

**Oregon NRCS 2019
Coos Local Work Group Meeting
February 20, 2019**

Following a welcome by Wallace Jennings and introductions facilitated by Kathy Ferge programming updates were provided.

Please see the following attachments for reports:

- **Farm Service Agency**—GovDelivery February 2019 Update (Barb Grant, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Technician for Brett Harris, FSA County executive director, Coos & Curry Counties)
- **NRCS Farm Bill Update** (Kathy Ferge, facilitator and state tribal liaisons/outreach coordinator)
- **CREP Update** (Barb Grant)
- **NRCS Progress Report** (Wallace Jennings, acting district conservationist Coos & Curry Counties)
- **Partners in Conservation SWCD Report** (Caley Sowers, district manager Coos SWCD)
- **Strategic Approach to Conservation**

Following the reports the group broke into small groups for a brainstorm session on conservation strategies. There were three small groups—forestry, crops/pastures, open--and participants within each group were asked “What will the next generation conservation strategy address?” Results of the discussion are as follows:

Crops/Pasture (Group 1)

- Drought—decreased production of hay and forage
- Invasives—thistles and other drought-tolerant invasives increase with dry weather, tansy ragwort, Japanese and other knotweeds
- Drainage/irrigation (species comp in pastures)
- Tidal influence/salmon habitat, regulatory impacts, complication
- Bank shaping to address fish habitat, water quality, and pasture losses
- Grazing management/prescriptions for increased use
- (Coos) River aging infrastructure, decreased drainage impacts:
 - decreased pasture health,
 - fish habitat
 - fish access/habitat
- Historic channels to complement modern drainage
- Water Water Water
 - Keep Coquille water quality CIS, needs to continue, expand area or?? This strategy has the practices that are of most use to area landowners and partners in Coos County.
 - Practices and CISs need to be designed for maximum participation
- Improve local outreach – workshops, news, PSAs, increase collaboration with SWCDs and Watershed Councils, increase staff

Crops/Pasture (Group 2)

- Invasives—Tansy Ragwort, knotweed, Canada thistle, organic control for knotweed

- Cleaning ditches—regulatory—individual permit, no general permit for fish bearing streams
- Involving natural/historic channels w/ modern drainage
- Drought—food supply, decreased hay crop
- Maintenance of levees & dikes for small landowners
- Cutbank—taper/reshape, passive revegetation
- Perimeter fence challenges—there are situations in which it would help if NRCS would pay for perimeter fences, riparian exclusion fences as an example.

Forestry (Group 1)

- Existing vegetation management—fire break
- Failed plantations that we retreat once the cause of the failure is understood.
 - Planning forest restoration around SOD
- Fire
- Awareness of fire, defensible space
- Innovative approaches to treat fuels
 - Biomass, biochar
- Gorse (fire) – cranberry, small forest ownership
- Sediment loading off forest roads

Forestry (Group 2)

- Management of forest, defensible space—small acreage forest, forest management restoration
- Evacuation with fire
- Dry summers
- Technical assistance forest thinning

Open/Other

- Fish habitat/connectivity: “Habitat through tidal influence”
 - Opportunities to improve drainage issues include:
 - Potential to improve fish uses where poorly-drained pastures are operated in areas that used to be transected by tidal channels.
 - Potential for providing seasonal channels in floodplains that would improve drainage AND improve fish floodplain usage, especially in the estuary areas or just above them.
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- Winter Lake Phase II
 - Collaboration
 - Inventory
 - Plan development
 - CIS Process—staff capacity

Partnership opportunities