

Session Notes

State Technical Advisory Committee

October 22, 2020, 9:30a-12:30p - Teleconference

Attendees:

Addie Candid	Jonathan George	Nicholas Peak
Bill Eller	Bonda Habets	Wendy Diamond
Caroline Walls	Harold Crose	Meghan Stuart
Chris Elder	Corina Hayes	Courtney Naumann
Roylene Comes at Night	Jacob Turner	Mike Baden
Robert Compton	Jennifer Boie	Mary Root
Sherre Copeland	Kristen Coles	Ashley House
Courtney Naumann	Mike Kuttel Jr.	Michelle Hennings
David Ryan	Megan Stewart	Gary Bahr
Erin Eaton	Michael Crowder	
Alan Fulk	Mike Baden	
Nathan Gallahan	Nicole Berg	

Introduction and Housekeeping – Nick Vira, NRCS State Partnership Liaison

- Welcomes everyone.

Opening Remarks – Roylene Comes at Night, NRCS WA State Conservationist

- *“By the Numbers 2020”* Power point presentation

Wildfire Environmental Impacts – Bonda Habets

- *Natural Disaster Relief* Power point presentation
- NRCS Program Payment schedule Justification of Cost Share Rates >50% (does the STAC support the higher rate greater than 50% general EQIP and 75% HU-EQIP. *Send Nick comments on whether you support to (maintain WA NRCS payment scenarios at 75% general EQIP (90% HU-EQIP) WA NRCS is asking for the STACs continue support for the higher rate; a payrate greater than 50% General EQIP (75% HU-EQIP)*)
- *Bonda will send a list of practices w/50% or 75% (152 practices and 192 scenarios to Nick and he will distribute to the STAC – Currently ok for FY21*

Payment Schedule

- WA NRCS has adopted 152 Practices with about 940 Scenarios total
- Of the above Practices: 17 Practices with 40 Scenarios that are less than the 75% General EQIP/90% HU-EQIP or about 4%
 - 9 of the 17 practices and 20 Scenarios are 50%/75% or less or about 2%
- Second year for 10 High Priority Practices with 72 scenarios to be paid at 90% or about 8%
- 10 practices with 23 Scenarios are paid at a rate higher than 75%/90 due to the Forgone Income included in the scenario.

Forest Land Use

- A land cover/use category that is at least 10 percent stocked by single-stemmed woody species of any size that will be at least 4 meters (13 feet) tall at maturity. Also included is land bearing evidence of natural regeneration of tree cover (cut over forest or abandoned farmland) that is not currently developed for nonforest use. Ten-percent stocked, when viewed from a vertical direction, equates to an aerial canopy cover of leaves and branches of 25 percent or greater. The minimum area for classification as forest land is 1 acre, and the area must be at least 100 feet wide.
- This land use definition is the same if it is grazed or not.

Range land Use

- Land on which the native vegetation (climax or natural potential plant community) is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs. Rangeland includes natural grasslands, savannas, most deserts, tundra, and certain forb and shrub communities.
- Also, a land cover/use category on which the climax or potential plant cover is composed principally of native grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing and browsing, and introduced forage species that are managed like rangeland. This term would include areas where introduced hardy and persistent grasses, such as crested wheatgrass, are planted and such practices as deferred grazing, burning, chaining, and rotational grazing are used, with little or no chemicals or fertilizer being applied. Grasslands, savannas, many wetlands, some deserts, and tundra are considered to be rangeland. Certain communities of low forbs and shrubs, such as mesquite, chaparral, mountain shrub, and pinyon-juniper, are also included as rangeland.

Cropland

- A land cover/use category that includes areas used for the production of adapted crops for harvest. Two subcategories of cropland are recognized: cultivated and noncultivated.
- Cultivated cropland comprises land in row crops or close-grown crops and also other cultivated cropland (for example, hayland or pastureland that is in a rotation with row or close-grown crops). Noncultivated cropland includes permanent hayland and horticultural cropland, including orchards and vineyards.
- In addition, cropland is defined as land that is not currently tilled, but has been tilled in a prior year and is suitable to be tilled for crop production; is currently devoted to one- or two-row shelterbelt planting, orchard, vineyard, or other related crops; is new land broken out if both of the following conditions are met:
 - (1) Land is planted to a crop to be carried through to harvest.
 - (2) Tillage and cultural practices in planting and harvesting the crop must be consistent with normal practices in the area; land that is in terraces that, according to FSA records, were cropped in the past even though they are no longer capable of being cropped; land that is in sod waterways or filter strips planted to perennial cover; and land that is currently in a CRP contract under a CRP-1, including alternative perennials, until CRP-1 expires or is terminated. See 2-CRP, paragraph 327, for alternative perennials.

Pasture

- Land on which the primary cover is introduced or native forage plants managed by using agronomic practices, such as regular fertilizer applications, liming, and weed control in addition to grazing management.
- Also known as “pastureland,” which means a land cover/use category of land managed primarily for the production of introduced forage plants for grazing animals. Pastureland cover may consist of a single species in a pure stand, a grass mixture, or a grass-legume mixture. Management usually consists of cultural treatments: fertilization, weed control, reseeding or renovation, and control of grazing.

Payment Scenario Financial Assistance Rates – Bonda Habets

- “Emergency watershed protection program (EWPP)” power point reference – Bonda Habets

NRCS Program Update – Wildfire Special sign-up & CSP Renewals – Alan Fulk
“Program update Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP/Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)” – power point presentation

EQIP—Wildfire Recovery Fund Pool

Submitted application, and Eligibility requirements for EQIP Wildfire fund pool by **NOVEMBER 20, 2020.**

- Own or control land
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) eligibility documents
 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification (AD1026) filed and recorded
 - Farm and Tract establishment
 - Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for FY2021
- Land units offered for EQIP Wildfire Recovery application must be within 2020 Washington wildfire season burnt areas and have been burnt or destroyed.

Natural Resources

EQIP—Wildfire Recovery Fund Pool

Prohibited items or actions

- Fence PS382 -- Interior fencing only. Fence that functions as a boundary fence, separate ownership, or exclude domestic livestock from transportation networks or residential, commercial, or industrial areas is prohibited.
- No used materials for all practice standards (PS)
- Cannot restore, rebuild or purchase equipment (combines, implements, tractors, atv, vehicles, grain augers, etc.)
- Cannot restore, rebuild, or purchase buildings (shops, grain bins, pole barns, houses, offices, barns, etc.)
- Any conservation practice that cannot be installed, certified, and paid out to the participant by September 30, 2021.

EQIP—Wildfire Recovery Fund Pool

Conservation practices NRCS will provide financial assistance to solve fire related resource concerns:

- Fence PS382 -- Interior fencing only. Boundary fencing is prohibited.
- Livestock Pipeline PS516
- Watering Facility PS614
- Spring Development PS574
- Pumping Plant PS533 – for Livestock Watering System only
- Obstruction Removal PS500
- Cover Crop PS340
- Mulching PS484
- Critical Area Planting PS342—Must be scheduled for installation only in 2021
- Range Planting PS550—Must be scheduled for installation only in 2021
- Riparian Forest Buffer PS391
- Tree/Shrub Establishment PS612
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation PS490
- Woody Residue Treatment PS384
- Forest Stand Improvement PS666
- Heavy Use Area Protection PS561
- Emergency Animal Mortality Management PS368

Natural Resource Conserva

CSP-Renewal



- Submitted application was required by March 20, 2020.
 - Each FY15 and FY16 eligible applicants received a letter from the State Office informing them of their opportunity.
 - 94 Renewal Applications are in Protracts
 - Renewal Contracts have to be obligated by December 31, 2020.
 - WA NRCS requested \$6.2 million from Headquarters for Renewal contracts in FY21.
- Payments need to be processed by November 6th
 - EQIP rules will be released on Monday Oct 26, 2020

Voluntary Stewardship Program – Bill Eller

Bill: V(B)SP to complete their 5-year report. Commission will receive 25 5-year reports may be contacting NRCS to see if they can provide data they need for report.

Farm Service Agency Emergency Programs – Rod Hamilton

- FSA emergency programs covering livestock, corn barley wheat, sales commodities for 2019 and 230 crops nurse crop, fruits,
- Corona virus food program

STAC Wildlife Committee Update – Mike Kuttel Jr.

- STAC wildlife subcommittee received quality feedback on specific wording of ranking questions for each focus area (minus Olympia Oyster) in CART. We will work with the subcommittee to finalize. Target is two or three ranking question in addition to geo-spatial data.
- Have STAC approve recommend the following EQIP State wildlife funding pools and focus areas to the State Conservationist: 1) Aquatic Habitat; 2) Terrestrial Habitat

- STAC Wildlife Subcommittee Update -

Mike Kuttel, Jr. – WDFW Farm Bill Coordinator (Co-chair of Subcommittee)

The Wildlife Subcommittee met virtually in late September 2020 to discuss the FY2021 EQIP State Wildlife Funding Pool and screening and ranking questions for the Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART). The group had two weeks following the meeting to prioritize the following focus areas within the funding pool that were approved following the June 2020 STAC meeting.

- i. Salmon & Steelhead
 - ii. Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) - State and Federal
 - iii. Olympia Oyster
 - iv. Pollinators (emphasis on Monarchs)
 - v. Wildlife Corridors
- Feedback from the Subcommittee prioritized non-salmon threatened and endangered species (T&E), Wildlife Corridors, and Pollinators. There was support for creating funding pools for Aquatic Habitat and Terrestrial Habitat. This aligns well with the new NRCS habitat resource concerns (Aquatic Habitat for Fish and Other Organisms & Terrestrial Habitat for Wildlife and Invertebrates). By splitting into two Statewide fund pools we can continue to target high priority salmon restoration and position ourselves to request additional funding from National Headquarters for larger river restoration projects that will range from \$500,000 – \$1.5 million while ensuring funding is available to conserve terrestrial species.

Request: For FY2021, the Subcommittee requests the STAC recommend the following EQIP State Wildlife Funding Pools and focus areas to the State Conservationist:

1. Aquatic Habitat
 - a. Salmon & Steelhead
 - b. Olympia Oyster
2. Terrestrial Habitat
 - a. Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) - State and Federal
 - b. Pollinators (emphasis on Monarchs)
 - c. Wildlife Corridors

STAC Soil Health committee Formation – Joe Williams

- Looking for diverse group of partners interested in promoting and expanding soil health adoption opportunities. Joe would like to Stand up the STAC Soil Health Subcommittee soon. Contact Joe at j.joe.williams@usda.gov or 360-704-7782 if interested.
- Looking at getting subcommittee formed quickly and implementing for FY 22. Contact Joe or Bonda if interested. Some will be needed by January. Time is of the essence. Group in place now and working on issues to get implanted for FY22.
- What type of committee make up? Ag and soil health can affect. Broad based 10 people would like to begin to meet within the next month.
- ACTION NEEDED - Report action items to Nick by next Wednesday.

STAC Soil Health Sub-Committee

- Assess and recommend new, emerging NRCS practices for cost-share.
- Ensure programs reflect the correct needs of soil health practices.
- Leverage the partnerships that already exist within the STAC and bring in additional groups that might be missing.
- Use financial assistance programs to encourage adoption of new technologies and assessments that are important for identifying resource concerns.
- Provide timely updates to the STAC on soil health issues.
- Expand outreach and education of soil health principles and practices in WA state.



Roylene – Closing remarks:

Adjourn

The next STAC meetings is scheduled for January 21, 2021.

The remaining STAC meetings for the remainder of FY21 are as follows:

March 25, 2021

July 29, 2021

Nov 4, 2021

Power point presentations:

- *“By the Numbers 2020”* – Roylene Comes at Night
- *“Natural Disaster Relief”* – Bonda Habets
- *“Emergency watershed protection program (EWPP)”* – Bonda Habets
- *“Program update Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP/Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)”* – Alan Fulk

Deadlines/Action items:

CSP Payments need to be processed by	November 6
EQIP Rules plan to be released	October 26
Submit application and eligibility requirements for EQIP wildfire fund pool by	November 20
CSP renewal contracts have to be obligated by	December 31
STAC committee submit payment schedule justification of cost share rate to Nick (yes or no) - Bonda will send list of practices to Nick to distribute to STAC	ASAP