

STAC Meeting  
Nov. 4, 2013  
Draft notes

Attendees:

Partners:

Agee and Vickie Smith, Northeast Elko Conservation District (CD)  
Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD  
Carl Clinger, Big Meadow CD  
Dick Reason, Tonopah CD  
Shammy Rodriguez, Owyhee CD  
Ted Ramsey, NACD Western Issues  
Barbara Perlman-Whyman, NVACD board and Nevada-Tahoe CD  
Duane Petite, The Nature Conservancy  
Brian Thomas, Indian Nations Conservation Alliance  
Randy Emm, UNCE  
Donn Lynch and Cherry Knight, South Fork Indian Reservation  
Reggie Premo, Cooperative Extension  
Jake Tibbitts, president, Nevada Association of Conservation Districts  
Connie Lee, Nevada Dept. of Wildlife  
Tim Rubald, Sagebrush Ecosystem Council  
Joe Locurto, Sandy Quilici, and Doni Bruland, Nevada Conservation District Program  
Ryan Shane and John Watermolen, Nevada Division of Forestry  
Sherman Swanson, UNR

NRCS: State Conservationist Bruce Petersen, Gary Roeder, Heather Emmons, Jaime Jasmine, Lex Riggle, Brien Park, Kory Kulinsky, Andrea Sestanovich, Chuck Petersen, Bill Elder, Susan Looper, Paulette Ballietto, Jarrod Edmunds, Tara Vogle, Andy Laca, Liz Warner, Debra Brackley, Gretchen Beausoleil, Allen Moody, Trina Johnson, Ed Biggs, Justin Feeman, Reid Kelly

Bruce welcomed the members and reviewed the action items from the previous meeting:

Forestry concerns - Bill Elder is working on an agreement with NDF and provided training to NDF staff. Carl mentioned that Nevada is one of two states that doesn't have a forestry fund pool (?). John Watermolen said it is difficult to generate interest among private landowners. Ryan Shane said that NDF used to spend \$50,000 a year on forestry practices and grants would run 3-5 years, but with the fund shift, they don't spend any. Difficulty with differences in terminology, standards/specifications, and getting landowners to contact another agency for funding assistance. **ACTION:** Bruce asked Bill to continue working on this.

Drainage - Bruce said that local work groups (LWG) can target funds for drainage projects.

NEPA on Public Land - regulations for applying EQIP projects on public land are still slowing us up.

Energy Plans - Bruce hopes there is increased interest in energy audits with the increased costs of pumping. There was discussion about the availability of TSPs to conduct audits in Nevada. Bruce said if there is workload, we can get the TSP's to service Nevada.

Tribal Grazing Mgmt. - Bruce said we had 3 or 4 applications

Pest Mgmt. – Bruce stated that this issue still needs some work. Carl Clinger said noxious weed issues are a significant problem in his area. **ACTION:** Suggested a working group. Pest management is a 1-year contract now. Gary wasn't aware that that had changed. Has to be associated with management practice.

Dick Reason commented that seeding after weed treatment is needed to get a handle on the reemergence. Said weed management should be part of the conservation plan. **ACTION:** Said NRCS needs to resolve the 1-year/3-year issue.

Pipe – Bruce said payment has been changed to pay by foot, not pound.

Razor Rock – Carl said the decision to approve razor rock on a case-by-case basis isn't what they need. (Clarification?) **ACTION?**

Local Work Group Subcommittee – Bruce said that a couple of meetings were held to discuss local work groups and a number of issues were identified. Gary read off a list of local work groups (some were missing): [include list](#)

Bruce said DC's received training in April. He attended the Elko LWG meeting this morning and thought it was functioning well; they identified LWG concerns. He asked for comments from the committee members:

- Carl said the LWG committee developed about 2 pages of recommendations including training. He had reviewed the training given to DCs and would have liked to see an example of how a LWG should operate.
- Maggie said she doesn't understand the process.
- Carl said that the LWG had been submitting bulleted lists with explanations, but now Gary doesn't want that; Gary wants a 5-year plan. Carl said his LWG is struggling to know what NRCS wants and they are not going to meet until NRCS know what they want. **ACTION:** Lex will work with the LWG.
- Dick said he thought the LWG subcommittee got off track. Thinks the problem is lack of communication – not hearing back from the State Office about issues and solutions. He said they held four meetings and the major issue was that they didn't know what NRCS was doing. He'd like NRCS and LWGs to work together to fix this.

- Jake said he is new to the process. Thought the training was helpful. Feels like LWGs are driven by the NRCS State Office but issues are supposed to come from the district/LWG level.

Bruce said that all NRCS field offices will be getting videoconference capability and hopefully the state office can start participating in LWG meetings by video.

Accomplishments:

Bruce said it was a banner year, particularly for the easement program. Spent about \$15 million on easements. Is continuing to support various partnerships, including Pheasants Forever, Nev. Dept. of Wildlife, and Sagebrush Ecosystem Council to help get conservation practices implemented. NRCS is also implementing the Secretary's StrikeForce Initiative that is bringing more money into the state to assist underserved customers. Nevada is targeting assistance to Native American producers.

Farm Bill – Bruce said there is strong bipartisan support for the conservation title of the new Farm Bill. NRCS can still authorize funds under EQIP, CSP, WHIP and WRPP

Energy Audits – Gary explained . . .

How many Technical Service Providers (TSPs) do we have? 2-3. The question was raised if NRCS can advertise better for TSPs.

Brien Park, NRCS soil scientist, made a presentation on the new Soil Health Initiative. Brien said soil scientists can allocate 10% of their time to help producers with soil issues.

- There was discussion about factors affecting soil health and applications being denied because of soil condition.
- Jake asked for examples of what neighbors have done or are doing; asked about the possibility of demonstration projects or funding for test plots.
- Agee asked how soil health can be applied to range. Bruce said a range component is coming.
- Carl suggested both education and demonstration components.

Carl said that a soils study was done on his ranch about 3-4 years ago but he never heard back. Christie was the middle-person. **ACTION:** Lex will follow up.

Program Allocations – Gary reviewed allocations, and fund pools and GARC rates. (Reference handouts) Said FRPP allocation is coming; not certain about GRP or WRP. **ACTION:** Gary asked for comments on the ranking tools for WRP, GRP, and FRPP by December 1.

**ACTION:** Gary asked for proposals for 2014 fund pools.

Water Quality Initiative – Lex Riggle gave a presentation on the water quality initiative in Churchill County. He mentioned the new dry milk plant that is being built and the impact that will have on producers.

**Discussion/Action Items:**

- Barbara asked if the Nevada-Tahoe LWG could be combined with the Washoe/Truckee LWG instead of the Carson Valley LWG. (check these lwg names with Gary's list)
- Dick asked what percentage of projects were not funded. Gary didn't know a percentage but said we have a backlog of projects.
- Connie asked what NRCS can do to increase use of TSPs; outreach?