

State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

Date, Location, and Time: July 26, 2013; Bradford Farm, Columbia, MO; 9:00am-12:00pm

USDA Leadership/Presenters/Moderators in Attendance: J.R. Flores, State Conservationist, NRSC; Mark Cadle, FSA; Dick Purcell, NRCS; Katura Wright, NRCS; Harold Deckerd, NRCS; Dwaine Gelhar, NRCS; Gerald Hrdina, FSA; Coleen Meredith, MoDNR; Charlie Hopper, Mo Dept of Ag; Karen Brinkman, NRCS; Charlie Rahm and Emily Murray, NRCS; Recorder: Sonja Williams, NRCS.

Members/Individuals in Attendance: Chris Klenklen, Mo Dept of Ag; Tim Gibbons, MO Rural Crisis Ctr; Bruce Wilson, SWCD; Ralph Gaw, SWDC; Al Vogt, CFM; Tom Lampe, SWCD; George Seek, DFM; Don Johnson; Brad Powell, MSWCDEA; Ken Lenz, Mo Dairy Assoc; Mike Deering, EVP; Terri Brink, EPA; Steve Mahfood, The Nature Conservancy; Amy Hamilton, Hamilton Native Outpost; Kevin Dacey, NRCS; Lynn Jenkins, NRCS; Harry Cope, SWCD; Chris McClelland, MDC; John Wallace, Quail Forever; Ryan Britz, MASWCD/SWCD; Steve Cromley, MFA; Sandy Stratman, MSWCDEA; Bernard Brune, SWCD; Frank Oberle; Greg Anderson, Mo DNR; Nate Goodrich, NRCS; Richard Hoelscher; Jon Wingo, Mo Prairie Foundation; Kenny Lovelace, MASWCD; Mai Her; Kenda Flores, MDC; Tracey Wiggins; NRCS, Bev Dometorch, MASWCD; Darrin Bentlage; Bruce Biermann, MASWCD; Shane Kinne, MO Corn; Ralph Glosemeyer, SWCD; Bill Wilson, Mo DNR; Alan Schwanke, SWCD; Brian Schweiss, MDC; Joe Tounsonant, MDC; Bill Chinn, SWCD; Jason Weirich, MFA; Glenn Davis, NRCS; Jeff Hodges, Total Resource Mgmt; Leslie Holloway, Mo Farm Bureau; Bob Garino, NASS; Judy Grundler, Mo Dept of Ag; Bob DeWitt, MDA; John Heckmann, Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation; Darlene Johnson, NRCS; Barbara Li, SKW Inc.; Joe Slater, Fertilizer Ag Lime Control; Kat Logan Smith, Mo Coalition for Env; Garrett Hawkins, Mo Farm Bureau; Kelly Strigley Werner, FWS; Chris Hamilton, NRCS; and Don Nikodim, Mo Pork Assoc. (*71 attendees per sign in sheets.)

Discussion:

| Item | Discussion |
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| 1. Welcome | Karen Brinkman welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order. Times have been set for comments and discussion during the meeting. She asked attendees to look for these opportunities if they have comments. Brinkman also asked that individuals identify themselves and their organization, and wait for a microphone prior to speaking to ensure the comments get into the minutes. |
| 2. State Conservationist/FSA State Executive Director | J.R. Flores asked attendees to introduce themselves. Flores explained the role of the State Technical Committee (STC) is to provide advice and recommendations on a number of issues within a variety of conservation programs and to identify any emerging issues members see. The STC was established with the 1990 Farm Bill, so it has been in existence for over 20 years. The State Conservationist's role is to be the chair and ensure there is a cross section of representation. He gives strong consideration to the advice the committee gives. Flores turned the floor over to Mark Cadle. This is Cadle's first year to attend the meeting. Cadle farms in the NW corner of the state. He said that he welcomes questions from the committee, looks forward to learning with them, and stated he was grateful for the opportunity to attend. |

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| <p>3. Farm Bill Activities [Environment Quality Incentives Program(EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)] and Update of Initiatives [Missouri River Basin Initiative (MRBI), Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), National Watershed Quality Initiative (NWQI)]</p> | <p>Katura Wright/Assistant State Conservationist (ASTC)-Programs: Wright discussed the CSP program. This year NRCS received a little over \$3M and has about 633 applications. NRCS is still in the process of ranking these applications and determining eligibility; therefore, the money has not been obligated yet. The sign up ended on June 14.</p> <p>MO received a little over \$300K in WHIP funding. Currently there are a little more than 100 applications in the system and field offices are in the process of ranking these. The sign up ended on June 12.</p> <p>EQIP is designed to develop contracts to implement conservation practices that address environmental issues. Missouri received \$18.4M for General EQIP, which includes cropland, pasture/hay land, animal feeding, and forest land. Last year the decision was made to distribute the funding by: cropland 30%, forest land 10%, pasture/hay land 40%, and animal feeding 20%. This equaled about \$5M in cropland</p> <p>The state also has initiatives that are mandated by NHQ and funding is allocated to us from DC. Missouri received \$262K for organics; a little more than \$1M for High Tunnels, which is the highest allocation that was issued to the states and \$1.18K was received for energy conservation. \$1M was received for CCPI and over \$9M was received for MRBI, which is MO's largest initiative. The last initiative is NWQI and Missouri received \$836K for three covered watersheds: Lower Little Medicine, Upper Troublesome, and Opossum Creek-North Fork Spring River. Wright discussed a chart with the committee that gave the number of contracts versus the backlog.</p> <p>For FY 13, cropland target was 30% (obligated over \$5M), animal waste 20% (obligated a little over \$2M), pasture and hay land 40% (obligated over \$8M), and forest 10% (obligated \$1.3M). Animals Waste actually had 15.7% and pasture/hay land was 45.6%.</p> <p>Today there are still 635 unfunded pasture applications. The next item the State Conservationists needs recommendations on is practices in general. Wright will email a copy of all the practices offered this year to committee members asking them to comment if they feel something is being missed.</p> <p>FY 2014- Flores needs the committee's input on the funding distribution. The four main funding accounts are pasture/hay land, animal waste, cropland, and forest. For FYs 12 and 13, cropland 30%, pasture/hay land 40%, forest 10%, and animals waste 20%. The State Conservationist needs a recommendation from the committee as to what this breakdown should be for FY 14. The EQIP Subcommittee did meet last month and they came to a consensus of 15% for animal feeding and 45% for pasture/hay, cropland remained at 30%, and forest at 10%. That was their compromise between 10 and 20%. Individuals were asked to send comments to the State Conservationist</p> <p>Harold Deckerd, ASTC-Water Resources, gave an overview of the WRP, GRP, and FRPP.</p> |
| <p>4. Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)</p> | <p>The main purpose of WRP is to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands on eligible private land while maximizing wildlife habitat benefits. Emphasis is placed on habitat for migratory birds, endangered species, or other species of concerned.</p> <p>Enrollment options include permanent easements (1 time easement payment, 100% restoration cost share); 30 year easement (75% of the 1-time easement payment, 75% restoration); and Restoration Cost Share (no easement payment, 75%</p> |

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| | <p>restoration). Ninety percent of what NRCS receives are permanent easements.</p> <p>Restoration includes restoring the hydrology of the site and emphasizes restoration of plants that existed prior to current conditions.</p> <p>Specific easement prohibitions are identified to the landowner upon entering into the easement.</p> <p>History of WRP: Been in existence since 1992. Missouri was one of the nine trial states to initiate this program. Congress has appropriated funding through 2013 to enroll a maximum of 3,041,200 acres. Nationally there is approximately 2.6M acres enrolled. Missouri is 6th in the number of acres and 3rd in the number of easements. Missouri has closed 1060 easements covering 146,593 easements. The enrollment goal for 2013 is 1800 acres. This year Missouri received the authorization for new enrollment in May. 100,000 acres were approved nationally. Missouri had 14 applications and a couple have fallen out of the pool. Unless Missouri is given more acres by our National office, the 1800 acres for 2013 will not be exceeded. A map was shown to display the distribution of acres across the state. Picture examples of restoration across the state were shown.</p> <p>GRP: The program objectives are to support grazing operations, maintain and improve plant and animal biodiversity, and protect grasslands from the threat of conversion. This is a voluntary program. There are rental contracts (10, 15, and 20 year) which are financially administered by FSA. There are also permanent easements administered by NRCS. NRCS does the technical work for rental contracts and easements.</p> <p>In 2013 we did not receive any funding for new GRP easements. Nationally the funding was extremely limited to mostly the western states. There were a couple of rental contracts that FSA administered. In the state we have 35 GRP easements for a total of 4020 acres.</p> <p>FRPP-Missouri has had limited success with this program. The program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interest in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50% of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement. The sponsoring entity must provide 25% of the easement purchase price at closing, and typically the landowner donates the other 25% for tax credits. Missouri only has two FRPP easements in the state; they are in SW Missouri. They are adjacent to Wilson's Battle Creek. Missouri has two applications right now that are being worked for this year.</p> |
| <p>5. Conservation Innovation Grants (CIIG)</p> | <p>Dwaine Gelnar, State Resource Conservationist. CIIGs are available to entities that have a history of working with farmers. Through the regular CIIG there was another announcement this spring and there were nine proposals submitted nationally. Those haven't been evaluated yet. They should be announced in August. In addition, we had three state proposals submitted. They are currently being evaluated now.</p> <p>Gelnar would like input from the committee on what the priorities for 2014 State CIIG should be. We don't have input on the National priorities. 2013 priorities were Soil Health and Water Quality. The process is, Missouri NRCS submits an announcement and individuals have the opportunity to submit their proposals on these topics. If you have any thoughts</p> |

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| | submit them to J.R. Flores or Dwaine Gelnar. |
| 6. FSA Update | Gerald Hrdina provided an update on the CRP sign up, referred to as Sign Up 45. The sign up was 4 week period from May 20, 2013, through June 14, 2013. Out of the 90,000 acres offered for re-enrollment, 97% were accepted, about 87,000 acres. Nationwide 1.9M acres were offered nationwide, with 1.7M acres accepted. The national enrollment ceiling is 32M acres with the current enrollment at 27M acres. |
| 7. Missouri Department of Agriculture Bridge Loan Program | Emergency Conservation Program. A few counties have had flood damage, so there has been a small ECP this year. Charlie Hopper: The Bridge Loan Program is a new program that was rolled out this year. It is an expansion of the High Tunnel Loan Program from last year. A landowner can come in with an executed contract and reassign their payment to the MO Ag Small Business Development Authority and the individual would be loaned this amount regardless of their credit rating. It is really a simple program. There is a one page application. Applications were provided for committee members. |
| 8. MO DNR SWCP Update | Colleen Meredith. Executive Order for the Drought, Missouri had a severe drought. Her department has the oversight for the Parks, Soils, and Water Sales Tax. This tax is coming up for renewal in 2016 and she thinks the STC is the right group of people to promote this tax. A census committee was formed because of the drought and the Soil and Water efforts came from that. Missouri had the second worst soil erosion rate at that time and the parks were in terrible shape. So the sales tax was developed and voted for in 1984. Meredith showed a map of the State Parks in Missouri, there are 11 of them. There are 87 in the state. The state park system in Missouri has been voted within the top four of the entire country for several years in a row. |
| 8. General Discussion | Last year's drought assistance did 5,387 contracts for about \$21.8M. \$11.8M came from the Parks, Soils, and Water Sales Tax. \$10M came from other state funds. All of this money went through the SWCDs. Mark Cadle and J.R. Flores will take additional comments by email up until August 9, 2013. |
| 9. Adjournment | Meeting adjourned. |

COMMENTS:
State Technical Committee
July 26, 2013

Financial Assistance Comments:

Do the terraces in Missouri seem to be causing more erosion in our creeks because they don't sequester water? Are we practicing any grassland waterways and do we give priority to that? Is there a more conservative way of retaining the water instead of shedding it? Response: Grassland waterways are offered, but I'm not sure if they are a priority.

I personally feel that the committee has never been asked their opinion about terraces and I think that it is something that should be addressed.

Comment: One thing in regards to tiles/terracing as it relates to MRBI; the whole process was to try and reduce nitrates into the system which creates hypoxia in the gulf. We are trying to keep our fertilization on the land and not off the land. One thing that was put forward at a meeting was to utilize small wetlands. Right now, terraces go into streams and creeks. They are doing the job of soil conservation pretty well, but the "commenter" is not so sure we have captured the intent of slowing the nitrate flow into our streams and rivers. If sediment basins could be installed as catch basins it would be beneficial to clean water.

In the past, terraces were required to be fed into a grass waterway. This requirement was removed a year ago. Also, it may not be a bad idea for terraces to have a draft over strip. Terraces are designed to flow the water down.

Northern IA is doing a lot of research on using native buffer strips in place of terraces and they are in the process of collecting data on the effect of preventing soil loss and sequestering the water deep.

A poultry grower from SW Missouri, Newton County, passed out a presentation she wanted to give to the committee. She said she realizes Energy is a national initiative, but she wants the committee to do all they can for Missouri to increase funding in this area. Since early 2000, Hmong families around the country started purchasing and operating poultry farms in the SW Missouri area. There are currently 85 Hmong farms with a total of 472 poultry houses. Poultry farms are being required to update and/or retro fit their poultry farms to integrator specifications. Most of these updates are energy components that EQIP could cost share on. At the present time there are 35-40 Hmong farms that need this upgrading at a total cost of \$7.344M. Many have signed up for Code 122 and 374 of EQIP. She provided a list of proposed practice items along with the benefits that she believes need to be added to Code 374. The topic will be discussed at the next EQIP Subcommittee meeting.

One of the reasons for the EQIP Subcommittee's recommendation to fund 15% AW and 45% P/H had to do with the level of unfunded pasture based contracts. So, this was taken into consideration during deliberations.

Is prescribed burning going to be included in the practices? Response: It is included this year. No decisions have been made for next year. It is not offered in WHIP, but it is offered in EQIP.

It says the target was 20% for Animal Feeding, why didn't we fund more if we had a request for them? Response: We funded everything we had requests for.

You had more request for pasture than animal feeding? Response: We got additional money. 60% of our money has to go toward livestock. We funded everything that came in for animal waste and we still had a backlog so we funded additional pasture.

It shows you have 55 that you didn't fund for animal waste. Response: They fell out for various reasons, they may not have met eligibility or they may have decided to not participate in the program.

Water Resource Comments:

How does the National Office set the rental rates for the GRP, given the fact hay has almost become a commodity? Can this body make recommendations to National Office to increase rental rates? Response: We do not know of any input that we have had into that process. These rates have not changed since the program was first implemented. National Office set these rates from information received from the Statistical Reporting Service. The information they used comes from the annual survey they do of landowners.

Could this be something that falls under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Subcommittee since it falls under NRCS and FSA? Response: Flores said that this could be assigned to the sub-committee if this is how everyone wanted to see it handled.

These minutes go on the website and these can be forwarded to our Congressional leadership telling them that these are the concerns and the minutes are validation. Response: Yes. You can do this.

Prairies are the rarest ecosystem in North America and the most in peril. The grassland dependent species need this land and I don't know how we got 146,000 acres of wetlands and we are only at 4,000 acres of native prairie and it is the rarest ecosystem in North America. 146,000 acres compared to 4,000 acres, I would like to see, as someone actively speaking for all those little brown birds, more emphasis within the state to try and push the agenda for our grasslands and the environment. I believe a western portion of Highway 63 in northern Missouri should be designated as a National Natural Area of Significance. This area is food factories for migratory birds and this is something we should work on and there is no place like this. Answer: We request more funds than we normally receive for the GRP program. We can ask for the funding, but if isn't there we just aren't going to get it.

Comment: Can a public utility company (on WRP easements) claim by eminent domain to go through the easement with a power line? Response: A WRP site will not withstand the right of eminent domain, but they will have to replace the land with property of equal or greater value. They also have to show that there is not an alternative route for the power line. Many public utilities easements are blanket easements that predate our easements.

In Holt County there is a public utility that has a proposed route through farm land that is rented and has a WRP easement on it. In this individual's opinion you are destroying the reason you put the land in WRP. If they have to replace the land, where will they get the ground to replace? In this area, there is not any ground to replace. Response: In this case, you are probably talking about the pipeline that goes to Omaha. We have discussed this with them. We have required them to show us that this is the only option for them. One of them does cross a very narrow portion of a WRP site. The Chief of NRCS will have to approve this. They will have to provide a site of equal or greater value. They will have to find land adjacent to this that they can restore. The US Fish and Wildlife Service will be involved with this and will make the determination as to what is of equal or greater value.

A lot of people didn't give WRP much hope when it first started. The success of the program came from a lot of cooperative work from everyone. I don't think Missouri puts enough value on its grasslands yet. Conservation Federation has a grasslands committee now. There are many people at this meeting that know that agriculture is depending on Missouri grasslands. We are one of the best cattle/calf states in the nation. Also, water quality hinges on the health of our grasslands. We put a lot of value on these wetlands; but I support the fact that we need to increase the value of our grasslands through a program like this. We have to get more dollars in the program. \$1400.00 an acres sounds pretty good to me if you are allowed to hay it, graze it, and harvest seed off of it. This would seem reasonable to me if I was a cattleman. We have to get more people interested and more people working together to ensure we can get more money for the program. It will support agriculture and water quality. It will increase the health of the environment. Response: GRP has been around since 2003, so it has only been around about 10 years. During that time the program has been funded each of those years. The funding just isn't as extensive as with WRP.

You talked about the assessed value of cropland. The rates need to be raised because land prices are much higher than what was listed. There are farms in Saline County selling for \$10K an acre. Response: Class I land is going to be of greater value than what we have here. Because we are doing this for comparable prices, you are always looking at the last year. These numbers probably have increased from what they were 2 years ago. We are doing everything that we can.

Wanted to reiterate that we submitted a letter that if a new Farm Bill is drafted that GRP be given a priority. All of the prime farm ground in Missouri was created by 2000 years of prairie before that. We are down to approximately 100,000 acres of prairie which is a concern. There is a lot more remnant pieces in Missouri that is just old degraded pasture. GRP is a great tool for someone to preserve that rare remnant piece that is irreplaceable. I would encourage that this program be given priority. Response: Every year we do request much more funding than we are getting.

CIG Comments:

What are the two CIGs that were approved in the spring? Response: The Michigan State proposal was in collaboration with the University of Missouri. They are looking at putting membranes in the subsoil to catch water and prevent it from percolating through the system.

What were the priorities for 2013? Response: Soil Health, Water Quality, and Stream Bank Erosion. Any comments from the committee will be entertained.

The rental rates seem to be out of sorts. In our county the rental rate is 30% under what the cash rental rates are and other counties are right on target. This is why the sign up is not competitive. I don't know how these rates are set, but someone needs to look at it. FSA Response: The county committee did a land value survey and this information was passed onto the National Office. A couple of years they took this out of the hands of the county committees and the average cash rental rates are determined by the National Office with information they received from the Statistical Reporting Service each year. The information they use is from surveys they get from the landowners in the counties. The accuracy of the surveys may vary from county to county.

Can this process be changed in anyway? If you are getting bad data something needs to be done. FSA Response: We reported to our National Office what we thought the average was going to be. Other states were also concerned. They said this would be taken into consideration, but we don't know if it will change.

The initial estimates in our county went down and others went up.

Crop Management for CRP. There are mid-contract management requirements in CRP contracts due to the concern of grasses being too thick for wildlife. There needs to be a zero option for that. There needs to be a waiver for this on acres that don't need to be managed. FSA Response: We appreciate what you are saying. We are getting several reports that we are having landowners do this and there is no need for it. National Office said this is under consideration. The problem is that before we can make this determination, someone from FSA or NRCS has to do a site visit because you may have a need for mid-contract management on one field and not another on the same farm. It is a good concept, but waivers are also a good concept, but it will be have to be done right and will require a lot of man hours.

Believes science has come a long way in 10 years and now that we working with dormant seeds and forbs on CRP fields, I've yet to see the need to spray with Round-Up or things like that. I don't see grasses overtaking these things anymore. Forbs are a food factory and if you spray you are destroying this. Could a presentation be made to get this validated? FSA Response: Certainly. When burning and disking, chemicals were all being used, we were looking at a lot of different type of seedings and cover (brohm and fescue). There is a lot less need for managing on the warm season grasses, CP33s, and the pollinator habitats (CP42s).

Of the acres accepted in this sign up in Missouri, how many acres were new contracts and how many were rolled over? Of the existing acres still under contract, do you have the percentage of those that are under brohm fescue as opposed diversified plantings? Sometimes we have to be careful what we asked. Mid-contract management is going to be critical for acres that are predominately brohm and fescue, so we have to understand of that landscape how much of it needs it and how much of it doesn't. FSA Response: 90% of 90,000 was reoffered.

This emphasizes the need to put pressure on the GRP. Every 10 years landowners have to make a decision to compete with commodity prices. We need to put more value in our Missouri Grasslands to where it can compete with the fluctuation of grain prices.

DNR Soil and Water Conservation Program Comments:

Looking at money spent on contracts. Some contracts are \$2-3K and on Animal Waste they are \$20K per contract. What are these for? DNR Response: Those are for stack sheds. There are also dairy systems that can run \$50,000 and there are also some feeding systems/winter feeding stations.

Last year I applied for some drought assistance and was turned down. I have 400 acres in native grasses and wildflowers. I was turned down because they didn't recognize what I grow as a crop. native grasses and wildflowers. The person that came out said I definitely had a need. This is for the future of all growers. People that are grown conservation plant materials are not recognized as growing something of importance. Can you address this? DNR Response: Last year the Executive Order was July 23 and contracts were due within a 2 week period; it was very intense. The requirement was that the water had to provide an immediate benefit to the crop. Perennial crops were not being looked at like annual crops. Of all the contracts, 83 out of almost 6000 were crops and the rest were all livestock. There was an agricultural review team made up of different conservation agencies and they went through the contracts very carefully to determine if there was an immediate material benefit for that crop for that year. It was up to committee and there were very few crop contracts approved because most were too far gone. Some of the others were perennial crops which might have taken a hit, but they would stay there.

2513 for \$13M. If I were to take some CRP ground, plow it up, and get all of this nasty erosion. Can I come knock on the door of SWCD and ask them to help me with this problem? DNR Response: You could, there is a waiting period; however, that would be up to the local board of supervisor. They make the decisions on who gets cost share. In their own district they make the policy.

In Cass County, in order to qualify for Sheet, Rill, and Gully Erosion they have to be in crop production 5 years.

When this tax was approved. Most of these taxes were not approved in the rural areas, so you asked people in the city to approve this tax. I was under the assumption that this was going to help heal a lot of wounds, not feed the benefactor who created new wounds. I just feel that this committee should petition this program not to encourage the breaking of new sod and draining that fund. That's kind of my point. DNR Response: These are things that are being discussed in the plan for the future and why we are going to the different areas to get this input on the conservation practices during next few weeks. The boards are very careful who the approve cost share for. It is a hard job and they are volunteers. You can appeal to them to make decisions.

The one issue I have is about how the money is spent. We have a 4-5 year wait on erosion practices and we have other categories that get funded that we never use. We should have the flexibility to spend the money where it is needed. DNR Response: That is a topic that has come up a lot. SWCDs used to be able to use the funding however they needed to. The commission developed the separate resource concerns. So we have animal waste; grazing; irrigation; nutrient and pest management; sheet, rill, and gully erosion; and woodland. The money was targeted by the commission.

How much money actually goes out for practices out of the \$40M? DNR Response: The \$40M all went out for practices. Normally the commission's goal is at least 60%, lately we have done 65-67% out to the landowners and about 25% out to SWCD, and about 7-8% for administrative in our program - this is also cost to the attorney general's office for the support of the commission. So really the bulk of this money goes to landowners. It is unusual to have that much money going right to the landowner.

State Drought Response Plan: Was it followed and if so did it work? What were the lessons learned? What were the roles of the SWCD, NRCS, and STC? DNR Response: The drought plan allows flexibility in responding to the drought at the local and state level. Because we had such a rapid onset of high temperatures and total lack of moisture the drought actions were coordinated at a higher level than the State Drought Plan because it went right to the Governor's Office. The Governor really initiated the drought response and because of this we had incredibly fast response to put all contracts into plans. So, the drought plan was in place, but it was implemented and used at a much higher level than it would have been if we had had just a moderate drought. Other outcomes of the drought plan that come into place, locally a lot of conservation measures are suggested, but the local municipalities put them into place and implement them. Lessons learned in the drought of 2005-2006, work was done very closely after that with interconnections with small water supplies interconnect to a water supply that other capability. Last year's drought they found that the impact wasn't as severe in municipalities due to these interconnections that they had made prior.

What efforts are underway for more stewardship of our freshwater resources? DNR Response: This is one of the things that the department is working on. The department is working on the Great Northwest Wholesale Water Commission with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This is to get an option for reliable water sources to underserved populations for 12 counties in NW Missouri. They are also working with the USACE and the Tri-State Water Coalition in SW Missouri and they have recently completed a 50 year water demand forecast for 16 counties in SW Missouri. From that they found that they need 125M for the region by 2060. That is a pretty huge impact. The department does keep investing in water resources monitoring through Water Observation Wells and the Stream Gauge Network, which is 165 Groundwater Observation Wells. These were observed during the drought last year to determine how much the water was dropping and we also observed 50 stream gauges to see what is happening in the streams. These are used routinely for flood forecasting and drought and water quality assessment. The department has contributed to the updated two technical tools for precipitation and low flow frequencies. They use these in helping to construct structures. The department is also working with the Kansas City USACE on the Locust Creek study on hydrology and erosion. Another big department initiative is Our Missouri Waters. This initiative looks at water and quality in all the 66 hydrologic units in the state. This is a very big partner initiative. There are three pilots: Lower Grand, Spring River, Big River.

What are the roles of the SWCD, NRCS, and the State Technical Committee? DNR Response: The role of the SWCD is the delivery system. That is why they were picked to handle the drought-we are local people talking to local people interacting with state and federal agencies. It is really a perfect mix. What we would like from the STC is input as you've given on the conservation practices.

Something about cover crops and cost share practice in Chariton County-could not hear speaker well. DNR Response: This was the first year cover crops were used in Chariton County as a pilot practice. That pilot is projected to go about 2 years and then the commission will evaluate it.

A year ago at this STC meeting everyone was concerned about water, I don't know if we forget about that, but I will say at the end of last year every acre in Missouri got 800-1000 gallon barrels of water on it, which comes out to 800,000 by the 1st of January per acre. We wound up with 30 inches of rainfall. Our practices should focus on how we can retain this water instead of spending all our time and money on shedding. Did we have a drought last year? Is 30 inches of rain a drought or did we have a dry period for 2 ½ months. I'm just sharing this with you. We still got 870,000 acres of water per gallon last year. I would like for us to think about how we can sequester more water in our soil.

I was interested in comments earlier about tax payers footing the bill for terraces. If you look at this from a 1000 miles down. The true beneficiaries of the practices that you participate in to help with erosion is to help conserve the soil so our consumers can buy reasonably priced food and can still preserve the land. I think that is a point that needs to be made.

General Discussion Comments:

I work very closely with NRCS and all the conservation organizations in the state. One thing that has become a topic for the FWS is karst habitat. In Missouri 78 out of our 114 counties are in karst. For those of you that don't know what karst is, it is underground habitat for a number of unique species that occur there. In the past 10 years several of those species have become imperiled and it has been proposed for some to be placed on the endangered species list. One of the things that is very common for karst is something that has been discussed today and that is water quality and quantity. All of these species depend on water and more importantly we all depend on water. One of the things that I've observed being on the EQIP and CRP subcommittees; I also work with a lot of conservation practice standards that NRCS has in association with in my position and my office because I administer programs for the partners for the Fish and Wildlife program which helps landowners restore habitat on their property. One of the gaps that we have, that I would like of us to consider, is the fact that there is no conservation practice standard for karst and sinkholes. I think that this would be an important standard for our state to adopt. Iowa, Tennessee, Kentucky, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have this standard, but we don't. I would say that we have more karst than any of these states. I just wanted to introduce this as a possibility to consider. I think this would be an important practice for the field to implement especially in those areas important to karst.

One thing that kept coming to my mind when people kept bringing up the Farm Bill and its potential passage. In the House version of the Farm Bill they don't connect conservation compliance to federal crop insurance. How this could and potentially will affect the role of the committee; I'm thinking CRP sign up and this is marginal land; well if you can get subsidized crop insurance on this a person may not sign up for CRP; they may try to raise crops on the land. Soil Health, soil erosion, water health-all these things could be potentially affected if there isn't conservation compliance connected to federal crop insurance. I think this is something we should think about in the future and we need to talk about it amongst ourselves.

When our group from Missouri represented NACD earlier this month this was a big topic of discussion. Compliance has to be in place. I hope they keep that in the Farm Bill. This was a big point.

I read about a lot of pollinator problems across the country and I'm wondering if anyone has any information about pollinators in Missouri and any initiative efforts towards this subject. NRCS Response: There was a SWCD Meeting at Frank Oberle's farm (amazing the pollinators he has there). There were a lot of federal/state agencies at this meeting, including universities and pollinator societies. Native pollinators were discussed at this meeting to make all agencies aware of what is being done with pollinators and to remind us to look at our practices to help improve them. Dwaine Gelhar-On the NRCS side, there are a number of things going on. A pollinator conservation activity plan has been added to our programming. This plan can be developed by a Technical Support Provider that NRCS will pay for. We are looking for ways to develop more pollinator habitat into our programs. We do some of this in EQIP practices (WHIP). Our agency will look at this more as we move forward. Chris Hamilton-In CRP there has been extensive work done on the conservation practice standards to up the amount of forbs to try to put the best plants in place and update the standard so that we are putting in the type of forbs on the landscape to attract pollinators. CRP has also input that has a pollinator planting. I understand there has been a lot of interest in this.

Right here on Bradford the MDC and MU are working on pollinator research. We are curious about the benefits of different seed sources to wildlife and pollinators themselves. Also whether the supplemental effect to ag crops from native pollinators that have habitat set up on a farm can be useful to commercial crops like it is to native plants. If you are interested in that you can talk to the farm superintendent at Bradford Farm.

With the Farm Bill not passing do you feel that it is crunch time, one priority over another? What is going to happen? NRCS Response: This year we are going to be okay. We have our funding and we are moving forward. Next year if there isn't a Farm Bill we may have issues. WRP will not be reauthorized if we don't have a Farm Bill. Harold Deckerd-Other programs are the same. Flores-It will have a huge impact. FSA will have to deal with this due. There is also sequestration; across the board cuts. There is going to be some impact in FY2014, which starts October 1.

I was told by some of the poultry growers that they were approved for the well drilling, for a certain amount of money, but it was set for cattle. With poultry the well has to go deeper. Whatever the state funded, the farmer has to cover the rest. Can we distinguish between poultry and cattle, so if we have another drought, if it is a poultry farm the requirement is deeper. That way they have sufficient water for the poultry and we aren't just catering to the cattle.

The new standards with tiles/terraces. I realize we don't have any choice in having to use them. If possible, please leave the local office access to the current program. We have people in our county that are willing to put in these conservation programs on their own. Leave us the options to give them the technical assistance to build them with the old standard so we don't have to design a system that has an addition 40-70% increase in cost to someone who is willing to do it on their own. I understand we eventually have to the new system, but let's not force landowners who want to do it on their own to take a design that is that much more expensive. NRCS Response: NRCS has gone to Windows 7 that doesn't support the DOS program. Flores has had close discussions with Meredith who are also getting new computers that have Windows 7. One computer that has the old program on it will be left in the field office until at least January.

I want to know the distinction that we are going to have to draw between the EPA and these watershed plans and the DNR and NRCS. The EPA seems to be acting on their own. They are giving direction on watersheds in our area. I'm concerned that EPA is overstepping in our local watershed. They have offered up a \$30K grant to do some stream bank and riparian work on the upper reaches of the watershed, but they haven't brought MoDOT into it. They are acting on their own and not bringing everyone involved into the picture. EPA Response: Individual with EPA said they don't know anything about the project and she offered to have the individual contact her and she would check into it. The Sandy Creek Watershed is the project in Jefferson County. She said she would talk to the individual after the meeting and get the information she needs to provide to answer the question.

Thursday afternoon, next week, there is a field day at Bradford Farm.

Mark Cadle and J.R. Flores will take additional comments by email up until August 9, 2013.