



What does the future hold for your farm?

Join us for a free Family Farm Succession Workshop!

Speakers

Tamara Cushing, PhD. OSU Extension Specialist — Ties to the Land. Will go over the communication and emotional aspects of transitioning your farm.

Jay McRostie, Attorney. Specializes in business, estate planning, and real estate law. Will discuss the legal, financial, and business aspects of succession planning.

Mel Omeg, Former owner-operator of Omeg Orchards. Mel will provide a personal account of his experience transitioning his farm to his children.

Jay Udelhoven, EMSWCD Executive Director. Will talk about conservation district programs and services available to protect farms.

Learn about the options available to you as you prepare to transition your working lands to future generations. Speakers will discuss the **legal, financial, and business aspects** of farm succession, and present real world examples of how to address these important issues while balancing the complexities of family dynamics.

Where: Holiday Inn Express
477 NW Phoenix Dr.
Troutdale, OR 97060

When: Monday
March 14th, 2016
6:00 - 9:00pm



For more information and to **register:**

emswcd.org/farm-succession

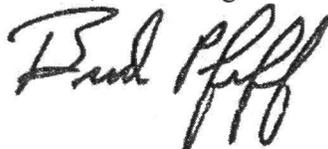
Or call Rick McMonagle, EMSWCD:

503.935.5374

For: State Offices

Renewing and Revising State Conservation Priority Areas (CPA's) and Zones

Approved by: Acting Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



1 Overview

A Background

National and State CPA's provide basic land eligibility for CRP. In addition, eligible offers for land located in approved water, wildlife, and air quality zones are awarded points within the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). In previous CRP general signups, CPA's were limited to not more than 33 percent of the remaining available cropland in the State.

CRP regulations provide that State CPA's are limited to not more than 25 percent of the available remaining State cropland.

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides procedure for renewing and revising State CPA's and guidance that State Offices **must** revise their State CPA's and associated zones according to all the provisions in this notice
- informs State Offices that the deadline for renewing and revising State CPA's and associated zones and reporting to CEPD is **October 23, 2015**.

2 State CPA's

A Developing State CPA's

STC's shall consult with State Conservationists and State Technical Committees to develop State CPA's. States may want to consult the County Cropland Limit Report to identify Counties that are near the 25% limit of County cropland. The report may be found at <https://sharepoint.fsa.usda.net/states/cepd/crp/default.aspx>. State CPA's will be reported to DAFP, through PECD. STC's must certify to DAFP that State Technical Committees concur with CPA and zone establishment.

Disposal Date	Distribution
January 1, 2016 10-2-15	State Offices; State Offices relay to NRCS State Offices

2 State CPA's (Continued)

B Establishing State CPA's

The State CPA's **must** be based on only 1 of the following geographic aggregations:

- entire county
- entire 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)
- entire 10-digit HUC
- entire 12-digit HUC
- combination of county and 8-digit HUC
- combination of county and 10-digit HUC
- combination of county and 12-digit HUC.

Exception: States with Wind Erosion Soils List (WESL) soils may request a waiver to this policy through PECD. States that have previously received a waiver **must** renew their waiver request.

Example 1: A State seeks to establish a State CPA for water quality on the eastern side of the State using 10-digit HUC boundaries. That same State wants to use 12-digit HUC boundaries on the western side of the State. This is **not** permissible. The State CPA **must** be based on only 1 of the geographic aggregations included in the list.

Example 2: A State seeks to establish a State CPA for water quality using major land resource areas. This is **not** permissible. The State CPA must be based 1 of the geographic aggregations included in the list.

Example 3: A State seeks to establish a State CPA for water quality using non-NRCS certified 14-digit HUC. This is **not** permissible. Only 8-, 10-, or 12-digit HUC's are permissible. The State CPA **must** be based on 1 of the geographic aggregations included in the list.

State CPA's **must** be identified by primary purpose of CPA (wildlife, water quality, or air quality).

Example: State establishes CPA in a portion of Haynes County. The primary purpose is water quality.

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2 State CPA's (Continued)

C Size Limitations for State CPA's

State CPA's are limited to no more than 25 percent of the available remaining State cropland.

Note: To determine available cropland, State Offices **must** subtract any applicable National CPA acreage.

Example: North Dakota has 25 million acres of cropland as of October 1, 2015. A total of 10 million acres of cropland is within counties that are part of the Prairie Pothole National CPA. Therefore, North Dakota has 15 million acres of cropland available to be included in the State CPA. However, no more than 25 percent (3.75 million acres) may be included in the North Dakota State CPA.

STC's **must** certify to DAFP, through PECD, according to subparagraph 7 B, that not more than 25 percent of the available cropland in the State has been designated as State CPA.

D State CPA's and CREP Project Areas

An approved CREP project area is **not** a State CPA unless the approved CREP agreement specifically identifies the CREP project area as a State CPA.

Any cropland acreage within an approved CREP project area that is **not** within a State or National CPA that is offered for enrollment as a general signup practice, as provided in the CREP agreement, **must** meet either of the following to be eligible:

- have a weighted average erodibility index (EI) for the 3 predominate soils of 8 or greater
- be enrolled in CRP scheduled to expire on September 30 of the fiscal year the acreage is offered, unless the CREP Agreement does **not** allow enrollment of such acreage.

Exception: Land within CREP that is specifically for facilitating a net savings in groundwater or surface water, that is offered as a general signup practice as provided in the CREP Agreement, does **not** have to have a weighted average EI of 8 or greater or be expiring CRP acreage to be eligible.

CREP project areas that are State CPA's, as specified in the CREP Agreement, **must** meet the 25 percent cropland limitation. Contact Virgil Ireland, the CREP program manager, at virgil.ireland@wdc.usda.gov if the CREP project area is a State CPA and it exceeds the 25 percent cropland limitation.

3 **Zones**

A Zone Establishment and Size Within State CPA's

States may establish water, wildlife, and air quality zones within the State CPA's. Eligible acreage offered within the applicable zone will be awarded EBI points. In the case of wildlife zones, points will be awarded if at least 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the zone **and** the weighted average N1a score is greater than or equal to 40 points.

States may submit 1 or more zones. Zones with different purposes may overlap. The water and wildlife zones may include up to 100 percent of the State CPA. The air quality zones may include 100 percent of the State CPA, consistent with the criteria used to establish the air quality zones.

STC's shall consult with State conservationists and State technical committees to develop zones.

B Zone Establishment and Size Within National CPA's

States may establish water, wildlife, and air quality zones within the National CPA's. Eligible acreage offered within the applicable zone will be awarded EBI points. In the case of wildlife zones, points will be awarded if at least 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the zone **and** the weighted average N1a score is greater than or equal to 40 points.

States may submit 1 or more zones. Zones with different purposes may overlap. The water, wildlife, and air quality zones may include up to 100 percent of the National CPA.

C Zone Boundaries

Zone boundaries within State CPA's **must** be based on the same geographic aggregation used to establish the State CPA's according to subparagraph 2 B.

Example: The State CPA's for Iowa are based on the combination of county and 12-digit HUC boundaries. The zones for Iowa **must** also be based on the combination of county and 12-digit boundaries.

Zone boundaries with National CPA's **must** be based on counties.

Example: Certain counties in North Dakota are in the Prairie Pothole National CPA. The State Office may designate up to 100 percent of the counties as a water, wildlife, or air quality zones.

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4 Wildlife Zones

A Establishing Wildlife Zones

Wildlife zones shall be established in locations where proposed land may contribute to restoration of habitat of threatened or endangered species or contribute to the restoration of important and declining species of national, regional, State, or local significance. Restoration of rare and declining native habitat, such as Long Leaf Pine, and Tall Grass Prairie, may also be addressed.

STC's shall consult State technical committees, State fish and game biologists, USFWS officials, NRCS State biologists, State foresters, and other wildlife interests, to determine areas within the State that will be designated as wildlife zones.

B Wildlife Points in EBI

Acreage offered for CRP located in wildlife zones will be awarded applicable points in wildlife subfactor (N1C) **only** if 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the area and the weighted average N1a score is greater than or equal to 40 points.

At least 51 percent of the offered acreage **must** be within the wildlife zone to be awarded points. If less than 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the wildlife zone, zero EBI points shall be awarded.

5 Water Quality Zones

A Establishing Water Quality Zones

Water quality zones shall be established in locations where proposed land may contribute to groundwater or surface water quality impairment. STC shall:

- consult with EPA, The State water quality agency, and State technical committee in developing recommendations
- ensure that areas submitted will assist in compliance of State water quality laws
- prioritize and approve **only** the highest priority water resources of the State.

Note: Areas may include ground water or source water protection areas.

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5 Water Quality Zones (Continued)

A Establishing Water Quality Zones (Continued)

STC, in consultation with the State technical committee, may use the following as tools in developing high priority water resource designations:

- areas where CRP enrollment would assist in the compliance of total maximum daily load standards
- State-identified wellhead and groundwater recharge areas
- areas with Coastal Zone Management Act Reauthorization Amendment coastal nonpoint pollution control programs
- State 303(d) and 305(b) reports.

B Water Quality Points in EBI

Acreage offered for CRP located in water quality zones will be awarded applicable points in water quality subfactor (N2a).

At least 51 percent of the offered acreage must be within the water quality zone to be awarded points. If less than 51 percent of the offered acreage is within the water quality zone, zero EBI points shall be awarded.

6 Air Quality Zones

A Establishing Air Quality Zones

STC, in consultation with the State technical committee, EPA, and State air quality representatives, shall recommend designated agricultural zones that contribute to the nonattainment of air quality standards.

STC, in consultation with the State technical committee, may also recommend zones within 50 miles of a Class 1 air designated area in which agricultural crop production could impact air quality standards.

Note: The State Office shall consult with the State air quality official for the most recent Class 1 designations.

Acreage in air quality zones will be awarded applicable points in the air quality subfactor (N5c) if **both** of the following conditions are met:

- at least 51 percent of the offer must be in the designated areas
- the weighted wind erodibility index must be equal to or greater than 3.0.

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7 Process for Creating and Submitting State CPA and Zone Shapefiles

A Creating State CPA and Zone Shapefiles

The State conservation specialists working with the State GIS specialists shall create a GIS shapefile for CPA that defines the project area boundary as a polygon or set of polygons. A GIS shapefile contains the following component files, “.dbf”, “.prj”, “.sbn”, “.sbx”, “.shp”, “.shp.xml”, and “.shx”.

Name the shapefile, “cpa_a_[code]_[prj].shp” where “code” is the State abbreviation, and “prj” is the type of projection. Submit all shapefiles in GCS projection. The following illustrates the naming convention for a potential Maryland CPA.

- cpa_a_md_gcs.dbf
- cpa_a_md_gcs.prj
- cpa_a_md_gcs.sbn
- cpa_a_md_gcs.sbx
- cpa_a_md_gcs.shp
- cpa_a_md_gcs.shp.xml
- cpa_a_md_gcs.shx

For zone shapefiles, the following attributes should be included within the polygon shapefile provided.

Name	Type	Length	Data Example
FID	Object Id	Default	
Shape	Polygon	Default	
Type	Text	25	CPA
Name	Text	255	Maryland State CPA
Code	Text	10	MD

B Certifying 25 Percent Cropland Limitation

According to:

- subparagraph 2 C, State CPA’s shall include no more than 25 percent of available remaining cropland in the State
- subparagraph 3 B, water, wildlife, and air quality zones may include up to 100 percent of State CPA’s.

Each State Office is **required** to conduct analysis necessary to ensure that provisions in subparagraphs 2 C and 3 B are followed. Certification shall be sent to David Taylor by e-mail to david.taylor@wdc.usda.gov.

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7 Process for Creating and Submitting State CPA and Zone Shapefiles (Continued)

C Submitting State CPA's and Zones

The State conservation specialist shall:

- zip the files and send them to David Taylor by e-mail to **david.taylor@wdc.usda.gov** by close of business **October 23, 2015**
- use the following checklist for revising and submitting State CPA and zones.

Step	Action	Reference	Completed
1	Chose polygons to be included in the State CPA.	Subparagraphs 2 B and 7 C.	
2	Chose polygons within State CPA to be included in water, wildlife, and air quality zones.	Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6.	
3	Chose polygons within National CPA to be included in water, wildlife, and air quality zones.	Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6.	

8 Action

A National Office Action

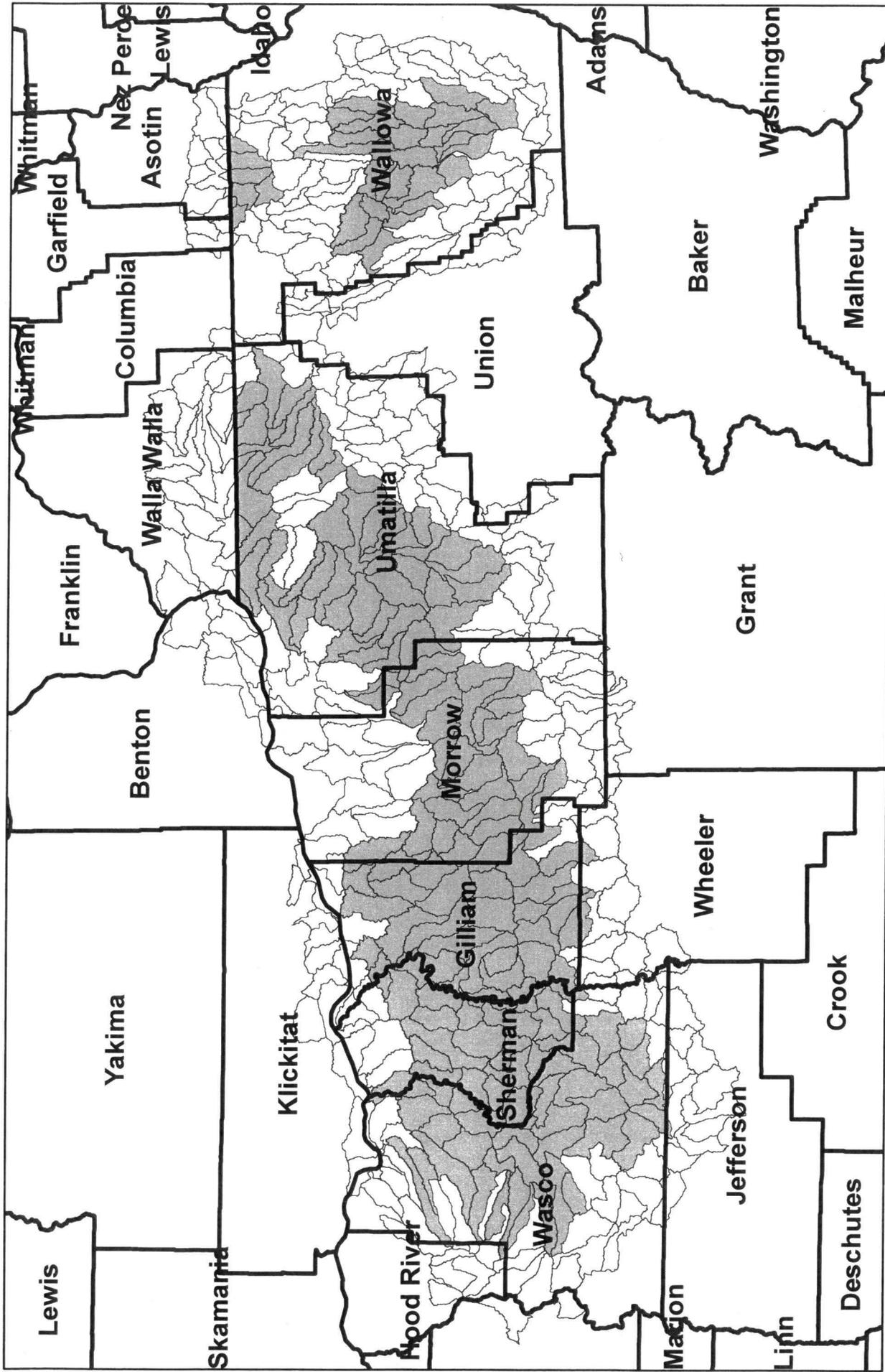
The National Office shall:

- process the submitted shapefiles and create corresponding Tool for Environmental Resource Results Assessment (TERRA) shapefiles
- notify State Offices individually when the shapefiles have been completed and the new CPA's are effective.

B State Office Action

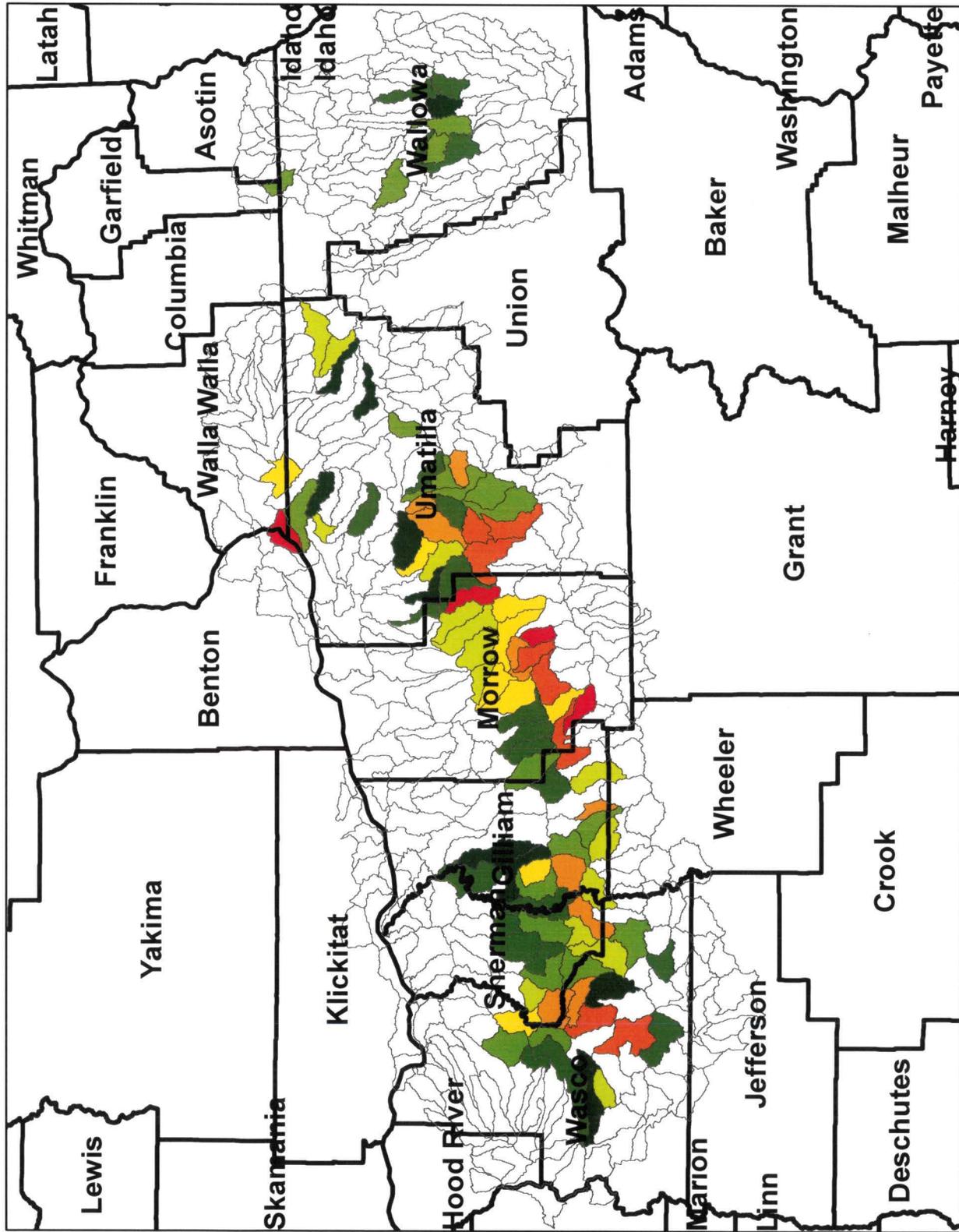
State Offices shall:

- follow the provisions of this notice
- certify that the new CPA and zone maps within TERRA are correct by e-mailing a response to David Taylor by e-mail to **david.taylor@wdc.usda.gov** by **November 30, 2015** .



Conservation Priority Area Total FY2015





**Resulting Conservation Priority Area
Reduced by Simple CRP/Cropland Percentage**



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

CONSERVATION

FACT SHEET

December 2015

Conservation Reserve Program, 49th General Enrollment Period Dec. 1, 2015, through Feb. 26, 2016

OVERVIEW

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general enrollment period from Dec. 1, 2015, through Feb. 26, 2016.

CRP is a federally-funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. Accepted contracts for the 49th CRP enrollment period will begin Oct. 1, 2016.

In its 30th year, CRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 and was reauthorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill). FSA administers CRP, while other USDA agencies and partners provide technical support. More detailed information on CRP is available in the FSA fact sheet, "**Conservation Reserve Program.**"

SUBMITTING CRP OFFERS

Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during the 49th CRP general enrollment period. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on Sept. 30, 2016, may submit offers.

To submit CRP offers, producers must visit their local FSA office. FSA will accept offers only during the enrollment period. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

To be eligible for CRP enrollment, a producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the end of this CRP enrollment period, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law or;
- The circumstance of the acquisition presents adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

ELIGIBLE LAND

To be eligible for the CRP general enrollment period, land must be cropland (including field margins) that is planted, or considered planted, to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2008 to 2013, and be physically and legally capable of being planted (no planting restrictions due to an easement or other legally binding instrument) in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity. Alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes grown in a rotation not to exceed 12 years may be eligible for the 49th CRP enrollment period.

ADDITIONAL CROPLAND REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the eligible land requirements for the CRP general enrollment period, cropland must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher;
- Be expiring CRP acres or;
- Be located in a national or state CRP conservation priority area.

CRP PAYMENTS

FSA provides those applicants who are selected for the 49th CRP general enrollment with annual rental payments, including certain incentive payments and cost-share assistance.

- **Rental Payments**

In return for establishing long-term, resource-conserving covers, FSA provides rental payments to participants. FSA bases rental rates on the relative productivity of the soils within each county and the average dryland cash rent. County office staff working with the producer will calculate the maximum CRP rental rate for each offer prior to enrollment. Producers may offer land below the rate to increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

- **Cost-Share Assistance**

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved cover on eligible cropland. The cost-share assistance cannot exceed 50 percent of the participant's costs to establish approved practices.

RANKING CRP OFFERS

FSA will rank offers for the 49th CRP general enrollment period according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). FSA collects data (primarily based on location, soils information and selected conservation practice) and determines the environmental indices for the land offered.

FSA ranks each eligible offer in comparison to all other offers and selects from that ranking. After the enrollment period ends, the Secretary of Agriculture will decide where to make the EBI cutoff. Those who have met previous EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this enrollment period. Producers may consult with local FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) staff on how to maximize EBI points and increase the likelihood that their offer will be accepted.

More information on EBI for the 49th CRP enrollment period is available by reading the FSA

fact sheet, "**Conservation Reserve Program Enrollment 49, Environmental Benefits Index.**"

CRP CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

In addition to the 49th CRP general enrollment period, producers at any time can participate in CRP continuous enrollment period, in which producers can enroll the most environmentally sensitive land. More information on CRP continuous enrollment is available in the FSA fact sheet, "Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Sign-Up" located at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2015/crp_continuous_sign_up_november_2015.pdf.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is for informational purposes; other restrictions may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details. For more information on CRP, visit FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or contact your local FSA office. To find the nearest FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).

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Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Grasslands

OVERVIEW

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands is part of the CRP program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 14 and 15 years.

CRP Grasslands helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

CRP Grasslands is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the program on behalf of the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

BENEFITS

Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations and improves environmental quality.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under federal or state law), conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences.

RANKING LAND OFFERED FOR CRP GRASSLANDS

Interested participants may file applications with FSA at any time. These applications will be batched and reviewed several times a year to determine which applications can be approved.

Applications for CRP Grassland will be ranked after each batching period using Grassland Ranking Factors. FSA collects data for each of the ranking factors based on the relative benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from that ranking.

FSA uses the following ranking factors, including:

- Existence of expiring CRP or Grassland Reserve Program land;
- Existing grassland;
- Multi-species cover existence and predominance of native species;
- Livestock grazing operation;
- State Focus Area (land-based) determined in consultation with State Technical Committee;
- Whether the applicant is an eligible beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher and;
- Other factors as determined by the Deputy Administrator.

ELIGIBLE PRODUCERS

A producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to close of the CRP enrollment period, unless:

- The new owner acquired the land due to the previous owner's death;
- The ownership change occurred due to foreclosure where the owner exercised a timely right of redemption in accordance with state law or;

- The circumstances of the acquisition present adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of placing it in CRP.

ELIGIBLE LAND

Land currently must be planted to a grass cover.

RENTAL PAYMENTS

In return for following an approved CRP conservation plan, FSA provides annual rental payments to participants in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value of the land covered by the agreement as determined by FSA for the life of the agreement.

COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE

FSA provides cost-share assistance to participants who establish approved practices on eligible land in an amount that is not more than 50 percent of the participants' costs in establishing approved practices.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only; other restrictions may apply. To find more information about CRP-Grasslands, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp. For more details on FSA conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation or contact your local FSA office. To locate the nearest FSA office or USDA Service Center visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

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If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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Conservation Reserve Program

Signup 200 CRP Grasslands: Signup period September 1, 2015 – November 20, 2015.

Total Oregon Offers/Acres by County ranked in COLS (numbers static from December)—**no determination on CRP Grasslands offer ranking per WDC (current as of March 3, 2016):**

State	County	Ranking In Process Grassland Offers	Total Acres
Oregon	Baker	25	23403.09
Oregon	Benton	1	269.72
Oregon	Gilliam	1	596.32
Oregon	Grant	8	6910.33
Oregon	Harney	20	11715.01
Oregon	Marion	1	19.16
Oregon	Morrow	3	7728.17
Oregon	Sherman	4	3224.81
Oregon	Union	12	1639.89
Oregon	Wallowa	3	905.93
Oregon	Wheeler	2	4698.59
Oregon	Yamhill	4	93.66
Total		84	61,204.68

As of March 8th, 2016, General Signup 49 Offers by status in COLS (submitted, complete, incomplete):

ST_NM	CNTY_NM	Incomplete SU49 Offers	Total Acres
Oregon	Gilliam	8	2417.05
Oregon	Morrow	2	217.09
Oregon	Umatilla	55	19883.38
Oregon	Wallowa	3	411.95
Oregon	Wasco	2	831.26
Total		70	23760.73

ST_NM	CNTY_NM	Complete SU49 Offers	Total Acres
Oregon	Morrow	10	3738.25
Oregon	Sherman	20	1940.77
Oregon	Umatilla	112	36721.60
Oregon	Wallowa	13	2745.56
Oregon	Wasco	58	15163.78
Total		213	60309.96
ST_NM	CNTY_NM	Submitted SU49 Offers	Total Acres
Oregon	Gilliam	23	6691.57
Oregon	Morrow	42	13089.64
Oregon	Sherman	49	4062.93
Oregon	Umatilla	276	64337.86
Oregon	Union	14	1655.98
Oregon	Wallowa	16	3052.49
Oregon	Wasco	89	18011.45
Total		509	110901.90

FSA Emergency Conservation Program Summary, October 2015-March 2016

PHONE

503-692-3688 x 245

EMAIL

Kelly.Worley@or.usda.gov

NAME

Kelly Worley

POSITION

Program Specialist

Date Requested	County	DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST	Practice Requested	Total \$ Requested/Approved (estimate)
October, 2015	Harney	Harney County held an ECP Signup from June-September, 2015	EC6-Drought Emergency Measures	\$985,331--Approved December, 2015
November, 2015	Morrow	Morrow County held an ECP Signup from September-October 2015	EC6-Drought Emergency Measures	\$810,000--Approved December, 2015
November, 2015	Lake	Lake COC requested a practice completion extension for one producer due to limited # of well drillers and contractors	EC6-Drought Emergency Measures (for well drilling)	Extension request was approved by the national office February, 2016 (extension to July, 2016)
February, 2016	Wasco/Hood River	Wasco/Hood River COC requested practice completion extensions for two producers	EC3-Restoring Permanent Fences	One extension request was approved by the national office February, 2016 (extension to September, 2016)--other extension approval pending February, 2016
February, 2016	Baker-Grant	Baker-Grant COC requested ECP Funding for Baker County	EC3-Restoring Permanent Fences	\$3,760,916 was requested, approval from national office pending February, 2016

FSA Emergency Forest Restoration Program Summary, October 2015-March 2016

PHONE
EMAIL

503-692-3688 x 245
Kelly.Worley@or.usda.gov

NAME
POSITION

Kelly Worley
FSA Program Specialist

DATE (requested)	County	DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST	Practice Requested	Total \$ Requested/Approved (estimate)
October, 2015	Baker-Grant	Due to major forest fires that burned ~263,000 acres, the Baker-Grant COC requested an EFRP Signup to assist participants in restoring private non-industrial timber ground	EF7, Upland Mixed Forest Restoration	\$3,835,992--Approved February, 2016 (\$2,447,975 to Baker, \$1,388,017 to Grant)
October, 2015	Malheur	Due to either the Soda, El Dorado, or Bendire Complex fires that burned ~20,000 acres, the Malheur COC requested an EFRP Signup to assist participants in restoring private non-industrial timber ground	EF7, Upland Mixed Forest Restoration	\$ To be determined after Signup (CED estimates 10+ participants
November, 2015	Lake County	Barry Point Wildfire-- Lake COC requested extension for four producers to extend EFRP applications due to lack of resources (unavailability of seedlings, deer damage to plantings, etc.)	EF6, Upland Softwood Forest Restoration	No \$ specified from CED --Approved February, 2016
November, 2015	Linn-Benton-Lincoln	A severe winter storm occurred in Linn-Benton-Lincoln Counties in November, 2014. The COC requested assistance to restore timber land for 6 participants on 91 acres	Remove debris; replant timber; road development (EF9)	\$127,419 --Approved (\$48,739 to Linn, \$21,602 to Benton, \$45,247 to Lincoln and \$11,831 to ODF for TA)
March, 2016	Wallowa	The Grizzly Complex fires affected approximately 6-10 potential applicants on 650 acres (fire occurred August, 2015)	EF7, Upland Mixed Forest Restoration	\$400,000 Requested--sent to WDC 3/9/2016 for approval



Overview

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers competitive grants to further innovative approaches to agricultural production and environmental enhancement through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.

CIG funds may be awarded to individual agricultural producers, local and state governments, federally-recognized tribes, and non-governmental organizations.

CIG projects are designed with technology transfer in mind. The overall goal is to incorporate new innovations into NRCS technical manuals and make them available to the agricultural community.

CIG

Conservation Innovation Grants in Oregon



The Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program offers competitive funding to help further innovative approaches for agricultural production and the environment.

Benefits of CIG

The CIG program enables NRCS to work with public and private entities and individuals to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches to address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG funds benefit agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.

NRCS Oregon has invested in a variety of CIG projects, such as rain harvest catching systems that collect and re-use rain water to supplement irrigation demands. Other Oregon CIG projects include developing pest management techniques to limit pesticide use on cropland, and using conservation planning inventory tools to provide potential eco-market incentives for producers.



Helping People Help the Land

Eligibility

NRCS accepts CIG applications from state or local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

To be considered for CIG funding, conservation approaches or technologies must be sufficiently studied to indicate a likelihood of success for technology transfer. CIG supports innovative, on-the-ground conservation projects, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. CIG does not fund research projects. Projects need to have a statistically valid design and application in an agricultural setting. Proposed projects should address one of the innovative conservation topics published in the announcement for program funding notice. Technologies and approaches commonly used in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are not eligible for funding through CIG.

At least 50 percent of the project cost must come from non-federal matching funds (either cash and/or in-kind contributions) provided by the grantee. Proposed projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers, which are farmers, ranchers or non-industrial private forest owners that meet EQIP eligibility requirements. CIG funds provided directly or indirectly to a producer are counted toward the producer's EQIP payment limitation.

National vs. State CIG

There are two sources of funding for CIG—National and State.

National CIG: Under the National CIG program, the NRCS national office in Washington, D.C. will announce a funding notice each year. National CIG funds are only for projects requesting more than \$75,000 in federal funding. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-state, or nationwide in scope. Projects cannot exceed three years.

National CIG applicants must address one of the natural resource categories identified in the funding announcement. NRCS will evaluate applications through a technical peer review panel and make sure they address the criteria identified in the funding notice. Then the NRCS Grants Review Board will make recommendations to the Chief of NRCS for final selections. Awards are made through a grant agreement with the NRCS national office.

State CIG: Each NRCS State Conservationist has the discretion to offer CIG in their respective states. In Oregon, the State Conservationist will offer a state CIG for fiscal year 2016. State CIG funds are only for projects requesting \$75,000 or less of federal funds. Projects may be farm-based, multi-county, small watershed, or Statewide in scope. Projects cannot exceed three years.

State CIG applicants must address one of the natural resource concern topics identified in the state funding announcement. In Oregon, applications are evaluated on a three-tier approach based on local application, technical transferability, and integration with Oregon's Strategic Approach to Conservation. Awards are made through a grant agreement with NRCS Oregon office.



Contact

Todd Peplin
Oregon CIG Coordinator
Phone: 503-414-3292
Todd.Peplin@or.usda.gov

Where to find CIG Funding Notices

CIG Announcements for Program Funding (AFP) can be found on the federal eGrants portal at: www.grants.gov.

Remember, there are two notices, one for National CIG and one for State CIG. Each notice will specify the information required to complete an application for CIG.

Equal Opportunity

The CIG program encourages participation from historically-underserved producers, beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers, and tribes. NRCS provides special consideration for these producers and strives to ensure they benefit from innovative technologies and approaches.

How to Apply

Visit your local USDA Service Center to apply or visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted

More Information

Visit the CIG program website to learn more.

www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig

www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Updated January 2016 by NRCS Oregon



January 2016

CIG

Conservation Innovation Grants

Frequently Asked Questions



These FAQs are intended to help potential CIG applicants determine eligibility and learn more about the program.

For specific information about your proposed project or your application, please contact us. We are happy to help you.

CONTACT:

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WEBSITES:

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www.grants.gov

1. What is a Conservation Innovation Grant?

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) are a source of federal funding provided to individuals, state and local governments, tribes, and non-governmental organizations to help stimulate the development and adoption of innovation conservation approaches and technologies. The CIG program is authorized by the Farm Bill and is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

CIG funds leverage federal investments in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural and forestry production. There are two funding sources for CIG—national level CIG and state level CIG. The overall goal of CIG projects is to incorporate new and innovative technologies and approaches into NRCS policy, technical manuals, guides or references materials, and to transfer those new approaches to the wider agricultural community. CIG projects may be farm-based, multi-county, small watershed, or statewide in scope.

2. Who administers the CIG Program?

There are two funding sources for CIG—national level and state level. The national CIG program is administered by the NRCS national office based in Washington, D.C. The state CIG program is administered at the discretion of each state conservationist. In Oregon, the CIG program is administered out of the state office headquartered in Portland. NRCS Oregon has invested in CIG at the state level since 2009 and will continue to invest in this valuable program in fiscal year 2016.

3. What is the period of performance for a CIG project?

For both the national and state level CIG program, projects can last up to 3 years. Projects must start in the fiscal year they are awarded.

4. Who can apply for CIG?

State or local units of government, federally-recognized Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations (i.e. corporations), and individuals are all eligible to apply for CIG funds. Federal agencies cannot apply for CIG.

5. Can an agricultural producer apply for CIG?

Yes, the producer does not necessarily have to own the land but he or she must have control of the land for the term of the grant. The producer must also meet the eligibility criteria for the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and is subject to the 2014 Farm Bill EQIP payment limitation of \$450,000.

6. Can multiple non-federal agencies join together to submit a CIG application?

Multiple non-federal agencies or non-governmental organizations can work together as collaborators in one project proposal. However, only one agency or organization can be the applicant.

7. Can an applicant submit several CIG applications?

Yes. An applicant can submit several applications however, each project must be a separate application.

8. If I have a current CIG grant can I apply for another CIG?

Yes; however, there must not be overlap or duplication of any previous or current CIG project. When submitting another CIG proposal, the applicant is required to identify any previously awarded CIG projects related to this proposal and any of their principal investors. The applicant must detail the purpose, outcomes to date, and how this new proposal is

different to the previous CIG award.

9. Can an applicant apply for a national and state level CIG in the same year for the same project?

Yes. Applying under both the national and state programs increases the likelihood for funding, however; applicants selected under the National CIG will automatically be disqualified for the CIG state component.

10. How much funding could I receive through a CIG?

The grant amount depends on which type of CIG you plan to apply for—national or state. For the state CIG, the State Conservationist may dedicate up to 5 percent of the state's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) allocation to set aside for CIG. NRCS reserves the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. In Oregon, NRCS has made up to \$250,000 available for fiscal year 2016 for CIGs. Applicants may request funds up to 50 percent of the total project cost, not to exceed \$75,000 at the state level. For the national CIG, applicants may request more than \$75,000.

11. What is the applicants required match for CIG?

Applicants must provide a 1:1 match, which can be either cash or in-kind services, or a combination of both. Cash or in-kind match must come from non-federal sources.

12. Must the matching funds be secured before submitting a CIG application or can it be pending?

Applicants must include in their CIG application written support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from non-federal third party sources securing match contributions.

13. Would staff time committed to the project by a project partner be considered cash or in-kind match? What other types of activities or experiences can be considered in-kind match?

Generally, staff time is considered in-kind since that person will be a paid staff member of the organization whether the NRCS proposal is funded or not. In some situations it might be cash: for example, if the staff incurs additional hours specifically for the project or if a person is hired specifically for the purpose of meeting a project requirement, then those hours could be counted as cash, unless their salary is to be paid by the grant. There may be some donated equipment, information, or assistance where cash is not transferred that would be considered in-kind.

14. Can funds from an existing EQIP contract be used as cash match?

No. Cash match must come from non-federal sources.

15. Can indirect costs be counted towards the applicants cash match?

Yes. The indirect costs (IDC) can be counted toward the applicants cash match. The amount of IDC will depend on whether the rate is applied to the entire funded amount or a specific budget category that is supported by the budget narrative. An indirect cost rate not to exceed 10 percent may be approved for applicants without a preexisting, federally-approved indirect cost rate. To be considered for an indirect cost rate not to exceed 10 percent, applicants must submit an indirect cost rate proposal with the application. Note: It is at the agency's (NRCS) discretion whether to allow indirect cost.

16. Our entity has a federally-negotiated IDC for research and public service/extension, can we request our full indirect cost rate on the USDA CIG program?

Applicants wishing to claim indirect costs must have a federally-approved indirect cost rate. The approved indirect cost rate must be included in the application package. If entities have a federally negotiated rate, you may claim indirect costs. Once your indirect cost rate agreement is received, eligible charges to the grant are dependent on that approved rate.

17. Besides applicant eligibility, what other eligibility requirements are there for CIG?

In order to be considered for CIG, four (4) other eligibility requirements must be met, they are:

1) CIG projects must involve agricultural producers (farmers, ranchers, or non-industrial private forest/timber producers). Any CIG funds, direct or indirect, going to an agricultural producer must be EQIP eligible.

2) The applicant must address one of the State Resource Concern Categories outlined in the Announcement for Program Funding (APF). Each State Resource Concern Category has suggested subcategories which are not inclusive. Applicants may submit a proposal that is different than the suggested subcategory, however the topic must relate to one of the State Resource Concern Categories.

3) Proposals cannot be research projects. CIG does not fund research projects, with the exception of on-farm conservation research. On-farm conservation research is defined as an investigation conducted to answer a specified conservation-related question using a statistically valid design, while employing farm-scale equipment on farm fields.

4) The CIG project must be transferable to NRCS in the development of technical or related technology materials (technical standards, technical notes, guide sheets, handbooks, software, etc.) and adoption in the agricultural community.

18. What are EQIP eligible agricultural producers?

CIG is funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), therefore any CIG funds provided to an individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements in 7 C.F.R. 1466.6, which include the following (see table on next page)

Eligibility Criteria	Potential Verification Documentation
Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (7 C.F.R. Part 12)	Documentation of compliance status can be obtained by the producer at a local USDA Service Center or through the USDA customer service online portal.
Have an interest in the agricultural operation as defined in 7 C.F.R. Part 1400	Documentation of farm interest can be obtained by the producer at a local USDA Service Center or through the USDA customer service online portal, showing that the producer has farm records established.
Have control of the land for the term of the proposed grant period	Documentation can be provided in the form of a deed, lease, or other documents which show the producer has adequate control for the term of the proposed contract period.
The average adjusted gross income of the individual, joint operation, or legal entity may not exceed \$900,000, unless not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person, joint operation, or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income (7 C.F.R. Part 1400)	If using FY 2016 CIG funding, documentation of a producer's AGI eligibility status can be obtained by the producer at a local USDA Service Center, or through the USDA customer service online portal.

19. Do agricultural producers need an EQIP contract to participate in a CIG project?

No. Participating agricultural producers are not required to have an EQIP contract to participate in CIG.

20. Regarding the Average Adjusted Gross Income for EQIP eligibility, this requirement is regardless of their size as long as it is 66 % of their profits?

A person or legal entity shall not be eligible to receive any

benefit during a crop, fiscal, or program year, as appropriate, if the average adjusted gross of the person or legal entity exceeds \$900,000. This considers all income as adjusted gross income.

21. Is there a way for researchers to be involved in this grant program?

Even though CIG cannot fund research projects, researchers can offer or collaborate in projects that encompass the development, evaluation, implementation, and monitoring of conservation adoption approaches or incentive systems; or conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures,

or approaches; or environmental soundness with goals of environmental protection and natural resource enhancement.

22. While CIG does not fund research, it does encourage monitoring and data collection for the purposes of outreach and extension (transferability). Does that mean that it is still acceptable to publish the results of the data collected?

Yes. Publishing the results of the data collected is an example of transferability.

23. Can you explain a bit more on the transferability requirement?

NRCS Oregon expects usable results for the investments made to CIG. Therefore, products resulting from CIG projects must be useable for NRCS Oregon field staff, or be incorporated in technical manuals and guidance documents, or provide the next step in resource conservation that will be adopted by the agricultural community.

24. Can a proposed project under the CIG state component be multi-state in scope?

No. Although eligible applicants from all 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), and the District of Columbia

may apply for the CIG state component the CIG project must be implemented in Oregon.

25. How is the grant award distributed? Are funds dispersed up front (block grant) or are they reimbursed as services are rendered?

Funding is disbursed on a reimbursable basis. Oregon NRCS will negotiate with the grantee and schedule identified deliverables on a quarterly basis. At each quarter the grantee will submit completed deliverables along with a SF-270 Request for Reimbursement form.

26. Is there a minimum project size (county wide as oppose to statewide) that will be competitive under a state CIG?

Review and the selection of projects are size neutral. The applicant must clearly address the natural resource concern(s) identified in the announcement for program funding and outline clear deliverables and milestones for successful completion, and ensure the transferability of the innovation or method.

27. Can the proposed budget contain the purchase of equipment?

In general, CIG funds may be used to purchase equipment, providing the equipment is an integral part of the innovation or method that is being developed or tested. The table below identifies the applicable federal reference for specific allowable cost for each entity.

Type of Organization	Applicable Federal Cost Principle
Education Institution	2 CFR Part 220
Nonprofit Organization	2 CFR Part 230
State, Local, Indian Tribal Governments	2 CFR Part 225
Commercial Organizations	48 CFR Section 31.2

28. Is there any guidance on sub-contractors arrangements?

The grantee is responsible for all sub-awards and assuring the responsible parties follow the appropriate terms and conditions. All sub-awards are subject to the same federal requirements as the grantee. The grantee is responsible for assuring/monitoring that the sub-awards follow the requirements. The grantee will also be the one penalized if there are issues with sub-award actions. (7CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3016)

29. Can a USDA ARS or other federal collaborator be listed as co-sponsor for the project?

Federal employees can ONLY serve as technical advisors on CIG projects. They cannot receive funds from CIG for technical assistance, travel, gift etc., nor can federal funds or services be used for match.

30. What involvement might a local NRCS office have in providing guidance for a potential CIG applicant?

CIG is a competitive grants process. NRCS personnel may provide technical and general guidance to potential applicants regarding environmental effects, transferability of the project, program information, and instruction for completing the appropriate forms. NRCS must not engage in the review or the development of the grant application.

31. Where can I find CIG funding opportunities?

Funding notices announcing the availability of funds for both the national and state CIG are published annually on www.grants.gov and on the Oregon NRCS CIG website http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/orprograms/?cid=nrcs142p2_044081

32. For FY16, what is the funding opportunity number?

AG-0436-G-15-XXXX

33. Who should I contact for additional information?

For more information about CIG, please contact the Oregon CIG Program Manager:

Todd Peplin
 Phone: (503)-414-3292
 Email: todd.peplin@or.usda.gov

FISCAL YEAR 2015
**SIGNATURES
ON THE LAND**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oregon provides innovative conservation solutions to restore, enhance and protect Oregon's working agricultural lands and forests. Our voluntary Farm Bill programs provide technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and woodland owners put conservation practices on-the-ground

Through our Strategic Approach to Conservation, NRCS works with landowners and partners to target investments and achieve meaningful conservation results. Together, we are improving and protecting valuable natural resources, such as air, water, soil, forests, and habitat. Recognizing that our accomplishments are measured by the success of the landowners and producers we assist, it's our pleasure to provide a summary of our programs for fiscal year 2015.

FY15

Snapshots of Success

Greater Sage Grouse rebounding, species not warranted for federal protection

Thanks to five years of strategic conservation work through the NRCS-led Sage Grouse Initiative, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced Sept. 22, 2015 that the greater sage grouse is not warranted for protection under the Endangered Species Act. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of private landowners and partners to tackle sage grouse habitat challenges early-on to avoid a potential listing. From 2010 to 2015, NRCS worked with 117 ranchers to restore 200,000 acres of key sage grouse habitat in Oregon, and has addressed about two-thirds of the conifer (juniper) threat on priority private lands. The total NRCS Oregon investment in SGI is \$18.4 million in on-the-ground restoration. NRCS continues to move forward with SGI with a focus on overall rangeland health to address all threats.



2015 NRCS Oregon Program Delivery

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
501 Contracts
500,723 Acres
\$16,401,826 in Financial Assistance

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
334 Contracts
1,026,599 Acres
\$7,247,080 in Financial Assistance

Regional Conservation Partnership Program
17 Contracts
12,116 Acres
\$1,072,874 in Financial Assistance

Agricultural Land Easements
3 Cooperative Agreements
16,172 Acres
\$2,389,009,0 in Financial Assistance

(continued on second page)

2015 NRCS Oregon Program Delivery

Wetlands Reserve Easements

1 Easement

17.6 Acres

\$43,364 in

Financial Assistance

Conservation Innovation Grants

2 Grants

\$142,058 in

Financial Assistance

Sage Grouse Initiative (includes EQIP and RCPP)

43 Contracts

46,631 Acres

\$3,931,468 in

Financial Assistance

Organic Initiative (EQIP)

14 Contracts

705 Acres

\$198,191 in

Financial Assistance

High Tunnel Initiative

14 Contracts

53 Acres

Joint Chiefs Landscape Initiatives

Funded by the chiefs of two agencies—NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service—these forest restoration projects focus on proactive wildfire prevention across public and private lands in at-risk communities.

East Face of the Elkhorn Mountains Project (Baker and Union counties)

16 contracts

1,687 acres

\$705,243

Ashland Forest All Lands Restoration (Jackson County)

7 contracts

1,212 acres

\$1,093,442

Oregon Chub de-listed due to recovery

Thanks to strategic conservation work by NRCS, landowners and partners, the Oregon Chub became the first fish to be removed from the Endangered Species List due to recovery on February 17, 2015. The NRCS' Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) was essential for restoring chub habitat and chub populations on private lands in the Willamette River basin. NRCS Oregon invested \$4 million in financial assistance to support chub habitat, protecting 823 acres through 8 wetland restoration projects and 8 conservation easements in Marion and Benton counties.



Significant Oregon Mule Deer Habitat Restored

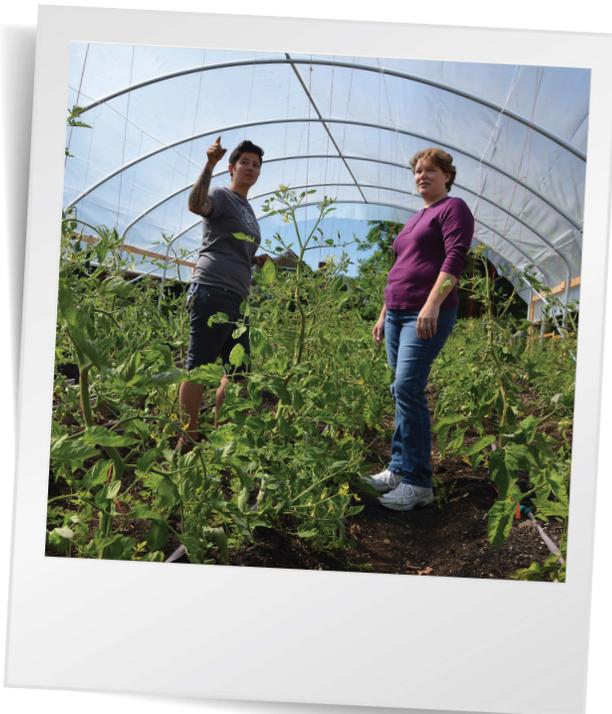
NRCS strategically invested Farm Bill dollars to target priority mule deer habitat through the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Mule Deer Initiative (MDI). From 2009 to 2014, NRCS invested \$4.8 million to improve mule deer habitat on nearly 40,000 acres of private lands, located within five wildlife management units in Eastern Oregon. That conservation work included removing invasive juniper trees, treating invasive weeds, installing fencing, and more. Habitat improvements in these units



were significantly higher than treatments in the five comparison areas, thanks to NRCS jumping in as a key partner on private lands. ODFW released its 5-year MDI report in February of 2015, which highlighted NRCS' habitat work as an integral part of the success of the overall initiative.

Efficient Irrigation Conserves Energy and Groundwater

NRCS is helping farmers save energy and conserve groundwater in the Stayton-Sublimity Restricted Groundwater Priority Area in Marion County. Since 2002, NRCS leveraged funding with partners to help farmers convert more than 50 irrigation systems to efficient linear systems. These new systems are about 30 percent more efficient than the traditional “big gun” irrigation systems that were commonly used in the past in this area. The annual estimated water savings from these systems is 6,130 acre feet per year—or roughly 1.9 billion gallons. According to estimates from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, that’s enough water to meet the annual household needs of more than 18,000 American families. Over time, these water savings reduce the strain on the groundwater aquifer and allow it to stabilize.



High Tunnels help feed urban communities

Through its High Tunnel Initiative, NRCS helped 14 Oregon producers this year install high tunnels to increase crop yields and reduce regional energy consumption. High tunnels allow farmers to plant earlier in the spring and later into the fall, while protecting crops from frost. They provide higher crop yields, better crop production, and they allow farmers to hit the market earlier and provide longer service to their customers. Stacey Givens, a chef and urban farmer in Northeast Portland, recently installed a high tunnel with assistance from NRCS. The high tunnel helps her grow 20 species of herbs and a variety of vegetables, which she sells to local restaurants. High tunnels like the one on Given’s farm are extremely beneficial in urban settings because they reduce the need to transport produce from out of town.



Maintaining Healthy Tribal Forests

NRCS is actively engaged with the nine federally-recognized tribes in Oregon to provide technical and financial conservation assistance. One example of our tribal conservation work is an ongoing forest health project with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, based in Lincoln County. Working with NRCS, the tribe contracted 833 acres of priority forestlands for pre-commercial thinning this year. In the last three years, the tribe has thinned 327 acres. This project greatly improves the health of the tribal forestlands by removing damaged and diseased trees (which opens the canopy and allows more sunlight for the healthier trees to grow taller and stronger) and providing enhanced wildlife habitat.

Building Healthy Soils

As part of its national soil health campaign, NRCS is raising awareness among Oregon's farming and ranching communities about the benefits of healthy soil. Our programs have helped farmers implement the NRCS 4 Principles of Soil Health:

- 1) Keeping it covered;
- 2) Diversity above equals diversity below;
- 3) Keeping a living root in the soil; and
- 4) Minimizing disturbance (no-till).

Producers such as organic farmer Chris Roehm has seen improved crop yields thanks to integrating soil health principles into his farm. Working with NRCS, Roehm implemented a soil management plan on his farm that alternates between growing and grazing cattle. This allows him to fertilize his land in a natural, sustainable way that improves the health (and production) of his livestock, soil, and vegetables.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

OREGON NRCS
TRIBAL
OUTREACH

FISCAL YEAR 2015
TRIBAL CONTRACTS

Environmental Quality Incentives
Program (EQIP)

 5 contracts

 \$348,067
in financial assistance

 4,439 acres

USDA TRIBAL OUTREACH

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is actively engaged with Oregon's nine federally-recognized tribes to provide conservation assistance through Farm Bill programs. NRCS provides both technical and financial assistance to help federally-recognized tribes address priority natural resource concerns on tribal lands. NRCS has contracts with a number of Oregon tribes that support the full gamut of natural resource needs, including forestry, rangeland health, and sage grouse habitat improvements.

CONSERVATION
INNOVATION GRANTS (CIG):

 1 GRANT
Burns Paiute Tribe
\$67,058

Refining the Use Environmental DNA for Aquatic
Species Detection

This project aims to refine existing environmental DNA (eDNA) techniques designed to detect and monitor rare, cryptic, and invasive species of fish. This project will provide land users and managers with a cost-effective, statistically valid, and logistically feasible protocol for using eDNA to quickly determine if an aquatic species is present in a stream reach.



SPECIAL FUNDING COMMUNITY GARDEN INITIATIVE



1 SMALL GRANT
Cow Creek Band of
Umpqua Indians
\$5,000

Traditional Plant Nursery Included in Tribal Garden

The focus of this project is to expand access to culturally significant first foods by including plantings of key species within the tribal community garden. A survey of tribal members identified Oregon grape and Bear grass as prime importance for medicine and basketry, respectively. Eventually the project will add tobacco, Blue Camas, Iris, and Huckleberries to the raised beds. NRCS provided \$5,000 to go toward this project, and the tribe exceeded a dollar-for-dollar match with a contribution of \$6,170. Funds were utilized for seeding/planting equipment and installation of the compacted rock to augment the addition of nine raised beds for the traditional nursery. The compacted rock paths will allow tribal elders easier access to the raised beds.



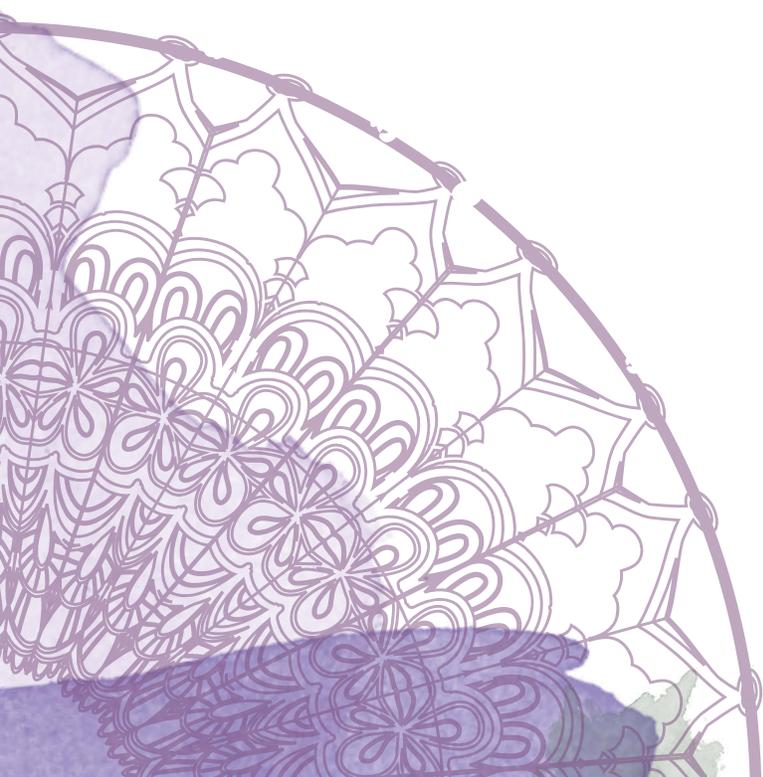
(From left to right) NRCS State Conservationist, Ron Alvarado; NRCS State Easement Specialist Bari Williams; Burns Paiute Director of Natural Resources Jason Kesling; and Cow Creek Director of Natural Resources Jason Robison discuss improvements made to the Cow Creek community garden. Raised beds will be the home for a variety of culturally significant plants. Gravel paths, providing ease of access for tribal elders were funded, in part, by NRCS. Robison hosted the NRCS Oregon Tribal Advisory Council fall meeting, which included a tour of tribal properties.

SILETZ SUCCESS STORY

To achieve their forestry goals, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians is working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to obtain technical and financial assistance for pre-commercial thinning.

"The overall focus on the Siletz project is forest health," says Kate Danks, NRCS district conservationist in Lincoln County. "Pre-commercial thinning is an essential forestry conservation practice because it removes damaged and diseased trees, and it opens up the canopy, allowing more sunlight for the healthier trees to grow. The open understory also provides better wildlife habitat."

About 15,000 acres of the Siletz' tribal land is managed for forestry, which equates to 96 percent of the tribe's total land. Currently, the tribe has





Kevin Goodell (left) a Siletz tribal member who serves on the tribe's natural resources crew, and Mike Kennedy (right), director of natural resources for the Siletz Tribe, examine a recently thinned portion of the forest. NRCS photo by Tracy Robillard.

contracted pre-commercial thinning on 833 acres of priority forestlands. In the last three years, the tribe has thinned 327 acres through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

"The EQIP program from the NRCS has been a godsend," says Mike Kennedy, director of natural resources for the Siletz Tribe. "Without financial support from the EQIP program to do pre-commercial thinning, many of our stands wouldn't get thinned. We just don't have the funding to complete the vast workload."

Not only is pre-commercial thinning good for the forest, but it also contributes to the economic livelihood of the tribe.

"The tribe depends on the revenue from its timber harvest, so we must have a healthy, well-growing forest," Kennedy says. "If the trees don't grow the way we expect them to grow, or if they're too crowded, then we won't get the size trees that we want. We

won't get the future revenue that we expect to get from the forest."

"I love working in the forest; It just feels good to be out here," says Kevin Goodell, a Siletz tribal member who serves on the tribe's natural resources crew. Goodell has worked in the Siletz forests since 1985.

"We are involved in all aspects of the forest, from the planning stage on up," Goodell says. "We log the trees, we go back in and plant them, we thin them—it's a cycle that keeps the forest healthy and keeps it here for future generations, for my kids and grandkids."

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR NUMU ALLOTTEE ASSOCIATION

In May, the NRCS Hines office completed a range inventory for members of the NUMU Allottee Association. Loosely connected with the Burns Paiute tribe, the Association invited NRCS to a meeting the previous fall. Through the winter, Allottee owners interested in having an inventory contacted the office. District Conservationist Zola Ryan developed a plan for tackling an inventory of approximately half the 11,000 acres.

In May, NRCS working in conjunction with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Lease Compliance and Water Rights officer Charisse Soucie, the Burns Paiute Tribe, and local Intertribal Agriculture Council representative Katherine Goodluck Minthorn, surveyed approximately 9,000 acres over the course of four days. NRCS staff included Cyndee Hill and Laura LaForest of the Hines office; Lars Larson, range specialist for the High Desert Basin in Redmond; and Kathy Ferge, state tribal liaison in Portland.

By autumn, NRCS crunched the data and sent results to landowners involved in the project. The report for each allotment includes three pieces of information: Similarity Index, Range Trend, and Forage Availability. Landowners will be working with the BIA to complete more detailed plans for the allotments.



Staff from Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Intertribal Ag Council and the Natural Resources Conservation Service work together to conduct a range inventory on a portion of land owned by members of the NUMU Allottee's Association. Pictured from left to right are: Zola Ryan, NRCS District Conservationist in Hines; Laura LaForest, NRCS soil conservationist; Lars Santana, NRCS rangeland management specialist; Kathy Ferge, NRCS tribal liaison; and Charisse Soucie, BIA lease compliance officer for the Burns Paiute Tribe. Not pictured: Cyndee Hill, rangeland management specialist and Katherine Minthorn-Goodluck, Intertribal Ag Council regional technical assistance specialist for Oregon and Idaho.

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AFTER THE FIRE

[KNOW THE SNOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FLOW]



If you can look uphill from where you are and see an area burned by wildfire, you are at risk.

Lands damaged by wildfire experience a higher risk for flash flooding. Even areas that aren't traditionally prone to flooding are at risk, because the burned soils can't absorb as much water. Flooding after a fire can cause significant soil erosion and trigger debris slides (such as ash, rocks, and burned trees) that can damage roads and infrastructure.

Flash Flooding, Snowpack & Rainfall

The potential for flooding depends greatly on rainfall intensity. Heavy rainfall on melting snow is a trigger for flash flooding. Generally, you can look at the density of the snowpack to gage snowmelt. Higher-density readings are an indicator that the snow is getting ready to melt. A general rule of thumb is that half an inch of rain falling in less than one hour is enough to cause flash flooding in a burned area, but this can be more or less depending on the fire severity and the steepness of the terrain.

Understanding the current snowpack conditions in your area and the potential for rain-on-snow events can help you stay better informed and prepared to anticipate flash flooding after a wildfire.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Snow Survey Program in Oregon measures snowpack and other pertinent data at about 300 mountain sites across Oregon and Washington. This data is available in near real-time online, so be sure to check the website for the latest information.



A view of the damage from the Canyon Creek Wildfire that blazed through John Day, Oregon in the summer of 2015.

Understanding the current snowpack conditions and the potential for rain-on-snow events can help you stay better informed and prepared to anticipate flash flooding after a wildfire.



LEARN MORE

Scan code with your smartphone for more information on Oregon snow survey data. Requires QR reader app.

**Or Visit Us Online at:
www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/snow**

What factors should I look for in the snowpack as it relates to flood risk after a fire?

Heavy rainfall—and heavy rainfall in conjunction with melting snow—are the primary factors to consider for flood risk. There are several indicators you can look for to gauge when the snowpack is starting to melt.

First, check the snowpack density at the sites in your area. If densities reach 40% or more, there is a greater risk for flooding if a moderate or heavy rainstorm falls on top of that snow. A high snow density means that the snowpack is reaching a point where melting is imminent. Density is calculated by dividing the snow water equivalent (SWE)—which refers to the amount of water stored in the snow—by the snow depth, multiplied by 100%. A 40% dense snowpack means that the snow is 40% water.

$$\frac{\text{SWE (inches)}}{\text{Snow Depth (inches)}} = \frac{10}{25} \times 100\% = 40\%$$

It's also important to note the trend in SWE. If there's a pattern of decreasing SWE levels, this also means the snowpack is beginning to melt, and thus the chances for flooding during a rainstorm are higher. Keep in mind that it's normal to see a gradual decrease in snow depth as the snow settles—so a downward trend in depth doesn't always indicate snowmelt.

As the snowpack begins to melt, which typically begins after the peak of the season in March and April, there's a greater risk for higher run-off as the snowmelt flows into streams and rivers.



At remote mountain sites, NRCS staff must manually measure the snowpack using a carefully-calibrated set of tubes and a scale. These sites are called Snow Courses and are typically measured about once a month. Most sites are equipped with automated SNOTEL stations that record data every hour, available online.

Be sure to check the National Weather Service River Forecast Center to see if rivers in your area are approaching flood levels.

View the Northwest River Forecast online at:
<http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=pdf>

How long will there be an elevated risk of flash flooding?

This depends on the severity of the wildfire and how much erosion occurs, but most burned areas are prone to flash flooding and debris flows for at least two years after the wildfire. It could take many years for trees and plants to re-establish. Vegetation is the primary factor that slows down the precipitation run-off that creates flash flooding and debris flows. Each burned area poses its own unique risk due to many factors including proximity to population centers, burn severity, steepness of terrain, and size of the burned area.

Contacts:

NRCS Oregon Snow Survey
Scott Oviatt, Supervisory Hydrologist
Phone: 503-414-3271
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National Weather Service
Pendleton, Oregon
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www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt



www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/snow



Strengthening Conservation with Regional Partnerships

Apply to the NEW

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs that benefit agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a new, comprehensive and flexible program that uses partnerships to stretch and multiply conservation investments and reach conservation goals on a regional or watershed scale.

Benefits

Partners participating in RCPP can use their local knowledge and networks to undertake conservation projects by joining with agricultural producers to restore or sustain natural resources such as:

- clean and abundant water
- healthy, productive soils
- enhanced wildlife and pollinator habitat

More Information

visit your
local USDA Service Center

or

nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill

How It Works

Through RCPP, NRCS and state, local and regional partners coordinate resources to help producers install and maintain conservation activities in selected project areas. Partners leverage RCPP funding in project areas and report on the benefits achieved.

Forty percent of RCPP funding will go to national, multi-state projects; 25 percent will go to state projects; and 35 percent will go to critical conservation areas (CCAs) designated by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Eligibility

Eligible Partners - Agricultural or silvicultural producer associations, farmer cooperatives or other groups of producers, state or local governments, Indian tribes, municipal water treatment entities, water and irrigation districts, conservation-driven nongovernmental organizations and institutions of higher education.

Eligible Participants - Eligible producers and landowners of agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland should visit their local USDA Service Center for information on how to enter into conservation program contracts or easement agreements under the framework of an RCPP partnership agreement.

How to Apply

The Announcement of Program Funding outlines the requirements for proposal submissions. NRCS and the selected partner will enter into a partnership agreement through which they will coordinate resources to provide assistance to producers in the project area. Partnership agreements may be for a period of up to five years, but NRCS may extend for an additional 12 months if needed to meet the objectives of the program.

Partnership Agreement

The partnership agreement defines the scope of the project, including:

1. Eligible activities to be implemented
2. Potential agricultural or nonindustrial private forest operation affected
3. Local, state, multi-state or other geographic area covered
4. Planning, outreach, implementation, and assessment to be conducted

Partners are responsible for contributing to the cost of the project, conducting outreach and education to eligible producers

for potential participation in the project and for conducting an assessment of the project's effects. In addition, partners may act on behalf of the eligible landowner or producer in applying for assistance. Partners may also leverage financial or technical assistance provided by NRCS with additional funds to help achieve the project objectives. Before closing the agreement the partner must provide an assessment of the project costs and conservation effects.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service



— USDA —
**Regional
Conservation
PARTNERSHIP
Program**
— NRCS —



coming together for conservation

2015 Selected RCPP Projects in Oregon

Program Overview

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a new, competitive program in the 2014 Farm Bill that promotes partnerships across the public and private sectors to tackle high-priority natural resources challenges. As the lead agency for the program, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements, program contracts and easement agreements.

RCPP combines the authorities of four former Farm Bill conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Great Lakes Basin Program. NRCS provides assistance to RCPP projects using existing Farm Bill funding programs: the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP); and in certain areas the Watershed Operations and Flood Prevention Program.

Klamath-Rogue Oak Woodland Health and Habitat Conservation Project

Lead Partner: Lomakatsi Restoration Project

Many at-risk and listed species depend on quality oak woodlands that are threatened by conifer encroachment, densification, and severe wildfires in this project area, covering portions of Oregon and California. Working with landowners, including historically underserved producers, and using a sound, science-based approach, the partners will target 3,200 high-priority acres recently identified in a Conservation Implementation Strategy to preserve, enhance, and restore the structural diversity, ecological function, and overall health and persistence of oak habitats and their watersheds.

The Oregon Model to Protect Sage-Grouse

Lead Partner: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

A thirty-year programmatic Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for greater sage-grouse—which is a mechanism to maintain or improve habitat and assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for regulatory requirements under the Endangered Species Act—has been developed for private lands in Harney County, Oregon, and similar agreements are currently being developed for the remaining six counties in Oregon within the range of sage-grouse. NRCS conservation practices are a critical piece to ensuring producers have the tools and financial assistance they need to successfully meet the terms of the CCA. The project has a goal to reach 40 percent of producers, and partners will provide additional technical and financial assistance, as well as monitoring support.

RCPP Funding by Project

Klamath-Rogue Oak Woodland Health and Habitat Conservation Project

NRCS \$3 million

Partner: \$1.3 million

The Oregon Model to Protect Sage-Grouse

NRCS \$9 million

Partner: \$9 million

Unlocking Carbon Markets for NIPF Landowners in the Pacific Northwest

NRCS \$1 million

Partner: \$914,000

North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project

NRCS \$4.2 million

Partner: \$7 million

White River Irrigation Efficiency and Stream Flow Restoration Project

NRCS \$1.6 million

Partner: \$2 million

North Willamette Valley Upland Restoration Partnership

NRCS \$2 million

Partner: \$3.9 million



Unlocking Carbon Markets for NIPF Landowners in the Pacific Northwest

Lead Partner: Pinchot Institute for Conservation

By aggregating landowners into groups, the American Carbon Registry (ACR) reduces transaction costs for carbon credit trading and allows small producers to participate. This project will target approximately 250 non-industrial private approximately 250 non-industrial private forest landowners in Oregon and Washington who wish to participate in a regional carbon crediting program and who possess lands in NRCS and state priority areas as defined in regional conservation strategies. Targeted parcels will be between 75 and 4,000 acres in size, with the majority being less than 250 acres. NRCS and partner assistance will cover much of the initial expense of participating in carbon projects, specifically the development of a forest management plan and subsequent implementation of pre-commercial thinning to enhance carbon stocks.

North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration Project

Lead Partner: Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

The Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District in Oregon has a long-standing, collaborative program that focuses on the improvement and protection of natural resources for the betterment of agricultural producers, the local community, and fish and wildlife. Using an innovative GIS approach to target treatment areas, the partners will implement a coordinated and directed effort to expand upon the current work being done to address key natural resource concerns in a ridge-top to ridge-top manner. EQIP, ACEP, and CSP will be used to accomplish objectives including pre-commercial thinning, irrigation efficiency projects, conservation easements, juniper removal, range restoration, spring developments, riparian restoration, and critical habitat restoration. Success will be gauged by the evaluation of measurable objectives and the expansion of established monitoring programs.

White River Irrigation Efficiency and Stream Flow Restoration Project

Lead Partner: Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District

Partners for this project in Oregon have identified specific goals, already planned through a collaborative approach in the county, including the removal of six unscreened fish passage barriers, saving 7,300 acre feet of water annually, and restoring flows to 21.9 miles of stream, of which 15 miles of stream were over-allocated and seasonally dewatered. Identified activities will increase water quality, improve irrigation efficiency, and improve fish habitat in this critical area.

North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration Partnership

Lead Partner: Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District

This project will provide investments to restore oak and prairie habitats in Yamhill and Polk counties to improve conditions for critical wildlife. Historic oak, prairie and savanna habitats have declined in the Willamette Valley, and efforts to restore this land will aid in the recovery of several endangered species, including the Fender's blue butterfly. This project will strengthen existing partnerships and facilitate the implementation of numerous regional conservation plans and priorities.

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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coming together for conservation

2016 Selected RCPP Projects in Oregon

What is RCPP?

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes partnerships across the public and private sectors to tackle high-priority natural resources challenges.

RCPP encourages partners to join in efforts with farmers and ranchers to increase the restoration and sustainable use of soil, water, air, land, forests and wildlife on a regional or watershed scale.

Through RCPP, NRCS and its partners help landowners install and maintain conservation activities in clearly-defined project areas. Partners leverage RCPP funding to provide additional conservation support.

As the lead agency for the program, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements, program contracts and easement agreements.

For more information, visit:
www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

Lower Columbia Watershed Partnership

Lead Partner: Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District

Category: Critical Conservation Area, Columbia River Basin

This project aims to make measurable improvements to the health and viability of the Lower Columbia River Watershed, with support from a wide range of local, state and federal partners and private landowners. The primary goals are to improve water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. To address water quality, the project aims to reduce excessive sediments that flow into surface waters by designing and implementing several stream bank restoration projects. These stream bank restorations would increase streamside vegetation, which helps minimize excess nutrients and pesticides from entering the stream system. The stream bank restoration projects are engineered by NRCS with support from partners. The project will also address four fish passage issues. NRCS is providing technical assistance for the design of both the stream bank and fish passage projects, which will enable other funding sources to engineer other projects involved in this watershed. Other project types include floodplain restoration and large woody debris.

Grande Ronde Watershed Conservation Partnership

Lead Partner: Union County Soil and Water Conservation District

Category: Critical Conservation Area, Columbia River Basin

By working with partners and agricultural producers in the Grande Ronde watershed, this project aims to implement critical watershed-scale projects to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water quantity and quality, and contribute to the recovery of endangered salmon, steelhead and bull trout populations. Conservation projects include removing barriers to fish passage, prescribed grazing, fencing, improving streamside riparian habitat, irrigation efficiency, and forest health. The Grande Ronde Watershed Conservation

Continued on next page

USDA / NRCS Project Funding (Over 5 Years)

*Lower Columbia Watershed
Partnership*

NRCS \$3 million

*Grande Ronde Watershed
Conservation Partnership*

NRCS \$3.7 million

*Water Quality and Quantity in the
Klamath Basin*

NRCS \$7.6 million

*SONEC Working Wet Meadows
Initiative*

NRCS \$2.6 million

*Dairy McKay Degraded Riparian
Ecosystems*

NRCS \$936,000

*High Desert Drought Resilient
Ranching*

NRCS \$1.3 million

Alder Slope Cooperative Partnership

NRCS \$1.1 million

Partnership is a diverse group with a 23-year history of collaboration. The Partnership works with landowners to address local conservation priorities related to watershed health and fish and wildlife habitat. The Partnership plans to monitor the project's success using several methods, including an irrigation water management analysis, instream flow measurements, vegetative assessment surveys, and fire danger assessments. Additional monitoring efforts include an annual fish distribution and quantitative habitat survey, and routine site visits for all upland restoration projects.

Water Quality and Quantity in the Klamath Basin

Lead Partner: Trout Unlimited

Category: National

This project aims to improve water quality and water quantity in the Upper Klamath Lake Basin by offering a variety of conservation options to agricultural producers, such as irrigation efficiencies, pasture nutrient management, wetland restoration, and the use of streamside riparian buffers. The primary natural resource concerns are limited instream flows and external loading of nutrients into Upper Klamath Lake—problems that persist downstream through the main stem of the Klamath River. This project's objectives include: 1) Improve water quality in the Upper Klamath Basin; 2) Increase protected instream flows in tributaries flowing into Upper Klamath Lake; 3) Increase drought resilience of producers and natural systems in the Upper Klamath Basin; and 4) Improve instream, wetland and riparian habitat for federally listed species, including endangered Lost River and shortnose sucker, and threatened bull trout. This highly-experienced team of partners plans to track tangible, measurable results of the project, including instream water quality, acre-feet of water saved through irrigation efficiencies, pasture condition scores, and acres of restored wetlands and proper functioning riparian buffers.

SONEC Working Wet Meadows Initiative

Lead Partner: Intermountain West Joint Venture

Category: National

The Southern Oregon-Northeastern California (SONEC) region is one of the most important areas for migratory waterbirds in North America, supporting approximately 70 percent of the Pacific Flyway's wetland-dependent migratory bird population (more than six million birds). These birds are attracted to SONEC because of the food resources provided by privately-owned, flood-irrigated wet meadow habitats on working ranchlands within historic floodplains. However, these habitats are increasingly threatened by changing irrigation practices, aging water conveyance infrastructure, and fragmentation. This project will strategically utilize Farm Bill programs and massive partner contributions to conserve 24,985 acres of wet meadow habitats and improve the resiliency of working ranchlands to drought. It will help ranchers remove threats through innovative and integrated application NRCS financial assistance and easement programs. Specifically, the project will improve the sustainability of wet meadows for migratory birds by: enhancing infrastructure and improving the efficiency of flood-irrigation on critical wet meadows; acquiring conservation easements to remove fragmentation risk; and enhancing important foraging habitat for wetland-dependent migratory birds.

Dairy McKay Degraded Riparian Ecosystems

Lead Partner: Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District

Category: National

This project aims to improve water quality, increase irrigation efficiencies, and restore stream habitat for fish and wildlife in the Dairy-McKay and Middle Tualatin watersheds, sub-watersheds of the Tualatin River Watershed in Washington County, Oregon. The project's objectives are to: Establish riparian forest buffers along priority stream reaches bordering agricultural lands in the project area; improve irrigation water use efficiency along priority stream reaches in the project area; decrease manure runoff from several livestock operations in the project area; and restore wetlands in floodplain sites bordering priority stream reaches. The project builds on 10 years of previous work by the Tualatin SWCD and partners to restore 39 miles of stream throughout the larger watershed, in coordination with more than 70 private landowners. The Tualatin SWCD and partners engaged the local sewer management agency, Clean Water Services (CWS), which provides additional incentives to rural landowners who install riparian forest buffers along streams. These additional incentives provide CWS with shade credits toward their temperature permit with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The Dairy-McKay Degraded Riparian Ecosystems project pairs these existing CWS incentives with other USDA programs. The result is a unique combination of USDA, state and local programs to address natural resource problems with strong support from the community, a scientifically valid prioritization process, a talented staff, and the use of natural resource (temperature) credits.

High Desert Drought Resilient Ranching

Lead Partner: Trout Unlimited

Category: National

Lead NRCS State: Idaho, with participation from Nevada & Oregon

Nevada, Idaho and Oregon ranchers have experienced a severe drought for the majority of years in the last 30-year cycle. This project will help reduce drought impacts to wildlife and livestock in the Owyhee watershed and adjacent communities in two lesser watersheds, which have been historically underserved. Project partners will work together to develop on-the-ground projects that keep water in streams longer for both livestock and wildlife. Project area selection will emphasize state and private land that currently provides habitat for three focal species: redband trout, greater sage-grouse and Columbia spotted frogs or is adjacent to known populations and has the capacity to restore habitat for these species.

Alder Slope Cooperative Partnership

Lead Partner: Wallowa Soil and Water Conservation District

Category: State

This project will address irrigation efficiency and forest health in the Alder Slope area in Wallowa County, issues identified as high priorities by partners and landowners at NRCS-led Local Work Group meetings. The irrigation portion of the project aims to increase irrigation efficiency by 15 percent, reduce water waste, and generate power in the Alder Slope geographic priority area. The first two years of the project will focus on restructuring and consolidating multiple smaller leaking pipelines into three larger, more efficient systems aligned with water rights. The next three years will be the second phase of the irrigation project, consisting of on-farm irrigation system upgrades such as sprinkler package upgrades (flow control nozzles to regulate and provide consistent water application across the slope), upgrading from flood to sprinkler irrigation, or upgrading from wheel line/hand line sprinkler systems to a pivot sprinkler system. By reducing the amount of flow diverted from Hurricane Creek, this project will help to improve stream conditions for bull trout and native red-band trout. The addition of micro-hydro plants will generate energy and help reduce the pressure flow needed from the great elevation change. The forest health portion of this project will create a defensible space from wildfire between public forests and private non-industrial forest land by reducing the density of overstocked stands, manipulating fuel arrangement and forest structure, and significantly reducing the fuel load. A catastrophic fire on Alder Slope would result in negative resource impacts to forest health, soil conditions, and endangered species such as bull trout, steelhead and salmon. It is estimated that 99,000 tons of fuel will be removed. The Oregon Department of Forestry will write the fuel reduction prescriptions and oversee this portion of project. The U.S. Forest Service plans to take the same actions on federally-owned forest lands to increase the defensible space.



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