

**Oregon Technical Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Agenda**

March 10  
 12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center  
 15210 NE Miley Road  
 Aurora, OR 97002

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
12:30	Opening / Introduction	10	Tom Watson, NRCS Phil Ward, FSA
12:40	FSA Update	30	Kelly Worley, FSA
1:10	2016 Conservation Innovation Grant Opportunities	20	Todd Peplin, NRCS Program Specialist
1:30	Oregon NRCS 2015 End-of Year Accomplishments Local Work Group Process	20	Sara Magenheimer, NRCS Partnership Liaison
1:50	Working with Oregon Tribes	20	Kathy Ferge, NRCS Tribal Liaison
2:10	BREAK		
2:25	On-Farm Data - CIG	30	Bruce Wilson, H&R Engineering
2:55	NRCS Basin Team Leader Update	20	Heather Medina Sauceda, NRCS Basin Team Leader
3:15	Baker and Grant County Post-Fire Flood Awareness Monitoring	15	Scott Oviatt, State Hydrologist NRCS
3:30	Regional Conservation Partnership Program Update	15	Loren Unruh, Leader for Programs NRCS
3:45	Closing Comments	10	Tom Watson, NRCS Phil Ward, FSA



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

## Attendees

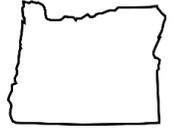
- Tom Watson, NRCS
- Sara Magenheimer, NRCS
- Scott Oviatt, NRCS
- Tracy Robillard, NRCS
- Eric Hartstein, OWEB
- Karl Dalla Rosa, USFS
- Ryan Gordon, ODF
- Harmony Burrigh, OWRD
- Robert Wallace, Wy'East RC&D
- Rick McMonagle, East Multnomah SWCD
- Walter Powel, Oregon Wheat Growers League
- Manette Simpson, ODA
- KC VanNetta, VanNetta Bros.
- Tammy Dennee, OR Dairy Farmers Association
- Sam Asai, FSA
- Kelly Worley, FSA
- Mitze Lankford, FSA
- Loren Unruh, NRCS
- Todd Peplin, NRCS
- Bruce Taylor, OHJV
- Kathy Ferge, NRCS
- Brittany Steele, OCA

## Opening Comments

- **Tom Watson, NRCS Acting State Conservationist:** NRCS Oregon's State Conservationist Ron Alvarado has taken a detail in Washington, D.C., for the next four months as the Deputy Chief for Science and Technology. We expect him back in July, however there's always a chance that his detail could be extended. Tom Watson is serving as the acting state conservationist during that time.
- **Sam Asai, Farm Service Agency:** Sam introduced a new member of the FSA staff, Mitzi Lankford, who serves as the new chief of foreign programs (replacing Pam Davis' position). She's new to Oregon and started her career in California. She has worked with FSA for several years. We are happy to welcome her on board!



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

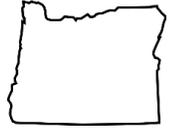
---

## FSA Update - Kelly Worley, FSA

- Kelly reported that both the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) have been very active in the last six months, especially with the devastating drought and wildfire season in Eastern Oregon. Additionally, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been very active with a grasslands sign-up and a general sign-up that just ended.
- New guidance from the FSA national headquarters has directed all states to cut their conservation priority areas roughly in half for CRP. The CRP general sign-up began in December and ended in February, so the new changes may impact some of those individuals. The footprint area in Oregon has been reduced. This was the most competitive sign up that FSA has had in Oregon. See the handouts for a detailed map showing where FSA has reduced the CRP priority areas as a result of this directive.
- FSA established a wildlife priority zone associated with the CRP Grasslands sign-up. The national office is still ranking and processing applications. Only 1 million acres were allocated for that program, so it's very competitive. Announcements on applicants selected will be forthcoming. Oregon has 84 proposals in the queue for the CRP Grasslands program, totaling more than 61,000 acres.
- The general CRP sign-up has 194,000 acres in Oregon submitted for consideration. Ranking should start soon, FSA is very hopeful that Oregon receives a generous portion of those sign-ups.
- A question was asked about how FSA determines the per acre value of the payment? The payments are determined by the soils.
- A question was asked about where the various grassland priority areas are located. There's a sage grouse wildlife priority area on the East side and a Fenders Blue Butterfly area on the West side.
- Emergency Conservation Program: Harney, Morrow, Lake, Wasco, Hood River, Baker and Grant were the most active counties that requested an ECP sign-up.
- NRCS is also following up on any requests for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program assistance on the coastal areas that were designated as natural disaster areas (ex:



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

Oregon coastal areas impacted by flooding in December, such as Tillamook). The EWP requires a project sponsor such as an SWCD or an entity; EWP does not directly work with a landowner.

- Emergency Forest Restoration Program: Most activity has been in Baker, Grant, Malheur, Lake, Linn, Benton, Lincoln and Wallowa counties. They submitted requests for EFRP funding to alleviate drought and wildfire conditions.

## Conservation Innovation Grant Program - Todd Peplin, NRCS

- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) stimulate new innovative technologies and approaches to further agricultural production while also protecting and enhancing natural resources. The overall goal is to find projects that can be transferred to the wider agricultural sector and can be added into NRCS technical manuals. The transferability piece is really key—not just for NRCS, but for the agricultural community as a whole.
- CIG includes a National component and a State component. The award amount can go up to \$2 million for a national CIG. It's very competitive and they get about 400 applications annually. They have \$20 million for this year.
- State CIG funds come from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This year Oregon has \$250,000 available for CIGs in Oregon. That equates to about 3 percent of our EQIP funding. The maximum request for a state CIG in Oregon is \$75,000. The projects can last up to three years for a state CIG.
- Anyone can apply except for other federal agencies. CIG projects must involve farmers, ranchers or woodland owners who are eligible for EQIP. Applicants must show a 1:1 match which can be any ratio of cash or in-kind service.
- Funding priority is determined based on the local adaptation of the project, how it ties in with the Oregon NRCS Strategic Approach to Conservation, and the transferability to agricultural production. See FAQs and Fact Sheet for more information about the program.
- NRCS has established the following categories for State CIG: Energy, Air quality/climate change, water quality, water quantity, plant health/vigor, soil quality/health, and wildlife



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

habitat.

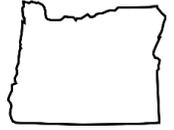
- National CIG grants close May 10. State CIG closes on May 23. NRCS is planning to post the state announcement for program funding on March 25. NRCS will provide the announcement to OTAC members once it's live on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).
- On April 11, NRCS is planning to host a webinar that goes through the step-by-step CIG application process.
- A question was asked on the matching funds: The dollar match must come from non-federal funds.

## End of Year Accomplishments - Tracy Robillard, NRCS

- 2015 was a milestone year for partnerships in Oregon. It was the first year that NRCS awarded projects through the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). In 2015, Oregon received funding for 6 projects—one of the leading states in the nation for RCPP. We are continuing that success in 2016, as NRCS just announced that Oregon has received funding for 7 new RCPP projects in the latest round of RCPP.
- Throughout 2015, we celebrated several significant milestones for wildlife, including sage grouse and the Oregon Chub. In September of 2015, the Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the greater sage grouse was not warranted for a listing under the Endangered Species Act. This was the result of years of strategic conservation work by NRCS, partners and landowners to restore more than 200,000 acres of sage grouse habitat in Oregon and address two-thirds of the conifer threat on priority private lands. Additionally, in February 2015 we celebrated the de-listing of the Oregon Chub as the first fish in history to be de-listed due to recovery. NRCS played a role in Chub recovery by investing over \$4 million in wetland easement programs to restore and protect over 800 acres of habitat.
- See the FY15 Accomplishments report for more information. For questions about the report, contact Tracy Robillard. Also, visit the NRCS Oregon website at [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov) to read the full success stories mentioned in the report.



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

## Role of State Technical Committee and Local Work Group Process - Sara Magenheimer, NRCS

- Nationally, all states have a state technical committee through NRCS. Oregon has really tried to broaden the scope of what our state technical committee does. We are co-chaired with FSA, and we try to meet three to four times a year. We do things very differently here in Oregon compared to other states, but we believe our approach is successful.
- NRCS Oregon uses a “Strategic Approach to Conservation” to identify natural resource concerns and lay out strategies for how to address those challenges, leveraging resources from partners. The local working groups work locally with the NRCS office and the conservation districts. Communication from the local working groups on-the-ground ties in with the state advisory committee. The local working groups are like a mini state technical advisory committee. It’s important for those of us in the state committee to be aware of those local working groups and the issues they are discussing locally. These groups give our district conservationists the tools they need to develop a long range plan.
- NRCS priority areas across the state based on the local working group process.
- Here’s a general flow chart of the process: Local Working Groups > Long Range Plans / Local Strategies > Conservation Implementation Strategies > State Technical Committee > State Strategies
- Oregon NRCS has a Local Working Group Website (search for the “partners” page). There’s a list of the local working group meetings with notes and agendas.
- NRCS also has a county webpage for each NRCS county office. These pages provide information about their local conservation strategies and active projects.

## Working with Oregon Tribes - Kathy Ferge, NRCS

- NRCS Oregon is actively engaged with the federally-recognized tribes to get conservation projects on-the-ground. It looks different depending on the tribe.



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

- Our state conservationist meets with the tribes every year, and we formed a tribal advisory group. Now the tribes are hosting those meetings themselves. We are hosting meetings with the tribes and programs staff to talk with them about NRCS programs and to see how they can align with their tribal natural resource goals. Our district conservationists have stepped up to the plate to work with the tribes in their areas, especially the smaller tribes.
- The Burns Paiute Tribe secured a CIG grant; and they are part of the Sage Grouse Initiative and have an EQIP contract through SGI. They are a great example of how our field staff and state office staff can engage the tribes so they can take advantage of multiple NRCS Farm Bill programs.
- As the Tribal Liaison for NRCS Oregon, Kathy helps keep everyone connected with Ron and field staff and tribal contacts. One of the things we're hearing from inland tribes is that climate change is affecting first foods, such as impacts to large game in terms of changing migration patterns, and changes in the season for gathering roots and berries. Our field staff can take that information and help them put together a Conservation Implementation Strategy to meet those needs.
- In order to receive NRCS financial assistance, the tribes must be federal-recognized to; but if they are a 401(c) non-profit or another entity they can also work with us.
- Kathy handed out a new Tribal Fact Sheet with updates about current NRCS projects with Oregon tribes. See the fact sheet for more information.

## On-Farm Data with a Conservation Innovation Grant - Bruce Wilson, H&R Engineering

- H&R Engineering created a new tool using funding from an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant. Two SWCDs (Marion and Tillamook) provided a cash match, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture provided some matching funds. We started in Oct. 2014 and have been working on it since then. We hope to finish it by the end of this year and have it running pretty solid.



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

- H&R Engineering are providing the in-kind services through development of the program.
- Our goal was to put together a record-keeping system for on-farm nutrient balances (manure management). We started with an Excel spreadsheet, but then we thought about putting it in an HTML Internet program. The system is called ODARK - Online Decision Making and Record Keeping.
- Anyone can go to this site and access the tool. It's available at: [www.odark.org](http://www.odark.org)
- Our goal this year is to make this user-friendly for mobile devices and phones. When you go into your phone and log-on, it can recognize whether you're using a desktop or a mobile device. You can use this tool on a mobile device, but it's not geared specifically for that.
- The tool allows farmers to create a nutrient plan or update a plan within the site. All the components are there on the website, but it allows you to massage it and create what you need.
- The tool uses an encrypted SSL secure connection to the server (256-bit encryption), which is much higher than what most sites are using. We have a level of security that we feel is more than adequate for the level of data that we have.
- The tool includes ways to keep track of nutrient balances, nutrient applications, grazing, cropping, and more. It has the capability to export a report in a printer friendly, readable format.
- Where does the funding come from to help maintain a tool like this? From the people who use it. The tool is free to use. We're hoping the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association will host it on their website, or a neutral third-party organization.
- The tool helps farmers track their nutrient applications to better manage the land and to also ensure compliance with state regulations.
- The Purpose of ODARK is:
  1. Provide an easy-to-use, computer-based record keeping system for nutrient applications;



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

2. Help to determine the right time, right amount, right source and right place to apply nutrients;
3. Generate reports of nutrient applications to satisfy permitting requirements and other purposes.

## **Baker and Grant County Post-Fire Flood Awareness Monitoring - Scott Oviatt, NRCS**

- NRCS Basin Team Leader Jay Gibbs organized a meeting in the fall to discuss post fire situations in Baker and Grant counties. The process involved immediate responses such as re-seeding through EQIP. But another major part of the story is discussing community preparedness relating to snowpack and run-off scenarios.
- After a fire, there is a much greater potential for flooding, debris slides and other damage due to rain-on-snow events in the burned areas. Our goal is to educate the community so that they are aware of what types of snowpack conditions are “ripe” for flooding.
- NRCS has launched a series of weekly reports for burned areas in John Day and Baker City to provide information about the snow conditions as it relates to the potential for flooding and debris run-off. The handouts provide information on the current snow water equivalent levels, the density of the snow, air temperature, and other factors.
- These weekly reports are being used by a number of partners, including emergency management personnel, SWCD staff, National Weather Service Offices, the Oregon Water Resources Department, Congressional staffers, county commissioners, Oregon Department of Forestry, City/County staff members and private landowners.
- Scott showed several maps of the burned areas around John Day and Baker City, from the Burned Area Emergency Response Team (BAER). See Powerpoint Slides for more info.
- NRCS and the local SWCD did \$512,524 of seeding after the Canyon Creek fire via helicopter. The seeding started in November and finished in mid-January. They seeded over the snow with native grasses and wheat grasses.



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

- NRCS is working to develop a similar report for the Grizzly Complex Fire in Wallowa County.
- For more information, visit the NRCS Snow Survey website at [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/snow](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/snow)

## Regional Conservation Partnership Program Update - Loren Unruh, NRCS

- In 2015 NRCS had 40 pre-proposals in Oregon for the new RCPP. 15 of those were asked back for final proposals, and six of those projects were selected for funding.
- In 2015, NRCS invested \$22 million with a partner match of \$34 million (those funds are spread out over five years)
- Oregon was among the top in the nation for RCPP projects in 2015.
- We had seven projects selected this year in 2016 for RCPP. Partners are matching funds with a total of \$33 million for the projects awarded this year.
- The RCPP projects selected this year have 64 different partners across Oregon.
- See handouts and Powerpoint Slides for details about the selected projects and maps.

## Closing Comments

- **Rick McMonagle - East Multnomah SWCD:** There's a free farm succession workshop March 14 in Troutdale, featuring various guest speakers. All are welcome to attend even if they are not from Multnomah County.
- **Eric Hartstein - OWEB:** OWEB recently awarded funding through its Focused Investment Partnership and Capacity Building Awards. Those areas include the Grande Ronde, Harney Basin Wetlands, Sage Grouse, Ashland Forests, Deschutes, and Willamette. Contact Eric for more information.



# Oregon Technical Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes for March 10, 2016, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
OSU North Willamette Research and Extension Center / 15210 NE Miley Road / Aurora, OR 97002

---

- **Sam Asai - FSA:** FSA is piloting a new software program called “Bridges to Opportunity” in 6 Oregon counties and in five states across the nation. The initiative focuses on getting anyone interested in agriculture the resources they need to achieve their goals. It will be available in the service centers and will be rolled out to the entire country soon. For more information, contact Taylor Murray, FSA.
- **Ryan Gordon - ODF:** While most of us recognize Ryan as working with the Oregon Network of Watershed Councils, Ryan now works with Oregon Department of Forestry. Jim Cathcart has moved and is now working with the East Multnomah SWCD, but Ryan has not replaced Jim’s former position. ODF plans to hire for Jim’s former position soon. Ryan is in a new position as the Family Forestland Coordinator. The department is working to build capacity to provide more technical assistance to small family forest woodland owners. Ryan is trying to get out on-the-ground more to attend small woodland association meetings and work with family woodland owners. He is working with Kelly and FSA on EFRP funding throughout the state and focusing on providing technical assistance to Oregon woodland owners. They are helping landowners with planning by leveraging the Forest Trust Program and making seedlings available for small woodland owners impacted by wildfire. They need 1.9 million seedlings in Baker County alone, but given the demand nationwide, it’s hard to get space to grow that many seedlings. They are working on leveraging resources to get some of those resources and expect to have 200,000 seedlings soon.
- **Brittany Steele - Oregon Cattlemen’s Association:** On May 22-24, there will be a three day convention and trade show in Sun River. Ethan Lane, Executive Director for PLC is speaking at the event.
- **Harmony Burrigh, Oregon Water Resources:** Harmony is a new member on the staff with the Oregon Water Resources Department. She serves as a Planning Coordinator. They are getting ready to do a five-year update on the Departments’ Integrated Water Resources Strategy. One of her goals in the position is trying to increase capacity for coordinated technical assistance at the local level. She is heading up a relatively new program with local implementation of water resources planning at the local level.

- END -

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.