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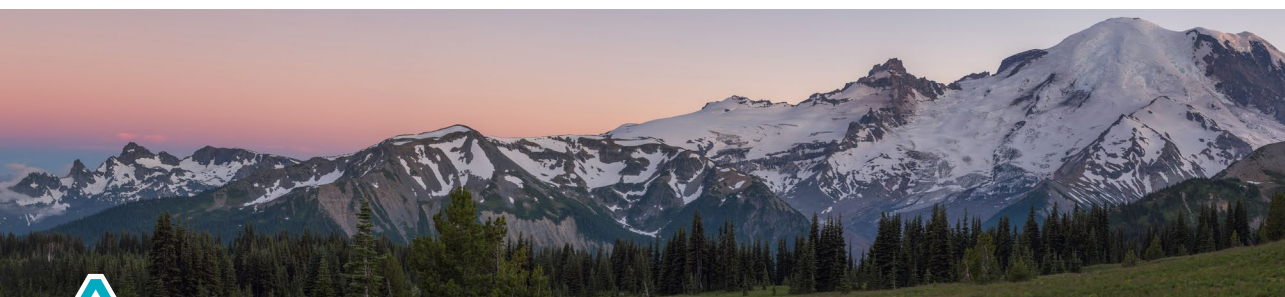


WASHINGTON

Partner Activity Report

Natural Resources Conservation Service - Washington

FY 2021



Helping People Help the Land

Washington
Natural
Resources
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Service

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A bright future ahead

By Roylene Comes At Night
NRCS-WA State Conservationist

We are seeing the agency gain tremendous support for what we do in voluntary conservation. NRCS had the support to hire an additional 1,529 entry level positions this past fiscal year. As we go in Fiscal Year '22 this support continues to grow in our number of partners, all of the new organization we are able to help, and the additional funding we are receiving outside of the Farm Bill.

The Growing Climate Solutions Act of 2021 is an example of this growing support. The legislation states, "This bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a voluntary Greenhouse Gas Technical Assistance Provider and Third-Party Verifier Certification Program to help reduce entry barriers into voluntary environmental credit markets for farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners. A voluntary environmental credit market is a market through which agriculture and forestry credits may be bought or sold."

The past fear of us being merged with another agency is long gone. As climate change and the effect on mother earth is gaining notoriety, NRCS is being recognized as the agency that has the delivery system to make the biggest effect on the worldly issues and concerns of climate change. So how is NRCS-WA going to be apart of this?

1. Hiring strategies to recruit new students as well as employees. This national strategy providing opportunities for interns (including housing stipends, tuition, and books) in which we will provide training and locations. We will be hosting a 1994 tribal scholar as well as 10 pathway students. We also will be hiring staff through new hiring authorities like veteran's preference and peace corp.

2. Now's our chance to capitalize on the investment we make in conservation. Our biggest challenge is the current 500 contract shortfall we must meet to financially afford more staff. Therefore, I set a benchmark of 30 active contracts per planner in FY'21 and this must continue into FY'22. Later in this booklet, we will discuss how we came to this number.

3. Over the next fiscal year, we are going to lead with partners to



implement the state's Sustainable Farm law. This law fits very well into the USDA department goal of climate farming. We have two years to prepare our customers for the opportunity to take full advantage of the state carbon markets. We are working with state partners like the Dairy Federation, and Washington state Conservation Commission to build this program.

4. Urban Conservation is nothing new as we had an urban conservationist in the state in 1997. We will be revitalizing this program with the offer of new opportunities for many areas in our state. In some teams we have already been implementing this program without a name or full-time staff. We will be advertising an urban conservation program manager that will work with leadership to develop more conservation practices that fit better. That will outreach to cities and towns to talk about farmer marketing and other types of conservation.

5. Environmental Quality Incentive Program - Conservation Incentive Contract (CIC) provide a new opportunity

for customers to try new practices without economic fears. One area we are working with tribes on is the development of potential, new incentives for larger riparian forest buffers.

6. Looking at adopting new conservation practices that will address more concerns of climate change, like livestock shade, etc.

We as the state leadership team have worked endlessly for months to provide a workforce strategy to assist in the increase of the workload so we can justify and increase the current and future workforce. I want you to know that this is a statewide effort that will require all of us (all hands-on deck) to meet these many opportunities. To do so, the state leadership team has developed a three-tiered approach to assist:

- **Logistics** (computers, vehicles, furniture, office space, etc.)
- **Training** (Process to request, competency levels/tool, path to journeyman planner, etc.)
- **Outreach** (Outreach toolboxes, focused communications campaigns)

The strategy will include areas such as:

- A focused communications campaign to support the Conservation Stewardship Program for Forestry.
- Developing specialized teams for Comprehensive Nutrient Management planning (CNMP), Easements, and Watershed Program (PL-566)
- Program managers for Urban Conservation and the Odessa Project that will provide direction to staff to better implement and utilize programs to address these areas.

This will all be challenging yet be very rewarding as we are looking at new programs (like PL-566) for the state as well as finally organizing and supporting programs (like urban conservation). At no time in NRCS's history have we had an opportunity to change the view of conservation while increasing staffing, partnerships and lead the efforts to reduce energy usage, carbon and preserve habitat, all at the same time. Hold on, because this is going to be great!



Conservationist Updates

East Area News

Ben Bonella

Acting East Area Conservationist

What a year we had! With COVID, maximum telework, limited office time and interactions with each other we still managed to have an exceptional year!

Program dollars by Team:

- Northeast Team | 21 contracts for \$668,201.96
- Palouse Team | 32 contracts for \$3,943,756.60
- West Palouse Team | 21 contracts for \$2,657,278.00
- Snake River Team | 79 contracts for \$7,514,837.71

Conservation on the Ground:

- 108,423.79 | Acres of Conservation Technical Assistance
- 373,418.06 acres | Conservation applied through Farm Bill programs
- 126,502 | Number of conservation plans written (Of that 496 of these are CRP plans & 486 of these have been implemented already!)



We were successful in filling six positions and have three positions pending HR hiring actions that we hope to bring on soon. We hope to bring on a new Partner Biologist in January located in Ritzville. We are continuing to prioritize staffing in FY22 to fill vacant positions throughout the Area and appreciate continued partner support in finding qualified applicants.

Thank you, staff and partners, for another very successful year!

Central Area News

Austin Shero

Central Area Conservationist

We have a lot to be proud of in Central Washington. Our partners and agency employees have been hard at work this year. Through those efforts, and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP), and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP), NRCS has entered into 144 contracts, totaling over \$17.5 million to address resource concerns within the Central Area. I certainly want to brag on our NRCS crew, but I also know none of this would be possible without the continued assistance, leadership, and amazing relationship we have with our local Conservation Districts and partners. We are proud to be accomplishing the same mission of helping people help the land.

helped assist NRCS complete required Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) status reviews. This task could not have been completed throughout eastern Washington without partner assistance.

A large, robust, and diverse group continues to meet and develop funding strategies surrounding the Odessa aquifer. This group has been meeting for quite some time, and a great deal of momentum is building around proposals to address resource concerns, solve water issues, and improve farming activities around the continually depleting aquifer. Funding opportunities are challenging for a project of this size, but the group is taking a very broad-based approach involving multiple agencies, local groups, and state government to target several different



funding sources. It is exciting to see this group continue to grow and build.

Final agreements for two new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) projects are wrapping up in Central Area. We are very proud of the efforts between NRCS and local partners actively working to address locally identified resource concerns through non-traditional paths.

Two WaterSmart proposals have been



Partners across Central Area have

submitted across Central Washington. These projects work jointly with NRCS and Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) to resolve current irrigation water distribution issues directly tied to BoR projects. Historically, Washington has not received WaterSmart funding before, so we're eager to utilize this new program to our state.

The Sage Grouse Initiative Expiring CRP-Near Lek program in central Washington has been a resounding success. This program came about

through discussions with local partners for the specific priority of protecting at-risk, intact grasslands.

Over the course of the last two years, as identified by our local partners and Conservation Districts, NRCS entered 51 contracts with landowners, thus protecting 23,584 acres. This also created a "bridge" for producers until CRP acres were available to compete for within the area. Thankfully, this opportunity will come for producers in Fiscal Year 2022.

NRCS is evaluating the program moving forward into next fiscal year. This is certainly a "mission accomplished" moment for producers, habitat, and the sage grouse. None of this would have been possible without timely action from local partners and CD's, working directly with NRCS field offices, to identify this complex issue and work toward a unique and creative solution!

West Area News

David Rose

West Area Conservationist

The West Area is excited to get started working with 3 new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects. Each will be addressing critical issues in their local area and are led by very motivated partners.

1877 Poop Smart Clark:

The Poop Smart Clark RCPP is a Pollution Identification and Correction program that utilizes expertise from local agencies and nonprofits to reduce sediment, nutrient, and bacteria runoff in Clark County. Through pollution source identification, targeted outreach, education, and implementation of on-the-ground practices, Poop Smart Clark connects landowners with the tools they need to correct pollution, drive social change and spur adoption of improved management practices. Lead partner is the Clark Conservation District.

2382 Nooksack Watershed Restoration:

The goal of the Nooksack Watershed Restoration Project is to address the natural resource concerns of inadequate aquatic habitat for fish and water quality degradation. The project will restore fluvial processes to improve ESA-listed salmonid spawning, rearing and holding habitat while increasing low flow and thermal refugia. Project objectives focus on root causes of habitat degradation, namely the lack of large, stable log jams that maintain habitat-forming processes.



The project addresses habitat limiting factors identified in the WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan (lack of key habitats, low habitat diversity, high water temperature, high channel instability, and elevated fine sediment). This project consists of five restoration projects split between two tribal partners - Lummi Natural Resources and Nooksack Natural Resources - working to recover two native chinook salmon populations essential to the recovery of ESA-listed Puget Sound chinook.

2243 WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery and Water Quality 2.0:

This is a renewal of RCPP 1344 with Whatcom Conservation District to open fish passage and restore habitat in Whatcom County by replacing culverts with bridges, adding large woody debris and riparian vegetation to streams. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife advises and helps plan the stream restoration, conducts much of the restoration as their partner contribution and conducts fish and redd counts in the streams to verify impacts as part of partner contributions.

The CD prioritizes stream areas or tries to coordinate with areas where Washington agencies have opened fish passage before to get the most bang for the project buck. The nonprofit Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association helps the producers by acting as a contractor in a way, they help the producer get a discount with a contractor for the bridge construction (because this organization 'buys' contracts for many bridges at one time both in and outside of the RCPP project) and they get all the required permits for the producers.

Great projects with great partners.





State Technical Advisory Committee

Nick Vira

Partnership Liason

Several years ago, Washington NRCS established a state technical advisory committee, know as the STAC, to assist in making recommendations relating to the implementation and technical aspects of natural resource conservation activities and programs.

Responsibilities of the STAC

- Provide information, analysis, and recommendations to USDA on conservation priorities and criteria for natural resources conservation activities and programs, including application and funding criteria, recommended practices, and program payment percentages.
- Identify emerging natural resource concerns and program needs.
- Recommend conservation practice standards and specifications.
- Recommend State and national program policy based on resource data.
- Review activities of the local working groups to ensure State priorities are being addressed locally.
- Make recommendations to the State Conservationist on requests and recommendations from local working groups.
- Assist NRCS with public outreach and information efforts and identify educational and producers' training needs.

STAC Membership

Each State Technical Committee will be composed of agricultural producers, owners and operators of nonindustrial private forest land, and other professionals who represent a variety of interests and disciplines in the soil, water, wetlands, plant, and wildlife sciences.

Each State Technical Committee must include representatives from all of the following:

- NRCS
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- FSA State Committee
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (formerly the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service)
- Tribes
- Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- State departments and agencies within the State, including the following:
 - Agricultural agency
 - Fish and wildlife agency
 - Forestry agency
 - Soil and water conservation agency
 - Water resources agency
- Agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the State



- Owners of nonindustrial private forest land
- Nonprofit organizations (as defined under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that demonstrate conservation expertise and experience working with agricultural producers in the State
- Agribusiness
- Other Federal agencies and persons knowledgeable about economic and environmental impacts of conservation techniques and programs as determined by the State Conservationist.

STAC Business

On usual years the STAC convenes quarterly with two meetings being held face to face with one on the east side of the state and the other on the west side of the state; and the other two meetings are held remotely, on an alternating basis. Meetings are posted early in the calendar year to maximize participation. Additionally, meeting notices go out at least a month in advance of each meeting along with requests for any agenda topics for consideration. Once developed agendas are sent out to the STAC membership two weeks prior to the meeting along with meeting materials. Meeting agendas indicate whether agenda items are informational only or if input is sought.

We also have brief relevant partner presentations on conservation topics as the agenda permits. Meeting minutes are posted on the webpage and can be found at this link: [STAC Meeting Materials and Minutes | NRCS Washington](#).

If you or your organization would like to become members of the STAC please send an email to Nick.Vira@usda.gov citing your interests and qualifications.

To learn more about the STAC click this link: [State Technical Advisory Committee \(STAC\) | NRCS Washington](#) or contact Nick Vira at (360) 704-7758.





Engineering

Western Water Quantity Strategy

Larry Johnson

State Conservation Engineer

Background: Persistent drought conditions are creating a lot of interest in water availability in the Western US. A Water Quantity Listening Session listening session was hosted by NRCS on Dec. 17, 2021. Representatives from the Western US and Western Tribes were invited to attend a listening session and provided comments, suggestions and recommendations related to water quantity issues. The comments were reviewed and categorized into general and sub-categories by NRCS Western Leadership and Subject Matter Experts. The listening session resulted in five general categories where actions can be taken: Interagency Coordination, Technology and Practice Standard Development, Program Implementation, Communication, and Staffing. NRCS is leading the effort to develop a Western Water Quantity (WWQ) Strategy for the Western United States.

NRCS national leadership requested each western NRCS State Conservationist to collaborate with each State's stakeholders to identify activities and actions for consideration of incorporation into the Western Water Quantity Strategy. NRCS Washington and our Stakeholders worked together to develop activities and to assigned priorities to each activity. We worked directly with the Washington State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and the Washington Tribal Advisory Council (WATCAC) and Washington Conservation Districts to provide input into Washington's actions and activities to assign priorities. The [final report](#) is has been sent to the NRCS WWQ Team leaders for consideration in the development of the Western Water Quantity Strategy for the Western United States.

WWQ Strategy Update Report: The National NRCS Strategy Team is processing and analyzing the survey data. Once the data has been analyzed and priorities have been identified, the Team will begin working on the strategy. An announcement will be posted in the Federal Register notifying the public that NRCS will be developing a Western Water Quantity Strategy for the West. It is anticipated that this work will begin sometime this winter.

Washington State Wildfires and the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)

Extreme record setting high temperatures combined with persistent drought conditions in the Pacific Northwest have been the recipe for a robust wildfire season this summer. Aside from the obvious dangers that wildfires pose, there are less obvious threats that need to be considered.

Dr. Randy Brooks is an Area Extension Educator - Forestry and Professor at the University of Idaho provides an excellent overview explaining the danger that wildfires can create (After the Fires - Hydrophobic Soils ([After the Fires - Hydrophobic Soils](#))). He says that the burning of litter and organic material can reduce infiltration, increase surface runoff and erosion, and lead to hydrophobicity, or hydrophobic soils. Here is the bottom line, hydrophobic soils repel water which can lead to flash floods and debris flows.



Wildfires often create a flood or debris flow threat to a community down watershed from a burned area. The NRCS State Conservationist can issue a disaster declaration when a watershed has been significantly impaired by a natural disaster. Upon the disaster declaration being issued, NRCS will work with a Sponsors to provide technical and financial assistance to remove the imminent threat to life and property through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP).

Wildfires that occurred during the spring and summer of 2021 have been evaluated for eligibility for EWPP assistance. Numerous sites have been assessed and a small number of sites have been determined to be eligible for assistance. NRCS is coordinating with Sponsors to determine the follow up action. NRCS was able to identify numerous sites that are at risk of flooding prior the devastating wildfire season. Many of these sites were determined to be at a higher post fire flood risk, but the increased risk to life and property was negligible in many situations.

Additional EWPP information can be located at the following link ([Emergency Watershed Protection Program](#)). The local NRCS Field Office is the point of contact for program assistance.

PL-566 (Small Watershed Program)

The Small Watershed Program is gaining a tremendous amount of interest in Washington State. We have had numerous inquiries about financial assistance and have begun the initial step to determine project feasibility on a number of them. There are four basic steps that NRCS/Sponsor follow to acquire funding for planning and eventually implementation, they are:

- Determine project feasibility.
- Application for watershed planning is made by a qualified project sponsor.
- Watershed Plan/NEPA document preparation and approval.
- Watershed Project implementation.

We have received four formal requests for assistance from eligible project sponsors and have initiated the development of Project Investigation Feasibility Reports (PIFRs) to assess overall





program eligibility. PIFRs are being completed for:

- East Columbia Basin Irrigation District: Construction of pump plants and irrigation pipeline laterals for the water user groups. The purpose of the project is to conserve water resources associated with the Odessa Aquifer.
- Clallam County: Construction of an off-channel reservoir in order to provide supplemental summertime irrigation water to water users. The purpose is to maintain adequate streamflow for critical anadromous fish habitat.
- City of College Place: Implementation of the Cities their storm water management master plan.
- Chelan County: Implement the Wenatchee River Watershed (WRIA 45) Watershed Plan.

Once a PIFR has been completed, the Project Sponsor can formally request funds from NRCS to develop a comprehensive watershed plan. Funding is requested through correspondence to the State Conservationist (STC). The STC reviews the request and the PIFR to see if the project meets the eligibility requirements of the Small Watershed Program. All potential project barriers as outlined in the PIFR will be considered prior to requesting funds from National Office. If there are no major barriers to implementing the proposed project, the STC can request funds to begin the development of a watershed plan.

Additional Small Watershed Program information can be located at the following link ([Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program](#)).

Tribal

Robin Slate

State Tribal Liaison

In 2021 NRCS's 11 Local Work Groups (LWG) funding totaled \$2,590,533, averaging approximately \$235,503. Projects can be funded by their local working group allocation and can also be funded from other LWG and state funding. The Tribal LWG was allocated \$370,076 with two other teams receiving more than the overall average.

NRCS received seven Tribal applications for a total of \$4,874,058.00, for fiscal year 2022. Tribal applications, projects include fish habitat, forest health and erosion.

To fund all seven of these applications NRCS requested and received additional EQIP funding. The largest contract was for \$1,448,270.00 for forest health and the smallest was \$21,280.00 for erosion control.

The Working Effectively with American Indians training starts Nov. 1. Two Tribes are co-hosting, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington and the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. Because this training is being held virtually, more students can participate. The class includes 70 students and are from NRCS in South Dakota and Washington and Washington Conservation Districts. This is one of the many classes that will contribute to planner certification that is due by Dec. 31, 2021.

The national listening circle has been

expanding participation and now averages about 275 registered participants. Not only NRCS staff and leadership attend, but also other agencies are participating as well. The November session will be Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) part 2 and will focus on how TEK can be incorporated into our daily work with Tribes.

A national team of State Tribal liaisons from each region in the country is developing and offering monthly talking circles that USDA staff across the country can that brings current issues and other learning opportunities for their work with Tribes and their communities. The national planning team for the listening circle will take the month of December and January off and are planning some great topics in starting back February 2022.



Terry Cosby, 17th Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Roylene Comes At Night, NRCS-Washington State Conservationist talks with NRCS-Washington Quality Leadership Team members during a virtual meeting Oct. 6. Cosby's emphasized how impressed he was with everyone's conservation work across the state and provided strategic insight into the agency's direction moving forward, including climate farming and urban conservation, among other topics. (Photo by Nathan Gallahan, NRCS Washington Public Affairs)





Ecological Sciences

Bonda Habets

State Resource Conservationist

WA State supplement has been posted to the General Manual 190 Part 417 – Ecological Science Job Approval Authority (JAA) for planners to inventory design and certify conservation practices. This policy includes Partner employees garnering conservation practices JAA if requested by District Conservationist.

NRCS Ecological Science staff welcomed three positions, a State Biologist, State Plant Material Center Manager, and a State Soil Resource Scientist. We are still planning for a State Agronomist early in FY22.

Washington NRCS prioritized 20 of the 50 NRCS resource concerns that provide a high level of conservation. These are identified in the Washington Priority Resource Concern Assessment (WAPRA).

As Conservation Innovative Grants Program Manager, I facilitated the review of five FY22 National proposals (Classic and On the Farm Trials). Washington was awarded three National CIG projects. One in the Energy Conservation category and two in the Wildlife Habitat category.

Washington NRCS State Resource Conservationist (SRC) has worked with many Partners in 2021.

Working with an memorandum of understanding with Farm Service Agency (FSA), Washington NRCS developed a CRP Strategy FY21 to define roles and responsibilities and

timelines. NRCS reviewed the FSA/WSCC Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) manual that clarifies roles of this CRP Program. The CREP manual was rolled out Oct. 28.

The Washington SRC represented NRCS in the Department of Ecology's Voluntary Clean Water Guidance Ag Effectiveness Workgroup meetings and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Shrubsteppe Proviso.

Washington NRCS acquired a contribution agreement with Pheasant Forever, Inc to add three FT Field Biologists to assist each Area. They will be housed in NRCS Olympia and Ephrata Area Offices and in the Ritzville Field Office. Two Contribution agreements with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife add six full time (FT) biologists (CRP SAFE- three FT, Salmon Habitat – three FT).

Washington NRCS has finalized two Biological Assessments with United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) monthly meeting for South Puget Sound Prairie and the ORWAC Programmatic Biological Opinion for Aquatics that will facilitate addressing Endangered Species.

Washington NRCS State FY21 Training Plan provided fifteen trainings with over 50 Conservation District (CD) staff. November's Nutrient Mgmt and Organics courses, and a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan training the week of Jan. 31 are being facilitated with the new Training Officer.

The SRC reviewed four National Fish Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Pacific Region's proposals and recommended supported to move forward with the four projects, three Washington and one Idaho.

Washington NRCS supported three COMET Farm and Planner demonstrations for Washington State Conservation Commission on how to utilize COMET FARM reports in planning carbon plans.

Public Affairs

By Nate Gallahan

NRCS-WA State Public Affairs Specialist

While a lot has changed in 2021 for the Public Affairs program here, there is even more coming in the months ahead. It's exciting times, and all this growth in the communications-and-outreach arena is being invested in to better serve our customers and partners across the state.

For starters, I was hired full time as

the State Public Affairs Specialist. Then, we maintained the contract I had been on and hired Adrian Melendez to fill that position. He brings a vast amount of communications experience to the team. Like me, he's retired military, having spent 22 years in the U.S. Navy. All but a few of which, he was a mass communications specialist. So, together, we bring almost four decades of communications experience to Washington conservation family, and we're both extremely excited for the road ahead.

Then, we're hiring on a new outreach

coordinator. They will be part of the NRCS-WA Public Affairs Office and report to me, and their primary purpose of the position is to plan, schedule, implement, and execute the state's outreach strategy, aimed at targeting diverse audiences. We're still working with human resources to develop this, but the position will be advertised on www.usajobs.gov soon.

I'm incredibly excited to onboard this new coordinator and integrate them into my team. They, along with Annie Dhaenens (our administrative assistant), Adrian, and me, are evidence of how seriously Roylene Comes At Night, NRCS-WA State Conservationist, takes communications and outreach and how she envisions our role as an integral, and operational, capability required to reach new producers, while enhancing the relationships we already enjoy.

Big things ahead! 2022 is going to be a breakthrough year for my mission area – and our success is directly bound to the quality of the relationships we share with all of you. And we look forward to working closely with Nick Vira and our partners to explore them and leveraging all of the opportunities that result.

Finally, and as always, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or ideas, I'm all ears. Please feel free to email or call at any time. I stand by to assist in any way.



New Media Specialist contractor Adrian Melendez traded in sailing on aircraft carriers on the Pacific and Atlantic oceans for kayaking around Wahington's lakes and rivers.





NRCS News

NRCS Announces Conservation Funding Opportunities for 2022

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing fiscal year 2022 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners for key programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program. While USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepts applications for these programs year-round, producers and landowners should apply by state-specific, ranking dates to be considered for this year's funding.

Through conservation programs, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency and contribute to the nation's broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change.

"NRCS conservation programs are good for natural resources and for your operation's bottom line," said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby. "Whether this is your first time working with NRCS or you want to take conservation to the next level on your land, we encourage you to contact your local NRCS field office to learn more."

Applying for Assistance

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round. State Technical Committees, composed of conservation and agricultural-related agency and organization representatives, work with NRCS to identify resource priorities and how best to address them. NRCS then sets state-specific, ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding that account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunities to apply. You should apply by your state's ranking dates to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process.

State-specific, ranking dates for all programs are available. Applications received after ranking dates will be automatically deferred to the next funding period.

Producers, landowners and forest managers interested in applying for assistance should contact the NRCS at their local USDA Service Center.

Program Options

EQIP provides cost share assistance for producers to use 170-plus conservation practices to address a wide variety of resource concerns. Within EQIP, Conservation Incentive Contracts allow producers to further target priority resource concerns. CSP helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level through comprehensive conservation and advanced conservation activities. ACEP helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into easements for long-term protection. Additionally, through RCPP, producers and landowners can work with partners who are co-investing with NRCS on targeted projects.



Historically Underserved Producer Benefits

Special provisions are also available for historically underserved producers. For EQIP, historically underserved producers are eligible for advance payments to help offset costs related to purchasing materials or contracting services up front. In addition, historically underserved producers can receive higher EQIP payment rates (up to 90% of average cost). NRCS sets aside EQIP, CSP and ACEP funds for historically underserved producers.

NRCS also recently announced the availability of funding for cooperative agreements for partners to provide outreach and support for historically underserved producers. Applications from individuals and entities are due Oct. 25.

Conservation Practices and Climate

NRCS conservation programs play a critical role in USDA's commitment to partnering with farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and local communities to deliver climate solutions that strengthen agricultural operations and rural America. States may prioritize a variety of voluntary conservation practices through these NRCS programs, including those that support climate-smart agriculture and forestry (CSAF).

In fiscal year 2022, EQIP and CSP will provide targeted funding for CSAF practices, and Conservation Incentive Contracts – a new EQIP program – will be available nationwide with an emphasis on CSAF practices. Building on these efforts, NRCS will also prioritize climate investments through ACEP, RCPP and Conservation Innovation Grants.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation's lands, biodiversity and natural resources including our soil, air and water. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic





growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including State, local and Tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets

for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

USDA Invests \$21 Million in Effort to Help Producers Build Drought Resilience

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$21 million as part of the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) collaboration with the Department of Interior's (DOI) WaterSMART Initiative to help farmers and ranchers conserve water and build drought resilience in their communities. These investments complement projects by irrigation districts, water suppliers and other organizations receiving WaterSMART Program funds from the Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation. NRCS works with Reclamation to coordinate investments in the same community for accelerating water conservation and drought resilience and making a bigger impact where it is most needed.

"The consequences of drought have continued to impact farms, ranches and communities across much of the West and other parts of the country," NRCS Chief Terry Cosby said. "Drought is a complex challenge, and our collaboration on WaterSMART is part of our strategic approach to help producers conserve water and build resilience while also bringing important partners to the table. Bringing as many like-minded individuals and groups as possible to innovate together is our best solution for water management in the West."

"Reclamation's collaboration with NRCS maximizes each agency's investment in tackling conservation and building drought resiliency in the West," said DOI Bureau of Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton. "Earlier this year, Reclamation awarded \$42.4 million to 55 WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Projects to support on-the-ground improvements to conserve water and build resilience to drought. Many of the projects announced by NRCS today will complement existing WaterSMART projects, maximizing the benefits of each agency's conservation programs."

In fiscal year 2022, NRCS will invest in 15 new priority areas and 25



existing priority areas with continued need, assisting producers and communities in 13 states across the West. NRCS is providing the funding through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

New WaterSmart Priority Areas

The 15 new priority areas include:

California (Funding amount: \$1,160,000)

Eastern Municipal Water District Area (Riverside)

McMullen Area (Fresno)

Idaho (Funding amount: \$3,417,000)

King Hill Irrigation District (Elmore)

Preston East Lateral Area (Franklin)

St. John East Lateral Area (Oneida)

Twin Falls Service Area (Twin Falls)

Nevada (Funding amount: \$500,000)

Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (Churchill)

New Mexico (Funding amount: \$470,000)

Bloomfield Irrigation District (San Juan)

Fort Sumner Irrigation District (De Baca)

Oklahoma (Funding amount: \$100,000)

Blue River Watershed District (Johnston)

Utah (Funding amount: \$1,500,000)

North & South Litz Lateral (Cache)

Washington (Funding amount: \$1,900,000)

Kittitas Reclamation District (Kittitas)

Whitestone Reclamation District (Okanogan)

Wyoming (Funding amount: \$780,000)

Heart Mountain Irrigation District (Park)

Lovell Irrigation District (Big Horn)

In total, there are 46 active projects for delivering WaterSMART assistance. Visit the WaterSMART webpage to learn more.

How WaterSMART Works

Private land managers such as farmers and ranchers can leverage money and resources of irrigation districts, water districts, and other organizations with water delivery authority in their community by coordinating their efforts to conserve



and use water more efficiently; increasing the production of renewable energy; mitigating future water conflict in areas at a high risk; and other activities that contribute to water supply sustainability in the Western United States.

Through the WaterSMART Initiative, funds are allocated to targeted areas for eligible participants to enter contracts. Each WaterSMART Initiative project area is carrying out different phases of program delivery at the same time— funding, implementation and evaluation.

NRCS and Reclamation, the nation's largest wholesale water supplier and second largest producer of hydroelectric power, have been coordinating EQIP and WaterSMART investments since 2011, the effort began as a pilot in California .

This federal collaboration works to provide states, Tribes, local water management entities, and water users alike with coordinated resources to plan and implement actions which balance water supply and demand through modernizing existing infrastructure, improving agricultural landscapes to conserve water

resources and bringing attention to local water conflicts.

More Information

In addition to helping producers build resilience, USDA is also helping drought-impacted producers recover. Other recent actions include:

- [Investing \\$41.8 million through a four-state pilot of the Conservation Incentive Contracts focused on drought practices.](#)
- [Expanding the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program to cover feed transportation costs.](#)
- [Extending deadlines for crop insurance premium and administrative fees, and deferring interest accrual.](#)
- [Streamlining and accelerating losses and issuance of indemnity payments for crop insurance.](#)
- [Investing \\$15 million through a block grant to the Klamath Drought Response Agency to provide payments to producers to reduce irrigation demand.](#)

Drought Coordination

USDA is coordinating with federal agencies, state governments, Tribes, and others to address the impacts of drought. This includes a new interagency working group created in April by the Biden-Harris Administration's National Climate Task Force to address the worsening drought conditions in the West and support farmers. USDA co-chairs the task force with the Department of Interior.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.



FISCAL YEAR 2021 BY THE NUMBERS

USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) provided a wide range of voluntary programs and services to enable Washington landowners to implement conservation practices and management activities in 2021. According to NRCS State Conservationist Roylene Comes At Night, these programs and services are providing Washington landowners with technical and financial resources to help them protect and improve soil, water and air quality, as well as wildlife habitat.



SOIL

342,550
acres of cropland
with conservation
applied to improve
soil quality.



WATER

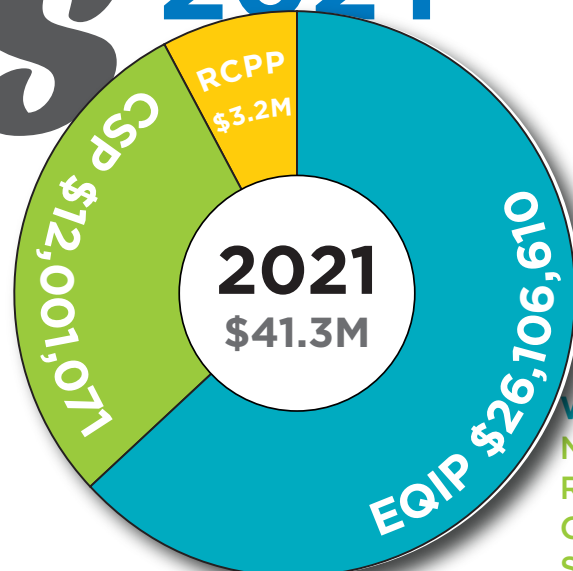
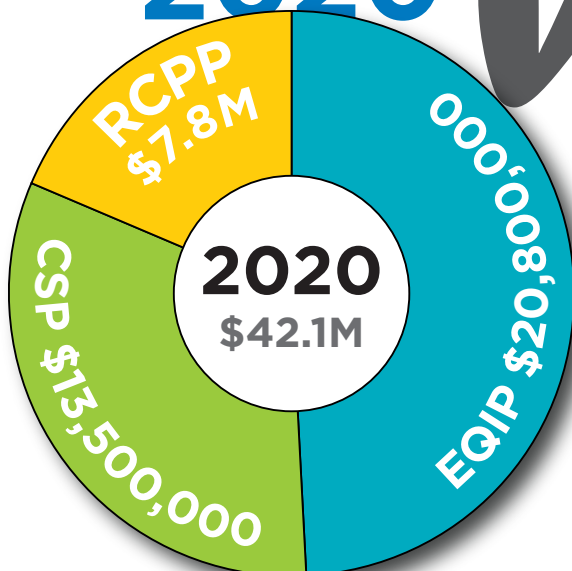
624,026
acres of land with
conservation
applied to
improve water
quality.



LAND

201,884
acres of grazing
and forest land
protected through
conservation.

Financial Assistance 2020 VS 2021



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STATUS UPDATE

CSP Annual Payment Rate

NRCS-WA is still waiting on legislators to approve or disapprove our request to increase the CSP Annual payment rate from \$.50 per acre to \$0.75 per acre for grazed forestland. We will notify all interested parties as soon as this information becomes available.

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE*

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Contracts: **322**

Obligated: **\$26,106,610**

EQIP Sage Grouse Initiative

Contracts: **4**

Financial assistance:

\$1,094,175

EQIP State Sage Grouse Initiative for lands coming out of CRP

New Contracts: **23**

Obligated **\$1,529,456**

EQIP Salmon Recovery

Contracts: **8**

Obligated: **\$2,472,889**

EQIP National Water Quality

Contracts: **5**

Obligated: **\$670,975**

EQIP Drought Assistance

Contracts: **20**

Obligated **\$376,441**

EQIP National Air Quality

Contracts: **36**

Obligated **\$4,013,190**

Conservation Stewardship

New Contracts: **86**

Obligated: **\$12,001,071**

RCPP (EQIP & CSP)

Contracts: **21**

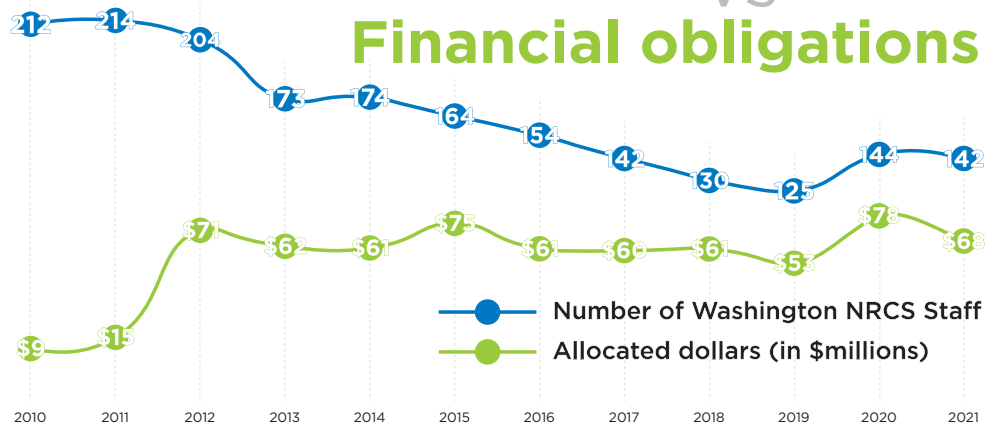
Obligated: **\$3,213,476**

ACEP: Agricultural Lands Easements

Easements Purchased: **5***

**All numbers pulled from Protracts on September 17, 2021 and not considered official.*

Washington NRCS Staff VS Financial obligations



FARM BILL PROGRAMS

The current Farm Bill was enacted in December 2018. NRCS offers voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment. The following is a short description of each program as they currently stand. It is anticipated that the bill will bring changes to these programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)

CSP helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance — the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

THE AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM (ACEP)

ACEP provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect and enhance enrolled wetlands.

THE REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. Assistance is delivered in accordance with the rules of EQIP, CSP, ACEP and HFRP; and in certain areas the Watershed Operations and Flood Prevention Program.

Stay tuned and visit www.nrcs.usda.gov for info on NRCS programs.



Conservation Plans
519,606
acres of conservation
plans written.



Environment
750,458
acres of conservation
applied to improve
environmental quality.



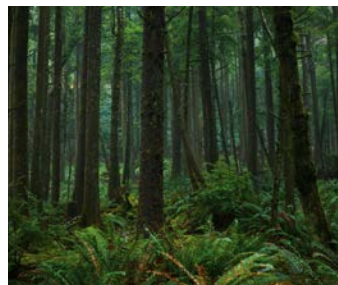


United States Department of Agriculture



WATER QUANTITY STRATEGY SURVEY

Survey Results | August 9, 2021



Helping People Help the Land

**Washington
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www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov



Introduction



Report to the Western Water Quantity Team

NRCS Washington took immediate steps to work with our stakeholders to develop and prioritize actions for water quantity issues identified in the State. We developed and conducted a survey to maintain consistency and ease of sorting and prioritizing the responses that we received from stakeholders. The recipients of the survey are the members of the WA State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), The Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC), and each WA Conservation District. We completed our stakeholder collaborative effort July 23, 2021 and are requesting consideration of our findings of the State's high priority actions into the Western Water Quantity Strategy session

The NHQ Presentation of the WWQ Strategy outlined broad areas where action could be taken to address water quantity issues. The broad categories are Interagency Coordination, Technology and Practice Standard Development, Program Implementation, Communications, and Staffing. Each category was further defined into sub-categories topics. A well represented group NRCS Washington Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) developed actions for each of the sub-category topics and then engaged our Stakeholder for input.

NRCS received 25 responses from the STAC, WATCAC and CDs from across the State. The following Washington Water Quantity Survey report provides a list of actions that have been prioritized by NRCS and our Stakeholders.



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United States Department of Agriculture

Overview

A Western Water Strategy is being developed by NRCS National Leadership. Federal and state agencies, tribes and other partners are being requested to provide input and ideas on how we can best conserve water resources to increase drought resilience; make available water-related information so well-informed decisions on water use can be made; and determine viable conservation practices to reduce agricultural water use throughout the Western United States.

The following goals were developed after NRCS hosted a listening session of western United States stakeholders December 2020. NRCS Washington reviewed the goals and have developed activities that support the goals. There are nine goals and thirty-eight activities. Please read through the following goal statements and subsequent proposed activities and rank the activities as a high, medium, or low priority, based on your experience and expertise.

Your responses are important and will help shape the Western Water Quantity Strategy.

Thank you!



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Helping People Help the Land

Goal #1

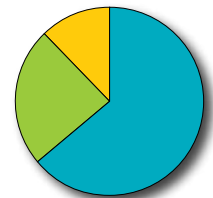
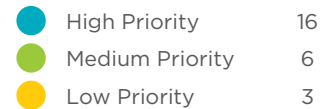


Pursuant to the Water Sub-cabinet established by the Executive Order on Modernizing America's Water Resource Management and Water, continue collaboration across agencies on advancing water conservation, forecasting, and related matters on private lands. Express support for continuation of the Water Sub-cabinet. Develop an implementation plan to collect climatological and soils data through:

1. Full build out of the Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) network replacing mission critical manual snow survey sites with automated real time sites, including enhanced sensor installations.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

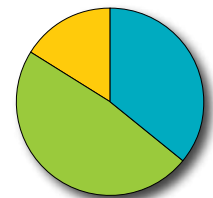
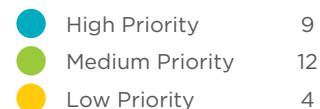
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



2. Identification of new Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) site locations that would benefit limited resource areas.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

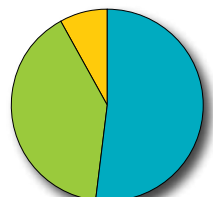
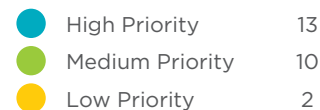
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



3. Full development of NRCS water supply forecasts in critical locations that currently have limited data or no data from which to make to water management decisions.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

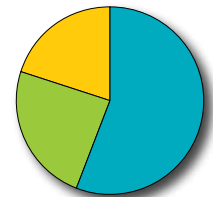
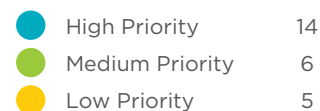
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



4. Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) sites for low elevation sites where climatic data is needed.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



5. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Making sure data is accessible in partner formats, GIS, ArcGIS, Online, others...
- Work with National Weather Service to develop enhanced predictive models for longer term water supply.
- Offer leaf sensor or additional soil moisture remote sensing data programs.
- I think all of these are important, but resources and priority should be based on where they would do the best not by blanket action.
- Continue to research and implement water usage reduction methods in agriculture.



Goal #2

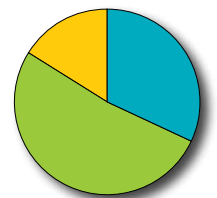
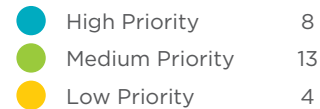


Establish MOUs with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) within states to support cooperation at all levels to ensure consistent of the collaborative Water SMART initiative (WSI). An MOU would identify key points of contacts, support implementation of program policies and procedures, and reconcile technical criteria differences. Collaborate with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to:

6. Understand agencies policies and programs an identify program areas where partnering opportunities exist.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

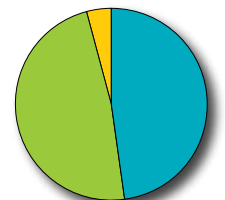
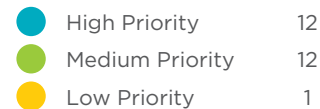
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



7. Collaborative efforts made by NRCS and USBR to provide program assistance to the agriculture community.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



8. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Align PL 566 grant program with extensive groundwater studies performed by USBR.



Goal #3

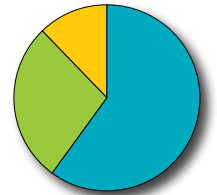
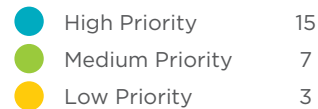


Encourage, to the extent practicable, high-level meetings between NRCS State Conservationists and state agency heads, Federal agency heads, Tribes and NGO's with water-related responsibilities to enhance overall coordination of activities. Utilize existing and recurring conferences and forums attended by agency leaders where appropriate:

9. Communicate with State level drought decision makers so they are aware and can identify areas where NRCS and States can collaborate on common issues and goals related to drought recovery.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

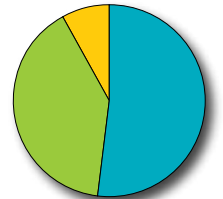
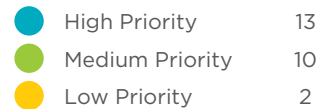
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



10. Communicate with Federal and State level water quantity decision makers so they are aware and can identify areas where the responsible Federal and State agencies can collaborate on common issues and goals related to drought recovery.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

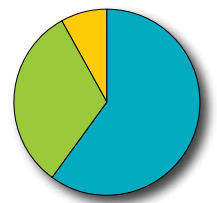
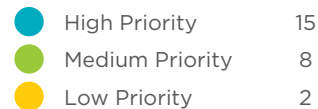
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



11. Involve Non-Government Organization (NGO's) and other non-Government stakeholders to identify common goals that can be leveraged to assist the agricultural community.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



12. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- It appears to me that County and State level communication is needed with NRCS and others. These are the folks that are often working with water management.
- Production Agriculture needs to more involved in these types of meetings.
- Promote leaf & soil moisture sensor programs.
- Remember that there are too many examples where fish recovery and agricultural needs can work together.



Goal #4






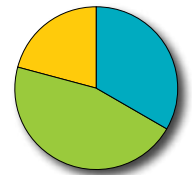
Encourage, to the extent practicable, within the State Technical Advisory Committee and Tribes, a specialized subcommittee for the purpose of water supply data collection, analysis coordination, and identification of resources needed. Recommended subcommittee members include NRCS, USBR, USACE, USGS, Tribes, State Water Resources Department, and other related entities.

13. Strengthen NRCS partnership with the Western Governors association and the Western Water Council to develop a coordinated approach to addressing water supply needs across the West.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO




	High Priority	8
	Medium Priority	11
	Low Priority	5

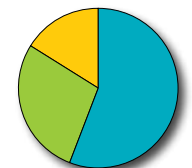


14. Develop a strategy to incorporate Tribes priorities across the West regarding for water supply data collection and forecasting.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!




	High Priority	14
	Medium Priority	7
	Low Priority	4

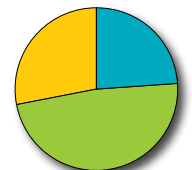


15. Establish a statewide subcommittee of Federal and State stakeholder to collaborate on water supply data collection and analysis coordination.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO




	High Priority	6
	Medium Priority	12
	Low Priority	7

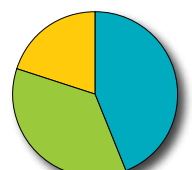


16. Identify practices that the State utilizes for water management activities, and cross walk them with similar NRCS FOTG Practice Standards and supplement standards where needed.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO




	High Priority	11
	Medium Priority	9
	Low Priority	5

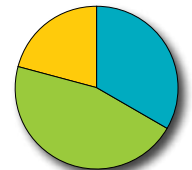


17. Identify practices that the State utilized for water management activities and develop Interim practice standards where it seems practical and enhances NRCS's ability to address water management issues across the State.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO

	High Priority	8
	Medium Priority	11
	Low Priority	5



18. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Usually it is state agencies that are in control of waters. Many states or even counties have committees already in place. This is where NRCS should spend their time. Not forming new committees. Tribes can come to the table or not. They have been invited. I don't think anything further is necessary for them.
- The questions seem to be focused on water supply, which hints at water as a resource for agriculture. Tribes and NGOs are much more likely to be focused on in-stream flows for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and promoting natural ecological processes and reducing the amount of management involved.
- This all sounds like "make work" activity.



Goal #5

Utilize the best available consumptive use data and incorporate in the State Irrigation Guide.

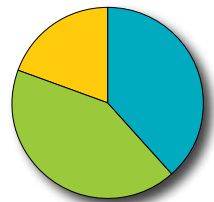


19. Review proposed update with STAC and Tribes to recommend adoption.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO

● High Priority	10
● Medium Priority	11
● Low Priority	5

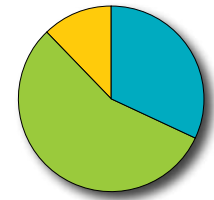


20. Provide training to all units of government and irrigation companies on how to access and utilize the data.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO

● High Priority	8
● Medium Priority	14
● Low Priority	3



21. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- You must define and defend the best consumptive before it can be utilized.
- Utilize State's consumptive data for other users as part data collection. For example, farmland conversion to residential and irrigation district's water being allocated to lawns for mega mansions with little regard to commercial growers needs.



Goal #6

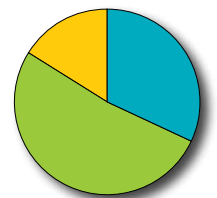
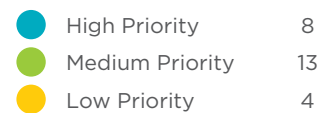


NRCS practices currently focus on irrigation efficiency, expand our contribution through prioritization of Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) multi-benefit irrigation infrastructure projects and utilization of Water Management Entity flexibility under the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

22. Develop a NRCS strategy to reward irrigation management over irrigation system upgrades.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

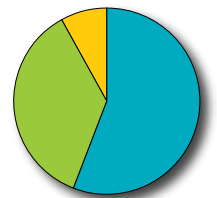
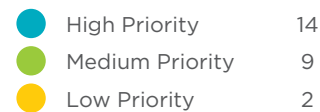
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



23. Request additional funding and develop a West Region specific RCPP Water management and water savings signup in the next Farm Bill. Limited funding under the current Farm Bill negatively effects NRCS's ability to have the program tools necessary to work with Partners to address water resource management activities in the West.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

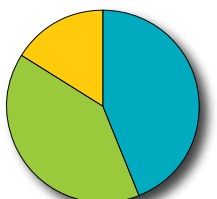
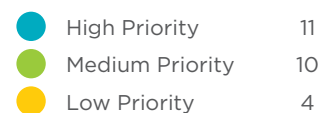
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



24. Provide incentives to irrigators that apply for a NRCS Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) 118, "Irrigation Water Management Plan", for assessing their opportunities for water savings.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



25. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Make NRCS funding easier to access for landowners and their NGO partners.



Goal #7

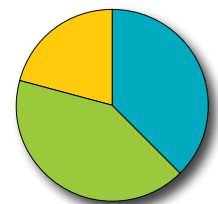
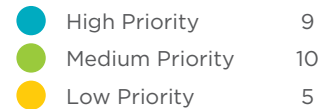


Continue utilization of the Water Smart Initiative, group projects, projects with Water Management Entities, and PL-566 projects all provide broader coordination of assistance to individual producers.

26. Pro-actively coordinate with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to identify eligible project areas that may benefit from Farm Bill (i.e.: PL-566, EQIP) water savings projects.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

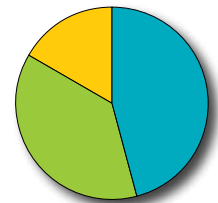
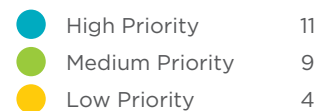
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



27. Develop a process where the design work is all completed with a focus on irrigation system delivery and energy savings for non-USBR irrigation districts.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

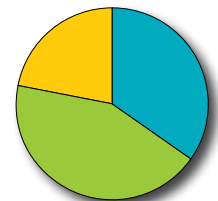
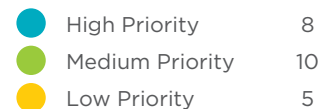
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



28. Revise NRCS policy that increases the payment limitation threshold for Water Management Entities (WMEs).

NRCS Priority?
YES!

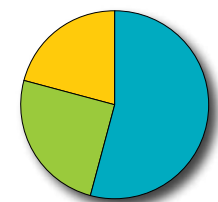
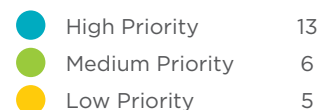
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



29. Revise NRCS policy allowing Water Reclamation Districts (WRD) to be considered a Water Management Entity (WME). Currently, WRD's are a subset of the State and of USBR and are currently not eligible for NRCS program participation.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



30. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- None provided.



Goal #8

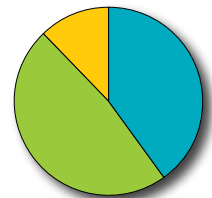
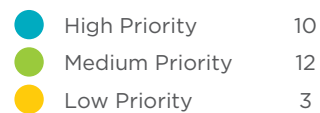
Educate NRCS staff of program opportunities.



31. As new standards are developed and adopted, provide training on enhancements and interim practices agency wide.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

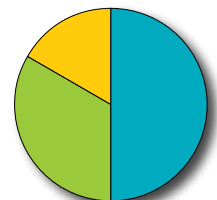
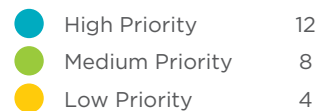
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



32. Provide cross training to staff across key USDA, Federal, Tribal, State, Local Agencies on funding opportunities being offered.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



33. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Make NRCS funding easier to access for landowners and their NGO partners.



Goal #9

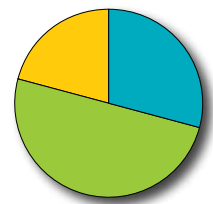
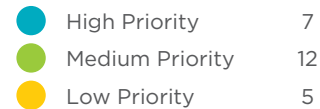


Increase water supply forecasting at the watershed level and field office staff in those areas experiencing long-term drought to help assist producers wishing to install practices that address water quantity resource concerns.

34. Increase the number or water supply forecast staff and Information Technology (IT) support staff at the NWCC to support expansion needs at the NRCS National Water and Climate Center (NWCC).

NRCS Priority?
YES!

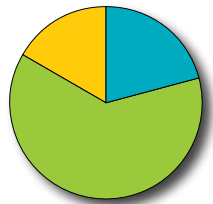
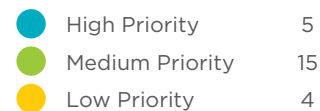
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



35. Increase staffing in Agency and State identified priority areas to support increased workload related to water quantity and efficiency.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

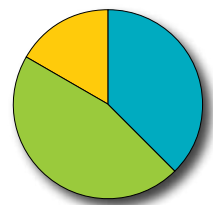
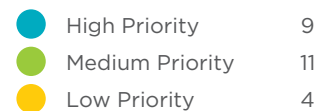
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



36. Develop and increase Technical Service Provider (TSP) capacity to support increased workload in priority areas. National NRCS developed and led training for recruiting TSPs would create consistency of TSP service and documentation throughout the West.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

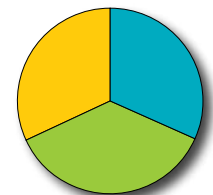
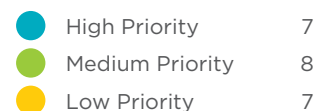
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



37. Create in-State NRCS ad hoc team or create a permanent team to address water quantity efficiency issues and needs across the state.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



38. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Develop and increase Conservation District capacity to support increased workload in priority areas.
- Increase partnership funding, training, and IWM planning with local Conservation Districts.
- Utilize more CCA's from Ag Sector in your TSP initiatives.
- All of this work should be done in consultation with other agencies and entities doing the work already, so it is coordinated.





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