

Jefferson County Agricultural Drought Resiliency Group

RCPP & Weed Program (Guest Speakers), update on Plan implementation

Thursday, August 22, 2024; 10-noon

Jefferson County Public Health Community Room, 500 NE A Street, Madras (east of St Charles)

***Vision:** Jefferson County agriculture will thrive by adapting successfully to drought, and will support its people, animals, economy, environment, and culture.*

***Group Mission:** to help agriculture create a sustainable, livable future for Jefferson County by adapting successfully to drought with support from Deschutes Basin stakeholders. We promote innovative solutions to proactively improve watershed health and increase the effective management of water.*

***Role of Group:** track and guide progress towards Vision and Mission*

I. Participants

Ally Steinmetz (MDWC)

Brad Klann (JCSWCD Board & producer)

Chris Hanby (NRCS)

Collin Cowsill (NUID)

David Phipps (NRCS)

Ellen Hammond (JCSWCD)

Jacob Kimiecik (DRC)

Josh Bailey (NUID)

Kate Haarberg (JCSWCD)

Lloyd Forman (JCSWCD Board & producer)

Marilyn Clark (Madras Pioneer)

Nina Caldwell (ODA)

Rob Galyen (JCSWCD Board & producer)

Tom Osborne (BPA)

Kate Haarberg is the new JCSWCD manager

II. Guest Presenters

A. NRCS RCPP proposal update: Jacob Kimiecik (DRC)

- DRC's partners are NUID, JCSWCD, and OSU Extension
- Requested \$10.6M: 3M to pipe laterals, 5M for on-farm (modernize irrigation equipment and cover cropping), 2.6M for technical Assistance spread across partners and NRCS.
- Will know in October, negotiate details until March. Jacob is confident that the proposal will be funded.

B. Pesticides and Weeds: Ellen Hammond for Ryan Brunner (JCSWCD)

- Ryan has lots of demands on his time for weed spraying. Current contracts with USFS and JeffCo and pending for BLM.
- Pesticide Stewardship Partnership and EPA toxics funding is paying for increased outreach on reducing toxicity of weed/insect management and on the pesticides of concern

III. Workgroups

1. Water Availability

a. Current Focus Tools

1. Pipe Upper Basin Irrigation Districts

All 8 Central Oregon Irrigation Districts are either actively piping their districts or are planning for such activities in the near future.

2. Pump from Lake Billy Chinook

The Appraisal Study has been completed for the project and work has begun on the Feasibility Analysis. District staff are working closely with Reclamation to secure the remaining funding for the project. IF Feasibility Analysis pencils out, project will be realized in 5-6 years.

3. Pipe NUID

At the conclusion of the 2023 Irrigation Season, NUID started work on Project Group 1, Segment 1 of our Lateral 43 Pipeline project. Segment 1 consisted of the installation of approximately 6000 feet of 66" HDPE pipe, approximately 15 deliveries, screened intake structure, and an additional 2500 feet of 10" through 12" HDPE Pipe. Work on Segment 2 is scheduled to commence at the conclusion on the 2024 Irrigation Season. Segment two consists of the installation of over 4.7 miles of HDPE pipe and multiple delivery upgrades in addition to a Pressure Reducing station.

4. Water bank for seasonal transfers:

- Planning meetings are ongoing with DRC, DBBC and interested parties for a basin-wide water bank.
- DRC received funding from BOR (and potentially RCPP) to construct software attached to patron portal on website to sell and buy water within NUID, and potentially across the broader Deschutes Basin.

5. Cloudseeding

- Before work begins, NUID continues to seek \$75,000 in non-Federal match funding for the \$75,000 BOR funds that were received. Mike Britton has contacted lots of groups without success.
- Link to information on Idaho's cloudseeding program: [Cloud Seeding Program | Idaho Department of Water Resources](#)

b. OSU Water Evaporation Study

OSU is doing an evaporation study throughout the NUID Main Canal system.

2. Croplands

a. Current Focus Tools (update attached)

1. Diversify crops
2. Increase irrigation efficiency (modernize infrastructure and improve on-farm water management)
3. Soil health
4. Annual Weeds

b. June 11 Soil Health Field Day: 40 attendees, NRCS and JCSWCD will follow up with workshop this winter

c. JeffCo broadband study and request for pilot farmers to test remote sensing

The contractor for the JeffCo Broadband study is looking for farmers to identify and pilot useful remote sensing tools. He will give a very brief presentation to the JCSWCD Board next week. Ellen thinks this could be a helpful tool.

d. NUID Soil Health CIS update

Only \$300K available last year. There were 21 applications and only 3 got funded.

3. Ranchlands

- a. **Current Focus Tools (update attached)**
 1. Bundling juniper control with reseeding, weed control, and periodic burning
 2. Targeted grazing to increase forage
 3. Vegetated streamsides
 4. Reconnecting streams to floodplains
 5. Annual weeds
- b. **Focusing more on Rangeland Health, instead of just the components**

Example from Beaver Creek (attached)
- c. **Prioritizing watersheds outside of Trout Creek (Ellen/Ally)**

Starting to figure out how to be more strategic in work outside of Trout Creek, mostly by focusing on rangeland health and wildlife habitat. More work to be done on this in the winter.

4. Green Energy

- a. **NUID Canal floating solar panels**
 - NUID got \$2.5M from BOR to develop floating solar panels on the Main Canal. This is the first project of its kind in the Nation and there is lots of interest.
 - 2178 panels will be located on 0.8 miles of canal north of the Willow Creek siphon.
 - Potential benefits include reduced evaporation (estimate 100 af savings), sold power can reduce patron assessments, shade out aquatic vegetation, panels will work year-round
 - Challenges include operation and management

5. Outreach

- a. SWCD Facebook Page ([2](#)) [Facebook](#)
- b. SWCD YouTube Channel [Jefferson County Agriculture - YouTube](#)
- c. COCC Lecture Series
 1. Ellen invited to give presentation February 11, 2025, Tuesday, 2-4pm in Bend
 2. For panel, Ellen would like to add NUID, DRC (Jacob Kimiecik), and landowners. Suggestions for landowners: Rob Galyen, Mark Wunsch, Craig Weigand, Phil Fine, and Kevin Richards

11:50 Next Group Meeting (before hunting season)

1. **October 29, Tuesday, noon-2**
2. JeffCo Public Health
3. Guest speakers: cloudseeding (Mike Britton), broadband pilot (Michael Curri), envu (Noe Marymor) , Weed Program (Ryan Brunner)