

Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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TO: Oregon Technical Advisory Committee Members August 24, 2007

FROM: Bob Graham, NRCS State Conservationist
Larry Frey, FSA State Director

SUBJECT: Basin Work Groups

Our sincere thanks to those of you who have worked over the past months to develop a proposal for improving the functionality of Basin Work Groups in Oregon. At this time, we are working to provide each of our Basin Team Leaders with contacts from your organization to attend Basin Work Group meetings.

To help you in determining who would best represent your organization on a Basin Work Group, we have provided some information on the attached pages. Information includes:

1. Background about Basin Work Groups
2. Roles and responsibilities of a Basin Work Group member
3. A map of Oregon's eight basins along with a membership spreadsheet
4. A list of current Basin Work Group members (for those who have current representation)

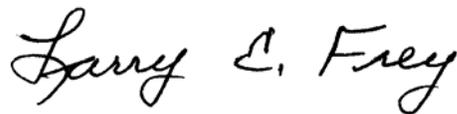
Using this information, please fill out the attached Basin Work Group member spreadsheet with your contacts for each basin. An individual from your organization can represent more than one basin. They will receive mailings and updated information for each basin identified.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee and conservation in Oregon. If you have questions, or need additional information, please contact Sara Magenheimer at 503-414-3250 or Bill White at 503-414-3085.

Sincerely,



BOB GRAHAM
State Conservationist
NRCS



LARRY FREY
State Executive Director
FSA

Attachments

cc:
NRCS Basin Team Leaders
FSA County Executive Directors

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BASIN WORK GROUPS

Background Information & Role of a Basin Work Group Member

THE CHALLENGE

A number of processes exist locally to identify and treat natural resource issues. However, these efforts can become bogged down when local groups seek funding or other resources support to address those issues. At the same time, regional and state agencies/organizations are investing dollars in local natural resource issues. Often, however, their investments aren't coordinated – either with the local decision-makers, or with each other.

The result is ‘random acts of conservation.’ Dollars and other resources are invested independently without a strategic approach to the investment or evaluating its benefit on the land.

BASIN WORK GROUPS

Many of the state's lead natural resource organizations and agencies have a presence on the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee. OTAC is unique in the federal government world because it is exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act, allowing for membership from federal, state, local governments as well as non-government organizations and individuals.

Basin Work groups were established as a subcommittee of OTAC for just that reason. Designed to be a ‘mirror’ of OTAC at the basin level, these groups have been in existence for 10 years. The basin boundaries cover a multi-county area that is close to the boundaries of the 6-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC).

PROPOSAL

Over the last year, the members of OTAC have been working to reinvigorate the Basin Work Group process. OTAC sees the Basin Work Group forum as having excellent potential to serve in the role of a ‘resource fair’, bringing together groups able to invest in natural resource issues with local groups who have identified priority concerns in their watersheds.

A number of processes exist to address resource concerns in a given basin. Often these processes are specific to a basin, and more often than not, are specific to a resource concern (water quality, salmon habitat, wildlife habitat, etc.) Rather than supplanting these methods, Basin Work Groups will facilitate these diverse interests and individuals at one table. This brings all of the voices in support of natural resources to one table, allowing them to:

- ✓ Share their priorities
- ✓ Identify common goals
- ✓ Pool resources where possible
- ✓ Learn about the latest opportunities in the natural resource conservation arena

Members of the Basin Work Groups will work together as they invest their organization's unique resources (dollars, staff, land, volunteers, grant-writing, monitoring) strategically to help local leaders reach the desired condition for their watershed. Individual organizations maintain their own methods and timelines for funding, but agree to discuss options and priorities together. The Basin Work Group would also provide a forum for inter-watershed communication of natural resource priorities and innovative technologies/strategies.

ROLE OF BASIN WORK GROUP MEMBERS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

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We need you. To make this program successful, the open nature of OTAC needs to be carried through to representation at the basin level. Each OTAC representative is encouraged to have a counterpart at the basin level to provide a broad cross-section of participants. An individual may serve on multiple Basin Work Groups.

Basin Work Group members should:

- ✓ Have knowledge of their organization and its role in conservation
- ✓ Be willing to meet 2-4 times per year, with representation based on the agenda items to be discussed
- ✓ Have knowledge of available funding sources and other resources their organization/agency can invest in local natural resource issues
- ✓ Wherever possible, have the ability to direct resources at a local level (staff, volunteers, land, dollars, grant-writing, monitoring)
- ✓ Be willing to work collaboratively with other conservation agencies and organizations to address local natural resource issues as they are brought forward
- ✓ Be able to seek strategic, creative solutions to local natural resource issues
- ✓ Have a passion for conservation!

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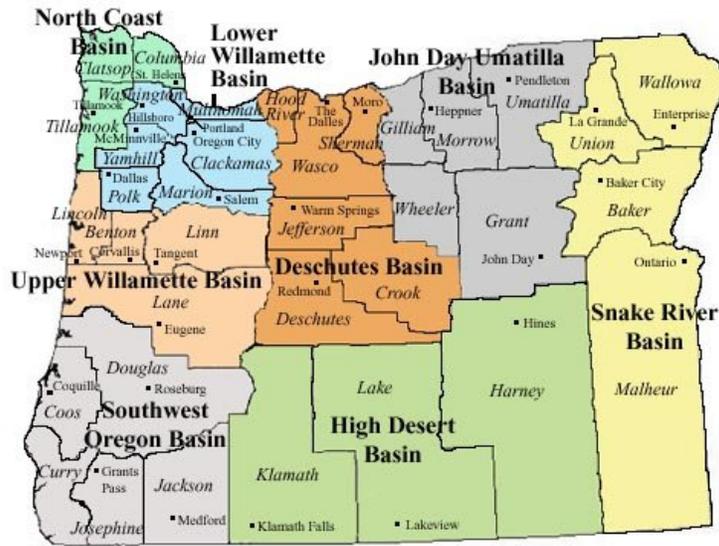
EXAMPLE OF INVESTMENT FAIR

The following is an example of how organizations/groups might invest in a local resource priority working together through the Basin Work Group. **This is not a comprehensive example.** In reality, many more organizations would provide investments into a project like this.

Local priority resource concern: Excess nutrients in X River and high stream temperatures.

- ✓ Resource concern is brought to the basin work group and the following decisions are made BY THE INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES/ ORGANIZATIONS:
 - The local conservation district provides willow plantings from their native plant nursery
 - The local watershed council and conservation district work with a local junior high school to hosts a volunteer day to plant willows along the stream to cool stream temperatures
 - The Xerces Society trains volunteers to monitor watershed health by using aquatic invertebrates
 - EPA and ODEQ provide monitoring information to track progress in reducing nutrients and lowering stream temperatures
 - FSA agrees to an outreach effort encouraging CREP funding for stretch of X River that has a large number of cattle in stream areas
 - At the basin level, NRCS provides a priority funding pool through EQIP for nutrient management on nearby crop fields.
 - Several local agricultural organizations agree to contact their members in the area to encourage voluntary program participation.
 - The Forest Service prioritizes riparian work on stretches of this stream under their jurisdiction in their local forest plan
 - USFWS and NOAA-Fisheries assist by coordinating consultation with the associated federal agencies
 - OWEB regional staff work with the local groups to apply to the small grants program and other grant programs as appropriate
 - The extension service provides landowner education workshops
 - ✓ Result: X River removed from 303D listing
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Basin Work Group Members



Based on the map above, please provide contact information for anyone within your agency/organization who would be appropriate to serve on a basin work group in each area. We will add their information to our contact list. Please remember that, if possible, representatives should have decision-making authority over resources that can be utilized for projects (i.e. staff, volunteers, monitoring, funding, grant writing).

Basin	Contact Name	Address	Phone	E-mail
North Coast				
Lower Willamette				
Central Coast/ Upper Willamette				
Southwest				
High Desert				
Snake River				
John Day/ Umatilla				
Deschutes				

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