

Civil Rights Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
November 3, 2011
10:00 A.M.
Des Moines, IA

Agenda items are in bold and underlined.

* Denotes Action Items

Attendees: Dave Beck, Paul Vondra, Lya Williams, Laurel Foreman, Scott Eischeid, Jaia Fischer, Julie Falcon, Clint Miller, Lori Schnoor, Rubyana Neely, Jeff Zimprich, Chris Knudsen and Alan Lauver.

Review policy on required quarterly reports (discussion led by Chris Knudsen)

Concern: Is there duplicative efforts when the Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) and Area Representatives (Area Reps) submit their quarterly outreach activity reports.

Some reports are required. It is Iowa policy to complete quarterly outreach activity reports.

* Adam Stiegelmeier and Chris Knudsen will look into regulations and determine if there is any duplication. This information will be presented at the Leadership Team (LT) meeting in 2 months.

Reaching women landowners-discussion (discussion led by Lori Schnoor)

-Our outreach efforts have been on women employees; there is a need to shift some of the outreach effort to women landowners.

-Women, Land and Legacy is one tool, but it is a big commitment of field time to maintain.

-Develop a more streamlined process. Example: A network environment (small groups) works better for women to learn from than formal presentation settings.

-We could have a core team provide training on how to conduct women landowner outreach.

-Conduct outreach efforts on a multicounty focus rather than individual counties.

-Mailing list from FSA could be improved if also included landowner names that are absentee landowners of another county.

* Propose to the LT that a team be formed to look into methods on how to improve our outreach efforts to women and absentee landowners. The following had volunteered to serve on this team: Lya Williams, Jaia Fischer, Laura Greiner, Julie Falcon and Lori Schnoor?

“Women Caring for the Land” meeting on November 17, 2011 in Dyersville. Being promoted as come and meet your conservationist.

Diversity Day-for FY 2012 (led by Dave Beck)

NRCS has the lead to develop the program for FY2012 Diversity Day. The CRAC team decided the program focus would be on new Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Emphasis Program and use a net meeting format to deliver the Diversity Day program. The following proposed dates will be provided to the other USDA agencies for their concurrence: March 20, 21, 22, 27 or 29.

* The program planning team will consist of Laurel Foreman, Clint Miller, Lori Schnoor and Jeff Zimprich.

Someone suggested that in addition to our typical presentation type diversity day, our employees could become more directly involved with diversity if our agency allowed work time to participate in a service related event. For example, employees could visit a Veterans Hospital.

*Jeff Zimprich will talk to the Leadership Team about having a service day for employees, where employees could take a half-day of work to participate in a service related event.

Final Review of Draft CRAC Business Plan-FY2012 (led by Jeff Zimprich)

The CRAC members discussed the draft business plan and action items resulting from the discussion are below.

*Chris Knudsen will send out by email the draft Recruitment Plan for all CRAC members to provide input back to him by 11/30/11.

*Develop a high school outreach plan. Lya Williams is the lead person and will contact other members to assist. The due date is 2/1/12.

*Jeff Zimprich will send out ideas related to Objective 2, Goal 1, Action Item 5 of the Iowa CRAC FY2012 Business Plan. (Attend university and community college Career Day/Expo, Farm Fair Day, and Earth Day)

*Dave Beck will pass on the comments received for improvement of Iowa's Civil Rights Compliance Review guide to Jeff Zimprich.

*CRAC members should send any additional comments/edits on the FY2012 Business Plan to Dave Beck in the next two weeks.

Other Business

The SEPMs send numerous informational emails during their respective emphasis month. Links to websites for additional information are often included. Often these websites have Donate buttons to solicit donations to promote their cause and lobby legislators.

Question: Is this a Hatch Act violation?

Response (Chris Knudsen): This issue was directed to our Ethics Office and they responded that this would not be a Hatch Act violation. Chris added that although this is not a violation, he recommends that the SEPMs should copy the article of interest from the website and paste it in their email and cite the source. When the Ethics Office sends their response in writing Chris will provide it to the Leadership Team.

The FY2012 meeting schedule for the Civil Rights Advisory Committee will be the first Thursday of the second month of each quarter. The next meeting will be February 2, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,
Alan Lauver

Iowa Black Special Emphasis Program Accomplishment Report FY2011 – 4th Quarter

1. Communications

- *Attended the Area 1 All Employees meeting on September 27, 2011 and provided updates regarding the BEPM program and gave a brief presentation on the history of African Americans in SE Iowa.*
- *Attended “The Organization’s” day out with students to Adventureland theme park. The event was sponsored by The Organization, 4 summer students and 4 NRCS employees attended the event.*

2. Working with Leadership

- *Attended the Iowa Leadership Team Meeting to provide FY11 updates on August 4, 2011*
- *Attended the 4th Quarter National BEPM conference call on August 9, 2011.*
- *Attended the 4th Quarter CRAC meeting on August 11, 2011.*

3. Recruitment, Promotions, and Recognition

4. Outreach

5. Projects

- *Continue to maintain the Iowa BEPM sharepoint site.*
- *Provided updates to the Iowa BEPM webpage*

6. Youth Activities

7. Special Emphasis History Month

8. Training

Disability/Veterans Program Manager Update

FY2011 4th Quarter (July – Sept)

Iowa NRCS CRAC Meeting – November 3, 2011

I sent all employees the Presidential Proclamation – Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act via email on July 26, 2011.

I sent all employees National Bulletin 230-11-23, announcing the National Disabilities Awareness Month Poster Contest via email on August 3, 2011.

I participated in the Onawa Field Office Civil Rights Review on July 29, 2011.

I forwarded all Iowa NRCS job vacancies to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS).

I updated the Iowa NRCS Disability & Veterans Emphasis Program web pages with accurate and current information.

I participated in the Veterans Emphasis Program Managers Barrier Analysis Training via conference call on September 22, 2011.

Laurel Foreman, GLBT Program Manager sent an email to all employees on “Coming Out Day” which was October 11th.

A 400 word article was written about USAJOBS and NRCS and was sent to “AccessLine”, one of Iowa’s Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Bisexual monthly newspapers . The article was to have appeared in the October issue, but wasn’t. Laurel will contact the Editor in Chief to see if there are plans to publish the article in a future issue.

Laurel also submitted an article for the October issue of Crossroads to Diversity on President Obama’s commitment to the equality and strengthening of the GLBT community.

Submitted 11/1/2011 by Laurel Foreman, GLBT Program Manager



Special Emphasis Program Accomplishment Report Hispanic Program Quarterly Report

Quarter IV: July 1 to September 30, 2011
State: Iowa
Submitted by: Paul Vondra
Date: September 22, 2011

The information you provide is critical to monitor and maintain an effective Hispanic Program. The information is also utilized to complete NRCS' annual MD-715 EEO Program Status Report and Annual Report to the President on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government. *(Please refer to page 2 for the quarterly report component explanation and examples.)*

1. **Barriers or Potential Barriers:** Budget limits travel to recruit and ability to hire. Limited interest in the NRCS professions with the Hispanic populations in Iowa. With time, effort, communication and recruitment, hopefully this can be overcome.
2. **Career Development:**
3. **Recruitment:**
4. **Promotions: Community Outreach September, 17, 2011: Education:** Worked a USDA booth at the Iowa Latino Heritage Festival. In conjunction with Rural Development, Farm Service Agency, and NRCS, worked two 3 hour shifts talking to the public about what we do, USDA programs, and potential employment.
5. **Communications:**
6. **Collaborating with NRCS Leadership: July 22, 2011:** Conducted Civil Rights review at the Humboldt Field Office. Submitted report to Area office via email on July 26, 2011.
7. **Youth Activities**
8. **Hispanic Heritage Month:** Developed email to announce Hispanic Heritage Month. Email sent September 15, 2011 to all NRCS and partner employees in Iowa.

September 21, 2011: Training: Attended the Hispanic Heritage Month Presentation given to approximately 30 State Office Employees. Our guest speaker was Mr. Orlando Gil. A native of Venezuela, Mr. Gil came to the United States to further his education. He attended Oklahoma State University and received B.S. degrees in Animal Science and Agronomy back in the 1980's.

Mr. Gil owns and operates "TCTS LLC", a consulting firm that helps businesses "bridge the gap" with the Latino workforce in agricultural related industries as they meet their needs for professional and skilled labor.

Mr. Gil's experience in the agricultural and food industry includes a variety of positions in training and recruiting as well as production.

Mr. Gil's presentation was titled "Latinos in the Workforce – Barriers, Challenges, and Opportunities".

9. **Other Assigned Projects and Duties:**

AIAN EPM FY2011 Q4 Report
Submitted by Clint Miller

I have been forwarding job posting announcements to other AIAN EPMs and my contact for the USDA/1994 and Tribal Scholars Program.

I participated in the FY2011 Q4 AIAN EPM National Conference Call.

I attended the FY2011 Q4 Iowa CRAC meeting.

Update of NRCS 2011 American Indian Heritage Poster

- 140 Posters were sent to Rich Sims via Shelly, ready to distribute to ASCT-FOs at next LT or CRAC meeting
- Extra posters will be available at NRCS Distribution Center
 - Best method to order extra posters - Email Alan Bengé alan.benge@ia.usda.gov

Area 1 Civil Rights Report **3rd and 4th Qtr FY 2011**

Recruitment and retention:

Damarys Mortenson was selected to fill the vacant Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Sioux City. She reports Nov 21, 2011.

The Obrien County R.C. position was recently filled by the selection of Ruth Ehley. The Cherokee and Primghar Two County Management Unit DC position is currently being advertised.

Ryan Ransom was hired as Wetland Specialist in Emmetsburg.
Derrick Klimesh was hired as a Wetland Specialist in Pocahontas

Renee Braun, DC in Cherokee, retired
Sheila Cox, ASTCFO in Sioux City, retired
Jeff Kestel, IA Lakes RC&D Coordinator, retired
Greg Jahn, SCT in Orange City, retired

Employee Development:

Field Offices noted covering CR policies at staff and SWCD meetings, and required training was completed in Aglearn. Jaia Fischer, Black SEPM, gave a presentation at the Area 1 all-employee meeting on September 27 at Alta.

Area Office/Field Office Reports:

Field Office Civil Rights reviews by the Area Office were completed in 3 Shared Management Units, and 2 Field Offices. Accessibility Reviews were completed for 10 Service Centers.

All offices reported outreach activities regarding the Hispanic/Female Landowner Discrimination awareness campaign.

Orange City Field Office hosted, Helen Leavenworth, a summer intern from Wisconsin.

Rock Rapids Field Office hosted Amanda McNees, a summer intern.

Spencer Field Office hosted Nicholas Williams, a summer intern.

Allie Rath was hired as an Americorp employee for the Spencer Emmetsburg Shared Management Unit

Osceola SWCD hired Jessica Hinsch with FB monies

Lyon SWCD hired Jill Meyer with FB monies

Numerous offices reported working with female landowners on CRP, WRP, EQIP, and State cost share applications.

Civil Rights Report for Area 2 NRCS
4rd Quarter 2011
Submitted by Rubyana Neely

Recruitment and retention:

Employee Development:

Monthly civil rights topics were written by Clarion, Fort Dodge, and Garner FO.

Field Office Reports:

The Polk and Jasper offices hosted a Women, Food & Agriculture Network workshop on September 21 at Chichaqua Bottoms. Ten women landowners attended the meeting that included discussion and information on NRCS programs and a tour of conservation practices in the field.

Women's Conservation Luncheons were held in Butler County on 7-11-2011 with 10 women guests in attendance and in Franklin County on 9-14-11 with 24 women guests in attendance. The focus of the morning program was to compare and contrast commonly used backyard conservation practices with large field scale conservation practices. ISU Extension presented information on mulching and rain gardens which were compared to information on conservation tillage/no-till and wetland restoration presented by Max Blodgett - NRCS Soil Conservationist. After the lunch, the groups were treated to a tour of an outstanding local garden.

All other counties in area have negative reports.

A3 Fourth Quarter Civil Rights Report F.Y. 11

Submitted by Julie Falcon

Area Office Report: The following offices had scheduled CR reviews completed in FY11 by David Beck --Charles City FO, Cresco FO, New Hampton FO, Osage FO and Toledo FO. The Vinton FO CR review was completed during their QR review in March.

Anamosa- During the September 14, 2011 staff meeting of the Anamosa Field Office, seven staff members reviewed information on generational diversity. District Conservationist Joe Wagner provided a handout for review and discussion. Descriptions of the generational groups that can be found in the workforce today were included in the handout. There was open discussion. Wagner closed by emphasizing the goal of understanding the generational differences in order to work best as a team.

Decorah- Field office staff assisted one female landowner in Yellow River Watershed with cost share application for water & sediment control basin. The staff assisted two female landowners with enrollment in the continuous CRP program.

Charles City- Civil rights, EEO, and Sexual harassment were discussed at quarterly staff meeting. The staff provided assistance to 1 Mennonite family and 6 females. Our field staff posted Hispanic/Woman's compensation claim posters in 8 locations from July 1 to September 30th.

Cresco/Osage- Women Land and Legacy Meeting was held in Cresco--- Program by Neil Schaffer on native plants – Also Notice for compensation for Claims of Discrimination for Hispanic/Women Farmers was discussed. Another WLL meeting was held and Program on Agricultural opportunities in value added crop production was the topic. EEO/Civil Rights Review completed by Dave Beck for both offices. A staff meeting held with items concerning EEO/Civil Rights discussed: Field Office EEO/Civil Rights Review, Complaint Process, Title VI & VII, and Hispanic/Women Discrimination complaint process.

Epworth-

Elkader-

Independence-

Manchester- This quarter, the Manchester FO assisted one female landowner with a CRP waterway. The office also provided technical and financial assistance to a female landowner that planted a windbreak through REAP. In conjunction with Dubuque County, the Delaware FO

staff hosted a MRBI meeting that informed targeted producers about opportunities within the MRBI program, eight people attend, two were women.

Marion- Reviewed the NRCS policies regarding outreach activities, sexual harassment, EO/CR, Titles VI & VII, and the CR Complaints process at quarterly staff meetings. Provided notice to staff of the Department Regulation 4300-010 regarding Civil Rights Accountability policy and procedures. Reviewed the Cultural Transformation letter from Under Secretary Harris Sherman with the staff. Also reviewed the Americans With Disabilities Act Proclamation by President Obama regarding the anniversary of the Act.

Maquoketa- Nothing to report for this quarter.

New Hampton- 9/15/2011 The New Hampton posted posters around town and in the local Farm Bureau Spokesman informing women and Hispanic producers of the USDA claims process.

Toledo- This office completed a CR area review by Dave Beck.

Vinton-

Waterloo- D.C. Ridgeway attended the West High School Career Day for recruitment. 45 students participated with mixed ethnic and racial backgrounds. The staff assisted 3 elderly, widowed women in separate large waterway projects for EQIP.

Waverly-

West Union- The staff Conducted level 1 Women, Land, and Legacy meeting with 30 women in attendance. Discussed issues that concerned them and how we (agency folks) can better serve them.

Waukon- The staff worked with a physically handicapped producer on a terrace estimate. The notice to Hispanic or women farmers and ranchers was covered at a staff meeting and we prepared a plan to carry out public notification. Our office is working on a concerted outreach effort to female landowners to sign up for cost share. We have completed continuous CRP applications for 6 female landowners. The office has completed terrace and/or pond estimates for 3 female landowners. 2 staff members attended and 1 staff assisted with ethnic heritage meal at a local church. The staff completed livestock manure system survey for one beginning farmer. A tour was conducted of manure sand lanes and was attended by 8 producers including one beginning and one female dairy producer.

Area 4 Civil Rights Report

Recruitment and retention:

Fremont Mills M.U. - Tuan Huynh completed his summer internship on September 23rd in Mills County then headed back to college at Oregon State.

Creston F.O. - Jaime Sandoval completed his summer internship at the Creston F.O.

Employee Development:

Area Office/Field Office Reports:

Fremont Mills M.U. – Hosted an Asian Pacific Islander meal with Tuan Huynh, Summer Intern in Mills Co., making a presentation about his family history.

Greenfield F.O. – Alan Lange spoke to a group at the Neely-Kinyon Farm’s Field Day about under-served customers- including women and Hispanics. Greenfield F.O. displayed posters at various businesses in Adair County about the “Notice to Hispanic And/Or Women Farmers and Ranchers Compensation For Claims Of Discrimination.” The staff has also taken turns reporting on events/topics related to civil rights at their weekly staff meetings.

Atlantic Soils Office - Taught the Audubon FFA about soils and how to judge it for their regional soil judging contest. This involved about 10 students which consisted of 6 females.

Osceola F.O. - Assisted several landowners with special needs and two Historically Underserved Producers with their CRP plans. Co-hosted a conservation field day with approximately 40 people in attendance and presented the “Notice to Hispanic and/or Women Farmers and Ranchers Compensation for Claims of Discrimination” to the group.

Council Bluffs F.O. – Made a Rain Barrel Presentation at Iowa Western Community College that 12 females attended. They also made a Composting Presentation at Iowa Western Community College that 9 females attended. The F.O. made a Rain Garden Presentation at Iowa Western Community College that 11 females attended too.

Quarterly Meeting
NOVEMBER 2011

Area 5 CRAC Report, Lya S. Williams

- ❖ Recruitment and retention
- ❖ Calendar of event
- ❖ Promotions in the Area pertaining to minority advancement
- ❖ New things in the employee development area

Area 5

Donnellson/Keosauqua MU:

The retention of disabled employee and maintained accessible equipment (modified truck and gator) for employee.

Mahaska:

The field office hosted two grazing tours with Area Office assistance of a Mob Grazing operation in Mahaska County in late July and early August. One tour was specifically for staff and the other for producers (staff were also invited). There were at least 3 female Soil Conservationists and 1 female Soil Conservation Technician that attended one of the two sessions on this newer type of approach to grazing.

Ottumwa Engineering Office – Civil Rights Representative (LSW-A5)

The Iowa Chapter of National Organization of Black Professional Engineers will be promoting careers in Agriculture on Education Day on January 28, 2011 at I'll Make Me World in Iowa (IMMAWII).

11/2/2011 Lya S. Williams

NRCS State Office Civil Rights Activity Report – Quarter 4

November 3, 2011

Submitted by Alan Lauver

Latinos in the Workforce Presentation

“Latinos in the Workforce – Barriers, Challenges, and Opportunities”: Mr. Orlando Gil discussed how Latinos can help grow a better future for Agriculture. It was held on September 21, 2011 in the state office and a total of thirty-six employees participated.

I participated in one outreach activity:

Team USDA Booth at the Iowa State Fair on August 12, 2011.