

OTAC Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2014

OSU Experiment Station

Aurora, Oregon

Reference documents from this meeting are posted at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/or/technical/stc/>

Next OTAC Meeting, February 11, 2015

Tom Watson, Assistant STC/Operations – Welcomed all members and expressed his appreciation for their participation in the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee. Ron Alvarado, State Conservationist was not able to attend and extends his regrets.

NRCS appreciates and wants to recognize the outstanding partnerships that have been established across the state. This was reaffirmed by the outstanding projects submitted through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Oregon was third in the nation for submission of RCPP pre-proposals. The state proposals we reviewed were all very strong applications.

Pam Davis, FSA Farm Program Chief – Announced that Phil Ward is the new State Executive Director for FSA. He sends his regrets as he was unable to attend today's meeting.

Overview of 2008 Farm Bill Accomplishments

Sara Magenheimer, NRCS

By the end of the 2008 Farm Bill, Oregon NRCS had worked with private landowners to implement over 3,500 contracts or easements. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the largest NRCS program making up over 70% of the total contract/easements with over \$43 million obligated to landowners to install conservation practices.

Under the Sage Grouse Initiative over 146,000 acres were treated for Juniper Removal from 2010-2013. Additional details on 2008 Farm Bill accomplishments can be found in the following PowerPoint presentation.



NRCS Farm Bill
Presentation_OTAC_

Farm Bill Updates**Pam Davis, FSA**

For Program Year 2014, Oregon FSA approved 410 CRP and CREP contracts totaling 61,949.9 ac. acres:

CRP General – 334 contracts for 59,393.1 acres
CREP - 76 contracts for 2,556.8 acres

For Program Years 1996-2014, there is a cumulative total of 4,283 contracts at 551,158.4 acres.

CRP General – 2,365 contracts for 496,704.2 acres
CREP – 1,918 contracts for 54,454.2 acres

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**Loren Unruh, NRCS**

NRCS expects the 2014-15 RCPP proposals for the national, state and critical conservation area's to be selected and announced mid-November.

NRCS expects the Announcement for Program Funding for the 2016 round of RCPP proposals to be made this winter.

As this is the first year for RCPP, NRCS is seeking feedback from our partners on the outreach, awareness and process for submitting these RCPP proposals.



10-14RCPP-OTAC2.p
ptx

Partner Feedback on RCPP:

- Downloading the forms was not always successful.
- Deadlines were too short when working to coordinate with multiple partners and funders.
- Another set of informational meetings may be appropriate when initial announcement comes out.
- Have meetings focused on completing the application information.
- Increase outreach/participation at Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Farm Bureau meetings. Have an RCPP presentation at the annual Cattlemen's meeting in December.
- Encourage potential applicants to begin coordinating partners and funding sources prior to the RCPP announcement for program funding.
- NRCS should coordinate with OWEB when a funding letter is needed for the applicant.
- Have partners share with each other the benefits of submitting/having an RCPP with multiple program opportunities and an increased stability of out-year funding.
- Encourage folks to look a non-traditional partners and environmental credit markets.

2015 Conservation Implementation Strategies**Mike Merrill, NRCS**

Presented an update to the group on the process and timeline for NRCS’s Strategic Approach to Conservation and how and when partners can work with local District Conservationists on developing conservation implementation strategies (CIS).

Also, updated the group on the FY2015 strategies that are approved for potential funding (depending on budget allocation).

(Refer to PowerPoint below)



OTAC_CIS_fy15_10-15-2015_release.pdf

Soil Health and Slugs in the Willamette Valley**Cory Owens, NRCS**

As Oregon NRCS works with private landowners to improve soil health, slug management and control is a significant barrier to the long-term adoption of reduced soil disturbance practices in the Willamette Valley. Reducing soil disturbance is a key component of the NRCS’s effort to increase soil health across Oregon. More research is needed in order to identify methods and options for landowners in regards to slug management. There is currently a lapse at OSU Extension for this type of research. It is important for all of our partners to be aware of this issue and the relevance to solving these types of issues as landowners work to change their systems to improve soil health. (Refer to pdf file below).



Soil Health and Slugs in the.pdf

Easements and Land Trusts in Oregon**Mike Running, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT)**

Mike Running, Communication and Outreach Manager for the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, spoke to the partners about his organizations and the 19 land trust members of the coalition. He then provided a brief introduction into the use, scope, and scale of conservation easements both here in Oregon and across the country, highlighting the somewhat unique position conservation easements have in the state due to the land use system. This then led to some current and future opportunities for easements to play more of a widespread and effective role, helping landowners conserve working lands and open spaces.

(Refer to PowerPoint file below)



OTAC Presentation 10-15-14.pptx

The Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) is the new easement program in the 2014 Farm Bill. Under ACEP there are two components the Agricultural Lands Easement (ALE) component, which focuses on working lands, and the Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) component, which focusses on wetland easements.

As Oregon NRCS works to implement these programs, we would like input and feedback from our partners on the opportunities for easements in Oregon as well as discussion regarding barriers and solutions.

A call was made to establish an Easement Sub-Committee, if you would like to be part of this committee, please send you contact information to Loren Unruh, Leader for Programs, loren.unruh@or.usda.gov.

The first meeting will be held November 17, 1-3pm, State Office, 8th floor conference room. For more information on ACEP and previous wetland easement priorities refer to PowerPoint below.



OTAC10-15-14ACEP
2.pptx

Partner Feedback/Discussion on ACEP:

- The Land Conservation Community needs more information on NRCS programs and the Farm Bill.
- Partners need to know NRCS National priorities for easements.
- Need to work through the nuts and bolts of the program and identify what can be addressed to work for Oregon.
- Rigid deed language for each entity and their easements, how do we make that work for everyone?
- Need to work on how to get the match source for ALE easements.
- We need a comprehensive management plan for easements that will meet the entity and NRCS' needs.
- We need to identify where we want to go as a partnership in regards to easements.
- Look at the possibility of putting easements into endowments.
- Consistent concerns: capacity of entities; make sure entities can handle long-term easements, management plans need to provide a system and add value.
- The Forest Legacy area has developed an easement plan.
- Identify opportunities to "stack funding".
- Provide opportunities or have a system in place that can utilize easements to hold mixed forestry and ag lands.
- Barriers can be the competing provisions for different programs.
- There needs to be local development and input from NRCS Basin Team Leaders and District Conservationist's.
- We should be looking for a way to get large swaths of conservation easement put together, combining for larger pieces of protected properties.

Partner Updates	OTAC Members
<p>Sam Asai (FSA, State Committee Chairman) Secretary Vilsack appointed him to a committee requesting 10 projects to shape America’s agriculture in February 2014. Secretary Vilsack also requested two more projects in April. Oregon was asked to be the pilot state for the project regarding New and Beginning Farmers, named Bridges to Opportunity.</p> <p>Jim Cathcart (ODF, Cooperative Forestry Manager) Dates for the Stewardship Steering Committee are October 30 and November 13.</p> <p>Mike Edwards (USFWL) Discussed Monarch butterfly conservation, focusing on mid-west. But there will be acres of habitat that need to be considered for Oregon.</p> <p>Dalton Strauss OR Cattleman’s Association Meeting December 4, 5, and 6 at the River House in Bend. The Farm Bureau meeting will be December 9, 10 and 11 at the Salishan Lodge in Lincoln City.</p> <p>Brad Siemens (USFS) provided the following personnel updates. Kent Connaughton, Regional Forester for Region 6 (Oregon and Washington) retired this past summer. Jim Pena is the new Regional Forester for Region 6, and he officially started August 3.</p> <p>Peg Polichio, Director for State & Private Forestry for Regions 6 & 10 (Alaska) retired this past summer. Teresa Raaf is the new Director, and she will officially start on November 3.</p> <p>Doug Daoust, Assistant Director for State & Private Forestry for Region 6, will be retiring the end of this calendar year. That position is in the process of being filled.</p>	
Closing Comments & Next Meeting	Tom Watson, NRCS
<p>We will plan to schedule the next OTAC meeting in February. Sara Magenheimer, State Public Affairs Officer, has had the lead for OTAC while the Partnership Liaison Position remains vacant. She will be going on maternity leave in mid-November. While she is out Tom Watson, NRCS Leader for Operations will be the primary contact for all OTAC related matters. His contact information is, tom.watson@or.usda.gov.</p>	
<p>Attendees: Tom Watson, NRCS, Oregon Assistant State Conservationist/Operations, Pam Davis, FSA Farm Program Chief, Sara Magenheimer, NRCS Oregon Public Affairs Officer, Cal Lee Davenport, PFW State Coordinator, USFWS, Jim Cathcart, Cooperative Forestry Manager, Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Norm Miller, Partnership Program Director, Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Cindy Kolmechuk National Fire Plan Coordinator, Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Alyssa Mucken, Program Coordinator for Oregon IWRS, Oregon Water Resource Dept., Ruben Ochoa, Policy Analyst, Oregon Water Resource Dept., Jason Faucera, President, Oregon Conservation Network, Joel Salter, Water Program Coordinator, EPA, Lauren Smith, Policy Coordinator, Oregon Water Resources Congress, April Snell, Executive Director, Oregon Water Resources Congress, Phil Ward, State Executive Director,</p>	

FSA, Sam Asai, Chair, FSA, Jerry Nicolescu, OAED, Meta Loftsgaarden, Executive Director, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Renee Davis, Deputy Director, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, John Byers, Program Manager, Oregon Dept. of Ag, Bruce Taylor, Oregon Habitat Joint Venture, Sara O'Brien, Director of Strategy, Willamette Partnership, Bobby Cochran, Executive Director, Willamette Partnership, Dalton Straus, OR Cattleman's Assoc., K.C. Van Natta, Partner, Van Natta Brothers, Brad Siemens, Program Manager, USFS, Josh Hinerfeld, Cambium Strategy, Tom Makowski, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Loren Unruh, Leader for Programs, NRCS, Mike Edwards, Klamath Basin Coordinator, USFWS, Rick McMonagle, EMSWCD, Teresa Koper, The Climate Trust, Mary Wahl, Wild Rivers Land Trust, Tracy Robillard, OR Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS, Laura Gay, Executive Assistant, NRCS, Laurie Sassmann, Executive Assistant, NRCS, Mike Merrill, Watershed Planner, NRCS