

# Welcome to the 2024 Polk County Local Working Group Meeting



## Housekeeping:

1. This meeting is being recorded
2. Silence phone, mute self on zoom
3. Questions for end
4. Break
5. (Optional) brunch and networking at end

## Purpose:

- To build and expand partnerships
- Evaluate natural resources
- Collaboratively prioritize and improve identified natural resource concerns

## Objectives:

1. Present updates from NRCS and Polk SWCD
2. Small group discussion about natural resource concerns
3. Possible development of a natural resource committee based on feedback



# Who are we?

**POLK**



**Soil & Water  
Conservation District**



**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Kevin Porter

District Manager  
Polk SWCD



## **Technical assistance and Outreach Grants**

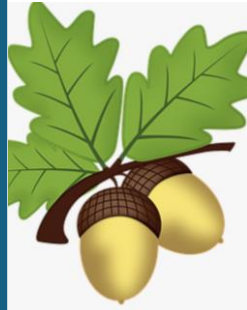
Effective and equitable outreach, conservation education, technical assistance, and land stewardship have never been more important. Through historic federal investments such as the Inflation Reduction Act, NRCS will invest over \$20 billion in working lands conservation over five years.

In order to achieve its climate and conservation goals, NRCS must enroll new and underserved producers into its conservation programs. Conservation Districts, their respective state/territory associations and agencies, Resource Conservation & Development Councils, and Tribal organizations help provide the outreach, education, mentoring and technical assistance that helps farmers, ranchers, and forest stewards make informed decisions on their lands to enhance its sustainability.

NACD and NRCS share the goals of impacting individual producers and communities, as well as equitably increasing civic engagement to strengthen the locally led conservation delivery system.

# Individual Impacts:

**Increase the number of producers who implement conservation plans and practices**



**Acknowledge and address historical barriers with the goals of:**



introducing new and historically underserved producers to conservation

increasing participation in NRCS programs

improving approaches to outreach and technical assistance

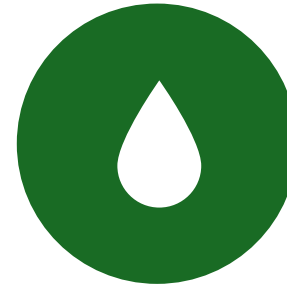


# Community Impacts:

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Improve economic and environmental resilience in rural and urban communities



Address environmental justice issues, such as food security and access, heat equity, and clean water initiatives



Develop conservationists and leaders within the communities for long-term sustainment of programs and investments

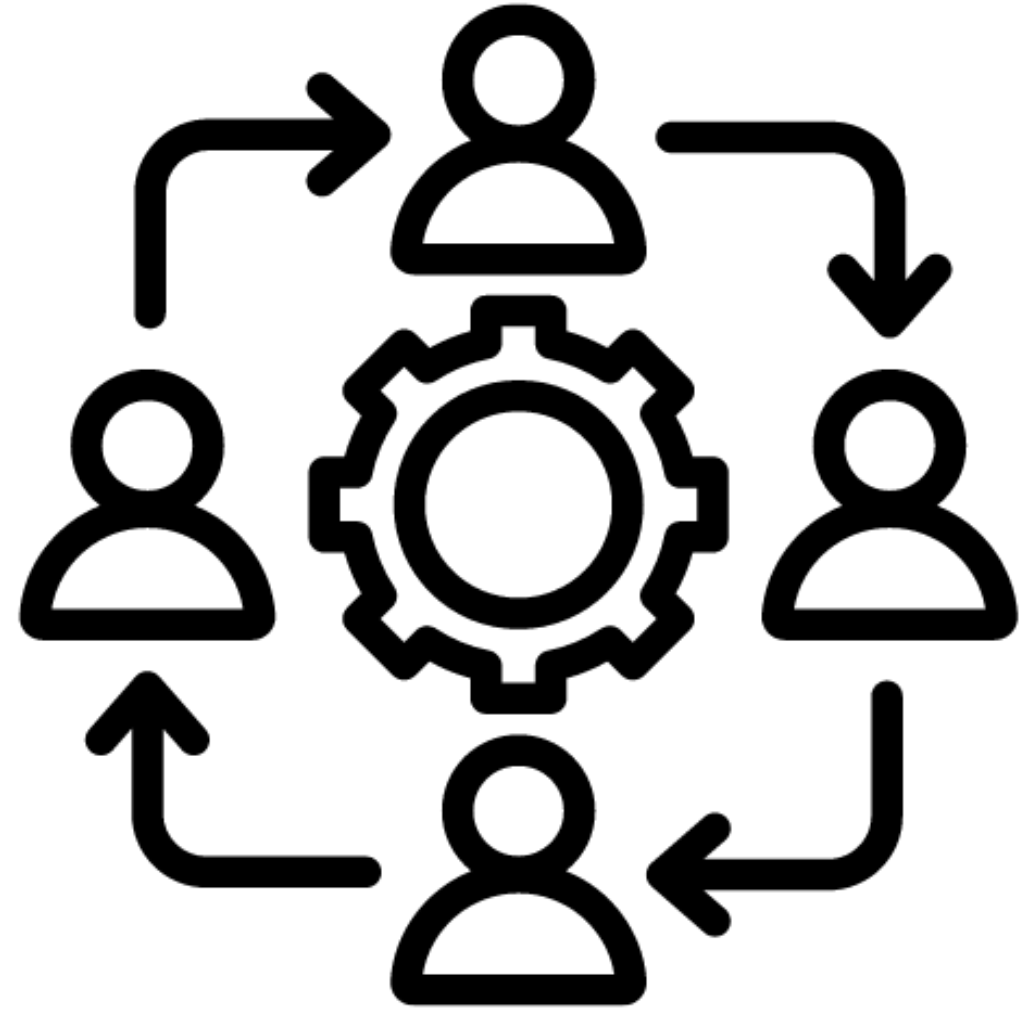


Support and advance tribal conservation goals

# Civic Engagement:

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- Increase or create new opportunities for civic engagement in conservation
- Increase awareness of the locally led conservation system and how producers' voices can impact community outcomes
- Develop and implement inclusive board succession plans/processes that advance DEIJA and ensure locally led conservation remains a core community value



- Polk County, Oregon has substantial forested lot-sized housing developments and larger urban/suburban residential properties that represent a significant amount of marginally managed timberland.
- We would like to perform Outreach and Technical Assistance to help promote conservation education and forestry management, especially relating to managing urban and suburban forested areas for wildfire resistance.
- Polk County's population has grown 16% since 2010, with substantial housing being built in oak and Doug fir timberlands in the West Salem area, and south and west of Dallas.





# Key implementation areas -

- Identify areas with overstocked tree stands and combine those landowners into management groups that can offer contractors and other partners benefits of scale to reduce costs
- Identify and treat areas with high invasive species pressure, with a focus on removing fuel loads for potential fire.



# Key implementation areas -

- Assist with conversion to Oak Upland habitat where practical.
- Facilitate community engagement to keep landowners working together for conservation and fire reduction activities into the future.
- Include small commercial timber owners in meetings and outreach

## Grant funding budget –

NACD						
TA Grant Proposed Budget Worksheet						
Applicant:		Polk SWCD				
TA Grant Funding Cycle (such as TA2023):			TA2023			
<b>Total Project Budget (Grant + Match):</b>			<b>\$37,500.00</b>			
Expense Item		NACD Grant Funds	Match Funds Cash	In-Kind Credit	Match	Justification (how expenditures contribute to project deliverables)
Salaries and Fringe* (with Contracted labor must be at least 80% of Project Budget) *Fringe includes the employer's share of taxes, social security and any benefits		\$11,250.00	\$11,250.00	\$0.00		Outreach coordinator, other staff time
Contracting		\$5,625.00	\$5,625.00			Contract Forester, Contract Habitat Restoration Consultant, ODF Forestry costs
Travel						
Supplies (total cost of supplies and equipment combined cannot exceed 10% of the project budget)		\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00	\$0.00		Fees, materials and supplies for outreach program and meetings
Equipment (unit cost greater than or equal to \$5,000)		\$775.00	\$775.00			For use on projects or demonstrations



# Project success outcomes

- The scope of outreach is largely a population that the SWCD and NRCS has had no prior contact within Polk County.
- The SWCD can assist qualifying landowners in the proposed project with FSA paperwork, if they are interested in further participation in RCPP or other USDSA programs.
- Education in a community that has significant in-migration, with property owners who may not be aware of management concerns in the area they live in.
- Community building and resiliency

**Evelyn Conrad**

**District Conservationist  
NRCS, Polk County**



# Climate Smart Ag & Forestry

Adaptation:

Adapting to Change

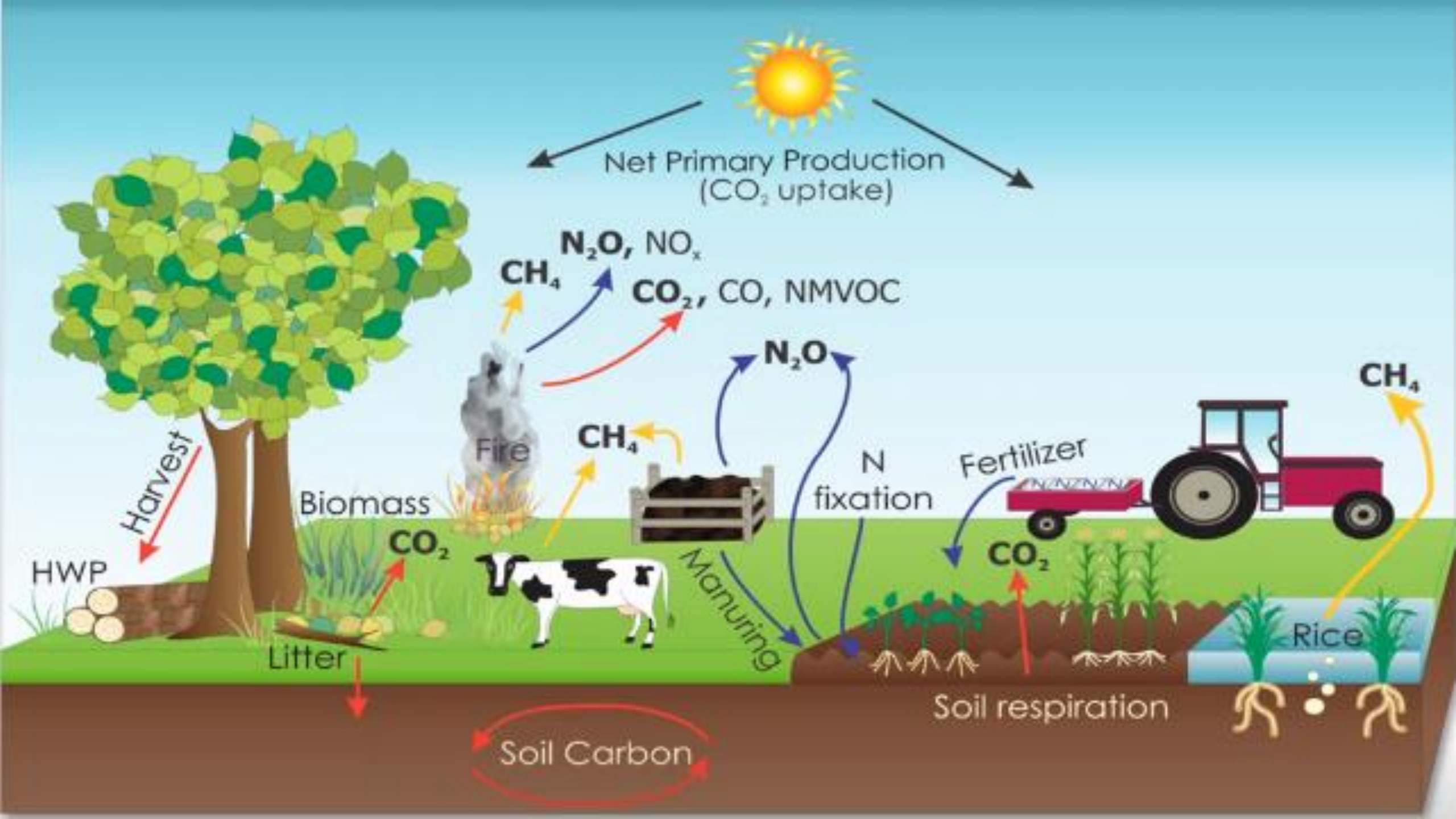
Building Resilience

Mitigating Impacts:

Reducing GHG



Increase Productivity, Income & Sustainability

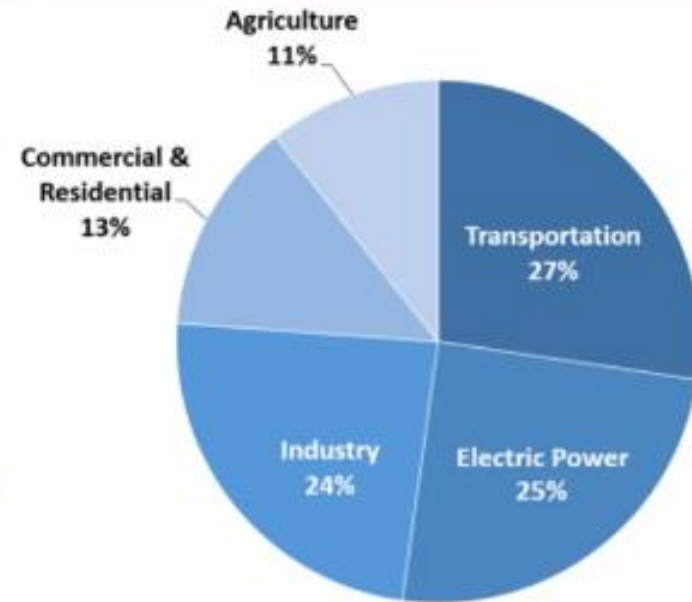


# Why Agricultural Mitigation?



- 17% of total global GHG emissions in 2018
- 11% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2020
  - 42% of methane emissions
  - 80% of nitrous oxide emissions
- The U.S. aims to achieve a **50-52% reduction from 2005 levels in economy-wide net GHG pollution in 2030** – this will require all sectors to take actions.

Sources of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions in 2020



Note: All emission estimates from the [Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2020](#).

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)



# NRCS Working Lands Practices... Work!

## - as Climate Solutions



Cover crops



Anaerobic digester



Conservation buffers



CO<sub>2</sub>



Conservation tillage



# Transition to Riparian Buffer



**Conservation Co-Benefits - Soil Health, Atmospheric Carbon, Riparian Health, Sustainability**



# Transition to Grazing Management

Conservation Co-Benefits - Soil Health, Atmospheric Carbon, Livestock Health, Sustainability



# Transition to No-Till/Reduced Till and Residue Management

Conservation Co-Benefits - Soil Health, Atmospheric Carbon, Nitrogen Management, Sustainability



# Carbon Sequestration



**Windbreak – CPS 380**



**Perennial Biomass and Soils**



USDA employees, Paul Youngstrum and Eric McTaggart, examine a cover crop radish.  
NRCS photo by Jody Christiansen.



**Cover Crop – CPS 340**



Climate Smart  
Agricultural & Forestry  
Funding is Available

EQIP – Reimbursement  
CSP- Stewardship

*Improve Resilience to Climate Change*

*Adapt, Mitigate, Sustain*

# Purpose: Reduce GHG Emissions & Improve Soil Aggregate Stability

- Supports vegetative growth and carbon sequestration
- Improves management practices & reduces contributors to GHG.
- Supports transition to sustainable, mitigating agricultural practices.

## EQIP General Funding Opportunities 2024:

- **Forest Resiliency in Face of Climate Change**
- **Meadow Restoration in Declining Habitats**
- **Polk County Oak Habitat Restoration**
- **Animal Feeding Operations**
- **Erosion In Orchards**

## EQIP Initiative Funding Opportunities 2024:

- **National Initiatives: High Tunnels, Organic /Transition, Energy, Air Quality**
- **Conservation Incentive Contracts – Land mgmt. 5 year.**
- **Conservation Stewardship – Ag & Forest stewardship 5 year**
- **Agricultural Land Easements - Wetlands & Working Ag Lands**
- **Riparian Restoration: –Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program 10-15 yr**

# NRCS Funding Opportunities

Website: Oregon NRCS

Search:

**“WHAT’S AVAILABLE IN MY COUNTY?”**

**Select POLK County for funding options.**

**Jesse Warden**

**Soil Conservationist  
NRCS, Polk County**

# High Tunnels / Organic Transition / Irrigation



# High Tunnels / Organic Transition / Irrigation

## **Primary Resource Concerns Addressed:**

### **High Tunnels:**

Degraded plant condition - Plant productivity and health, extend growing season

### **Organic Transition:**

All Resource Concerns – Transition from non-organic production to organic.

### **Irrigation: EQIP-CIC**

Source Water Depletion



# High Tunnel Initiative

## **High Tunnels Resource Concern Addressed:**

- Degraded plant condition - Plant productivity and health, extend growing season

## **Project Description:**

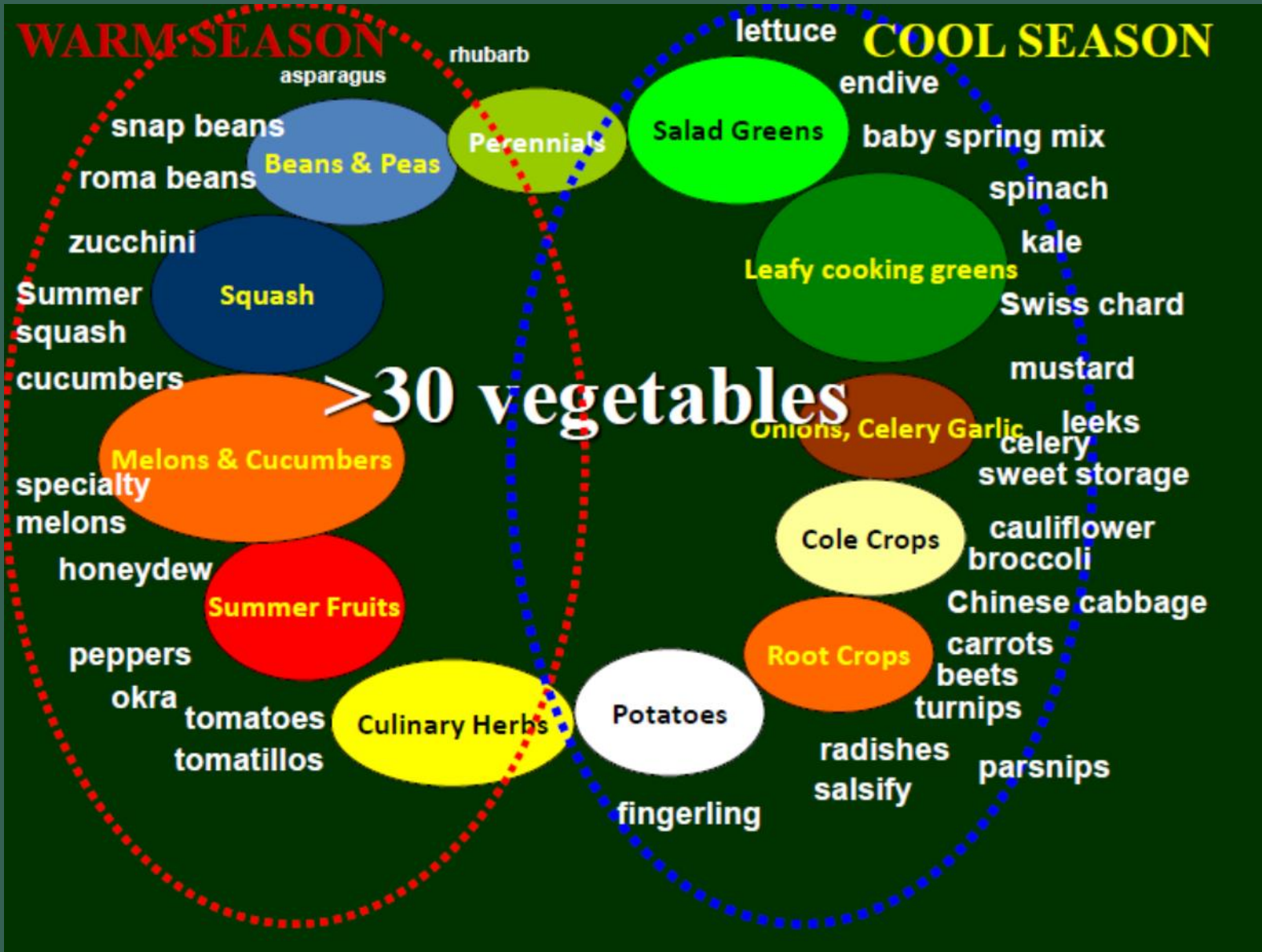
High tunnels protect plants from severe weather and allow farmers to extend their growing seasons – growing earlier into the spring, later into the fall, and sometimes, year-round.

High tunnels help farmers provide their communities with healthy local food for much of the year – food that requires less energy and transportation inputs.

## **Conservation Practice Offered:**

High Tunnel System

# High Tunnel Systems



# Organic Transition

## **Organic Transition Resource Concerns Addressed:**

All Resource Concerns – Transition from non-organic production to organic.

## **Project Description:**

Help organic producers improve their operations or help producers transition to organic using a conservation plan tailored to their needs.

## **Conservation Practices:**

Improving irrigation efficiency;

Developing an Organic System Plan;

Creating pollinator habitat;

Grazing plan and supportive livestock practices;

Nutrient and pest management activities;

Installing a high tunnel system

Establishing buffer zones;

Improving soil health and control erosion;

Enhancing cropping rotations;

Managing cover crops;

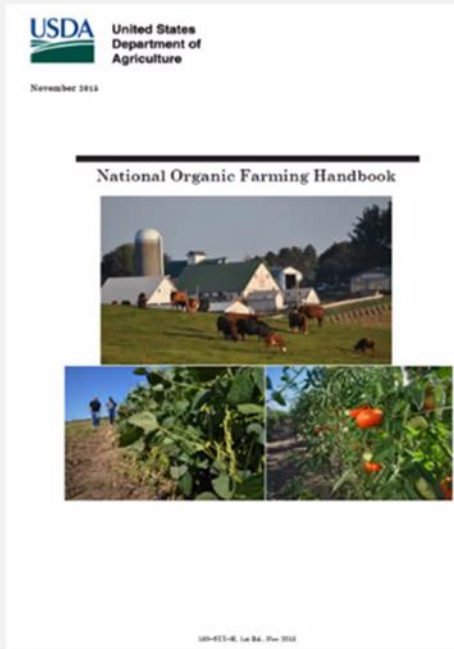
# Organic Transition

Learn More about Organic Management

## Organic Farming Handbook

### D. Integral Conservation Activities

- Nutrient Management
- Cover Crops
- Compost
- Crop Rotations
- Tillage & Residue Management
- Integrated Pest Management
- Buffers and Natural Areas
- Grazing Management
- Livestock Living Conditions, Facilities, and Structures



## Soil Health and Reducing Tillage in Organic Systems



## Some Organic Soil and Weed Mgmt Best Practices



Cover Crops (Use NRCS 340)



Crop Rotation (Use NRCS 328)



Nutrient Management (Use NRCS 590)



Strategic Tillage and Cultivation (Use NRCS 329/345)



# EQIP CIC - Irrigation

## **EQIP-Conservation Incentives Contract Primary Resource Concern:** Source Water Depletion

### **Project Description:**

“Steppingstone” for correcting resource issues on specific land units, to achieving sustainable stewardship on an entire operation. Incentive contracts are management focused and now offers conservation evaluation and monitoring activities to help report outcomes of practices.

### **Conservation Practices Offered:**

Soil Health Testing (216)

Cover Crop (340)

Irrigation Pipeline (430)

Sprinkler System (442)

Pumping Plant (533)

Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329)

Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345)

Irrigation System, Micr-oirrigation (441)

Irrigation Water Management (449)

Structure for Water Control (587)

# EQIP CIC - Irrigation



**Brandon Steiner**

**Forester**

**NRCS, Polk County**

# Forest Resiliency in the Face of Climate Change





# Forest Resiliency in The Face of Climate Change

## **Primary Resource Concerns Addressed:**

- Degraded plant condition - Plant productivity and health
- Air quality emissions - Emissions of greenhouse gases – GHGs

## **Project Description:**

The objective of this CIS is to enhance forest ecosystem resiliency and build upon past efforts of increasing forest structure diversity, while focusing efforts in areas of high priority for the Local Work Group and partners. This strategy will deploy a number of techniques to target the most vulnerable locations to lessen the impacts of disturbances and reduce the potential of catastrophic disturbances, such as the wildfires in 2020.

# Forest Resiliency in The Face of Climate Change

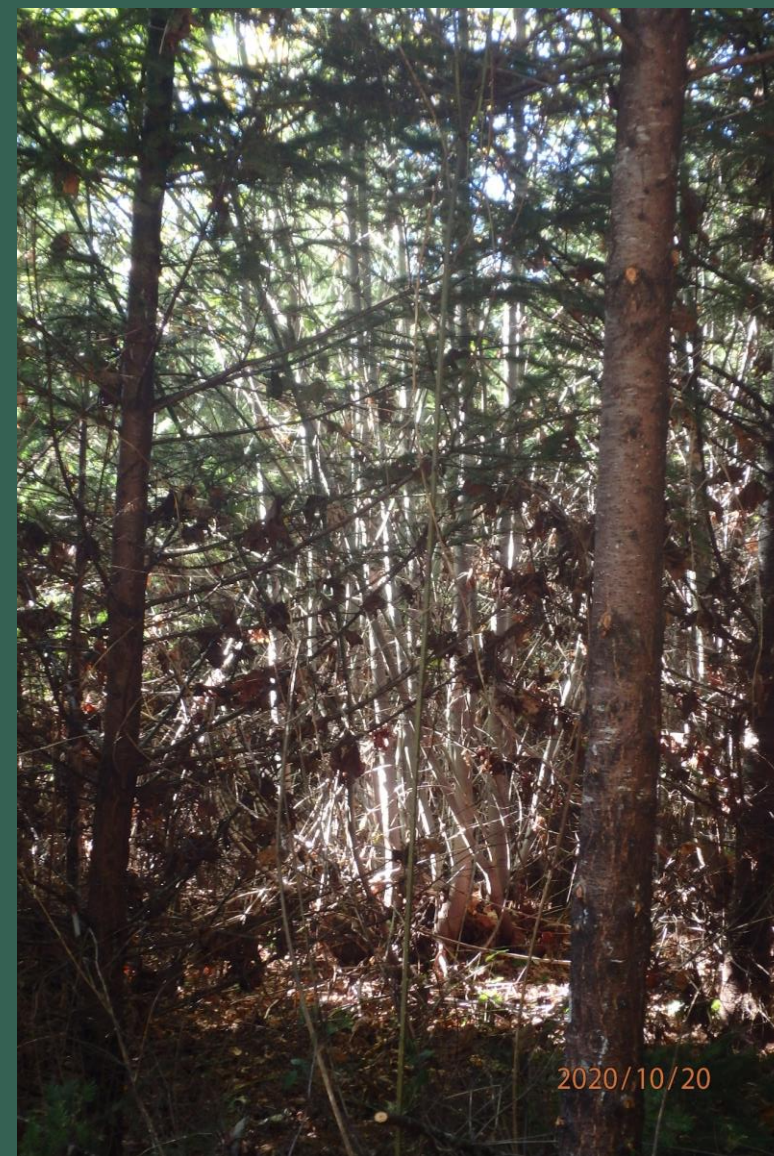
## Conservation Practices Offered:

- Forest Management Plan (106)
- Forest Management Design and Implementation Activity (165)
- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Woody Residue Treatment (384)
- Tree/Shrub Pruning (660)
- Fuel Break (383)
- Brush Management (314)
- Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)
- Conservation Cover (327)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Access Road (560)
- Forest Trails and Landings (655)

# Pine Forest Management: Before & After



# Douglas Fir Forest Management: Before



# Douglas Fir Forest Management: After



# Oak Woodland Health & Habitat Management



# Oak Woodland Health & Habitat Management

## **Primary Resource Concerns Addressed:**

- Degraded plant condition - Plant structure and composition
- Terrestrial habitat - Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

## **Project Description:**

Declining oak and upland conifer habitats with connecting corridors are inadequate in Polk County to provide sufficient forage, shelter and cover for species dependent on these habitat types. Private and tribal lands with overstocked oak woodlands and upland conifer forests deficient of wildlife meadows in the Airlie/Haybeck oak, aligning with partner-identified conservation opportunity areas, priority wildlife connectivity areas and within close proximity to powerline easements located in southern Polk County will be highest priority.

# Oak Woodland Health & Habitat Management

## Conservation Practices Offered:

- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Woody Residue Treatment (384)
- Brush Management (314)
- Herbaceous Weed Control (315)
- Conservation Cover (327)
- Obstruction Removal (500)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Structures for Wildlife (649)
- Hedgerow Planting (422)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Wildlife Habitat Planting (420)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)



# Oak Woodland Health & Habitat Management: Before



# Oak Woodland Health & Habitat Management: After



# Thank you!

## USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAW AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) CIVIL RIGHTS REGULATIONS AND POLICIES, THE USDA, ITS AGENCIES, OFFICES, AND EMPLOYEES, AND INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN OR ADMINISTERING USDA PROGRAMS ARE PROHIBITED FROM DISCRIMINATING BASED ON RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, SEX, GENDER IDENTITY (INCLUDING GENDER EXPRESSION), SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABILITY, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, FAMILY/PARENTAL STATUS, INCOME DERIVED FROM A PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, POLITICAL BELIEFS, OR REPRISAL OR RETALIATION FOR PRIOR CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITY, IN ANY PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY CONDUCTED OR FUNDED BY USDA (NOT ALL BASES APPLY TO ALL PROGRAMS). REMEDIES AND COMPLAINT FILING DEADLINES VARY BY PROGRAM OR INCIDENT.

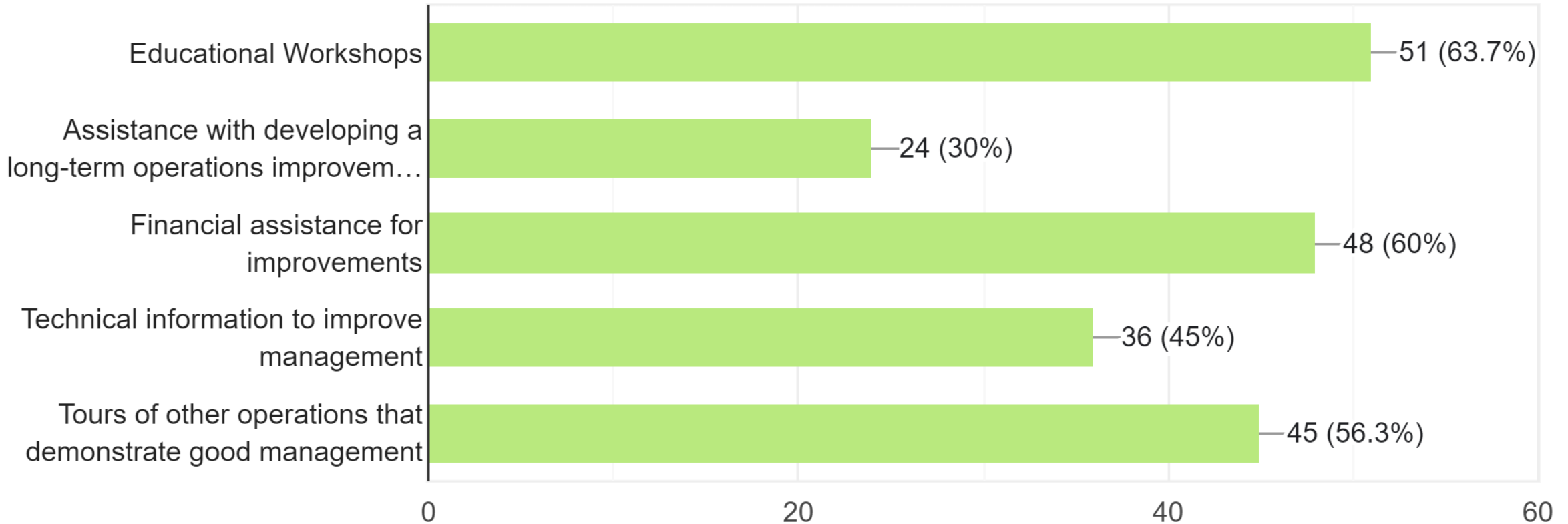
**USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER,  
AND LENDER.**



Polk County Community input  
Natural Resource Concerns

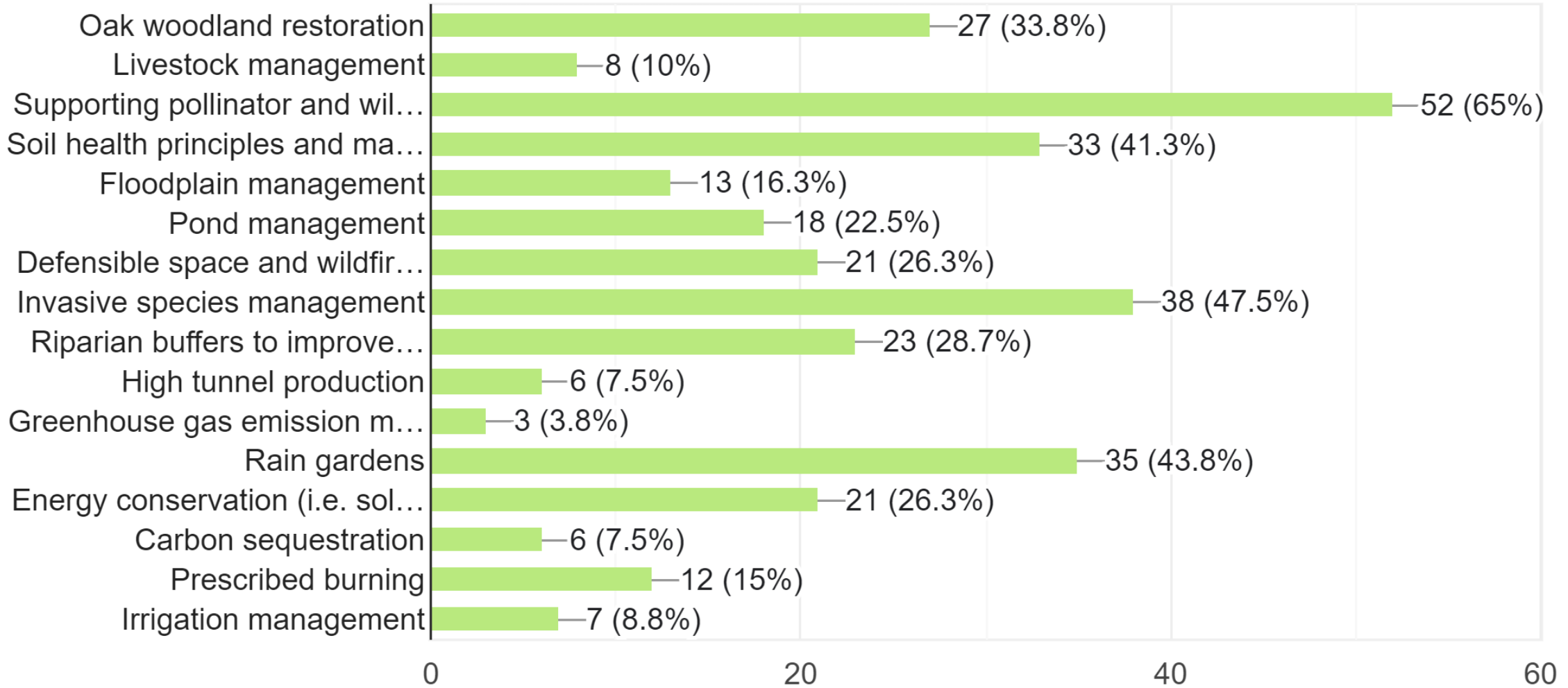
# What types of assistance would you like to have to improve the management of your property?

80 responses



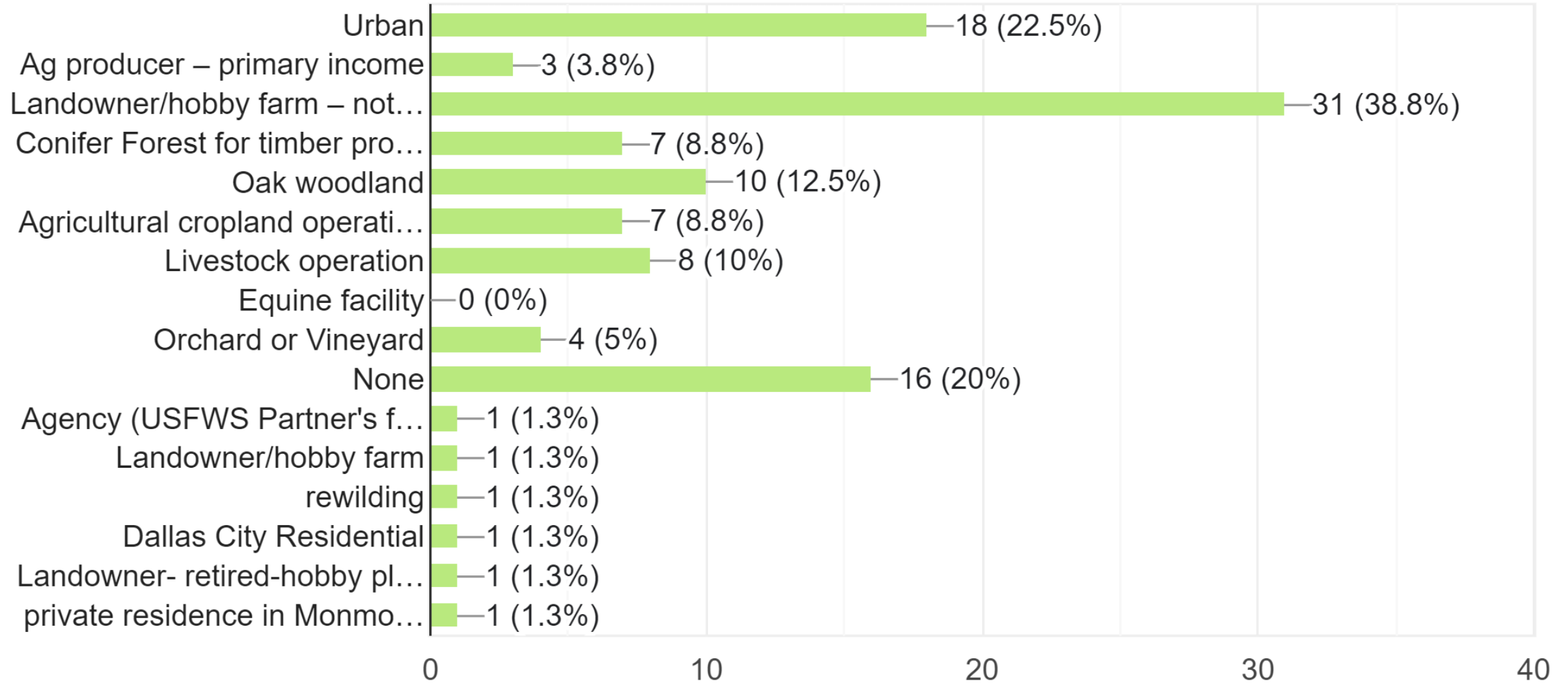
# I would be interested in attending these educational workshops:

80 responses

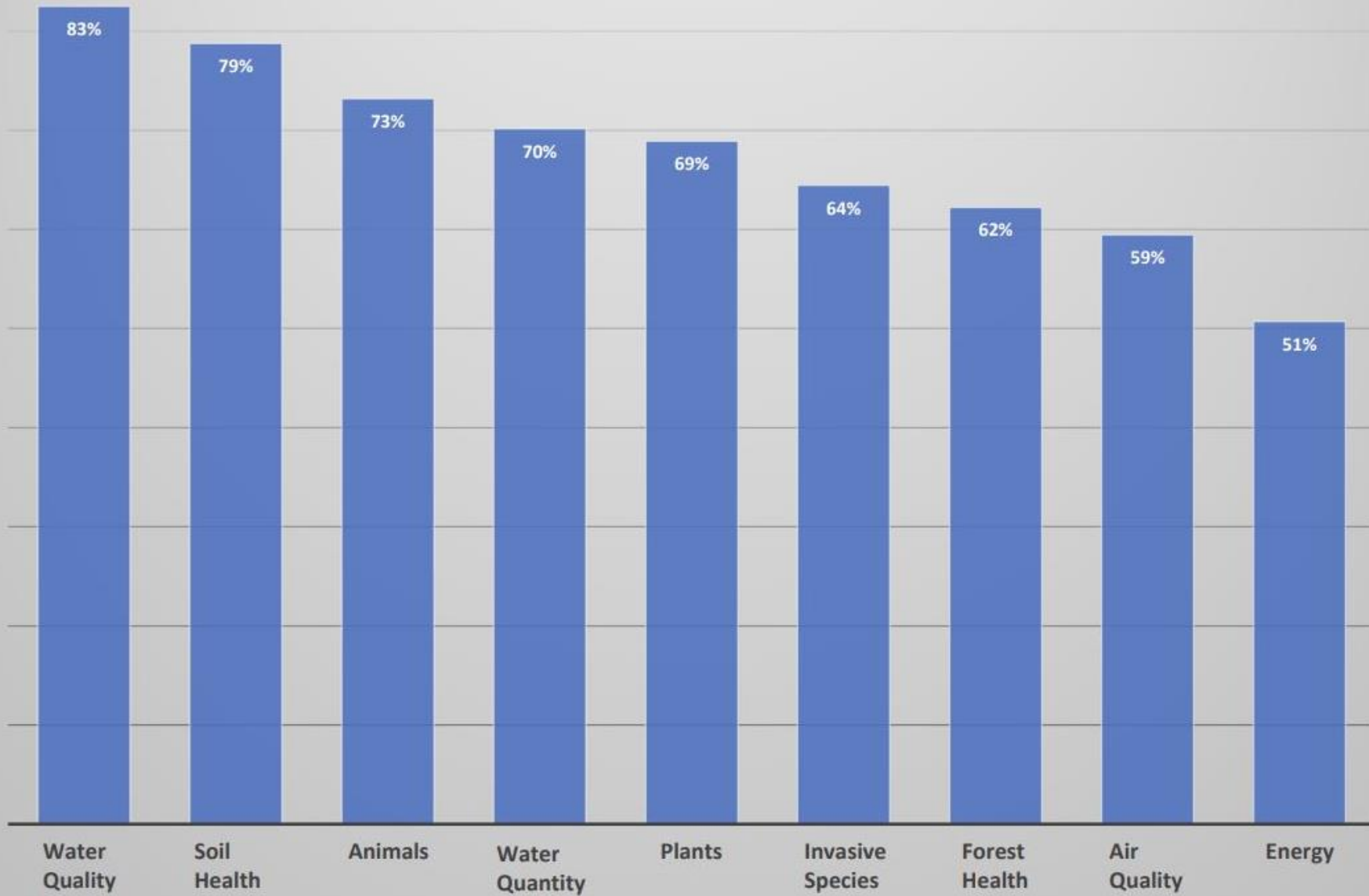


# What type of property or agricultural operation do you have?

80 responses



## Community Survey





## Small Group Discussion - 10:00-11:00

- Choose groups based on your zone
- Facilitator/Group Rep Introduction
- Individual participant introductions
- Assign a note taker
- Discussion:
  - Discuss results of survey – what are we missing?
  - Challenges and/or limitations to address resource concerns or target areas
  - Solutions for resolving this
  - Funding opportunities (and \$ amount) that will help
- Record notes/summary on big post its and put on walls



Questions???

# Thank you!

Please:

- Complete feedback form
- Complete demographics form
- Enjoy brunch!