

# Minutes of the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

## 10:00 AM August 13, 2008

### Members/Advisors Present

Sabrenna Bryant-Chairperson & MAL

Antron Williams -Treasurer & MAL

Charlie Ogg-Secretary & MAL

Rafael Mendez-HEPM

Wayne Henderson-DEPM

LaKeisha Hill- BEPM

Lisa Good-FWPM

Amy Maxwell-Outreach Advisor & 1890's Liaison Advisor

### Members/Advisors Absent:

Elyse Benson - AIPM

Cliff Eaddy- AIANPM

Craig Ellis-Title VI Advisor

Dory Reeves-Title VII Advisor

- I. Call to Order. Bryant called to order the SC Civil Rights Committee (CRC) at 10:03 AM.
- II. Approval of minutes. Good made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2008 meeting. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- III. Treasurer's Report. Williams said he received no changes to the budget prior to the meeting, however, some deductions were made during the meeting. Mendez said he spent \$1522.59 for travel and \$450.00 for training and tuition. Hill spent \$518.00 for the *Minority Landowners* magazine subscription.
- IV. Ongoing activities and approaching deadlines.
  - a. Bryant asked all SEPMs to submit to her a page-length report outlining their accomplishments for FY2008. In addition to preparing the annual hard-copy report, she plans to make a presentation to the State Leadership Team.
  - b. *Current Developments* Articles  
Bryant reported she will submit an article for the *Current Developments* issue. Mendez will submit an article in August.
  - c. *Candidate for Civil Rights Award*  
Bryant reported nominations were received for the Civil Rights award and Mr. Glasgow has made a selection.

- V. AIANPM Report. No report. Eaddy is attending the AIANPM annual training conference in Spokane, WA.
- VI. BEPM Report. Hill reported the following:  
The magazine subscription for *Minority Landowners* has been purchased. Field offices should receive the summer issue in the next couple of weeks. The magazine is published quarterly.
- Hill has been selected to serve as the Black Female representative on the National Civil Rights Committee, effective October 2008 and continuing through September 2011.
- Hill attended training for Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery, July 7-10, 2008 in Harrisburg, PA.
- VII. DEPM Report. Henderson reported on the email he sent to NRCS employees concerning sign language interpretive services provided by the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind. The school is located in Spartanburg.  
([http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/sign\\_language\\_interpreters\\_2007.htm](http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/sign_language_interpreters_2007.htm))
- Henderson passed around a brochure about an upcoming conference to be held at The Columbia Conference Center that he plans on attending, entitled "Helping South Carolina Business Grow – Profitability in Hiring People with Disabilities.
- VIII. FWPM Report.  
Good reported she forward to all female DC's a request from the National Federal Women's Program Manager for anyone who would like to serve on a committee to review concerns, barriers, etc. females encounter with advancement.
- Good reported completing a survey for the FWP categorizing barriers that females encounter in the workforce.
- Good reported the email she sent to SC NRCS employees highlighting female farmers received good response from the field offices.
- Good reported receiving a request from the National level to report parity hiring and training. Maxwell said this is a report Reeves submits quarterly and is not the kind of information Good should be required to gather and submit.
- IX. HEPM Report.

Mendez and Mr. Glasgow attended the National Association of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees, July 7-11, 2008 at Madison, WI.

Mendez reported the National HEPM position is vacant. He also said Jayson Mas, from Puerto Rico, has been hired as a Soil Conservationist in Lancaster County, SC.

Mendez reported he is organizing an activity to celebrate the Hispanic community. The activity, tentatively scheduled for a date in September, will be held in the Strom Thurmond Federal Building for NRCS and RD.

- X. APIPM Report. No report. Benson is attending the AIANPM annual training conference in Spokane, WA.
- XI. MAL Report. Williams will attend the EEO Roles and Responsibilities training in Atlanta, August 25-26, 2008..
- XII. Outreach Report.  
Maxwell led a teleconference between Clemson University Extension, Penn Center, and Jasper Wholesale Auction Produce Market personnel to discuss the NRCS CESU agreement and the progress of the demonstration. The market has temporarily suspended operations until early Fall due to the limited growing season. The results of the first season of operation are positive, but there is still a need for more buyers/sellers, and for increased visibility for the market. Maxwell also met with STC and United Farmers CEO's to discuss partnership opportunities.

Maxwell worked with Reeves and Program Staff to compile and submit the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter SC Civil Rights Assessment Report to NHQ.

SC NRCS once again provided outreach funds to the Commissioners School for Agriculture, which takes place each July at Clemson. SC NRCS is a proud supporter of the yearly event. NRCSer and Clemson graduate Bethel DuRant attended the awards luncheon and closing ceremony on July 25th. This is a good way to inform high school juniors and seniors the careers NRCS offers, and to inform them about the college courses they need to take to qualify for certain positions.

Maxwell reported on two items of interest which she posted to the SC NRCS *Sharepoint*.

The first involves Civil Rights Committee Special Emphasis Programs, and there is a new web page at

<https://nrsc.sc.egov.usda.gov/east/sc/SEPM/default.aspx>

where Special Emphasis Program Managers can post information on their respective areas, and SC NRCS employees can get information and resources.

The second item, Maxwell said, is that on the front page of Sharepoint there is information and a draft program for next week's Cultural Awareness Day, including directions to the facility.

Maxwell also reported an exciting new partnership agreement she is working to draft with USC-ESRI (Buz Kloot) whereby they would create short DVD clips of conservation practices to provide an overview to landowners and other audiences, with a specific focus on the Piedmont Common Resource Area. The idea came from Heather Stephens and Dave Demarest who are assisting with the project. If the agreement is approved in headquarters, production will begin in the Fall and last for about one year.

- XIII. Title VI Report. No report.
- XVI. Title VII Report. No report.
- XV. Cultural Awareness Training  
Hill reported the CAT committee has planned an outstanding Cultural Awareness Training for CAT on August 21, 2008 at Seawells restaurant. CRC members are asked to arrive early for set-up and stay afterwards for clean-up.
- XVI. Other Business.  
There was some discussion about procedure for filing a grievance. Maxwell will ask Reeves to send out the procedure statewide to NRCS employees.
- XVII. Next Meeting. **The next meeting of the CRC is 10:00 AM October 8, 2008.**
- XVIII. Adjourn. Bryant called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Hill made a motion to adjourn. Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed. The CRC committee adjourned at 10:55 AM.