LONG RANGE STRATEGY and OUTREACH PLAN

CENTRAL OREGON COAST

LINCOLN COUNTY AND WEST LANE COUNTY

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

1130 Forestry Lane

Waldport, Oregon 97394

March 2019

Section 1 Introduction

Vision: Shared responsibility and commitment to local action promoting effective land stewardship.

Mission: The plan strives to recognize existing alliances and to direct investment of financial and technical resources to effectively solve natural resource challenges on the central coast of Oregon.

The development of this plan draws from:

Siuslaw Watershed Council
Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District
Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District
Oregon Department of Agriculture
Salmon Drift Watershed Council
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
MidCoast Watersheds Council
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department of Forestry
Oregon State University Extension
Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians

Partner Plans:

Siuslaw Watershed Council website
MidCoast Watersheds Council biennial reports and website
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy
Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District annual reports and business plan
Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District annual reports and business plan
Salmon Drift Watershed Council website

Major Issues:

- water quality – sediment, temperature, aquatic habitat
- forest health - stand composition, vigor, density
- noxious weeds and disease
- soil health and productivity
- wetland loss and restoration

Updates from the Local Workgroup:

The Central Coast Local Workgroup met on Wednesday, March 20, 2019. There was a great turnout from representatives of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Landowners/Producers, Watershed Councils, Tribes, OSU extension, and others. Everyone was able to provide input and the meeting minutes are available on the NRCS Oregon website.

There was great input on the three Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) that are currently in place; Siletz, Salmon Sanctuary, and Forest Resistance and Resiliency. All the partners (including tribe) are in support of the current strategies and they also match up to the partners' priority areas. These strategies will be in place through 2020.

Below is a list of items that were discussed at the Workgroup meeting as possible focus areas in 2021. A CIS will need to be developed throughout this year and into next.

- *Thinning for forest health in stands that are less than 10" DBH where no economic harvest value is left in the material. It would be better for the forest stand to lop and scatter to retain the nutrients.*
- *Climate-As weather patterns bring more extreme events or drought, there is an increasing need to leverage state funds to develop more fire-wise communities.*
- *There are limited dollars for monitoring toxins for drinking water and salmon. There was some discussion about contributions of lead to the water and health issues that fish face. While NRCS is not able to directly help with monitoring, Farm Bill Programs could be looked at for match.*
- *Water quality in Siuslaw watershed (Maple/Fiddle/Lower North Fork) and lakes for salmonids.*
- *Reconnect floodplains to riparian areas for the benefit of salmon and water quality.*
- *Establishing riparian buffers to promote water quality in agricultural systems.*
- *Strategy areas are not matching up with land owned by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians of Oregon. Look at developing or modifying a strategy to address those lands.*
- *Continue with forest treatments for forest health.*
- *There is drought stress showing up in Douglas fir stands. These stands are not completely suited to growing Douglas fir. Look at diversifying these stands and being more resilient to changes in the climate.*
- *Diversify forest riparian zones both in size and quality.*
- *More agroforestry opportunities on neglected pasturelands.*
- *Healthy Forests Reserve Program should be funded again. This was a great program to have.*

Section 2 Natural Resource Inventory

Lincoln County and western Lane County are located on the central coast of Oregon. The topography is characterized by steep mountain slopes and sharp ridges. Elevation varies from sea level at the ocean shoreline to Mary's Peak, which is about 4,100 feet; main ridge summits are 1400–2500 feet. The Coast Range's climate is influenced by cool, moist air from the ocean and is the wettest and mildest in the state. The Coast Range climate creates conditions for highly productive temperate rainforests which are important ecologically and for local economies. Most of the region is dominated by coniferous forests. Large forest fires are infrequent but are severe when they occur. The Coast Range includes the highest density of streams found in the state. Deciduous riparian vegetation that has resulted from a history of both human disturbance since the 1800s and localized landslide is distinct from surrounding coniferous forests. Along the coastal strip, habitats are influenced by the marine environment and include beaches, estuaries, and headlands. Some towns in the region include: Yachats, Florence, Lincoln City, Newport, and Waldport. Forestry remains the primary industry in the interior areas and tourism is important to the coastal communities. Fishing (both commercial and recreational) and fish processing are significant components of the economy. People are increasingly moving to the coast to retire, so retirement services are growing in importance.

Major land uses: forest 86%, developed 8%, wetlands 2%, grassland 4%

ownership:	private land:	industrial forest:	423660 ac
		nonindustrial forest:	236345 ac
		tribal forest:	6509 ac
		grass/pasture:	19000 ac
		wetland/developed:	14000 ac
	public land:	forest	567139 ac

number/types farms (2012 Census of Agriculture data):
Lincoln county number of farms: 362, average size 83 acres; number and size down slightly from 2007
west Lane county number of farms: estimated to be similar to Lincoln County
private nonindustrial forest owners (estimated): 600 property size (average, estimated): 150 acres
*data for nonindustrial privately owned forest land has been difficult to obtain

From 2005 through 2010 NRCS has supported application of many conservation practices on 42 contracts totaling over $902,000. Of these, 19 contracts were for forest land conservation.

Concern: human

Land use conversion and urbanization: Some areas of the Coast Range are developing rapidly, especially along the coastline. Steep slopes limit the amount of land available for development and concentrate it in sensitive areas such as near rivers and estuaries. Residential development contributes to habitat loss, and can threaten other land uses such as agriculture and commercial forestlands.

Increasing recreational use: Recreation contributes positively to the Coast Range's economy and local communities and is managed carefully in many areas. However, increasing numbers of recreationalists

can impact sensitive areas such as shorebird nesting areas and tidepool habitats. There are concerns with off-leash dogs and uncontrolled off-highway vehicle use in some areas, including beaches, headlands, and in forested areas.

Concern: economics

Local forest harvest had been booming for many years, and slowed to a crawl in the 1980s; the public land harvest decreased dramatically due to endangered species concerns and the Northwest Forest Plan. Industrial forests filled the gap for several years but that too slowed for a time. The last two years have seen an increase in logging activity.

Commercial fishing experienced a similar trend, with many independent boat owners getting out of the business around 1990, much like the situation of the family farm. Larger companies with boats that can range farther out and fish more seasons are now the mainstay of the industry. Fish processing still provides employment, though not in the numbers of the past.

Tourism remains as a major source of income generation for the coastal communities. The beneficial effects are not experienced in the inland portions of the area, other than a certain amount of low wage service industry employment.

The loss of fishing and general decline in agriculture and forestry has been accompanied by a decline in forest related jobs. The number of trees cut each year has dropped, particularly on federal lands. Private industrial forests are being cut on 40-60 year rotations that are less than optimal in terms of maintaining high harvest volumes. State forests are still at mostly young ages and will be harvested at a fairly slow rate. Many local mills have closed. Other mills operate at lower levels than they had in the past. Wages of forest workers have stagnated or declined. The tourist/retirement economy on the coastal strip is relatively strong but service jobs typically pay less than a living wage. The largest employers in the region are the utility districts, hospitals, casinos, school districts, and government.

Concern: cultural resources

The entire central coast was inhabited by several different American Indian tribes and is dotted with known and mapped sites. In 1855 the United States established a reservation encompassing the whole west side of the central Coast Range, covering more than a million acres stretching from Cape Lookout (southwest of Tillamook) to the mouth of the Siltcoos River (south of Florence). More than 4,000 people from 20 different tribes were resettled on this reservation. Though the government deemed the area unfit for farming and inaccessible there were other resources. In 1861 the beds of rare, delicate oysters in Yaquina Bay became known. Companies from San Francisco came to harvest the oysters, which created conflicts with Indians living on the reservation, and depleted the oyster supply within a few years. About the same time, soldiers at the reservation saw the possibilities of the resources and lobbied Congress to open up the land to settlement. Responding to this pressure, the government opened the Yaquina Bay area to non-Indian settlement in 1866. Reservation employees, fur traders, commercial fisherman, and others seeking opportunity and free land staked their claims.

American Indian tribes maintain a strong presence on the central coast, and are increasingly exerting influence in natural resource management. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians recently added to their landholdings. These newly acquired lands in coastal Douglas County are forested. Though

relatively small when compared to the landholdings of many other Tribes in the State, growing financial development will enable expansion and increase influence.

Concern: aquaculture

Native Yaquina Bay oysters were 'discovered' in 1861 and depleted within a short time. Currently there is one commercial oyster grower on the Bay. In the late 1990s it was determined by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) that commercial shellfish growing could be done in part of Alsea Bay. To date, no commercial enterprise has been established there.

The Siuslaw River estuary has not been certified by ODA for commercial shellfish production. One oyster grower rears oysters near Florence, but transfers them to Winchester Bay (south) for finishing.

Concern: soil

Soil erosion is a multifaceted concern. The loss of the soil from its place of origin causes reduced productivity at that site, be it forest or farm. Another aspect of the concern is the effect the moving soil has once it is transported and deposited. Erosion from roads and developed areas (lots), forests, farms, and streambanks is the main source of sediment generation.

Management of farm and forest either builds or reduces the quality of the soil. The negative effects of soil compaction, organic matter depletion, and contamination with animal waste is concerning. Reducing soil quality will increase erosion, decrease productivity, add to management challenges and increase the financial burden to the landowner who strives to maintain productivity.

With its high rainfall and moist soil conditions throughout the year Oregon coastal forests have high soil carbon when compared to forests in the western and eastern Cascades. Soils at Cascade Head had on average 12.33% total soil carbon from 0-20 cm compared to 5.39% in the west Cascades and 1.86% in the east Cascades (Sun et. al. 2004). Stand age and composition also play a factor in the amount of carbon stored in the soil. There is ongoing research into the status and potential for Oregon coastal forests and soils as large carbon sinks in regards to carbon sequestration and global climate change.

Concern: water quality and quantity

Water quality affects all organisms. Sediment, temperature, and nutrient levels in surface water are of particular concern in the central coast. Streams, lakes, and estuaries are all affected. Conditions affect domestic and wild animals (aquatic and terrestrial) and humans.

Surface water temperature is one of the primary concerns and has been in the forefront for several years. Most streams and rivers in the central coast support many species of fish, several of them listed as threatened or endangered. Cool water temperatures are integral to their survival. Much of the surface water is temperature limited. Sampling and monitoring have been ongoing for many years, the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District(LSWCD) is managing the data and working closely with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality(DEQ) to add the information to the State's database and use that information to develop water quality standards. The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) and the Salmon-Drift Watershed Council (SDWC) also perform sampling, monitoring, and data collection. The data they collect is also added to the State database.

Several waterbodies in the central coast have been listed by Environmental Protection Agency for water quality impairment. The listing was updated in January 2013 include 23 new segments. A full listing can be found on the Oregon Department Environmental Quality website at:

http://www.epa.gov/region10/pdf/water/303d/oregon/Dec_attachment_1_added_waters_to_OR_2010_303d_List.pdf

Ground water concerns are not as prevalent on the central coast as concerns for surface water.

Since most privately owned agricultural properties are located in the narrow valley bottoms adjacent to streams, livestock holding areas are most commonly located there also. The concentration of livestock in these areas can create problems with accumulation of mud and generation of sediment close to streams. Often the problems can be alleviated by implementing simple solutions like roof gutters and downspouts, heavy use area protection, or through management changes. The number of small acreages operated as rural residential properties, often including livestock, creates a unique opportunity on the central coast to have a big impact on sediment load in streams, in a relatively small treatment area.

The coastal lakes provide a unique aspect of fish habitat on the central coast. Woahink, Siltcoos, and Tahkenitch Lakes are highly productive fish habitat, some of the strongest populations of the species. There are several water quality concerns that threaten the condition and productivity, including exotic aquatic plants (Hydrilla sp.), conditions conducive to blue green algae blooms, residential development along the shore with the accompanying leakage of sewage and other household toxics, and soil erosion from sites being developed.

Rock Creek, in the Devils Lake watershed supports a population of coho. Restoration projects undertaken in the Rock Creek watershed have improved habitat conditions in the Creek, but several water quality parameters are limited in the Lake itself. Temperature, cyanobacteria, E. coli, and lake water levels are monitored by the Devils Lake Water Improvement District (DLWID). There is a significant concentration of residential and urban development on the shore, giving rise to concern for leakage from septic systems and presence of household toxics.

Water quantity is a challenge from both aspects of too much and not enough. The high amount of rainfall creates situations of excessive runoff and ponding. The seasonal distribution of precipitation provides the highest supply of water when the demands are the lowest for plant growth and municipal usage. Water quantity negatively affects animals (domestic and wild) when the supply is low in the summer months and there is little available to drink and stream levels may become too low to support aquatic species.

Concern: air and energy

The central coast has great clean air; some slash burning occurs on forest lands but Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) regulates burn/no burn days and most people follow those rules. The days of smoky air in the developed areas are few and far between.

Electrical energy is moderately expensive on the central coast. The distribution is good; most areas have access to public utility services. Tapping into the energy of ocean waves is currently being explored and tested for development to large scale application and distribution. Still in the research and development

stages, it shows promise, although biological effects and the disruption of the local economy (fishing and crabbing) are expected but unmeasured at this time.

Hydropower, solar, and wind generated energy are becoming more common on the central coast, but are generally limited to individual applications.

Concern: plants

The health and vigor of plants, in both forest and farm, is one of the primary concerns on the central coast. Forestry has been, and will most likely continue to be, a major occupation and contributor to the regional economy. Several types of forest pests (insect, disease, invasive plants, rodents) are known to occur here, the most recent being an outbreak of Swiss needlecast in about the year 1984. The severity of the infestation has continued to increase.

Control of noxious and invasive plants on all lands has been given high priority. Conservation partners are actively implementing control strategies. Riparian and estuarine habitats have been the focus of the efforts. There are several plant species which are targeted.

Industrial forest management is changing to shorter rotations, trending toward a 30 to 50 year rotation. The concern that arises from this is the condition of the soil resource and the exposure to erosion that could occur at shorter intervals. The increase in disturbance disrupts the biological components and structure of the soil.

Concern: animals

The quantity and quality of feed for domestic and wild animals are concerns on all pasture and forest land, and on a limited amount of forested land where livestock graze intermittently. The amount and grade of forage will determine the health and condition of the animals that depend on it, affecting stability of the population, and survival of the species. Where soil nutrient balance is not maintained, amount and quality of forage is reduced. Most soils in the central coast have a naturally low pH which inhibits nutrient availability and uptake, affecting the plant production and nutritive quality, in turn affecting the animals that feed on it.

For domestic livestock, inadequate water supply is often a concern, especially where the focus on riparian habitat improvements for aquatic species has excluded livestock from riparian areas and they no longer access streams for drinking water. Development of alternative sources of water must be considered in all riparian exclusion projects.

For wildlife, habitat fragmentation that occurs with development of land in urban and rural residential areas factors into the decline of some species populations. With the encroachment of development on the open areas, wildlife must either adapt to the new conditions, or establish a new range. Development can also disconnect the established habitat, making moving between areas difficult, dangerous, or impossible for wildlife. This is especially evident when looking at the major roads and highways in the region. Highway 101 along the coast was constructed with the placement of numerous culverts in streams, culverts that were installed without consideration for fish passage. Some creeks were blocked completely. In many places the intersection of the road with the creek is the only fish

passage barrier and upstream habitat remains intact. Management of these streams as fish bearing is required under Oregon's forest practice rules. Where roads or property development break up habitat, conflicts between wildlife and people damage both.

Fluctuating ocean conditions, predation of salmon at sea, and competition from hatchery fish are all factors affecting the year to year abundance of fish in the region. Even with watersheds in pristine condition, there are good years and bad years. But with the populations reduced to levels far below that experienced at any time in the recorded past, there is little room for further habitat loss. Continued logging and valley bottom farming combine to deprive the stream system of a steady supply of large wood that could rebuild complex habitat over time at relatively low cost. The legacy of large wood that formed the backbone of the aquatic habitat has mostly been lost. The large down wood left in the landscape is managed differently and does not fully replace the amount that has been removed. In addition, logging of high risk debris flow areas could disrupt the natural cycle of sediment and organic delivery to streams.

Because the narrow valley bottoms are the only places in much of the watershed suited to agriculture, home building, and transportation corridors, and since these areas were the easiest to log initially, riparian forests and associated wetlands have borne the brunt of 125 years of development. Only about 30% of the entire riparian zone is mature forest condition. The extent of wetland loss is unknown, but is likely very high, particularly near bays.

Degraded riparian habitat and loss of channel complexity have combined to result in a simplification of the aquatic system. As stream channels incise down into the valley floor, floodplain connection is lost. Large wood, a keystone of the ecosystem, is no longer present in sufficient quantities, and the few pieces of wood that make it to the streams are quickly swept to the estuary and out to sea during winter storms.

Within the coastal lakes, predation on salmon by exotic species of fish (bass) and competition among species decreases the survival of the salmon.

Loss of estuary habitat

Estuary habitat is extremely important in the survival of anadromous fish. Estuaries provide the conditions which allow the fish to adapt to changes when entering or leaving freshwater. About 58% of the original wetlands in the Siuslaw estuary below Mapleton have been diked or drained. In the Alsea and Yaquina estuaries, the reductions have been (respectively) approximately 26% and 34%. (Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, 1999). Dredging of the channel and the funneling effect of the jetties likely result in a passage of wood and nutrients to the ocean. This may in turn force young salmonids to the ocean before they've had sufficient time to acclimate. This then reduces ocean survival. Most of the remaining wetlands in the estuary are privately owned and only partly protected from development. There may be opportunities to restore former tidal wetlands by removing dikes and tidegates, although much was accomplished between 2000 and 2010.

There are many listed endangered and threatened species and non listed species, both aquatic and terrestrial, which inhabit the central coast. Migratory and resident wildlife species use the central coast for at least a portion of their life cycle. In all planning and implementation activities, the needs of the species must be considered along with the effects of the actions on each species. Coordination with other Federal agencies and State agencies is required to ensure compliance with the law and continued survival of the species of animals.

Concern: wetland

Historically, wetlands were regarded as "wastelands," with water too shallow to swim in, the ground too wet to farm or inhabit, and they were considered breeding grounds for mosquitoes, insects and disease. Their true value wasn't known. Wetlands are giant filters, purifying water, preventing and minimizing flooding, and replenishing groundwater. In addition to the human benefit, shorebirds, waterfowl, fish and other wildlife need wetlands for survival. Nationally, 35% of all rare and endangered species depend on wetlands. Statewide 29% of the native wetland plant communities are identified as "imperiled" and about 1.4 million acres of wetlands remain; about 2 percent of Oregon's total land surface.

Principal threats to wetland ecosystems include conversation to other uses and impacts from human activities, such as pollution, sedimentation and invasion of non-native species that threaten wetland condition and function. Many of the most critical wetland concerns are in lowlands of the major river basins, which were once vast wetlands, riparian forests and prairies that are now home to the majority of the state's population. As NAME's (insert county) population continues to grow, wetland loss due to urbanization and resource development will continue to grow. Protecting and restoring the ecosystem benefits that wetlands provide is important to maintaining or increasing the valuable services they provide. Some of the wetland ecosystem benefits include:

- Flood water storage that reduces peak flows;
- Habitat for a diversity of plants, wildlife and fish;
- Improvement of water quality through filtering of sediment and pollutants;
- Recharge of groundwater;
- Protection of shorelines;
- Benefits from open space and aesthetic qualities.

Section 3 Natural Resource Analysis

Projects completed from 1995 through 2010 (Oregon Watershed Restoration Implementation database)

type	number of projects
upland	38
riparian	83
wetland	21
instream	335
road	435
fish passage	3133

miles of stream treated – instream projects: 118

miles of stream treated – riparian: 513

acres of riparian treatment: 3287

MidCoast Watersheds Council (MCWC) – Types of projects completed by the MidCoast Watersheds Council include: large wood placement, riparian planting and livestock exclusion from riparian areas, limiting factors analyses, wetland restoration, culvert replacements, education, and watershed assessment. The watersheds where the work has focused are: Siletz, Devils Lake, Yaquina, Alsea, Beaver Creek, and Yachats.

Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) – Types of projects completed by the Siuslaw Watershed Council include: riparian tree giveaways (25,000+), culvert replacements, education, riparian planting and livestock exclusion, wetland restoration, community building, large wood placement, and watershed assessments. The watersheds where the work has focused are: Siuslaw estuary, Indian Creek, North Fork Siuslaw, Deadwood Creek, and Lake Creek.

Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council (SDCWC) – Types of projects completed by the Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council include: large wood placement, riparian planting, wetland restoration, culvert replacements, and education. The watersheds where the work has focused are: Siletz, Devils Lake, and Salmon River.

Agencies - Natural resource managers from various agencies have been attempting to address habitat related issues on the central coast since the late 1960s. Streams were cleared of log jams and beaver dams in the belief that this would aid fish passage. Restoration efforts since the 1980s have focused on installing in-stream structures to help capture gravels, wood, and nutrients. Since the 1970s, roads on federal lands have been built to higher standards, so that they will maintain their stability. The watersheds where the work has focused are in the estuaries of the Siuslaw, Siletz, Salmon, Yaquina, and Alsea Rivers, and in many of the watersheds of all midcoast basins.

In the 1990s, multiple efforts grew. **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**, the **USDA Forest Service**, and **USDI Bureau of Land Management** have continued to experiment with various techniques for improving in-stream structure and habitat. Many unused roads have been closed. **Timber companies** have worked to stabilize roads and replace problem culverts. Some valley-bottom landowners have restored wetlands and replanted or fenced riparian areas. The city of **Florence** has upgraded its sewage treatment plant, and is taking progressive steps at recharging its aquifer by directing stormwater into the ground. The city of Florence is also studying options for urban development that promote and foster ecosystem health.

Most of the Federal land in the basin is now excluded from clearcut logging (as a result of the Northwest Forest Plan) and may eventually return to mature forest condition. State forest management has been reoriented to growing more mature forests. Combined federal and state spending on restoration has averaged over a million dollars a year for recent years. In kind contributions from private landowners (labor, machinery, and materials) is an unaccounted for contribution.

Section 4 Natural Resource Problems and Desired Future Outcomes

Opportunities in Program Delivery:
There is a need to get community based groups together to fill gaps. Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Councils have struggled to cover administrative and operational costs. When these costs go unsupported, the capacity to provide assistance to landowners, to develop and complete

restoration or educational projects is severely limited. Utilizing USDA/NRCS programs to do multiple plans with multiple landowners who want to become, or are already involved in, local food production is an area for expansion. State, Federal, and private grants are possibilities, but there is a concern that these do not pay for the coordinator who brings the project together through planning and landowner contact.

Due to a changing forestry market and the subsequent reduction of federal funds to counties, there is a need to bring landscape level projects into the county for the continued viability of the groups which depended on these funds for operation. Conservation districts have been able to obtain a limited amount of these funds to counties in the past, to support District operational costs which enable the Districts to then develop projects and pursue the funding for these projects. With the current uncertainties this income source is not dependable and the effect ripples through weakening program delivery.

Conservation District and NRCS activities have addressed fish, agricultural, and forestry issues. As the funding sources move their priorities to other needs, the Conservation Districts and NRCS will have to fill the gap, or shift priorities also. An arising need is an increase in the number of small farming operations contributing to the local markets. These producers need assistance, but don't always fit into the traditional USDA farm program. Specific strategies and initiatives have become available and are beginning to be used with limited success. Expansion of this type of assistance could provide more benefit if preceded by effective marketing and outreach.

Opportunities in Aquatic Habitat Restoration:

Three parameters believed to be critical to restoration of aquatic ecosystems on the central coast are: (1) the historic aquatic population levels, (2) the potential for restoration based on the degree of human influences, and (3) the current aquatic population size. Based on these criteria, the Siuslaw Basin ranks high among all of Oregon's coastal watersheds. High historic numbers of salmon and in spite of 130 years of intensive land use, the system remains free of large dams or large urban areas, and the watersheds are still mostly forested. Based on these conditions, the Siuslaw basin presents a unique opportunity for investment with a very high likelihood of satisfactory return on the investment.

Opportunities in Forest Management:

Concern over forest health has increased over the last decade. Single species stands dominate the industrial landscape. Responding to historic markets, much of the forest land was planted to Douglas fir. These single species forest stands are less resilient to pests, disease, and fire, than a mixed forest stand. Recent management strategies have trended toward diversification of forest stands to increase the number of species. Increasing the number of actively managed multispecies forests could improve the resiliency of coastal forests to disease, pests, and fire. Multispecies management may also position woodland owners to respond to changes in economic opportunities.

Opportunities in Water Quality Management:

Sediment, temperature, and nutrient levels in surface water are the principle water quality concerns in the region. Streams, lakes, wetlands, and estuaries are affected. Conditions affect domestic and wild animals (aquatic and terrestrial) and humans.

Many miles of unpaved roads on the coast are used as primary transportation routes. Water flow can become concentrated on roads, increasing the erosion potential. This erosion has the potential to produce sediment, which can be transported to surface water. Treating roads to reduce concentrated flow will improve water quality in many streams. Infrastructure management is often criticized and singled out as a primary source of sediment loads in surface water. The challenge exists across the landscapes, on all types of ownerships. Small parcels of farms and forestland, large industrial forests, public lands, state lands, and county roads are all affected. Improving the situation requires a broad base of support and participation. Coordination of the effort will require cooperation on all levels and multiple fund sources.

Another primary concern, surface water temperature has been in the forefront for several years and many streams and rivers on the coast are listed as impaired. Most of these waters also support aquatic species which are considered threatened or endangered. Over the last 15 years, private landowners and public land managers have completed restoration projects with the goal of maintaining and/or reducing water temperatures.

Section 5 Prioritization of Natural Resource Problems and Desired Future Outcomes

Desired Outcome: healthy economy, communities, and environment

Priorities: Priorities differ by organization and are primarily affected by their sphere of influence. The various entities working on the central coast have different strengths and internal structure which makes each one more suited to addressing different types of project opportunities.

The priorities can be divided roughly into two types, restoration projects and community building/education projects. In the Siuslaw region, the coastal lakes are the focus for restoration projects. The upper Siuslaw River watershed (the Lorane area) is a focus area for outreach and community networking activities. In the Lincoln County area, the Siletz-Yaquina watershed is the focus area for restoration projects. Project implementation has focused in the Big Elk watershed but may shift to the Siletz River watershed in the next biennium.

Section 6 Outreach Plan

As the framework for implementing a comprehensive outreach process for Lincoln and west Lane Counties, this plan utilizes existing partnerships and seeks connections to form new ones.

To best support local Conservation Implementation Strategies this plan focuses on outreach at the local level. This includes acquiring the tools, products, and support available from State Office staff to enable the District Conservationist to efficiently and effectively point outreach based on local priorities and opportunities. It assesses the outreach goals and objectives, develops action items to reach them, and determines the type of support needed from the State Office staff.

This plan is also designed to help support activities that inform and encourage participation in NRCS programs by historically underserved and non-traditional audiences in the Lincoln and west Lane County areas. The intent is to ensure understanding of available local demographic data and the

resultant opportunities. With this knowledge, focused plans with specific actions can be developed to help reach these audiences and meet desired objectives. State Office staff can support the effort with guidance and development of materials.

Outreach Goals:

- Ensure NRCS programs and services are made accessible to all potential customers including non-traditional and historically underserved individuals and groups.
- Maximize the effectiveness of conservation strategies through effective marketing and outreach; develop local strategy and obtain support from the State Office staff.
- Increase general awareness of NRCS mission and purpose.
- Work to increase customer understanding and importance of conservation and conservation compliance.

Objectives:

- Use effective marketing and outreach to support obligation of 95% of financial assistance funds
- Obligate EQIP financial assistance to traditionally underserved communities, with a target of five percent of EQIP financial assistance obligated in these communities
- Maintain parity for Socially Disadvantaged producers within an acceptable range in conservation programs (see Parity Report).
- Obtain assistance from State staff for outreach and marketing

Target Audience:

- Owners of private nonindustrial forest lands, farm owners and operators in identified project areas
- Historically underserved (HU) or non-traditional (NT) landowners/producers within the identified project areas

Key messages:

- NRCS mission and purpose
- importance of conservation and conservation compliance
- range of financial and technical assistance available
- locally prioritized opportunities for participation

References

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