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Grant County Local Work Group Meeting - 2023

Aaron Roth – District Conservationist | February 2023

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Meeting Agenda



- **Welcome and Introductions – NRCS Staff**
- **New Staff Introductions – Maureen Puffer**
- **Partner Updates**
- **2023 Drought/Snowpack Status**
- **Break (5 minutes)**
- **Review of County Priority Resource Concerns**
- **A look back at 2021-22 LWG Meeting and Ideas**
- **Review 2022/2023 EQIP/EQIP-CIC/RCPP/CSP/CREP Contracts**
- **Review 2023/2024 Funding Opportunities**
- **Customer Service/Outreach**
- **Future Project Planning**
- **Break (5 minutes)**
- **Local Input Opportunities/New Project Ideas/ New Resource Concerns**
- **Questions/Comments/Discussion/Poll Questions**
- **Adjourn**



NRCS Staff

Aaron Roth - District Conservationist
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Maureen Puffer – Soil Conservationist
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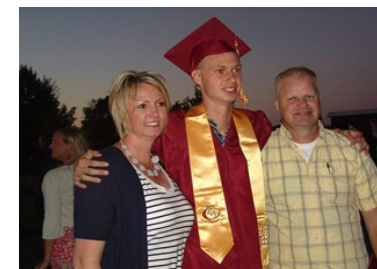
Stephanie Rice – Soil Conservationist
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Tereasa Perkins – Soil Conservationist Technician
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Neil Brooks– CREP Technician
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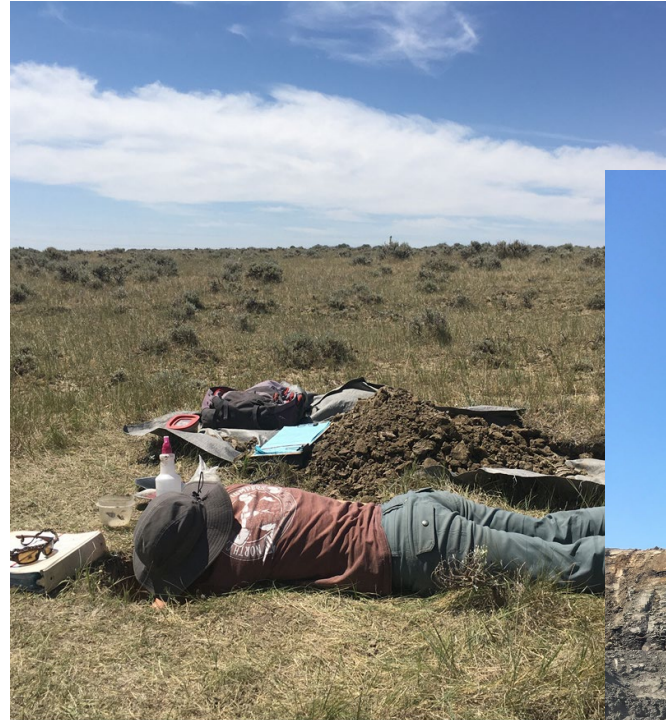
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Maureen (Mo) Puffer– Soil Conservationist

- I grew up in SE Minnesota
- Worked on restoration efforts in prairie and riparian systems in W. Washington
- Finished my BS in Forest Ecosystem Restoration and Mgmt. at UWSP
- Obtained my MS in Range Science from NDSU
- Worked in Miles City, MT collecting rangeland data for BLM
- Prior to moving to John Day, worked for the Jornada Experimental Range in Las Cruces, NM



Farm Service Agency Updates

Shannon Wenick, Program Technician

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Deborah Arntz, Grant-Harney County Executive Director

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Forest Service Updates

Collen Malaney – Partnership Coordinator

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Oregon Department of Forestry: Natural Resource Specialists





Allison Blair
John Day Unit Forester



Brandon Ferguson
Forest Resources Manager



Kirk Ausland
Stewardship Forester



Kevin Chen
Community Wildfire Forester



Stacy Lauritsen
Community Wildfire Forester



Matthew Brown
NRS2 - NRCS Lead Forester



Josh Wood
NRCS Forester – John Day



Justin Tryon
NRCS Forester - Fossil



Kara Doescher
NRCS AFF Forester – John Day



Kyle Erickson
Dev. NRCS Forester – John Day



Brock Mortimore
Dev. NRCS Forester - Fossil

ODF Updates



Oregon Dept. of Forestry
Central Oregon District – John Day/Fossil Unit Staff:

Brandon Ferguson

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OSU Extension

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John Rizza:

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Save the Date! - Tree School East 2023

Mark your calendars and plan to join us on Friday, June 30th at Baker High School in Baker City, Oregon for Tree School East, hosted by the OSU Extension, Forestry & Natural Resources Program.

This mini-college will feature classes on a wide variety of forestry and natural resource-related topics that will be of interest to small woodland owners, foresters, natural resource professionals, loggers, contractors, arborists, teachers, and the general public. Plan for a full day of classes, as well as demonstrations, exhibitors, vendors, and a great lunch!

Visit the Regional Tree School website for the latest updates: <https://beav.es/5KK>

For more information, please contact Jacob Putney (Phone: 541-523-6418 | Email: jacob.putney@oregonstate.edu)



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Grant SWCD and Grant Weed Control Updates

Kyle Sullivan, District Manager

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Matt Wenick, Weed Control Coordinator

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Monument SWCD Updates



Erik Rook

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North Fork John Day Watershed Council

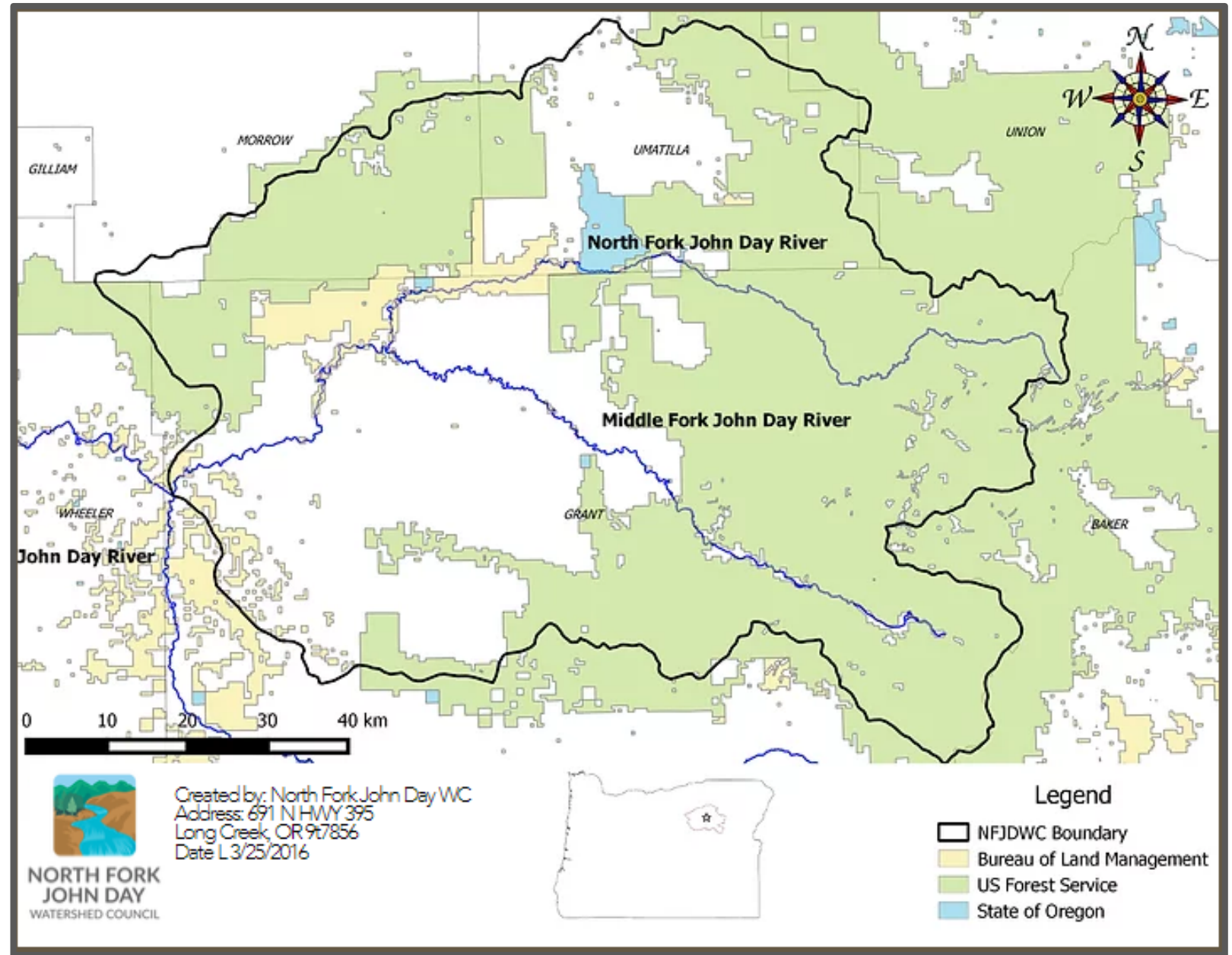
691 Hwy 395 N
Long Creek, OR 97856

PO Box 444
Long Creek, OR 97856

www.nfjdwc.org

541-421-3018

The North Fork John Day Watershed Council's mission is to restore and protect the natural resources that make up the North and Middle Fork John Day Watersheds.



Programs



Monitoring & Research

NFJDWC is active in monitoring water quality and upland vegetation and habitat to ensure restoration is guided by the best available scientific data.

Landowner Services

Our goal is to connect with and serve landowners in a way that benefits the community and the environment.

NFJDWC offers many services to assist landowners in stewardship and conservation, from mapping and printing to stewardship planning.



Restoration

In-stream and upland restoration is at the core of the NFJDWC's mission.

We partner with organizations and private stakeholders with diverse interests to promote balanced watershed restoration, habitat conservation, and resource management.

Staff



Kristen Walz
Executive Director

kristen@nfjdw.org



Silke Meinl
Administrative Assistant

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Javan Bailey
Restoration Project Manager

javan@nfjdw.org



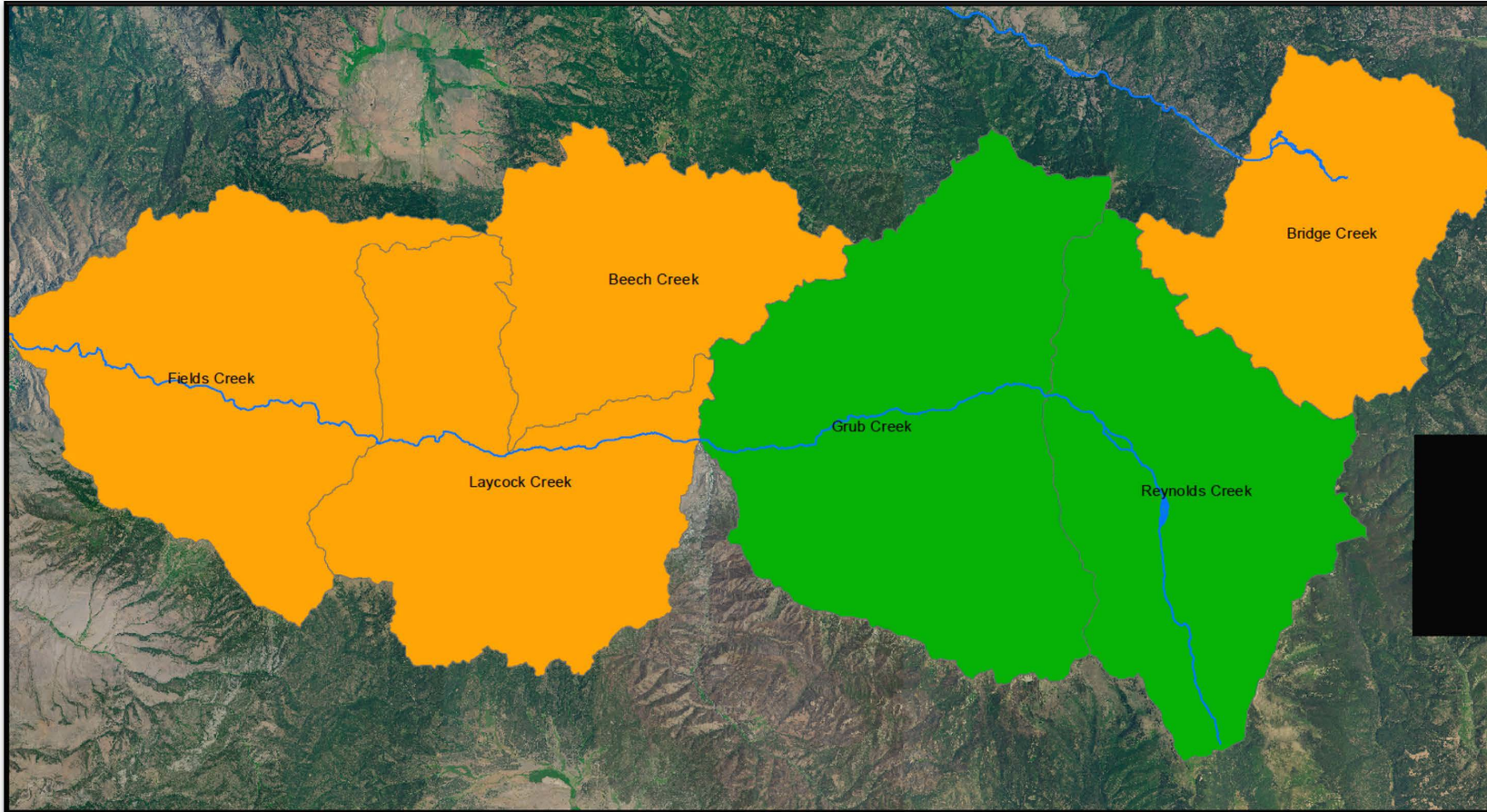
Alex Rice
Restoration Project Manager

alex@nfjdw.org



Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Updates

Upper John Day River Flow and Protection Project



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NRCS - EQIP



- Financial assistance is available for private landowners within the RCPP project boundary that would like to implement irrigation efficiency projects, stock water projects, irrigation water management project and more.
- Irrigation efficiency projects will include all conservation practices needed for the specific property and approved by the individual private landowner. EQIP and partner dollars will combine to maximize restoration work for each of these projects.



ACEP – ALE

- ACEP-ALE money will be used to help acquire working lands conservation easements that will help restore, protect, and enhance important lands to improve overall watershed health and protect agricultural viability. Working lands conservation easements will be established on private lands to protect critical habitat for fish and wildlife in perpetuity, while also protecting strong riparian communities that can keep the watershed functioning at a desirable level to meet the demands of agricultural production and water users.
- By entering into a conservation easement on your private lands, it ensures that your land will not be subdivided at any point and will be protected in perpetuity. There are additional incentives for landowners such as tax benefits and/or cash payments.



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Contact Information

**Nicole Lexson**

CTWS Restoration Project Manager

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Aaron Roth

NRCS District Conservationist

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Amanda “Marti” Martino (ACEP-ALE)

BMLT Conservation Director

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Phil St. Clair

Jeff Maben

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Richard Nelson

Kyle Sullivan



Staff

Amy Stiner

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Lindsay Bullock

Contact Information

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South Fork John Day Watershed RCPP

Legend

- RCPPFocusAreaSouthForkJohnDayWatershed
- RCPP streams

Scale: 0 1.75 3.5 7 Miles

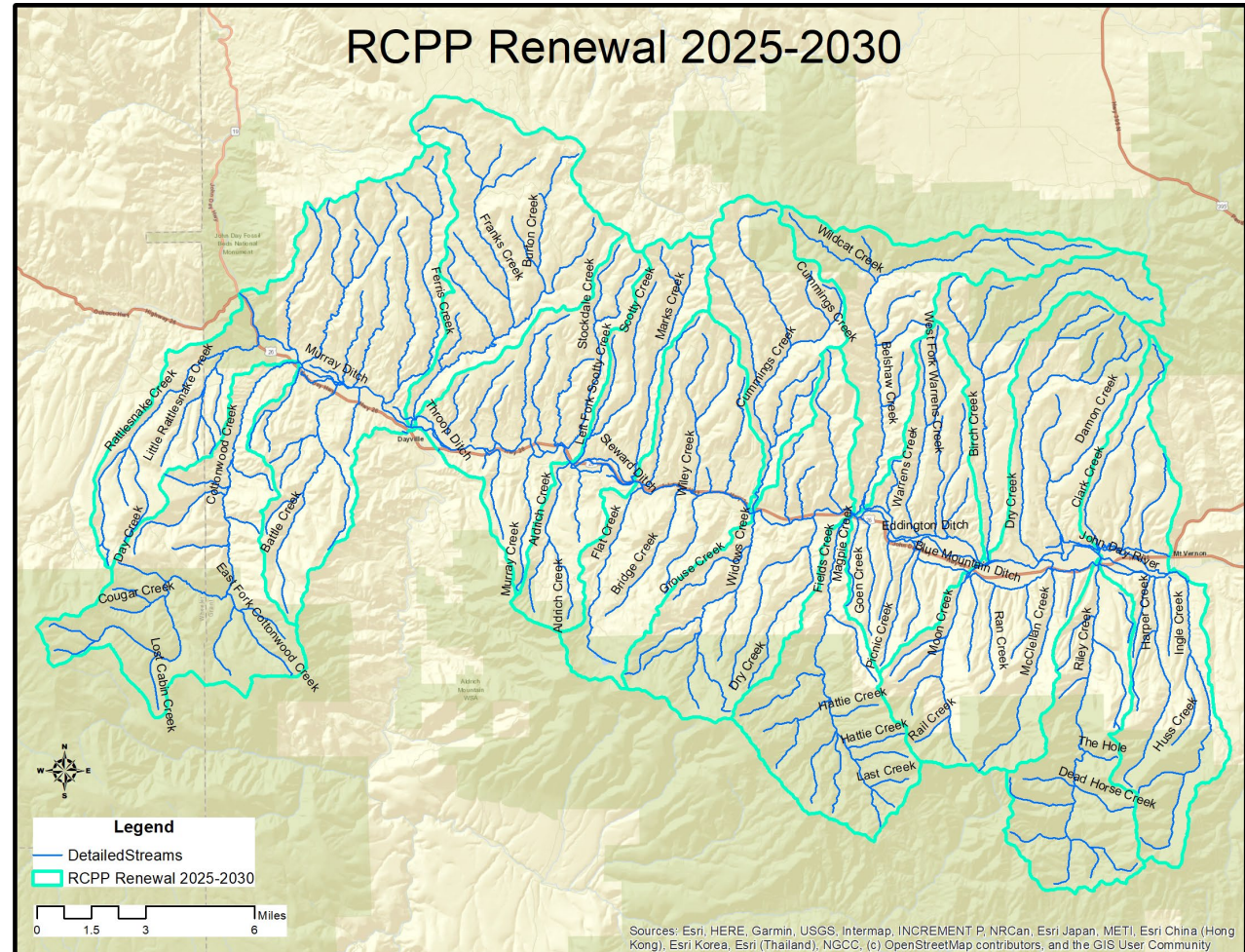
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Practices:

- Juniper Removal
- Water Developments
- Forest Health
- Pasture Fencing
- Noxious Weed Control
- Re-seeding

Practices:

- Juniper Removal
- Water Developments
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John Day Basin Partnership

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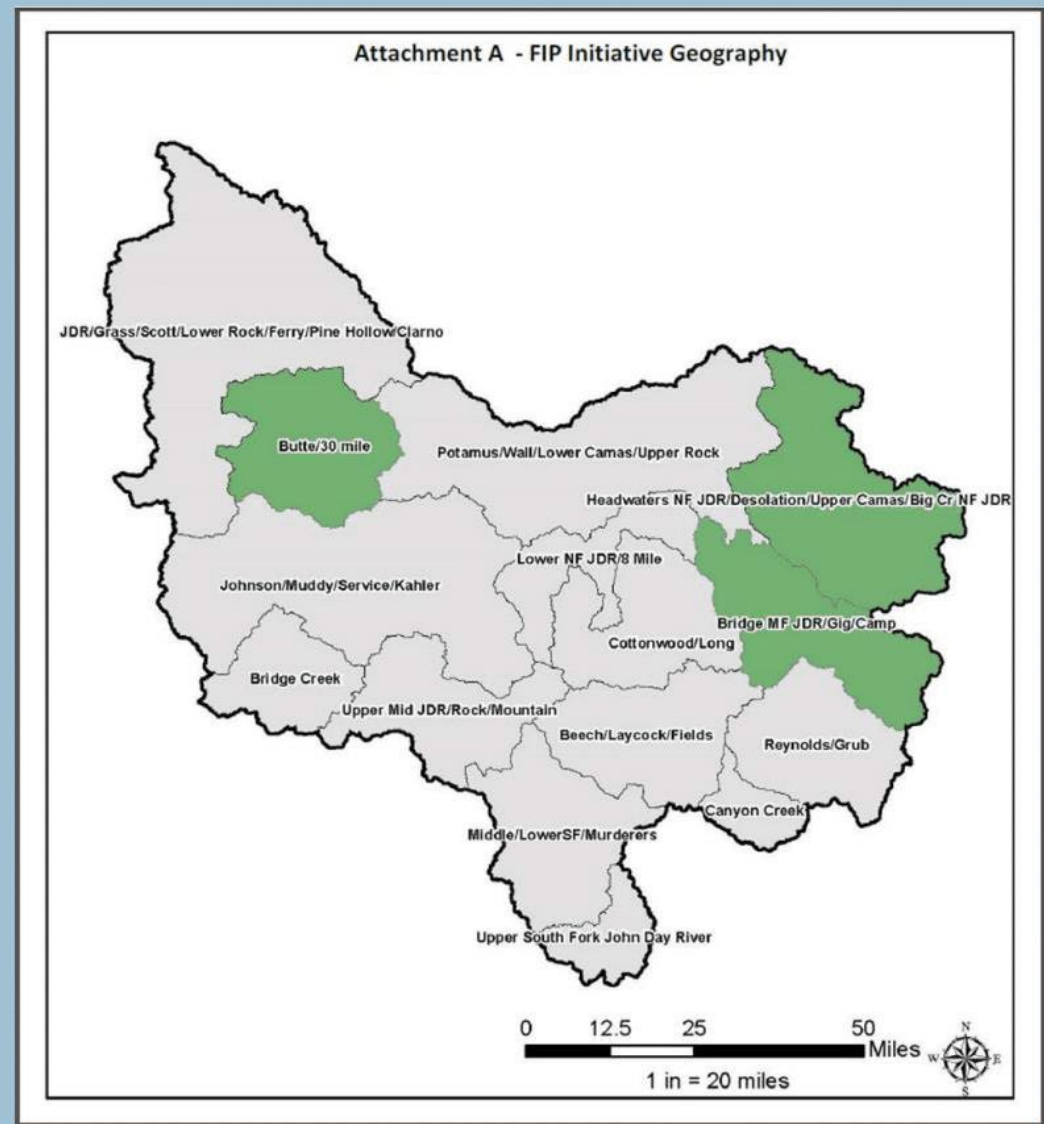


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John Day Basin Partnership: OWEB FIP John Day Basin Native Fish Habitat Initiative



FIP Focal Geographies:

- (1) Upper North Fork
- (2) Upper Middle Fork
- (3) Butte/Thirtymile

RITTER

Land Management Team

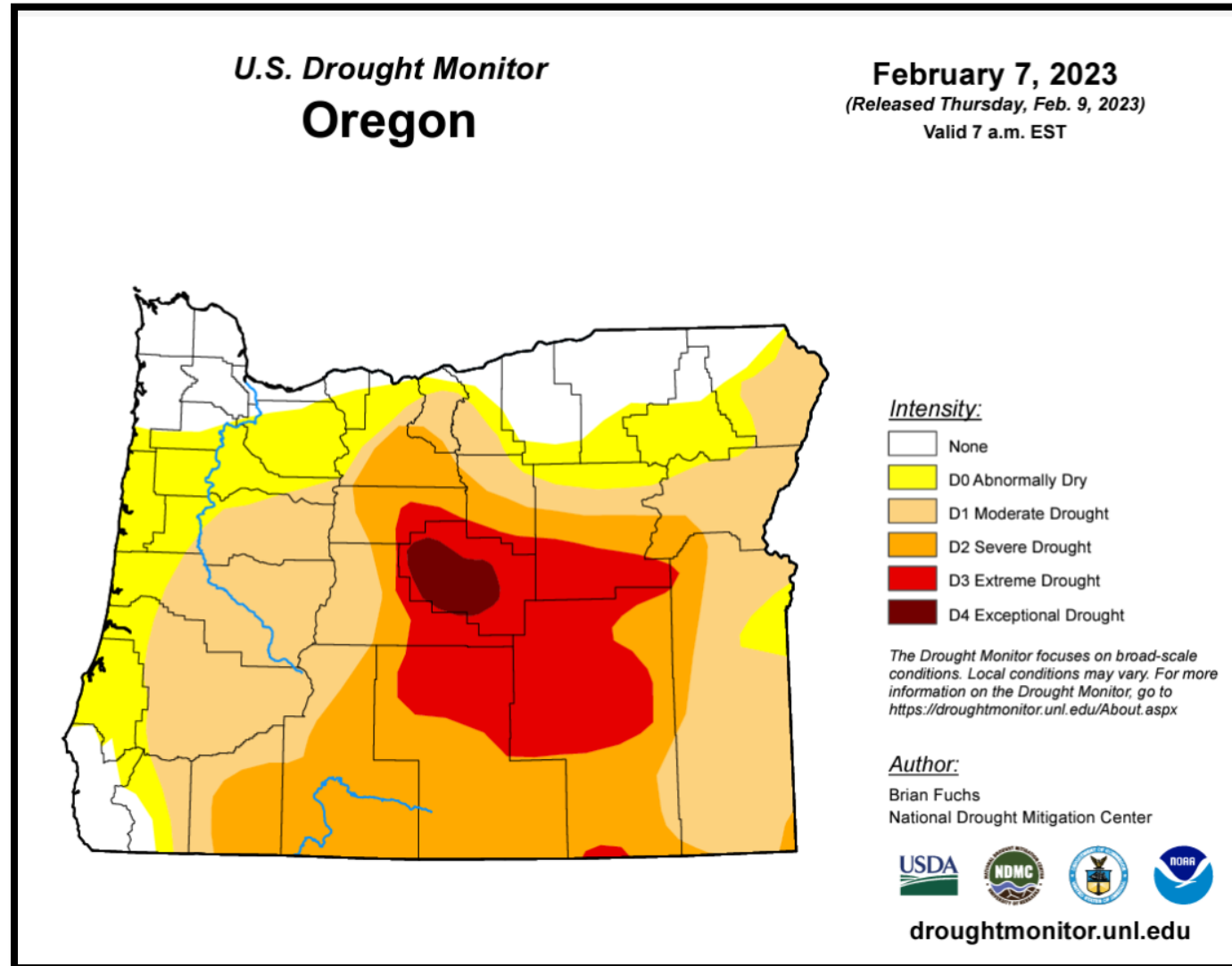
A Community Collaborative

Brian Kelly – Executive Director

Phone: (541) 786-1478

Email: brian.evergreentree@gmail.com

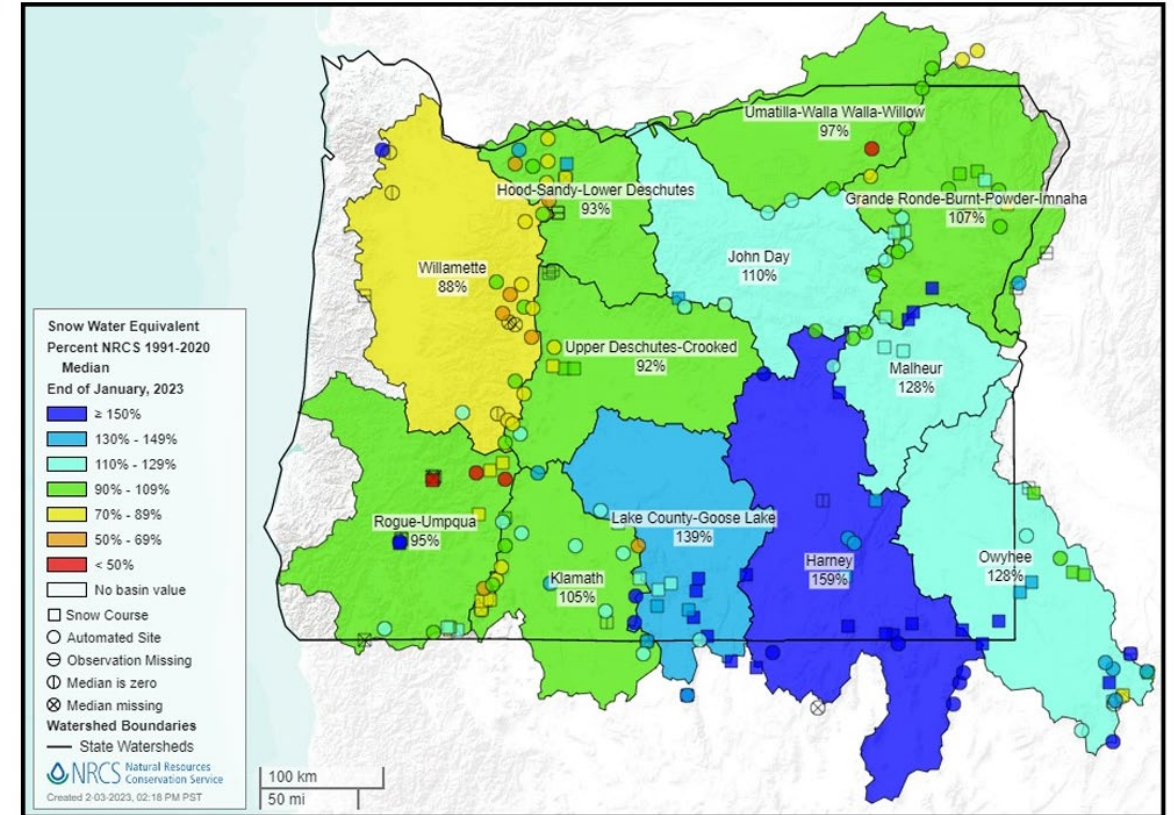
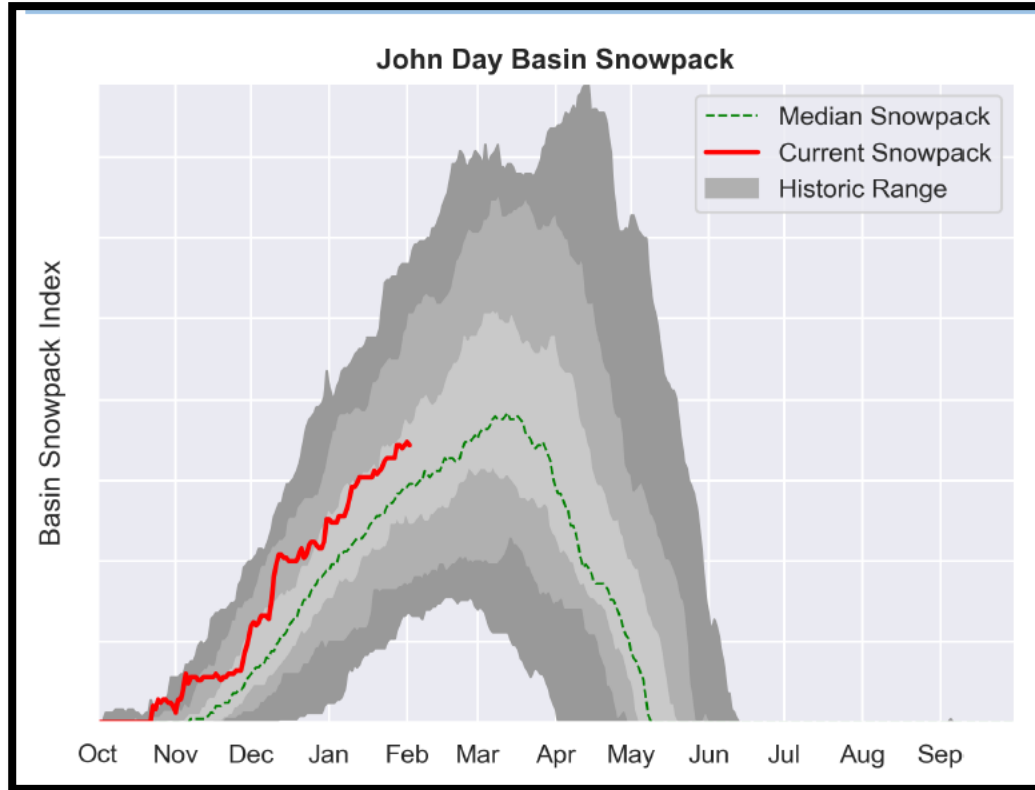
2023 Drought Status



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2023 Snowpack Report



Basin snowpack (% median) as of February 1st.





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Break



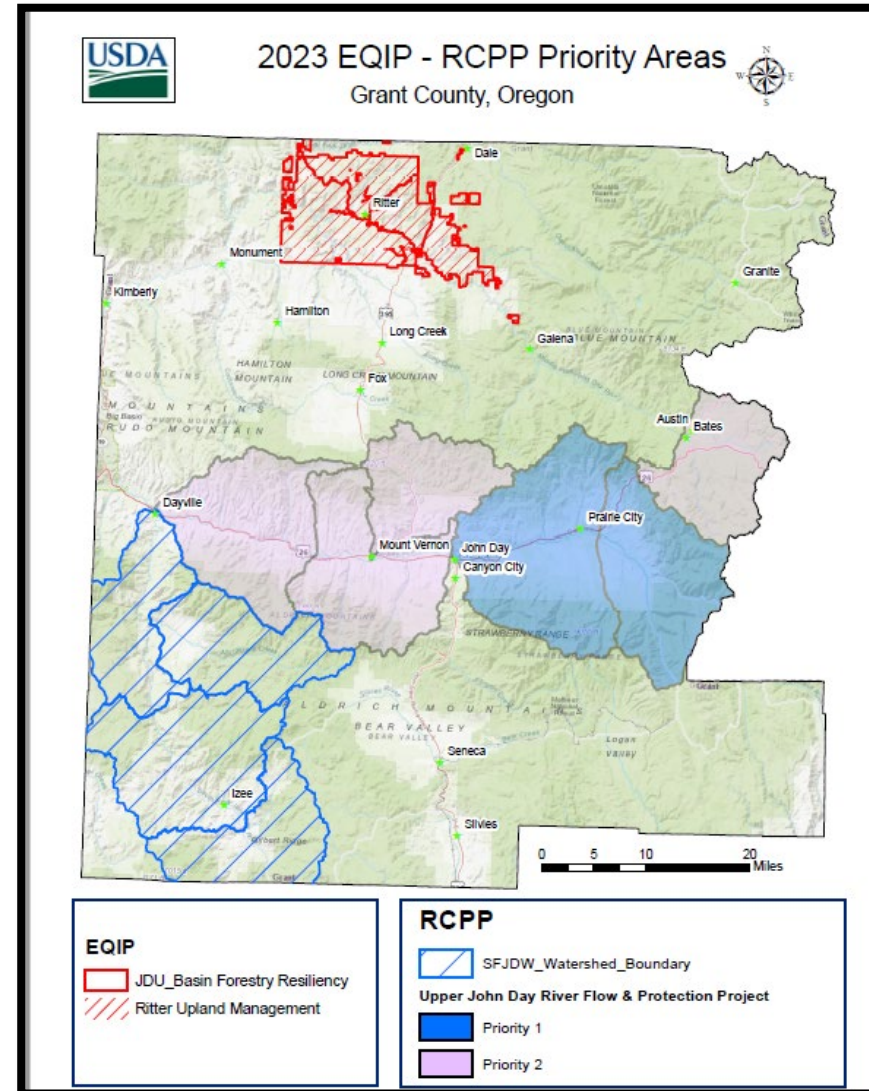
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County Priority Resource Concerns

County Priority Resource Concerns

1. Invasive Species (including juniper, annual grasses & herbaceous weeds) sweet briar rose?
2. Forest Health (including aspen restoration)
3. Grazing Management (including stock water developments and cross-fencing for private lands)
4. Water Quality/Quantity (including irrigation efficiency improvements, stock water)
5. Easements (to keep working lands in ag production and mitigate threat of subdivision)



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2021-22 LWG Meeting Suggestions and Ideas

Cropland Land use:

- Utilize soil health, pasture improvement thru diversity, reduced tillage, advanced grazing strategies.

Rangeland/Pastureland use:

- Water quality/quantity through juniper removal, water storage/stock water, annual grasses, advanced grazing strategies (education for landowners, wildfire risk reduction, etc.), BDA's, Regenerative Ag, Renewable energy

Forestry Land use:

- Water for multiple uses including fire, fuel breaks, private/public interface, forestry work needed through out the county, forestry prescriptions

Maintenance/Repeat Treatment:

- Practice life span/ranking points



2022 Funding Summary:



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP Renewal	Contracts	
3 NIPF		
3 AG		
Total	6	\$680,566
CSP Classic	Contracts	
1 NIPF		
3 AG		
Total	4	\$595,086
EQIP	Contracts	
JDU Basin Forestry	2	111,941
Kahler Upland Improvement	2	269,086
Ritter Upland Mangemnt	5	351,395.25
Total	9	732,422.25
RCPP	Contracts	
South Fork RCPP		
Total	3	\$135,004

	Contact	\$
CSP Renewal	6	\$680,566
CSP Classic	4	\$595,086
EQIP	9	\$732,422
RCPP	3	\$135,004
Total	22	\$2,143,078





2023 CREP update

Neil Brooks

CREP Technician

(541)575-1274 Ext. 117



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2023 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)- Grant County

- 17 practices completed and certified
- 6 renewal contracts completed totaling 408.67 acres and 14.07 stream miles
- 3 monitoring sites visited to conduct Visual Stream Assessment and OWEB monitoring checklist
- 8 Site assessment/assistance visits



2023 & 2024 Funding Opportunities

2023 Funding:

- EQIP – November 17th, 2022, deadline
- EQIP – CIC – Deadline for applications TBD Cropland only
- CSP Classic – Deadline for applications TBD
- Other ??

2024 Funding:

- CSP Renewals – Zero in Grant County in 2024
- CSP Classic – Spring 2024

Fall 2024 Deadline (TBD)

- Upper John Day River Flow and Protection Project (RCPP) – Last Year
- Ritter Upland Management (EQIP) – Last Year
- Grant County Invasive Annual Grass Control (EQIP) – First Year
- Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy (EQIP) – First Year
- State Initiatives (Energy, High Tunnel, Organic) EQIP



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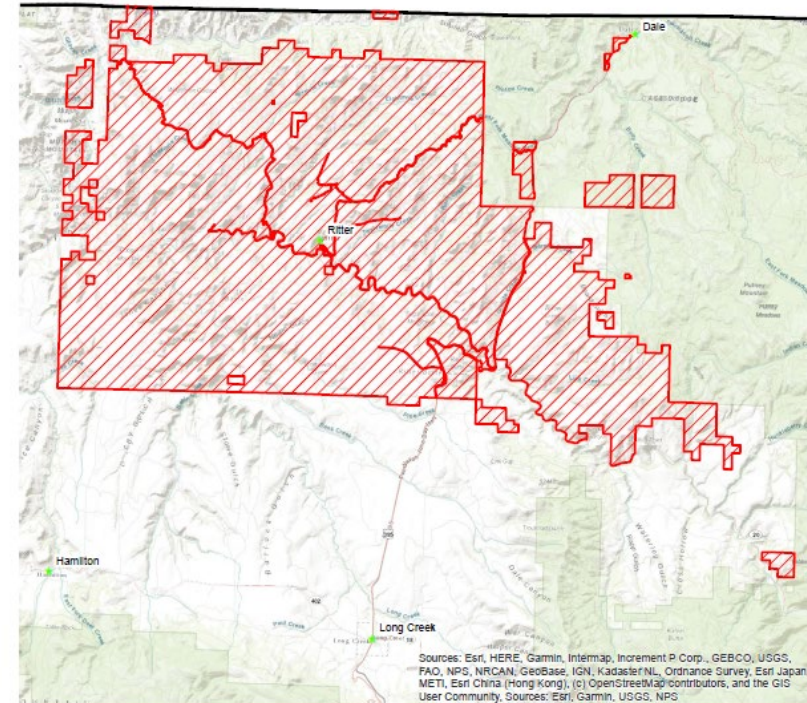
Existing Active CIS

Ritter Upland Management - CIS

- Juniper removal, aspen restoration, forest thinning.
- In 2021: 551.4 ac juniper contracted, 1.5 ac aspen, and 639 ac forest thinning over 13 contracts.
- In 2022: 409.9 ac juniper contracted, no aspen, and 411.8 ac forest thinning over 7 contracts.
- In 2023: 861.9 ac juniper applied for, 0.5 ac aspen applied for, and 866.4 ac forest thinning applied for over 21 applications. We will contract a portion of this.
- 2024 would be year 4 of funding.



2024 EQIP - Priority Areas Grant County, Oregon



0 1.75 3.5 7 Miles

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NEW Conservation Implementation Strategy

Grant County Invasive Annual Grass Control CIS Approved – Taking application now. First funding in 2024.

Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy – Taking applications now. Funding in 2024.



Grant County Invasive Annual Grass Control CIS

- Targeting the three invasive annual grasses found in Grant County (Medusahead, Cheatgrass, Ventenata).
- Looking at ground with beneficial perennial grasses so areas have good chance of recovery and limited juniper or tree canopy.
- Will conduct field visits to determine level perennial grasses and tree canopy cover. At least a year of rest will be required for fields that are sprayed and seeded.
- New payment scenario was approved.
- Multiple year seeding waiver was also approved
- Practices include herbicide treatment, seeding, prescribed grazing, fencing.
- Application with helicopter:
 - \$18-30/acre for application
 - \$50/acre for chemical



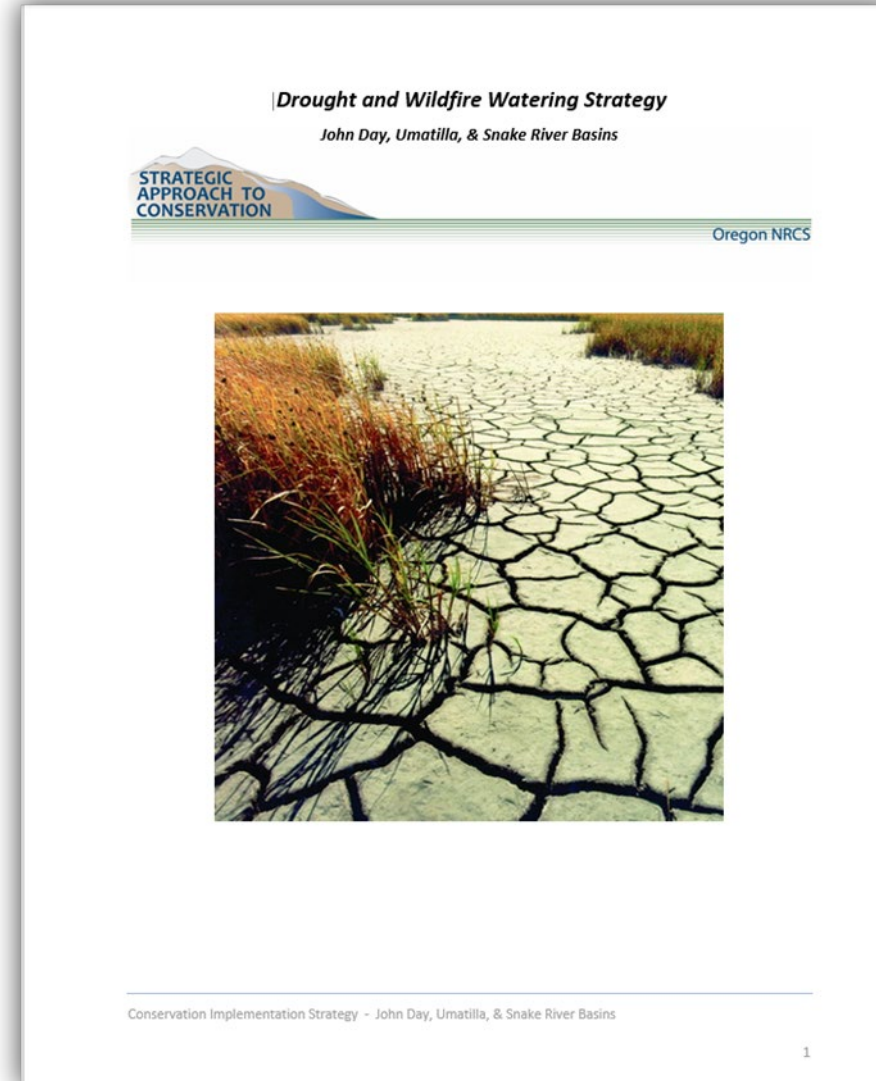
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Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy CIS

- Recent drought has dried up perennial streams and springs
- Remote areas have limited livestock water and wildfire fighting resources
- Common water development practices including: wells, spring developments, solar pumps, livestock pipeline, and water facilities will be available.
- Additional components will include cisterns and large capacity watering facilities.
- In addition to being used for livestock and wildlife addition options can be deployed for using as a wildfire resource
- Whole ranch approach



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Customer Service & Outreach

- **2nd Annual Natural Resources Fair**
(Tuesday April 18th)
- **OSU Forestry Rapid Assessment Outreach + Education Events (TBD)**
- **GSWCD/ENVU Annual Grass Tour**
(Wednesday June 21)



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Future Funding/ Projects in Planning: Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership

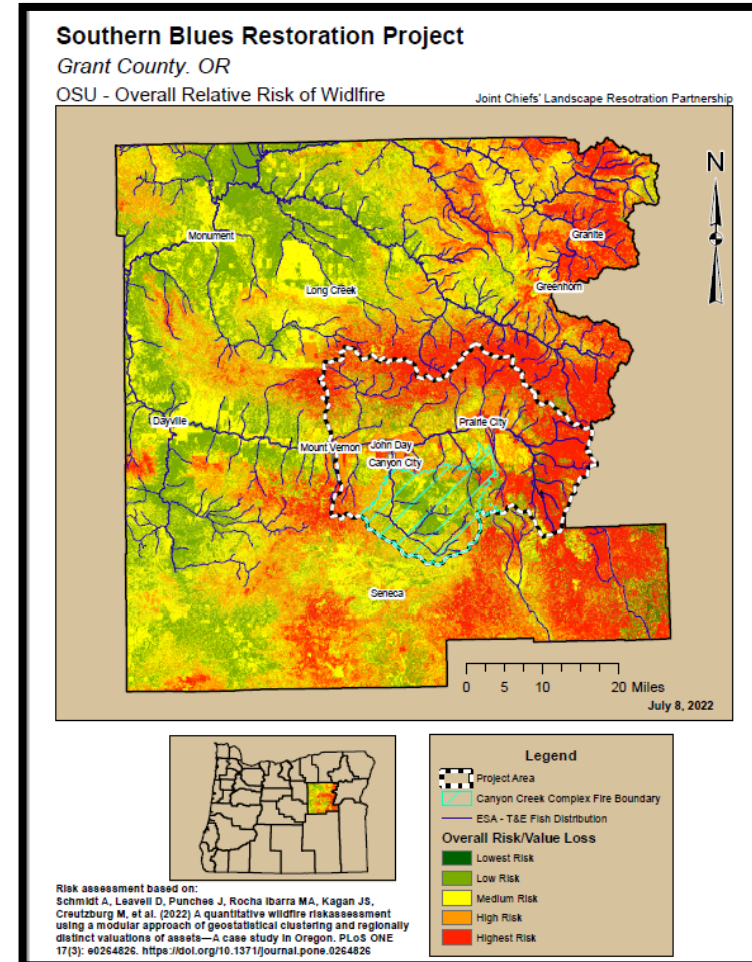
Application was submitted August of 2022.

Three Main Criteria for Evaluating Joint Chiefs Proposal

1. Reduce and mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners
2. Protect water quality and supply for communities and industry
3. Improve habitat conditions for at-risk species

Other important Considerations:

- Contribute to improved resilience of forests and grasslands to a changing climate.
- Complete all National Environmental Policy Act requirements and documentation for planned Year One.
- Include partner support and involvement (non-federal contribution to the project will strengthen application).



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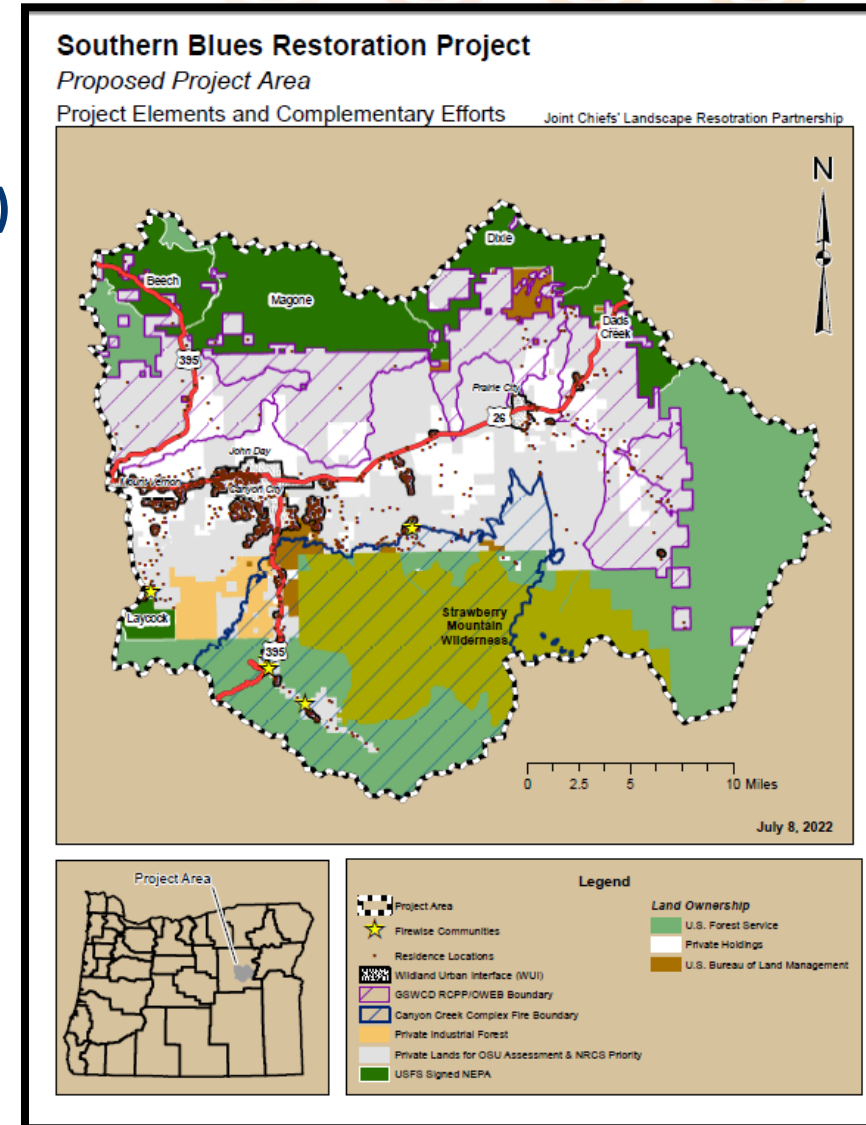
Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership

Partners involved:

- Blue Mountain Forest Partners (BMPF)
- Grant Soil and Water Conservation District (GSWCD)
- Jerome Natural Resource Consulting
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Malheur National Forest (MNF)
- Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
- Prineville Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- OSU Extension
- OSU College of Forestry

Proposed Timelines:

- Submit application in Summer 2022
- If successful funding would be for 2023-2024-2025
 - NRCS Ask: \$3,010,000
 - Forest Service Ask: \$4,085,000
 - ODF Ask: \$486,000
 - Total: \$7,581,000



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Funding Timeline



Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership (Year 2)
 Ritter Upland Management CIS
 Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy CIS
 Grant County Invasive Annual Grass Control CIS
 Upper John Day River Flow and Protection Project RCPP

2024

2025

2026

Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy CIS
 Grant County Invasive Annual Grass Control CIS
 South Fork RCPP Renewal
 New CIS???

Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership (Year 3)
 Drought and Wildfire Watering Strategy CIS
 Grant County Invasive Annual Grass Control CIS
 South Fork RCPP Renewal



The Unknown: Inflation Reduction Act Funding

- **19.5 billion in NRCS over 5 years**
 - \$8.45 billion – Environmental Quality Incentives Program
 - \$4.95 billion – Regional Conservation Partnership Program
 - \$3.25 billion – Conservation Stewardship Program
 - \$1.4 billion – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
 - \$1 billion – Conservation Technical Assistance
 - \$300 million – Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Monitoring
- **Climate Smart Practices**
 - Practices that are used in Grant County:
 - 528 Prescribed grazing
 - 550 Range planting
 - 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
 - 666 Forest Stand Improvement
 - Other Facilitate Practices
 - Grant County plan is to IRA funding in current CIS areas when possible, utilizing the facilitate practices
 - May develop new CIS based on additional information



USDA United States Department of Agriculture				
Natural Resources Conservation Service				
Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List [1] FY2023				
Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽¹⁾ (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Soil Health			B000BFF1	Buffer Bundle#1*
			B000CPL24	Cropland soil health management system*
			B000CPL25	Climate smart advanced soil health*
	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
			E327B	Establish monarch butterfly habitat
			E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328E	Soil health crop rotation
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E328G	Crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement
			E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
			E328O	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
			E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)		None Available
	340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E340D	Intensive orchard/vineyard floor cover cropping to increase soil health
			E340F	Cover crop to minimize soil compaction
			E340G	Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients
			E340H	Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles
			E340I	Using cover crops for biological strip till
	345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)	E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion
			E345B	Reduced tillage to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
			E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E345E	Reduced tillage to reduce energy use
	386	Field Border (acres)	E386A	Enhanced field borders to reduce soil erosion along the edge(s) of a field
			E386B	Enhanced field borders to increase carbon storage along the edge(s) of the field
			E386C	Enhanced field borders to decrease particulate emissions along the edge(s) of the field
			E386D	Enhanced field borders to increase food for pollinators along the edge(s) of a field
			E386E	Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field
	393	Filter Strips (acres)	E393A	Extend existing filter strip to reduce water quality impacts
	412	Grassed Waterways (acres)	E412A	Enhance a grassed waterway
	484	Mulching (acres)	E484A	Mulching to improve soil health
			E484B	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
			E484C	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch
	585	Stripcropping (acres)		
	601	Vegetative Barriers (feet)		
	603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)		None Available

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Rural Development
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Together, America Prospers

Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Loans and Grants

Loan guarantees for this program are streamlined under the OneRD Guarantee Loan Initiative



The Rural Energy for America Program ([REAP](#)) provides grants for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements for agricultural producers and rural small businesses. The program has existed for over a decade but is expanding now with over \$2 billion in new funding from the Inflation Reduction Act. REAP grants are for a maximum of 40% of the total project costs. The REAP grant cycle has two annual deadlines, March 31 and October 31 each year. Applications then compete and are awarded throughout the year.

To qualify for the program, agricultural producers must generate at least half of their income from agricultural operations, and rural small businesses must be located in eligible rural areas (check [here](#)) and meet the SBA size standards for small businesses. Under REAP, Renewable energy systems can include any commercially available technologies, including solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, small hydropower, and more. Energy efficiency improvements must be replacement projects for currently existing equipment (no expansion projects), and can include upgrades such as high efficiency HVAC, insulation, lighting, cooling and refrigeration, electric irrigation motor, and other improvements. Anybody interested in applying for an energy efficiency upgrade project must first receive an energy assessment. Rural Development partners with the Oregon Department of Energy to offer low-cost energy assessments ([here](#)), or an applicant can receive an assessment from another qualified assessor or auditor. For renewable energy system projects, technical assistance providers are also available to help interested applicants develop their projects and apply for REAP.

REAP also offers loan guarantees, although these are typically only applicable for larger scale projects.

Please reach out to **Ellie Draves** (elizabeth.draves@usda.gov), Rural Development's Oregon State Energy Coordinator, for more details.

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Break



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Local Input Opportunities/New Project Ideas/New Resource Concerns

County Priority Resource Concerns

1. Invasive Species (including juniper, annual grasses & herbaceous weeds) sweet briar rose? (Plant productivity and health, Plant pest pressure, Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates)
2. Forest Health (including aspen restoration) (Plant productivity and health, Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation, Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates)
3. Grazing Management (including stock water developments and cross-fencing for private lands) (Inadequate livestock water quality, quantity and distribution)
4. Water Quality/Quantity (including irrigation efficiency improvements, stock water) (Inefficient irrigation water use, Surface water depletion, Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms)
5. Easements (to keep working lands in ag production and mitigate threat of subdivision) (Loss of function and value, Threat of conversion)





We want to hear from you!



Questions/Comments/Discussion



Thank You!



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Grant County Local Working Group 2023

Participants:

NRCS (Aaron Roth, Stephanie Rice, Tereasa Perkins, Maureen Puffer, Cory Owens), FSA (Deb Arntz), ODF (Brandon Ferguson, Allison Rayburn, Matthew Brown, Kirk Ausland, Kara Doescher, Kyle Erickson, Brock Mortimore) GSWCD (Matt Wenick, Neil Brooks), MSWCD (Erik Rook, Todd Hoodenpyl, Emily Schmidt), NFJWC (Kristen Waltz, Alix Rice) CTWS (Nicole Lexson), SFJWC (Amy Stiner, Hannah Latzo), RLMT (Brian Kelly), Grant County Commissioner (John Rowell), OSU extension (Didgette McCrackin) BPT (Matthew Hanneman)

Producers: Bill Newman, Joanne Keerins, Mike + Shirley Titus, Jim Kennedy, Shannon Rust, Tom Thomsen, Matt McElligott, Kurt Spencer, Jim Bahrenburg, M.T. Anderson, Layne Jackson

Notes in addition to the power point

Partner Updates:

FSA

- Still waiting for CREP, CRP or CRP-Grasslands sign up dates.
- Many new programs coming out.
- Emergency livestock assistance program
- Farmers.gov for more information

ODF

- Work across multiple counties
- Work on private forests and state forests and in protection services
- Community wildfire
 - Landscape scale
 - Writing grants for multiple areas
- Landowner assistance available

OSU Extension Service

- Tree School Event Upcoming

Grant Soil and Water Conservation District

- Private Forest Assessment
 - All the delineation is complete
 - Have completed a lot of the on the ground assessments but still some left
 - Will provide a final product to those landowners
- Weed Department
 - Assessed acres for annual grasses
 - Assistance for annual grass spraying applications open at 9am on February 27th and allows for \$10,000 worth of treatment at a cost of \$2,500 for landowners, last year that amounted to around 147 acres
 - Other assistance available for herbaceous weeds contact the weed coordinator

Monument Soil and Water Conservation District

- New Staff
 - Tod is the new office manager
 - Emily is the new project manager
- Last year completed 1 diversion and leafy spurge treatment
- 7 open conservation projects possibly in the works including juniper removal, fish, mule deer and weeds
- Also working with Top Road Firewise, NFJDWC work, and Wall Creek Projects

North Fork John Day Watershed Council

- Private and public lands work
- Monitoring water quality and research in the Middle Fork
- Restoration instream and uplands
- Mapping, printing, and surveying services
- Stewardship planning program for landowners
- Rudio and Gillman Creek- full assessment properties of willing landowners
- In the future looking to include native plant propagation distribution

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

- Staff changes
- RCPP Program- Upper John Day Flow
 - Last year fall sign-up November 2023
 - Irrigation efficiency
- ACEP-ALE easements on working lands
 - Protects land from subdivision
- Nursery in Prairie
 - Only native species
 - Can have for private landowners
 - Can sometimes give native plants and sometimes assist with plantings

South Fork John Day Watershed Council

- Staff updates
- RCPP- work done for this project
 - Would like to apply for a renewal in new geographic area. Looking at 2024 or 2025 and working on landowner outreach currently.

John Day Basin Partnership

- Determined native fish habitat priority areas
- Starting on uplands prioritization for the entire John Day Basin

Ritter Land Management Team

- Ritter Fish Habitat Assessment Report
 - On Six mile, Eight mile and Granite Creeks

- Attempting to acquire funding for implementation of recommendations
- Ritter Firewise Community has been formed and is active.

Top Road Firewise Community

- Joint BLM and National Forest project to treat public land for a 1,000 ft fire break
- Need to address post juniper removal follow-up, preferably with prescribed burning
- Juniper removal and forest thinning is important for water resources as well as fire risk reduction.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

See slides

Landowner Feedback/Questions:

- What is available for additional funding for cross boundary treatments?
 - Good Neighbor with the Forest Services might have some, but it is more challenging in roadless areas. Joint Chiefs is another option that is being pursued in the county.
- What are the barriers to water impounding?
 - The soils in Grant County are often not good for impounding water
 - The permitting
 - Water rights and state regulation.
- Landowner commented, this area has the capacity to work together to improve our water usage and head off some of the problems other areas like California are experiencing with drought and conflict over water
- What is the situation with seeding after spraying Rejuvra (for annual grass treatment)?
 - You must wait at least two years
 - Hopefully there are other perennial grasses in the medusahead that will release after the spraying
 - Concern with seeding mixes that have introduced wheat grasses that start to take over and are not palatable for very long?
 - There are optional mixes depending on the location and landowner goals
- What is the cost share for Rejuvra?
 - Will need to look at current cost share rates. Funding will be available in 2024.
 - For GSWCD weed department is about \$65-\$85 per acre for landowners with large areas using a helicopter
- Landowner would be interested in seeing a solar vendor at the upcoming Natural Resources Fair
 - NRCS will receive the contract information from a landowner and invite them
- Landowner would be interested in seeing the watermaster, Erik at the upcoming Natural Resources Fair
 - He will have a booth but will not be a speaker this year
- Will there be funding to improve the “extreme” areas on the Fire Risk Map of the State that was released?
 - That map has been recalled and will not be used to consider funding or ranking

- For Joint Chiefs ranking we are going to be using a model that is more specific to the area
- What projects or areas are going to be eligible for the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) money?
 - We do not have all the details or information on IRA yet. The climate smart practice list are a good place to start.
- Landowner is concerned that we are focusing on what can more easily get funded instead of what would have the greatest impact
- Landowner notes that storage capacity is necessary for water resources
 - NRCS is working to include water storage capacity with cisterns included into water development plans
- How do we get money where we want from the Congress?
 - Talk to your representative
- Is it possible to receive funding for trials for new conservation ideas?
 - Yes, through the Conservation Innovation Grant
- Landowner commented that prescribed fire is needed to return the area to historical conditions
- Juniper removal water saving amounts study request
 - Another landowner responded that the literature on this exists and should be consolidated and shared
- Landowner commented on subsurface drip irrigation as an effective irrigation water saving method

Grant County Priority Resource Concern Dot Exercise 2023 Results:

1. Water Quality/Quantity (including irrigation efficiency improvements, stock water)
2. Invasive Species (including juniper, annual grasses & herbaceous weeds)
3. Forest Health (including aspen restoration)
4. Grazing Management (including stock water developments and cross-fencing for private lands)
5. Easements (to keep working lands in ag production and mitigate threat of subdivision)