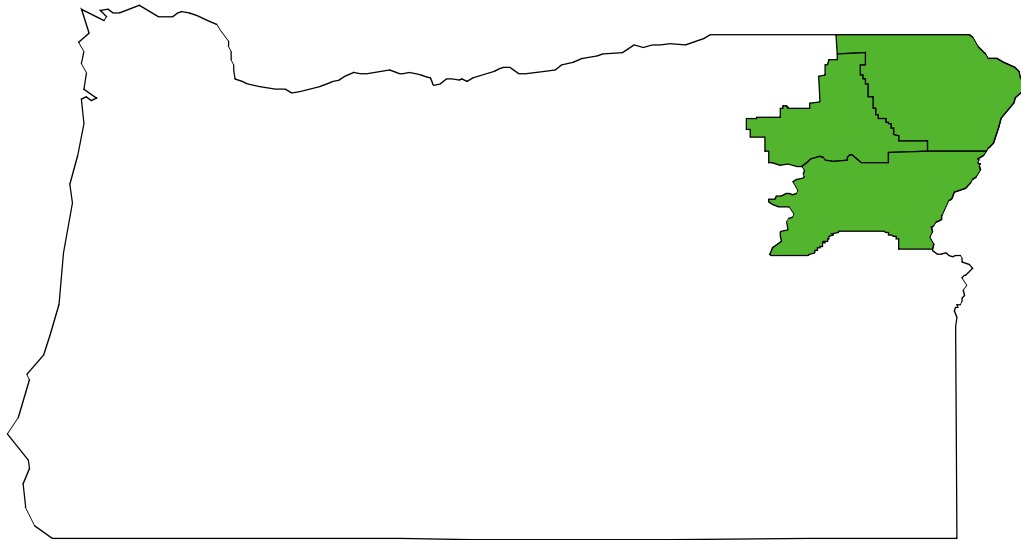


**APPLICATION  
FOR  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM ASSISTANCE**

For the  
EAGLE CAP RC&D COUNCIL  
State of Oregon



March 2004

With Assistance From:  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
101 SE Main Street, Suite 1300  
Portland, OR 97204

**APPLICATION FOR  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM ASSISTANCE**

DATE: February 2, 2004

TO: Ann M. Veneman, Secretary of Agriculture

THROUGH: Bruce I. Knight, Chief  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Washington, DC 20013-2890

We, the Eagle Cap RC&D Council, do hereby apply for designation as a Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) area and have ratified this application. We agree to support the RC&D program to improve the well being of the people of our area.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PREFACE

The Eagle Cap Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council was organized in response to the growing need for community development and natural resource conservation in northeast Oregon. Rural communities are seeking to improve their infrastructure to provide a sustainable living environment for their residents and landowners are striving to offset the depletion of irrigation water and the falling of agricultural commodity markets.

Many organizations throughout the area have continued to adopt successful projects to alleviate these problems, each one specializing in its own field of expertise. However, to see a major difference, larger projects must be designed and implemented. The Eagle Cap RC&D Council will provide the area with a partner to bring these organizations together and accomplish the big projects that are so desperately needed.

Initial RC&D focus will be to:

- Expand and develop businesses in the region;
- Improve rural community infrastructure;
- Enhance noxious weed control efforts;
- Improve water quality, quantity, and availability;
- Expand natural resources education; and
- Enhance urban interface with rural areas.

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council will work to develop communities that are economically viable, sustain natural resources, and provide a quality living environment.

**SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**  
Eagle Cap  
Resource Conservation & Development Council  
Oregon

Date Submitted: October 2002; Revised March 2004

Counties: 3

Baker, Union, Wallowa (5,299,200 acres)

Tribal Reservations: 2

Umatilla, Nez Perce

Sponsors: 8

**(5) Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

Baker Valley SWCD

Burnt River SWCD

Keating SWCD

Union SWCD

Wallowa SWCD

**(3) County Governments**

Baker County Board of Commissioners

Union County Board of Commissioners

Wallowa County Board of Commissioners

Supporting Organizations: 9

Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership

Baker Valley Irrigation District

City of Baker City

City of La Grande

Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program

Lower Powder River Irrigation District

Northeast Oregon Housing Authority

OSU Extension Service District Advisory Council

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

General Description of Area<sup>1</sup> :

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council includes members from the three most northeastern counties in the state of Oregon: Baker, Union, and Wallowa. The Blue Mountains run along the western border, with the Wallowa Mountains running through the center. The eastern border is the Snake River, which runs through Hells Canyon, the nation's deepest gorge. The northern border is marked by the state line and the southern by county lines. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest lies within the area and encompasses almost 2.3 million acres, including the Eagle Cap Wilderness area.

The landscape varies across the region, with elevations ranging from 850 feet above sea level in Hells Canyon to 9,800 feet in the Wallowa Mountains. The climate is moderate with 10 to 60 inches of precipitation annually, fairly cold winters and warm, dry summers. Rugged mountains transition into fertile agricultural land and semi-arid desert that produce top agricultural commodities of cattle, peppermint oil, potatoes, wheat, forest products, and grass seed.

The tri-county area covers 8,250 square miles which represents 8.6% of the entire state of Oregon while the total population is approximately 48,000 residents, or 1.4% of the state's population. The largest towns include La Grande and Baker City, with approximately 12,300 and 9,800 people, respectively.

Eagle Cap RC&D Council Primary Contact:

Holly Sullens, Vice President of Steering Committee  
46431 Wirth Road. Baker City, OR 97814  
(541) 853-2371 (H) [sullens@eoni.com](mailto:sullens@eoni.com)  
[www.pacrimrcd.org](http://www.pacrimrcd.org) (go to "Members")

Congressional Delegation:

Senators: Ron Wyden (D-OR)  
Gordon Smith (R-OR)

Representative: Greg Walden (R-OR-2)

## **Council Name**

The name chosen to represent this RC&D area is the Eagle Cap Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council. At an elevation of 9,600 feet, Eagle Cap is one of the tallest peaks in northeast Oregon. This peak is located in the Eagle Cap Wilderness in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, where all three counties converge. Eagle Cap is also the headwaters for several rivers and streams in the three counties, making it symbolic for the diverse organizations that will come together at the Eagle Cap RC&D Council, then return to their areas of expertise with a new common goal in mind and the ability to accomplish larger projects.

## **General Description of the Area<sup>1</sup>**

Located in the most northeastern part of the state of Oregon, the Eagle Cap RC&D Council includes members from three counties: Baker, Union, and Wallowa. The Blue Mountains run along the western border, with the Wallowa Mountains running through the center. The eastern border is the State of Idaho along the Snake River, which runs through Hells Canyon, the nation's deepest gorge. The region is bordered on the north by the State of Washington, to the south by Malheur County of Oregon and to the West by Umatilla and Grant Counties of Oregon. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest lies within the area and encompasses almost 2.3 million acres, including the Eagle Cap Wilderness area. The Grande Ronde, Imnaha, Powder, and Burnt rivers make up the major river basins in the area and all are surrounded by rugged mountains that transition into fertile agricultural land and semi-arid desert. A variable supply of surface water and limited ground water are becoming of increasing concern to area residents, requiring more time, more money and more effort to provide water for human and wildlife needs. The availability of water will have an increasing impact on the Northeast Oregon way of life.

The landscape varies across the region, with elevations ranging from 850 feet above sea level in Hells Canyon to 9,800 feet in the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Counties are characterized by fertile mountain valleys and foothills where a variety of crops can be raised; high desert sagebrush plant communities where cattle are grazed; and forested mountains with lush Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir forests. The climate is moderate with 10 to 60 inches of precipitation annually, fairly cold winters and warm, dry summers. The top agricultural commodities are cattle, peppermint oil, potatoes, forest products, wheat, and grass seed. Noxious weeds are a common problem throughout the region, reaching pandemic levels in some areas. Extensive education projects are underway in several areas to assist the public in identifying and eradicating noxious weeds, but increased funding and support from all sectors is needed to continue and expand the projects. The high mountain ridges, meadows, rivers and lakes of the forest region set the scene for a host of wildlife. Big game, birds, and fish abound in this region from southeastern Washington to east-central Oregon. Elk, mule deer, black bear, and an occasional antelope are a few of the larger mammals present. Smaller animals such as beaver, mink, squirrel, otter, raccoon, and bobcat also make their home in the area. There are literally hundreds of species of birds, some of which are game birds. Of the non-game species, there are bald eagles and, occasionally, osprey and golden eagles can be found. Various rivers, streams, and lakes of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest provide native trout, steelhead, and salmon.

The tri-county area covers 8,250 square miles (Baker: 3,068, Union: 2,037, and Wallowa: 3,145 square miles) which represents 8.6% of the entire state of Oregon. Forestry and recreation uses dominate the high elevation and rugged terrain that covers much of the landscape. Diversified crop production and grazing account for the use of the bottomlands, with the total area being used for farms ranging from 30.8% in Wallowa County to as much as 51.3% in Baker County (compared to

the state average of 28.4%). Federally-owned land generally comprises more than half of the total land area, ranging from 47.5% in Union County to 57.2% in Wallowa County (compared to the state average of 51.4%).

At least 58% of the population of the three counties can be considered rural, living outside incorporated areas or in towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants. Still, at least half of the population in each county lives in an incorporated town, although many of those towns are much smaller than 5,000 people. Wallowa County, for example, has 4 incorporated towns—the largest with only 1,827 inhabitants. Half of all incorporated towns in the tri-county area have less than 500 people. Population growth in the region could become an issue for residents, although recent numbers indicate little change. Any increase would still be defined as rural, however, as Union County, which has the largest city in the region, experienced a 0.8% population decrease. All three counties remain in the bottom 25% of the state in population increases. The total population for the three counties is approximately 48,000 residents, or 1.4% of the state’s population. The largest towns include La Grande in Union County and Baker City in Baker County. With only 48,000 people spread across all three counties, large cities and towns are sparse. Most residents live in small rural towns. The population is predominantly white, with Hispanics and Native Americans making up the largest minority populations. In all three counties, the population is growing very slowly or not at all. Without major industries to attract more people, the populations will continue to grow at their current rate.

|  | <b>Baker</b> | <b>Union</b> | <b>Wallowa</b> | <b>State</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Population (2001 est.)                   | 16,743       | 24,327       | 7,207          | 3,472,867    |
| Population Change (April 2000-July 2001) | NA           | -0.8%        | -0.3%          | 1.5%         |
| Caucasian                                | 95.7%        | 94.3%        | 96.5%          | 86.6%        |
| Hispanic or Latino origin                | 2.3%         | 2.4%         | 1.7%           | 8.0%         |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native        | 1.1%         | 0.8%         | 0.7%           | 1.3%         |

## **Socio-Economic Information<sup>1</sup>**

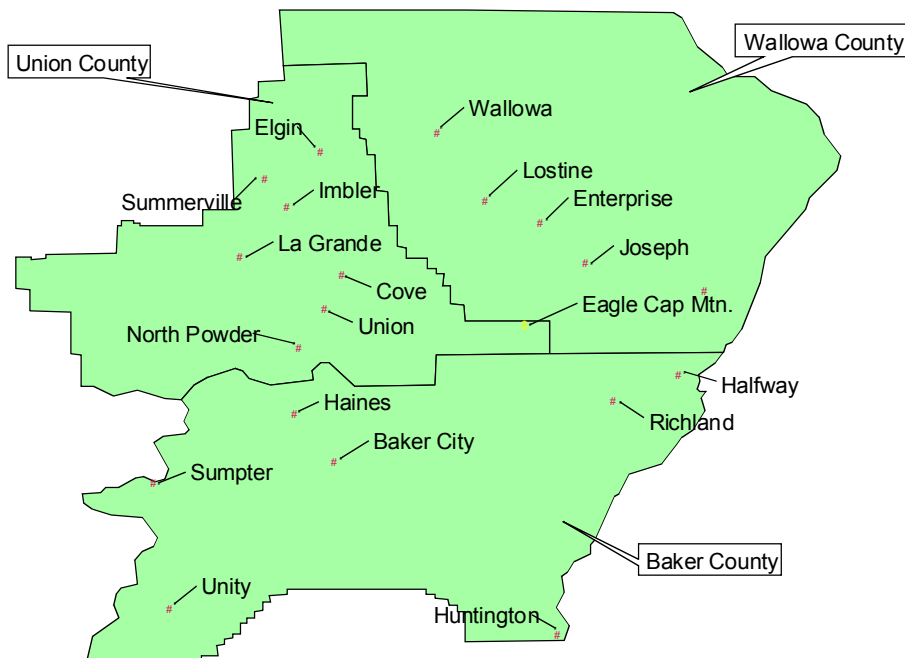
The interface of residential land use with agriculture and forestry land may cause escalating property values, insufficient water resources and forest fire danger. Development of agricultural land is a concern for local stakeholders while local wood products companies have seen their timber harvest decrease by as much as 65.7% in Baker County. Increased regulation on industry will continue to strain the economy of the region. Per capita income levels rank in the lowest one-third of the state (<\$20,000 on average). Baker County reports a per capita income of \$19,635 (30<sup>th</sup> out of 36 counties in the state), while the county reporting the highest per capita income in the region, Union County, comes in at \$21,505—well below the state average of \$27,084. Persons living in poverty range between 13.5% of the population of Wallowa County to 16.6% in Baker County. All three counties have a greater percentage of people living in poverty than the state average (12.4%).

Using such factors as unemployment rates, annual income, and population, the State of Oregon determines areas within the state that are “distressed.” Distressed areas receive priority assistance from the Economic and Community Development Department. Both Baker and Wallowa Counties have been designated as “distressed” along with the cities of Cove, Elgin, Imbler, North Powder, Summerville, and Union within Union County. The unemployment rate for the region continues to

be significantly higher than the state average (4.9%) with rates as high as 8.7% in Wallowa County. Stricter regulation of the timber industry along with fluctuating crop prices and a national economic downturn greatly affect the employment rates as well as the economy of the region. As the national economy improves and the state government takes steps to attract businesses to transfer to, develop in and stay in Oregon, local economic opportunity will also improve. However, these changes may not have as great an effect on the majority of people in rural areas when compared to more urban areas. Government jobs continue to lead the tri-county area in employment opportunity (24.1-32.4% of all employment) while wholesale/retail (19.5-26.0%) and services (17.2-22.4%) round out the top three job providers. Manufacturing employment (13.0-16.7%) and tourism (6.3-22.0%) also lead agriculture, fishing and forestry employment (2.4-3.4%) opportunities in the area.

Tourism and recreation will continue to grow as important industries in the region. Wallowa County, alone, boasts of 21 Forest Service campsites, 2 State Parks, 175 miles of maintained trails for snowmobiling, 560 miles of trails in the Eagle Cap Wilderness for hiking, and 694 miles of trails in the Hells Canyon Recreation Area along with horseback riding, downhill and cross-country skiing, whitewater rafting, fishing, rodeo, and art and music festivals. Cultural facilities include the Wallowa County Museum, Manuel Nez Perce Crossing Museum, the Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center, Fishtrap literary seminars and many art galleries. Every county in the region is taking steps to increase tourism by offering numerous recreational and cultural sites and activities.

## Map of the Area



## Area Plan<sup>1</sup>

### Land Conservation and Management

Increases in population and changes in land use are intertwined with all of the area resource concerns. Demand for housing and infrastructure (roads, commerce, and industry) has resulted in taking some amount of the limited farmland out of production. Farm parcels continue to be divided into less economic units forcing many farm families to seek off-farm employment when property values increase beyond potential agricultural return. Decreased viability of agriculture leads to a downturn in land managers' ability to invest in and commit to long-term conservation efforts. The overall stewardship audience is increasing in size, decreasing in the time necessary to acquire more knowledge and may have limitations on availability to access resources and participate in projects and training opportunities.

Natural vegetation is impacted by changing land uses and the increased transport of noxious weeds by humans, wildlife, and livestock. Control of noxious weeds is a long and difficult process requiring a concerted effort over many years. Local efforts to educate the public and assist with control have been launched in many communities. A region-wide, 'on-the-ground' implementation project would help dramatically reduce noxious weed invasion.

Increased construction of homes in forested areas has raised the stakes and potential for wildfires in the forest-residential interface. Although humans are the primary users of natural resources, they are also capable of providing sound stewardship and management. The population can also be looked upon as a resource as a reduction in federal land management is pursued. Many skilled retirees are available to volunteer on stewardship projects. Many newcomers eagerly seek out information and assistance with stewardship. People are often attracted to the natural beauty of the area and they have the potential to be activated to conserve and restore it.

### Water Quality and Quantity

The demand for water in northeast Oregon is very high for agriculture, municipal and wildlife benefits. Water for agricultural crops is currently diverted from rivers and streams through ditches and pipelines. The listing of threatened fish species has heightened the awareness of area residents to the need to conserve and improve the water supply and its quality. Storage of water during peak flows (winter and spring) and improvements in irrigation efficiency would benefit landowners throughout the region.

The area has three (3) Priority 1 sub-basins, three (3) Priority 2 sub-basins, one (1) Priority 3 sub-basin and one (1) Targeted Priority 1 sub-basin as indicated by Section 303(d) listings of the Clean Water Act by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, indicating significant water quality issues. The list provides a way for Oregonians to identify and prioritize water quality problems and serves as a guide for developing and implementing watershed pollution reduction plans to achieve the water quality standards and to protect beneficial uses as set forth in the Clean Water Act. Clearly, the tri-county area will need to continue their progress in improving water quality in order to meet those standards. High temperature is the most prevalent reason that streams are listed under Section 303(d) while other water quality concerns include bacteria, dissolved oxygen, sediment, habitat modification and flow modification.

Surface erosion, lack of riparian vegetation, diversion structures, road construction, timber harvest, and vegetation management can contribute to impairment of water quality and are all factors that local organizations continue to address. Local, state, and federal natural resource agencies are

targeting non-point source pollution reduction and riparian enhancement through legislation and programs and the Eagle Cap RC&D Council will be able to assist these agencies as well as other organizations by working with local landowners to improve their natural resource management.

#### Community Development

The Eagle Cap RC&D area is made up of small, rural towns. Many of these small communities are struggling to sustain themselves. Solid waste management, education, wastewater management, and recreation facilities need upgrading. Outside assistance is critical to help these towns to improve their rural infrastructure and natural resource dependent economies.

Transportation routes are concentrated on U.S. Interstate 84 running northwest-southeast and several other highways including State Routes 3 and 82 in Wallowa County, 237 and 203 in Union County and 86, 7, and 245 in Baker County. Train service is limited to commercial lines although a few novelty/recreational railroad lines are available to the public. There are no major commercial airports in the area, although eight (8) small airports are spotted throughout the tri-county area.

The Eagle Cap RC&D area has only one state university, Eastern Oregon University in La Grande (Union County), although distance education programs are available through Oregon State University, Portland State University, Boise State University, and Blue Mountain Community College at field offices and via the internet.

There are three United States Department of Agriculture Service Centers with co-located offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and/or Rural Development. The Ag Service Centers are located in Baker City, La Grande, and Enterprise. All of the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are co-located in these service centers, creating an environment of camaraderie and partnership. In total, there are six (6) SWCDs in the Eagle Cap RC&D area.

Three hospitals (St. Elizabeth Hospital – Baker County; Grande Ronde Hospital – Union County; and Wallowa Memorial Hospital – Wallowa County) address major health needs while the smaller communities have clinics to provide preventive and minor acute care. The number of physicians available to residents in the area range from less than 1 physician per 1000 residents (0.69) in Wallowa County to just under 2 physicians per 1000 residents (1.99) in Union County. This is compared to the state average of 1.44 physicians per 1000 residents.

Each county has its own board of commissioners as well as numerous city governments and public and private organizations. These organizations range from public safety and politics to special interest and service groups, providing their communities with diverse and useful contacts. The Eagle Cap RC&D Council will be able to draw from the strengths of the university, the Ag Service Centers, the medical centers and these diverse organizations to assist in community development, including marketing and merchandising, information and education, recreation and tourism, and cultural resource development.

## Mission and Vision

### Eagle Cap RC&D Council Mission:

To assist people and organizations in Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties through enhancing social livability, economic vitality, and natural resource sustainability via community-based partnerships and networks for the benefit of present and future generations.

### Eagle Cap RC&D Council Vision:

A region of social livability, economic vitality, and natural resource sustainability.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and strategies provide a framework to guide the Eagle Cap RC&D Council for the next three to five years. They were developed during a public participation process that included representatives from a wide variety of groups in the region (see “Community Representativeness” below). Locally led conservation is based on an assessment of conservation needs and all the assistance available to the community through government and non-government sources. It will use all resources available, singly and in combination, as tools to solve priority issues. An Annual Plan of Work will be prepared by the Council to describe, in detail, proposed projects and responsibilities.

Through consensus, the Eagle Cap RC&D Council has identified the following major priority issues:

- Expand and develop businesses in the region;
- Improve rural community infrastructure;
- Enhance noxious weed control efforts;
- Improve water quality, quantity, and availability.
- Expand natural resources education; and
- Enhance urban interface with rural areas.

### **Goal 1: Expand local business and develop new business opportunities to boost the area economy.**

Objectives:

#### A. Utilize area programs to support natural resource industries.

DESIRED CONDITION: Agriculture, forestry, and mining industries are able to support individuals and their communities.

Significant improvements in natural resource industries will occur if:

- Value-added products are developed.
- Diversification of resource opportunities is established for alternative income such as, but not limited to, recreation, energy, and ecotourism.

STRATEGIES:

- Identify markets for alternative crops that can be grown in the area.
- Partner with USDA and NRCS to market conservation incentive programs.
- Research alternative industries and partner with local organizations to provide information to the public.

B. Encourage non-natural resource industries.

DESIRED CONDITION: Local businesses enjoy a thriving economy and continued community support.

Significant improvements in non-natural resource industries will occur if:

- Organizations work together to increase community support.
- More family-wage jobs are available to local residents.

STRATEGIES:

- Pursue partnerships with local business facilitators to encourage businesses to locate in the area.
- Help develop economic incentive programs for local businesses.
- Promote the purchase of local products and the support of local businesses.

**Goal 2: Develop infrastructure in rural areas to support efforts in increasing community sustainability.**

Objectives:

A. Develop rural infrastructure to create sustainable communities.

DESIRED CONDITION: Efforts continue to create and maintain a rural infrastructure that supports and sustains the local community.

Significant improvements in rural infrastructure will occur if:

- Current systems are updated.
- Previously established programs and systems are supported locally through communication and funding.

STRATEGIES:

- Help establish recycling and composting programs and solid waste management in urban and rural areas.
- Help upgrade recreational facilities to make them handicap accessible.
- Assist in developing fire fuel reduction programs around rural communities.
- Improve storm sewers and wastewater treatment facilities by partnering with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and Rural Development (RD).

### **Goal 3: Improve natural resource use and conservation.**

Objectives:

A. Weeds—assist efforts regionally to combat the spread of noxious weeds.

DESIRED CONDITION: The spread and/or proliferation of noxious weeds is under satisfactory control and emerging weeds are eradicated before becoming severe problems.

Decreases in weed populations and spread would occur if:

- Comprehensive weed identification and management education are provided to the public.
- Aggressive, coordinated weed control efforts are implemented (including Federal, State, and local efforts)
- Aggressive weed control efforts are implemented along transportation corridors.
- Technical assistance and funding of weed eradication is made available to all private land owners.

STRATEGIES:

- Help develop education programs for rural and urban citizens using existing partners.
- Explore alternative control methods and integrated pest management, such as goats and other biological methods.
- Increase staff assistance available locally to assist with efforts

B. Water Quality and Quantity—improve to enhance agricultural & recreational opportunities.

DESIRED CONDITION: Human activities do not significantly contribute (in the form of runoff or other pollutants) to water quality impairment.

Significant improvements in water quality will result if:

- Watershed function is enhanced through improved management of riparian zones, wetlands and uplands
- Runoff is minimized through recycling and improved water management.
- Point source and non-point source pollution sources are identified and minimized.
- Conservation practices continue to be applied and maintained.

STRATEGIES:

- Through partnering, improve upland retention of snowmelt by developing reservoirs and storage facilities, restoring wet meadows and managing forest canopy.
- Explore opportunities to improve existing irrigation infrastructure.
- Research rangeland water development opportunities.
- Establish Irrigation Water Management infrastructure to increase irrigation efficiency.
- Encourage the education of landowners regarding AFO/CAFO guidelines.

- C. Forest Health—improve to benefit watershed and reduce risk for catastrophic events.  
DESIRED CONDITION: Forest stand densities, productivity, species diversity, and forest fuels are managed to improve watershed health and reduce threats to public safety.

Improvements to forest health would include:

- Thinning and fuels reduction.
- Disease and insect management.
- Reforestation with appropriate, site specific species.

STRATEGIES:

- Train and provide technical assistance to landowners and rural firefighters.
- Develop and distribute educational materials.
- Promote demonstrations of Best Management Practices.

## **Avoiding Duplication of Efforts**

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council will avoid duplication of efforts with other conservation and economic development organizations in the region. A project will be adopted when:

1. No other group is addressing the need; or
2. Organizations lack the resources or capacity to address the need; or
3. Priorities, authorization, and/or mandates prevent an organization from addressing the need; or
4. Organizations would like to form a partnership with the Eagle Cap RC&D Council in addressing the need.

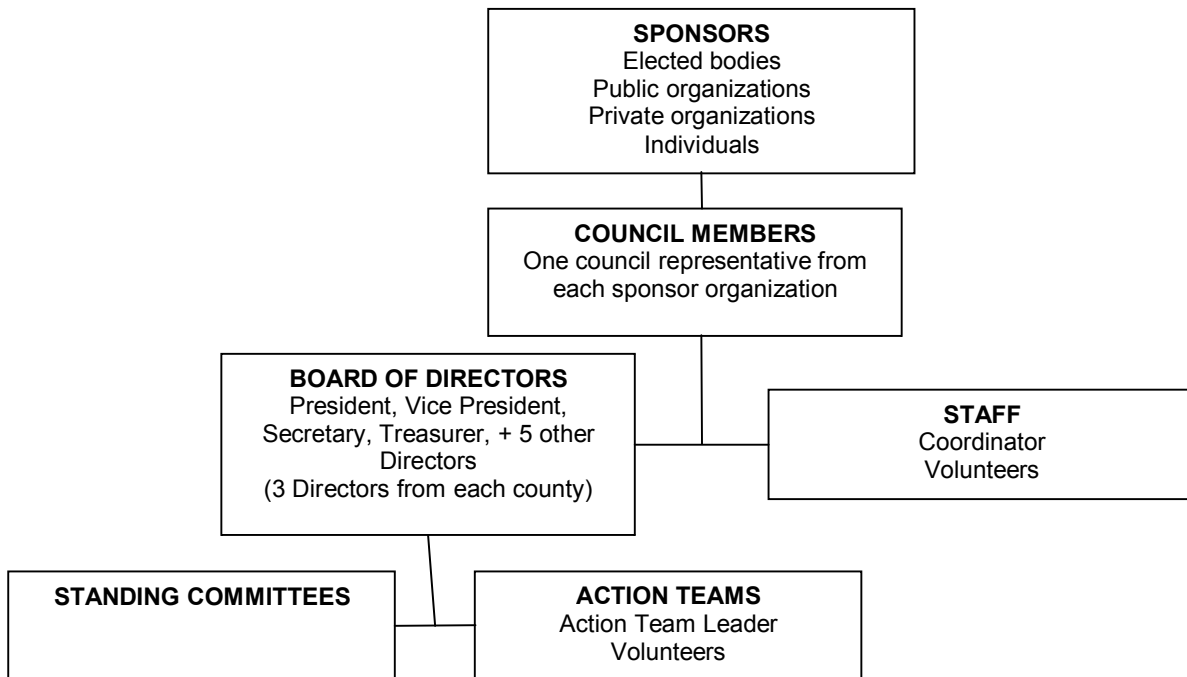
## **Community Planning and Organization**

### RC&D Organization

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council officially began the formation process in March of 2002. However, the idea of an RC&D Council available to residents and partners in eastern Oregon has been supported locally since 1965, when an application for authorization was also submitted. In March 2002, the communities and organizations were ready to proceed with the development of an RC&D Council. During the initial 2002 meetings, it was thought that the council would encompass all of eastern Oregon, including Malheur and Harney Counties. After a meeting to discuss this, it was decided that the area was too large and the distance would be detrimental to the Council. At that time, the committee voted to separate the area into two councils: the Eagle Cap RC&D Council (Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties), and the Southeast Oregon RC&D Council (Harney and Malheur Counties).

Like other RC&D Councils, the Eagle Cap RC&D governing body is a Council made up of representatives from member organizations, or sponsors. Currently there are eight sponsors- five Soil and Water Conservation Districts and three county governments. In the future, there will be members representing Soil and Water Conservation Districts, County Commissioners, City and Town Councils, Indian Tribal Councils, and other units of local government as well as those representing public and private organizations, regional planning bodies and individuals. One representative from each organization makes up the membership of the Council, which then elects a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors creates standing committees for continuous projects and action teams to work on specific issues. See Figure 1 below. Currently, a steering committee is leading the Eagle Cap RC&D Council, with three representatives from each of the three counties.

**Figure 1: Organizational Structure of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council.**



Sponsors: Five (5) Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)  
 Baker Valley SWCD  
 Burnt River SWCD  
 Keating SWCD  
 Union SWCD  
 Wallowa SWCD

Three (3) County Governments  
 Union County Board of Commissioners  
 Baker County Board of Commissioners  
 Wallowa County Board of Commissioners

Steering Committee

President: Melanie Tromp Van Holst, Union SWCD  
 Vice President: Holly Sullens, Keating SWCD  
 Secretary: Doni Clair, Baker County Association of Conservation Districts  
 Treasurer: Cynthia Warnock, Wallowa SWCD  
 Members: Paul Boehne, Union SWCD  
 Mike Burton, NRCS La Grande  
 Terry Drever-Gee, Baker County Planning Commission  
 Tom Smith, NRCS Enterprise  
 John Williams, OSU Extension Enterprise

(Interim) Coordinator: Greg Kuehl, NRCS Snake River Basin

### Activity Under Way

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council has taken this year to refine and strengthen the leadership and membership of the Council as well as identify unmet needs in the area and how the Council would be able to assist in meeting those needs. In the list of objectives and goals for the RC&D, there are many projects and activities that the Council is exploring. One of these includes the marketing of noxious weed control efforts and products as part of a public education effort in Northeast Oregon. The Oregon Association of RC&D Councils (OARC&DC) has offered to work with the Eagle Cap RC&D Council to develop a local Sustainable Ag Conference for the region. In October 2003, Holly Sullens (the Vice President of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council) was elected as Treasurer of the OARC&DC. The steering committee has been meeting quarterly to continue discussion and progress of the Council as well as prepare for member solicitation and Board of Directors election.

### Levels of Support

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been an integral part of the development of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council. Coordinators from other RC&D Councils, Basin Team Leaders, and state office representatives have all been present at the meetings and driving the momentum toward Council authorization and project implementation. The NRCS State Conservationist has written a letter of support and the State RC&D Program Manager has attended an Eagle Cap RC&D Council meeting and been in e-mail and telephone communication with the Council.

### Community Representativeness

The Area Plan, goals and objectives were created during Steering Committee meetings over the past year and a half by representatives from actual and potential sponsoring agencies. Five Soil and Water Conservation Districts, three County Board of Commissioners, three Irrigation Districts, two cities, a Watershed Council, a Housing Authority, Oregon State University Extension Service District Advisory Council and the U.S. Forest Service along with state and U.S. senators and representatives have all written letters of support for the formation and authorization of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council. In addition to these entities, representatives of local Chambers of Commerce, NRCS, Weed Districts and other Oregon RC&D Councils have met to discuss the needs of the local area. From these discussions, priority issues common throughout the area were designated to be included in the Area Plan and this application.

### Required Clauses

The local sponsors make application for federal assistance under the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 Public Law 97-98, 16 U.S.C. 3452-3461 as amended by Public Law 101-624, Section 1452.

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council's program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Pub. Law 100-259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7CFR-15, Subparts A&B) which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial (or technical) assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for procurement, suspension, and disbarment.

The Eagle Cap RC&D Council has had this application reviewed by the state. Comments made through the state single point of contact have been considered prior to submission of the application and that all applicable procedures have been followed. An environmental impact statement will not be prepared during the development of the Area Plan, but an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be prepared concurrently with the development of each project, when applicable, in accordance with federal procedures.

## RC&D Area Activity Report

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| March 27, 2002     | Steering Committee Meeting in La Grande (Union Co.)<br>18 participants<br>Created <b>list of unmet needs</b> in the area.   |
| May 20, 2002       | Steering Committee Meeting in Baker City (Baker Co.)<br>15 participants<br>Addressed <b>contacting community members</b> and obstacles to overcome.   |
| Aug-Sept-Oct 2002  | received <b>22 letters of support</b> .   |
| August 23, 2002    | Teleconference, 6 participants<br>Discussed <b>prospective representatives and members</b> .  |
| August 29, 2002    | Teleconference, 6 participants<br>Discussed the importance of attending meetings and <b>making progress</b> .   |
| September 4, 2002  | Steering Committee Meeting in La Grande (Union Co.)<br>16 participants<br>Created <b>VISION</b> and <b>MISSION</b> as well as presented potential obstacles and solutions to unmet needs of the tri-county area.                |
| September 23, 2002 | Steering Committee Meeting in Baker City (Baker Co.)<br>8 participants<br>Presented a <b>draft application for authorization</b> by the Secretary of Agriculture and established a steering committee, including a chairperson. |
| October 21, 2002   | Eagle Cap RC&D Council <b>application for authorization submitted</b> .   |
| January 16, 2003   | Steering Committee Meeting in Baker City (Baker Co.)<br>11 participants<br>Drafted <b>bylaws</b> and discussed potential projects.  |
| May 19, 2003       | Steering Committee Meeting in La Grande (Union Co.)<br>11 participants<br>Accepted the bylaws and elected <b>Steering Committee Officers</b> .  |
| May 28, 2003       | <b>Articles of Incorporation-nonprofit filed</b> with the Oregon Secretary of State   |

- September 9, 2003 Steering Committee Meeting in Enterprise (Wallowa Co.)  
11 participants  
Drafted a **business plan, project authorization and evaluation forms**, and Eagle Cap RC&D Council **flyer**.
- September 18, 2003 Submitted application for **Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)**.  
(EIN received on September 30, 2003)
- October 20, 2003 Holly Sullens (Eagle Cap RC&D Vice President) **elected as Treasurer** of the Oregon Association of RC&D Councils (OARC&DC).
- October 27, 2003 Steering Committee Meeting in La Grande (Union Co.)  
13 participants  
Drafted an **update letter** to those who had sent letters of support, corrected bylaws, established leadership and membership need, and developed a plan to contact potential members by letter with a **follow-up** in person.
- October 29-31, 2003 Terry Drever-Gee (Steering Committee member) **attended the Pacific Rim Regional Association of RC&D Councils Annual Meeting**, representing the Eagle Cap RC&D Council.
- November 4, 2003 Submitted **501(c)(3) application** for tax-exempt status with the IRS.  
**Registered as a Charitable Corporation** with the Oregon Dept. of Justice.
- November 18, 2003 Created **website** as a member of the Pacific Rim Regional Association of RC&D Councils. Go to <http://www.pacrimred.org> then move the mouse over “Members”, click on “Oregon RC&D’s” and then “Eagle Cap” on the left sidebar.
- December 3, 2003 Steering Committee Meeting in La Grande (Union Co.)  
7 participants  
Re-established leadership and organization regarding paperwork submitted and meetings attended, finalized the **2<sup>nd</sup> application for authorization** by the Secretary of Agriculture, and committed to **marketing noxious weeds control efforts and products** in Northeast Oregon.
- January 28, 2004 Steering Committee Meeting in La Grande (Union Co.)  
9 participants  
Continued to wrap up administrative issues including a bank account, the application for RC&D program authorization, and bylaws. Discussed four **potential projects** in which the Council could have significant impacts.
- March 8, 2004 Steering Committee Meeting in Enterprise (Wallowa Co.)  
7 participants  
Updated administrative issues and began to plan for the big membership/information meeting with the public that will occur in the Fall.

## RC&D Area Planned Activities

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Winter 2003-2004 | Provide technical assistance and personnel to other organizations in projects that complement the goals and objectives of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council.   |
| Early Fall 2004  | Special Council Meeting<br>Meeting/solicitation of potential members to present the history and purpose of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council as well as the benefit of membership in the Council.                        |
| Fall 2004        | Establish official membership.  |
| Late Fall 2004   | Elect Board Members and new Officers of the Eagle Cap RC&D Council.   |
| Winter 2004-2005 | Establish partnerships within the Council that meet non-traditional needs in community development as well as natural resource conservation.<br>Develop an AREA PLAN that can be referenced for up to five years. |

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1. Most information for the General Description of Area, Socio-Economic Information and Area Plan is derived from *Cultural Resource Overview of Northeastern Oregon* by Lorelea Hudson, [www.bakercounty.org](http://www.bakercounty.org), [www.unioncountychamber.org](http://www.unioncountychamber.org), [www.wallowacountychamber.org](http://www.wallowacountychamber.org), *Oregon: A Statistical Overview: 2002* by Rebecca L. Reid, and [bluebook.state.or.us/local/counties/counties.htm](http://bluebook.state.or.us/local/counties/counties.htm).

**SIGNATORY PAGES**  
Eagle Cap  
Resource Conservation & Development Council  
Oregon

Sponsors: 8

**Five (5) Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs):**

Baker Valley SWCD  
Burnt River SWCD  
Keating SWCD  
Union SWCD  
Wallowa SWCD

**Three (3) County Governments**

Baker County Board of Commissioners  
Union County Board of Commissioners  
Wallowa County Board of Commissioners

**Signatory pages**

“We, the undersigned sponsoring local organization, offer the above information in support of our request for designation of RC&D Program assistance. This application represents a true picture of the conditions in our area. Further, we agree to support this area and Council if designated and to participate in all its undertakings. Witness the signatures of the undersigned on the dates shown below.”

This action authorized at an official meeting of \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_