

Local Work Group (LWG)

November 15, 2021

Minidoka Fairgrounds McGregor Extension Building

Idaho South Central Snake Local Work Group Work Session

In Attendance: Brian Kossman (Minidoka SWCD), Dusty Wilkins (Minidoka SWCD), Steve Ward (East Cassia SWCD), Rob Cottle (East Cassia SWCD), Kathy Poulton (West Cassia SWCD), Brent Stoker (West Cassia SWCD), David Mabey (Burley/Rupert NRCS – Team Lead), Carolyn Firth (ISWCC), Dinah Reaney (Rupert NRCS), Joel Packham (U of I Extension-Cassia County), Mark Olson (NRCS), Doreen McMurray (East & West Cassia SWCD Admin), Rachelle Osterhout (East & West Cassia SWCD – Admin), Sharon Hardy (Minidoka SWCD – Admin),

In Attendance by Zoom: Ray Ledgerwood (facilitator), Maureen Pepper (NRCS), John Lind (BID), Amie Miller (State NRCS).

Permission was granted by all in the room to record this LWG session. Welcome to Local Work Group Meeting by Minidoka SWCD Chairman Brian Kossman.

Ray Ledgerwood gave an overview of the objectives and purpose for the LWG. He discussed the agenda and led introductions. He reviewed the 1985 Farm Bill and the 2008 Farm Bill and the changes between these bills for local areas. He reviewed the LWG responsibilities. (*see Ray Ledgerwood presentation*)

David Mabey (Burley/Rupert NRCS – Team 12 Lead) reviewed FY 2021 Program accomplishments and projects including a focus on irrigation and soft conversion projects, range and sage grouse projects (including livestock trough improvements, and high tunnel projects which extend the growing season. In 2019, the appropriations went from competing with a large area to including only Cassia and Minidoka Counties for the appropriations. He discussed how projects are selected. (see David Mabey's PowerPoint presentation)

Each person in attendance listed their top 2 natural resource priorities. (See Ray's NOTES) The group discussed practice ideas each priority area. (see Ray's NOTES for details)

Each agency in the room listed the ways they could support the priorities.

Farm Bureau – County Boards, have influence on issues in local area.

DEQ – grants available through 319 non-source projects and BMP grants.

ISWCC – RCRDP loan program and working to restore a Water Quality Program.

Fish & Wildlife – Partners for Fish & Wildlife program.

Irrigation Districts – BID – Idaho Water Resource Board/surplus of state funding.

SWCD – Direct Seed & Cover Crop Project, direct seed drill rentals, Information & Education Outreach, Free Soil Health Workshop, funds for capping wells, Coordinating LWG meetings, soil sampling projects.

ID Fish & Game – Statewide grants, technical assistance

ID Dairymen Assoc – fund research projects, education & outreach, inter-seeding projects.

U of I – Research projects.

Local Producers – Manure/compost use, carbon input, increased value and need of water.

Maureen Pepper (NRCS) spoke about water quality aquifer areas and the EQIP process.

The group discussed the EQIP Program and the committee's Priority Resource Concern recommendations.

1. Water Quality
2. Insufficient Water
3. soil Quality Degradation
4. Soil Erosion, Concentrated Erosion (dryland)
5. Degraded Plant Condition (rangeland, pasture, livestock)

Reviewed the Pool Categories & Distribution of EQIP funds for FY22: Irrigated Cropland, Range/Dry Pasture, Irrigated Pasture, and Dry Cropland.

Committee decided to keep the allocation percentages the same for FY22 as they allocated for FY21 which is:

Irrigated Cropland 70%

Range/Dry Pasture/Grazed Forests 15%

Irrigated Pasture 10%

Dry Cropland 5%

*Any funds not spent in the funding pool will go to the unfunded projects with the most resource concerns addressed, no matter which funding pool it comes from. With Top resources carrying the most weight.

No conservation technical assistance changes are needed. Multi-District Projects were listed with details and assignments. (see Ray's NOTES for details).

Lunch (lasagna, garlic bread, toss salad, and cookies) was provided by the East Cassia, West Cassia, and Minidoka Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Meeting was adjourned by Brian Kossman at 12:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Doreen McMurray, Sharon Hardy, and Rachelle Osterhout.