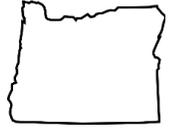




# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for August 20, 2019 - 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Oregon Farm Service Agency / 7620 SW Mohawk Street / Tualatin, OR 97062

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## Attendees:

1. Amanda Moore, NRCS
2. Loren Unruh, NRCS
3. Mary Beth Smith, NRCS
4. Amy Fischer, NRCS
5. Anna Freitas, OACD
6. Bari Williams, NRCS
7. Kent Willet, FSA
8. Taylor Murray, FSA
9. Barry Buschue, FSA
10. Jay Gibbs, NRCS
11. Ken Yates, Oregon Water Resources Congress
12. Mike Edwards, USFWS
13. CalLe Daveport, USFWS
14. Kevin Blakely, ODFW
15. Mike Brown, BLM
16. Mikal Cline, ODFW
17. Anthony Barber, EPA
18. Jerome Rosa, OCA

## FSA Update: Taylor Murray, FSA

### Conservation Reserve Program & Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- FSA is partnering with NRCS and USFWS on nesting season restrictions (discussed at a prior OTAC meeting)
- FSA is running a CRP and CREP sign up starting June 1 through Aug. 23. This is a tight turnaround. NRCS has a two-week window starting Aug. 23 to get conservation plans back to FSA. Sept. 30 is the deadline for getting those contracts finalized into FSA's system. This has required significant coordination with NRCS at the local level
- Challenges with short duration CRP/CREP sign up is getting things through the cultural review process. All cultural reviews have been submitted to SHPO.
- Many sign-ups are re-enrollments that don't require new conservation planning.
- The program still requires that every contract has a mid-contract activity, however cost share payments for those activities are no longer offered.

### Emergency Conservation Program and Emergency Forest Restoration Program

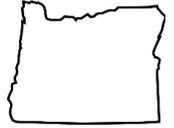
- FSA is receiving applications for these programs from various natural disasters that occurred last year, including damage from heavy snows in Douglas and Lane Counties, also damage from flooding in multiple counties such as spring flooding around Gilliam/Wheeler/Grant counties.

## NRCS Update: Jay Gibbs, NRCS

- NRCS is approaching the fiscal year close out and staff are very busy obligating contracts before year-end deadlines.



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- Staffing continues to be a challenge, though NRCS is advertising and hiring for several positions statewide.
- Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Initiative solicitation came out today. This is a funding opportunity for forestry projects on private lands and adjacent federal lands in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.
- The Farm Bill interim rules will expire at the end of September. The new rules are under review by OMB. NRCS anticipates having robust decision points on the new Farm Bill at the next OTAC meeting.
- There are no new NRCS programs in the Farm Bill, but every program has been modified. The degree of change within each of those programs has taken time to develop policy.

## **WRP and Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC): Bari Williams, NRCS**

- The GARC only applies to wetland reserve easements; not to agricultural land easements
- See the PowerPoint presentation for specifics on GARC funding amounts

## **EQIP and National Water Quality Initiative: Mary Beth Smith, NRCS**

- NRCS is currently working with partners in five watersheds across the state to develop “readiness phase” plans for NWQI projects with a focus on source water (drinking water) protection.
- There is an emphasis in drinking water protection in the new Farm Bill through NWQI
- Upcoming opportunities are available for partners to collaborate with NRCS on drinking water protection projects through NWQI.
- See PowerPoint presentation for specific maps and details on the current readiness projects.

## **590 Practice Standard for Oregon: Amanda Moore, NRCS**

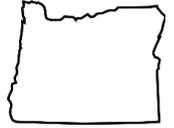
- Amanda Moore is the new State Resource Conservationist for NRCS Oregon based in the state office in Portland. This position has been vacant for several years. Welcome Amanda!
- 590 is the NRCS Nutrient Management Practice Standard
- Every 5 years, NRCS must review all conservation practices and revise/update practice standards. Practices get revised at the national level and there’s a public comment period, then states have 1 year to adopt the practice. Oregon just entered that period in May of 2019 to review the standard and tailor it for Oregon, within NRCS policy. Oregon can edit the standard to comply with state specific laws or regulations, and with local conditions.
- There is an additional focus on air quality within this standard, as well as a few other technical changes.
- NRCS would like to stand up a sub-committee within OTAC to provide input and review of the 509 practice standard, as well as a longer-term sub-committee that will review ongoing practice standards as they are revised and updated in Oregon. Contact Amanda Moore to be included on this sub-committee.

## **Conservation Innovation Grants & Conservation Stewardship Program: Amy Fischer, NRCS**

- NRCS Oregon received 13 applications for the FY19 state-level CIG. Five of those were selected for funding totaling \$275,000 in grants. The following are the awardees:
  - Burns Paiute Tribe Natural Resources Department - project on medusahead control and revegetation
  - EcoTrust – modern land mapping tool to design a user friendly, open source web map for use in forest stewardship plans



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- Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District – project to plant pollinator habitat along irrigation pipeline corridors and combat invasive species, develop how-to manual for other irrigation districts
- Oregon State University – updating tool for native plants and fact sheets to include Eastern Oregon
- Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District – developing toolkit to help conservation planners integrate carbon sequestration credits
- Oregon skims money off the top of its EQIP program and invests that into CIG. CIG is the bridge between research and everyday application. The goal is to take good research and help it turn into a mechanism where it can become an everyday application. It's an investment in the future for practices that may currently not be listed in the FOTG but could potentially become a new tech standard or become a conservation practice. The CIG sub-committee participates in evaluating the applications. The State Conservationist makes the final decision on CIG selections at the state level.
- This year we are obligating all 5 years of CSP funding at once; instead of obligating it every year.
- Grasslands Conservation Initiative – NRCS received 56 applications, so far 51 are moving forward to get CSP on their base acres.

## Web Soil Survey: Amanda Moore, NRCS

The Soil Web app has been updated and is again functional.

- <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANRCS/bulletins/2501e19>
- This app is available on apple and android devices and is used throughout the public and private sectors for on-the-fly soils information to inform natural resource planning

All soils digital data to be refreshed in 2019.

- The NRCS is working to improve spatial soil data performance by completing a national refresh of all spatial data that will increase draw time and processing speeds. No other major changes are occurring in Oregon's soils data

NRCS announces STATSGO the most up-to-date continuous coverage of soils information for the continental U.S.

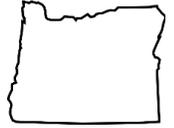
- <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANRCS/bulletins/2584b84>
- This is important for OTAC because many partners work on state level modeling activities that are often unable to use soils data since there are so many data gaps. Complete best coverage allows for modeling to continue through data gaps by seamlessly providing the best soils information in one layer. For Oregon this means a blend of traditional survey level coverage with the more broad STATSGO coverage.

## Closing Comments:

- Jerome Rosa, Oregon Cattleman's Association: Sept. 19 fundraising event in Powell Butte. A large fire in Kansas at a processing plant unfortunately has resulted in packer prices dropping.



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- Mikal Cline, ODFW: The upland game bird program reports that this year was the lowest pheasant count on record in the Ontario area. ODFW partnership position in the Heppner office with NRCS working on CREP status reviews. Oregon is hosting the 2020 sage grouse conference in Bend, the week of June 22, 2020. Includes a field tour.
- Kevin Blakely, ODFW: Still finalizing sage grouse population report; late winter conditions show that male attendance at leks was down significantly in some areas. Kevin Blakely was in Washington, D.C. earlier this year on a detail working on Voluntary Public Access Program. There's a \$50 million set aside for states with a 5-year implementation. Legislative session outcomes – resulted in ODFW getting 3 wolf plan implementation biologist positions.
- CalLee Daveport – will be on the agenda next time about the Partners for Conservation event. This is a nationwide organization. Redmond, Oregon will host the tour in 2020 at the end of Sept/early Oct. Farmers and ranchers attend across the country.
- Klamath Basin Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program experiencing some staff changes; working to transition staff.
- September 23 – 25 in Tillamook – EPA is hosting a CAFO workshop, attendance also by NRCS and OSU. EPA Agency Administrator signed an MOU with FFA to line up internships for high school and college students.
- Ken Yates – Oregon Water Resources Congress, represents irrigated agriculture. Irrigation modernization is our top priority.
- Kent Willet – FSA Market Facilitation Program – started last week of July. So far there are more than 1,300 applications. Sign up will run through the month of December.
- OACD continues to participate in state level groups including Oregon Endangered Species Council and tide gate groups. OACD is working on making their communications more engaging. They are sending out a monthly newsletter and hosting a monthly teleconference. There's an opportunity for partners to participate in a teleconference to share updates with OACD/SWCD members.
- Next month NRCS Oregon is hosting the deputy chief of programs for NRCS.

Next OTAC Meeting TBD. It will likely be in November and again hosted at the FSA State Office. More details will be provided via email to committee members.

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