



United States Department of Agriculture

New Jersey State Technical Committee Minutes of June 13, 2012

Those in attendance:

Janice Reid, NRCS
 Christine Hall, NRCS
 Tim Dunne, NRCS
 Fran Grasso, NRCS
 Fred Kelly, NRCS
 Mona Peterson, NRCS
 MaryBeth Sorrentino, NRCS
 Barbara Phillips, NRCS
 Joye Nagle, NRCS
 Lenora Jordan, NRCS
 Chanel Wright, NRCS
 Bill Angstadt, Growmark, FS
 Liz Thompson, NJFB
 Marie Banasiak, NJFB
 Ben Casella, NJFB
 Eric Shrading, USFWS

Charles Roohr, SADC
 Cindy Roberts, SADC
 Jeff Everett, SADC
 Gail Harrje, SADC
 Brad Smith, TNC
 Steve Eisenhauer, NLT
 Nancy Coles, FSA
 Torrey Reade, FSA
 Jean Lynch, NJAS
 Kathleen Hitchner, NJDEP
 Lynn Fleming, NJDEP
 Dave Clapp, NJDA
 Tim Fekete, NJDA- SSCC
 Justine Cook, NOFA-NJ
 Jack Rabin, RCE
 Gladis Zinati, RCE

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. Janice Reid welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation to the Muzzarelli and Muth farms and the Gloucester County Extension office for allowing us the opportunity to have a State Technical Committee conservation tour.

Janice opened the meeting with remarks on the movement on the new Farm Bill and the NRCS budget.

The March meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted.

CRP, CREP, SAFE, GRP Activity

Nancy Coles provided the quarterly update report on FSA conservation programs. Jointly, FSA and NRCS selected four ranked 2012 GRP applications for funding. FSA is currently working with these GRP applicants to complete and approve their contracts. Nancy thanked everyone for the support letters that were written for additional acres for the SAFE program. Notice CRP-715 announced the opportunity for a new initiative. This will allow producers to do pollinator habitat (CP42) without competition for CRP. The Signing Incentive Payment (SIP) rate has increased to \$150 per acre for CP42, as well as conservation practice installations for wetland restoration (CP23 & CP23A) and habitat buffers for upland birds (CP33).

AMA – Agricultural Management Assistance Program
 AWEP – Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
 CAP – Conservation Activity Plan
 CCPI – Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative
 CIG – Conservation Innovation Grant
 CRP – Conservation Reserve Program
 CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
 CStP – Conservation Stewardship Program

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program
 FRPP – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program
 GRP – Grassland Reserve Program
 HFRP – Healthy Forest Reserve Program
 SAFE – State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement
 WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
 WLFW – Working Lands for Wildlife
 WRP – Wetlands Reserve Program

Status of Funds and Initiatives

- AMA: \$150,059.74 allocated; \$133,964.56 obligated (8 contracts);
 - balance is \$16,095.18 (not enough for next contract);
 - will be requesting additional funds this week
- AWEF: contracting is underway this month
- CStP: \$196,935.00 obligated to date for 23 contracts (2010-2012)
 - 9 new 2012 contracts obligated as of 6/6 for \$83,981.00
 - 14 existing contracts (2010 & 2011) obligated for \$113,984.00; \$112,954.00 in payments made
- EQIP: \$4,847,428 allocated; \$3,942,268 obligated (177 contracts);
 - balance of \$905,160 to be used for
 - 1) 3rd round organic and seasonal high tunnels (~\$145,000)
 - 2) CIG (\$216,832), and
 - 3) NWQI (~\$450,000)
- WHIP: just received \$238,000 for WLFW bog turtle and golden winged warbler; accepting and reviewing applications now
 - Thanks to our conservation partners for assisting in outreach!
- FRPP: received an additional allocation of \$1.16M
 - Updating 3 agreements with entities to obligate remaining funds
 - Funding 22 parcels (1419 acres)
- WRP: We've obligated just over \$500,000 towards one new easement, restoration on 2 existing easements, and due diligence on new applications.
 - We have the potential for over \$2M in obligations; however we only have \$1,129,800 in available funds.

NJ Conservation Innovation Grants 2012 Full-Proposals

We received eight pre-proposals for the NJ Conservation Innovation Grants. After reviewing the pre-proposals we invited all of the applicants to participate in a review meeting. Of the eight, six were asked to submit a full proposal. Five full proposals were received. A peer review panel will meet this month to review the full proposals and make recommendations for funding.

Wetland & Riparian Restoration on FRPP Land

NRCS met with SADC staff in South Jersey to discuss the issue of wetland and riparian restoration on preserved farms. The result of this meeting was an agreement that SADC and NRCS would begin to look at these on a case by case basis. Charles Roohr commented that SADC will be very cautious when approving these. He also added that the SADC is now aware of the situation and can direct applicants to NRCS before they preserve the farm. Eric Schradling felt that was a good compromise to the situation. New staff members with the SADC were introduced and contact between these staff members and NRCS staff was strongly encouraged to facilitate this dialogue.

Customer Satisfaction survey

Christine Hall reported that a customer satisfaction survey has been developed for State Technical Committee members. All are encouraged to complete the survey online.

Nutrient Management Standard Update

Fred Kelly reviewed the proposed changes to NRCS practice standard 590 Nutrient Management that will go in to effect in 2013. Fred would like people to contact him with

comments on the issue of spreading manure on snow covered ground issue. Fred can be contacted at fred.kelly@nj.usda.gov.

Open Discussion

Jack Rabin reported that he is finishing a website on composting.

Barb Phillips reported that the outreach committee would be meeting soon.

Nancy Coles stressed how important crop reporting is.

Liz Thompson reported that Farm Bureau was asked which Farm Bill programs NJ farmers utilize the most.

Kathleen Hitchner was happy to participate in National Water Quality Initiative.

Bill Angstadt stated that a new tool will be available for use by farmers to assist in nutrient management planning.

Eric Schradung has been working with NRCS on Working Lands for Wildlife and reported that it is going very well. Question for NRCS: is bog turtle funding available for WRP? Janice responded that it depends on whether or not there is a WRP program in 2013.

Chuck Roohr announced that all four positions with SADC have been filled and introduced the new staff members. Jeff Everett, Chief of Stewardship was formerly an NRCS employee. Jeff manages all post-closing issues as well as the Right to Farm program. Cindy Roberts is the Regional preservation coordinator for southern NJ (Camden south). Jessical Uttal is the in house title policy reviewer. Judith Andrejko Esq. is the in-house attorney replacing Cassandra McCloud. In addition to the new hires there was a bit of an office restructuring which provided the new regional coordinator jobs: 1) Stephanie Miller is handling all new acquisitions for North Jersey, 2) Dan Knox is the coordinator for the central part of the state and 3) Gail Harje is working on the processing of applications and scoring statewide.

Justine Cook informed the group that the NOFA NJ winter conference will be in Burlington County in 2013.

Tim Fekete commented on animal waste that comment period is open.

Ben Casella commented that he covers labor issues for Farm Bureau.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held in September at the NRCS State Office; exact date to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 PM.