

Deschutes Basin Watershed Proposal Criteria Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Oregon NRCS, Deschutes Basin – June 2009

Overview

The Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Deschutes Basin is targeting 25% of the FY 2010 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) dollars towards watershed projects that address basin priority resource concerns. The resource concerns identified by the Deschutes Basin Work Group include *Water Temperature, Plant Condition* and *Energy Conservation*. The projects will provide targeted assistance to producers for enhancing conservation of these priority resource concerns on agricultural and non-industrial private forestland. Watershed projects should identify specific resource concerns within the broad category areas outlined above.

Areas of assistance are selected competitively through applications of eligible partners. Eligible partners include, state, local, and tribal governments, federal agencies including NRCS offices, producer associations and cooperatives, institutions of higher education, and non-governmental organizations. Projects must be in the Deschutes Basin, which includes Wasco, Sherman, Hood River, Jefferson, Deschutes and Crook Counties, and the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.

EQIP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Criteria

When submitting a proposal to the Deschutes Basin Team Leader, please read the Federal Register Notice regarding EQIP prior to developing your proposal to ensure your project meets the programs intent. The Federal Register Notice can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/index.html>.

The following information is just a summary of the program requirements for your use as a reference in developing an application.

Program Purposes

The purpose of the basin priority dollars is to:

1. Address conservation priorities set by the Deschutes Basin Work Group involving agriculture and non-industrial private forestland on a larger-than-farm scale;
2. Encourage producers to cooperate in meeting applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements related to production;
3. Encourage producers to cooperate in the installation and maintenance of conservation practices that affect multiple agricultural or non-industrial private forestland;
4. Promote the development and demonstration of innovative conservation practices and delivery methods, and

5. Encourage collaboration among partners to work together on projects in order to more strategically invest program dollars.

To submit an application, your proposal MUST include the following criteria:

Proposal criteria

To be eligible for selection, prospective partners must submit a complete proposal to the Deschutes Basin Team Leader.

The proposal must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration. A complete application will address each of the bullets below individually, with enough specific information that the review team can use the application alone to evaluate the quality of the project. Please provide the following information in no more than five pages with a minimum of 1 inch margins and no smaller than 12 point type:

1. Please provide an executive summary of 1000 words or less that describes the project, and how your project will address the basin priority resource concern(s).

Resource Concerns

2. Describe the geographic area where the project is located. Provide a map, and describe why the identified area is important to address the basin priority resource concern(s).

Please provide an electronic copy of a geospatial file of the map (example: shapefile) in addition to a printed copy. This can be provided via email or on a CD.

3. Clearly describe the resource concern(s) to be addressed and outline the timeline for completion of the project. Timeline should include specifics regarding the amount of time for planning, practice design, implementation and evaluation/monitoring. Describe the practices or systems that will be used to address the resource concerns. In addition, please describe any long term operations and maintenance costs or concerns for those practices.

Producer Participation

4. Identify the “estimated participation rate” of the different groups of landowners expected to participate in the project *using NRCS Technical Note 1801 (revised)*. The Tech Note can be found on the Oregon NRCS website under the Deschutes Basin Work Group at the following link: <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/schedule.html>. One worksheet can be filled out for each group of similar landowners in your project. Please work with your partners when answering the questions in the tech note. If you need assistance in using the tech note, contact Tom Makowski, NRCS Water Resources Planning Team, at 503-414-3106. You only need to submit the estimated participation rate, and not the entire worksheet.

Describe the level of outreach that has been conducted with the targeted landowners to achieve that expected participation rate. Are the producers and landowners who have

indicated willingness to participate in the project the critical, key, or important participants needed to make the strategy work? If so, describe how and why.

5. For those landowners identified in this project who have participated in NRCS programs before, please describe their success or participation in NRCS programs in the past. Please indicate if any of the landowners are beginning farmers (farmed less than 10 years) or belong to a socially disadvantaged group (A group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. These groups consist of the following: American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics.)

Funding Request

6. Include a table that outlines your proposed year by year budget. Identify:

- the number of acres to be treated,
- the specific practices to be applied,
- the amount of EQIP cost-share needed for the project, and the amount of partner dollars that will be used. For partner funds, identify which of the partner funds have already been secured, and for those that are not secure, describe what the process would be for securing those funds.

Of those listed, identify which practices will be funded through EQIP, and clearly identify those areas of partner investment. For example, NRCS-EQIP may pay for irrigation efficiency practices by installing drip systems, while partner funds may be used for off-farm components of the irrigation system.

Additional Information

7. Specifically identify the partners involved in the project and their roles (funding, monitoring, evaluation, technical assistance, etc.). Any funding commitments should be identified in the project budget. Please provide letters of support from partners that include specific involvement commitments. (Letters of support will not count towards the five page maximum.)

8. Does the proposed project use practices that have important or innovative values as a demonstration, “seed”, or learning opportunity? If so, please describe those practices, and how you plan to engage in technology transfer.

Identify the criteria you would use to rank producers for funding within this geographic area. This information will be used to help NRCS establish application ranking criteria.

9. Has the proposed project been reviewed and/or endorsed by the local work group or local NRCS District Conservationist? (Yes or No)

10. Describe portions of the proposed project that will involve state/federal regulatory requirements such as T&E species that will require ESA consultations, surveys, or

permitting: Cultural Resources that will require surveys and /or SHPO reviews; Clean Water Act permits/certifications? Include a description of possible delays that would impact implementation timelines or funding source requirements.

Proposals will be ranked based on the following criteria:

The Deschutes Basin Work Group will use an assessment tool to assess the merit of each proposal. The BWG will give a higher priority to proposals that:

- Have a high percentage of producers actively farming or managing working agricultural or non-industrial private forestlands included in the area covered by the agreement:
- Complete the application of the conservation practices and/or activities on all of the covered program contracts or cost-share agreements in 3 years or less,
- Significantly leverage non-federal financial and technical resources and coordinate with other local, state, or federal efforts:
- Deliver high percentages of applied conservation to address water temperature, plant condition and energy efficiency.
- Provide innovation in conservation methods and delivery.
- Provide for outreach to, and participation of, beginning, small acreage, socially disadvantaged, and limited resource farmers or ranchers, as well as Indian Tribes, within the area covered by the agreement.

Proposal Due Date and Announcement of Successful Proposals:

Proposals must be received by the Deschutes Basin Team Leader by 12:00 midnight on August 14, 2009. Proposals can be submitted electronically, by mail or by fax. Please submit proposals to:

Gina Kerzman, Deschutes Basin Team Leader
Deschutes Basin Watershed Proposals
625 SE Salmon Ave., Suite 4
Redmond, OR 97756
Ph: 541-923-4358 x 138
Fax: 541-923-4713
Email: gina.kerzman@or.usda.gov

Successful proposals will be announced by September 1, 2009. Landowners included in the project area(s) selected have until October 1, 2009 to submit applications for contracts to the local NRCS field office.

For more information, contact the Deschutes Basin Team Leader, or a district conservationist in a local NRCS field office in the Deschutes Basin.