

State Technical Committee Minutes

Richmond, Virginia

July 24, 2012

Wade Biddix, NRCS ASTC-Programs, opened the meeting and welcomed all and introduced himself, then asked the group to introduce themselves individually and state the organization represented. He also asked them to sign the attendance sheet.

Attendance: Wade Biddix (*NRCS*), Jack Bricker (*NRCS*), Libby Norris (*CBF*), Emily Horsley (*FSA*), Diane Dunaway (*NRCS*), Chad Wentz (*NRCS*), Patricia Stansbury (*VABF*), Ron Wood (*NRCS*), Jeremy Stone (*NRCS*), Alan Spivey (*VA Forage/Grasslands Council/VA Cattlemen Assn.*), Blair Krusz (*Virginia Agribusiness Council*), Todd Groh (*DOF*), Dave Byrd (*USFWS*), Brent Whitlock (*FSA*), Sue Ellen Johnson (*PEC*), Karen Hudson (*VIMS*), Brian Wagner (*TJSWCD/Ecosystem Services, LLC*), David Kriz (*NRCS*), Greg Frey (*VSU/VCE*), Philip Reed (*VOF*), Aaron Siegel (*DMME*), Maribeth Pettigrew (*NRCS Recorder*).

Jack Bricker – NRCS – Opening Comments: Jack expressed appreciation to the group for their participation on the committee throughout the past year. He compared this time of year to landing an airplane and expressed hope for a smooth landing. We haven't expended any of our accounts. Jack mentioned the handouts on the front table available for pick up and specifically noted the Farm Bill handout that updates the status as to where our funding stands right now. He stated that Wade would go through the highlights. There will be cuts if the Farm Bill goes forward as it is now, but more interesting will be some of the consolidations; he noted that the impacts won't really be understood until they are implemented. We are looking forward to our programs being easier to administer and easier for our clients to understand. He reviewed the news that came out yesterday on the nationwide drought; several items are specific to Farm Bill programs, i.e. offering emergency relief for some of the people in hardest hit areas. FSA will cover a lot of that because of CREP. A news release Jack received this morning still expresses some doubt as to whether or not there will even be a new Farm Bill approved prior to the November election. A large percentage of the Farm Bill goes to food stamps and WIC. If we wait a year for a new Farm Bill, the fear is that the cuts we're seeing forecast might even be doubled.

Emily Horsley– FSA – (handout attached) – CREP enrollment activity is a bit lackluster at present. They are looking at a revision to the Southern Rivers agreement; they are almost at current enrollment allocation and are encouraging offices to accept enrollments; they are also taking steps forward to increase acreage allocation. FSA will submit request for allocation increase to the national office by the end of the week and hope for a quick approval. Emily noted differences on handout from prior meeting.

Press release on emergency haying and grazing of CRP acres: Provisions are in place to allow producers access more expeditiously and that can be administered more easily. Change is that after primary nesting season, any county in CRP can be automatically approved without going through regular approval process. Also the payment reduction rate has gone from 25% to 10% in these instances.

Emily noted CRP initiative notices that are recent. SIP would be increased but they have just received clarification that is only applicable in certain areas, i.e. wetlands. Also, some practices like a pollinator process is now continuous. Other practices that used to just be available in sign-up periods are now available on a continuous basis. If erosion index is 20 or greater, that can be approved continuously. Usually index has to be 8 or greater, so that's the difference.

One hundred twenty offers were accepted during the last general sign up. Some of those that were not accepted because of prior restrictions may now qualify. There will be info posted on their website today and more info on national website as well.

Comment made re: electrical storms from a couple of weeks ago that knocked out power to livestock operations—are there special allowances? A lot of people were relying on wells and had no electricity. One specific farmer had to buy five generators to keep his water supply going. It should be written into all programs which allowances are set up to help them in this kind of situation. (Fences down, no electricity, high temps).

Status of Program Funds:

Diane Dunaway – (NRCS) WRP/GRP handout (attached) – We are trying to get things in place so that WRP restoration can begin as soon as easements are closed. We are conducting a review of our GARCs and not doing a full market analysis this year. NRCS hired a real estate appraiser to do the review.

Jeremy Stone (NRCS) - FRPP handout. We are expecting more applications in the next few weeks. Applications may exceed available funds, which is a big change, if you'll remember from the beginning of the year. He clarified that there should be enough funds unless every application qualifies. Nationwide, there is usually money that can be pulled in from elsewhere if we are short this time of year.

We have been approached to see if we could use the Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund that is managed by The Nature Conservancy in Virginia as a matching fund. The Army Corps of Engineers is involved. Right now, we are proceeding with allowing this to work as a match. It is a rare match that appears to be working. It may hit a snag and everyone is aware of its potential for that, but so far it looks good. It's a case of private funds managed by public agencies. Libby asked if it would change the standard now that this fund is attached to mitigation. Someone else responded that the idea concerns "two different footprints". Buffers are in place so that ag lands won't damage water resources. Our standards will not change at all and theirs won't change either. Another question re: overlapping easements. Answer: it will be one easement. USDA does not hold FRPP easements as of 2008 – they hold them in partnership only.

Dan Solomon (NRCS) EQIP/CBWI – Handouts (attached). He reviewed year-to-date obligation of funds. There is very little backlog this year. Areas that are shaded refer to funds that cannot be transferred from one fund to another (because of federal regulations). Dan noted that the field people had done a good job.

Libby asked re: CCPI closing – "Is it over?" Deadline is this Friday. Wade clarified that the CBF CCPI funds had been moved to another CCPI project, so it is not available now. Libby wanted to ensure funds didn't go unused. Wade explained that we are now in a crunch time, but unless it's in a special project and something is ready to go, we can't really open the applications back up at this point.

It was noted that CBWI will be done differently next year if the current Farm Bill proposal goes through. It will function more like CCPI projects where groups make proposals.

Wade noted that if you look at the distribution of funds, it's clear that it's pretty much allocated. It is significant to note that we don't have a lot of pending applications. A few contracts are still out there that are being finalized, but by the end of the week, they should all be obligated. Headquarters hasn't swept any funds from us, and that's a good thing.

Ron Wood –(NRCS) - Organic/Seasonal High Tunnels. Reviewed items on handout point by point. **WHIP -** another handout - reviewed. We were able to allocate the majority of monies.

Wade Biddix – (NRCS) - CIG grants – We received 8 CIG proposals; 6 have gone to the full-proposal stage. We have requested additional funding. As things are now, we will probably only be able to fund 3-4 of them. National Headquarters has not released the national CIG awards, and we can't release our decision until they release theirs (sometimes there are duplicate proposals at the national and state levels). We're hoping that leftover monies from EQIP might be able to fund more here. The grant requests are excellent; we would like to fund all of them.

Wade shifted the subject to talk about next year - changes that might be coming. He reviewed the handout (attached) including the proposed changes. There is a big one with EQIP and WHIP. It looks like the programs will be merged. It will probably end up that about 5% of EQIP funds will be designated to WHIP. All easement programs may be rolled together. The reverse of the handout shows other programs that will be rolled together. We think CB will qualify as one of the critical watershed areas, but it looks like funds will be substantially lower. We won't know how any of this will really affect us until something is officially signed into law and the programs get appropriations. Jack and Wade discussed the status of CB as to whether it is considered "earmarked". They are not sure at the moment. In Virginia we get a lot of money from CB and even areas not in the Bay are positively affected because of extra EQIP funds, so cutting these funds will definitely affect the entire state.

Changes are proposed for the State Technical Committee. More of a standard operating procedure may be applied. Could be more structured. We will wait and see what is passed in the final Farm Bill.

Veterans have been specified as one of the socially protected groups for whom we will have special funding. That's new. Dam rehabilitation also appears to be going to be tied to farm bill funding.

Wade then reviewed the implementation timeline; of course this is all subject to change depending on what happens with the Farm Bill. Training will be rolled out in first quarter. We'd like to move easement deadlines up because they just take longer to process. There will be a second option later in the year, so it will be available if needed. Applications are accepted continuously.

On the EQIP side – we are looking at middle of January with one exception. Forestry applications need to be processed early. We have tried to space out obligation deadlines a bit. Headquarters made exception on CSP; this will probably be moved up to May. They have committed that any special initiatives will be out by spring. We are trying to control deadlines a bit more and make it less confusing.

Subcommittees: Referred to highlighted sheet (handout). Wade has posted subcommittee divisions and asked for volunteers. Sign – up forms are posted on the wall with chair person(s) designated. Wade noted that we would send out a sign-up opportunity for people not here at the STC meeting, but if you're here today, feel free to sign up.

Ideas to be developed: Easements – is there a way to somehow prescreen? That will be one question dealt with. Wetlands criterion will probably be another.

We will be doing another brand new FY-13 Farm Bill Handbook, not just additions.

Wade then reviewed specific ideas on the handout. He noted that a lot of people wanted a pool for specialty crops. Trying to split that money doesn't seem like a good idea since there are already opportunities with organic, etc.

Policy issues will probably be the biggest committee. Wade noted he didn't want to read through each item, but asked the group to review and look at anything with which they would like to be involved.

Comments? Any other committees you can see a need for? There were no responses.

All sorts of considerations and unanswered questions right not with the election and the Farm Bill, but we still need to try to put some plans in place to prepare for FY-13. Of course, there will be programs, but we are not sure how they will be defined and administered.

Chad Wentz –(NRCS) - Nutrient Management Standard – updating/revising – would like to spend a little time on this standard. It's been a hot topic. There's been a lot of comments nationally and we have had some inquiries within the state.

Background: all standards are developed nationally. They have been posted and are open for review. Once they are posted by national, states have one year to adopt as is, or to propose changes. Some things are not changeable, but others are. These standards are up for review every five years. This standard came up last year, and there was a lot of controversy. We have met with DCR; we're in the process of updating.

Chris Lawrence, Cropland Agronomist, came in and gave a presentation. There is a handout included specific to this standard.

Virginia had been more aggressive previously and national policy has actually moved more toward what we as a state already had in place. We still have more detail than the proposed national standard.

We are concerned that we stay consistent with VA's DCR nutrient management program. We want there to be consistency between conservation plans and nutrient management plans. You don't just adopt a plan. You do have to carry out specified activities. That can't work unless the plans fit together with our partners. It could be a nightmare with trying to make uniquely developed plans mesh.

Every standard has a purpose. Our proposed strategy is that it doesn't matter what purpose the standard is being implemented for, it will still have to follow the same regulations.

The minimum for the national criteria will NOT be any less stringent than our state standard! (in respect to nutrients). Phrase to sum this up: BASIC 590 (p. 4 of handout) What is it? 6 core elements specified. Ensure consistency and then carry out details of plan.

Rate, timing, placement, form... Will depend on farmer as to level of challenge to meet these requirements. Every site has to be evaluated to determine if it is environmentally sensitive. Bottom Line – there will not be a lot of change for VA except to ensure that our plan is matching up with our partners. Soil Loss Tolerance has been included in National 590 so that will need to be incorporated.

Chris clarified that meeting these guidelines is a team effort to assist the producers. Everybody has to work together. DCR/NRCS work together to develop guidelines, but producers need to ensure that they communicate any changes to ensure they are consistent with what is in place.

Question re: voluntary participation in this effort. Chris discussed how this regulation fits into requirements for farmers. Cost share programs are dependent on following the 590 standard. It's not like it's a law that all farmers have to follow. Chris said he thinks in some states it is a law but not in VA. State of VA does have regulations that are enforced.

Question re: being protected by federal mandates if 590 is complied with. Response: This is a state decision that is being discussed.

Different strategies for managing phosphorus – that is the central issue in some ways with this 590. Chris discussed some of the scientific approaches for that – site specific risk assessment approach – effects on water. Question re: which approach would be taken on a national level – and that is the side they've come down on. You do not know how much you need to manage phosphorus on a specific field unless you actually go out and look at that field. VA has had this as an option since 2005. If people are following 590, it is the suggested option.

Once the standard is posted in the federal register, there will be a thirty day window to make comments. Chad will notify STC members once it is posted so they may have access to review and comment.

AGENCY UPDATES:

Patricia Stansbury (VABF) – On her radio show, she recently interviewed Matt Lohr; available on Facebook for anyone to access.

Libby Norris – (CB) – We are helping Harrisonburg to work on Farm Bill program contracts. Pushing for same language on Farm Bill.

Dave Kriz – (NRCS) - Work Planning conference is planned to be held here at the State Office on August 28 and 29; it will be discussing data we're looking at re: restructuring of soil science division. DOF and VA Tech will be talking about special projects and future plans.

Alan Spivey - (VA Forage/Grasslands Council/VA Cattlemen Assn.) – QUESTION: County – Regional authority purchased acreage a few years ago. What agency can help this group with their development of parks and recreation plan? RESPONSE: DCR; also NRCS can provide technical assistance. Parks and Rec. don't understand impact, he's afraid. Patricia asked re: master gardeners. Opinions are diverse – want grass mowed, etc. Discussion among group. Libby Norris encouraged them to pull in all the expert groups in the area and look at the big picture; take advantage of expertise. Dan Solomon suggested that the SWCD can help pull that all together. Jack Bricker clarified with another question re: whether the land was purchased without a master plan? RESPONSE: Pretty much. He wants to suggest agencies to help them focus.

Todd Groh – (VDOT) – re: state cost share. Fiscal year – 98% of funding was actually spent. Close to highest percentage of actually spent, not just obligated. They are working on obligating the rest – total allocation = \$1.2 million approximately. Funds generated primarily by General Assembly and also from tax associated with logging. They're working with DGIF on the Quail Initiative. They are going to provide money to DOF for some on-ground projects for quail, i.e. prescribed burnings.

Last meeting, he mentioned DOF changes in organizations. Work units – senior area foresters, deputy regional foresters. All the SAFs are hired and in place. Work units are functioning differently – not through counties. It's an ongoing transition.

NRCS liaison stuff: he's been conducting field reviews of EQIP – reporting because these visits seem to be having a good educational impact. He hopes to come back with suggestions to help things run more smoothly.

Blair Krusz – (VA Agribusiness Council) - Katie Frazier is now President. They are closely monitoring Farm Bill. She is taking a group up to DC to see members of Congress; they are starting town hall meetings. On Friday, sponsoring a Senate candidate forum.

Greg Frye – (VSU/VCE) – A lot's going on. Aug 28. is scheduled as an Ag field day in Chesterfield Co. It will be a fun event. Jewel Hairston has been appointed as permanent Dean of School of Agriculture at VSU.

Sue Ellen Johnson - (PEC) – working on conservation and stuff with Farm Bill. Feedlots and nutrient management are current focus.

Aaron Siegel - (DMME) - new member; looking forward to contributing to group and welcomes suggestions.

Phillip Reed (VOF) – nothing new, plugging along with easements.

CLOSING: Jack gave his “gliding in on all four wheels” analogy again and stated that he is looking forward to next year. “What we’re seeing is that overall numbers will be a cutback, but that we will be able to manage.”

Wade expressed thanks to all for participation on the STC. “We are able to function better because of you.”

Wade Biddix – (NRCS) – adjourned meeting at 11:56. Next meeting is scheduled for September 25, 2012, at 10 a.m.

State Technical Committee
Agenda

July 24, 2012 - 10:00 a.m.
Richmond NRCS State Office
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Ste. 209

Welcome and Opening Remarks	NRCS - Bricker
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CREP)	FSA - Horsley DCR - Moore
Status of FY-12 Program Funds GRP and WRP FRPP EQIP, CBWI, CSP Organic, High Tunnel and Energy CIG	NRCS - Dunaway NRCS - Stone NRCS - Solomon NRCS - Wood NRCS - Biddix
FY-13 Farm Bill Program Offerings Local Work Groups - Input Compiled Summary of New Farm Bills (Handout) Proposed Changes for FY-13	NRCS - Biddix
Virginia Nutrient Management Standard - CPS 590	NRCS - Wentz
Agency Updates	All



Next Meeting -September 25, 2012

Proposed FY-13 Program Implementation Timeline

July 24, 2012

Training to Field and Area Staff – October, November or December JEDs

Easement Program Deadlines

- NHQ approves GARCs – October 1, 2012
- First Application Sign-up Period Ends – October 31, 2012
- First GRP Ranking Deadline – November 30, 2012
- Second Application Sign-up Period Ends – February 28, 2013

EQIP and Other Farm Bill Program Deadlines

Application and Ranking/Batching Cut-off Dates:

- First Period – January 18 with ranking by February 15, 2013
 - Exception = Forestry ranking due by January 31, 2013
- Second Period – February 28 with ranking by March 29, 2013

Obligation Deadlines

- Obligate at least 75% of available funds by April 1, 2013
- Obligate at least 90% of available funds by June 1, 2013
- Obligate 100% of available funds by July 1, 2013

CSP Deadlines

- NHQ will announce sign-up
- State will establish batching dates
- Obligation deadline is May 17, 2013

Special Initiatives

- New guidance provided to States by February 28, 2013
- Application Period is April 1 to May 31, 2013
- Batching Deadline is June 30, 2013
- Obligation Deadline is September 1, 2013

FY 2012 CIG APPLICATIONS - Full Preproposals

Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Purpose/Overview	Area(s) Affected	Total Project Funding	Federal Share	Years
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation	Virginia Wetlands Catalog	The catalog will be developed for known and predicated wetlands prioritized for multiple mitigation benefits (i.e. wetland, restoration, enhancement, preservation, and creation). The Catalog will be of particular value to VA NRCS staff, as an innovative tool for screening opportunities for wetland restoration, enhancement and preservation.	Statewide	\$97,781.00	\$48,890.00	2
Virginia No-Till Alliance	Innovative Cropping Systems using Diverse Cover Crops and Manure Injection	This project will demonstrate innovative approaches to building soil health through high diversity cover crop mixtures coupled with the added benefits of injected versus broadcast manure.	Augusta County, Shenandoah Valley Region	\$151,237.27	\$39,514.64	3
Hanover-Caroline Soil & Water Conservation District	Feasibility of Multispecies Cover Crops in Central Virginia Cropping Systems to Affect Water Quality	To improve the soil quality and reduce dependence on chemical methods of fertility and weed control. Documentation of changes in soil quality shall be utilized to demonstrate how the methods of tillage, planting, grazing, and residues affect the improvement in soil quality. Producers will be the decision makers for planting and cover crop termination methods, through conventional means or rolling cover crop, promoting innovation.	Carolina, Hanover, Lancaster, King George, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland Counties	\$185,156.00	\$50,700.00	3
Water Stewardship, Inc	Assessment, verification and monitoring of impacts on soil and water quality of extensive water quality BMP implementation in Muddy Creek Watershed, Rockingham County, VA	To identify and assess the short-term effectiveness of agricultural BMP's implemented recently on working farms and dairies and estimate the effects of these water quality BMP's on soil quality	Rockingham County	\$89,436.00	\$44,493.00	3
Center for Science, Economics and Environment	Evaluation of pollinator benefits from NRCS conservation practice standards.	Evaluation of pollinator benefits	Statewide	\$50,000.00	\$25,000.00	3
Virginia Tech	Managed Grazing for Improved Soil Health and Environmental Protection	To demonstrate how alternative types of grazing management affect soil health and nutrient loss in pastures.	Steeles Tavern, Va Blacksburg, VA	\$150,000.00	\$75,000.00	3
Total				\$723,610.27	\$283,597.64	

WRP :: Wetlands Reserve Program

1. \$791,080 is expected to be obligated out of the \$879,118 allocation (90%), for 203 acres.
Title searches and environmental database searches were completed and have been reviewed by staff. Ten pre-approval offers were made: 8 are proceeding, and one is pending. Agreements for Purchase of Conservation Easement (APCE) contracts are being sent out this month.
2. Acquisition is proceeding on 8 FY-11 (& prior) WRP easements totaling approx. 400 acres; closings are expected within FY-12. (One canceled due to unresolved title issues.)
3. Restoration was completed on 3 WRP sites this spring; WRPO design and implementation are underway on 4 other closed WRP easements, totaling 273 acres; plus one ten-year restoration agreement of 3.4 acres;
WRPO design is concurrently underway on the 9 easements in the acquisition stage.
4. FY-13 Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs) will be based on a contracted real estate appraiser's Review of the FY-12 Area-Wide Market Analysis fair market values for WRP and GRP.

GRP :: Grassland Reserve Program

1. \$282,350 is final allocation and expected obligation (93%+): Pre-approval offer was made and accepted for one new FY-12 GRP easement in Rockingham Co., using all FY-12 funds, plus additional funds requested in order to fund the full request of 71 acres; title search and environmental database search are underway. Two rentals are being funded totaling \$8,000 for 60 acres.
2. We closed FY-11 GRP permanent easement for 131 acres in Halifax Co. in July.
3. Acquisition is proceeding on the other FY-11 GRP easement, for 110 acres; closing is expected within FY-12.
4. FY-13 Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs) will be based on a contracted real estate appraiser's Review of the FY-12 Area-Wide Market Analysis fair market values for WRP and GRP.

Status of Program and Funds

1. Acquisition is proceeding on 4 open FRPP easements, all in Area 1.
2. We have closed 2 FRPP Easements since the last STC meeting for a total of 180 acres in Area 1.
3. FY-12 eligible applications so far total \$3.1 Million in Areas 1, 3, and 4. Will begin obligating funds in August for September 2 deadline.
4. Several more applications are expected within the next two weeks, potentially requesting \$1.7 million in FRPP funds in Areas 1, 2, and 4.
5. FRPP State Plan for FY-13 is complete; a copy is available at the front of the room please contact Jeremy Stone if you would like an electronic copy.
6. FRPP Easement Monitoring Plan for FY-13 has been drafted and provided to Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations.

Jeremy P. Stone, Easement Specialist, FRPP State Program Manager, (804) 287-1666, Jeremy.Stone@va.usda.gov

CBWI Finds Status 7-23-2012

Account Name	Allocated	Contracts and Approved Applications	Pre-Approved Applications	Funds Remaining	Backlog
Virginia	\$12,570,462.68	\$11,597,657.22			
Sub Funds	\$12,570,462.68	\$11,078,471.93			
CBWI - Animals in Confinement	\$5,303,626.70	\$4,923,896.40	\$313,843.00	\$65,887.30	\$305,354.00
CBWI - Cropland	\$2,601,914.80	\$2,528,636.80	\$70,000.00	\$3,278.00	\$0.00
Forestry CCPI	\$240,961.00	\$216,870.00	\$9,700.00	\$14,391.00	\$0.00
Forestry CCPI Forest Management Plan	\$3,500.00	\$2,925.00	\$0.00	\$575.00	\$0.00
CBWI - Limited Resource Farmer	\$103,949.00	\$103,949.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CBWI - New Farmer	\$1,012,802.60	\$890,372.60	\$108,720.00	\$13,710.00	\$0.00
CBWI - Pasture	\$2,073,482.03	\$1,835,271.13	\$232,374.00	\$5,836.90	\$10,673.00
CBWI - Socially Disadvantaged	\$75,207.00	\$75,206.00	\$0.00	\$1.00	\$0.00
Smith Creek Showcase Watershed-Cropland	\$147,460.20	\$77,828.00	\$46,900.00	\$22,732.20	\$0.00
Smith Creek Showcase Watershed-Pasture	\$107,465.00	\$104,825.00	\$0.00	\$2,640.00	\$0.00
Shennendoah Valley RCD_CCPI	\$372,639.00	\$318,692.00	\$10,200.00	\$43,747.00	\$0.00
Trout Unlimited	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FY12 CBWI Reserve	\$527,455.35	\$519,185.29	\$0.00	\$8,270.06	\$0.00
			Available Funds	\$122,355.46	
			CCPI Funds	\$58,713.00	
			Grand Total	\$181,068.46	

EQIP Funds Status 7_23_2012

Account Name	Allocated	Contracts and Approved Applications Approval	Pre-Approved Applications	Funds Remaining	Backlog
Virginia	\$10,988,919.97	\$10,377,005.06			
Sub Funds	\$10,978,919.97	\$10,320,973.76			
FY12 Certified Organic	\$67,084.00	\$60,983.00	\$0.00	\$6,101.00	\$0.00
FY12 Organic Transition	\$263,012.40	\$216,925.00	\$10,675.00	\$35,412.40	\$0.00
FY12 On-Farm Energy	\$130,907.00	\$130,907.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
FY12 Seasonal High Tunnels	\$542,754.00	\$541,699.40	\$0.00	\$1,054.60	\$0.00
Aquaculture	\$60,000.00	\$59,950.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Livestock in Confinement - Christiansburg	\$2,208,149.20	\$2,208,149.12	\$0.00	\$0.08	\$444,789.00
Livestock in Confinement - Farmville	\$925,564.00	\$925,564.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$95,000.00
Livestock in Confinement - Harrisonburg	\$246,852.00	\$246,852.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$290,370.00
Livestock in Confinement - Smithfield	\$523,373.00	\$522,453.00	\$0.00	\$920.00	\$0.00
CGPI-Ches Bay Foundation	\$170,042.00	\$133,367.60	\$0.00	\$36,674.40	\$0.00
Cropland - Christiansburg	\$146,610.00	\$146,610.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cropland - Farmville	\$75,728.00	\$75,728.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cropland - Harrisonburg	\$164,583.00	\$164,583.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cropland - Smithfield	\$732,708.00	\$726,189.00	\$0.00	\$6,519.00	\$0.00
CAP 130 Drainage Water Management	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CGPI-Fish America	\$925,226.00	\$890,386.00	\$34,840.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 106 Forest Mgmt Plan	\$82,620.00	\$82,620.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 124 Energy Audit Field Operations	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Forestry - Statewide	\$507,530.43	\$492,880.43	\$11,700.00	\$2,950.00	\$390,689.00
CAP 122 Energy Audit Headquarters	\$24,800.00	\$23,290.00	\$1,510.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 114 Intergrated Pest Mgmt	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Long Leaf Pine Initiative	\$200,000.00	\$7,623.00	\$84,075.50	\$108,301.50	\$0.00
Limited Resource Farmer	\$107,541.10	\$107,541.10	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 102 CNMP Development	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

New Farm Bill Program Changes
July 24, 2012

Overall cuts in Conservation Title – House cuts \$6.06 billion; Senate cuts \$6.37 billion

CSP Changes

- Senate Farm Bill
 - Cuts enrollment acres to 10.3 million acres from 12.8 million acres
 - Limited to land in production at least 4 out of last 6 years from 10/1/12
 - Stewardship Threshold – Meet at least 2 priority resource concerns and meet or exceed 1 additional one by end of contract.
 - Requires prorating of payments to equal annual payments.
- House Ag. Committee
 - Cuts enrollment acres to 9 million acres from 12.8 million acres
 - Allows producers to enroll expiring CRP acres into CSP during final year of contract.

EQIP Changes

- Senate Farm Bill
 - Consolidates EQIP and WHIP with 10% cut with eligibility based on EQIP rules
 - Eliminates requirement for contract to stay in place 1 year after last practice implemented.
 - Repayment of advance payments required if not used in 90 days.
 - Requires a minimum of 5% of funds for payments targeted to wildlife benefits.
 - Funding for Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers set at \$50M
- House Ag. Committee
 - Consolidates EQIP and WHIP with 3% overall cut
 - Sets a maximum of 5% of total funding for wildlife.
 - Payment limitation raised from \$300,000 to \$450,000
 - Funding for Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers set at \$25M

Easement Program Changes in Senate Farm Bill

- Consolidates FRPP, GRP, and WRP into Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Ag land components = FRPP and GRP
- Wetland easement component = WRP
- GRP rental contracts going to CRP
- WRP - no longer acreage authorized.
- WRP ownership requirement prior to enrollment from 7 years to 2 years.
- Federal, state or locally owned land is ineligible
- At least 40% of ACEP must go to ag. land protection easements.

Farm Bill Program Changes (Cont.)

Regional Conservation Partnerships Program

- Senate Farm Bill
 - Consolidates partner programs such as CCPI, AWEP and CBWI
 - Competitive process to select partnerships
 - Funding Allocation set at \$100M annually
 - 40% to National projects
 - 25% to State projects
 - 35% to Critical Conservation Areas
 - Secretary of Ag. can designate up to 6 geographic areas.
 - House Ag Comm. Bill is substantially the same as the Senate Bill

Miscellaneous

- Senate Farm Bill
 - Program funds remain available until expended, but unobligated balances offset the level of funds available in subsequent years.
 - State Technical Committee standard operating procedures will be reviewed and updated by the Sec. of Ag.
 - Provides \$85M annually to Dam Rehab.
 - Veterans – establishes them as a special group like socially disadvantages and new farmers.
 - Provides \$800M for Energy Title Programs.
- House Ag. Committee
 - Provides no money for Energy Title Programs

Proposed Revisions to Virginia NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Standard

*State Technical Committee Meeting
July 24, 2012*

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A. Overview

- 1. New NHQ 590 finalized Jan. 2012**
 - Extensive debate, many key changes
 - Jan. 2013 deadline for state implementation
- 2. In VA, NRCS consistency w DCR program still key**
- 3. Bottom line:**
 - New NHQ 590 similar to current VA state system
 - Biggest impacts:
 1. More emphasis on consistency between "CP" and "NMP"
 2. Soil loss planned to "T"

B. Where 590 fits in VA NRCS priorities

1. Increasing emphasis...

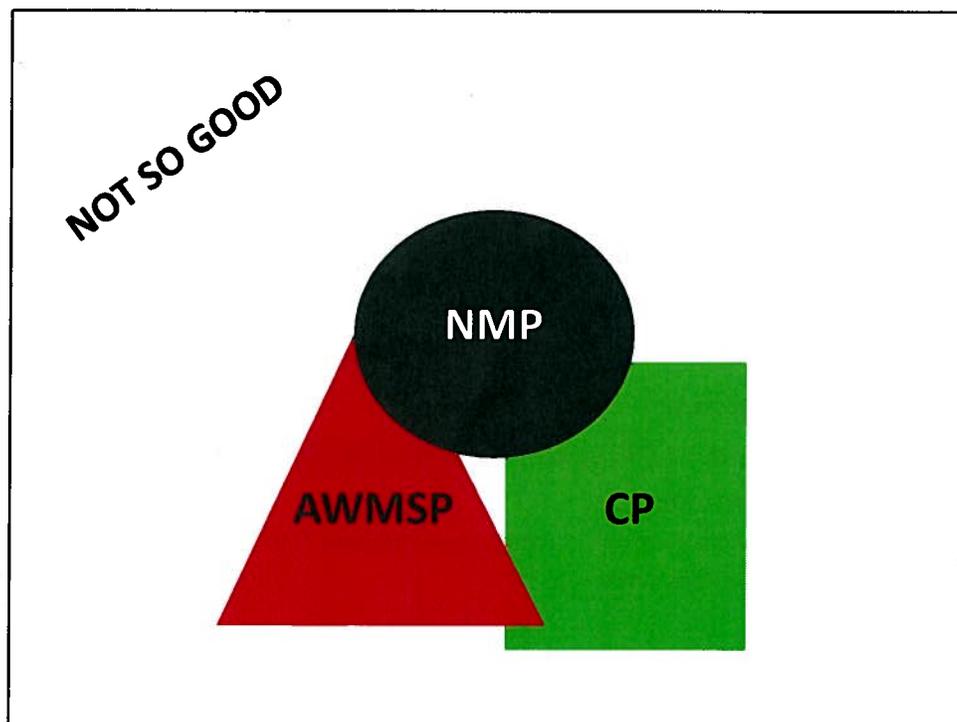
- But still just one part of our whole-farm focus.

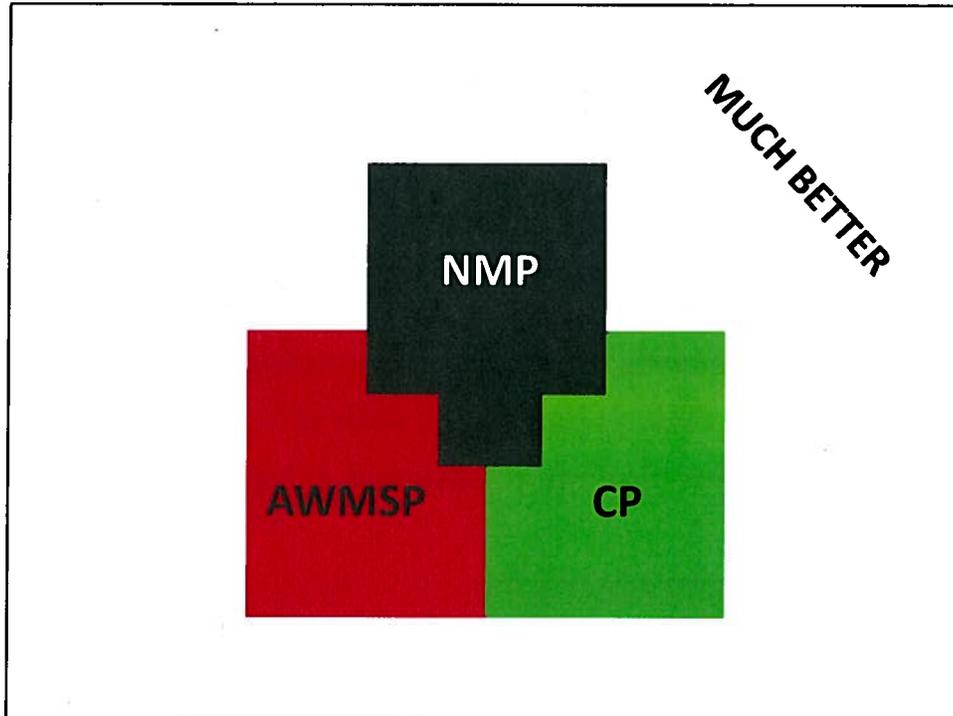
2. **IMPLEMENTATION REQUIRED!**

- Getting your NMP is not enough...
- Must carry out key NMP recommendations!

3. The client's "plans" should fit together:

- Conservation Plan (CP)
- Animal Waste Management System Plan (AWMSP)
- Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)





C. Terminology & Organization

NRCS Term	Meaning	Proposed VA 590 Strategy
"Purposes"	Client's reason(s) for implementing the conservation practice.	All purposes will trigger same criteria . Minimum needed to achieve 590 will be same for every client.
"Criteria"	Minimum activities required to achieve the practice and "meet" the Standard.	Based on and no more stringent than minimum ("shall") elements in VA state NMP regulations (with respect to nutrient rates). Proposed catchphrases: "Basic 590"; "core" NMP elements.
"Considerations"	Recommendations for going beyond the minimum to achieve higher levels of performance	Includes a wide range of <i>optional</i> activities for further enhancing rate, timing, placement, form of nutrients applications. Proposed catchphrase: "Enhanced 590."

D. What is “Basic 590”?

1. Get NMP prepped by DCR-certified writer.
2. Implement six “core” elements of the NMP.
3. Keep records to show you are doing so.
4. Ensure NMP is consistent with CP.
5. Carry out planned rotations & tillage (to “T”).

Anything beyond the above is “Enhanced”

Core NMP Element 1: RATES

- Follow rate recommendations in NMP for:
 - Nitrogen (N)
 - Phosphorous (P)
 - Potassium (K)
 - Lime

This may include P-based limits on manure/biosolids!

Core NMP Element 2: TIMING

- A. Do not spread **N fertilizer** in absence of actively growing crop or more than 30 days ahead of planting.
- B. Follow NMP's **manure/biosolids spreading schedule** (*various restrictions on spreading in absence of actively growing crops or more than 30 days ahead of planting*).
- C. Follow NMP restrictions on nutrient applications to **frozen or snow-covered ground** (*in particular, never spread fertilizer or liquid manures on frozen or snow-covered ground*).

“Core” NMP Element 3: More restrictive TIMING on environmentally sensitive sites

On any fields listed as **environmentally sensitive**, follow more intensive NMP guidelines on timing of nutrient applications.

- Split N fertilizer between at least two applications to row crops and small grains
- Follow more restrictive guidelines on manure/biosolids spreading (*never more than 30 days before planting or in absence of growing crop*)

Core NMP Element 4: PLACEMENT

- No manure/biosolids in designated setbacks areas near wells, springs, surface water, etc.

Core NMP Element 5: TESTING

- Maintain up-to-date soil and manure/biosolids tests as required by NMP.

“Core” NMP Element 6: UPDATING

- Update NMP if animal numbers increase or other significant livestock or cropping systems changes occur.

E. What is “ENHANCED 590”?

- **Enhanced Rate:**
 - In-season testing (PSNT)
 - Better yield records
 - Variable rate data
 - Variable rate application
- **Enhanced Placement:**
 - Banding
 - Injection
 - Variable rate application
- **Enhanced Timing:**
 - Closer to planting
 - Splitting (non-ESS fields)
- **Enhanced Form:**
 - Slow-/Controlled-release
 - Additives (urease, etc.)
- **Other Enhancements:**
 - N-scavenging crops in rotation
 - N-supplying crops in rotation
 - Buffers
 - Etc.

F. Current VA 590 \$ Assistance

- **Basic 590**

1. Get NMP prepped by DCR-certified NMP writer
 - **“Level A” (no payment)**
2. Implement six “core” elements of NMP
3. Keep records to show you are doing so
4. Plus confer with NMP writer annually
 - **“Level B” – lower payment**

- **Enhanced 590**

- Do basic 590 above
- Plus implement two enhanced techniques per year
 - **“Level C” – higher payment**

What will change:

- Additional emphasis on NMP matching up with CP.
- Soil loss to “T”

G. Other Potential Discussion Topics

1. **NRCS NHQ Approach to P Management**
 - Soil-test vs. Site-specific Risk Assessment
2. **Why not simply say: “follow your NMP”?**
3. **Your questions / comments**

FY-13 Proposed Program Changes
July 24, 2012

Easements

Subcommittee will be formed to look at easement issues – Jeremy and Diane will co-chair the group.

1. For GRP, develop a pre-screening worksheet to reduce paperwork/effort on applications that have low likelihood of funding.

Farm Bill Handbook

- Develop a complete new FY-13 Handbook (not just updates to FY-12 edition)
- Control of land form not permitted; will be removed
- Include section for Special Initiatives like Longleaf Pine
- Don't include "draft" payment schedules in Handbook

Forestry Resource Concern

Subcommittee will be formed to consider forestry changes – Todd Groh to chair the group.

- Trees per acre, LLP, and Prescribed Burning
 - Look at contract limits,
- Separate into establishment & management pools
- CPS 612 – Establish criteria for 612 on hardwood cutover site
- CPS 490 - 1st year vs CPS 666 in year 2 & 3
- Look at LLPI funding pool in EQIP (not wait for Special Initiative)

Special Initiatives

Subcommittee will be formed to look at Special Initiatives – Ron Wood to chair the group.

- Organic Initiative
 - Provide options to pressure treated wood
 - Have certifier review practice schedule before granting eligibility to applicant
 - organic tobacco – offer drip irrigation
- High Tunnel
 - Continue to allow multiple hoop houses w/in sq. ft. (e.g. cut flowers in 1; veggies in 2)
- Aquaculture is good as is
- Keep wildlife with 3 types of projects (about 5% of EQIP funds)
 - Upland Habitat creation,
 - Aquatic Habitat creation
 - Maintenance of existing habitat
- Specialty Crops
 - Decision - don't offer separate fund pool
 - Deer fencing (NOT allowed by NRCS policy)
 - Review practices

Risk Assessments for Heavy Use Areas and Poultry Pads

Subcommittee will be formed to look at these assessments – Chad Wentz to chair the group.

- Purpose is to provide a rationale and basis for saying “no” to some applicants
- 300’ criteria questionable > 300’ excludes w/o consideration of other resource concerns
 - Consider other criteria to allow this (e.g. DEQ says to clean up)
 - Add question: channelized flow to a stream (ephemeral, etc.)
 - Add date and signature
- Change CPS 561 to see improvement (risk assessment tool) existing vs. future like wildlife

Water Feature Data (“Worm Map”)

- Decision – utilize GIS layer to determine distances to water features – worm map not needed.

Policy Issues

Subcommittee will be formed to look at policy issues, practices, and ranking tools – Dan Solomon to chair the group.

- VCE does not recommend “soft” IPM for fruit trees in FY-13
- Is STC ok w/ keeping \$ in contracts (e.g. 338 with LLP 612 & burn is 3-5 yrs out) so no financial activity for several years on open obligations?
- Irrigation needs (policy requires history 2 out of last 5 years)
- Still need Access Control clarification at Program rollout
- At Program rollout, provide instruction on participant ag eligibility through forest land/asset for EQIP

Practices

- Irrigation – CAP plan required for participation similar to energy improvement practices (H₂O Quality, energy, etc.)
 - Micro irrigation for organics
- Need special instruction/review @ Program rollout of CPSs w/ scenarios that have forgone income built in (examples) and changes to how we’ve been planning/contracting
- Make collection from roof runoff practices available for all landuses; Add to all fund pools, not just livestock in confinement
- Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs)
 - Add grazing management plan
 - Add fish and wildlife management plan

Ranking Tools

- Discontinue using the Water Quality Vulnerability Map
 - Not consistent or not available for all counties
- Remove points for CPS 528 from State Questions: Can’t get contract completed within the 3 yrs.
- Emphasize @ Program rollout that planners should warn participants to “not agree” to getting contract done in 3 years (Nat’l Question) when they probably cannot if they agree; we expect adherence to 3 yr.
- Increase the negative effect for participants with previously terminated contracts (can’t be ranked high priority with terminated contracts)

Prescribed Grazing

Subcommittee will be formed to look at this practice – J.B. Daniel will chair the group.

- Lower caps – look at \$10K/yr for \$30k total; \$90k too high for 3 years
- Grazing plans must be done first prior to infrastructure
- Record keeping required
- Show improvement in Pasture Conditioning Score

Respond to Local Work Group Comments

Subcommittee will be formed to look at all LWG comments - Wade Biddix will chair the group.

- Address concerns & develop responses

Joint Cost-Share Project With FSA and DCR for 100%

Details are currently being developed from a committee made up of representatives from FSA, DCR, NRCS, SWCDs and VASWCD – Mike Foreman, DCR, is chair.

- Structural practices for Pasture, Cropland, and Headquarters
 - Use CREP to prioritize efforts
 - First NRCS payment makes payment based on payment schedule
 - State cost-share makes up difference based on actual costs
 - CREP not involved
 - Get participant to do 35' buffer
 - NRCS contract & State cost-share makes up difference based on actual costs

<p>EASEMENTS / WETLANDS Co-Chairs: Jeremy Stone & Diane Dunaway Galon Hall Dave Byrd Brian Wagner Phillip Reed Kevin Schmidt Sarah Richardson Jon Roller</p>	<p>FORESTRY/WILDLIFE RESOURCE CONCERNS Co-Chairs: Todd Groh and Galon Hall Charlie Ivins Jack O’Connell Yamika Bennett Dan Solomon Scott Klopfer Dave Byrd Greg Frey Seth Coffman Marc Puckett Daniel Belin</p>
<p>SPECIAL INITIATIVES Chair: Ron Wood Mat Lyons Galon Hall Brian Wagner Patricia Stansbury Sue Ellen Johnson Mark Dubin Mark Schonbeck Tim Sexton Seth Coffman Jon Roller Karen Hudson/Thomas Murray</p>	<p>RISK ASSESSMENTS/HEAVY USE AREAS – TECHNICAL Chair: Chad Wentz Mat Lyons Mike Liskey Mark Dubin Betsy Bowles Gary Moore</p>
<p>POLICY ISSUES Chair: Dan Solomon Patrick Vincent Stuart Bayne Bill Widner Ron Wood Chuck Cummings Greg Frey Mark Dubin Gary Moore Tim Sexton</p>	<p>PRESCRIBED GRAZING Chair: JB Daniel Delbert Southall Charlie Ivins Bill Keith Bill Patterson Mark Jessee Sue Ellen Johnson Mark Dubin Betsy Bowles Larry Seamans Chuck Cummings</p>
<p>RESPOND TO LWG COMMENTS Chair: Wade Biddix Patrick Vincent Ron Wood Betsy Bowles</p>	