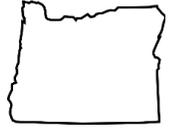




Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for July 11, 2018 - 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife / 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE / Salem, OR 97302

Attendees (26)

1. Bruce Taylor, Oregon Habitat Joint Venture (Intermountain West and Pacific Birds)
2. Lauren Smith, Oregon Water Resources Congress
3. Mikal Cline, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4. Marissa Theve, Bureau of Land Management
5. Jim Johnson, Oregon State University – Forestry
6. CalLee Davenport, U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Service
7. Ryan Gordon, Oregon Department of Forestry
8. Glenn Dolphine, Oregon Invasive Species Council
9. Karl Dalla Rosa, U.S. Forest Service
10. Scott Oviatt, Natural Resources Conservation Service
11. Ron Alvarado, Natural Resources Conservation Service
12. Al De Vos, Oregon Department of Forestry
13. Linda Lind, U.S. Forest Service
14. Loren Unruh, Natural Resources Conservation Service
15. Jim Cathcart, West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
16. Sam Asai, Farm Service Agency state committee
17. Wes Jennings, Farm Service Agency
18. Taylor Murray, Farm Service Agency
19. Mike Merrill, Natural Resources Conservation Service
20. Kevin Blakely, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
21. Tami Kerr, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
22. Bari Williams, Natural Resources Conservation Service
23. Tracy Robillard, Natural Resources Conservation Service
24. Julie MacSwain, Natural Resources Conservation Service
25. Tom Watson, Natural Resources Conservation Service
26. Jay Gibbs, Natural Resources Conservation Service

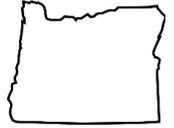
OTAC Meeting Opening / Introduction

Ron Alvarado, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service:

- Ron thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and emphasized the importance of this committee being co-chaired by NRCS and FSA.
- Julie MacSwain is the new NRCS partnership liaison and will be taking over organizing OTAC meetings. Committee members are encouraged to contact Julie with suggestions for agenda topics and feedback.
- Tom Watson, Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy, has served with NRCS Oregon for the last 6 years and is leaving this month for a new position as the State Conservationist for NRCS Montana. Jay Gibbs, Basin Team Leader for the John Day/Umatilla and Snake River Basins, will be acting in Tom's position at the state office for the next few months.



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- A Farm Bill has passed in the House and Senate; though we don't have specific details at this time as the two different versions of the bill are under committee. We expect to have more details on the Farm Bill for the next OTAC meeting.

Wes Jennings, Chief of Farm Programs, FSA: FSA State Directory Peggy Browne is in Washington, D.C. this week. FSA plans to hire more employees this year. There are four positions currently advertised online. More position vacancy announcements will be forthcoming.

FSA Update

Taylor Murray and Wes Jennings, FSA

- **FSA Sub-committee:** FSA would like to establish a sub-committee within OTAC where FSA can coordinate and send information to members to review conservation items. For example, mid-contract management on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands, and changes to conservation practices. Contact Wes Jennings or Taylor Murray if you're interested in being on this sub-committee. The sub-committee plans to provide routine report-outs on their activities to the greater OTAC group.
- **SAFE Program:** State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) – Wasco County has developed a proposal through this program to set aside acres for sage-related species. The county plans to enroll 3,000 acres into grassland habitat. There is a current project in Morrow County for mule deer habitat that is also utilizing the SAFE program. Project boundaries within this program align with ODFW priority areas. (See Fact Sheet)
- **CRP:** Nationally, there is a 24 million acre cap for the Conservation Reserve Program. There is a new sign up this fall with a deadline of Oct. 1, though it will be very competitive with limited acreage. Within the next couple of years, there will be quite a bit of acres coming out of general CRP in Oregon. FSA expect future CRP sign ups to be more targeted.
- **CRP Grasslands:** Changes to soil rental rates for CRP has a low rate for CRP Grasslands, resulting in many producers backing out of the sign-up.
- **Mid-Contract Management for CRP:** Grazing is restricted as a mid-contract management activity with a 25% payment reduction every other year. Routine grazing is a maintenance activity and does not receive a payment.

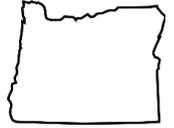
Snow Survey Update

Scott Oviatt, Snow Survey Supervisor, NRCS

- The 2018 Water Year snowpack was warm and dry through early February, resulting in low accumulation. At the peak of the snow season, most of Oregon's snow sites were less than 70% of normal. Most sites melted out ahead of schedule.
- Current precipitation across the state is 88% of normal.
- Drought outlook: Dynamic changes in drought year to year. This year we are seeing expansion of moderate drought in Harney, Lake, Wheeler, Grant, Crook and Baker counties. Keep in mind a



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Governor's drought declaration alone doesn't qualify producers to be eligible for FSA drought programs. Those programs are only available to producers in a D-2 (severe drought) designated county that has experienced D-2 for at least 8 weeks with approval from the Secretary. Producers in counties where a D-3 drought has been in place for at least 1 day are eligible.

- Three month climate outlook shows above normal chances of hot, dry weather and drought persisting in most of Oregon (Eastern Oregon)

Oregon Invasive Species Council Update

Glenn Dolphin, Oregon Invasive Species Council

- Glenn has been in Oregon for 11 years. He previously spent 5 years with the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District and prior to that he was a volunteer with NRCS. He is currently the chair for the statewide invasive species council.
- Invasive species can cause widespread economic and environmental devastation. Oregon needs to invest more in prevention to avoid having to fund containment and long-term management.
- The council is focused on prevention of invasive species coming into the state. Funding primarily comes from boater fees. The Council includes permanent members and appointed members who serve a two-year term. Advisory Committee is open to all; the council is seeking members.
- The council worked with Oregon Public Broadcasting on a documentary a few years ago about invasive species issues that helped raise public awareness called "The Silent Invasion"
- Oregon Department of Agriculture is working on Japanese beetle invasion in Washington County and utilizing emergency funds from the state.
- Aquatic invasive species of concern: Asian Carp; New Zealand mudsnails; zebra & quagga mussels; Emerald Ash Borer; Japanese Beetle.

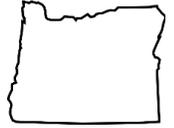
2019 Agricultural Conservation Easements Ranking and Geographic Area Rate Caps Update

Bari Williams, Easement Specialist, NRCS

- NRCS has a sub-committee for easements. Every year that sub-committee provides input to NRCS regarding proposed ranking and geographic area rate caps.
- There are two components of Agricultural Conservation Easements Program within NRCS – ALE and WRE (Agricultural Land Easements and Wetland Reserve Easements).
- WRE easement compensation is 85% of the Fair Market Value.
- NRCS has established various priority areas for both wetland and ag land easements that overlay with partner's priority areas.



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- NRCS locally doesn't have control over ALE ranking criteria like they do for WRE. ALE criteria require at least 50% of national criteria. ALE applications in Oregon rank higher if they occur in areas that have an NRCS Long Range Plan or a strategic Conservation Implementation Strategy; and areas within ODFW's priority grasslands habitat.
- Increasing capacity for Land Trusts in the SONEC region is a concern among partners. NRCS has a grant opportunity to increase land trust capacity in Eastern Oregon, currently available on Grants.gov.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Update

Loren Unruh, Leader for Programs, NRCS

- ACEP – both the House and Senate have included ACEP in their versions of the Farm Bill. Both WRE and ALE have slightly increased.
- CSP – the House bill repealed CSP; Senate bill maintained it but cut down the amount. There's talk of CSP being integrated into EQIP. We expect something similar to CSP whether it's a standalone program or not. EQIP passed with increases in both the House and Senate.
- RCPP also passed in the House and Senate. Currently NRCS has 22 funded RCPP projects with total USDA investments of \$88 million and partner investments around \$1 billion over the duration of those 5-year projects.
- There's a diversity of projects both in resource concern, geography across the state and types of partners.

Fiscal Year 2019 Conservation Implementation Strategies

Mike Merrill, Conservation Planner, NRCS

- NRCS Oregon's strategic approach is resource-focused; that will not change with the new Farm Bill, though funding/programmatic pools may change. There will still be an emphasis on locally-led planning.
- Each NRCS county office develops a strategic long range plan, with input from their communities, to prioritize resource concerns.
- Other Oregon partners are planning strategically, including OWEB, ODA and ODFW, and are identifying priority areas/watersheds that can align with and leverage other funding sources.
- About 16 NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategies will be "completed" at the end of fiscal year 2018.
- About 20 new CIS's are slated to come available for sign ups in fiscal year 2019. Some may not get EQIP funding in 2019, but may be positioned to implement should additional funding become available. The updated GIS map will be available on the NRCS Oregon website in September/October as we transition to FY19.

Closing Comments

- Oregon Department of Forestry will be reviewing and revising the state forest action plan. This plan outlines the priorities of ODF, which is a strategic plan for the department. Al De Vos with



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ODF will be leading that effort in coordination with OTAC. The statewide agreement with NRCS will also be reflected in the plan. More information may be forthcoming.

- END -

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