

EQIP COUNTY FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS for 2019

I. Local Work Group (LWG) Information and Objectives

- A. County: Lewis and Clark
- B. LWG Chairperson: Scott Blackman
- C. Meeting date(s): 7/19/2018
- D. Minutes from the meeting(s) (attach when transmitting to NRCS State Conservationist)

In an effort to provide greater local direction in a focused approach, the guidance sought by the LWG is more involved for 2019. We are requesting that you provide your recommendations in 3 key areas: 1) identify your top 2 resource concerns or geographic areas; 2) recommend screening criteria/questions for each; and 3) recommend ranking criteria questions for each.

Our objective is two-fold – first, to ensure our field time is focused where we are most certain of getting quality conservation work completed and second, to provide a locally driven way to address your most pressing issues.

II. LWG Recommended Resource Concerns/Geographic Area for EQIP Allocation

#1 Resource Concern or Geographic area to focus 2019 EQIP funds:

Improve plant health in Lewis and Clark County by implementing NRCS conservation practices on grazing, forest, and cropland to promote plant health, vigor & production in Lewis & Clark County.

#2 Resource Concern or Geographic area to focus 2019 EQIP funds:

III. Screening Tool

Questions to be used for a screening tool to identify the High, Medium and Low priority applications.

Some ideas for screening questions are:

- Does application fall into LWG highest priority for funding?
- Is the applicant working toward a complete resource management system for the farm or ranch?
- Applicants who have not participated in EQIP before but are interested in developing a complete plan for operation.
- Has the applicant had a contract in past (?) years that was cancelled (or terminated or defaulted or behind schedule)?
- (Other ideas of your own)

IV. Ranking Criteria Questions

As in years past, LWGs have had the ability to recommend questions to be used in the EQIP ranking criteria and you still have this ability in 2019. Montana NRCS allows 100 points within the ranking criteria to be developed by the LWGs. Therefore, for each of the 2 resource concerns identified, please develop 3 ranking questions.

#1 Resource Concern or Geographic Area: Plant Health

Ranking Question 1. Does the application involve the contracting of a NRCS Practices that will reduce the impact of pests, invasive species, inefficient use of irrigation water, or overstocking of forest stands? (On rangeland, forested acres, weeds and/or riparian areas, or cropland.)

Points = 50

Ranking Question 2. _____

Points = _____

Ranking Question 3.

Points = _____

#2 Resource Concern or Geographic Area: _____

Ranking Question 1. _____

Points = _____

Ranking Question 2. _____

Points = _____

Ranking Question 3.

Points = _____

V. Other Comments from the LWG

VI. LWG Recommendation Approval & Response from State Conservationist

Chairperson of LWG Tom Watson Date 7-19-18

District Conservationist John D. Watson Date 7/19/18

Assistant State Conservationist
For Field Operations _____ Date _____

For State Office Use Only	
Concur _____	
Concur with the following modifications: _____	

Do not concur for the following reasons: _____	

Tom Watson, State Conservationist	Date _____

Helena LWG Report

With the fires in the summer of 2017 and outreach throughout the county we saw a renewed interest in forestry work and fuels mitigation applications. Between Helena & White Sulphur Springs the two offices fielded contacts by 142 interested parties of which 117 were in the Helena Field Office and 25 were in White Sulphur Springs. There was other request for assistance for Range & Irrigation questions throughout the FY18 field season.

Clients seem generally happy with workflow & the offices ability to help them meet their goals and objectives within our abilities to do so. We did have two requests for streambank protection work, and an AFO/CAFO project this year as well, but most of our work is for Plant Health issues based around Forestry, Grazing and Irrigation based land uses.

I have not heard of any new concerns being raised this year regarding issues in the county (other than the flooding issues) and continue to work with partner groups to see if there are other issues in the county that need to be addressed or looked into.

FY18 Active & Pending Contracts

Active Contracts – 54 (5 csp's, 3 high tunnels, 2 range/pasture, 1 irrigation, 43 forestry)

FY 18 Obligations – 5 new contracts (3 high tunnels, 2 forestry)

FY 18 Pending Obligations – 19 forestry (10 are awaiting signatures for clients or obligation)

9 additional applications we are going to attempt to fund if additional funds come available.

FY19 Workload as of 7/16/18

70 Interested clients

66 Forestry (12 Formal Apps, 54 interested clients)

3 Range (Formal Apps)

2 Irrigation (Formal Apps)



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

790 Colleen Street • Helena, Montana 59601 • 449-5000 ext. 112

7/19/18

Local Work Group

Hosted by Lewis & Clark Conservation District

10:30 a.m. 790 Colleen Street, Helena MT 59601

Bailey Rapp

Chris Evans

John George

Diane Fitzgerald

Steve Granzow

Jeff Ryan

The meeting convened at 10:35 a.m.

John passed out a synopsis of last year's contracting needs and requests. There has been increased traffic for forestry projects. Last year was a big fire year and that drives the forestry requests.

Newest concerns are the flooding issues, especially those in the northern part of the county. There is concern about assigning something very specific for the priority resource concern, because it leaves too many landowners out of the running for projects.

Last year's #1 resource concern was: improve plant health in Lewis and Clark County by implementing NRCS conservation management practices

#2 was Improve and protect grazing, forest and cropland to promote plant health, vigor and production in Lewis and Clark County.

There was some confusion about our priority concern from last year at the area office level which we had to clarify after the fact. We clarified that statement to read: #1 Improve plant health in Lewis and Clark County by implementing NRCS conservation practices on grazing, forest and crop land to promote plant health, vigor and production in Lewis and Clark County.

There were questions about the language and clarification from John about how the rankings work. Anything that is in #2 automatically moves to medium priority and will almost certainly not get funded.

Plant health and vigor has worked extremely well for the office in the past, over all the land uses. Diane and Darcy also indicated that the priority resource concern also helped in the statewide fund pools. John said that one problem with it is that it culls streambank projects.

There was discussion about why the LWG changed this several years ago as a priority resource concern when the state moved to area funding pools instead of county funding pools. This priority resource concern casts a wider net over landowners in the county and makes the money go further. Jeff said that

ultimately there might be projects that it would be nice to tap into the funding for stream projects in the riparian fencing and grazing and stockwater arena.

John said a new State Conservationist has been brought on, Tom Watson. It's unknown what spin the new state con will put on things. Keri has talked a lot over the years about limiting us to one land use. Priority resource concern: #1 Improve plant health in Lewis and Clark County by implementing NRCS conservation practices on grazing, forest and cropland to promote plant health, vigor and production in Lewis and Clark County.

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.