

**Minnesota State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**May 25, 2017**  
**Waite Park Field Office,**  
**110 2nd Street S, Suite 128**  
**Waite Park, MN**  
**9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Attendees:

Cathee Pullman, NRCS	Jeff Hastings, Trout Unlimited
Ryan Galbreath, NRCS	Jason Garms, DNR
Sheldon Myerchin, USFWS	Bob Hoefert, MNSWCD
Shannon Carpenter, NRCS	Warren Formo MAWRC
Jennifer Sweeney, NRCS	Thom Peterson, MN Farmers Union
Rob Sip, MDA	Daniel Block, NRCS
John Beck, NRCS	Jennifer Wollenweber, NRCS
Lanette Dietrich, NRCS	Tim Hepola, Shakopee Duluth Sioux Tribe
Angela Hanson, FSA	Neal Feeken, TNC
Nick Vira, NRCS	Paula Sunde, Senator Franken’s Office
Amanda Deans, NRCS	Jason Reichel, NRCS
Jim Kukowski, MN Soybean Growers	Kristin Kust, NRCS
Fawad Shah, MCIA	Marcie Weinandt, NRCS
Rhonda Osterman, NRCS	Mark Oja, NRCS
Steve Hockett, Great River Greening	Aaron Meyer, Rural Development

Opening Remarks: Cathee Pullman

- Welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**Watershed subcommittee update - Shannon Carpenter, NRCS**

The “MSTC Watershed Selection Criteria” document was brought to the full Minnesota State Technical Committee (MSTC) for approval and final recommendation to the State Conservationist for full adoption. The MSTC members had the following overarching comments during the discussion:

1. They noticed and liked the structure of the 40-40-20 points split between the three sections, but wanted more details of how those points would be spread through the sub-categories within each of the three sections.

They noted some concerns with the “local readiness” section of the document to many “subjective” statements and recommended the watershed committee work towards refining this section to reflect the overall current objectives with the criteria but make the statements more “quantitative” or measurable.

**Decision Point:** To move forward to using watershed selection criteria with comments from MSTC. The MSTC agreed that a “draft” MSTC watershed selection criteria should be sent out

statewide for local staff to start gearing up or identifying with the expectations of potentially submitting an application when a solicitation of watershed proposals comes out.

### **Soil Health Strategic Plan timeline and a brief update on statewide training – John Beck, NRCS**

Partner feedback: as a partner with a shared goal of implementing soil health in MN, how do you see your efforts best utilized in this partnership?

Cathee asked for thoughts from the attending partners and agencies on this plan.

### **Easement Programs - Lanette Dietrich, NRCS**

Honeybees on easements – Lanette and Ryan discussed compatible use authorizations and how it applies to bee hives and honeybees on easements. It was suggested to have someone from the Minnesota Honey Bee Association on the committee.

**Decision Point:** Put together a subcommittee to review honeybee criteria for easements and develop parameters for Minnesota easements including the University of Minnesota and FWS on the discussion.

### **Economic evaluation of NRCS and partner programs using Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN) software - June Grabemeyer, NRCS**

June discussed use and sharing of economic information and to show the economic activity generated in the local economy by conservation practices in Minnesota.

### **Local Work Groups – Nick Vira**

In accordance with the Farm Bill, Local Working Groups are subcommittees of the NRCS State Technical Committee and provide recommendations to USDA on local and state natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs. According to NRCS Program policy, it is recommended that SWCDs should convene the Local Working Group.

The Locally Led Work Group Report, May 1, 2017\_FINAL will be sent out to the MSTC.

### **FSA Update - Angela Hanson, FSA**

FSA Update on CRP and CREP

1. National Notice CRP-828 was issued on May 3, 2017 regarding CRP Signup 50 Contract Approvals. In summary CCRP offers received prior to May 3, 2017 are being processed as normal. CCRP offers received starting May 4, 2017 are being accepted and sent to NRCS for eligibility, however are unable to be approved or sent to NRCS for conservation planning. Clarified that CREP offers are not subject to the May 3, 2017 deadline and CREP offers can be processed as normal.

2. CRP National Acreage Cap: FSA National Office is monitoring the 24 million acre cap. With a new Secretary of Agriculture being confirmed, the FSA National Office will be reviewing potential options with him on how the balance of acres currently available and due to expire should be utilized moving forward. The FSA National Office will continue to keep State Offices informed.
3. CREP: Signup started on May 15, 2017. CREP acres are included in the 24 million acre cap, however the FSA National Office is monitoring overall CRP acres and stated CREP offers can continue to be enrolled as acres are available. Minnesota can enroll a maximum of 60,000 acres under this CREP agreement. FSA is working on a database for tracking CREP and will also be issuing a PII form for information sharing form between BSWR and FSA. BSWR has a webpage for CREP.
4. MN Buffer Law: Discussion was raised regarding MN Buffer Law and CCRP enrollment. Explained that MN Buffer law is a MN State requirement. CCRP continues to follow FSA CRP policy, regardless of the MN State requirements. At this time, landowners can continue to submit CCRP offers, however there is no guarantee that they will have approved contracts prior to the MN Buffer deadline. MN will need to determine if those offers meet the buffer requirements.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2017.

Adjourned