

**Civil Right Committee (CRC) Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2009**

Member/Advisor Presents

Niles Glasgow
Antron Williams
Marty Bright-Rivera
Daniel Cabaniss
Jayson Mas
Odessa Armstrong
Michael Sampson
Elyse Benson
Kim Johnson

Members Absent

Myra Jones
Ruthie Davis
Amy Maxwell

Niles Glasgow

- The meeting was called to order by Antron Williams. Niles Glasgow emphasized the importance of the CRC working with the communities and Soil Conservationists in determining what needs to be done. Mr. Glasgow also announced that this would be his last meeting since he was retiring. His replacement would be selected by Dave White, and the new State Administrative Officer would hopefully be selected before he departs. . The acting STC would be announced by the National Headquarters (NHQ).
- Niles had several questions on the budget and the approval of the budget was tabled until the questions could be answered by absent members. The decision was made that Members at Large could attend the Joint Conference at Kansas City, MO, however the CRC would not pay their expenses. These expenses would be put into the individual training plans.
- It was also decided that the new Chair of Cultural Awareness Day should be identified before the next CRC meeting. The committee should also determine the proper recognitions for individual presenters during the CAD.
- The 2010 Plan of Works is to be finalized and it is to be available for Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) to have with them when they go to training events.
- The Gay/Lesbian SEPM is currently at the National level only. Nothing is to be done at the State level until further guidance is received.

- Suggestions were given for the new Member at Large because Michael Sampson is leaving South Carolina NRCS to accept a new position in Georgia. Mr. Glasgow appointed Bradley Poston from the Marion Field Office as his replacement.
- Mr Ben Johnson was nominated by the committee as a nominee for the “2010 Small Farmer of the Year” award.

Federal Women’s Program Manager – Myra Jones

No Report.

Black Emphasis Program Manager – Ruthie Davis

1. Submitted 2009 Activities and Initiatives Report to the National BEPM
2. Submitted 2010 Plan of Work to the secretary, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
3. Submitted 2010 BEPM Budget to the treasure, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
4. Announced the annual NRCS poster contest in recognition of Black History Month
5. Participated in BEPM’s quarterly teleconference.
6. Subscribed t the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees.

Disability Emphasis Program Manager – Marty Bright-Rivera

1. Submitted 2010 Plan of Work to the secretary, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
2. Submitted 2010 DEPM Budget to the treasure, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
3. Sent a copy of the 2010 Disability Poster to all field offices.
4. Sent the history of Veterans’ Day to all employees along with activities held throughout the state.
5. Attended the South Carolina Vocation Rehab Graduation on November 10th. This graduation consisted of disabled clients throughout the state that had completed an intense specialty program.

Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager – Jayson Mas

1. Submitted 2010 Plan of Work to the secretary, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
2. Submitted 2010 HEPM Budget to the treasure, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee.
3. Jayson was unable to provide any information on the status of the lawsuit in Texas.
4. Jayson has been in contact with Katie Black at Clemson University and is trying to identify Hispanic Agricultural students.

Asian Pacific Islander Program Manager – Elyse Benson

1. Submitted 2010 Plan of Work to the secretary, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
2. Submitted 2010 AIPM Budget to the treasure, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee.
3. Attended a teleconference and discussed the MD 715 and Plan of Work.

4. The theme this year will be “Bridging Culture for Agriculture Across America”.
5. Discussed ways to improve recruiting.

Native American Emphasis Program Manager – Daniel Cabaniss

1. Submitted 2010 Plan of Work to the secretary, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee
2. Submitted 2010 NAEPM Budget to the treasure, SC Civil Rights Advisory Committee.
3. Contacted Chief Rogers of the Catawba tribe. The Chief attended a meeting last month along with other Tribal Chief’s and President Obama. More information is forth coming.

Members at Large –

Odessa Armstrong

1. Attended the Santee State Park Agribusiness Banquet in which she was a guest speaker.
2. Scheduled to attend the North Carolina A&T Agricultural Banquet.
3. South Carolina State University has initiated a “Discover Agriculture Program” which targets high school students.

Michael Sampson – No report was submitted, and he announced this would be his last meeting since he was leaving South Carolina NRCS.

Outreach Report – Amy Maxwell

1. Headquarters has released a *DRAFT* news release regarding the High Tunnel Pilot Project but we don’t know when it will be officially released and the sign up conducted. Info. should not be released or promoted until further instructions are received. This is a practice being offered through EQIP via a 3-year pilot project and it aims to increase availability of locally grown foods and will target small farms, limited resource and organic farmers.
2. Maxwell reported that NRCS’ Professional Employee Organizations are planning a joint conference to in Kansas City, MO, the week of March 15th, 2010. The “**NRCS 2010 Joint Professional Employee Organizations and Special Emphasis Program Managers Training Conference**” is a joint effort among NRCS Civil Rights Division, the Asian Pacific/Islander Organization (APIO), the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) and the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees (NOPHNRCSE). There is a call for nominations for outstanding farmers, and Maxwell has proposed to submit Ben Johnson, small farmer in St. Helena Island, SC, as a nominee for the **Black Farmer/Rancher Conservation Award**. Nominations include a narrative and video, both due by Feb. 1st. Maxwell will work with USC-ESRI’s Buz Kloot to revise an existing video highlighting Mr. Johnson’s conservation work and submit a nomination.
3. **FRPP sign up** info. is now on SC NRCS website, and Maxwell is promoting the sign up in statewide media and to conservation partners. Glenn Sandifer promoted the program sign up during a *Conservation Matters* live radio interview on 1230 AM, on Thursday, December 4th.

4. Maxwell said that NRCS has contracted with **Southern Farm Network** to record and air a total of 20 radio spots, each 3 minutes in length, to be broadcast on about 12 different radio stations throughout the state. These interviews can be conducted via phone, and Maxwell encouraged any field folks who have any subject matter that is statewide, and non county specific, and would like to do one of these radio interviews, please contact her. The topic, and interview time/date, is up to the individual. The first interview will air on Dec. 17th, conducted by Mr. Glasgow, concerning the FRPP sign up.
5. Bethel Durant, Acting ASTC (Programs), delivered a webinar on **Forestry Aspects of the Farm Bill** on Nov. 19th, which was a program offered free of charge by Clemson Extension, Forestry and Natural Resources. The webcast was presented to over 40 participants who included SC Forestry Commission employees and licensed foresters, as well as NRCS' David Findley. DuRant also informed participants about the opportunity to register as a Technical Service Provider (TSP).
6. USDA established the **Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO)**, as authorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill). The Office will also serve as an advocate for underserved constituents and as an avenue for them to have input into programmatic and policy decisions to improve their viability and profitability. OAO will be separate from the Office of Civil Rights, which will remain focused on the rights of employees and service to all USDA customers. The funding underscores the increased effort underway by the Administration to encourage and advocate for full participation by all Americans in USDA programs.

Title VI Advisor – Bethel Durant – No Report.

Title VII & Employment Report – Kim Johnson

1. Identified current vacancies. They were the State Administrative Office, three Soil Conservation Technicians, and a Program Specialist position.
2. A reminder was given that all Performance Work plans were to be in place not later than December 15, 2009.
3. The 2009 awards were analyzed and a recommendation that the new leadership would relook how awards are currently being processed in South Carolina. Kim made a recommendation that an awards committee be created. This committee would include the State Administrative Office, the chair of the Civil Rights Committee and the Human Resources Manager.
4. Recommended that training for all managers and supervisors be given on how to write performance plans and award criteria.

Other Business - Niles Glasgow

1. Recommended that consideration be given to the implementation of an award committee.
2. The award committee would set standards, manager would submit award recommendations, the committee would review and/or make adjustments, and the State Conservationist would approve all awards.
3. The list for South Carolina's SLT members and the colleges they were responsible for recruiting for are:
 - a. Clemson University – Doug Deaderick

- b. South Carolina State University – Amy Maxwell
- c. North Carolina State University – Craig Ellis
- d. Alabama A&M University – Doug Deaderick
- e. Tuskegee Institute – Erica Westbrook
- f. University of Georgia – Pam Thomas
- g. North Carolina A&T – Eric Fleming
- h. Virginia Tech – Pam Thomas

Next Meeting The next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2010

Adjourn