

EQIP COUNTY FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS for 2018

I. Local Work Group (LWG) Information and Objectives

- A. County: Lewis and Clark
- B. LWG Chairperson: Stan Fraiser
- C. Meeting date(s): 8/10/2017
- 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 2018. 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 2018 EQIP funds:

Improve plant health in Lewis and Clark County by implementing NRCS conservation management practices.

#2 Resource Concern or Geographic area to focus 2018 EQIP funds:

Improve & Protect grazing, forest, and cropland to promote plant health, vigor & production in Lewis & Clark County.

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 2018. 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 management system that will reduce the impact of pests, invasive species or inefficient use of irrigation water? (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: Grazing lands

Ranking Question 1. Does the conservation plan include irrigation water management, prescribed grazing or forest stand improvement/fuel break?

Points = 50

Ranking Question 2. _____

Points = _____

Ranking Question 3.

Points = _____

V. Other Comments from the LWG

The county local workgroup is great, but we recognize that local ranking questions are developed at the area office level not the county level and we believe that an area workgroup meeting would help facilitate the targeting of resource concerns within the Bozeman area. We would like to see an area workgroup in 2018.

VI. LWG Recommendation Approval & Response from State Conservationist

Chairperson of LWG _____ Date _____

District Conservationist _____ Date _____

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: _____

Lisa Cloverdale, State Conservationist

Date



LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

790 Colleen Street • Helena, Montana 59601 • 449-5000 ext. 112 • Fax (406) 449-5039

Local Workgroup Meeting
USDA Service Center Conference Room
790 Colleen Street
Helena MT, 59601

August 10, 2017
11 a.m.

In attendance:
LCCD
Stan Frasier
David Martin
Chris Evans

NRCS
John George
Diane Fitzgerald

OTHER

The meeting was called to order by Conservation District Chairman, Stan Frasier at 11:00 a.m.

John George discussed the applications that have come into the field office in the past year. A variety of project types have come in and they are expecting more. In 2017 for applications we had an afo/cafo, 4 range/pasture, 2 irrigation, 36 forestry and 2 high tunnels. Outreach through the county for the forestry special initiative. About 65 contacts came into the office resulting from that.

Other than the afo/cafo, all the projects addressed the priority of plant health and vigor. The goal is good healthy plants on the landscape. There was discussion about grazing contracts. There has been significant outreach to those landowners with only one contact back. There was some discussion about why we can't get grazing applications and the general feel from people, including supervisors who ranch, is that the push for RMS contracts has reduced landowner interests in programs.

NRCS wants a recommended resource concern or a geographic area for EQIP allocation. With a geographic area, the funds would be targeted toward that area. Other landowners can apply but the priority for funding would go toward the geographic area selected. After being asked by the CD board what would be more effective for the landowners who are seeking assistance, John said that using the resource concern basis seems to be more effective for Lewis & Clark County.

Resource Concern: Improve plant health and vigor in Lewis and Clark County by implementing NRCS conservation management practices.

Other comments: The county local workgroup is great, but we recognize that local ranking questions are developed at the area office level not the county level and we believe that an area workgroup meeting would help facilitate the targeting of resource concerns within the Bozeman area. We would like to see an area workgroup in 2018.

Since the local questions longer seem to be used in ranking, we won't use them. If they are required, then these are the questions we would use:

Ranking Question 1: Does the application involve the contracting of a management system that will reduce the impact of pests, invasive species or inefficient of irrigation water.

Ranking Question 2: Does the conservation plan include irrigation water management, prescribed grazing or forest stand improvement/fuel break.