



***Washington County Local Work Group Meeting  
February 14, 2017  
USDA-NRCS Hillsboro Field Office***

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by Dean Moberg at 6:30 p.m.

Dean Moberg welcomed everyone to the meeting, and stated that the purpose of this meeting is to work together collaboratively with local partners and landowners to develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources effectively and efficiently. These meetings are mandated by policy to be held annually. Even though we only meet annually, we will certainly take comments and ideas at any time. The meeting was organized around a slide show, with discussion encouraged for each topic.

**Goals & Objectives – Strategic Approach to Conservation**

Dean explained the Strategic Approach to Conservation and Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS). Everyone said they were aware of how CIS work and are comfortable with this focuses approach to solving conservation problems. Based on previous local work groups and partner input, the current focus for conservation in Washington includes water quality, water quantity and forest diversity.

**Water Quality**

The Tualatin SWCD received funding for a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project in the Dairy-McKay and Middle Tualatin River watersheds. This program focuses on Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding for riparian buffers, irrigation efficiency and manure management. This RCPP project also includes some funding for Wetland Reserve Easements and the Conservation Stewardship Program. The group is satisfied with the progress in this RCPP project so far. Tualatin SWCD staff are providing much of the planning support for EQIP contracts funded by this RCPP on farms in the focus area. Funding for this RCPP is \$936,000; the program will fund contracts written in 2016 – 2020.

**Water Quantity**

Washington County has an EQIP funding pool that focuses on improving irrigation efficiency within the Tualatin Valley Irrigation District (TVID). This project partners with TVID, Clean Water Services, the Tualatin SWCD, the Oregon Water Resources Department and local

irrigation vendors. It is slated for a total of \$750,000 in funding through EQIP for 2015-2019. Micro-irrigation, mainlines, center pivot irrigation, linear move irrigation systems and pumps are funded. The group discussed what kinds of farms are eligible. Only fields with water rights, have received irrigation at least twice in the past five years and regularly have crops which use 15 inches or more of water are eligible.

## **Forestry**

Washington County has two EQIP funding pools that focus on forest land conservation. The Structural Diversity CIS funds pre-commercial thinning, woody residue treatment and tree/shrub establishment in forestland in the Dairy-Mckay Creek watershed. This area was chosen to complement the RCPP funding described earlier. There is also funding via the Pinchot Institute's RCPP Carbon . This RCPP funding focuses on helping non-industrial private forest owners develop forest management plans and carbon plans. The goal is to provide forest owners with enough information to allow them to sell carbon on one or more carbon exchanges.

## **Other NRCS Programs:**

Dean explained that NRCS also provides funding for conservation projects that is available across Washington County, provided the land and operators meet eligibility requirements:

- **Initiatives**  
EQIP funding is available to help farmers install seasonal high tunnels, help organic and organic transitional farms implement a variety of conservation practices, and help conserve energy on farms.
- **WRE - Wetlands Reserve Easements**  
NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands. Provides habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, with additional benefits of improved water quality. The Tualatin SWCD directors were very aware of WRE because the Tualatin SWCD is currently implementing a cooperative agreement with NRCS to restore the Hutchinson wetland easement. Dean pointed out that the Dairy-Mckay RCPP also has some limited WRE funding.
- **ALE – Agricultural Land Easements**  
NRCS helps tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands, providing for the long-term viability of the nation's food supply. The Tualatin SWCD recently was approved for a tax base and has expressed interest in acquiring easements.
- **CStP – Conservation Stewardship Program**  
Helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn annual CStP payments for conservation performance for five years. You

must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract, be actively engaged in the day-to-day management of the agricultural operation and share in the risks associated with agricultural production. You must also be meeting the stewardship threshold of at least two resource concerns at the time of application. CStP is available for farmland as well as forestland. Several participants in the Local Work Group were very familiar with CStP because they have had CStP contracts already.

**Other news:**

The group was interested in the current federal hiring freeze and how that affects finding a new District Conservationist for Washington County. Dean explained that we cannot hire a District Conservationist at this time. However, Kim Gray with NRCS is the Acting District Conservationist and Jeehye Lee is a full time Soil Conservationist in the office.

The Tualatin SWCD was interested in leasing arrangements because their lease expires in the next 12 months. Dean explained that the NRCS lease expires in 2018. He said he has alerted Tom Watson in the NRCS state office about this. Everyone in the Local Work Group expressed a desire to continue the strong local partnership.

Dean congratulated the Tualatin SWCD on having two of their planners, Briita Orwick and Aaron Shaw successfully complete the NRCS Conservation Planning course. Dean awarded Briita, Aaron and Jeehye Lee with their planning course certificates and certified conservation planner stamps.

Meeting adjourned 7:10 p.m.  
Dean Moberg

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