



Nevada Interagency Civil Rights
Advisory Committee

USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service
and
USDA Farm Service Agency

Civil Rights are for Everyone!

Minutes of July 23, 2013 Meeting

Call to Order and Introduction:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Chair Jarrod Edmunds took roll call.

Present by teleconference:

- Jarrod Edmunds, Chair
- Eric Eldredge, Secretary
- Dan Rybicki, FSA Advisor
- Ann Rossi, FSA Advisor
- Bill Conlin, LGBTPM
- Ed Sturges, VEPM
- Tracey Jean Wolfe, WSEPM
- Cory Lytle, AA/PIEPM
- Alicia Nyland, SEEM, NV National Guard
- Christy Hales, NV National Guard

Could not attend:

- Bruce Petersen, NRCS DEEOO
- Clint Koble, FSA DEEOO
- Bill Elder, NRCS Advisor, DEPM (sent reports)
- Dennis Workeman, SAO, NRCS Advisor
- Erin Hourihan, BSEPM (sent report)
- Susan Looper, AI/ANPM (sent report)
- Brien Park, Vice Chair
- Lex Riggle, HEPM

Review of Minutes:

The Minutes of the meeting of April 15, 2013 were reviewed and approved, as posted on Nevada sharepoint at:
<https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/west/nv/CivilRightsEO/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fwest%2fnv%2fCivilRightsEO%2fNICRAC%202013&FolderCTID=&View=%7b3B965083%2d5DE1%2d4E5F%2dB7C0%2d27E13732A233%7d>

Special Emphasis Program Manager Reports:

Susan Looper – AIAN SEPM: I have continued to distribute email job opportunities and share educational stories about Native American life and history. I attended Nevada's StrikeForce Initiative Event with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe held on April 17, 2013 on the Pyramid Lake Reservation. The event was successful at identifying barriers to agricultural participation in USDA programs, as in the cost of addressing irrigation conveyance on the reservation through Farm Bill Programs, and economic growth stifled by program processes.

During this event I was able to converse with Randy Emm, (Walker River Tribe), who is Coordinator of Indian Programs for the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE). From him I learned that Natchez Elementary School, a public school in Washoe County School District located on the Pyramid Lake Reservation, has a hoop house and needs assistance managing the structure and using it for education at the school.

Since the StrikeForce event, I have met with the Natchez Elementary School Principal (May 24, 2013) and discussed creating an internship, through Earth Team Volunteers, to manage the Natchez hoop house structure and student utilization of the structure. I have also been in contact with some of the local colleges about creating an internship for the elementary school and utilizing a college undergrad for the project. Response has been very positive, and I hope to have this project on the ground by the 2014 Spring Semester.

I also recommended to our State Conservationist that Nevada NRCS donate NRCS's old computers, lap tops, printers, etc. that were recently replaced, to the Natchez Elementary School as the equipment would be a good fit for use by students K-6, and the elementary school serves the Paiute Tribal Community (about 95% student body is Paiute). I am currently working with IT (Sam) to help this equipment donation happen.

Also on May 20, 2013, I met with Nevada National Guard, Alicia Nyland, COL, USA (Ret), State Equal Employment Manager, at our State Office to discuss how NRCS and the NV Guard (DOD) might be able to collaborate on projects serving our Nevada Tribal communities. It was a good brainstorming session.

Cory Lytle – AA/PIEP: New in the position, will have more to report at the next meeting.

Erin Hourihan – BEPM: Submitted quarterly report to national. Took over posting job opportunities to the twitter account and the UNR for Kristen. If anyone has something they would like to see posted, please send it to erin.hourihan@nv.usda.gov.

The National Employment Research Team is working to capture data for the employees within the agency's designated special emphasis areas at the state and national level. The BEPM was asked by national to compile the Black Employee History spreadsheet for NV. They are looking for information such as employee's name, position/title, gender, and dates of service. HR does not have this type of information for employees that have left the state. At this time, several people here in NV have been very helpful, but if anyone has anything to add, it would be greatly appreciated.

Bill Elder – DEPM: With the concurrence of Bruce Petersen, I have assumed the duties of the DEPM for Nevada. Kristen alerted the National DEPM (Danny Jones, TN) of her resignation, and to include Bill Elder as the new contact.

The only item to report at this time relates to a rewrite of the instruction manual for the "Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery" course – It now includes considerations for reasonable accommodation, assistive technologies, and disability access to office and meeting space. By including this in the training, it is hoped that it will raise the level of awareness of this facet when doing business with the public.

Tracey Jean Wolfe – FWPM: Nothing to report at this time.

Bill Conlin – LGBTPM: June was Pride Month, which is important to the LGBT community. Bill attended the Pride Month celebration at Davis, CA, and met with Robert Miller. He heard presentations by Sandy Hood and Kristen Beasley who grow apricots, plums, and various crops.

Bill Conlin suggested we consider having a Pride Month event next June for Nevada agencies, and invite participation by California agencies. Jarrod suggested that it be put on the agenda for the October meeting, when we may know more about the budget. The recent Supreme Court ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act making

employee benefits available to all married people was also mentioned as an important victory in the struggle for equal civil rights for everyone.

Lex Riggle – HEPM: No report

Ed Sturges – VEPM: Reported that Bruce has the signed Certificates of Appreciation for NRCS employees in Nevada who served in the military. Most of them are in the Reno area, so a lunch or BBQ, maybe having the VFW make the presentation, have been discussed. National Veteran's workshops were held in Oklahoma, Alabama, Indiana, and South Dakota, and Ed will pass along more information on them. Ed's term ends in September, so a new VEPM will need to be found.

NICRAC Officers and Advisors Reports:

Chair Report – Jarrod: most will be covered in Business items. Nevada has some vacancies that will be filled, the Las Vegas DC., an engineering technician position in Elko, and a planner in Winnemucca. All Field Offices will be administered as one area, and Jarrod will be the Area RC starting in September.

Secretary Report – Eric: Thanked the people who sent in written reports. It helps with compiling the minutes.

Vice-Chair Report – Brien Park: No report

DEEOO: – No report

NRCS Advisor Report – Bill Elder: Nevada has had limited hiring in the past quarter – 2 term employees have been hired, one a white female, the other, a black male.

Our Semi-annual Civil Rights report was submitted – the big change was the rate of program obligations to traditionally underrepresented groups vs. whites. While the data suggests some disparity, the report was based on a 'snap shot' of applications completed obligations as of June 1. As you can appreciate, certain fund pools had 'no' obligations at the time that data was pulled, while others were in excess of 75% obligated – effectively creating a sampling bias in the report. TA remark to this effect was included in the report. Our next report will likely start in the next fiscal year reporting cycle, and we could expect it to be due by January 10, 2014.

FSA Advisor Report – Dan: said Annie is new in the role and is learning the process.

Old Business:

1. NICRAC Nevada Bulletins – Bulletins for the last quarter: Each D.C. is required to plan a Strikeforce outreach event, multi-agency with FSA and RD. Bill Elder needs the dates reported to him. Caliente is planning one in Lincoln County for late August to coincide with the County Fair, and includes the County Commissioners.
2. Veterans' Appreciation Letters – Was covered in VEPM report.
3. NICRAC 2013 Business Plan Third Quarter update – Jarrod reminded us to go to the document on sharepoint <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/west/nv/CivilRightsEO/Forms/AllItems.aspx?View=%7b3B965083%2d5DE1%2d4E5F%2dB7C0%2d27E13732A233%7d> and update our sections for the third quarter.
4. Outreach Strike Force Coordinator update Bill Elder: Strikeforce Report: On June 26, Nevada hosted four Strikeforce events – The first, a Nevada Tribal leadership listening session with the Director of the USDA Office of Tribal Relations, Leslie Wheelock. This 90-minute event was followed by a visit and meeting with the administrative leadership with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in Nixon (and Wadsworth), NV, to discuss community challenges and opportunities. A tour of the Wadsworth Community Center and John Guerrero's ranch

followed the meeting. The third activity was a Nevada "Food Hub" strategy meeting, to explore effective coordination and delivery of, and access to, foods in the 'food deserts' of Nevada, and to promote sound nutrition for all. The fourth event involved a USDA Office of Communications Video crew, whose mission was to capture some of the aforementioned activities on video, but also to conduct on-camera interviews of Strikeforce initiative recipients. Some 12 people were interviewed, and the material has been sent to the Office of Communications for inclusion in the upcoming Strikeforce-Southwest video production, a companion to the Strikeforce-Southeast production, released earlier this year. Special thanks to Kelly Clark (PAS, RD) and to Randy Emm (FRTEP, UNCE) for their assistance.

5. On July 23-26, Beverly Mosley (PAS, TX) will be visiting Nevada to collect Strikeforce success stories by conducting interviews with program recipients – including members of the Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe and the DuckWater Shoshone Tribe. We have also coordinated with Utah to include a visit to the Goshute Reservation, which straddles the border between the two states. Thanks go out to Jamie Jasmine and Cory Lytle in helping to plan this event, and provide another example of how Nevada conducts effective outreach.
6. Career Fairs/Recruitment with Pathways requires that any position first be advertised on USAJobs.

New Business:

1. Three new SEPMs have started, Bill Elder: New SEPMs: As a reminder, new SEPMs will need a collateral duty agreement and a PD addendum for their new position(s). Please work with Jarrod and Dennis to get these documents in place.
2. Mentoring Application Period closes Friday 26 July. Please complete applications, especially needed are mentors. Proteges in NV are typically matched with mentors in CA, which has been working well.
3. Semi Annual CR Report – Jarrod sent out, it gives program, employment and outreach data, not a public document.
4. NV Civil Rights Award – Formerly a bulletin was sent, now all awards are suspended, so Jarrod has not asked for nominations this year.

Open Public Comment:

Bill Conlin asked if mentors could tell the story of what they do. Jarrod explained that new hires and new supervisors are required to participate as protégés. It is also a good idea to participate as a protégé if someone changes their career field. A full day net training and a half-day classroom training conference will match mentors and proteges, and teach them how to prepare their plan for this year. The training will be sometime in October.

Alicia Nyland, SEEM, NV National Guard, and Christy Hales, NV National Guard, invited the NICRAC, FSA and NRCS to a Diversity Day event on Friday, September 27, at the Carson City National Guard Armory. It will feature booths displaying different cultures, food samples from different cultures, drums performance, and Basque and American Indian dance performance. The National Guard has had a monthly recognition; it is now being combined into an annual Diversity Day. Alicia will send out a flyer on the event by email.

Meeting Adjourned:

10:50 Adjourn – The next quarterly NICRAC meeting is 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 22, 2013.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex (including gender identity and expression), religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, familial or parental status, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information, in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

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Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities and you wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.), please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

For any other information dealing with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues, persons should either contact the USDA SNAP Hotline Number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish, or call the State Information/Hotline Numbers.

All Other Inquires

For any other information not pertaining to civil rights, please refer to the listing of the USDA Agencies and Offices.