



Book opens door to cutting resource costs

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Looking to save money by reducing energy and water costs on your farm, but have no idea where to start? You're not alone, says Julie Davis O'Shea, executive director of Farmers Conservation Alliance, an Oregon nonprofit organization.

To help landowners "navigate the sea of incentives," the alliance has assembled "The Navigator," a free, 80-page book that lists resources for grants, loans, tax deductions, incentives and permits for people who want to save money and resources.

O'Shea said the idea for the book occurred to the alliance as she talked to farmers and other rural landowners about the organization's mainstay, a unique horizontal fish screen used in irrigation and power plant diversions.

"Many of these farmers were searching for a way to reduce their resource use, since growing food, conveying irrigation water or driving to the grocery store use significant amounts of energy and water, and ultimately cost a lot of money," she wrote in the introduction to the book.

The book is a practical guide to helping large and small rural landowners figure out what energy-saving measures suit them, from replacing weatherstripping to installing a wind turbine. The book is made for hands-on, independent investigation.

"Do the Math" worksheets help readers calculate potential savings, and eye-catching icons show whether an incentive program is suited for

a farmer, a home, a business, the community or all.

Energy incentives include federal and state tax credits for those planning to build or install alternate fuel stations; produce biodiesel; or install solar, geothermal, wind, water or fuel cell equipment.

The book lists cash incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon and other programs through local power and natural gas utilities and the U.S. and Oregon departments of energy, for example.

Each brief program description includes websites for further information or applications.

Online

The free book is available at www.TheNavigator.org or throughout Oregon at most local Soil and Water Conservation District offices, Oregon Department of Energy offices, USDA Rural Development and Natural Resource Conservation Service field offices and some OSU Extension centers.

What the book does

- * Provides an up-to-date (including 2009 economic stimulus programs) guide to all incentives available in Oregon for energy-efficiency upgrades and renewable-energy technology installations and water conservation/efficiency system upgrades.
- * Illustrates whether those programs apply to households, small businesses or farms.
- * Provides Web shortcuts for each incentive program to reduce online searches.
- * Provides a two-page quick reference table to the incentives and rebates offered by all Oregon utilities.
- * Provides "Do The Math" worksheets to help decide the potential payback period of a project.
- * Provides a directory of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Resource and Conservation Districts, OSU Extension center field offices, watershed councils and NRCS field offices throughout Oregon, with websites and phone numbers