

## NRCS Gilliam/Wheeler Local Workgroup Meeting 2-8-2018

12:30 pm in the Condon Fire Hall

### Introductions

- NRCS staff introduced
- Gilliam and Wheeler Conservation staff introduced

### Discussed Past Resource Concerns

- Juniper invasion
- Annual grass invasion
- Irrigation efficiency
- Forest Health
- Insufficient Livestock Water

### Discussed 2017 Wheeler EQIP funding

- RCPP
  - 19 contracts
- Kahler CIS Funding pool
  - 11 contracts
  - Multi county funding pool (Grant, Morrow, Wheeler)

### Discussed Future Treatment Ideas for Wheeler County

- Butte Creek Uplands Improvement
  - Rangeland health – juniper predominantly in Phase I
  - Water quantity within the watershed
    - City of Fossil decreasing water supply
  - Forest health
    - Overstocking
    - Disease issues
    - Fire danger
- Prescribed burning funding pool
  - County wide? Or specific to a certain area/watershed?
    - General agreement that burning needed to continue but no overarching direction on where
- Are there areas of concern for irrigation efficiency?
  - None were raised

### Discussed 2017 Gilliam EQIP funding

- No funding for EQIP in 2017, transition year

### Discussed 2018 Gilliam EQIP funding

- Ferry Canyon CIS
  - 2018 is the first sign up year
  - Cost shared practices:
    - Brush management to treat juniper and blackberry
    - Vegetative firebreaks to help with human caused wildfires from the John Day River
      - Will also help with nature caused wildfires
    - Farm road treatment
      - Strategically treat areas of farm roads causing sediment transport to the Ferry Canyon stream system
    - Beaver Dam Analogues
      - Attempt to aggrade the water system
      - Develop beaver habitat to more beaver up system from the mouth
    - Livestock water developments
      - To facilitate proper grazing management within the Ferry Canyon watershed

#### Discussed Resource Concerns/Future Ideas

1. Chemical runoff from weed spraying on county roads
  - a. Kills perennial grasses and crops
  - b. Maybe SWCD or Watershed council could discuss issue with County court?
2. Side canyons of the John Day
  - a. 10 Mile/Hay Creek/30 Mile
  - b. Replicate Ferry Canyon CIS
    - i. Maybe RCPP application?
3. Grass Bank on expired CRP
  - a. District lead the effort?
  - b. Mentioned that there is plenty of local capacity (Wheeler and Gilliam) to fill grazing need
  - c. The Gilliam SWCD could be the middle man between CRP owners and livestock producers needing grass
4. Discussed adding the fencing practice to the Ferry CIS to facilitate proper grazing of expired CRP
  - a. Developing livestock water is already covered
  - b. CRP ground would have to be expired
5. There is some interest in doing some small scale cover cropping trials
  - a. Will follow up with landowners showing interest
  - b. Will it work in Gilliam County?
6. Annual grass invasion continues to be a problem lacking a good solution
  - a. Some discussion on the status of the soil amendment
7. Transportation/vectors for weeds
  - a. Rye

- b. Russian thistle
- 8. Carbon tax credit for leaving expired CRP in grass
  - a. Will look further into work that Sustainable Northwest might be doing in this realm with the State of Oregon
  - b. Could be enough to keep land in perennial cover vs annual cropping

Conservation Easements were discussed

- Introduced Amanda “Marti” Martino
  - Conservation easement specialist with the Blue Mountain Land Trust
  - She discussed what easements are, what they are not and potential sources of easement funding including NRCS ACEP-ALE program
  - She talked a little bit about estate planning (succession planning) for ranchers/farmers and how easement might fit into the picture

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm