

Deschutes County Local Working Group Meeting 2018
February 26, 2018

Introductions

Purpose of meeting

- Annual opportunity to connect with natural resource partners to identify priority natural resource issues. Identify places/issues where NRCS can contribute
- Share ongoing and upcoming partner conservation efforts and programs

Resource Concerns

- Irrigation Efficiency
 - Gap in funding for small, private landowners
 - For some, flood is cheaper and easier
 - Irrigation mismanagement leading to weedy invasive issues
 - Current pilots Swalley and COID
 - Irrigation district system improvement plans being developed by Farmers Conservation Alliance
 - Basin Study Work Group working on long term planning effort for Deschutes water management
 - Need for further water savings, such as pond lining in areas like Arnold Irrigation District
 - Need for education on equipment maintenance and Irrigation Water Mgt.
 - Pilot projects for LISA/LEPA technologies
- Forestry
 - Fuels reduction
 - CWPP and WUI focus
 - La Pine Basin
 - Forest health
 - Bark beetle
 - Challenges
 - Landowner engagement
 - Agencies need to pool together contacts and resources
 - Small lot owners
 - “out of pocket” cost beyond program cost shares
 - Finding a balance between fuels reduction and wildlife needs
- Wildlife
 - Safe passage for wildlife over/under highways

Current NRCS programs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - Joint Chiefs’ initiative for fire risk reduction/forest health provides financial assistance in the greater La Pine area for practices such as pre-commercial thinning, slash treatment. Cooperative program with USFS, ODF, Deschutes county, Walker Range
 - Three Sisters Irrigation District Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP) EQIP funding for on farm irrigation improvements to complement TSID piping projects to finish their system improvement. Partner funding for TSID pipeline, barrier removal on Whychus creek diversions, stream channel improvements
 - Sage Grouse Initiative: Rangeland improvements in the sage grouse core area that includes some of eastern Deschutes county. Mostly juniper control

- Seasonal High Tunnel incentives to build High Tunnels to extend growing seasons for producers for the local food market
 - Organic Initiative provides financial incentives for a variety of practices to support certified and transitioning organic producers with natural resource issues
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) provides 5 year contracts to producers with payments to support existing conservation efforts and incentives to apply new conservation. Applicants must meet conservation thresholds with their current management to be eligible
- Agricultural conservation Easement Program (ACEP) financial assistance to organizations to purchase easements on agricultural land to keep it in agricultural production

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