

Drought Resiliency for Jefferson County Agriculture (“Ag Drought Group”)

Meeting #6 = Review Drought Matrix, Communication

Monday, April 3 6, 2023; 1-3pm

Madras Airport: 2028 NW Berg Dr, Madras, OR

video = <https://meet.goto.com/233191613>

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If you have trouble accessing Go To Meeting, call Ellen at 541-771-8258

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.

Agenda

1pm Introductions

1:10 Mission: Suggestion from Group Member

“focus narrowly on irrigated water needs in Jefferson County - the mission statement could be as simple as: "Maintaining a viable and sustainable agriculture sector in Jefferson County with less water" (I don't think this group needs any overlap with others and should sharply focus on irrigated agriculture; no fish goals, no ecological goals - others are focused on those)”

1:20 DRAFT Drought Matrix (attached; must review before meeting)

1. Purpose (5)
 - a. Summarize Group discussion up to this point
 - b. Help with messaging
 - c. Help prioritize next steps
2. Group Review
 - a. ‘Tools’: any more to add? Change the word ‘tools’?
 - b. ‘Goals’: do they capture Group’s main goals? Are they phrased well enough?
 - c. ‘Goals’ attributed to ‘Tools’ (the ‘X’s or text in in the boxes): Change any?
 - d. ‘Challenges’ and ‘Opportunities’: do they capture the main concepts? Are they phrased well enough? Any changes? Additions?
 - e. ‘Challenges’ and ‘Opportunities’ attributed to tools: Change any?
 - f. ‘Likelihood of success’: discuss and make changes
3. How prioritize next steps?

2:30 Discussion on thoughts provided by Group Member

1. I think farmers don't blow their own horns enough (for all the right reasons, namely too busy with real work) - in this regard, I think **an inventory of all the actions and investment amounts that have occurred in the last 20 years to increase water use efficiency, shift crop types, increase water retention, and re-use tailwater resources should be an action step.** Numbers for these would be best. Large swaths of the general public have misperceptions and misinformation about Jefferson County farming and farmers. It is getting better as I note some Bendites who pay attention are now acknowledging the efforts in NUID to be more efficient with water. There remains a large group that have no idea and are limited to seeing NUID in the context of the past. Lacking any other information, they are vulnerable to political statements. An inventory of all the work that has occurred would be a good starting point to

help these people. Couple the past inventory of actions with the future projects and actions planned and in motion, and I think we can offer a more balanced view, and

2. We should challenge the vocal advocates who want more water in the river. This can be done on two levels - the first would be ask **how many more fish we would get with each additional acre foot of water left instream**. We know the value of the same acre foot in NUID in terms of crop value year after year. We currently have no apple-to-apple comparison. So, people are demanding a known economic sacrifice for what's in box #3 on the stage. The second would be get us all away from the current zero-sum game where NUID farmers have to lose for the river to win. How about we all look to **increase water supplies** instead of fighting over what we think is a fixed amount? There seems to be an opportunity to store more winter flows in mid-basin reservoirs (think Haystack type sites) when plenty of water is available. De-linking from full winter storage above Bend to the highest degree possible seems a big part of a sustainable solution.
3. My last thought is that there may be some value in **cataloging all the ag products** produced in Jefferson County. I think these crop reports and values probably already exist, but putting it all in a tight summary report for public consumption (not technical) may assist in gaining general support or at least reducing opposition levels.

2:40 Next steps

Next Meeting = May 1, 1-3pm at Public Health Building