

Minutes, NRCS LWG meeting, February 14th, 2018

Meeting began at 1:05 with Chris Mundy introducing himself and asking everyone else to do the same.

Chris Explained the Local Workgroup Process then gave a brief history of NRCS's strategic approach to conservation from 2010 until now.

Successes and challenges of past CIS's were discussed. Conant basin CIS, The Tri County Forestry strategy, Crook County Aspen Restoration CIS and the Two Chief proposal submitted in 2016 were all discussed.

Current CIS's and other Farm Bill Programs were discussed by all. This included The Sage Grouse Initiative, the Maury Mule Deer Habitat CIS, the McKay Creek Steelhead Habitat CIS, ACEP/ALE – easement programs in Crook County, The successful Lower Crooked River RCPP application and the High Tunnel Initiative program.

At this point, future needs were addressed beginning by going over concerns/issues discussed at the 2017 LWG meeting.

2017 concerns included:

Camp Creek – Andy explained the Camp Creek Atlas and how it will provide a guide for restoration efforts within the Camp Creek watershed.

Two Chief Proposal – Even though funding is not available in 2016 or 2017, everyone was in agreement that some very good partnership opportunities are available and many of the resource concerns identified in the original application are valid and should be left on the table as future opportunities.

Mesic Habitat Restoration using Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA's) – Although BDA's have been shown effective in many situations, the permitting process has become cumbersome. Garry Sanders stressed that this is another tool that should be available but it may be a few years before the permitting process issue makes BDA's feasible. Fish Passage concerns have been a particularly challenging issue with ODFW in our region. Garry informed us that ODFW State office is working on a programmatic BA for BDA's.

Grizzly – A BLM/Private partnership to remove juniper trees in the Grizzly Mountain area was proposed in 2017 by Michelle McSwain. It was agreed by everyone that this would be a good area to focus. It was noted that the Forest Service has been working in the area and there was an approximately 200 acre fire in the area last summer. This may also be a WUI area. Andy stressed it is good mule deer habitat potential with lots of bitterbrush. Debbie mentioned that Ochoco West has a Russian knapweed problem as well. ODF also suggested Forest Health as an issue to address in the upper elevations.

Powell Butte Irrigation - 2017 it was suggested this would make a good CIS. At that time, DRC noted that there are two other entities currently working there. In addition the successful PL566 grant was discussed and there should eventually be funding through that mechanism. It was agreed that this area should remain a focus in Crook County should a CIS opportunity become available.

This Point, Chris asked for input or any additional comments from everyone.

Sanders – no comment

Chase- No Comment

Gordon – Don't overlook The Two Chief area or Mill Creek or Johnson Creek – lots of Juniper in all

Mylen – Water use efficiency – it's easy to make the switch but may be hard to capture the savings. Discussed sensors and IWM. If you have an efficient system you still need to operate it well to realize the savings.

Gallagher – No Comment

Debbie- McKay Creek and Powell Butte are always good areas with lots of opportunities to address weed control – especially Scotch Thistle in Powell Butte.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:00pm