

State Technical Committee Meeting  
667 Federal Building  
April 14, 2005  
1:00 p.m.  
Des Moines, Iowa

## MINUTES

Present: Rick Van Klaveren, Chair; Robert Fenemore, EPA; Linda DePaul for John Walkoviak, Ken Herring, and Lyle Asell, DNR; Jim Munson, FWS; Dan Bruchte, Corn Growers; Susan Heathcote, IEC; Doug Gronau, Farm Bureau; Kelly Tobin, Producer; Derryl McLaren and Merlin Plagge, FSA; Lee Faris, Producer; Jerry Miller, ISUE; Jim Gillespie for Ken Tow, DSC; Mark Ackelson, INHF; John Sellers, SSCC; Brad Riphagen for Shannon Ramsey, Trees Forever; Leslee Spraggins, Nature Conservancy; Deb Ryun, CDI; Jim Sands, NASS; Linda Kinman, Iowa Water Agencies Association; John Glenn, Iowa Watersheds; Inger Lamb, Iowa Prairie Network; and Dan Rasmussen for Bruce Barnhart, LICA. Others not members: Duane Sand, INHF; Madeline Meyer, SSCC; Mike Musel, FSA; John Moreland, Senator Tom Harkin's Office; Marty Adkins, Roger Link, Mike Sucik, and Shelly DuBay, NRCS.

### Welcome Comments – Rick Van Klaveren

Rick welcomed Dan Rasmussen from the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association (LICA) as a new member of the State Technical Committee. He also announced that Mark Jackson will be replacing Doug Lindgren from the Iowa Soybean Association.

Rick announced that NRCS has filled two key positions in Iowa. Paul Sweeney will be the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in the State Office and he provided some background on Paul. The Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in West Union will be Alan Ehley. Rick provided some background on Al for the group.

### EQIP Update – Rick Van Klaveren

Rick shared background on the decision on holding \$7 million for the animal waste requirements based on the recommendation from this entire group. We funded 100 percent of the systems for the financial assistance (FA) portion. We used as much of the technical assistance (TA) as we could. Technical Service Providers (TSP) are needed to complete the work due to the shortage of NRCS staff time to get the jobs done. Unfortunately, the funds for TSP have run out by the sum of approximately \$850,000. NRCS did request additional fund from National Headquarters for \$850,000 to cover this need. Iowa is not the only state in this situation. The agency will be doing a "sweep" of the budget across the nation in the near future. When this occurs, there may be a possibility that we may be able to cover the funds needed for TSP.

### CIG Sub-Committee Update – Deb Ryun

Deb Ryun provided a copy of the news release from the following website <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG.html> on Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). The proposals are due May 30, 2005. Deb provided details of the CIG. There is \$400,000 available for these grants. Deb wanted to make sure that she had everyone listed that would like to participate on the review team. The following individuals will be on the review team for the CIG proposals:

Deb Ryun, Chair	Rick Robinson
Linda Kinman	Lyle Asell
Brad Riphagen	Bruce Barnhart

The team will be meeting sometime in mid-June and provide a report to the entire group at the next meeting July 21.

### CRP Sub-Committee Update – Kelly Tobin

Rick Van Klaveren shared that Kelly has asked to step down as the Chair for the CRP Sub-Committee. John Sellers will be the Chair effective immediately. Rick thanked Kelly for great work that was done in relation to being chair of this sub-committee. Kelly stated they had contacted 53 landlords and they asked for 30 days to review/think about this issue. Since then, they did follow up with the landlords and approximately half that are interested in this type of program. John Sellers will continue with this effort.

### CPI Sub-Committee Update – Lyle Asell

Lyle Asell stated there was a RFP from the NRCS National Office earlier this year for Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) through the 2002 Farm Bill. There was \$1 million nationwide available for assisting local groups on watersheds or geography issues. Iowa had 2 applications – one from Iowa State University (Odors and Livestock) and one from western Iowa in the Loess Hills. The group recommended that the Golden Hills RC&D for the Loess Hills project be forwarded to Washington, D.C. for consideration for funding. At this time we have not heard what the status is on the applications. There was a recommendation from the group to put together a state RFP in anticipating that this will happen again next year. This will allow individuals interested in a project to put together all the documentation that is needed without as short of a timeframe. The notice is on the NRCS website and the State Office also notified the field offices.

### Special Projects Sub-Committee Update – Jim Gillespie

Jim Gillespie stated that earlier this year there were four projects (Upper Iowa River, South Fork, Rathbun, and Elk River) submitted but the decision as that time from the sub-committee was that they weren't quite ready to go. Since then, they have followed up on the projects to get additional information and updates. There is \$500,000 available for special projects. In this process, the sub-committee reviewed the updates and recommended the following:

Upper Iowa River- \$425,000

Rathbun - \$75,000

There was \$1 million set aside out of the WRP funds from a recommendation from the State Technical Committee for special projects. Out of that set aside money, the decision was to fully fund the Rathbun request for WRP (\$400,000) in addition to \$75,000. The other two projects were not updated enough and there was no additional dollars available. In addition, there was not an immediate need for the other two project at this time.

Jim provided a copy of the draft RFP dated April 14, 2005, to use for next year. The recommendation is to adopt the draft form and proceed with the due date of June 24. There was some discussion from the group.

### Members of the sub-committee:

Ken Tow, Chair	Dave Petty
Jim Gillespie	Lyle Asell
Duane Sand	Deb Ryun
Marty Adkins	Roger Link

### CSP Update – Mike Sucik

Mike Sucik stated that the producer meetings held across the state were well attended and successful with 40 people signing up to attend and 80 showing up. There will be additional meetings held in all the watersheds. Mike provided additional details on the places the meetings will be held. The sign-up started March 28 and ending May 27 (60 days). There was some discussion from the group.

Mike stated that the sub-committee needs to get together to select the 2006 watersheds by mid-June.

Members of the sub-committee:

Francis Thicke, Chair	Duane Sand
Leslie Spraggins	Bill Northey
Jim Gillespie	Deb Ryun
Linda Kinman	Ubbo Agena

#### GRP/FRPP Update – Marty Adkins

Marty Adkins provided a copy of a map showing the FY2005 Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) Rental Agreements/Easements. The recommendation for the sub-committee at the last meeting was to provide 80 percent of the funds to be used for rental agreements and 20 percent set aside for easements. Marty provided additional background information to the group.

NRCS did receive one proposal for the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) for FY2005. Marty commended Mark Ackelson and the Natural Heritage Foundation for the amount of work they put into this project with additional interest from other individuals. At this time, we think we may be asking National Headquarters for additional funds for FRPP this year. The project is called Little Egypt. It is a special landscape area in the Loess Hills that will include 13 tracts. There was some discussion from the group.

Lee Faris shared that Ringgold County has a site with Prairie Chickens. The IDNR has built a viewing stage to see the chickens in their natural habitat. It is located one mile west of Kellerton on Highway 2. There is an open house Saturday, April 16 with coffee and juice at sunrise. At sunrise there is 100 percent chance to see them, at sundown there is 70-80 percent chance.

The next State Technical Committee Meeting will be held on July 21, 2005, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 577 Federal Building, Des Moines, Iowa.