



**USDA Nebraska State Technical Committee  
Lancaster Extension Education Center, Lincoln NE  
Wednesday August 28, 2013, 1PM  
Meeting Minutes**

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**Welcome, Introductions and Opening Comments – Craig Derickson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist**

- Craig welcomed the committee and thanked everyone for their attendance. (attendees are listed on pages 3 and 4)
- A Continuing Resolution (CR) is being debated in Washington that would provide funding from October 1 – December 15. Additionally, because of the 2012 budget action, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) funding would not be authorized; however, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funds would be continued.
- Some are speculating that it is unlikely that a new Farm Bill will be passed into law by the Sept. 30 expiration date.
- NRCS has filled some vacancies in our field offices.
- NRCS Chief Jason Weller came to Nebraska in June to celebrate the success of the work of our NRDs and Ogallala Aquifer Initiative.

**FY2013 Conservation Program Overview – Brad Soncksen, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs** (PowerPoint presentation)

- It has been a record year for the funds we have received and obligated in Fiscal Year (FY) 2013.
- Conservation Security Program - 765 active contracts in the state. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has replaced the Conservation Security Program, and we are projecting to add 425 contracts in FY13 which will bring the total of active Conservation Stewardship and Conservation security contracts to over 3270 in Nebraska.
- We would like to begin funding energy initiative contracts, but at this time we do not have certified Technical Service Providers available to complete the required farm energy audits.
- In FY 14, we will utilize the 9 priority resource concerns utilized by the revised NRCS planning tool CDSI (Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative). Funding pools will be established using the 9 priority resource concern categories of which 4 will be administered at the local work group level and 5 will be administered on a statewide level. We anticipate approximately 180 fund pools in FY14.

- Documents presented to the EQIP subcommittee were distributed to those in attendance. Copies are available upon request.
- Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI)-The high and medium priority areas as they are currently defined have been difficult to manage. Suggested changes in ranking are being reviewed by NRCS National Headquarters and the 8 states involved with the initiative. We will continue to have high, med, and low priority areas; however, the boundaries may be adjusted.
- Brad reviewed the Practice Payment Schedule changes. (see PowerPoint for full details)

**Farm Service Agency Programs Update – Greg Reisdorff, FSA Program Specialist (PowerPoint presentation)**

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Sign-up: Approved rental rates are posted on the PowerPoint and on a handout provided.
- CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing (EH&G): Last year the whole state was eligible, but this year only about 2/3rds of the state was opened to EH&G.
- Emergency Forestry Restoration Program, Emergency Conservation Program: In 2012, \$5M was received mostly for reconstruction of fences that were burned down in the fires last year. Right now we have funding for Franklin and Harlan counties. Sign up is still going on in Gosper and Furnas Counties.
- Without further additional action on the Farm Bill, CRP funding will be discontinued beginning October 1.

**Web Soil Survey Demonstration – Dan Shurtliff, NRCS Assistant State Soil Scientist (PowerPoint presentation)**

- Dan provided a demonstration on how to use web soil survey found at <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>.
- The software will build and produce a custom soil survey report.
- When the printed soil surveys manuscripts were archived, historical information was included as well. Complete soil surveys (in PDF format) are available at: [http://soils.usda.gov/survey/printed\\_surveys/](http://soils.usda.gov/survey/printed_surveys/)
- If there is an archive soil survey manuscript you are interested in that is not yet available on online, please let Dan know, [daniel.shurtliff@ne.usda.gov](mailto:daniel.shurtliff@ne.usda.gov).
- The free [soil web iPhone app](#) was developed by University of California- Davis. An Android format is available [here](#).
- The app can be used to determine soil types surrounding the user.
- The web soil survey site is also the hub for all NRCS GIS material.

**Off-Site Wetland Determination Methodology– Ritch Nelson, NRCS State Wildlife Biologist (PowerPoint presentation)**

- In the Playas of Western Nebraska, we may be able to make more accurate determinations by using offsite technology.

**Forestry Subcommittee Report – Dennis Adams, Nebraska Forest Service (handouts provided)**

- LB634 - Wildfire Control Act of 2013
- Forestry Subcommittee recommendations for EQIP
- Eastern Red Cedar issue

**Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Grazing Lands**

- Tim Kalkowski, 2010 Leopold Conservation Award recipient, discussed Soil Health and the Rangeland Monitoring Program.
- Jim Luchsinger: The Grazing lands Conservation Initiative is partially funded through NRCS. The committee unique in that it is led by producers and involves all types of farmers and ranchers from small pasture, to organic, as well as more traditional ranching and grazing methods.

**Closing Comments – Craig Derickson, State Conservationist**

- Craig thanked everyone again for their participation and encouraged committee members to contact NRCS staff at any time with additional questions or concerns.

**State Technical Committee Meeting Attendees: August 28, 2013**

*	Designates call-in participant
Alicia Hardin	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Barth Crouch	Playa Lakes Joint Venture
Ben Mullarkey	Audubon Society
Bob Bettger	Department of Natural Resources
Brad Lubben	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Brad Soncksen	NRCS-Assistant State Conservationist/Programs
Craig Derickson	USDA-NRCS State Conservationist
Dan Shurtliff	NRCS Assistant State Soil Scientist
Dave Griffith	NRCS- Water Resources Planner/NDEQ Liaison
Dave Sands	Nebraska Land Trust
Dennis Adams	Nebraska Forest Service
Don McCabe	Nebraska Farmer

Elbert Traylor	Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Eric Zach	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
Greg Reisdorff	Farm Service Agency
*Jason Moudry	Lower Loup Natural Resources District
Jim Luchsinger	The Nature Conservancy
*John Hansen	Nebraska Farmers Union
*Jordan Dux	Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation
*Ken Rahjes	Congressman Adrian Smith's Office
Kent Zimmerman	Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
*Kristen Hassebrook	Nebraska Cattlemen
Lavaine Moore	Farm Service Agency
Lindsey Salestrom	Nebraska Department of Agriculture
Marcia Trompke	Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District
Megan Baker	NRCS-Executive Assistant
Matthew Laughlin	Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska
*Neil Moseman	Senator Deb Fischer's Office
*Pete Davis	US EPA Region & US EPA Region 7
Rich Torpin	NRCS Program Manager
Ritch Nelson	NRCS State Biologist
Robert Swanson	US Geological Survey
Shaun Vickers	NRCS-State Resource Conservationist
Tami Nordman	NRCS-Administrative Assistant
Tim Kalkowski	2010 Leopold Conservation Award recipient
Wally Valasek	Soil and Water Conservation Society
Zach Rigg	NRCS Program Manager