



Location: Bandon Library 1204 11th St SW, Bandon OR 97411
With Zoom option

4:00 pm **Welcome** by Tom Snyder, Eugene DC. Announced recording and use of Owl meeting camera. Described the primary purpose of the LWG is setting priorities for NRCS locally led conservation for 2025 and encouraged participants to communicate year-round with DC Katie Woodruff.

Introductions (name, affiliation, primary resource concern): NRCS staff, local ODFW, Coos and Curry SWCD, landowners, local nursery, Energy Trust staff, forestry TSPs are present.

Overview of programs and purposes Katie provided a brief (WRE, ALE, RCPP, EQIP, CIC, IRA funds, etc.) description and a summary of 2023 applications including 3 Local Foods high tunnels, 3 Forest Management Plans, 3 Gorse for wildfire applications. Described difference between Oregon CISs and IRA “Climate Smart Ag” priorities.

Current Strategies. Katie described the 2024 local CISs: Gorse, Cranberry Irrigation Efficiency, and Tidegate upgrades. Participant questions included “What is a high tunnel?” “Is herbicide required for Gorse CIS participation?”

Tidegates: Extensive discussion, beginning with a question (Landowner, OR Cattlemen’s Association Craig Herman) How much money is dedicated to tidegate applications for 2023? Katie discussed current and future allocation of funds and the dependence on participation to justify future year funding, with approximately \$200k budgeted for tidegates this year. Further discussion about need for partnerships to bring sufficient funds to a tidegate project, and Caley Sowers of Coos SWCD discussed the value of NRCS funds as match for other grants. Katie described the plan of focusing on clusters of projects each year of the CIS.

Gorse/Wildfire: Question (Darcy Grayhek, Stillwater Natives) Is herbicide required for gorse control through EQIP? Katie discussed variety of techniques and difficulty of gorse control over time. Additional discussion about using grazing and other biocontrols for gorse, fire and additional ecological impacts of gorse. Herbicide is not required but is often the most effective approach for larger acreage.

Cranberry Irrigation Efficiency: Katie explained this year’s CIS development (7 current applications) came about because of high level of interest and calls from producers, and encouraged participants to do the same if there are other resource concerns they observe and would like to see addressed through EQIP or other NRCS funding.

RCPP vs CIS discussion: RCPP is partner-led and needs a strong partnership in place with capacity to develop an application and run the projects and reporting. So far, no partnership has been up for this particular challenge locally, but there is potential in the

future. Katie and other NRCS staff are available to discuss advantages and requirements if local entity is interested.

FSA programs: CED Bret Harris unable to attend. Katie listed some of the locally available FSA programs and reminded all to talk with Bret if they have any questions about loans, disaster programs, CRP, other FSA programs. FSA's role in eligibility determination and record maintenance also discussed.

CREP: CREP Tech discussed program, revisited gorse challenges and grazing/harvest exclusion requirement, mentioned success of non-CREP grazing for gorse control and cautioned against moving endemic predatory/parasitic mite from the coast as a danger to desirable biocontrol mite.

SWCD Updates: Drew Harper provided an overview of **Curry SWCD** progress especially on Elk River SAP, gorse, fish passage, off-stream watering facilities, and riparian restoration. Willow Creek is now a Model Watershed for Agriculture and Wildlife Habitat; additional SAPs are being planned for the Sixes and Floras/New River watersheds.

Abby Richards of **Coos SWCD** announced need for volunteers for 2 riparian restoration projects on Bear Creek SIA area next week, February 10 weather permitting.

Introduced **IRA funds:** Katie provided an overview of IRA funding and explained the emphasis on carbon sequestration in the practices available for pasture, forest, crop, energy, AFOs.

Introduced CSP: Overview of CSP (baseline payments for high level of conservation, payments for enhancements), and required high level of record-keeping. Brief discussion of types of enhancements and ideas for local applications.

Discussion

Question (Craig Herman) Is the local office still limited to 3 Strategies at a time? Katie clarified that the 3 local strategies are in addition to the IRA and State/National priority funding. Tom and Katie briefly discussed capacity limitations due to staffing levels. Tom further explained negotiation process among Basin DCs to determine distribution of funds, impact of coming new Farm Bill, and the approximate 3 to 5-year window of funding for each CIS.

Are there any resource concerns NRCS should be aware of? What are the big priorities for local landowners and land managers?

Forest Health: TSP Eric Farm asked if IRA funds are the best way to fund small woodland owners on old harvest sites reverting to hardwood and shrub. Discussion about using IRA funds while they are available for carbon-boosting forest health.

Riverbank Stabilization and Dikes: Landowner Craig Herman indicated a pressing concern about instream sediment and protection of agricultural land, and mentioned modern MTRs are more fish-friendly than old tidegates. Discussion with input from ODFW's Chris Claire about barbs, sloping steep banks, dikes, large wood structure, etc., and NRCS pasture improvements and riparian restoration to provide matching funds for landowners to bring to Partner instream/bank shaping projects, the need to provide ecological uplift to attract funding and get permits for land protection projects. The role of partnership among entities discussed.

Permits: Landowner Jeff Messerle indicated that permitting is burdensome, and landowners need help. The increasing complexity of permitting, the role of NRCS, and the availability of agreements for EQIP practices discussed, as well as the advantage of involving a partner who can assist with permits while NRCS helps fund implementation. RCPP is one way to make such a partnership work, or cooperation is possible project-by-project. Local capacity to develop and run a longer-term RCPP type partnership is a limiting factor.

6:05 Adjourned.