \$465,582.39

(contracts/funds)

(41%/66% of EQIP totals)

#### II. Cropland Technology:

6 applications @ \$57,250.00

2011 Proposal – Cropland: 60% of funding

(21%/8% of EQIP totals)

#### III. Forest Health:

10 applications @ \$119,348.00

2011 Proposal – Forestland: 10% of funding

(34%/17% of EQIP totals)

#### IV. Multi-Use Vegetation Management

1 application @ \$62,496.00

2011 Proposal – Vegetation Management: 10% of funding

(3%/9% of EQIP totals)

#### V. Streamside Areas

0 Applications @ \$0

2011 Proposal – 20% of funding

(0%/0% of EQIP totals)

### EQIP 2010

34 no. Contracts @ \$728,230 obligated on 8419.2 acres

#### I. Water and Soil Quality on Cropland:

9 No. Contracts @ \$431,081 on 4762.1 acres

(contracts/funds/acres)

(26%/59%/57% of EQIP totals)

#### II. Cropland Technology:

9 No. Contracts @ \$168,804 on 3393.7 acres

(26%/23%/40% of EQIP totals)

#### III. Forest Health:

16 No. Contracts @ \$127,841 on 262.8 acres

(47%/18%/3% of EQIP totals)

### Prevalent Natural Resource Conservation Needs

- Cropland: Soil Erosion – Sheet & Rill Erosion
- Cropland: Water Quality Degradation - Excessive Sediment in Surface Water
- Cropland: Soil Quality Degradation – Organic Matter Depletion
- Grazing Land: Degraded Plant Condition - Undesirable plant productivity and health.
- Grazing Land: Livestock Production Limitation - Inadequate Livestock Water.
- Forest: Inadequate Habitat for Fish & Wildlife- Habitat Degradation.
- Forest: Degraded Plant Condition: Undesirable plant productivity and health
- Forest: Degraded Plant Condition: Wildfire Hazard, Excessive Biomass Accumulation.

**Priority Natural Resource Conservation Needs: FY12**

1) Treat **non-irrigated cropland** to reduce sheet and rill erosion and impacts of sediment, and restore organic matter while improving water infiltration. Emphasize protection of former **CRP land** with residue management practices, grazing facilitation practices, and buffers and upland wildlife habitat practices which promote retention and enhancement of permanent cover. Focus advanced and precision use of **cropland technology on non-irrigated and irrigated cropland** for nutrient and pest management to reduce over application and impact to water and air. This will comprise **60%** of funding priority.

2) Promote **vegetation management** systems to improve diversity of vegetation stands on grazing/forage producing and forested lands. Use biological controls, pest management, plant materials introduction, manage invasive and noxious weeds, and/or implement managed grazing practices. This will comprise **20%** of funding priority.

3) Treat **streamside areas** to prevent water quality impacts from livestock and crop production activities. Emphasize vegetation solutions for streambank treatment. Increase vegetation along streams, preferably native species. Provide for off-site livestock watering where site specific and optimal, in combination with prescribed grazing systems adjacent and uphill from streamside areas to decrease erosion and improve water quality. Eliminate crop production from stream sides and implement buffers. This will comprise **5%** of funding priority.

4) Treat **forestland** to reduce fuel loads for wildfire hazard. Replace burned or diseased stands. Improve forest health by treating pests, overstocking, under-stocking, erosion, and wildlife habitat. This will comprise **15%** of funding priority.

Notes:

Combination of programs to a conservation result of the vegetation management with working lands production.

**Funding Pools**

<b>Funding Pool - EQIP</b>	<b>FY11 Actual</b>	<b>Recommended FY11</b>	<b>Recommended FY12</b>
Dry Cropland	66%	45%	45%
Cropland Technology	8%	15%	15%
Riparian & Streamside Protection	0%	20%	5%
Vegetation Management & Grazing	9%	10%	20%
Forest Land	17%	10%	15%

**Notes on Ranking Questions, Practices, Cost Share Rates:**

- Handle riparian and streamside protection practices within applications ranking higher in each land use area
- Cap on cropland technology practice increased to \$8000.
- Beginning farmer would get extra points in ranking process (state question) and higher payment rate.
- The funds management process remains the same as last year.
- Consider a mentoring component (payment \$10 / acre) into any direct seed application...model from AWEP including qualifications

**Working Team Formation**

- Kurt, Larry, Cory, David...Colfax office...Wednesday, 2.23.11...9:00 am to noon

**Chair for Upcoming Year:**

Larry Cochran

**Priority Resource Concerns Descriptions**

See separate files

## Appendix A

### Overview of the Local Work Group Role & Operating Procedures:

#### Local Work Group Participants:

##### Current Members

- Whitman COC
- FSA Whitman County
- FSA Spokane County
- Whitman Co Extension
- Spokane Co Extension
- WADNR Spokane Co
- WADNR Spokane Co(North);
- WDFW
- Spokane County CD
- Pine Creek CD
- Whitman CD
- Palouse CD
- Palouse-Rock Lake CD.
- Lands Council
- USFWS
- PNDSA – Whitman
- PNDSA - Spokane
- Ecology
- Spokane County Cattleman
- Whitman County Cattleman
- Cattle Producers of WA
- Hay grower
- Farm Bureau

All members have to be active in natural resources in Whitman or Spokane County.

In addition to existing representatives – recommendation to invite representatives from the following groups from Whitman & Spokane Counties.

- Hog producer
- Sheep producer
- WA Wheat Alliance
- Pea & Lentil Assn
- Non-industrial Private Forestry
- Organic Farming (eg Rural Roots)
- Farm Bureau

#### Operating Procedures:

- Decision Making – consensus first (consensus arrived by the question “is there anyone that cannot live with this”) – with vote if needed
- New invited members – PNDSA, Whitman County Cattleman, Spokane County Cattleman, Cattle Producers of WA, seated on 5.7.09 with follow-up needed (consensus)
- New members would be considered through a written request by their organization including the name of the person and alternate name (one voting member) representing the organization and be acted on by the LWG. (consensus)
- An invitation letter to potential representatives, the list above, plus a public invitation done by DC.
- Email communication preferred – originated by DC and chair (consensus)