

10:10 am.

Meeting initiated with an introduction by Hannah Smith, District Conservationist (DC). Brief introduction, personal history, and educational history.

Updates were provided by multiple agencies.

Jana Pederson, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), gave updates on NRCS funded projects. Potential new funding source in addition to the NRCS in the Pine Eagle area of the county, Fire Wise in East Eagle, and a Community Fire Grant. Jana did confirm that NRCS funds will be used prior to other funding resources.

Tara Phillips, Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD), stated the SWCD has 21 open projects at this time, 32 monitoring projects, and 6 currently in the application process. Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB) will have new application opening for 2023 funding beginning in May of 2023. ODFW continues to help with fish screening funds when needed. Small grants through the SWCD will begin in September of 2023, small grants are now limited to \$15,000 compared to the past \$10,000 to be matched by OWEB at 25%.

Hannah Smith presented the most recent 2023 drought prediction for the Eastern side of Oregon. The snowpack is currently at a 132% average median. Illustrations of priority Resource Concerns (RC) areas were presented to the attendees. Long range plans were discussed, and a focus was placed on soil, water, plants, and animals. Fire suppression is now becoming an RC based on drought and hazardous fire condition in the Intermountain West.

Presentation of the NRCS's current cost share, contract numbers, and obligated totals were given for each respective program. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Environmental Quality Initiative program (EQIP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Currently the NRCS is ranking the first round of 2023 EQIP applications. Currently, there is no set deadline for CSP applications. There may be a second signup for EQIP, a decision is yet to be determined.

Local Producer, Curtis Martin asked for clarification whether the CSP signup was for Classic or Renewal, the signup is for renewal on contracts ending in 2019. Classic enrollment has not been decided at this time. Second question from the producer was if there would be carbon sequestration would be included in new areas of emphasis. Hannah explained that yes carbon sequestration practices and implementation is and will be included.

Hannah asked the local producers what their main priorities and concerns today and long range would be.

Irrigation practices and cost share opportunities were the number one concern given the drought in recent and future years.

Curtis Martin would like to see more carbon sequestration, soil practices, nutrient reduction, and climate change practice that are based on science concerning societal perceptions of the beef industry. Hannah explained that many of these practices are currently being used in priority areas. Curtis Martin

explained that continued societal exposure of what is currently being done for carbon sequestration and strategies for climate smart practices to policy makers and the general public should be increased.

Dan Axness, Idaho Power, stated the number one priority for Pine Valley/Halfway area is irrigation consolidation. Chad Davis, NRCS, relayed to the attendees that many of the producers in the valleys that have irrigation districts have attempted to work with the NRCS in past years. Many times, the proposals hit roadblocks with certain landowners not willing to participate in the program. This has hindered potential CIS's in new priority areas. Dan also stated that often times the long preparation time is necessary from the landowners. Currently most of the Idaho Power funds through OWEB, SWCD are being used primarily for diversions.

Tara Phillips, SWCD, reiterated that there continues to be a very large interest in the installation of Pivots with in the 4 irrigation districts.

Hannah Smith reiterated that the NRCS will only cost share on the On Farm Practices or actions.

Arvid Andersen, Local Forestry Consultant, asked if the priority areas would change in some areas for fire suppression with continued funding for tree maturity, thinning and some commercial logging. Hannah explained to the attendees that if interest within a priority area continues some Priority Areas can be renewed on an as needed basis. The current Baker Watershed funding for forestry practices is in its second funding cycle due to demand.

Morgan Solomon, Baker County Sage Grouse LIT, stated that funding continues for the Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI), addressing continued support for soil, plant, and animal habitat.

Lane parry, Lane Parry Forestry Consulting, asked if a grass bank has been considered in case of a fire. The SGI LIT is working on trying to get one set up, different options, moving cattle, and alternative forages. The land acquisition is a long process, one that has been tried before.

Travis Bloomer, Baker County Livestock Association (BCLA), asked if anyone had contact information for Ken Anderson, who had previously worked on a grass bank project in the county.

Jana Pederson, ODF, stated that the USFS and ODF have been researching the potential for a grass bank.

Travis Bloomer, invited attendees and partnership agencies to the Baker County Livestock Associations April Meeting.

Hannah Smith, DC, confirmed with attendees the priority concern areas and what is important with the various agencies and producers. Stating that the NRCS is looking forward to the Long range goal for the county.

Arvid Andersen again stated that he has continued interest for the forestry and fire suppression practices.

Travis Bloomer, BCLA, asked if fact sheets with program signup dates could be produced to give to the partnership agencies and producers to share with their respective clients. Specifically, programs and signup dates.

Curtis Martin asked if there was any Funding for NRCS research. Hannah Smith indicated at this time there is not. Most research is done through the Land Grant Universities.

Curtis Martin asked if any research was conducted on carbon sequestration on haying versus grazing or the potential for selling carbon credits from deferred grazing and haying to local companies for their future required Carbon Cap's. Several producers said such a process has not been talked about within their respective clients or agencies.

Meeting adjourned at 10:54 am By Hannah Smith NRCS.

JDUSR NRCS BFO

Chad Davis

Soil Conservationist

