

**Maine CRAC Meeting
September 8, 2010
Minutes**

Present: Autumn Birt, Heidi Bunn, Coleen Churchill, MaryAnne Coffin, John Gledhill, Lance Gorham, Juan Hernandez, Lindsay Hodgman, Seth Jones, Wayne Munroe, Leslie Nelson, Elaine Tremble, Dave Tingley, Don Todd, Brian Vigue and Alice Begin (guest).

New Business

Juan Hernandez discussed the upcoming changes to the CRAC team which will become effective at the beginning of FY2011. This includes the addition of 3+ members from FSA who will serve on the committee during a trial year. At the end of the year, members from both agencies will assess the partnership and determine if it should be made official. Representatives from both agencies will conduct Civil Rights Compliance Reviews over the next year; the CRAC will have sole responsibility of these reviews. Positive reviews were given by the SEPM's who participated in the FY2010 reviews at several offices.

Additionally, the following three new SEPM's were chosen:

- Disabled SEPM: Heidi Nelson
- Federal Women's Program Manager: Helena Swiatek
- Hispanic SEPM: Jade Gianforte

The Asian American/Pacific Islander SEPM position held by Autumn Birt has been extended for an additional year.

It is still to be determined if the Disabled SEPM will also include veterans. If a veteran NRCS employee is willing to join the committee, a separate SEPM will be created. New SEPM's will begin their terms at the next meeting and will work with current SEPM's until Diversity Day 2011. All new SEPM's will be attending the NRCS EEO Roles and Responsibilities Training in Warwick, RI September 13-14, 2010.

Final Bylaws

The final ByLaws were presented and agreed to by the committee.

FY2011 Meeting Dates

The following dates were selected

November 3, 2010

January 12, 2011

March 2, 2011

June 1, 2011

September 7, 2011

2010 Business Plan Update/Draft 2011 (see Business Plan for action descriptions)

#4a: A plan has not been developed for FY2011 yet. Juan Hernandez has requested that this item be tabled until the next meeting.

#4b: A draft of the New England Recruitment Plan was developed, but never signed. The plan will be reviewed by the committee at the next meeting to determine what is expected of the team and whether or not to make the commitment.

#4c: Seth Jones asked that this action item be moved above #4b.

#4d: It was requested that this item be removed from the business plan because it is not the responsibility of the committee to vouch for its accuracy. Lance Gorham volunteered to work with Brian Vigue to give a presentation on *An Introduction and Interpretation of the DN-714* at the next meeting. The presentation would provide information from the latest report for Maine. Brian Vigue noted that this report is based off of information from the EPP and all employees should access their EPP and check their gender, etc., by September 24, 2010 as noted in the National Bulletin.

#5: Pauline Pare currently serves as the Civil Rights Liaison and it was requested that this item be removed from the business plan.

#6: Two articles will be written for the upcoming Conservation News Briefs. Dave Tingly and Lance Gorham volunteered to rework an article from Agricultural Extension regarding their "Agribility" program. Additionally, MaryAnne Coffin agreed to provide an article about the partnership between FSA and NRCS on the CRAC. The committee will revisit this subject at the next meeting to create a list of potential articles.

#7: To be discussed at the next meeting when all new members are present. Coleen Churchill will find out what offices will have Civil Rights Reviews in FY2011 and the dates from Pauline Pare.

#8: It was requested that this item be put under #4.

#9: Elaine Tremble has updated the Maine NRCS webpage and will include the new members. Coleen Churchill suggested having a short bio on the website for each member. All members will have their bio sent to Elaine Tremble by the January meeting. Additionally, the CRAC poster will be updated with pictures of all new members. It was suggested that if there is not enough space on the poster, a group photo could be taken. Elaine Tremble and MaryAnne Coffin will work together to ensure that the elements from both agencies are incorporated on the poster.

#10: Two new "Breakfast and Learn" sessions will be planned for FY2011. Lindsay Hodgman and Brad (FSA) will create a draft survey to send out to all employees to get feedback as to what topics are of greatest interest for FY2012.

#11: Stephanie Landry will be taking over the mentoring program in Maine. It was requested that she attend the next meeting and provide information on the sex, gender and grade level of employees who are currently participating. It was also suggested that the phrase "Continue Mentoring Program in Maine" be changed to "Evaluate and Promote the Mentoring Program in Maine."

#12: This year a senior from the winning Envirothon team was awarded an internship with NRCS in Lewiston. Lance Gorham said that it has been a positive experience for all involved and gives us an opportunity to see how they work and gives them an idea as to what NRCS does. Juan Hernandez said that he will continue this program in Maine next year. The committee will revisit this topic at the next meeting once the budget is finalized to determine what offices students would be most successful in.

#13: The 2nd Annual Diversity Day will be held February 16, 2011. Current SEPM's will remain on the committee until then to aid new SEPM's. The following people will be in charge of Diversity Day at these locations:

- Presque Isle: Seth Jones, Jade Gianforte, Juan Hernandez and MaryAnne Coffin
- Bangor: Wayne Munroe, Leslie Nelson and Helena Swiatek
- Lewiston: Dave Tingley, Lance Gorham, Autumn Birt and Heidi Nelson

#14: Elaine is putting the Farm Bill Packets together with the help of Susan Arrants and Seth Jones. The packets should be completed by the end of September to hand out at the outreach meetings being held in Aroostook County starting in November. Lance Gorham suggested including the self-certification sheet in the package which can be found on the internet.

#15: Lance Gorham will be holding a training session for AMA/small farmers which he would be willing to open up to other offices.

#16: Completed

#17: Completed

SEPM's Update

-Seth Jones (American Indian/Alaska Native): Recently attended the American Indian/Alaska Native National Conference. Also, is working on getting speakers and space lined up for Diversity Day.

-Autumn Birt (Asian Pacific Islander): Putting together a binder for future SEPM's with information and contacts.

-Wayne Munroe (Black Emphasis): Will be sending a document to Coleen which outlines the roles and responsibilities of SEPM's which is a valuable resource. He also suggested that we do a better job at identifying minority landowners and highlighting them.

-Dave Tingley (Disabled/Veteran): Has put together a list of the disabilities counselor contacts at local universities/community colleges.

-Leslie Nelson (Federal Women's): Noted that the Federal Women's Program is working on creating a national organization.

-Lance Gorham (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender): Sent out an email highlighting the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and received no negative responses. He will be attending EEO training 9/13/2010.

-MaryAnne Coffin (FSA): Explained that this is a new territory for FSA and she will be talking to the three additional FSA employees who will be joining the team to see how to make things mesh.

NRCS/FSA Diversity and Unity Day 2011 Update

Coleen will make contact with Spectacular Event Center in Bangor to make a reservation for 2/16/2011. SEPM's will continue to line up speakers and will work with the appropriate people to develop a menu. A luncheon will be served rather than snacks this year. It was suggested that informational tags be placed in front of food describing where it comes from and what is in it.

Outreach Update (Elaine Tremble)

There will be three trial outreach sessions in Aroostook County geared towards new clients, beginning farmers and limited resource farmers. Once the kinks have been worked out, other sessions will be held state-wide. Additionally, NRCS did 8+ presentations regarding the Farm Bill to specialty groups at the Ag Trade Show this year. Elaine will update the outreach plan and send it out to the team.

HR Update (Brian Vigue)

There are two announcements in Maine (Contracting Officer and Soil Conservationist Tech for Machias and Houlton) that close on 9/16/2010. Brian is currently working on the Maine Recruitment Plan.