



The National Organization of
Professional Black NRCS Employees
12th Annual Training Conference

The Daily Link

Wednesday, December 15, 2004

Western Diversity—Many Faces, Many Dreams, One Vision—Conservation

Today at a Glance—

Wednesday, December 15, 2004

Continental Breakfast6:00 a.m. – 7:15 a.m.
Registration6:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
General Sessions7:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions10:30 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.
Small Farmer Luncheon12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions.....1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Membership Drive5:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.
Photo Session5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
The Store Opens.....5:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.
Annual Business Meeting6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Things to Remember:

- √ **Check Message Board** located in front of the Sacramento Room.
- √ **Chapter Presidents, Committee Chairs, Regional Reps.**—Sign up for **Photo Sessions**. Sign-up sheet is on message board.
- √ **Conservation Tours – Fri Dec 17th!**
- √ Support the NOPBNRCSE **Store** in Ballroom D.
- √ **MILITARY LIST:** If you know of any Organization member who is active duty in the military in Afghanistan/Iraq, please put their name and state on the **NOPBNRCSE MILITARY LIST** posted on the message board.

The 12th Annual Training Conference Gets a Great Start



The 12th Annual Training Conference of The Organization opened with stirring welcomes from , Bill Hunt, President of the Organization; Alvin Alhara, Sacramento Chief of Police; Sara Braasch, Regional Assistant Chief for the West Region, and Charles Bell, California State Conservationist, as well as representatives of many other organizations. Pooh Vongkhamdy represented the Asian Pacific Island Organization, Gary Mast represented the

National Association of Conservation Districts, Dr. James Ghent represented the National Association of RC&D Councils, and Bertha Venegas represented the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees. We are proud to work with these and other supporting organizations

Mr. Hunt noted the outstanding growth and accomplishments of The Organization. Currently there are 171 Lifetime Members, and the number is growing. He encouraged attendees to focus on skill enhancement, and networking. One of the keys to the success of The Organization’s conferences is the teamwork in the planning and the behind-the-scenes labor. The California Chapter and the California State Conservationist demonstrate this kind of team effort. He noted important training points:

- Training should be stepped up, expanding and intensifying employee development
- Training must be approached as an investment
- Technical/Automated Tools and Systems should help us work smarter and be more productive

President Hunt noted that this training is an important component to developing employee confidence. It helps employees to make more meaningful contributions to the agency and profession, and value self worth.

Session: Effective Briefing Techniques



The **Effective Briefing Techniques** session talks about how to calm down when **YOU** are in the hot seat of a briefing session. One technique is to picture your boss or audience in a ridiculously funny situation. That trick might relax you enough to get through a tough spot; but, some people might panic even more. Doug McKalip, Director of Legislative Affairs, notes that there are other, more professional, techniques that are helpful for almost everyone.

McKalip’s first tip is for you to remember that, by definition, a briefing should be brief. Reduce your topic to 4-5 key points. It helps to have a moderator who can serve as a mediator if necessary. This person can introduce the speaker, field questions and/or keep the session moving. When you speak, don’t just give a list of the issues. Always provide options for solutions, and various potential outcomes. Keep handouts to one page. All attention should be focused on you, not charts, spread sheets, etc. Finally, remember that **it’s okay not to have a final answer for everything**. Sometimes in order to stay on topic, stay afloat, or remain realistic, you may have to say **“I’ll get back to you on that.”**

There will be a test. Is the answer a), b), c) or (none of the above)?

Session: Ethics Training



Caryl Butcher, NRCS Ethics Officer, and Joseph Cotton, NRCS Ethics Specialist, provided **USDA Ethics training**. Certification of this course can be used to meet the USDA requirement for Ethics training. The training included a summary of the ethics compliance provisions related to Grants & Agreements, Political Activity and Lobbying, and Fundraising. Ms. Butcher and Mr. Cotton discussed pitfalls to avoid, and insights and directions on how to “focus on the mission” in

order to provide useful assistance to customers. Class participants may register for online versions of this class through ICAMS and download a certificate of completion from the Organization’s website, and submit it to the appropriate Administrative Officer to receive official credit for this training.

Job Announcement

NRCS Idaho is recruiting for the positions of Assistant State Conservationist for Technology and Area Conservationist. Interested persons may contact Terry Cosby, Idaho Deputy State Conservationist.

Do YOU Know These African American “FIRSTS”?

2002	Lillian Woods	First Female African American NRCS State Conservationist
2000	Lawrence Clark	First African American NRCS Deputy Chief for Science and Technology
1992	Lawrence Clark	First African American NRCS Deputy Chief for Programs
1989	Sylvia Rainford	First African American NRCS Public Affairs Specialist
1988	Charles Davis	First African American NRCS State Conservation Engineer (California!)

Watch for more ‘FIRSTS’ in each **Daily Link**