

Josephine County Local Work Group and Fire Meeting Notes

Hosted by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
& the Illinois Valley SWCD
March 15th, 2019 at the Kerby Belt Building

NRCS and Farm Bill presentation by David Ferguson (see attached slides)

- Goal to develop 1-2 new Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS) strategies in JoCo
 - NRCS currently limited by staff capacity, goal to gain technical support staff in JoCo
 - Need CIS to leverage Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the main source of NRCS \$ for landowners. Local successes with EQIP can lead to support of future Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) NRCS can help with the writing for funds and support implementation
 - Funding available for the Taylor Klondike wildfire area to support a forest management plan for landowners on a somewhat rolling basis
 - **March 26th at 6pm the Siskiyou Field Institute** will be holding an informational meeting about this
 - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/or/programs/financial/?cid=nrcseprd1446420>
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Fire Discussion

- **March 27th at Williams Grange** there will be a Williams Community Fire meeting
 - Meetings like this indicate local support → consider something like this for the Illinois Valley
- Sienna Fitzpatrick (IVSWCD) referenced the Rogue Valley Integrated Fire Plan (2017) that covers Jackson and Josephine Counties (<http://www.rvem.org/>) and the Illinois Valley Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (2011) (<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/documents/fire/cwpp/illinoisvalley.pdf>)
- Malcolm Voyager (IV Community Development Organization) and Sean Hendrix (Grayback Forestry) are working on a shared fuels reduction and defensible

space project with support from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (25% community match, 75% from FEMA)

- This is a community assistance grant, with buy-in from 30-40 landowners currently
- Tyler Averyt (Oregon Dept. Forestry, Firewise Coordinator)
 - Current programs include a \$500 defensible space rebate program -- "community assistance grant"
- NRCS project support *usually* has a focus on larger areas of land (10+ acres) to get bigger projects done
 - Projects can incorporate riparian restoration, fuels work, etc as long as it addresses the overall strategy of the conservation plan
- Kelpie Wilson (Wilson Biochar Assoc) discussed biochar projects developed at Page Creek and other county projects
- KS Wild (Allee Gustafson) is developing Fire and Smoke education opportunities and programs with communities
 - Richard Fairbanks educating on prescription fire for private lands
 - Several events were brought up (ask Allee for details to include)
 - March 23rd 11-4PM at Yale Creek there will be a hike to see a BLM prescribed fire project, followed by a presentation on historical fire with time for questions and discussion (Yale Creek Brewery, 724 Yale Creek Rd, Jacksonville OR)
 - April 14th 5-9PM at Williams Grange: screening of Wilder Than Wild and a seminar on Indigenous Fire Management
- Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation (Kymmie Scott) has a habitat and wildlife program they are looking to expand across their territory (Smith River, up to the Sixes, over to Applegate and down to Wilson Creek)
 - They are interested in developing partnerships with groups operating within their borders
- Illinois Valley Fire District (Chief Kamron Ismaili, Fire Marshal)
 - Often the first call residents make when looking for information on partners/groups working on fire hazard mitigation
 - Facilitate project implementation like home assessments (?)
 - Strongest avenue for disseminating information to the public and collecting input on greatest issues
 - Offered to support public outreach events and efforts
 - Terri Fairbanks (Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative - SOFRC)
 - Using the Rogue Basin Cohesive Forest Restoration Strategy (RBS) as a model to efficiently and cost-effectively develop priority areas

- https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationByGeography/NorthAmerica/UnitedStates/oregon/forests/Pages/Rogue_Basin_Restoration.aspx
- Terry Fairbanks can potentially host workshop on using the RBS tools to help prioritize
- This is an area ODF and other agencies can help with specific to the IV
- Info from RBS can support a NRCS CIS proposal
- Overarching question that arose throughout the conversation:
 - What is the key to getting projects off the ground out here?
 - Funding
 - Multiple funding sources must be leveraged against each other with collaboration among partners
 - Suggested first step to find “low hanging fruit” and start something to build momentum
 - NRCS \$ is slow, not a quick turnaround for getting \$ on the ground. 2 - 3 years planning
 - Connecting and leveraging assets currently available in the IV
 - Leadership (the right persons/groups)
 - Who should be the coordinator between the county and the community?
 - Who should coordinate partners/projects in the IV?
 - Who has capacity to keep partners on track?
- Other aspects to consider:
 - Economics
 - Where will the labor force be coming from to implement these projects?
 - Training locals will increase local support and boost economy
 - Current available local contractors? Developing a list/directory could be helpful
 - Internship program through schools/county (Jean Ann Miles spoke to this)
 - Outreach
 - ODF has limited capacity to meet with as many landowners as there is need for
 - Need for landowner education on maintenance/create fire plans
 - Outreach can lead to community buy-in for NRCS CIS
 - OSU Extension as education resource
 - Discussed hosting a community meeting at the high school

- Technical discussion ensued
 - Prescription burn techniques, thinning, how to incorporate a maintenance plan for these bigger projects
 - ODF (Nick Haile, Tyler Averyt) and Grayback (Sean Hendrix) answered more in depth
 - Some priority locations were mentioned:
 - Merlin
 - Rt 199 Corridor
 - Areas with willing landowners
- Overall, two main areas of need in the IV were identified amongst participants
 - **Funding and planning team**
 - NRCS (David Ferguson)
 - Grayback Forestry (Sean Hendrix)
 - Tolowa Dee-ni' (Kymmie Scott)
 - **Outreach and education team**
 - IV Fire District
 - Jean Ann Miles (Cave Junction City Council)
 - Sienna Fitzpatrick (IVSWCD)
 - Other potential partners/resources to engage with:
 - OSU Extension
 - Lomakatsi
 - The Ford Family Foundation