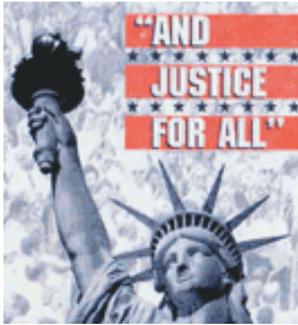


Idaho Civil Rights Newsletter



State Conservationist Message

Greeting Idaho Conservationists! It is my pleasure to kick off this edition of the Idaho Civil Rights Newsletter. As there hasn't been a newsletter in a long time, I'm glad to see this effort continue as it is a good platform to keep us all informed about equal opportunities, civil rights, special emphasis programs and cultural events. During the past 2 years, your Idaho Civil Rights Committee initiated 2 additional noteworthy efforts: the Idaho Mentoring Program and the Idaho Civil Rights Awards. These awards recognize Workforce Diversity efforts that promote program delivery, Excellence in Supervision, and Together is Better award.



Special Emphasis Observances:

January 17th-Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

February-Black History Month

March-Women's History Month

May-Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

September 15th-October 15th-Hispanic Heritage Month

October-Disability Awareness Month

November-Veterans Awareness Month/American Indian Heritage Month

November 11th-Veteran's Day

A special note of thanks goes out to Sue Ellis and Dee Carlson for recognizing the need and value of mentoring. Our workforce is rapidly changing and the need for mentors is a key component to guide our younger employees through their careers and a tool to retain the very best and brightest conservationists.

The 2010 Civil Rights Awards winners are highlighted in this issue. Their efforts embody the values that make NRCS the employer of choice.

Congratulations!

Together IS better!

Jeff

Idaho Civil Rights Committee Members

- Steve Keller, Asian/Pacific Islander Emphasis Program Manager, Committee Chair
- Darin Vrem, American Indian Emphasis Program Manager, Committee Vice-Chair
- Deb Nace, Black Emphasis Program Manager, Committee Secretary
- Ryan Clayton, Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager
- Howard Johnson, Disability Emphasis Program Manager
- Brian Henneman, Veterans Emphasis Program Manager
- Julie Phelps, Federal Women's Program Manager
- Sue Ellis, Civil Rights Advisor

Representatives

- Frank Gariglio, Division I and II Representative
- Dinah Reaney, Division III and IV Representative
- Lindsay Markegard, Division V and VI Representative
- Mary Goode, State office Representative

Are you interested in serving as a member of the civil rights committee? Division I and II Representative, Division III and IV Representative, and Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager will be coming open the end of fiscal year 2011. Watch for an announcement with more information about these positions coming this summer.

2010 Civil Rights Awards

Every Year, the Civil rights committee offers Civil Right awards for outstanding employees promoting civil rights in Idaho. In 2010, there were three categories offered. They were: Idaho Civil Rights Workforce Diversity award, Idaho NRCS Excellence in Supervision Award, and the Together is better award.

There were several good nominations submitted to the committee. All were unique and were worthy of recognition.



Treg Owings, Richard Spencer, Roger Amerman, Amber Brocke receiving the “Together Is Better Award” for their participation on the committee in Division II to develop and distribute the outreach poster promoting NRCS practices and programs.



Richard Spencer receiving “Workforce diversity/Civil Rights Program Delivery Award” for his leadership on the Division II Outreach Committee.



Carla Rebernak receiving the “Excellence in Supervision Award” for her efforts in providing accommodations at the workplace and supporting a flexible work schedule for a new nursing mom.



Larry Mickelson receiving the “Excellence in Supervision Award” for his exemplary management style and NRCS program delivery.

SCEP Program

So, you hear about the SCEP announcements and see the students roll into the office in May and leave in August. Wonder what the position is about and what those students do? Here it is.

SCEP stands for the Student Career Experience Program. Many of us more seasoned staff members may remember, or started with the agency, as student trainees. This is a similar program with a more descriptive name. Selected students are allowed to work in the same discipline as they are studying in college. Typically, students will be placed in a field office during their summer break. Field offices are chosen due to the diverse workload, experienced staff and ability to provide a positive experience for the student. This is a GREAT opportunity for the agency and the student to see if future employment is mutually beneficial.

Students benefit from the work experience within their field of study with real world application. They are also usually allowed to see the many different positions available within our agency, shown through brief cross training experiences. They see our typical work products and all the related documentation, planning, design and installation work. Minimal manual reading is encouraged.. This allows the students to see if our agency is the type of workplace in which they would like to eventually start their career.

The agency benefits by determining if the student is a good fit for the team. During summer work periods, the student is placed in different field offices throughout the state. Work locations are determined in the early spring, based on agency needs and availability. Training is provided, with evaluations by the student and the supervisor.

The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) provides high-potential college students valuable work experience in their chosen field of study as well as full-time employment opportunities upon graduation. The student are required to carry a minimum of half-time academic course load when not employed with the agency. Various openings are available from year to year, in order to fill in positions that are forecasted to be open in the future. Upon successful completion of all work study and degree requirements, students may be eligible to be converted to a permanent position within 120 calendar days after graduation. Many of our bright young staff have been brought on board with this program.

The eligible candidates will be at least 16 years old, U. S. citizens, maintain acceptable GPA, at least part-time student at a qualifying educational institution, studying a major that relates to the NRCS career paths and preferably in their first or second year. Mobility is required, as the students will not be placed in the same field office in subsequent years. Students are required to complete a minimum of 640 hours of career-related work prior to meeting the academic requirements for graduation.

Idaho is currently seeking applicants in the Soil Conservation, Range Management, Engineering and Forestry positions. The priority consideration closed on January 4, but if all the selections are not made, a second round of applications will be accepted until March 31. Currently Engineering and Forestry applications are still available for the March 31st deadline.

If you have any questions, or would like to refer a potential candidate, contact Maria Wallior, Human Resources Specialist, at 208-378-5712.

Contributed by Deb Nace, Black Emphasis Program Manager

SCEP Experiences: Student to NRCS Employee

I found that what I had learned during my summer employment actually helped me in my college courses and I was also able to apply the knowledge that I had gained in my classes during my work experience.

The program is a great way to “feel out” the agency to see if it is right for you. Although you are generally not in the same field office each summer, it is a great way to be exposed to the different work and field environments and resource concerns in different regions of the state. The agency does take into account personal preferences, but you do have to be willing to move around.

One of the most valuable aspects of the SCEP for me was the relationships, both personal and professional, that were built. My advice to new SCEP employees is to build those working relationships and keep the lines of communication open as they will benefit you throughout the program and future career.

Overall, the SCEP experience, for me, accomplished its primary objectives. While I have a lot more training to do, I feel that I have the ability to perform the tasks required of me.

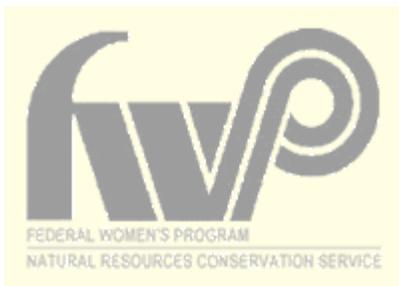
-Rosana Rieth, Rangeland Management Specialist, Challis Idaho

I enjoyed being a SCEP because working in different offices with varying specialties allowed for a broad general understanding that I was then able to build upon once I started working full time. As a SCEP I was able to gain an appreciation for the disciplines represented by Engineers, Range Cons., Soil Scientists and of course Soil Conservationists and D.C.'s.

The most embarrassing thing as a SCEP happened near my last day at the Gooding Field Office. I was helping Eric Moore survey a pasture for a possible surface to surface irrigation conversation (flood to gated pipe) and the producer had said she turned off the electric fence. Note: Don't believe everything you hear! Eric jumps the fence, no problem, so I am thinking it is actually off. When I go to hop over the fence I brush the hot wire with my leg and Eric and I hear a loud pop. Sure enough I had gotten shocked and tore my jeans. Oh and did I mention I just happened to be on a cell phone, as I was just informed I was to receive the American FFA Degree. Luckily this was not the norm and my overall experiences helped me decide that NRCS was the place I wanted to be.

-Amanda Pangburn, Soil Conservationist St. Anthony Idaho

Message From Julie Phelps, Federal Women's Program Manager



National Women's History Month is an annual commemoration held each March to honor the contributions made by women to our Nation's history. In 1978 in California, the education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women began a "Women's History Week" for school children to study and learn about women's contribution to American history. The week was chosen to coincide with International Women's Day, which is celebrated each year on March 8. Three years later, Congress passed a resolution establishing National

Women's History Week and in 1987 it was extended to the whole month of March.

"Our History is Our Strength" is the theme for 2011 National Women's History Month. The stories of women's achievements are integral to the fabric of our history. Learning about women's tenacity, courage, and creativity throughout the centuries is a tremendous source of strength. Until relatively recently, this sphere of women's history was overlooked and undervalued. Women's achievements were often distorted, disdained, and denied. But, knowing women's stories provides essential role models for everyone. And role models are genuinely needed to face the extraordinary changes and unrelenting challenges of the 21st century. Inquiries may be directed to me, Julie Phelps, Idaho Federal Women's Program manager.

Want to provide the Civil Rights Committee Feedback? Go to the Idaho Sharepoint Website Under Civil Rights/Suggestions. Provide us suggestions on how we can better serve you through our suggestion box, anonymously.

Tips for Making Maps for the Color Blind

Did you know approximately 1 in 20 people have some form of color blindness? There is a good chance that you will be working with a person that is color blind.

At the last Civil Rights meeting with the National Civil Rights Committee in August, we asked the national committee, "Are there any tips for making maps for the Color Blind?"

Cara Clark, the National Disability Emphasis Program Manager, had several recommendations:

- Use patterns or hatching instead of color on maps or drawings to define an area.
- Use dashed lines for borders rather than solid color lines to define boundaries.
- The most common color blindness is to red and green colors, the least common color blindness is to blue colors. Do not use red and green colors together when creating documents for the color blind.
- When doing presentations: Get a blue laser pointer instead of the traditional red laser pointer.
- Be aware of contrasting colors in the presentation. The use of vivid colors will make objects more distinguishable.

If you would like to see what your map/drawing/powerpoint presentation looks like to a color blind individual; convert your document to a JPEG file and upload the document to this website: www.vischeck.com.

Contributed by Dinah Reaney, Division III and IV Representative

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