

Maine Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) Minutes

Tuesday, November 04, 2008

The meeting was called together at 10:10 by Anna Kettell, Chair. Present were Pauline Pare, Bill Yamartino, Bianca Soto, Jane Plummer, Autumn Birt, Leslie Nelson, Wayne Munroe, and John Gledhill.

I. Reviewed minutes from July 25, 2008 meeting. Wayne updated the group on the information packets. He has worked with Elaine to help create a folder and packet to be used for different activities around the State. He provided a few folders as examples. The state purchased 5,000 folders. Wayne suggested that the folders could be modified by changing the front label and by adding some more information on NRCS positions, and living in Maine so they could be used for recruitment activities.

Anna passed out two brochures that were designed two years ago on NRCS in Maine and Life in Maine. If anybody would like copies of these brochures, just contact Elaine. They are useful for recruitment or educational purposes.

Anna updated the group on the issues that had been raised on LinkPASS and its impact on Districts and volunteers. Advice given to Anna was that the LinkPASS issue was not a civil rights issue. It has been directed by the President. The impact on Districts and volunteers is still on going in the National Office. It was decided we would not pursue the issue as it is outside of civil rights.

II. New Business

Reviewed the 2008 Plan of Work and discussed the 2009 Plan of Work

Work Item 1: Training was completed for 2008. Wayne has training scheduled for December and Bianca has training scheduled for March.

Work Item 2: Performance Work Plan documentation. Completed. Will be added to the 2009 Plan.

Work Item 3: CRAC Accomplishments. Completed for 2008. Will be added to the 2009 Plan.

Work Item 4: Recruitment. Completed for 2008. Will be added to the 2009 Plan. The 2009 student intern recruiting sheets have been sent out by Pat. Pauline said we could begin negotiations with any potential student.

Work Item 5: Civil Rights Reporting Plan. Completed for 2008. Will be added to the 2009 Plan. First Quarter reports will be due in early January?

Work Item 6: Conservation News Briefs: Completed in 2008. Chris Jones, Susan Arrants, Leslie & Anna contributed articles in the last Conservation Brief. 2009 potential articles were discussed. Jane Plummer agreed to write an article on the mentor program and the recent training. Wayne suggested an article on the 2009 student interns or volunteers so that staff could get to know them. Pauline suggested an article on recruitment based on Vermont's draft plan, and that it is everyone's responsibility. Bianca offered to write an article based on one she is reading on working with Hispanic customers.

Work Item 7: Civil Rights Reviews. 2008 reviews are completed. 2009 reviews will be in Fort Kent, Time & Tide, and Dover. Leslie volunteered to help in Fort Kent, Autumn will help with Time & Tide and Jane Plummer will aide in Dover. Pauline said that she hoped to change the focus of the reviews and to work with Bill & Susan to combine the Civil Rights and Programs & Operations reviews.

Work Item 8: Underserved customers: Completed for 2008. The Share Point site is still being worked on and will be part of the 2009 Plan. Bill discussed the new Farm Bill language that will include Historically Underserved as well as the Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer definitions. Will invite Ricky Hall, Outreach Coordinator, to next meeting to discuss plan for 2009.

Work Item 9: Civil Rights poster and webpage. Completed for 2008. Suggested updating the website as soon as possible for 2009 and updating the poster in January.

Work Item 10: Breakfast & Learn: Completed for 2008. Discussion on plans for 2009 included a session on Field Safety in the spring, Powerpoint for potentially this winter, and EmpowHR training.

Work Item 11: Mentoring Program. Done for 2008. For 2009 an initial Mentor Training has been held. An article will be written for the Conservation Briefs. The potential to sponsor a mentee/protégé training in FY 2009 will be researched with potential promotion on what the mentor program can offer via articles or a review at an all employee meeting or similar setting.

Work Item 12: Fact sheets. Completed. Will be added to the 2009 plan

Work Item 13: Diversity Day. Completed. Diversity Day was discussed for 2009 with the potential for a summer meeting at the Penobscot Indian Nation similar to a Diversity Day held about a decade ago or a similar venue.

Work Item 14: Cancelled. Vacancy Announcement Subcommittee has been disbanded because per John Gledhill, OPM has announced they will standardize all vacancy announcements. Will not be added to the 2009 plan.

Work Item 15: Photo Contest. This has been moved to the main project for 2009 and is now focused on producing a video and potentially a CD that could be handed out in

recruitment packets. Husson College has said they are willing to help produce the video. Elaine will be invited to the next civil rights meeting and potentially a contact from Husson to better feel out costs, length, and number of positions to be targeted.

New Item: Working on the information packet and adding to it to create a recruitment packet. Wayne, Elaine and Bill volunteered.

Potential Item: Pauline suggested adding an item to discuss planning on small farms or socially disadvantaged farms to address any potential efficiency that could be found. Anna and Bianca said that small farms had not been addressed at Bootcamp. Action Item: Ask Joyce to make the suggestion to the National Civil Rights Committee and/or the National Employee Development Team for NEDS to create a training to address working with small and/or socially disadvantaged farms. Also, try to incorporate state level trainings and discussions by inviting DCs to discuss the workload and any efficiencies found.

III Regional Outreach & Training

Anna will be participating in a regional teleconference on outreach & training.

The draft Vermont NRCS recruitment plan was reviewed. There is a discussion that this plan will become a regional (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont) recruitment plan. It was decided that Anna would contact Thom Villars in Vermont to suggest hosting a regional meeting in Durham to work on a regional draft of the plan. Eventually, a tri-state civil rights meeting could be held with potential diversity training. Action Item: SEPMs should send information on states, training offices, etc to Anna. We will hold another meeting to work out Maine items in the plan before the regional meeting.

IV Trailblazer Award

Two people were nominated for the Trailblazer Civil Rights Award. One was chosen as the nominee, and sent to Joyce.

Next CRAC meeting will be held on January 27th in the State Office Conference Room from 10:00-2:00.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 A.M.

Autumn Birt
Recorder