

STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING



Meeting Called By: Rick Ellsmore, STC

Type of Meeting: State Technical Committee

Facilitator: Rick Ellsmore, STC

Note Taker: Holly Boyson

Attendees:

Duane Hyde (TNC), Dave Welsch (USFS), Grant Mecozzi (NWTF), Carl Bartlett (NHFB), Roger Monthey (USFS), Darrel Covell (UNH Cooperative Extension), Stephen Walker (NH Office of Energy and Planning), Eric Williams (NH DES), Tim Floury (UNH Cooperative Extension), Kim McCracken (NRCS), Tom Thomson (Thomson Tree Farm), Eric Derleth (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Ted Kendziora (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Vickie Smith (NHDAMF), Dean Bascom (NRCS), Pam Gilbert (Grafton County Conservation District), Lisa Morin (Belknap County Conservation District), Steve Fuller (NHFG), Linda Grames (FSA), Jay Phinizy (FSA), Rick Demark (North Country RC&D), Amanda Costello (Cheshire County Conservation District), Rick Ellsmore (NRCS), Betty Anderson (NRCS), and Holly Boyson (NRCS).

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: Partner Reports

Presenter: Rick Ellsmore, STC NH NRCS

Discussion:

Tom Thompson- Thomson Tree Farm is conducting a Tree Farm Field Day working on tree clean ups

Duane Hyde – The Nature Conservancy:

- Working on Ossipee Pine Barrens Restoration; they are getting ready to have a controlled burn today (9/21/2010).

Grant Mecozzi – NWTF: Has been doing habitat assessments. They are also working with NRCS on five outreach events.

Upcoming Workshops:

- Oct. 7th will be having their first Landowner Workshop in Cheshire County.
- Oct. 19th will be the second Landowner Workshop in Grafton County, from 3-6pm.

Eric Derleth – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

- Reported that the Homestead Woolen Mills Dam has been removed. Construction will be ongoing for the next 2-3 weeks.
- They have also been working with NH Fish and Game on the NE Cottontail Initiative. They are looking for more partnerships range wide.

Ted Kendziora – Ted is from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, he is a New England Cottontail Biologist working in the Concord Office.

Vickie Smith – NHDAMF:

- The Big “E” is this Friday.
- The Commissioners’ have been busy closing out the budget.

Dean Bascom- NRCS:

- Winding down this fiscal year.
- Getting practices done on contracts.
- Dean has been working on moving office to Orford.

Pam Gilbert – Grafton County Conservation District:

- Having its “Fall Tour” Friday, Oct. 15th. The tour will be held in the Orford-Piermont area. (They will be looking at storm damage)

Lisa Morin – Belknap County Conservation District:

- Held a Hayfield Restoration Meeting in August. This was an informational session and was really well attended.
- The budget has been a priority.

Upcoming Dates:

- Oct. 1 - NHACD is sponsoring a Soil Judging Contest.
- Oct. 12 - Current Use Workshop (Working with the Cooperative Extension)
- Oct. 20 - Stream Crossing Rules hosted by BCCD. The presenters include: UNH Cooperative Extension, DES, and NRCS.
- Nov. 10 - Resources for Landowner Workshop, hosted by: The Conservation District and UNH Cooperative Extension, and Presenters include NH DES.

Dave Welsch – U.S. Forest Service is getting a new ranger, Terri Miller, from Saco Mountain.

Roger Monthey – The U.S. Forest Service is working on:

- A “Forest Stewardship Project”; Roger handed out a pamphlet to show what their state partners are doing.
- A draft of the “Landscape Scale Document” is coming out. Please submit comments to Roger by Oct. 1st.

Darrel Covell – UNH Cooperative Extension:

- Working on outreach for “Good Forestry” in the Granite State.
- Also working with the U.S. Forest Service on monitoring the Asian Longhorn beetle.
- The Extension just received a grant to conduct a “Tree Filter Assessment”; this will measure the water flow in urban areas.
- The Extension is also in a re-hiring process for a Forester in Coos County, they are hoping to find someone within next couple weeks.

Stephen Walker - NH Office of Energy and Planning:

Lately Conservation Stewardship and Monitoring has been presenting new challenges. Land protected between 1987 and 1991 is in the stewardship phase. He is focused on the challenges of conservation easement monitoring.

Eric Williams – DES:

- Holding the second Watershed Roundtable at Pease AFB Oct. 7. If interested let him know, there is no charge.
- Legislature created a Storm Water Bill because it has become an infrastructure problem. New recommendations should be coming out this November.

- Received 22 applicants for Grants.

Tim Fleury-The UNH Cooperative Extension:

- “Saving Special Places” will be April 9th.
- “Roads and Trails On Your Woodlot” Workshops are starting in November in Boscawen (See Website)

Jay Phinizy – FSA:

- Oct. 13 holding a “Bio-Fuel Strategic Session” in Campton. This meeting will be held in the new U.S. Forest Service building from 9:30am - 12pm.
- There is a new conservation loan program for farmers; FSA will be working in conjunction with NRCS.
- The Conservation Reserve Program had no applicants from NH.

Steve fuller – NH Fish and Game has been working with five other states to develop initiatives to preserve NE Cottontail rabbits.

Amanda Costello – Cheshire County Conservation District upcoming dates:

- Oct. 6th CCCD will be holding a listening session with farmers on infrastructure needs.
- Nov. 3rd Farm and Garden Education in Schools, held at the Keene Public Library 6:30pm.
- Nov 16th Workshop on energy efficiency (All day long) at the Stonewall Farm in Keene.
- Installing the 7th and final rain garden in Keene, this week.
- Has been working with other counties on future plans for the County Farm.

Carl Bartlett - Farm Bureau had a picnic at Canterbury Farm, it was very successful.

John Hodsdon – Belknap County Conservation District had nothing else to report.

Agenda Item: State Conservationist Report

Presenter: Rick Ellsmore

Discussion:

The role of State Technical Committee (STC) is to provide recommendations to NRCS and the State Conservationist. These recommendations include how Program and Conservation Practices can be improved to best serve NH.

Timelines:

Set up an Annual Timeline for maximum participation.

- Next meeting will be **Jan 12, in the Concord area.**
- **There will be 3 STC meetings per year.**
- The meetings will always be from 9am-12pm in the Concord area.

Timelines for **Sub-Committee’s** also need to be determined:

NRCS is currently tracking 3 Sub-Committees:

- 1.) Agriculture
- 2.) Forestry and Wildlife
- 3.) Easement

Sub-Committee’s need to start providing reports on their recommendations. *Sub-Committee members do not have to be STC members.*

Targeting: Anyone can attend STC meetings; they are always open to the public. The current goal is to broaden our membership. We would like to have partnerships with some people from the following groups:

- Easements
- Organics
- Energy
- Small Farmer
- Forestry and Wildlife, etc.

Local Work Groups: Kim McCracken is in charge of NRCS’s Ranking Sheets and Payment Schedules.

- Counties will start to see County Allocations again, particularly for EQIP.
- The State Technical Committee needs to take a look at the Rankings and let NRCS know what they want at the County level.
- Local Work Group Members will be able to look at the breakdown of allocations and decide where the money should be spent.
- Kim needs input from Local Workgroups no later than **Oct. 1, 2011**, for the 2012 Program Year.

Initiatives:

- 1.) Something New: The 3 year pilot Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative has been very successful in NH, kudos on outreach.
 - A Seasonal High Tunnel is a “hoop house” without heating, electricity, or mechanical utilities.
 - It prolongs the growing season.
 - We monitor soil, pests, and other factors that affect crop growth.
 - We want to rely more on NH for food sustainability.
 - NRCS and the International Institute of New Hampshire just installed Seasonal High Tunnels in Manchester.
 - We are looking to put together more demonstrations of the High Tunnels, two possible locations are: Schools in Carroll and Coos County.

- 2.) “Random Acts of Conservation” - Kim McCracken is putting together a statewide resource list of inventory to find out what we are doing with our conservation dollars. This will help prioritize our projects in NH. We would like to target initiatives, rather than random conservation projects in order to make a greater impact with the funding we have available.
 - NE Cottontail habitat.
 - Another is Upper Ammonoosuc and Israel River Watersheds, want to connect these wildlife corridors (White Mtn National Forest lands).
 - Quabbin to Cardigan (Q2C), one of the largest un-fragmented corridors east of the Mississippi, stretches into MA from NH. The Q2C’s easement portion is meant to protect the land, now working towards conservation practices.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Date
✓ <i>Timelines for STCM</i>	<i>State Technical Committee</i>	<i>Next STCM 1/12/2010</i>
✓ <i>Timelines for Sub-Committees</i>	<i>Sub-Committee Member’s</i>	<i>As soon as possible</i>
✓ <i>Send out Initiative Maps to members</i>	<i>Holly Boyson</i>	<i>9/24/2010</i>
✓ <i>Review State Technical Committee Partner Handout list (Email Rick with suggestions)</i>	<i>State Technical Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

Agenda Item: Technology Report

Presenter: Kim McCracken

Initiatives 2010: Some of these initiatives are practices and some are considered more regional efforts.

Below are some examples:

High Tunnels(EQIP, AMA), Native pollinator habitat (EQIP, WHIP, AMA), Nutrient management – Soil Health (EQIP, AMA), Keeping Forest as Forest (WHIP), Energy/Air Quality (EQIP) in the future will have an farm energy resource concern, Conservation Activity Plan (EQIP) including: Ag energy, CNMP, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Grazing, IPM, transition to organic.

Agreements 2010:

1. Seasonal High Tunnel
2. NE Cottontail
3. Eastern Brook Trout (Carroll County)
4. Soil Health – Tests are sent to Cornell and Penn State, there are some differences and leading to questions of which test is best for NH.
5. Coastal Invasive - EMI Technology (Working with folks at the Jackson Lab).
6. Early Succession Habitat – NWTF (Grant – National wild turkey found.)
7. Grazing outreach and education agreement with the N. Country RC&D office (Granite State Grazers).

Grants 2010:

1. Conservation Innovation Grants:
2. Water:
 - Water Quantity – Greenhouse irrigation demo project
 - Water Quality – Nitrogen utilization w/ oysters and seaweed
3. Soil Quality – No till
4. Future Plan – Have recipients share results

Initiatives 2011:

- NE Cottontail
- Quabbin to Cardigan
- Upper Ammonoosuc to Israel River Watersheds

2011 Practices and Ranking:

There are a few new changes for 2011.

1. Ranking: Developed questions for special initiatives.
2. Practices: New rates for high tunnels and greenhouses. To aid people more than in the past.
3. IPM – Number of new standards, will have a new name, but same practices.
4. Mulching – New biodegradable plastic mulch
5. Deep tillage – measured compaction, or Cornell recommended, by Soil Health Test
6. Prescribed Grazing and CNMP – Payment based on combo of AU and AC
7. Prescribed burning and terraces taken off the books this year,
8. Windbreak establishment using (Tree and shrub planting)

Preparing for 2012

1. NRCS has to select the least cost alternatives to solve the problems.

2. NRCS has to focus on resource concerns. Make sure people are clear on what we do and why we do it.
3. Considered maximum amounts (Kim is mentioning today, will need more discussion in the future):
 - Access roads – limits?
 - Fence – not for boundary fencing, with limits
 - Forest trails and landings – Now we put in forest trails, but, with limits
 - Pond – livestock water, economical/environmentally friendly?
 - Stream crossings – demand for bridges (good for fish, but \$\$\$ and time)
 - Well – Flat rate/ Hydro-fracturing (not a guarantee)

State Resource Assessment:

Target Date is JULY

Action Items:	Person Responsible:	Date:
✓ <i>Kim will forward information On Certification Requirements for Becoming a Registered TSP</i>	<i>Kim McCracken</i>	<i>As soon as possible</i>
✓ <i>Kim will forward information to Pam Gilbert regarding NH Forest Plans, For Pam's local work group.</i>	<i>Kim McCracken</i>	<i>As soon as possible</i>
✓ <i>Betty will send out a link for Success Stories</i>	<i>Betty Anderson</i>	<i>As soon as possible</i>
✓ <i>Rick will discuss DES Permitting For Access Roads with Carol Drungil, NRCS State Engineer</i>	<i>Rick Ellsmore</i>	<i>As soon as possible</i>

Agenda Item: Sub-Committee Reports

Rick Ellsmore:

- Historic places – Two weeks from the ranking
- Sugar-bush is a concern

Kim McCracken:

Gave updates on Easement and Agriculture Committees.

Eric Williams - Annual deadline for NRCS Program sign ups is on Oct 29. Nutrient Soil Tests better communication to present results to farmer. Actual practices for nutrient management.

Grant Meccozi – Discussed developing ranking criteria, using a GIS database. He also discussed Quabbin to Cardigan initiative to match tracts.

Agenda Item: Success Stories

1. Easements – Hauser Property
2. Seasonal High Tunnels -

3. Raspberry Farm in Hampton Falls –
 4. Installed a bridge for the brook trout crossing –
 - RC&D works extensively with bridge manufacturers; Rick Demark suggested getting these companies involved for cost efficiency.
 5. Stonehouse Pond in Barrington, just closed in June
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Closing Comments:

Tom Thomson asked about Access Road requirements.

Steve Fuller was happy to hear about moving away from "Random Acts of Conservation" to targeted initiatives and hopes it will continue. He said we need to target our efforts and make sure they get there.

Rick Demark added that, with the level of federal investment, it only makes sense that a business plan is a requirement.

Rick Ellsmore reminded STC about next meeting. It will be in the Concord area Jan 12, 2011.

Rick Ellsmore adjourned the meeting at 11:35am.