

Jefferson County Agricultural Drought Resiliency Group

Virtual Fencing & Water Bank (Guest Speakers), update on Plan implementation
Wednesday, May 8, 2023; noon-2pm (lunch provided)

Attachments: Virtual Fencing presentations

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

Participants

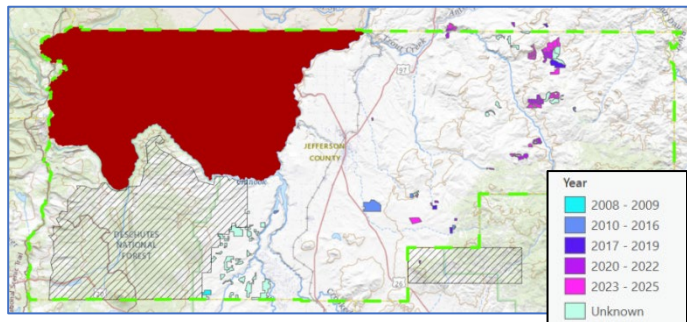
Albert Sikkens (Pratum)
Ally Steinmetz (MDWC)
Brad Klann (producer)
Collin Cowsill (NUID)
David Phipps (NRCS)
Dave Bohnert (EOARC)
Debbie Wood (Crook Co weeds)
Elaine Cornick (Culver citizen)
Ellen Hammond (JCSWCD)
Gordon Jones (OSU Ext)
Jacob Kimiecik, DRC
Jay Kehne (Conservation Northwest)

Josh Bailey (NUID)
Lanier Fussell (Wy'East)
Lisa Seales (DRC)
Lloyd Forman (producer)
Margaret Matter (consultant)
Marilyn Clark (Madras Pioneer)
Nina Caldwell (ODA)
Ryan Brunner (JCSWCD)
Scott Duggan (OSU Ext)
Theresa DeBardelaben (OWEB)
Tom Osborne (BPA)
Trevor Derstine (producer)

New faces/voices: Ryan Brummer (JSWCD Weed Program Manager), Jacob Kimiecik (DRC water program), Marilyn Clark (Madras Pioneer reporter replacing Pat Kruis)

I. Data

We are getting started on mapping juniper projects. Awaiting data from BLM and USFS.



II. Virtual Fencing with David Bohnert (EOARC) and Jay Kehne (Conservation Northwest)

David spoke about his research projects in southeastern Oregon, followed by Jay who spoke about large projects in eastern Washington. See attachments for their presentations.

- Bottom line: it works on larger acreages, even in tricky terrain; it can be much cheaper than traditional range fencing; it is becoming more popular

III. Workgroups

1. Water Availability

- a. How to get the additional 200 cfs (~60,000 a-f) NUID needs after September 2028
 - NUID and DBBC helping other irrigation districts conserve water that can go to NUID.
Every irrigation district in Central Oregon is doing a conservation project right now; COID will be the primary source of conserved water to NUID. Water saved by piping will end up instream or on-farm.
- b. How to get the additional 100-200 cfs NUID needs after September 2033
 - New pumping facility in Lake Billy Chinook
 - Additional conservation in Deschutes Basin irrigation districts
- c. Solar panels on NUID main canal
 - Pilot program that is scalable. Floating panels will be placed in more placid parts of the concrete-lined canal near Bend. Looking for partners
- d. Cloudseeding
 - NUID got \$76,000 grant from BOR. Still looking for partners.
- e. Drought declaration: Jefferson County submitted a request to the state to issue a drought declaration for JeffCo. The first review from the state drought committee did not recommend a declaration due to current hydrologic conditions. [NUID encourages folks to support a declaration. Ellen will try to craft a Letter of Support and submit it before the committee meets again on May 15. She will provide guidance for others if they are interested in doing likewise.](#)
- f. \$35,000,000 Disaster Recovery funds from state E Board. [NUID encourages letters of support for JeffCo farmers. Ellen will send out NUID's letter and supplemental information for anybody wanting to also send a letter.](#)
- g. Evolving 'water bank' concept for the Deschutes Basin (Jacob Kimiecik, DRC)
 - i. DRC and partners including irrigation districts, cities, agencies, and the Tribes are working to develop a water bank for temporary transfers throughout the Deschutes Basin that is flexible, nimble, informal, and doesn't open doors to speculators.
 - ii. They are building off last year's pilot between COID and NUID and hoping to pilot the new version next year.
 - iii. They are investigating paying farmers for cover cropping to incentivize landowners to bank their water and provide land stewardship opportunities.
 - iv. By focusing on temporary transfers, they are hoping to avoid formal state transfer processes while still working within existing water law, however, policy changes are being investigated to better facilitate water banking.
 - v. How can we help? [Provide feedback at upcoming Group meetings and also write letters of support on request \(with key messages provided to us\).](#)

**“If you want to go fast,
Go alone.
If you want to go far,
Go together.”**

2. Croplands

- a. Current Focus Tools
 1. Diversify cropping

- 2. Increase irrigation efficiency
- 3. Soil health
- 4. Annual Weeds
- b. OpenET demo: Gordon demonstrated the free OpenET website and discussed his desire to use it to help calculate actual irrigation efficiencies and crop yields/amount of water. [He is looking for landowners who are willing to share their yield and irrigation meter data.](#)
- c. Adding questions to NUID Crop Report
 - i. Current question #11 = # Acres not irrigated: dry cropped, fallow, or idle
 - ii. Workgroup wanted to break it into 2 categories. Further discussion added '3'.
 - 1. # acres with residue
 - 2. # acres idle (no cropping)
 - 3. # acres chem-fallowed

#1 would include both 'dead' residue such as uncultivated bluegrass or living residue such as a dryland or rotational crop. Weeds would be included in #2.

 - iii. [Workgroup will reconsider before this fall.](#)
- d. Soil Health Field Day <https://spokanecd.org/pages/regenerative-ag-farm-tours>
- e. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership
 - i. Reconvened and working on outreach to landowners.

3. Ranchlands

- a. Current Focus Tools
 - 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. Soil Health Field Day <https://spokanecd.org/pages/regenerative-ag-farm-tours>
- c. Sustainable Northwest Regenerative Ranching program
 - i. We are trying to contact their program manager to find out more about their activities in JeffCo.
- d. Prioritizing watersheds in Willow Creek drainage
 - i. Looking at prioritizing based on wildlife species and
- e. Additional Tools: diversifying income (farm programs, recreation, green energy)

4. Green Energy (new name)

- a. Two Matrix tasks: Agrivoltaics and Green Energy mitigation
- b. Mark Wunsch asked the SWCD to convene an advisory group to the County Planning Commission on mitigation. The Green Energy workgroup is working to support this effort.

5. Outreach

a. General Public

1. Videos

- YouTube channel! [Jefferson County Farming - YouTube](#)
- 5 1-minute proposed videos: Food and Food Production, Sports, Wildflowers & Native Land Restoration, Families & Communities; Piping to resolve high losses in conveyance systems, River Stewardship
 - Working with Pratum, Helena, and Wilbur-Ellis on funding

2. Bend Bulletin Guest Column April 6.

3. Flyers: distributed at OPB's Think Out Loud event on March 1, on NUID website, DRC webinars

4. Proposed Logo: Seth Klann provided an updated draft. Group liked it, but a couple suggestions were made and will be discussed by the Outreach Workgroup



5. Planned activities: distribute video, DBWC Basin Plan, NUID and DRC websites

1. [JeffCo Fair booth?](#) Absolutely to maybe

b. Landowners

1. Newsletter (monthly)

IV. Moving Forward

1. Funding update: working on funding proposals
2. Adding Ryan Brunner to Workgroups
3. How highlight JeffCo ag products? Trade show? **ODA Marketing program!**

V. Next Group Meeting (August)

1. Schedule date/time: We need to meet to maintain momentum. Landowners may be too busy to meet then, but whoever can come will come.
2. Location: JeffCo Public Health
3. Guest speaker = Ryan and Ellen figure out