

January 18, 2017
Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS)
Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD)
Local Work Group Meeting Minutes
JSWCD Conference Room
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

The purpose of this meeting is to showcase current conservation projects, evaluate currently funded conservation strategies, and begin groundwork for future projects, as well as network with partnership groups.

Erin Kurtz, NRCS District Conservationist, opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for their attendance and introductions were made. NRCS is a non-regulatory agency that works with landowners on private lands.

In the valley, NRCS's highest resource priorities are water quantity and quality and forest health and fuels reduction along with wildlife habitat. NRCS has been partnering with Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Seven Basins and Applegate Watershed Councils, Jackson County Integrated Fire Planning Committee, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Oregon State University (OSU) Extension in the Applegate and Seven Basin's Community Wildfire Protection Plan Areas.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, NRCS is helping to improve water quality in the Little Butte Creek watershed by converting flood to sprinkle irrigation. Partners include JSWCD, Rogue River Watershed Council, Medford Water Commission, and Oregon Department of Water Resources (ODWR) and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Erin reported on other projects that included Oak Woodland Health and Habitat Conservation. A national RCPP program is actively restoring oak woodlands in Jackson, Klamath and Siskiyou Counties. The Klamath-Siskiyou Oak Network (KSON) is one of their partners.

The Ashland Forest All Lands Restoration Project (AFAR) is a huge project that will help reduce and mitigate wildfire threats to communities, and protect water quality. It will also protect endangered wildlife in an area that has a large public and private land interface. This project is sponsored by the Chief Joint Restoration Partnership with both NRCS and United State Forest Service (USFS).

Other NRCS programs include the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Agricultural Land Easements (ALE), Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE).

Dan Esposito, NRCS Soil Conservationist, gave an overview of the new Conservation Client Gateway that was developed to streamline the NRCS application process. It is a secure web-based process for on-line applications, e-sign registrations and contracts. Clients will be

able to digitally report completed practices and request certification. This will help eliminate the many office visits for computer savvy clients.

JSWCD presented their video "Who Were Are What We Do" explaining the Districts purpose and services offered.

A question was asked if there were any conflict with NRCS Easement Programs and The Nature Conservancy's easement program. Erin answered that NRCS has worked with landowners who have easements and may be beneficial for preserving practice effectiveness.

Erin spoke of the need for coordination with other agencies and their input on what their projects are to see if there is a way for NRCS to help.

John O'Connor from the Oregon Department of Forestry said that they are looking at the Rogue Basin Risk Assessment plan to help guide them with future projects. They are looking for overlap with other agencies. This is a long term planning process and they would like to include small private landowners. Max Bennett from OSU Extension also spoke on this project called My Southern Oregon Woodlands. The target area is based on high fire risk lands. John will keep NRCS in the loop as this project moves forward.

Chrysten Lambert from Trout Unlimited discussed opportunities through various programs offered.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.