NRCS is analyzing all comments received, both verbal and written and hopes to publish all comments, responses to comments, along with a set of recommendations, in the Federal Register sometime in May.

Oral Comments From Oregon

- “A strong, locally led strategic and focused approach is the only way we will succeed at addressing these complex resource problems.” – Ron Alvarado, NRCS Acting Associate Chief, Oregon State Conservationist - https://youtu.be/HbzwjO5Ljmg?t=7271
- Dan Keppen – Family Farm Alliance - https://youtu.be/HbzwjO5Ljmg?t=3474

NRCS Assistance for Western Water Issues

- **Federal Coordination**
  - National Drought Resiliency Partnership
    - National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) and Soil Moisture
- **Locally Led Conservation**
  - Field Offices
  - Local Working Groups
  - State Technical Advisory Committees
- **Data Collection/Assessments**
  - National Coordinated Soil Moisture Monitoring Network
  - Snow Climate Analysis Network and Snow Survey (SNOTEL)
- **NRCS National WaterSMART Initiative**
  - NRCS and Reclamation have coordinated EQIP and WaterSMART Investments since 2011 to conserve water and build drought resilience
  - $10-$15 million in EQIP financial assistance obligated annually since 2016
  - For FY21 there are 31 new priority areas approved to initially offer $13 million in EQIP financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and entities.
    - Not happening in Oregon(?)...yet
- **EQIP Alternative Funding Arrangement Authority for Tribes**
- **EQIP Assistance for Water Management Entities**
  - Water Management Entities is a new 2019 Farm Bill provision
  - FY20 was the 1st year EQIP applications were accepted from them
  - None in Oregon(?)...yet
- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program**
- **PL 566 Funding**
  - Three Sisters Irrigation District highlighted – effective use of the whole “toolbox”
- **Conservation Effects Assessment Project**
  - Addressing assessment needs for western water resource concerns – water quantity and quality relationships and conservation practice effects
“That visionary approach [Mark Thalacker] has employed with [his irrigation district] is a win-win. Not only for farmers but helping address a variety of resource issues and concerns. [The picture] we’re trying to help paint here is we’re trying to go from individual landowner technical assistance that may be $200,000 per contract to broader projects with water management entities that may be up to $900,000 contracts to regional conservation partnership agreements that could be between $1 and $10 million dollars, and now PL 566 that basically can go up to $25 million.” – Jimmy Bramblett, NRCS Deputy Chief for Programs - https://youtu.be/HbzwJ05ljqm?t=10481

Locally Led Conservation