

Bakeoven / Buck Hollow Watershed Council Meeting Rangeland Health Project Identification Workshop

September 25, 2014

12:00 – 3:00 PM

A & K Ranch Meeting Room, Maupin

MINUTES

Attendees:

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Abbie Simmons, SWCD | Bob Krein, Co-chair | Larry Ashley, Landowner | Dan Carver, Landowner |
| Anna Buckley, Coordinator | Randy Warnock, Landowner | Ryan Bessette, SWCD | Melissa Stresing, NRCS |
| Lissa Biehn, FSA | Aimee Bell, FSA | Lance Dill, Landowner | Garrett Duyck, NRCS |

Call to Order and Introductions

Bob called the meeting to order and had members review minutes from the previous meeting. Randy moved to approve last meetings minutes, Larry seconded and the motion passed. Anna briefly explained the agenda and said the purpose of this workshop is that she is looking for ideas and projects landowners are interested in. Bob asked if the council is up to date on all paperwork for OWEB's standards? Anna said yes as of right now we are. Larry asked do you have to come up with all of the project ideas at one time? Anna said that this doesn't have to be done all at once. The lists can be added to, as long as there is a general topic or area of concern.

Program Overviews

Emergency Conservation Program Fire Updates – Aimee Bell, FSA

Aimee Bell with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), explained the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and the CRP grazing. She said that the programmatic relief has been approved for Gillam, Moro, Sherman, and Wasco counties and that it will not cost you your 25%. The dates are 30 days to graze. Larry asked if starting on October 1, can you rent out your CRP? Any landowners wishing to graze need to call Aimee. The dates for grazing are: 1 round of 120 consecutive days, starting Nov. 1 and ends Feb. 28; 2 rounds of 60 consecutive days, starting Jan. 1 – Feb. 28 and then back in July 16 - Sept. 13 (These will cost you money compared to regular routine grazing). There is plenty of paperwork and the SWCD and NRCS will do the stocking rates. The new program standard pay, for beginner farmers, don't have to pay the rental rates for the first 10 years, they also don't have to be the landowner, just has to own the cows.

There is also a CRP early out or termination option (if it has been effective for 5 years), can be taken out without a penalty. That takes affect October 1 and any time after October 1 can be prorated (Only for fiscal year 2015). CREP is not available, only CRP. If you opt to take it out on October 1 you will still be paid for the previous year.

Aimee also explained that there is cost share available for the ECP of 75% to replace fences, depending on the damage. She said she can email applications but will need to know the miles as well as the age of the fence. They are taking applications but as of now there isn't any money. November 14 is the deadline. So far there hasn't been any word on the 2015 CRP sign-ups. There wasn't one in 2014 but FSA will be in contact with those who are coming up for renewal.

Livestock Disaster Assistance – Lissa Biehn, FSA

Lissa Biehn is working with the disasters programs. She said that Wasco county is not considered in a drought but there are programs for livestock folks whether the ground was leased or not. She said that there is 7.3% for programs for Federal BLM that burnt up and that folks need to get in and get an application by next Tuesday (September 30). Lissa explained that the emergency program includes livestock, honeybees, and fish, but is there to help with fires on your own ground. She said that these are cost share flat payments and is only for livestock that were killed. She also explained that listed species have a program as well but there are a lot more hoops to jump through.

Lissa also said that they are offering \$5 a head for calves that were killed in last years winter storm. She briefly explained NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program). If you were affected you need to come in and give a notice of loss. If the county had more than 50% loss of grazing there are options available but you need to get it documented. She said the same goes for beginner/ limited resource/ gender or discriminated farmers, which is free for the first 10 years, and can save them \$250.

NRCS Farm Bill Programs – Melissa Stresing and Garrett Duyck, NRCS

Garrett gave a quick update on programs that are available. CSP and EQIP are the two main ones right now. He explained CSP and said that everyone is eligible as long as your land isn't already enrolled. Forestry CSP is also available. He provided some detail on EQIP and said that it works/ provides financial assistance as long as it's project oriented and is a problem that has been reoccurring. EQIP funding programs are not available right now but once a project gets put together money could become available in the long run. The old CSP expires Sept. 30, 2014 and all land in those contracts are eligible to go into the new CSP which have 5 or 10 year contracts. Bob asked if it would include a project like better water for livestock? Melissa answered saying that they could put in wells for livestock, pipelines, and tap into springs, as long as a resource concern was identified. She did mention that NRCS cannot put in irrigation wells under EQIP. There has to be an issue your addressing, in this instance, the issue would be water quantity and that can be addressed in numerous ways. It would also have to be Bakeoven and Buck Hollow specific, be able to help a certain amount of landowners in the area and be able to see an impact in 10 years. She said that they are looking for ideas now because it could be a year or so before funding is available. Bob asked if you can group different projects together like; brush/ juniper removal, pipelines, etc.? Garrett said yes, we can make the program whatever we need to as necessary.

Wasco SWCD Cost Share Program – Ryan Bessette, SWCD

Ryan explained that the district has a \$5,000 max where the SWCD will cover half. He said that there are a lot of practices available, and handed members applications. Ryan said to come see him if you have any questions and would like to sit down and find a budget, get maps put together and get it approved by the board. Bob asked what is the difference between EQIP and cost share? Ryan explained that EQIP takes longer and may not go through, but there is a lot more money for a longer period of time. Cost share funds are usually available within 30 days or less but is a one-time deal. EQIP just needs a general topic and not a full-fledged plan. EQIP is just a flat rate with a limit of \$400,000, where the SWCD is by receipts.

OWEB Lower Deschutes Small Grant Program – Anna Buckley, SWCD

Anna quickly explained the small grant program. She said that the max amount is \$10,000 but you would only get \$9,600 because the SWCD takes \$400 of the original amount. The Small Grant Program contains a little more paperwork and roughly takes 2 months to get the money. She also mentioned that November 1 is the deadline for this cycle. The Small Grant team has a meeting coming up to look at new applications. Anna said that if you are asking for less than \$5,000, 75% of it will be cost share, which is a better deal but more paperwork than the SWCD Cost share program. If you're asking for the full \$10,000 you will be paying 50% compared to the \$5,000 where you would only pay 25%.

Workshop

Anna asked council members to share their resource concerns and why. She created a list of potential projects and why there is a concern.

1. Juniper Control (Upland/Riparian) – water, grazing (forage), erosion, riparian encroachment, stream flow impacts.
2. Water Quantity / Livestock Distribution – grazing, wells (EQIP can't help with the power, solar is available though).
3. Plants/Grasses – grazing, water, livestock distribution etc. Plant condition – noxious weeds (medusa head), not enough forage for livestock.
4. Medusa head – grazing, fire hazard, erosion, irrigation – steelhead, etc.
5. Feral Pigs – not widespread but a future concern (not if, but when)
6. Wildlife Concerns – adding them into a project for EQIP. Planting trees, shrubs, pollinator habitat.
7. Seeding – can go lots of ways. Purpose can be erosion, medusa head, wildlife (forage/habitat). Have to figure out how to prioritize seeding (soil type, basins, etc.) Degraded plant condition - better grass stand.

Council members discussed potential solutions and what works best for folks out here. They discussed what time of year to seed, techniques, etc. They also discussed fencing, spring/wells for water improvements, forage improvement, noxious weed control, intensive managed grazing, fire/hazards and brush control (juniper/sage). Dan shared personal stories and explained that over a 20 year period he has watched productivity go from 1 AUM/50 acres, to 1 AUM/2 acres. He also suggested controlled burning instead of juniper thinning. Dan said that burning is solving the long term issue, not just the short term. Randy suggested an intense grazing management to try and suppress the little juniper. He said that fire can be really hazardous and chemicals may be too expensive and may damage the grasses around the other trees. It was mentioned that funding is available if one would like to dive into one of these programs for grazing management. Anna handed out index cards and asked landowners to fill out their name and contact information, projects, problem they are hoping to address, estimated cost, and the percent they could pay for (in kind or cash for labor or materials). Some of the projects written down included: pipelines, fencing, seeding old grass fields, grazing management, range seeding - \$200/acre, haul water, tourism, juniper control, drilling wells, stream crossings, brush removal, and better water trough capacity. They were also asked to locate on the map of the watershed project sites and areas of concern. Discussion ensued.

Council members talked about different projects with the agencies that were present and getting more private information from the program overviews that were shared earlier in the meeting. The meeting wasn't officially adjourned but everyone thanked Bob for the awesome lunch and left at their own leisure.