

State Technical Committee (STC) Meeting

November 8, 2012

Clint recognized The Nature Conservancy with a plaque for their work to promote the Sage-Grouse Initiative in Idaho

<p>Round robin partners updated the group on their organization's activities.</p>	<p>Keith Esplin (Potato Growers of Idaho) The January Potato Conference will have a seminar and workshop on soil health. Information on this topic is needed especially in areas with severe wind erosion problems.</p> <p>Stuart Van Greuning (Idaho Dept. Of Water Resources) – this is last year for Idaho Water Resources Board's Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) projects</p> <p>Lynn Tominaga – (Idaho Ground Water Appropriators) IGWA is taking possession of 3 fish growing facilities near Hagerman. Bought them to prevent the 1962 water rights from being curtailed. Will help create recharge sites for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.</p> <p>Peter Anderson – Trout Unlimited is working on projects in the Lemhi, Pahsimeroi and Yankee Fork areas, Pebble Creek in southeast Idaho, and projects to rebuild diversions on upper Blackfoot River. Also have a project going north of Boise on Dry Creek.</p> <p>Dave Pisarski – Idaho DEQ – NRCS & 319 funds are supporting projects to improve water quality along the Lower Boise River.</p> <p>Dave Torrell (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation) - Working on landscape scale projects with partner groups on forest restoration & working to engage private landowners in conservation and restoration projects</p> <p>Ronda Hirnyck (UI Extension) – Promoted the soil health workshops with extension education this summer. UI has a Conservation Innovation Grant for work to reduce pesticides in water and sediment in the Lower Boise River. They are promoting drip irrigation on farms along the Lower Boise River</p> <p>Bret Rumbeck (Idaho Assoc. of Soil Conservations Districts) Idaho hosted the Southwest and Pacific Region National Assoc. of Conservation Districts annual meeting in September</p> <p>Joe Adamski (Bureau of Land Management) – 1.9 million acres burned in Idaho this year.</p> <p>Teri Murrison (Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission) - The Commission is furthering conservation across the state with their field employees. RCRP loan program provides matching funds for landowner loans.</p>
<p>Update from Farm Services Agency - Ron Abbott</p>	<p>Biggest expected changes in FSA's programs are for the total nationwide acres. There will be no new contracts without a new Farm Bill.</p> <p>FSA closed four offices in Idaho – Clearwater-Orofino office went to Lewiston. Marsing went to Canyon County in Caldwell. Payette moved to Weiser, and Shoshone went to Jerome. Reduced 60 employees statewide all through voluntary retirement.</p> <p>Provided spreadsheets with available acres for FSA programs</p>

	<p>Can't approve new contracts for SAFE Highly Erodible Land Initiative for wind or water erosion. Can put land in program outside the general signups</p>
<p>NRCS Fiscal year 2012 Program Accomplishments</p>	
<p>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and EQIP Initiatives Ron Brooks</p>	<p>Regionalized payment schedules: NRCS moved to regionalized payment schedules to have more payment consistency nationwide. In FY 2012 15 practices used a regionalized payment schedule; all practices will use regionalized payments for FY 2013. A national team developed 800 payment scenarios with regional team review. Regionalized scenarios can be modified with approval from the national office. Idaho, Montana and Wyoming were formed into a region. Idaho is currently reviewing the scenarios to get a cost list to use to make the payment schedule.</p> <p>Timeline for EQIP signups: Nov 16, last day to sign up for FY 2013 funding. Applications will be ranked by 3/30/13 and obligated by May 1. Won't know if there will be another EQIP ranking period until after March. Producers can sign up after the ranking cutoff date but those applications won't be ranked until the next sign up.</p> <p>There will be a sign up for a National Water Quality Initiative. We don't know when.</p>
<p>Easement programs</p>	<p>Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) for last 2 years emphasized sage-grouse projects. 2012 focused on the Pioneer Mountains priority area for sage-grouse work. 26 GRP easements waiting to be closed</p> <p>Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) is used to determine the value placed on an easement. Saves NRCS from doing and paying for appraisals on each piece of property. The GARC x number of acres = amount landowners will receive at closing.</p>
<p>Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)</p>	<p>If there is funding after paying the existing 2012 contracts there will be a CSP sign up in FY 2013.</p>
<p>Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)</p>	<p>Money from WHIP was allocated for specific species through the Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative. Idaho had money for sage-grouse related projects. WHIP is separate from EQIP in that it has its own rules. Also different from SAFE which is FSA's program.</p>
<p>Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)</p>	<p>Marysville Phase 4 – pipeline project to replace dirt irrigation ditches Portneuf Irrigation Company – pipeline project to replace dirt irrigation ditches Goose Creek Irrigation District - Hazelton Butte north and south – conversion from ground water pumping to surface water when it is available.</p>

<p>Soil Health in Idaho Marlon Winger/Ron Brooks</p>	<p>3 key concepts 1) Understand the context of soil 2) Protect the soil habitat the microbes live in 3) Provide diverse food (or carbon sources) for microbes NRCS sponsored 3 soil health workshops in August in Idaho Falls, Pocatello and Jerome. Planning more workshops. November IASCD conference; February workshops in Lewiston, Colfax and Spokane; potato school and wheat commission conference</p> <p>Idaho's soil health initiative is to reduce/eliminate wind and water erosion. Handed out a list of suggested practices. Robust discussion focused on education, areas to include in the initiative, how to help farmers improve soil health, bringing in partners to help with initiative, potential for districts to lease no-till drills to farmers, developing informational materials on improving soil health.</p> <p>NRCS requested input on the Soil Health Initiative from the committee. The committee recommended offering the initiative statewide and setting aside 10% of the general EQIP allocation for the 2013 signup.</p>
<p>New 590 Standard for Nutrient Management</p>	<p>NRCS now has a final draft of the standard. The new one is not much different than the old one. A lot of things in the new standard were already being done in Idaho. Emphasizes looking at nutrient management risks and how to deal with the nutrients that run off the property.</p>