

Grant County Local Work Group Meeting

MEETING AGENDA NOTES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

Oregon Department of Forestry (Conference Room)

1:00pm-3:00pm

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION:

Provide a forum for NRCS to work collaboratively with our partners so we can develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources in a way that benefits all of us.

OBJECTIVES

Confirm resource concerns identified from past local work group meetings and prioritize projects for Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) developments.

- **Introductions (Zola Ryan- facilitator)**
 - a. Each attendee was asked to provide name, organization/or affiliation, and the best thing they had heard or seen that day.
 - i. Kirk Ausland- OFD state that they had 70,000 tree seedling available for sale.
- **New Employee: Emma Anspach introduced herself**
- **2017 LWG Meeting summary (Lorraine Vogt- District Conservationist)**
 - a. Northside Juniper and Aspen, Upper John Day forest thinning, drought stock water.
 - b. New forestry area in Izee, working on Ritter group juniper and forestry, working with Tribes on irrigation project in upper John Day valley.
- **2017 Farm Bill update (Lorraine)**
 - a. Northside Juniper and Aspen -1,800 ac left on Northside unit hope to be done in 2018
 - b. Kahler CIS - \$152,000 mostly forest thinning and juniper, year one of CIS
 - c. Forestry – 7 contract \$234,000
 - d. 1 Energy audit contract
 - e. 2 season High Tunnel contacts
 - f. 1 RCPP- sage grouse contract

| 2017 EQIP Summary | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Funding Pool | No. of Contracts | Dollars Obligated | Acres |
| Northside Juniper | 15 | \$ 625,118.16 | 2822.4 |
| Northside Aspen | 1 | \$ 4,788.00 | 0.7 |
| <u>Kahler Upland Improvements</u> | 5 | \$ 154,887.00 | 463.7 |
| JDU Basin Forestry | 7 | \$ 234,592.00 | 484.5 |
| On-Farm Energy | 1 | \$ 2,496.00 | 84 |
| Seasonal High Tunnel | 2 | \$ 16,915.00 | 0.1 |
| RCPP- Oregon Model to Protect Sage Grouse | 1 | \$ 45,175.00 | 497.4 |
| Totals | 32 | \$ 1,083,971.16 | 4352.781 |

- **CREP tech update (Tereasa Perkins- CREP tech)**

The CREP program is a continuous signup.

- Meaning that you can sign up any time of year.
- This is an FSA program.
- Interested landowners should contact Trent Luschen from the FSA, (541)523-7121 ext. 2.
- NRCS provides technical services to FSA for CREP and I will be assisting NRCS in conservation plan development and certification

| | Grant County | Baker County |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Active Contracts | 47 | 80 |
| Expiring Contracts | 10 | 6 |
| New Applications | 7 | 7 |
| Mid-Management Due | 6 | 13 |

- **2018 Drought Outlook (Lorraine)**

- Lorraine presented 2018 Drought Monitor maps as of January 23
- If drought designation occurs then only fund available would have to come from existing EQIP allocation.
- Current estimates of 2018 EQIP allocation could be between \$400,000 - \$500,000

- **Conservation Stewardship Program (Lorraine)**
 - 2017 Summary
 - 1 contract, 13,370 acres, \$172,457 total
 - 12 applications, only 4 went through ranking process
 - 2018 Renewals
 - 10 contracts, 20,563 acres, \$119,116 for 2018
 - 2018 New applications
 - 6 applications
 - New evaluation tool, new enhancement lists
 - Deadline for applications is 3/2/2018

- **2018 Conservation Implementation Strategies (Lorraine)**
 - Northside Mule Deer Winter Habitat
 - Kahler Basin
 - Forestry
 - Blue Mountain Vegetative Health Initiative (Grant SWCD RCPP)
 - 1.2 million awarded, \$900,000 on the ground, juniper and pre commercial thinning.
 - Trying to build on forest service work with a goal to improve last season flows for salmon and steelhead.
 - Still working on ranking question using GIS tools with an aim to prioritize the most productive ground
 - 1,700 ac juniper acres, and 3,500 ac targeted. This should be more than money available
 - State (High tunnel, Organic, Energy)
 - EQIP Program update: Deadlines is March 16th, 2018

CIG Grant Proposal

- Looking for projects that have proven science that NRCS can expand and use with landowners in the future.
 - National is for more than \$75,000 Deadline: February 26, 2018
 - Less than \$75,000 can apply of the state level. Deadline: TBD
 - How much monitoring would be included in this proposal? Would have to find out.
 - Would biocontrol for yellow star thistle, stand set up and monitoring be possible?
 - Match need to be secured at the time of the proposal?
 - Is it a 50% match? Yes, can be cash or in-kind.

- **Review of County Priority Resource Issues (10 minutes, Lorraine)**
 County Priority Resource Issues
 1. Invasive Species (including juniper, annual grasses & herbaceous weeds)
 2. Forest Health (including aspen restoration)
 3. Grazing Management (including stock water developments and border/cross-fencing for private lands bordering federal ground)
 4. Water Quality/Quantity (including irrigation improvements, stock water)

5. Easements (to protect investments of conservation funds and mitigate threat of subdivision)
 - a. List has not changed much since 2010. Recently added, water quality and quantity, and easements.
 - b. Upland storage falls into added water quality and quantity.
 - c. Could forest funding be used to address other forest health issues besides stocking level, new diseases (diploidium, black scale)
 - i. Treatment would not change, still based on working with stocking rates.
 - ii. Diploidium is affecting riparian vegetation in middle fork and riparian zones
 - iii. Appear to be health, not overstocked timber, maybe an air movement areas
 - iv. Western gall rust also an issue, lost 50% of large seed trees.
- Zola confirmed that the resource concerns are the high level priorities for the county. Within each of the resource concern categories different CIS can be developed to address them.
 - a. A question was asked from last year's meeting what invasive grasses funding has been done. Most of the funding was focused on juniper removal.
 - b. Annual grass treatment is a facilitative practice and requires additional practices to address the resource concerns.
 - c. ODFW murders creek work has been successful. But ODFW has said that medusahead treatments have been multiple treatments post fire.
 - d. Zola – last year's meeting small group could not identify which species was most important.
 - e. A question was asked if soil health is applicable to any of the counties project. Lorraine stated most of the focus for soil health has been on cropland, efforts continue to be developed on range, pasture, and forestry.
- Is everyone okay with the current Local work Group Priorities
 - a. Someone asked if easements should still be on the list.
 - b. It seems everyone is okay with this list.
- **Future Direction (50 minutes)**
 - Upper John Day River Flow and Protection Project (CTWSRO RCPP)
 - o \$1.4 million EQIP
 - o 3.2 million ALE
 - o Just in the contracting phase
 - Looking at first sign up in fall 2018, or spring 2019
 - 2 land trust willing to help with this, Blue Mountain Land Trust
 - o
 - 2019-2020 funding

Current Proposed Timeline of EQIP funding

2018 EQIP

- Northside Mule Deer – Final Year
- Kahler Basin - 2019
- Izee Forestry – Last Year
- GSWCD-RCPP – First Year

2019 EQIP

- GSWCD-RCPP – 2nd Year
- Tribes – RCPP – First Year
- Kahler Basin – 2019

2020 EQIP

- GSWCD-RCPP – 3rd Year
- Tribes – RCPP – 2 Year
- New CIS – EQIP – Ritter proposed CIS Year 1 of 3 or 4
 - Ritter Group put in a zero funding CIS this last year. Could possibly start this in 2020
- New CIS – JD Partnership coordinated concept

2021 EQIP

- Tribes – RCPP – 3rd Year
- Ritter CIS – 2nd year
- New CIS- 2nd year

Group Discussion

Zola – What is the next Local Priority to work on?

- Concept of coming back in to old juniper cut to control past investments.
 - 10 year practice life span
 - Would OWEB be willing to pay for retreatment?
 - Could fire be used?
 - EQIP funding to control with fire was very beneficial in Izee.
 - Liability
 - Fear of Fire
- Just finished stock water assessment on area south of highway 26. This is a high priority.

Zola – divide the group into the two for 10 minutes

- Stock water
 - Juniper, forest thinning, and stock water in the southern part of the county.
 - Addressing country priority 1,2,3 at more of a holistic approach
- Juniper retreat
 - a. Important to follow up with fire, herbicides, cutting