



## **A PROPOSAL**

### **FOR ASSISTANCE IN CREATING STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENTS FOR AND WITH PRIVATE OWNERS/OPEATORS IN THE KLAMATH BASIN**

**W**ork cooperatively (DOI, USDA, CEQ, Stewardship America, state and local agencies, local user groups and Klamath Basin farmers), using Sec. 2003 of farm bill as a starting point, to provide:

1. An assessment of existing programs available,
2. Identify participants,
3. Negotiate short-term contracts,
4. Implement a training program,
5. Execute long-term stewardship agreements, and
6. Manage, operate, and monitor the agreements.

#### **PHASE I: ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS**

Assemble a list of programs available through federal and state agencies and private sources that will:

1. Keep land in private ownership,
2. Accomplish conservation objectives that are desired in the Klamath Basin, and
3. Generate new, ongoing, stable sources of revenue for owners/operators in the Klamath Basin.

#### **PHASE II – IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

1. Identify initial group of owners and operators in Klamath Basin who might be willing to enroll lands in stewardship agreements.
2. Identify local groups, organizations, and offices of federal and state agencies, and resource conservation districts that have established working relationships with local owners/operators; can serve as local partners to assist in negotiating agreements; and can take on responsibility for managing and monitoring agreements once agreements are established.

#### **PHASE III – SHORT-TERM CONTRACTS**

Use short-term contracts (described at [http://privatelands.org/FSP\\_short\\_contract.htm](http://privatelands.org/FSP_short_contract.htm)) to:

1. Conduct baseline analysis of selected properties;
2. Present owners/operators with list of programs that can be assembled on their properties;
3. Describe benefits offered by stewardship agreements to landowners and community;
4. Obtain commitment from owners/operators to proceed with negotiating and assembling stewardship agreements;
5. Work with USDA/NRCS and third-party vendors to develop or update conservation plans;
6. Determine which programs can be assembled through stewardship agreements;
7. Identify other "services" that owners/operators could provide that are not covered by existing programs or programs that can be used in the Klamath Basin;
8. Identify sources of funding to pay for these services.

#### **PHASE IV: TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Create and conduct a training program to enable local groups to:

1. Locate and assemble programs from all levels of government;
2. Negotiate short-term contracts to begin working with private landowners;



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3. Assess resource needs and opportunities on individual parcels of property and the willingness of individual owners/operators to carry out specific conservation practices;
4. Develop conservation plans acceptable to USDA/NRCS;
5. Assess applicability of existing programs to individual parcels of property;
6. Determine what "adjustments" need to be made in these programs to carry out conservation objectives and accommodate unique local conditions;
7. Request permission from proper authorities to make necessary program adjustments;
8. Create and execute documentation to tie together and coordinate existing programs through stewardship agreements;
9. Fill in gaps through "service contracts" incorporated into the agreements and funded by other agencies and organizations;
10. Execute agreements; and
11. Monitor owner/operator progress under the agreements.

#### **PHASE V: MANAGEMENT, OPERATION AND MONITORING**

1. Assist the Secretary in designating one or more local groups to act as a "contracting agency" to enter into and administer agreements on behalf of the Secretary.
2. Maintain communication and collaboration with local entities to assist in reviewing agreements and owner/operator progress every five years and recommending possible modifications, additions, adaptations, improvements, enhancements or other changes to the agreements to improve the way agreements operate.

WHAT ARE LOGICAL NEXT STEPS?