August 26, 2010

TO: OTAC Members

FR: Oregon NRCS Leadership Team

RE: Recommendations for Statewide Resource Priorities

Action Requested:

1. Information on Funding Pool Establishment
2. Recommendation on Process for Determining State Resource Priorities
3. Subcommittee to Review Identified Priorities

Over the last year, NRCS has presented to OTAC updates and received concurrence regarding the process to develop a Long Range Strategy for every field office. Field offices are in the process of completing the first phases of those strategies, which has included baseline resource analyses, review of existing strategic plans and extensive meetings with local conservation and agricultural leaders, state and federal agencies.

As a part of this process, field offices are also identifying their priorities for Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding for next year. The information gathered through the Long Range Strategy process has fed this process as well.

At the same time, we have been informed that our national office will be requesting specific state-level resource concerns as a part of the Fiscal Year 2012 funding allocation process. Concerns must be submitted nationally by June, 2011 and will be recommended by OTAC to the state conservationist. NRCS Oregon would like to identify concerns this year to test how they can best be utilized to focus investments at the basin and state level.

Since field offices are working through the long-range strategy process and funding pool priorities at the local level, identifying resource concerns, NRCS proposes the following process to determine state level resource concerns for recommendation to the state conservationist.

1. EQIP funding pools are due to the State Conservationist August 31.
2. NRCS will complete an initial analysis of the resource concerns identified in the state funding pools by September 15. The analysis will include the top 10 resource priorities, along with an indication of where these priorities exist (west-side, east-side, land use type, etc.)
3. NRCS will present these findings to a sub-committee of OTAC to use in the development of a recommendation for state-wide resource concerns
4. Once developed, NRCS will provide the state resource concerns to OTAC electronically for concurrence prior to October 1.
5. In addition to their locally identified funding pools, Basin Team Leaders will have the option of developing basin-wide funding pools that correlate with the top 3-4 resource concerns recommended by OTAC.