

# Minutes of the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

## 10:00 AM August 8, 2007

### Members/Advisors Present

Lynette Savereno-Chairperson & MAL (Member at Large)

Sabrenna Bryant-Vice-Chairperson & MAL

Cliff Eaddy-Treasurer & AIANPM

Charlie Ogg-Secretary & MAL

LaKeisha Hill- BEPM

Lisa Good-FWPM

Wayne Henderson-DEPM

### Members/Advisors Absent

Rafael Mendez-HEPM/APIPM

Craig Ellis-Title VI Advisor

Dory Reeves-Title VII Advisor

Amy Maxwell-Outreach Advisor & 1890's Liaison Advisor

- I. Call to Order. Savereno called the SC Civil Rights Committee (CRC) meeting to order at 10:07 AM.
- II. Approval of minutes. Eaddy made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2007 meeting. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- III. Budget Report. Eaddy reviewed the FY07 CRC budget. He requested all SEPMs submit their expenses to him as soon as purchases are made.
  - Eaddy reported Mendez wants to use the money in the HEPM/APIPM portion of the budget. Eaddy will contact Mendez to finalize his expenses.
  - Hill says the money remaining in her budget should cover her EEO training expenses.
  - Bryant will submit CAT expenses.
  - Eaddy will contact other SEPMs concerning expenses in their budgets.

Savereno asked if any purchases could be made to benefit field offices.

- Henderson suggested large-print and/or Braille publications, posters, etc.
- Savereno suggested workstation equipment for disabled employees.
- Bryant suggested civil rights displays for field offices, small group meetings, and partnership conferences, especially those tailored to specific programs.
- Good will check into subscriptions for publications related to health issues.

Henderson made a motion to transfer money to Bryant for the purchase of display supplies. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- IV. Ongoing activities with approaching deadlines.
- a. *Current Development Articles.*
- Bryant will write a CAT article for the Sept.-Oct. issue.
  - Mendez and Eaddy will each submit articles for the Sept.-Oct. issue.
  - Henderson will write a disabilities article for the Sept.-Oct. issue.
- b. *Training for members.* Hill, Good, and Bryant will attend the CRC new member training in Atlanta.
- c. *Civil Rights Reviews & Reports.* Eaddy attended the Camden field office review. Bryant will attend the Lancaster field office review in September. Hill will attend the Edisto/Savannah RC&D review August 15.
- d. *Plan of Work.* Savereno asked members to send completed items to her via email and she will update the plan electronically.
- e. *2007 CRC report to STC.* Savereno stated the CRC report needs to be completed for submission to Mr. Douglas in October. Savereno requested each CRC member submit a paragraph on their accomplishments via email to her.
- f. *2007 Civil Rights Award.* Savereno circulated the draft nomination letter she prepared for Mr. Douglas.
- g. *Replacement Recommendations for Outgoing CRC members.* Savereno will send an email statewide requesting individual interested in serving on the CRC committee to submit their names. She will compile the list for selection of new members. Because the new members need to be in place prior to the October CRC meeting, selections need to be made before October.
- Henderson made the motion for Savereno to circulate the compiled list of nominations to the CRC via email and that committee members vote via email. Good seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- V. AIANPM Report. Eaddy reported the Catawba tribe has elected Donald Rodgers as its new Chief. Other new members have been elected to the executive committee as well. Eaddy also reported he will attend the annual AIANPM training at Corpus Christi, TX and that he continues to participate in the national teleconferences.
- VI. BEPM Report. Hill reported visiting with Reeves about the mentoring program. Hill believes the program could be revamped to increase the program's effectiveness for career interns and mentors as well by establishing new guidelines and training for the mentors.
- Below is Hill's summary of her meeting with Reeves.

June 22, 2007

Re: Meeting Summary

Dory Reeves and I met Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss the state of our mentoring program.

- All career interns are required to have a mentor assigned to them.

- Currently all career interns do have an assigned mentor.
- Other than on paper, is the mentoring program functioning as it should? No!
- How do we go about revitalizing the mentor program?
- All employees should have mentors if they so choose but they should not be assigned. Because career interns are required to have mentors and these mentors are assigned, we need to:
  - Make sure the individuals serving as their mentors have had training. Perhaps we should have a half day or entire day mentor/mentee training session. The mentors and mentees would be split into separate groups during the first half of the training so that different individual topics could be discussed. Towards the second half of the day, mentors and mentees would be together to discuss topics, view videos and interact.

Possible Topics:

Mentor

- What is a mentor?
- What do mentors do?
- Mentoring styles?
- Types of mentor assistance
- Understanding mentees' needs

Mentees

- What is a mentor?
- Have you been mentored?
- Mentoring styles
- Listening
- Adapting to change
- TSP, Leave, EPP, Insurance, IDP's, Aglearn, etc.
- What does it mean to be vested?
- What does it mean to be a career intern?
- IDP's

Action Items

<b>Look to see if AgLearn offers any web-based training related to mentoring</b>	<b>Hill, Reeves</b>
Talk with newer employees to find out topics they might like to see covered in a mentoring training session.	Hill
<b>Talk with current mentors to get their opinion and feedback of topics that should be covered in a mentoring training session.</b>	<b>Hill</b>

Dory and I will communicate via email and phone and decide what to do next including:

- Who should conduct this training?
- Who should attend this training?
- What happens after the training session?

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Hill asked the committee if she should continue researching ways to improve the mentoring program.

Henderson made the motion for Hill to continue pursuing the restructuring of the mentor program. Eaddy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- VII. DEPM Report. Henderson reported he applied for the DEPM position on the National Civil Rights Committee but was not appointed because he is not disabled. Henderson also shared suggestions for coworkers for improving the CR webpage. Suggestion 1: Add a quick access link to the CRC page. Suggestion 2. Revise portions of the webpage with current employee locations. Bryant will incorporate these suggestions.
- VIII. FWPM Report. Good reported attending the FWPM training conference at Washington, D.C. Conference emphasis was on women's mobility within NRCS. Conferees looking toward career advancement were recommended to watch for state-to-state mobility opportunities; both opportunities that provide a grade increase and those that provide a lateral with potential for grade increase.
- IX. HEPM/APIPM Report. No report.
- X. MAL Report. No report.
- XI. Outreach Report. Savereno submitted a written report provided by Maxwell. The report is as follows.

Maxwell prepared a report about expenditure of outreach funds: Two new Cooperative Agreements were recently signed, including one agreement with the Penn Center to enhance outreach to farmers along the coast of SC, and to assist in establishing a solar energy demonstration for small farmers at the Penn Center.

The other agreement will assist United Farmers USA in setting up a website targeted toward small and limited resource farmers. Part of that website will include information on Farm Bill programs.

NRCS also allocated outreach funds to the 2007 SC Ag. Commissioner's School of Agriculture. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the program which provides a one week learning opportunity for high school students to learn more about careers in agriculture. Maxwell attended the closing ceremony a few weeks ago in Pendleton, at which NRCS was recognized for their financial support. During the ceremony, the students presented Power Point presentations about their experience during the week, but Maxwell noted that NRCS was not included as a possible career choice. She suggested that NRCS become more involved with the program, and perhaps make a presentation at the school next year. She has already contacted the school coordinators who have agreed to involve NRCS in the school's curriculum for next year.

- XII. Title VI Report. Savereno reported email correspondence with Ellis, "The same definitions for limited resource producers, small scale farmers, etc. will be the same for FY08 as FY07. We'll have to wait for the new farm bill and the policy development to see if we change to socially disadvantaged definition."

- XIII. Title VII Report. No report.
- XIV. Cultural Awareness Training. Bryant reported the CAT committee is finalizing preparation details for Cultural Awareness Training. Bryant said there is a good response from partners interested in attending as well. A notice will be sent to NRCS statewide reminding employees CAT is mandatory for receiving Title VI and VII training; otherwise, supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees receive this training.
- XV. Other Business. Savereno submitted the NB.230.7.5, EOP, National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC) 2007 Issues and Concerns Responses. The bulletin is found at <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewDirectives.aspx?id=3339>
- XVI. Next Meeting. The next two meetings of the CRC are 10:00 AM October 10<sup>th</sup> and 10:00 AM December 12<sup>th</sup> 2007. Other FY08 meeting dates will be February 13, April 9, June 11, August 13, and October 8.
- XVII. Adjourn. Savereno called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Henderson made the motion to adjourn. Eaddy seconded the motion. Motion passed. The CRC adjourned at 11:50 AM.