

# State Technical Committee Meeting

06/20/2012  
9:00am – 12:00pm  
N. H. Audubon  
84 Silk Farm Road  
Concord, NH 03301

Meeting Called By: **Rick Ellsmore, STC NH NRCS** Type of meeting: **State Technical Committee**  
Facilitator: **Rick Ellsmore, STC NH NRCS** Note taker: **Shari Cohen, NRCS**

## Attendees:

Richard Lutz (NHACD), Grant Mecozzi (NWTF), Wendy Weisiger (SPNHF), Stephen Walker (NHOEP), Marilyn Ricker (FSA), Tim Fleury (UNH CE), Dave Welsch (US FS), John Lanier (Private Contractor), Gregg MacPherson (RD), Artie McCollum (US FWS), Simon Thomson (Rep. Sen. Kelly Ayotte), Carol Andrews (NHACC), Lisa Townson (UNH CE), Jillian McCarthy (NH DES), Edna Feighner (NH Div. of Historical Resources), John Hodsdon (Belknap CCD), Damon Burt (SBF NH), Terry Miller (USDA/FS), Charlie Bridges (NH F&G), David Grobe (Sullivan CCD), Paul Stacey (Great Bay NERR/NH F&G), Don Keirstead (NRCS), Jade Nield (NRCS), Jan McClure (TNC), Roger Simmons (USFS – WMNF), Pierce Rigrod (NH DES), Jasen Stock (NH TOA), Kira Jacobs (EPA)

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## Meeting Minutes

### Agenda Item: Welcome, introductions, and partner updates

**Rick Ellsmore** began the meeting at 9:05 am.

- Introduced NH NRCS' new State Engineer, Jade Nield –from RI – already making a great impact to move things forward

### Members Updates:

#### **John Hodsdon, Belknap County Conservation District**

- BCCD lost our space at the federal bldg and are now located in space at Southern University of NH w/ RC&D and NH Lakes Assoc. – We are negotiating our lease for another year.

#### **Jillian McCarthy, NH DES (for Eric Williams)**

- Re: 319 budget/program - EPA studying effectiveness – changes are; different way to allocate funds to states, a focus on spending funds quickly, and at the end of Fiscal Year, unallocated funds will be taken back. The result will be that dollar distribution will go to states that do a good job of spending money quickly – if you do not spend funds, allocation can be reduced for the following year
- Management plans need to be updated for NH (programs and projects that include any non-source point project) – we will contact you to update for Sept. 2013 deadline
- DES is also working on a guide for homeowners on storm water management – There is a fact sheet for homeowners to use now w/ practices for use on their properties - we will be keeping tabs

#### **Paul Stacey, NH F & G**

- Doing research w/ Great Bay Reserve – focus is on watershed management, nutrient management and climate change
- I am drawn here because of the National Water Quality & Forestry Initiatives

#### **Grant Mecozzi, NWTF**

- working on 142 CAP plans (an upland program)

**Stephen Walker, NH Office of Energy & Planning**

- Director leaving to take job in Boston - other staff leaving as well
- Working on state energy program, and information and referrals for energy conservation for private land owners

**Terry Miller, Forest Service, Durham, NH**

- Test alert: Eastern White Pine Needle Cast has been prevalent/noticeable – it is of a natural/pathological cause and there is information here on the back table
- We are trying to obligate funds for Forest Legacy and other programs

**Damon Burt, Small and Beginner Farmers**

- We are working on pooling equipment, sharing resources, and obtaining our 5013C to get non-profit funding (mission is education)
- Obtained a Specialty Crop Block Grant w/ the help of Lorraine Merrill (working on marketing and more specialty crop grants)
- Creating Workshops
- NH SBF's definitely supports NRCS
- NH SBF email list is open to the public

**Rick Ellsmore, NRCS**

- Because we have a huge backlog in our applications, there are some folks not getting funded right now

**Charlie Bridges, NH F & G**

- Personnel changes: losing 2 division Chiefs, adding a new Great Bay Research Manager
- We are having Black Bear problems and are hopeful for an early wild fruit crop to get them back into the forest – really it's a people problem because they feed bears and they become habituated – there's usually a dog involved in bear attacks on people

**Artie McCollum, US F & W Service, Silvio O. Conte Wildlife Refuge, MA**

- Working w/ NRCS in Fitzwilliam, NH; dam removal & assessing culverts

**Pierce Rigrod, NH DES**

- Focus is on water systems /drinking water
- Working w/ towns adapting codes to protect drinking water

**Kira Jacobs, EPA**

- Focus on drinking water suppliers and working w/ NRCS for protection of drinking water like in Salmon Falls watershed
- Your Land, Clean Water, Your Legacy event this Thursday - flyers here on back table

**John Lanier, retired Wildlife Biologist, representing Wildlife Institute (today)**

- Worked w/ NRCS quite a lot the last few years to help w/ contracts in focus areas (watersheds; Upper Ammonoosuc and Israel Rivers)
- Working w/ Forest Service researchers & NRCS soils scientists

**Don Keirstead, Ecologist, NRCS**

- Funding for New England Cottontail, candidate for federal listing w/ several species – we have 250 acres of habitat signed up

**Wendy Weisiger, SPNHF**

- Working w/ Don on New England Cottontail Habitats
- Good news; hired two fulltime foresters who are working on inventory management planning

**Gregg MacPherson, Rural Development**

- RD has funded Pleasant View Gardens; bio mass facility & thermal curtains

**Simon Thomson, for Senator Kelly Ayotte**

- I am covering environmental issues for the senator
- Farm Bill is major focus
- The Senator is opposing the Lee Amendment to cut forest legacy from the Farm Bill

**Dick Lutz, NHACD**

- Working on New England Cottontail w/ multiple agencies - weather has been great for planting NEC habitat
- Finishing High Tunnel agreement this summer, CD Managers are following up on High Tunnels
- Envirothon had 85 students, it was well done – next year's Envirothon is on pastureland/rangeland management – looking for Envirothon Judges for next year too

**Rick Ellsmore, NRCS**

- 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for USDA is August 1<sup>st</sup> at the Miles Smith Farm in Loudon, NH – FSA, RD & NRCS are coordinating this event – not open to the public – contact Shari Cohen for information & invite

Agenda Item: **NH Timberland Owners Association**

Presenter: **Jasen Stock, NH TOA**

**Handouts:**

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2012/HB1551.html>

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2012/SB0218.html>

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2012/HB0514.html>

*\*PRESENTATION Notes– posted to webpage*

**Rick Ellsmore, NRCS**

- A number of our payment lists have changed taking them away from the state; they shifted our High Tunnel rate to national and our payment rate decreased.
- We are trying to prioritize larger projects in forestry so that we can impact a greater landscape w/ high scale forestry work & watershed protection

Agenda Item: **NH NRCS Forestry Focus**

Presenter: **Don Keirstead, NRCS**

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

**Charlie Bridges, NH F & G**

- Preferred approach is to enhance and sustain habitat through commercial forestry

**Don Keirstead, NRCS**

- Forestry practices are funded through EQIP / Working Lands for Wildlife (WHIP)

**Kira Jacobs, EPA**

- Landowners w/ at least 10 acres are eligible

Agenda Item: **UNH Cooperative Extension Service Update**

Presenter: **Lisa Townson, UNH CE**

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

**John Hodsdon, BCCD**

- Question to Lisa: Will the Ag experiment station survive?

**Lisa:** Yes it should survive – commercial development on Univ. Ag property has been denied – CE is fighting to provide support for Ag

Agenda Item: **FSA Update**

Presenter: **Marilyn Ricker, FSA**

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

**Marilyn Ricker, FSA**

- It is required ask STC to review CRP – email me with any suggestions and input by the end of next week 6/29<sup>th</sup>

**Jasen Stock, NH TOA**

- *Question to Marilyn:* Landowners biomass harvests for timber stand improvement, and then get paid for the chips, then they run into problems because of compensation for the chips – are they eligible?

**Marilyn:** the focus is on cropland and riparian buffers so reductions for revenue may not come into play – there could be a reduction based on the revenue - FSA is trying to find how CRP can fit better for NH

**Don Keirstead, NRCS**

- Riparian buffers in CRP would help compensate for crop land that is lost

**Kira Jacobs, EPA**

- Farmers compete for CRP in VT – farmers are offered a method to stabilize water supply via CRP

Agenda Item: NH Association of Conservation Commissions

Presenter: Carol Andrews

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

**General Discussion re: new standards for disabilities access (motorized equipment on trails)**

**Wendy Weisiger, SPNHF**

- We have an interim plan that will be followed up w an inventory of trails

**Jasen Stock, NH TOA**

- *Question re: trails* – if a property has an easement on it, can a private landowner required to put a management plan on it?

**Carol:** NHACC will have to educate private landowners about management plans

**Wendy:** It is the plan that is important to define what vehicles can and cannot be on particular trails – protecting natural and cultural resources is a justification for denying access to motorized vehicles on trails

Agenda Item: NRCS Report

Presenter: Rick Ellsmore, State Conservationist

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

**Questions:**

**Charlie Bridges, NH F & G**

- WHIP program has morphed into Working Lands For Wildlife (WLFW) for a few key species; what is the reaction?  
**Rick:** people in focus areas like it, and people outside of the focus areas do not – we are hoping that once we get that allocation, we can decide how much to dedicate to each but keep it under one program (consolidate programs) including easement programs.

**Kira Jacobs, EPA**

- I want to acknowledge Rick for his role in the U.S. Water Prize for Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative; I am grateful for your partnership- Congratulations to Rick Ellsmore and team for their work!  
**Rick:** it was quite an honor; most other winners were cities and large corporations – it was nice to be representing Salmon Falls and be part of a successful partnership!

**Rick Ellsmore, State Conservationist, NRCS**

- Next State Technical Committee Meeting date: 10/17/2012, Concord area, exact location TBA

*Meeting Adjourned*

