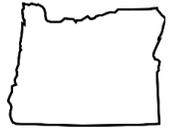




# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife / 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE / Salem, OR 97302

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## Attendees

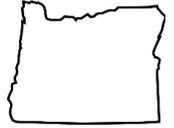
- Sam Asai, FSA
- Jerry Nicolescu, OACD
- Eric Hartstein, OWEB
- Kevin Blakely, ODFW
- Dave Budeau, ODFW
- Benjamin Cate, Burns Paiute Tribe
- CalLee Davenport, USFWS
- Irma Lagomersino, NOAA Fisheries
- Andrew Addressi, NOAA Fisheries
- Thomas Whittmington, ODF Private Forests
- Robert Wallace, Wy'East RC&D
- Bruce Taylor, OHJV
- Phil Ward, FSA
- Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth
- Teresa Matteson, Benton SWCD
- Robert Wallace, WyEast RCD
- Mike Davis, Aero Dicon Corp.
- Anthony Barber, EPA Oregon
- Harmony Burringtit – Oregon WRD
- Ron Alvarado, NRCS
- Tom Watson, NRCS
- Sara Magenheimer, NRCS
- Tracy Robillard, NRCS
- Cory Owens, NRCS
- Heather Medina Saucedo, NRCS
- Tom Makowski, NRCS
- Annie Young Mathews, NRCS

## Opening Comments

- **Ron Alvarado, NRCS State Conservationist:** Ron is back from his detail in Washington, D.C. He announced that Sara Magenheimer, NRCS Partnership Liaison, is leaving the agency this week. Cory Owens, NRCS State Soil Scientist will continue to convene OTAC into the future until a new partnership liaison is hired.



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- **Phil Ward, Farm Service Agency:** Phil echoed Ron's sentiments in thanking Sara for coordinating OTAC over the last few years.

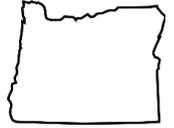
## Working Lands for Wildlife Partner Opportunities

Heather Medina Saucedo and Sara Magenheimer, NRCS

- Presented by Heather Medina-Saucedo – defined the six elements of the Working Lands for Wildlife Model: Trust and Credibility, Shared Vision, Strategic Approach, Accountability, Leverage, Regulatory Predictability.
- No new funding is associated with WLFW, though identified projects could receive funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. NRCS Headquarters will support states by providing tools to track progress and accomplishments.
- The WLFW program functions much like the Strategic Approach and like the Sage Grouse Initiative. But new national funding sources are not likely with this program. Funds would be invested from existing NRCS Oregon allocations.
- Potential Species Identified by Committee Members:
  - Streaked Horn Lark
  - Northern Spotted Owl
  - Coastal Coho
  - Washington Ground Squirrel
  - Oregon Spotted Frog
  - Red Band Trout
  - Bull Trout
  - Fenders Blue Butterfly
  - Fisher
  - Marbled Murrelet
  - Monarch butterfly (added post meeting through partner input)
- NOAA Fisheries provided comments on the Coastal Coho as a recommended species for WLFW. Recovery of Coastal Coho is foreseeable in the near future. NOAA calls the species “recovery ready” – they are seeking a catalyst to help them with the final push of the



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recovery effort. Recovery plan coming in December.

- This effort is species-driven, not primarily focused on habitat areas (such as oak).
- Bruce Taylor provided comments about habitat preferences of streak horned lark that fits better with agriculture and working lands. Need to look for opportunities where agriculture intersects with the species.
- Fenders Blue Butterfly projects have been going on for several years, other partners are investing in this species.
- Potential for funding through RCPP or other venues. No Healthy Forest Reserve Program allocations in the current Farm Bill. RCPP is a great option to amplify existing Conservation Implementation Strategies and take it to the next level.
- Committee members voted for their top two species from the list, three species that ranked the highest on votes were Oregon Spotted Frog, Streaked Horn Lark, and Coastal Coho. This does not mean the program will focus on these species, but it gives a general indication of which species partners are interested in as a first step forward in the discussion. OTAC is developing sub-committees to explore these and other species further. These efforts are also discussed at local working group meetings hosted annually by the NRCS county field offices. This year's local work group meetings will start in November and run through the winter. Dates and details to be posted on the NRCS Oregon website.

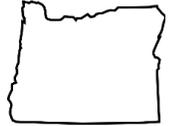
## 2017 Conservation Implementation Strategies

**Heather Medina Saucedo, NRCS**

- Many of your local staffs attend local work group meetings at the county levels. The local work group process puts together Conservation Implementation Strategies (CIS)
- Oregon has 73 total CIS for FY17, includes RCPP and Joint Chiefs. See map on the slides.
- These strategies address priority natural resource concerns such as water quality/quantity, degraded plant condition, soil erosion, wildlife habitat, etc.



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- The CIS's are funded by the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
- Ron Alvarado added comments about the local planning process. Each District Conservationist develops a long range plan for their county with partners. The long range plan identifies the resource concerns and priorities for the county. The Conservation Implementation Strategies build off of the long range plan. If we're going to move the needle, we need to focus investments on specific areas such as the CIS. We typically have between 70 and 80 CIS in a year. This does not include the national initiatives such as organics and high tunnel.

## National Water Quality Initiative: Pilot Watersheds

Heather Medina Saucedo, NRCS

- NRCS has allocated funds in the past for Willow Creek in Malheur County and Brandy Creek in Marion County through the National Water Quality Initiative. This year NRCS will remove Willow Creek from the NAQI funds and will continue those funds with Brandy Creek. High demand from landowners in this watershed for irrigation improvements, more demand than funding at this time. NRCS will continue to invest EQIP dollars in the water quality initiative in this watershed.
- Pilot Project looking for ready and willing partners and a TMDL watershed. Lost River in Klamath County has an OWEB grant application from partners on this project. NRCS local staff are working with the partner group to develop a proposal for that pilot project.
- The goal of the pilot project is to monitor work being done with DEQ and other partners. The pilot project does not involve financial assistance but focuses on providing technical assistance through watershed planning.

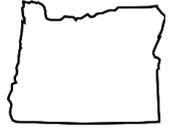
## Establishment of OTAC Sub-Committees

Sara Magenheimer, NRCS

- Opportunities exist for members to participate in sub-committees on the following topics:
  - Working lands easements
  - Wetland easements
  - Conservation Innovation Grants



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- Field Office Technical Guide
- Working Lands for Wildlife
  
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) comments due Oct. 1 to NRCS. There's an easement sub-committee currently working on easement priority areas. If you have comments on these priority areas, contact Heather Medina Saucedo.
  
- Conservation Innovation Grants: NRCS Oregon allocates \$250,000 every year from its EQIP allocation for CIG. Individual state CIG projects cap at \$75,000 each. National CIGs are up to \$1 million. It's a very competitive program. The sub-committee would help develop categories or focus areas for future CIG proposals in Oregon.

## Soil Health Partnership Committee, NRCS

Cory Owens, NRCS and Teresa Matteson, Benton SWCD

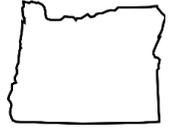
- We are now launching a new Oregon Soil Health Partners Group. This is a new active soil health partner group that has been in the works for several years.
  
- Teresa Matteson's work in soil health began with a CIG in 2009. She helped launch the Soil Quality Network which is available on the OSU Small Farms Website. Also hosted 2 workshops with support from Western SARE in 2012 and 2013. Total of 152 participants engaged, 24% (37) attended both events. The soil quality network database is pending.
  
- The Oregon Soil Health Partners Group builds upon the Soil Quality Network. It will have seasonal virtual meetings, get-together at CONNECT, newsletter and announcements.
  
- Events already planned for Fall of 2016 through Summer 2017. OTAC members will be added to the partner list, can designate a representative from your agency to attend this group.

## NRCS Plant Materials Center Update & Cover Crop Tool Demo

Annie Young Mathews, NRCS Plant Materials Center, Corvallis



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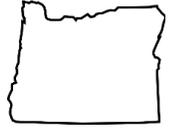
- Plant Materials Center develops plant technology, provides training and education to NRCS staff, partners and the public, collects plant attribute data for practice standards, models, etc., develops and tests new plant materials to address specific resource concerns.
- Pacific Northwest Cover Crop Selection Tool – A collaboration between the Plant Materials Centers in Oregon, Washington and Idaho to help landowners develop adapted species for the region. Released in the spring and is now available on the plant materials program website and the NRCS Oregon website.
- The tool requires Microsoft Access to operate. It helps select annual cover crops for annual rotations in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Users answer questions using dropdown menus on the worksheet. Detailed instructions are available for each question to help guide producers through the worksheet. The tool will help producers plan for which cover crops to use, how much seed to use, and when to plant them based on site-specific parameters and their goals.
- PMC Pollinator Habitat Project: Doing seed mix trials and demonstrations for pollinator-friendly plants. Working with partners such as Xerces and landowners to achieve this project.
- Other Active PMC Projects: Seeding recommendations for restoring wetlands, prairies and oak woodlands. Native and weed seedling identification guide. Updating seeding and planting guide for Western Oregon.
- Developed the new Native Seed Production Manual for the Pacific Northwest – copies are available by contacting the PMC or available online.
- Cover crop calculator tool available through Oregon Small Farms. This tool can be used as a complement to the cover crop selector tool.

## Farm Service Agency Update

Phil Ward, FSA



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- General CRP sign-up took place this year. Congress moved cap from 32 million to 24 million acres in CRP. Oregon had 20 percent of CRP bids re-accepted into enrollment. Could not fund nearly 80 percent of applications this year.
- Workshop in Umatilla County with 125 producers on what do to with their land after their CRP contracts expire.
- Asked OTAC members to think about Oregon's approach/recommendations for CRP lands going forward in the 2018 Farm Bill.
- CREP Agreement in Oregon, a sub-set of CRP, is targeted toward restoration of riparian areas along key waterways in Oregon. Working to draft a new agreement for CREP by Oct. 1 to address some issues that came up in renewing CRP contracts at irrigation rates this year.
- Grazing has been added as a mid-contract management activity on CRP grounds.
- About 20 to 25 contracts set to expire at the end of this month; specific numbers and acreages will be provided to OTAC either via email or at a later meeting.
- FSA in process of re-staffing the Grant County Office, plans to re-join the NRCS Service Center per congressional request.

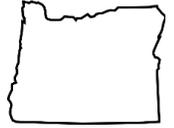
## Renewable Energy Opportunities for Ag Producers and Rural Small Business

Robert Wallace, Wy'East RC&D

- Funded by USDA Rural Development REAP Program
- Goals are to educate producers and rural small businesses about energy efficiency and renewable energy options; evaluate economic feasibility of using energy efficiency and renewable energy to offset farm energy use; provide project consultation and hands-on technical assistance; and increase number of successful applicants to REAP grants/loan programs.
- Interested in leveraging funds with NRCS, OWEB and other funding partners to incorporate the energy component into irrigation projects.
- Loan program allows producers to take a loan from their commercial bank vs borrowing directly from USDA.
- Wy'East is a regional nonprofit based in The Dalles. They have helped operators install roughly 600 energy projects since 2010.
- Partnering with Sustainable Northwest, Northwest Energy Engineering, LLC, and Klamath Watershed Partnership



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- The gap: why aren't more farmers and rural small businesses investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy and projects? Research showed a lack of awareness; prohibitive costs upfront; complexity of project implementation; program 'silos' between agencies.
- Eligibility for REDA – Ag producers with at least 50% of income coming from ag operations; exempt from rural requirement. Small businesses must be rural, not in Portland, Salem-Keizer, Eugene, Springfield, Bend or Medford. Not eligible for residential projects; non-profits and public entities (irrigation districts).
- Examples of successful projects: PV Solar Energy project in Klamath Falls, OR; Dual Variable Frequency Drives in Sisters, OR. The VFD has about 30 percent energy savings.
- Plans to reach out to the Dairy Association and other groups to leverage this project with other partners. Plans for meetings in the Dalles area, Redmond/Bend, Klamath Falls.
- Received a state CIG this year for Advanced Precision Irrigation 2.0. Focuses on pump station operation and efficiency, using weather models to measure efficiency of field irrigation application. This will help producers determine the most efficient times to irrigation based on weather conditions.

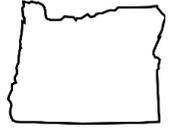
## Rollout of NEW Conservation Stewardship Program

Heather Medina Saucedo, NRCS

- More than 70 million acres enrolled since 2010
- FY17 ushers in a new era of CSP – emphasis on stewardship, more transparent and flexible
- It was difficult to explain the results of the previous screening tool; there's new screening and ranking tools that will make the process easier to understand and simplified.
- The new program will focus on conservation planning up-front.
- CSP will provide clarified enhancements tied to conservation practice relations
- Integrates with state and local priority resource concerns
- Consistency in payments – no more 'performance points' – payments consist of an annual "baseline" payment to incentivize existing conservation and an additional payment based on additional conservation activities.
- Oregon receives an average of 300,000 acres of CSP each year; each state is allocated a specified number of acres. About 10 percent of the state's CSP acres go to non-industrial private forest lands.
- Oregon zones for CSP organized by resource concerns; applicants will be competing on similar resource concerns in their area. See map handout.
- Minimum annual payment of \$1,500.



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- Baseline payments calculated by number of resource concerns met at time of application, plus acres in the land use and pre-determined land-use rate.
- Next steps for a successful program: providing greater flexibility; responding to customer and partner feedback; advancing precision conservation; and demonstrating outcomes.

## Discussion on Future of OTAC

Sara Magenheimer, NRCS

- NRCS has received feedback from various partners that we need to find ways to increase the networking and dialogue within OTAC. Explore opportunities to have increased networking and dialogue – “no presentations, just conversations.”
- Suggestions brought forth by the group: Add social/networking time before the formal OTAC meeting; partner update conversations based on a pre-determined theme; reinvigorate sub-committees within OTAC to address priority issues in a more proactive manner. Explore more informal networking opportunities within OTAC.
- Farm Bill authorizes state conservationist to establish a state technical advisory committee.
- Share feedback or suggestions with Cory Owens.

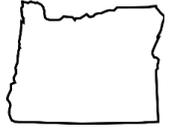
## Closing Comments

- **ODFW** – The new state conservation plan has been released and is now available on the ODFW website.
- **Oregon Tilth** – Organicology Conference coming up in February 2017 in Portland. There will be an intensive session on natural resources and biodiversity on farms. Involvement from other partners such as Xerces and NRCS.
- **Oregon Water Resources Department** – Funding opportunities are available for the Feasibility Study Grant Program and Water Projects, Grants and Loans. Also the local integrated water planning program is kicking off now with 4 pilot areas. Mid-Coast; Harney County; Lower John Day; and Upper Grande Ronde.
- **NOAA Fisheries** – Shifting leadership at NOAA Fisheries; they have a new regional administrator at NOAA Fisheries. Position changed from a political appointment to a career position.



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