



CRC Ag Producers Working Group

Meeting Notes

June 26, 2023

In person & via Zoom Meeting

In Attendance

Doug Busselman, NV Farm Bureau
Shane Fryer, CWSD
Valerie Gordon, Ace Hereford Ranch
Jessica Gwerder, NRCS
Cami Hodges, Break A Heart Ranch
Brenda Hunt, CWSD (Host)
Ed James, CWSD
Rachel Kiefer, AWG
Lori Leonard, TNC
Mareena Lovejoy, CCOS

Danny McClure, Lahontan Water Board
Charmi Mitchell, UNR Ext., Mineral County
Allen Moody, NRCS
Ryan Morgan, Wooley Star Ranch
Kelly Nicholas, AmeriCorps
Nik Noomen, Wild Harmony Ranch
Catrina Schambra, CWSD
Chuck Schembre, Understanding Ag
Rich Wilkinson, CVCD
Woody Worthington, NV Farm Bureau

Introductions & Round Robin

Brenda Hunt, Watershed Program Manager, CWSD

Brenda introduced herself and asked everyone to do the same and give an update on the work they do.

Chuck Schembre, Understanding Ag

Previously with NDEP, [Understanding AG](#) is his new position. He has clients in Carson Valley and is also doing side consulting regarding winter cover cropping with great success. He reported an update from Joe Frey (Fallon Regenerative AG Farmer). Joe is interested in pursuing conservation easements on the riparian corridor. Chuck has been working with him on projects at his ranch. Summer cover crops, planting new crops, and rotating livestock has been working well for his ranch. Also, soil samples taken at his ranch in April 2023 are being used for NDEP Soil Health 208 grant with CWSD. His ranch was a stop on the GET ON THE BUS TOUR to educate on Regenerative Ag practices in action. Joe wants to host more workshops at his property in the future to promote these practices.

Valerie Gordon, Ace Hereford Ranch Manager (Alpine County)

She had Danny McClure out recently to look at her project. She is thrilled to host projects at the ranch! They are working on Healthy Soils CDFA Grant (HSP Grant) now (California Department of Food & Ag). See suggests group contact [Point Blue](#) for funding opportunities.

Woody Worthington, NV Farm Bureau

He wis working on Ag in the Classroom Events with CWSD.

Charmi Mitchell, UNR Cooperative Extension

She is organizing a workshop on October 12 focusing on Regenerative AG and Soil Health. Looking for feedback in Douglas County and Carson City for workshop ideas. (Feedback provided later in notes).

Danny McClure, Lahontan Water Board

He is an engineer working on the West Fork Vision Plan with ranchers along the river and in the watershed. The Plan will be going out the stakeholders in July 2023.

Jessica Gwerder, NCRS (Minden)

Currently focused on Source Water Protection projects. EQIP funding available.

Allen Moody, NCRS (Reno)

He introduced himself to the group. Here to listen and learn.

Nik Noomen, Wild Harmony Ranch, Gardnerville

He has a regenerative ranch and is always looking for ways to improve. His ranch was a stop on the recent GET ON THE BUS TOUR, which was great, but wished he was given more time. He is always open to using his ranch for these types of events. Brenda Hunt suggests that maybe the group can meet at different ranches for field trips around the watershed in the future.

Lori Leonard, The Nature Conservancy, River Fork Ranch Preserve

[River Fork Ranch](#) is an 800 acre preserve using 400 acres as pasture. She is still looking at timing to implement EQIP plans. Much of the preserve is still under water.

Rachel Kieffer, Headwaters Coordinator, Alpine Watershed Group

AWG is not actively looking into Ag grants but looking at 319 grant possibilities now. She was on the GET ON THE BUS TOUR and highly recommends it to the group! She also mentioned AWG has funding information that she will send to the group. *Editor: Rachel will send under a separate cover.*

Ryan Morgan, Wooley Star Ranch Operator

He works with the [Savory Institute](#) as an Ecological Outcomes Verifier and is monitoring soil health through a HSP grant for CDFA Healthy Soils Program at the Woollystar Ranch. He is just now able to seed after all the snow.

Cami Hodges, Break A Heart Ranch Manager, Silver Springs

She joined this group through the Frey Ranch Workshop in Fallon. Their ranch has started no-till drilling by renting the equipment. She is interested in funding to purchase or to buy a used no-till drill. She has a cover crop of triticale in with alfalfa and it is doing very well.

Doug Busselman, Nevada Farm Bureau

AB109 on Soil Health went from NR Committee to Way & Means Committee before it died. He is hoping it will be brought back to the next session. It has a lot of support.

Mareena Lovejoy, Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space

She is new to her position, but wanted to mention the Carson City owns Buzzy's Ranch & Silver Saddle Ranch.

Kelly Nicholas, CWSD Watershed Technician, AmeriCorps

Kelly introduced herself to the group.

Shane Fryer, CWSD Watershed Program Specialist

He announced he is retiring on June 30, but will be seeing everyone around the watershed.

Group Discussion: Mission, Vision, Goals & Strategies

Brenda introduced the latest draft of Mission, Vision, Goals & Strategies and went through the document with the group. [Click here to review the draft document.](#)

- Valerie Gordon suggests adding being a good steward of the land.
- Chuck Schembre suggests adding rural property owners who are not ranchers.
- Rich Wilkinson wants the group to be as inclusive as possible to all Ag Producers. We need outreach to include these people.

- Doug Busselman suggests tour opportunities would be hands-on training to get information out to Ag Producers.
- After a brief recreation discussion as an outreach opportunity, Danny McClure stated the group should remain focused on Ag Production only. Farmers are busy and if they tune in and the subject is recreation, they may tune out and not take the time to return in the future.

Brenda asked the group to please review the document again and email any edits to her at brenda@cwsd.org. ***Editor Note: Brenda finalized the document based on comments in the meeting and those emailed to date. Please see attached. It is a living document so if you still have thoughts, concerns, corrections, etc. Please email her as suggested above.***

Clean Water Section 208 Planning Grant – Soil Health & Regenerative Ag Update

Brenda reported CWSD has a small NDEP grant. CWSD hopes to find the most cost-efficient ways for farms to integrate Regen Ag practices, since the cost to change can be financially challenging for Ag Producers. Also looking at 3-4 properties, doing soil sampling and planning additional Regen Ag workshops.

Recent Events

Brenda reported on the Carson River Watershed Forum held in April and the 2-day GET ON THE BUS TOUR which both highlighted Regenerative Ag and Best Management Practices.

Funding Opportunities

Brenda reported that although it is too late for this grant cycle, we should keep [Danone Regenerative Agriculture initiative](#) in mind for a 2-year Regenerative Ag grant called [Sustainable Food Systems Initiative](#). This looks like a good source of funding. The next grant cycle appears to be for 2025-27 with proposals due in June 2025.

UNCE and UNR October 12 Regen Ag Workshop – For CHARMI

Charmi Mitchell reported that the UNR and UNCE Regenerative Ag Workshop for the Carson River Watershed is set for October 12, 2023 in Douglas County. Lindsay Chichester, UNCE is helping organize the workshop. It will be an all-day event starting around 9am. Classroom Education first, then a tour, visual learning out on some ranches. There is financial compensation available to ranches to host tours at their ranches. Those logistics can be worked out later between the ranchers and

Chuck Schembre suggests the Soil Health Education level of the target audience should be determined. Thinking it might be good for an introduction to Soil Health principles, what are regenerative ag (or conservation best management practices)? It could be interesting to focus on Adaptive and Wholistic grazing systems in relation to the Carson Valley and the broader local area. Teaching about Adaptive grazing as a way to soil health and better forage. He also suggested a demonstration of poly wire fencing and net systems. Ryan and Valarie are doing adaptive grazing and are slowly converting their

lands to adaptive grazing, but not in as intensive manner as a couple hours on/off, more like two days to two weeks on off.

Demonstration on water system so livestock always has access to water in poly wire paddocks.

Lori Leonard, TNC also suggested people could come out to RFR as they are interested in being the guinea pigs on how to set up such a system.

Valarie:

Critical that we don't get too caught up in the jargon. What is your baseline, what is your goal instead of getting into the jargon. Also important to discuss how these practices are not one size fits all.

Valerie Gordon & Nik Noomen agree pinpointing the audience focus is important, but also suggest that the time for transition needs to be explained to create realistic expectations. Changing your land takes time and patience.

Brenda and Chuck suggested that discussing what works and doesn't work is super important in a workshop setting, but ensuring people realize that what works one place, may not work other places. It is all dependent on the land and resources available. Trying something once is often not enough trying. That it is important to be patient and tweek things to find what works best for your land. Good principles to cover in the workshop. No prescription.

Chuck and Valarie – More boots on the ground people teaching is better than researchers. Also, going out and seeing lands in transition and discussing the process will help folks.

Nik – Who is the audience? And what do they want to know? Would be helpful to know so you can adjust your talk to give them what they are interested in.

Charmi said the workshop is open to all ranchers and farmers. She can do a survey with registration so workshop teachers can tailor their talks. What are the expectations of the learners?

Chuck: Topics should include adaptive grazing, but also cover crops. He also

Brenda/Shane: Set the agenda, survey who participates. Agenda should be diverse to make sure you can cover multiple principles and topics.

Morning session: Intro to Soil Health, Do Slake test and have Kabir come over from CA with his big rainfall simulation table. These models are so helpful at showing

Nik said maybe looking at Homesteading, then maybe another is large animal grazing...
Charmi suggested you could have three separate tracks in the field.

Brenda did mention that having a discussion about the benefits of conservation practices to water quality, soil and overall watershed health is the perspective the last workshop took and we would be interested in having that be discussed at the workshop.

Charmi stated the grant for these workshops covers 4 per year in 4 different areas of Sierra Nevada. She welcomes all input for creating the best workshop possible.

The next meeting will be in September. Adjourned at 3:31pm.

CHAT:

13:57:33 From Chuck Schembre : I have an update from Joe
14:05:18 From Rachel Kieffer, Alpine Watershed Group : rburnett@pointblue.org
14:10:24 From Nik- Wild Harmony Ranch : I got through the first 2 pages
14:25:52 From Jessica Gwerder - NRCS : I'll run down and see if I can be IT
14:26:06 From Nik- Wild Harmony Ranch : Reacted to "I'll run down and see..." with 👍
14:27:56 From Nik- Wild Harmony Ranch : maybe podcasts if you're looking to reach people
14:31:32 From Lori Leonard : UNR-Cooperative Extension might be a good group to include, to assist with outreach to landowners with smaller acreage/pastures highlighting different ag ideas ~lavender production, bees, native/pollinator plants...
14:45:07 From Chuck Schembre : Nik can start his podcast
15:02:07 From CWSD : Lori had her hand up
15:13:51 From Richard.Wilkinson : Cami, please reach out to me regarding the potential of having the CVCD help you with your event ***Editor Note: I think this is for Charmi.***
15:23:06 From Jessica Gwerder - NRCS : Cami - Please feel free to reach out to me if you need assistance the NRCS Minden office could provide. ***Editor Note: I think this is for Charmi.***
15:28:38 From allen.moody : I have to log off, great meeting.
15:30:54 From Chuck Schembre : once a quarter
15:31:08 From Charmi : Thank you all for your information and suggestions. I greatly appreciate your ideas.
15:31:24 From Cami Hodges : once a quarter is good for me too, thank you!