



Tillamook County Local Work Group Meeting ***February 13, 2018 POTB Conference Room***

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Mitch Cummings at 10:07 a.m.

Welcome and Self Introductions

Those groups/agencies in attendance were:

NRCS	TCSWCD
ODF	Food Roots
OCA	NRCS ORPMC
ODFW	TBFID
NW Ag Consulting	Nehalem Marine
ODA	ODFA

Mitch welcomed everyone to the meeting, and directed their attention to the agenda packets each received. Also, pointed out that on the back table there were further handouts with all the information about the current Farm Bill, at least what we know about at this point, from the information that was sent out two weeks ago. NRCS still has questions, so more to come. There is also a print out with some exciting news about a local beef producer, who received an award from ODFW for her conservation work.

The main thing to try to focus on in the end is to talk about where we are at right now, and then, where we might be able to go from here. Or at least to document some of the suggestions that we are thinking about.

Tillamook Program Participation Summary 2017

Mitch explained there are two main Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) funding pools running right now.

- Salmon Superhwy Project. Is funded by Two Chiefs funding. Set up to fund forest practices, forest management plans, fish passage, and a lot of different practices associated with water quality and riparian work. The handouts provide some examples of ranking questions, so you can see how applications are ranked as they come in. In 2017 we contracted with 15 people out of 17 applicants, expending \$237, 216. This year we have 9 applications so far.
- Forest Management Plans: This funding pool is also for forest management plans.

In addition there are two older CIS programs we are just finishing up contracts on.

- Water Quality Nutrient Management CIS/CNMP: the last contract we wrote for this program was in 2016, and we have one year left on those contracts. We worked with 43 people out of the 55 applications. Some of those were canceled. We used \$739,245 on that CIS.
- Nestucca Water Quality CIS: This was short-lived. Mostly fish passage projects; 4 culverts and 1 bridge installed. Worked with 6 people out of 8 applicants, spending \$339,349 from 2013 to date.
- Nestucca/Tillamook Watershed Function (Two Chiefs): This funding is a continuation and expansion of the Nestucca Water Quality CIS above. Last year we wrote 15 contracts out of 17 applications. Most all of those were for Forest Management Plans, plus 1 fencing project and 1 bridge for \$237, 216. This year so far we have 9 applications; 5 of them are Forest Management Plans, and we have had the first plan come back completed already. These plans are written by our Technical Service Providers (TSP); TSPs register with NRCS to have their services available to our clients for planning and implementation of Practices. A list of TSPs is created for our clients who are eligible to pick from the list for assistance.

Other NRCS Statewide Initiatives Active in Tillamook County:

- EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative – This program has been continuous since 2013. This year we have 4 application so far. In previous years we have contracted with 8 people for high tunnels.
- Organic Initiative – We had 2 applications in 2015, but there has been no applications since that time.

Other Initiatives that are Available in Tillamook County

- Energy Initiative: This is available, however, when we sat down with our local PUD, and looked at their programs and our programs, we couldn't find really anything different than what was being done locally already. But certainly folks can come in and sign up for this initiative if they are interested.
- Oregon continues to explore other options for initiatives. Initiatives are a valuable tool to address resource issues that are common across the state. There are some things that don't fit the way we are set up right now with CIS's with a local funding pool, because they are cyclical. Typically with our CIS's we are trying to identify the resource issue, get in, get it done, and then move on to the next thing. But there are some issues that we have found over time that don't fit that very well with the CIS system. We are able to address it once in the CIS, but in five years' time the issue may need attention again, and we're just not set up to really do that. So in order to address that, we are looking at other statewide initiatives to see if there is some way that we can provide additional support to our clients to address their needs.

Partner and Landowner Projects – Mitch invited attendees to talk about what projects they are doing right now and what opportunities there might be to come up with other Implementation Strategies for the future.

Troy – TCSWCD

- Tillamook County SWCD Weed Program has a South County focus area addressing riparian weeds in Nestucca drainages and smaller creeks like Neskowin/Slab Creek area and East Beaver Creek.
- Grant proposal in to ODA/Oregon State Weed Board which, if funded, will facilitate survey and treatment of invasive weeds along the Tillamook River, Bewley Creek, Sand Creek and a bunch more in South County. That grant will help us complete our focus on South County and start inching our way North.
- We don't necessarily work directly with NRCS on these programs, but through these interactions we do identify landowners that have issues NRCS may be able to address.
- Knotweed projects continue.
- Weed Inventory- getting inventory built up so that we have an idea of distribution within the County.

Rudy – TCSWCD Chair

- Receiving requests from cities for assistance with weed control in lakes.
- Getting more requests for assistance with Knotweed than we are about Ag land noxious weeds
- Small hobby farms – looking for funding for cost share assistance (over 150 hobby farms in Tillamook)
- Bank erosion – a number of landowners asking SWCD and Rudy about getting help. It's getting busier than he has seen in his 30 years on the board.
- Holden Creek. Drains the City of Tillamook & agricultural land. 3 tidegates involved. Who is responsible? Feds say no fish in there so they backed off.

Armando – ODA

- CAFO Program in Tillamook County – The number of permits is getting smaller but number of animals and workload is not getting smaller.
- Dairy industry is not where the dairymen would like it to be, they are looking for assistance for everything from equipment to nutrient management plans. It's a struggle to come up with that kind of funding because the department itself can't really do much of that so we rely on other sources for funding, grants and to get things accomplished. It's a challenge, but he firmly believes that of every dairy farm in this county, 95% of them are doing the best that they can do, and then those last 5% you've got some that are stubborn and set in their ways, or are so strapped financially that they can't do much.
- Hobby farms – are causing some potential issues. Armando is the only person in this county that deals with CAFOs. He has the smallest geographical area, but the largest concentration of permits. The little hobby farms are taking some time from what he normally needs to do, which is adding to his workload. Not that it

is supposed to be a part of his job, but he is not going to turn away from potential issues. So it's a challenge, he's just plugging along, trying to keep his head above, "water"!

- Comment from Rudy – we have more landowners looking for funding. In the District we have the MEAD fund, and some have used it to help get additional dry storage. It has been a limited resource/funding. We used to go through thousands of dollars, and we don't have that any more.
- Question from Angie: So when you say the hobby farms are causing issues, what sort of issues? Is it too many animals in too small of a space? Is it animal waste? Armando Reply: It varies and depends on the type of facility and what's going on. He's had a wide variety of calls, everything from "Are they allowed to have animals here" to "Yes, I can see it going into the water".

Tom – NW Ag Consultants

- It would be a good idea for the District to have little seminars for smaller farms on how to deal with bank erosion, bare land, etc.

Leo – Nehalem Marine

- Tidegates, tidegates, tidegates. These guys really need some help on these tidegates.
- There's a lot going on right now, he has been successfully working on tidegates with NRCS in California and Washington.
- People are going to need some technical help.
- It's critical in Tillamook. We've got a whole generation of aluminized pipes over here that are all at the end of their life
- There are probably 75 units within a mile or mile and a half of where we are sitting that are going to go any minute, some are going right now. We've got some emergencies that are going on right now.
- It's a huge problem along the Oregon Coast and up and down the Columbia River.
- We just want to be pushing to get NRCS more involved. We have been doing a lot of the engineering and stuff, and I am going to be 64 this year...it's about time I go do something else for a while. It's a huge job.
- Mitch Question: what kind of cost do you see on that?
- Leo Reply: There was a lot of really bad information that went out here lately. One thing was the myth that there is a cheaper alternative to meet fish passage. A lot of people were talking about tidegates that really don't have much experience with it. The truth is, even our tidegates won't meet the fish passage without a muted tidal regulator (MTR) on it. The MTR is what pushes them over the point where they'll make fish passage. The big cost is involved in the design criteria and the requirements that are put on us by NOAA and by ODFW: the fish passage criteria for tidegates. And a lot of that is being worked out right now, I think it is going to get a rewash, it's the perfect time for NRCS to get involved. We are talking about costs, meeting those fish passage requirements can drive the costs from, for example; A small 4' ag-exempt, really high quality tide gate system, you

could do it for about \$30,000. But then, you add a MTR, and that adds on \$40,000 right there. So cost is all dependent on the fish passage requirement and the quality of the installation.

- We are doing some of these projects, like we did at Neahrings: beautiful projects, huge amount of juvenile habitat reconnected. They report the best drainage they've ever had, they are happy. And that's those big concrete structures, and they are running \$400,000 to \$500,000 like that. We are going back on some of those concrete structures that were built in 1930 and retrofitting them.
- We are noticing the performance is so much better with those concrete structures because when you've got a culvert, and you get down to the bottom of that culvert shape it's narrower, there's not much capacity, and it's rougher. These box structures have the full width of the structure when the water is really low. We just finished one up in Mt. Vernon where they just had 32 year record flooding, and everybody in that area didn't even get water in the fields. There's farmland 9 miles from that structure that they are saying it's better than it's ever been. The box structures, because it's serving that low end so well, and they lend themselves really well to regulators too. Because "tidal regulating" of tide gate opening and closing comes with a whole host of problems, including water hammer, and it's a lot more complicated.
- He is trying to create "regulator-ready" tidegates, so that partners can finish seeking funding to purchase and install regulators following tidegate installation.
- Mitch Cummings asked what the price tag for 75 tidegates would be. Leo replied that for example, a regular 5-foot system runs \$60,000-\$70,000. He noted there are people working to reduce the regulations, which might reduce costs.
- Things he has found over the 20 years working on tidegates have turned around his original way of thinking. He was once surprised to find 450 Coho in a little farm ditch shorter than this room.

Robert - ODFW

- Fish passage – ODFW has received \$\$ from ODOT to address high priority fish passage projects. Deadline to apply is tomorrow. A couple million available, over a large area.

Chad – ODFA

- Looking for \$\$ for projects to meet TMDL's. Previous funding was very successful. Advocate for continuation of that project to build on successes.
- Still think facilities could use more storage.
- And covers for open lots where manure accumulates.
- Rain covers for liquid storage are still very expensive, but needed.
- He is also on the newly formed and funded Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission. It is being set up right now to preserve farm land. They will be seeking match partners. Agricultural easements and conservation plans are a part of the heritage packages.

Craig – OCA

- Tidegates and ditches. Farmers are going to go out of business if no help.
- His ditches ARE habitat, he has seen it. His top-hinge tidegate does allow 1" fingerlings through. ODFW says it's not possible. The geese and long-beaked birds love his ditches.

Ed– ODF

- He has been putting out the CIS flyers and spreading the word about the forest management and plans assistance. Sending people to NRCS for Forest Management Plans, and he is glad to see the signups.

Mark – ODF

- Has been putting the word out about the NRCS forest management plan funds.

Tilda – TBFID

- Tidegates. NRCS should fund tidegates.
- TBFID has been doing a tidegate replacement at Juno Creek. They need partners to help with permits and technical.
- Pilot projects – Tillamook County should do a Tidegate pilot project similar to SB1517.

Mitch Cummings mentioned that NRCS, USFWS and NOAA are working on a Bi OP that will result in a Programmatic Consultation for NRCS which includes tidegates.

Mitch said despite that, tidegates may still be on a case-by-case basis.

Leo said he has seen a draft of the USACOE NWP. This nationwide permit would cover some out of the box projects. ESA consultation still bogs the process down – since it always refers to NWP 03.

Angie pointed out that Washington and California NRCS have a different funding processes than Oregon. Oregon uses the CIS mechanism. So the NRCS program approach can be different from state to state.

Mitch, Chad and Leo continued the discussion about tidegates, and the idea of needing to involve a lot of different partners if we are going to solve this problem.

Mitch mentioned that RCPP is a possible program that might work for tidegates. A group can apply, but they would need to bring some of the funding plus the people/clients.

Mara – NRCSPMC

- They have been busy doing cover crop trials with winter and summer varieties taking into account the following:
 - Biomass
 - Nutrient needs/requirements
 - Irrigated/non-irrigated

They invite farmers to come take a look. Data from the trials is online.

- Focus: native plantings and pollinator habitats.
- Native seedling guide – to distinguish if you have weeds early in their life.

Allyson – Food Roots

- Beginner Producer Program – establish an IDA (Independent Development Account) and save \$3,000 over 3 years, and you get \$9,000 towards the development project.
- Farmer/Food Business Program
- School Program
- Work with small farmers
- #1 issue – access to land is hard – a real challenge to get onto 5-10 acres. Beginning farmer/rancher program works with about 20 local small farmers regularly, plus 30 more who bring stuff to the Food Roots storefront in Tillamook. OSU Extension also has a small farm program. They are working on getting an agent out here.
- #2 issue – water management (boom and bust). Catchment tanks.

PARTING DISCUSSIONS:

Mitch/Armando: CAFO = Confined Animal Feeding Operations. 124 permits now, dropped from 146 permits 9 years ago in Tillamook County.

Armando: Of those, 1 is for a beef facility, 1 is a dairy goat facility, and the rest of the permits are for dairy cow facilities.

Mitch: These permits are based on nutrient (or waste) management plans. Spread on fields at rates plants can uptake. Takes a few weeks or more to write those CAFO plans. NRCS used to write several of these plans per year, but time has not allowed for it, so recent programs were developed to provide assistance from TSP's to write these. Our recent CIS program that we funded those with has now closed. The question of how are we going to assist with those plans in the future comes up. Oregon NRCS is working with their partners on how we might use an initiative to provide this support across the state.

Tom – mentioned the ODARK record-keeping tool. It meets the minimum ODA permit requirements.

Mitch: a CNMP is needed when building structures funded by NRCS programs.

Chad and Armando: TCCA is actively trying to address the planning issue. The Creamery is advertising to fill a planner position now. Currently in Tillamook County there are 120 plans, needing updated a minimum of once every 5 years.

Mitch will e-mail the minutes of this meeting to all who provided their emails on the sign-in sheet.

Meeting adjourned 11:44 a.m.
Sherry Vick

Edited Mitch Cummings