

MEETING NOTES

2. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Topic	Decision
Purpose of Meeting	Provide a forum for NRCS to work collaboratively with its county stakeholders and partners so they can develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited resources to address priority resource concerns in a way that benefits all individuals within Marion County for 2018-2019.
Marion County Priority Resource Concerns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Water Quantity 2) Water Quality 3) Soil Erosion 4) Wildlife
Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) & other Federal Cost-Share programs	<p><u>Stayton-Sublimity 2011-2015:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stayton-Sublimity CIS was successfully completed in 2015. This CIS has saved ~3875 of acre/feet of water annually through cost-share on irrigation systems and thousands of acres of irrigation water management. Irrigation over 15 years (life of irrigation system) has a projected water savings of 58,125 acre feet. • Energy saved: 1,372,000 KWH as of 2017. In 15 years, estimate is 20,580,000 KWH saved. • The partnerships with Energy Trust, irrigation businesses and Santiam Water Control District have helped implement projects and spread the word to local farmers <p><u>Brandy Cr/Pudding River:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality is on an upward trend. <p><u>Champoeg Creek Watershed CIS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 was the 3rd year for the Champoeg Creek Watershed CIS with over 2.3 million dollars being obligated for conservation efforts. 2018 has started off with lots of applications. There is a request to expand the boundaries for 2019 EQIP sign up. <p><u>Howell Prairie Creek/Pudding River Watershed CIS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 the first year for applications and funding. There is a minor boundary change for this area. NRCS will probably stay in this funding zone until 2021. <p><u>2018 CIS's:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible focus area: Santiam Water Control District's involvement in a Temperature control structure behind Detroit dam. Would help address temperature issues during water releases/draw-down. Many things still need to be considered: drinking and irrigation water supply, sediment and the City of Salem water filtration system to name a few. There is a need to conserve water because of water quantity shortages. This is where NRCS may have an opportunity to help the irrigation district by way of efficient irrigation systems, water management, pipeline, and pumps. The Corp is still taking comments and evaluating.

	<p><u>National Initiatives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives for the 2014 Farm bill include; Organic, Energy, and High Tunnel. Marion County applications have been selected for funding in each of these initiatives at this point; there is a second signup underway. This year, NRCS has abundant funding and is working hard to obligate. There is also a new funding opportunity for Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) and Confined AFO's. Since NRCS hasn't had the ability to fund AFO's and CAFO's for about 8 years, there are no applications as of yet for this money. Need to make calls to producers to inform them.
<p>Group Input</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Keudell mentioned a new automated system for the heads on the North Santiam WCD was installed with NRCS funding and the overall irrigation district's efficiency has increased. • Anna Rancin of the Pudding River watershed council mentioned their annual meeting happening on March 15. The title of this meeting is "Living on Shakey Ground" and is at Seven Brides Brewing in Silverton. All are invited to hear Todd Jarvis (OSU, Hydrogeologist) and Andy Bryant (NOAA, Hydrologist). • Jo Morgan (ODA) thought forest health should be a resource consideration. • Tyler Ross (NRCS-PMC) mentioned soil health needs.
<p>Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)</p>	<p>With the new Farm Bill 2014 all WRP easements are now part of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). WRP is now the Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE). Marion County currently manages 26 easements with over 1000 acres of restored wetlands. NRCS has had a great working relationship with the USFWS and their partners for wildlife program to assist landowners. NRCS has managed to stretch program funding with contribution of funding and technical knowledge that USFWS has brought to projects in interagency agreements on WRP/WRE projects. In addition partnership with ODFW staff has also contributed technical assistance to NRCS. With these great partnerships we have managed to get a lot of great conservation work on the ground. In 2013 we implemented practices on ~400 new acres of easements, in which hydrology has been restored. We are moving into 2017 with great expectations of restoration work to continue on a path to fully restore. It's important to note that during early restoration WRP/WRE ground is suitable habitat for the Streaked Horned Lark and restoration efforts may need to be adapted to extend the longevity of the suitable habitat.</p> <p>With the new Farm Bill NRCS will be looking for new opportunities with our partners for the future of wetland restoration and other restoration projects in Marion County.</p> <p>Dani Aleshire is now working in our basin to help with existing WRP's and future WRE's with new applicants.</p>

<p>Working Lands for Wildlife</p>	<p><u>Chris Seal (USFWS)</u>: Chris works primarily in the USFWS partners program to turn marginal agricultural ground into productive conservation land. This has culminated in the first federal delisting of any species. The Oregon Chub was delisted in 2016 with the help of the agricultural community and their dedication to improve the natural resources for future generations of farmers.</p>
<p>Streaked Horned Lark (SHLA) Biologist: Pacific Birds</p>	<p>Niles Brinton introduced himself as the Streaked Horned Lark (SHL) Biologist working with NRCS and Pacific Birds in a Joint Venture program to develop farming friendly practices that assist in the recovery of the listed species. He gave a presentation about where the SHL likes to nest, raise their brood and live year round. Niles has starting on Conservation Initiative Strategy for the SHLA and is looking for an interested party or group interested in a RCPP.</p>
<p>Streaked Horned Lark (SHLA)</p>	<p><u>Chris Seal (USFWS)</u> The SHLA is the newest animal on the threatened and endangered species list (10/3/2013). Reason for listing: change in land use is the primary factor and range wide population decline/range contraction. SHLA is one of 5 wintering ssp. in WV (and one of 21 North American lark ssp.) USFWS is currently focusing on outreach within the Willamette Valley where 2/3 of the overall population resides. Critical habitat has been designated to Refugees only (Finley, Basket Slough, and Ankeny). Important note is the 4D rule doesn't consider weed control on the landscape to be considered TAKE; allows ag operations. More information on the SHLA can be found at http://cascadiaprairieoak.org/documents/StreakedHornedLark-TechnicalNote.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of yet, the USFWS has not established a species recovery team. Research and creativity are needed along with private landowner commitments to make recovery efforts successful. • Landowners/farmers will be key to helping out with habitat, but they need to be informed where the habitat is and how to avoid any “take” as much as possible. Best for farmers to voluntarily allow habitat versus being mandated.
<p>Energy Trust of Oregon</p>	<p><u>Ulrike Mengelberg</u>: – Energy trust of Oregon Outreach Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy trust has lots of incentives on irrigation improvements with rebates. • Rebate forms are available online or paper copies if you prefer. • Location of the power usage is important in order to receive any assistance. To view coverage the map go to www.energytrust.org • Certain energy improvements through energy trust require pre-approval so please check before purchase of equipment. • VFD's are potentially a good fit for cost-share. • Lesa/Lepa conversion for linear irrigation systems to lower boom heights is a new cost-share item through Energy Trust. <p>The scientific irrigation system (SIS) is the newest up to date way to schedule your irrigation.</p>

<p>Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)</p>	<p><u>Jo Morgan</u>: ODA Water Quality Specialist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agricultural Water Quality program continues to work well with voluntary compliance and technical assistance to landowners. • ODA is currently focusing on Strategic Implementation Areas (SIA) to focus outreach and education. Seven areas in Oregon are chosen every year and they have four levels of concern ranging from no concern to serious concern. These SIA's only apply to perennial streams not intermittent. • Marion County has one of these areas located on the lower Abiqua Creek. • Farmers are tasked to "Do no harm" when farming and to reach water quality goals. Majority of parcels are "of no concern". Compliance goal is predicted to be reached. • Properties with in these SIA areas that do not meet water quality requirements may be subject to further compliance investigation. • Soil and Water conservation districts decide on focus areas for education outreach. • Education for Oregon residents regarding water quality is still a primary focus for ODA. <p>Water quality improvements are totally voluntary for landowners at this time.</p>
<p>Janelle Huserik</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is still available for producers as well as CRP – grassland's.
<p>Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD):</p>	<p><u>Jane Keppinger</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marion SWCD's 46th just happened – good times. • New conservation planner: Brandon Bishop, has good farm experience. • The Landowner Assistance Program (LAP) is the SWCD's primary funding source for conservation improvements. There is an annual budget of 100,000 and the annual per project amount has increased to 7500/project and up to 20,000 in five years. This program is undergoing revisions with its paperwork and cost share methods and is open for signup. • 2.5 million spent since LAP inception; 50% of this was from SWCD funds, other 50% from in kind work of farmers. • Other SWCD news: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued conservation education for K-12 - Weed mapping - Working with partners - Assist landowners with resource concerns - Annual native plant sale is in March -

RECAP	Marion County NRCS has worked well with its county stakeholders and partners so they can develop a plan that strategically utilizes limited funding, and limited resources to address priority resource concerns in a way that benefits all individuals within Marion County for 2018 and beyond.	
Final Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bob Koenig</u>: Thanks • <u>Marion SWCD</u>: Great to work with partners and Les/NRCS • <u>Gale Goshie</u>: Well organized meeting, good to hear local happenings • <u>Dave Budeau</u>: Thanks; good to hear from everyone • <u>Jo Morgan</u>: Thanks • <u>Chris Seal</u>: Mentioned the Heritage Working Lands program • <u>Val Tancredi</u>: A better schedule needs to be developed to draw down reservoirs storing vital irrigation water. • <u>Bob Stanford</u>: Thanks, good meeting • <u>Gary Butler</u>: Butler Farms llc have saved a ton of water because of EQIP and cost-share funding available to farmers. • <u>Steve Keudell</u>: Thanks, great meeting and thanks to Les • <u>Ulrike Mengelberg</u>: Energy Trust can help with irrigation improvements and maintenance for energy savings. If producers make any improvements, all they have to do is fill out a rebate form and send it to Energy Trust. VFD and Drip improvements require vendor pre-approval on any Energy Trust financial assistance. • Anthony Tasselli – ‘first timer’, good meeting 	
Les Bachelor – NRCS Thank you all for coming; Adjourn 12:00 PM.		
3. Action Items		
Action	Owner	
5. Next Meeting (if applicable)		
Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD 	