

## EQIP Overview

Taken from a presentation by Jeffery Loser of the NRCS.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides in a single voluntary program flexible, technical, educational, and financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who face serious threats to soil, water, air and related natural resources on agricultural land and other land, including grazing lands, wetlands, forest land, and wildlife habitat.

EQIP replaces ACP, WQIP, CRSCP and GPCP. Assistance will be provided in a manner that maximizes environmental benefits per dollar expended and will help producers comply with federal and state environmental laws.

Funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will be used to fund the assistance provided under EQIP. For fiscal year 1996, \$130 million was made available to administer an interim program; \$200 million is to be made available for each fiscal year 1997 through 2002. Fifty percent of the funding available for the program will be targeted at practices relating to natural resource concerns due to livestock production.

The program has been designed to be locally led, under the belief that people at the local

and state level know their natural resource problems and the best approaches to solve those problems. There will be national guidance and direction, as always, but most of the actual decisions will be made at the local and state level. For this to occur, people need to make decisions in a collaborative manner using a consensus process. NRCS, FSA, FSA state and county committees, conservation districts and many other agencies and people will have significant roles and responsibilities in the program.

The program has been designed to take advantage of what each agency does best, and will primarily be available in priority areas throughout the nation. The priority areas will be watersheds, regions or areas of special environmental sensitivity or having significant soil, water, air or related natural resource concerns. The process for selecting these priority areas begins at the local level. EQIP will also be available outside of the priority area where there are natural resource priority concerns that have been identified at the state level.

Program participation is voluntary and initiated by the producer who applies for a contract. Applications will be evaluated and ranked based on how well the producer plans on maximizing environmental bene-

fits per dollar expended. The highest ranked applications will be approved for a contract.

Approved applicants are responsible for developing and submitting a conservation plan encompassing the producer's farming or ranching unit of concern. The conservation plan will describe conservation practices to protect the soil, water, air or related natural resources. This plan will use the conservation treatments of the NRCS field office technical guide and is generally developed with NRCS and other technical assistance. The plan is used to establish an EQIP contract.

The contract provides for cost-sharing and incentive payments to the producer for applying the needed conservation practices and land use adjustments within a specified time schedule. Payments are made to the producer when the conservation practices specified in the contract are satisfactorily established. The contracts are 5-10 years in length.

In summary, these are key differences in EQIP from prior programs. EQIP is primarily led by local decision making; instead of decisions being made and handed down from the national level, most decisions are made at the local or state levels. Because of locally-led efforts, the program will require partnering, collaboration, and coordination among agencies and organizations. EQIP is not an annual program for the producer. Producers must submit a conservation plan which becomes the basis for a 5-10 year contract.

Unlike some other programs in the past, EQIP is not a single purpose program. It will not only address soil and water, but also air, plant and animal resources. While EQIP does not focus on any one natural resource concern, it does focus on geographic areas for the majority of its emphasis.

These geographic areas-called priority areas-can be watersheds, regions, or areas with common problems. Maximizing environmental benefits per dollar expended is a term used frequently in the program, and there are numerous ways in which this will be accomplished.

EQIP may also be used to assist a producer in complying with environmental laws. Producers with large confined livestock operations will not be

eligible for cost-share assistance to construct an animal waste storage or treatment facility, but they may be eligible for assistance on other conservation practices. Payment limitations per person are \$10,000 in a fiscal year and \$50,000 for any multi-year contract. Congress also indicated that no payments may be made to a person in the same fiscal year of entering a contract. The first payments must be made in the subsequent fiscal year.

## Notes from the Chair...

By Chairman Chris Rauch

Lately, I have been hearing a new buzz phrase-"locally-led conservation". What does locally-led conservation mean? It means local people, with the leadership of local conservation districts, assessing their natural resource conditions and needs. It means local people setting goals, identifying programs and other resources to solve those needs. It means local people developing proposals and recommendations to implement solutions and measuring their success.

Locally-led conservation is voluntary. It means neighbors rural and urban--working together as the foundation for effective conservation; providing a platform for effective communication, achieving mutual understanding, and forging partnerships.

Locally-led conservation allows local people, who know the problems best, to deal with those problems. It is based on shared responsibility--neighbors, farmers, ranchers, rural and urban residents taking responsibility for their share of conservation.

Local means a county, a portion of a county, a watershed, or a multi-county region. The local people are those with a

shared stake in the health of natural resources in the local area.

This "new" phrase isn't new at all. In fact, the phrase is at least 60 years old. In 1935, the Soil Erosion Service established a 25,000 acre project in south Morrow County to help restore eroded creek channels and depleted rangeland. In 1937, the Lexington Blow Control District was formed. The Heppner Soil Conservation District was formed by local farmers, in 1941, recognizing the importance of local, voluntary conservation efforts on private lands. The Heppner Water Control District was formed by local people to address the problems that caused Oregon's worst natural disaster.

Unfortunately, this commitment to locally led conservation was derailed a few years ago, but with the steadfast persistence of conservation districts and their partners, we are seeing a recommitment to our roots. I invite all private landowners, individuals and communities in Morrow County to join the Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District and our partnership.

If we pull together our local resources, we can make fantastic progress in the name of conservation.

## Morrow SWCD Education Partnership

The Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District has initiated an educational partnership with county schools. The intent is to provide an opportunity for area youth to learn more about natural resources. The District will provide the necessary information, technical, and administrative assistance. Participating instructors will design a curriculum around various projects and the students will carry out the field work. A fair and uncontroversial data use policy will be implemented in order to protect the non-political position of the educational program. When data is gathered for a cooperating individual, business, or agency, an agreement as to the intended use of the data will be established before the data collection begins.

In April, representatives from the SWCD and county teachers traveled to Monument for a field day to learn about the Monument High School's natural resources program, Student Watershed Enhancement Team (SWET), which has been featured on the Public Broadcasting Station program, "Oregon Field Guide".

In November, Morrow SWCD sponsored Dale Holland, lone science teacher, to attend the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board's convention in Seaside. He will share ideas he picked up on curriculum development with other partnership teachers in the county.

We have also been working with the Umatilla-Morrow Educational Service District (ESD) and the Umatilla Basin Watershed Council (UBWC). The Watershed Council is initiating a similar education partnership in Umatilla County. The Umatilla-Morrow ESD received a \$39,800 technical literacy grant and plans to target the teachers involved with natural resource education projects in two counties. A committee has been formed to coordinate our efforts and to get teachers together to share ideas.

We have received contributions from interested citizens and various companies for equipment purchases in the amount of \$1,175.00. We are pleased with the response and encouraged by the inquiries.

Following is a list of current contributors: Jim McElligott; West Extension Irrigation District; Potlach Corp.; Finley Buttes; Pacific Telecom, Inc.; Wheatland Insurance; Bank of

## ODFW fall deer counts listed

The annual, post-season deer composition counts have been completed for the Heppner area. The counts are conducted to determine the post-season buck to doe ratios and the fawn to doe ratios. The counts are conducted by vehicle throughout the different management units. Each group of deer observed is classified by sex and age and all

BGMU	Does	Fawns	Bucks
Heppner	357	234	47 (8-sp, 19-2pt, 9-3pt, 11-4pt)
Fossil	409	232	53 (9-sp, 24-2pt, 12-3pt, 8-4pt)
Col Basin	317	173	41 (9-sp, 21-2pt, 8-3pt, 3-4pt)
E Biggs	221	106	39 (6-sp, 18-2pt, 6-3pt, 9-4pt)

### MORROW COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances -- All Governmental Fund Types (Arising from Cash Transactions) Year Ended June 30, 1996

	Governmental Fund Types	
	General Soil and Water	Special Revenue Weed Control
<b>REVENUES:</b>		
Grant revenue	\$ 15,454	\$ -
Morrow County funds	39,179	-
Interest income	550	-
Contract services	3,000	-
Miscellaneous	1,724	-
Total revenues	\$9,277	-
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>		
Personal services	47,673	633
Materials and services	11,641	23,185
Total expenditures	\$9,314	23,818
FUND BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR	22,842	23,818
FUND BALANCE, END OF YEAR	\$ 23,506	\$ -

Eastern Oregon; Morrow County Grain Growers; and Cascade Specialties.

The Willow Creek Watershed monitoring project which has been headed up by Dale Holland will be our first project in Morrow County because it will furnish students in Heppner, lone and Boardman with an opportunity to evaluate the same stream at varying points while developing valuable skills.

Following is equipment needed for the project in lone: 100 ft. cloth measuring tape;

bucks are separated by antler class. All counts in the Heppner, Fossil, Columbia Basin and East Biggs BGMUs were completed by Thanksgiving.

In total, 2,229 deer were classified in the Heppner area. The following table lists the number and classification of deer observed in their respective Big Game Management Units.

stream flow velocity meter; computer dedicated to project. The Morrow SWCD is very excited about the Ed Partnership program and we welcome any suggestions or donations.

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- ◆ Electronic Engineering Technology
- ◆ Industrial Maintenance Technology
- ◆ Industrial Technology
- ◆ Production Agriculture -- Crops and Livestock

These and our other professional/technical programs are generally nontransferable. However, students interested in transferring to a four-year college or university in one of these areas can work closely with their academic advisor to ensure their courses will transfer.

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