

Crook Count Local Workgroup Meeting Minutes, February 14th, 2025

Meeting was convened at 10:05 am and all participants introduced themselves.

Present at the meeting:

Chris Mundy – NRCS

Andy Gallagher – Crook County SWCD

Kody Johannsen – ODF

Tim Deboodt – Crook County

Abby Papke – Crook SWCD

Dominic Rocco – ODFW Partner Biologist

David Stuart – NRCS

Darren Mitchell – NRCS

Scott Dugan – OSU Extension

Damon Brosnan – NRCS

Ryan Vogt – ODF

Benn Wallen – ODF

Gordon Jones – OSU Extension

Body Brown – Crooked River Watershed Council

Chris Gannon – Crooked River Watershed Council

Chris Mundy explained the Strategic Approach to Conservation and the CIS process to the group using the Conant Basin CIS as an example. Chris Mundy then highlighted past CIS successes and failures.

Chris Mundy moved on to current CIS's active in Crook County highlighting SGI, Powell Butte Irrigation Efficiency, Upper Crooked and Grizzly Mt. Forest Health, Non- Lethal Predator Control RCPP, ACEP/ALE program.

Andy asked if any measurements have been completed on water savings resulting from the Powell Butte Irrigation improvement project. Damon suggested using the Model developed by Freshwater Trust. Kody asked how long the Non- Lethal Predator control RCPP would be active – Damon responded 5 years. Damon mentioned that we have a new APHIS partner position for wolf conflict, David Andrews. Discussion on whether David was aware of the Wolf Depredation Committee in Crook County. Scott will email Chris Mundy contact info for this committee so he can make sure David can participate.

CREP funding has been halted – Bodie explained this and that FSA is doing their own CR surveys now which is slowing process down. Chris Gannon asked if they could use CR money in their OWEB CREP grant to hire an archeologist to perform these. Damon is looking into it.

Chris explained how the ACT NOW Wildfire funding was used this fall to treat wildfire issues from this summer. Ben asked about funding and Damon explained it is a yearly ask with local NRCS match being a normal requirement

Chris Mundy explained the CSP program then asked for input from each participant on future opportunities for CIS's in Crook County.

Andy Suggested an annual grass wildfire prevention RCPP and explained how remote sensing could be used to prioritize and rank applicants. Andy Also suggested extending the Powell Butte CIS because there is still need and no one else has the resources to help.

BOR water smart grants were discussed. Gannon asked if we could use the BOR project on the lower Crooked River to leverage funding. Damon said it should be watershed specific.

Andy suggested focusing on the uplands in McKay as another possible CIS. After all the work that has been done this would be the next reasonable move. Bodie Agreed.

Kody Johannsen asked if IRA goes away where would forestry priorities be focused. Chris M said they would lean on ODF for guidance on prioritizing areas. Kody asked we can seed with current forest contracts if ground disturbance is high. Chris M said we can add the practice if it isn't already in there.

Tim Deboodt – ODF wil upgrade station 2 in 2025 and increase ditch capacity simultaneously. They will be piping Grimes Ditch for 8 miles and irrigators may need assistance in this area for on farm and hookup costs. New Juniper bill in 2023 has been duplicated and there are currently two versions being looked at. First is 3078 from Central Oregon Cities. Second is 3515 from Representative Vikki Breese. Vikki's has 15 million with no strings attached. Andy explained that the SWCD is focusing on Clover Creek Watershed with the last bill, and they will be treating 2800 acres, and it is tied to OWEB money as well as NFWF Funds. OSU has installed shallow water well and weather stations to establish baseline information prior to the start of the juniper cutting. Tim continued that the Prineville Biomass facility is still going ahead, and the designs are 90% done. It will produce 43 MW of power, and the footprint needs to be enlarged to accommodate for the size of the design. There is not yet a power purchase agreement.

Dominic – ODFW has seed available for landowners at no cost. Access and Habitat program has dollars for seeding, cutting and planting. Pittman Roberston money will be available to the tune of about 100K, but you must be on the list so sign up if interested. Needs names now. As for the wolf issues, it seems like too many cooks in the kitchen. Lots of people doing thing but communication needs to improve so we are all working together. Wolf advisory committee can pay for losses. Sage Grouse Lek surveys start soon. He will be using the drone this year to see how it works and some new leks will be ground surveyed.

Darren- Implemented Post Fire Rehab team and developed a burn severity map that was used extensively by DCs throughout the burn areas to target resources after burn. NRCS developed burn severity maps and ODF did mortality maps.

Scott- Calving school had 71 people in attendance. Virtual fence class had 173 people in attendance both in person and virtual school. Beef Quality Assurance training teaches landowners how to track chain of supply. Small Farm School training coming up – one half day with 12 coursed targeting beginning to mid-level farmers. Bodie asked if virtual fence is available through NRCS – Chris said just for SGI applicants. Damon is working with BLM for something larger that would cover the whole county. Bodie asked more about Virtual fence and Darren explained that the property must be perimeter fenced to be eligible, and all the

cows must have collars. Damon said range riding as a WOLF practice will be available next year. Currently being used in other states but not yet approved in Oregon.

Ryan – no comment

Ben – asked about a CIS on McKay like the one on Trout Creek focusing on salmonid habitat. Chris explained that we want to measure effects of water switch before deciding if that is the direction to go. Ben asked if we could revisit the ranking questions on Forestry program to make it more effective. Chris said yes.

Gordon – Reaffirmed Andy's suggestion to extend the Powell Butter Irrigation Efficiency CIS and offered to help analyze water savings for projects completed thus far. On the 25th there will be a LESA/LEPA specialist named Troy Peters in town doing a workshop.

Bodie – asked if NRCS could fund perimeter fence. Chris said yes with grazing plan but no CIS in that area. Andy suggested a small grant app through the OWEB program. Tim suggested title 2 money through the USFS. Precedent has been set in Wheeler County.

Chris Gannon – Still much work on the lower crooked river project to be done – any help would be welcome. He too wants to wait on restoration work on McKay until results of the piping project have been seen. Chris asked if NRCS can help with analyzing water quality. Damon said no. If a problem is identified, we can help resolve it though.

Chris Mundy- Soil Survey in Crook County is PUBLISHED> BIG NEWS> Handed out Jenni Moffit's tutorial of web soil survey for all to use and read.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50am.