



Siuslaw (West Lane County) Local Work Group Meeting Notes

3/2/2023 10 am – noon (Zoom) – Meeting Recorded

Welcome, Agenda Overview & Why We're Here

- There were 10 participants in attendance, including local landowners and representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Siuslaw SWCD staff and board, Siuslaw Watershed Council, McKenzie River Trust, and NRCS.
- **Meeting Purpose:** Provide a forum for NRCS to gather input and work collaboratively with our producers and partners to develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources for the most benefit.
- **Objectives:** Update NRCS's Central Coast Long Range Plan to direct conservation assistance efforts over the next several years.
- Brief NRCS history & importance/purpose of Local Work Groups
 - Sharing info
 - Listening – Gathering input for the future
 - Connecting – Working together

Update on Current USDA-NRCS Programs in Lincoln County – Annie Marion, District Conservationist

- Current Farm Bill Programs – discussed – EQIP, EQIP-CIC, CSP, CREP (FSA Program), ACEP, WRE, HFRP
- Other Programs – RCPP (Partnerships), CIG (Grants)
- New Office of Urban Ag and Innovative Production – [grants](#) available for food security/urban ag projects
- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#)
 - Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) – there are currently 5 locally directed focus areas for EQIP funding pools in the Waldport service area.
 - **Siletz Forest Strategy** (Lincoln County) – Two back-to-back CISs in the Siletz River basin, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022, prioritized forest structure & composition and water quality—sediment & nutrients in surface waters.
 - **Siuslaw Salmon Sanctuary** (West Lane and Douglas County) – 2018-2022 strategy with focus area in the coastal lakes, lower Siuslaw River, North Fork Siuslaw, and Indian Creek sub-basins. The priority resource concerns were forest structure and composition, water quality (sediment), and aquatic habitat.
 - 3 contracts (2 FY18, 1 FY19), \$23,300 total
 - 95 ac PCT, 7 ac release
 - **Forest Resistance & Resilience** (Lincoln, Lane, Benton & Linn Counties) – 2019-2023 strategy prioritizing forest structure & composition, wildfire hazard, and wildlife habitat to increase forest stand diversity (species and age classes) and promote healthy forests that are resilient to pest and disease outbreaks, drought, and wildfires.
 - 2 FY19 contracts & 1 FY21 contract
 - 2 FY22 contracts – 737 ac, \$446,234 total obligated

- 705 ac thinning & slash trt, 617 ac tree planting
 - 4.1 ac riparian planting, 96 ac pollinator seeding
- **Forest Management Planning** (western Oregon) – New strategy 2022-2026 that provides funding for landowners to hire a Technical Service Provider to develop a Forest Management Plan (FMP) for their property. Priorities are forest structure & composition, wildfire hazard, and terrestrial wildlife habitat.
 - 2 FY22 contracts (1 Lincoln, 1 Lane) totaling ~\$6,900 of FMP on 400 acres.
 - 4 FY23 applications (1 Lincoln, 3 Lane)
- [High Tunnel Initiative](#)
 - 3 FY22 contracts (Lincoln), \$20,202 total
 - 4 FY23 applications (Lincoln)
- [Organic Initiative](#)
 - 1 FY21 contract (Lincoln)--High Tunnel & Cover Crops; no FY22 applications
 - 1 FY23 application (Lincoln)
- [EQIP-Conservation Implementation Contract \(EQIP-CIC\)](#)
 - New program in 2021 that acts as stepping-stone between EQIP and CSP and includes annual management payments plus associated practices. CCUW-SW Basin focus is on pasture and nutrient management.
 - 2 FY21 contracts (Lincoln), \$77,000; no applications FY2022
 - FY23 sign-up will be late March/early April (**update: April 7, 2023**)
- [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#)
 - Participants earn payments to maintain existing conservation systems and adopt additional enhancements to address priority resource concerns over 5-year contract.
 - 3 active contracts in Lane County (all forestry)
 - 2 new FY22 contracts – 230 ac, \$38,344 total
 - FY23 sign-up deadline is March 31, 2023
- [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#)
 - Part of the Conservation Reserve Program run by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) – provides annual rental payments to take marginal pastureland out of production to restore degraded riparian zones and wetlands through 10- or 15-year contracts.
 - 6 active contracts in Lincoln County, 176 ac
 - 6 active contracts in west Lane County, ~24 ac
- [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements \(WRE\) & Healthy Forests Reserve Program \(HFRP\)](#)
 - Protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and forests through conservation easements.
 - WRP: 2 easements (5 landowners) in west Lane County, 385 ac permanent easements on tidal wetlands
 - HFRP: 4 contracts in west Lane County, 687 ac permanent easements
- New in FY23 – Siuslaw Floodplain Reconnection CIS (Lane & Douglas Counties) - EQIP
 - This CIS will build off more than two decades of watershed restoration collaboration among partners in the Siuslaw Coho Partnership to improve aquatic habitat for fish through reconnection of floodplains and tidal wetlands and restoration of riparian buffers. The focus area is the 11 priority sub-watersheds in the Siuslaw and coastal lakes basins identified in the SCP’s recently awarded OWEB FIP grant.
 - Received 2 FY23 applications, more outreach planned this year.
- New in FY23 – Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): focus on [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Activities](#)
 - \$19.5 billion over 5 years to EQIP, CSP, ACEP & RCPP
 - For FY23, Oregon has \$2 million in EQIP – **sign-up by April 7, 2023**

- This year our Basin is prioritizing IRA funding for the Forest Resistance & Resilience CIS, Westside Wildfire Recovery CIS, and Williams Community Forest CIS (Josephine County)

Siuslaw Soil & Water Conservation District Program Updates – Seth Mead, Watershed

Conservationist Contact info: siuswcd@gmail.com, <https://siuswcd.com/>

- Staff provided updates on the District’s main programs: conservation, education, and local leadership. The ODA Focus Areas are Fiddle Creek and Maple Creek (Siltcoos Lake drainage).
 - Ag water quality program – planting and fencing riparian areas
 - Watershed restoration program – stronghold approach, very active program
 - Education & outreach program – get kids outside and excited about the watershed
 - Noxious weed control program – strategic approach focusing on target species
 - Looking to hire 1-2 new staff members in the coming year

Other USDA Programs – Annie Marion

- Farm Service Agency – emergency/disaster relief programs, crop insurance, Organic Certification Cost Share Program. Rural Development – housing loans, community grants, value-added producer grants, etc. Eugene Service Center: 780 Bailey Hill Rd, Eugene, OR 97402, (541) 465-6443.
- [Organic Transition Initiative](#) – new program in 2023, more info coming soon.

Priorities for the Future – discussion of potential new Conservation Implementation Strategies

- [Local Foods and Climate Resiliency](#) – food security and climate resiliency in Central Coast/Upper Willamette/Southwest Basin.
 - Ray Kinney (SSWCD board/landowner) – very supportive of this effort - agroforestry & high tunnels important for local food production and food availability (water quality/quantity-friendly), look at high value crops for small acreages (like orchards), monitoring is also important, developing growers cooperatives
 - Seth Mead – supportive, knows local landowners who would be interested in this effort, ample opportunity to expand/diversify ag on the west side of the Coast Range
 - Suggested partners: Lane Farm & Food Coalition, Fill Your Pantry, farmer’s markets
- [Forest Resistance & Resilience](#) – 5-year strategy slated to be completed in FY23, is there interest in extending it and possibly extending the focus area boundaries in western Lane County?
 - Ray Kinney – important to consider climate change and adaptability of dominant species (increased pest/disease on stressed trees), need “islands of diversity” for the future, LT soil health/nutrient/pH effects of short timber rotations in a high rainfall environment
 - Ty Siepert (NRCS) – Swiss needle cast becoming more of an issue for DF in coastal fog belt
 - Seth Mead – prioritizing is difficult because it’s such a wide-spread issue in the area, monoculture plantations that are about 30 years old now, work in GIS on pulling out just private non-industrial forest to prioritize watersheds
- [Native Olympia Oyster Restoration](#) – Washington NRCS has been working on Olympia oyster restoration for several years, FL/RI NRCS have other successful shellfish restoration programs.
 - Potential interested partners: Stan Vandewetering (CTSI), Dick Vander Schaff (TNC), Steve Rumrill (ODFW), Chris Langdon (OSU)
 - Ray Kinney is interested in keeping up on this project—water-quality assessments to evaluate the feasibility
 - Seth Mead—supportive, would like to keep tabs on this project, help how he can—has seen a few spots with oysters/shells, but probably not on private land (USFS?),

CTCLUSI probably interested as well and might have suitable lands and might already be doing water quality testing

- New suggestion (Ray Kinney): Carbon sequestration using biochar applications on local pastures, cropland
 - Soil Carbon Amendment practice (included in new Local Foods CIS) includes biochar application on cropland
 - Info from NW Climate Hub:
<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/northwest/topic/biochar>
 - Idea of inoculating hazelnut/chestnut orchards with truffles, other potential high value crops

Partner Updates/Ideas

- Seth Mead – interested in the new Siuslaw Floodplain Reconnection CIS – has a private landowner that might be a good fit, Tribes and MRT probably have some other upcoming projects that could work too
- Eli Tome (MRT) – set to close on Site 59 property in next couple weeks (NRCS WRP easement) on N Fork Siuslaw, also working on restoration plan for Wren Marsh, other acquisitions in the works that will have tidal wetland restoration potential in the future; hiring a Coastal Stewardship position in Florence area (plus 4 other positions). <https://mckenzieriver.org/jobs/>
- HFRP funding through RCPP? Seth is interested, wondering about likelihood of getting funded, match requirements.
 - Heather Medina-Sauceda: lots of funding coming in next few years from IRA, could go to RCPP for HFRP. May not require 1:1 match in the future. ODF or SWCD could be lead partner, don't have to be certified planner, just have to coordinate the project.
 - Seth would be interested in seeing list of folks who previously applied for HFRP to see if they're still interested.
 - Tom Snyder: Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OWEB) is set up to match NRCS Ag Land Easements (ALE). <https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/Documents/Oregon-Agricultural-Heritage-Program-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Ray Kinney – stressed the importance of water quality monitoring for alkalinity moving forward. Easily testable, could be added to current monitoring strategies. Seth said he might be able to help with that.

Thanks again to everyone who participated in the Local Work Group process this year, and thanks to Tom Snyder, NRCS, for facilitating the meeting.

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Click here to find a link to the recording of the Annual Local Work Group Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbyPcFdKzDI>