

Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) Meeting  
August 24, 2009

Minutes

The meeting was called together by Anna Kettell, Chair. Present were Bill Yamartino, Bianca Soto-Gomez, Leslie Nelson, Pauline Pare, Peter Marcinuk, Wayne Munroe and Dave Tingley (by phone).

Minutes from June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting reviewed and approved.

**New Business**

- 1) Reviewed the EO/CR performance element. Discussed the standards, and the importance of making them measurable. Pauline will update the document with recommendations from the group and provide to Juan for review.
- 2) Dover-Foxcroft review has been completed. Mid-coast zone, Fort Kent and Scarborough will be postponed until first quarter 2010. Training will be conducted prior to that for members on the review team. For preparation, members should read the CR Review guide, get a list of posters required for each office, and be prepared to review the 230 file folder.
- 3) Discussed having a Lunch & Learn as opposed to a Breakfast & Learn to reach more people. Elaine had offered to do a session on PowerPoint. Anna will follow up with her, possible for a November timeframe.
- 4) Diversity Day 2010 dates were discussed. February seemed to be the best month based on workload and deadlines. The meeting will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  diversity training and  $\frac{1}{4}$  business. Alumni Hall in Orono was recommended due to its central location and the success of the last meeting held there. Anna will follow up with Juan on budgets. Each SEPM should bring an idea for speakers to the next meeting.
- 5) Peter led a discussion on current Maine policy of planning prior to funding. He suggested an alternate method where preplanning, ranking and cost estimates are done prior to designated funding rounds, which would allow us to accept more applications and serve more clients. Final planning would be concentrated on applications that were funded. Peter will research other states and do a paper for Juan incorporating his findings.

## Old Business

- 1) Plan of work was reviewed.
  - #5) Next CR quarterly report due to Pauline October 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - #6) A list of articles is posted on the NE Civil Rights SharePoint site. Anna and Bianca have completed articles. Leslie will write one for next Conservation Briefs.
  - #13) Bring ideas for speakers to next meeting
  - #15) Farm Bill packets currently being updated and are being used for CSP.
  - #16) Framework for the recruitment packets has been completed. Jane has state maps available for any new hires.
  - #17) Invite Sue Watson to next meeting to discuss small farms training.
- 2) John reported on his visit with Horace Hodge. The discussions centered on the importance of recruiting the right people into the right positions based on culture, personality etc. and to make sure positions are tailored to state needs. There have been issues (nationwide) with students traveling away from home with no support structure in place once they arrive. Also discussed the stipend issue, and the lack of consistency nationwide due to budget differences. In Maine, we need to set up at state standard. Suggested Maine consider paying for travel, so all students end up with the same money earned at the end of the internship. Also discussed pursuing college dorms as a housing option for students. This may be more comfortable for students; however, the lack of public transportation would be a barrier.
- 3) The framework for new employee recruiting packets has been developed.
- 4) Anna will invite Sue Watson to next meeting to discuss small farms, soil quality etc.
- 5) Pauline reminded everyone to read the survey results posted on my.nrcs.
- 6) Welcome packets for new employees were discussed. Since the framework of the packets has been developed, no additional work is needed until a specific position has been filled. At this point, material can be added to customize it to the local area with information such as maps, phone books, etc.
- 7) Anna will schedule a teleconference to wrap up the NE recruitment plan with NH and VT. The new DN-714 has been added to the document. A list of Native American schools needs to be added to the appendix.
- 8) Leslie volunteered to write the next CR article for Conservation Briefs.

## **Other Business**

Two new regular members are needed on the committee. Anna's term as member and committee chair will expire at the end of September. Peter volunteered to replace Anna as chair at the start of the new fiscal year.

Bianca provided an overview of the NOPHNRCSE conference she recently attended.

Next meeting scheduled for October 27<sup>th</sup>, location to be determined.

Leslie Nelson  
Recorder