

**Nevada NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Transcript
Nov. 17, 2016, Las Vegas NRCS Field Office**

Attendance roster:

Nevada State Office:

Paulette Balliette, NRCS; Sherman Swanson, UNR/CABNR/UNCE; Jarrod Edmunds, NRCS; Clint Koble, FSA; Jan Kolvet, FSA; Mark Coca, BLM; Cheva Gabor, VSFS

Las Vegas Field Office:

Ray Dotson, NRCS State Conservationist; Julie Malvitz, NRCS Asst. State Conservationist for Partnerships; Teri Knight, NRCS District Conservationist; Bill Elder, NRCS State Resource Conservationist; Gary Roeder, NRCS Asst. State Con. For Program, Melissa Blair, NRCS Acting State PAS; Maggie Orr, President NVACD; Amber Bosket, Corrie Bosket and Eric King, CD Southern Nevada; Agee Smith, Elko Co. CD; Barbara Perlman-Whyman, NV Tahoe CD/NACD; Lauren Williams, White Pine CD; Dick Reason, Tonopah Conservation District; Stan Hardy, producer; Andi Porreca, NVACD/HWCWMA; Bruce Boyer, Clover CD; Birgit Henson, NDEP

Elko Field Office:

Jaime Jasmine, DC NRCS; Kory Kulinsky, NRCS; Rachelle Peppers, Pheasants Forever/NRCS; James Rudy Blossom, Sho Pai Tribes; Sam Cisney, BLM-Elko

Yerington Field Office:

Ed Biggs, NRCS; Eweda Martinez, Walker River Paiute Tribe; Angela Mushrush, NRCS

Minden Field Office:

Jessica Gwerder, NRCS; Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD

Rural Development – Carson City Office:

Jim Gifford, NRCS; Kelly Clark, USDA-RD; Heather Giger, NDF

Fallon Field Office:

Lex Riggle, NRCS

Lovelock Field Office:

Christie Scilacci, NRCS Carl Clinger, BMCD

Ely Field Office:

Connie Lee, NDOW; Ed Stuges, NRCS

Winnemucca Field Office:

Leah Mori, NRCS; Bobbie Jones, NRCS/NDOW; Sherry Yarnell, retired soil biologist

Meeting Minutes

Ray Dotson welcomed everyone. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

Ray asked if attendees had any changes to last STAC meeting notes. There were no changes.

Ray encouraged attendees who have told him about the great job NRCS staff are doing around the state, to please tell that to the staff themselves to encourage them. He said the sincerity of a personal thank to NRCS staff means a lot more coming from the producer and they need to hear that directly.

Ray introduced Julie Malvitz, new Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships. Julie came to Nevada from Montana, where she was Assistant for Field Operations in Great Falls, MT, and worked with NRCS staff and Tribal nations. She has also worked in Washington D.C. as Programs Manager for the national organics program, which she offered to share her knowledge. Julie has worked her way up through the ranks, and is looking forward to meeting all of the conservation districts and their boards.

Ray introduced James “Jim” Komar, new State Soil Scientist, coming from Red Bluff, CA, who started his new role on Mon. Nov. 14th and will be in Reno office on Dec. 5th. His 28 years with NRCS were in California in a variety of roles. Jim is a results-oriented person, passionate about helping clients effectively manage their soil resource to maximize conservation and production goals. He will be leaning on the conservation professionals across Nevada to help him get oriented to his new state and position.

Ray gave the floor to Bill Elder who has been with Nevada NRCS for 12 years in several different roles. Bill is moving to Michigan as Asst. for Field Operations. His last day will be Dec. 11th with Nevada.

Upcoming hiring positions: Ely hiring for range conservationist and engineer; in Fallon hiring range conservationist, and area resource conservation for programs; in Reno, Tribal liaison position, two administrative positions and State Resource Conservationist. Trying to fill these positions before a hiring freeze with administrative change.

Attendees received policies handouts for the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) and Local Working Groups (LWG), which has requirements that NRCS is going to fulfill (Posted in Handouts). By policy, STAC includes individuals who represent entities, and the way to become a member of committee is by sending in justification on why you want to be a part of the STAC. To be in compliance with the policy to turn this into a working committee, whose goal it is to look at policy and things going on around the state, and to make recommendations to the State Conservationist on how NRCS delivers its programs. Same thing for LWG, Ray had talked to Jake Tibbits, NVACD president prior to meeting, and now will be working with Maggie Orr, new NVACD president, so NRCS know exactly whom these individuals are.

Ray said it is critically important because he hears from producers and others, “Why show up, when you are not listening to us anyway.” NRCS has gotten so far away from the way this process is designed to operate. We need to get the LWG and STAC members together so Conservation District meeting minutes are addressed by the LWG. Then the LWG submits information to STAC, where they address local issues and try to mesh that into a state perspective so NRCS can do a better job of not losing those issues that are important on the local level. In addition, we are working to do that a way that improves the parity, the fairness or equity of funding and services around the state.

NRCS will be working with the CDs for STAC members. Some individuals will be automatically on the STAC based on their roles they serve, i.e. Maggie Orr as President of NVACD. NRCS will announce who the STAC members are. Even if you are not on STAC, you can still attend meetings.

Ray visits with producers and partners as he travels the state, but he wants to start having two or three town hall meetings a year with no agenda, to visit about local issues and concerns to get a better understanding of what is going on across the state.

Ray really wants to hear from producers: “NRCS is here to serve you. My motto is, producers in this state go out of business, so I am joined at the hip with you. My livelihood depends on your livelihood, and I do

not lose. If I am not going to lose, then you are not going to lose; so we are in this together. Look forward to these opportunities coming in the future.”

Ray shared that NV NRCS has been working with National Headquarters regarding the irrigation policy, which requires producers to irrigate the past 2 of the last 5 years. With the drought and producers not getting water to irrigate, it puts up a natural issue that is causing barrier to NRCS program on being able to work with you if you want to make improvements to your operation. NRCS have been working with national office to get some relief from this policy so folks are eligible for programs, and not eligible because of a natural disaster that has kept them from irrigating. NV NRCS has sent letter with supporting documentation and as soon we know on ruling we will let Maggie know to share with CDs.

In NV with Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) from 2014 to 2016, NRCS has only spent \$440K over three years. National perspective of program from Oct. 1, 2015 to Sept. 30, 2016, NRCS has put provided over \$900 million of financial assistance contracts for CSP compared to our \$440K over three years.

Ray challenged the attendees with Nevada’s state motto, “Battle Born” to get in the fight to get NRCS conservation assistance on the ground! For leaders and ag producers to understand NRCS programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and to respond by sharing about the program and encouraging producers to apply for the program. Battle against the idea of it being too much paperwork, because if NV NRCS does not use the funds then they will go to other states and our producers lose out. Other states are seizing the opportunity to use these funds and NV producers need to do the same.

NV NRCS responded to push on soil health priority by forming a cadre that will be bringing in national NRCS soil health experts to train 20 of our staff in April 2017 to be able to spread the knowledge. NRCS will bring in our producers and partners after training to see how we can improve soil health such as making small changes to your operation that will be beneficial long term.

Clint Koble, FSA State Executive Director in Reno, Clint shared in FY16, that NV FSA made almost \$20 million worth of loans to producers with half going to beginning farmers/ranchers. This is good since the average age of the producer is increasing and production is moving to next generation.

The loan portfolio is up about 20 percent because of low commodity prices, so FSA is doing more loan restructuring and loan servicing. Overall, statewide loan delinquency rate is very low. For guaranteed loans, it is less than 1 percent and for direct loans its 5.5 percent so FSA is still making good loans. FSA will just have to work harder to keep some loans in place with the low commodity prices.

In Jan. 2016, FSA moved into new office in Winnemucca along with NRCS and Forest Service. Tribe outreach since the 2014 Farm Bill, FSA has gone directly to tribes to get program sign ups (LFP and NAP). In last few years, FSA has seen a 50-60% increase in Native American producer signups for programs.

Last year, NV Dept. Board of Agriculture decided to terminate the organics program. Clint started movement to form Basin and Range Organics and by Jan. 2016, they were accredited. Now Basin and Range Organics are certifying all of the organic producers in the state, and even extending to regional with certifications in Northeast CA and Utah too.

Clint shared that FSA yearly administrator award went to three staff in NV. Movement to right size some of the county offices to distribute staffing, service territory and workload, broke apart Ely and Elko with Mickey Lyons in Ely. Working to fill three main FSA positions before possible hiring freeze after first of the year.

Nationally in FY16 first time in FSA history, the farm loan program broke the \$7 Billion barrier across the country with 50% or more going to beginning farmers/ranchers. People say government does not work, but this is a great example of how government does work. FSA is making good loans and to the right people with the new generation and urban farmers.

Demand for organic production sharply increasing with an 11% dollar increase, and 22% increase in acres, with the demand outstripping the supply each year, especially here in NV. Great promise for organics in the future.

Increase in receipts for service that USDA agencies are required to give to producers for activities completed. Bridges to Opportunity, partnership program that helps FSA assist folks who come into office with agricultural questions that are not USDA related, where they can refer them to resource directory of local, state and federal, and other partners. Continuing outreach efforts with StrikeForce, working with underserved producers in high poverty areas, including the Native American tribes.

Discussed low prices for next few years and FSA is here to help producers. New Farm Bill in 2018 with major changes coming in RPLC, dairy program, major emphasis on beginning farmers/ranchers as well as urban farmers/producers. Not going to take our eyes/efforts off commodity producers, but being challenged to work to make loans to the new agriculture producers in urban areas. One of the challenges is working in rural areas where FSA knows where the farms and ranches are, but in urban areas, the producers are small and scattered in different areas so it will be up to all of us to share information with them.

With the election, Clint will be transitioning out from FSA with last day on Jan. 20, 2017 at noon.

Jan Kolvet, Farm Bills Program Chief, have not received Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) for FY17. Two outstanding ECP requests for fire and fencing, at standstill with no funds. Few counties in D3 drought, but no requests for drought assistance yet. Received new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for small acreages of 200 acres or less, working on applications but with low rental rates in NV it is hard to find interested producers.

Jeff Yasui, Director of the Davis CA office, USDA-Risk Management Agency, (RMA), His office covers five states, AZ, NV, UT, HI and CA. RMA oversees crop insurance programs throughout the U.S, cover about 300 million acres nationwide, which is about 65-70 percent of agricultural land. RMA provides actuarial data such as rates, premium amounts, yields that are used and policy language to crop insurance companies.

In NV, there are 11 crop covered and some livestock programs headed up by the Pasture, Rangeland and Forage Program (PRF) for grazed or hayed land. In Nevada, 4 million acres are covered, which is up from 2 million acres the prior year. Most of the acreage from last year increase is in PRF. Under this program, if there is less than normal rainfall in a grid area, then you may be paid based on your coverage level. Most every year, growers will collect an indemnity on it if there is a shortage of rain.

Insure about 60K acres of row crops in NV. RMA has contracts with about 19 crop insurance companies to provide the insurance across the U.S. to producers. The companies will have their independent agencies write the paperwork, provide policy work with growers directly and who growers report their production too. There are deadlines to purchase, it automatically renews if no cancelled, and cost is same from all crop insurance companies and agents that is why USDA oversees it. No rebates or promotions are allowed. Crop insurance premiums are subsidized about 60% by the federal government and producer has to be in compliance with conservation compliance provisions, such as AD1026 with FSA and possibly a conservation plan with NRCS. If not, it could triple their premium. Conservation compliance came in

with the 2014 Farm Bill and exposed more people to USDA and USDA programs. Many growers had not been into a USDA office until they had to meet conservation compliance.

Whole Farm Revenue Program started under 2014 Farm Bill and if grower doesn't have a crop that is insurable then they can get a policy to cover the whole farm's revenue. If there is a revenue drop, then the producer may be paid based on the coverage level. Only program to guarantee revenue on your property for the whole farm. Gaining popularity, but since tax records are reviewed for the policy and it is a new concept, many producers have not gone this route yet.

Crop insurance pays on crop loss to weather and natural disasters but not poor farming practices. Some crop insurance can cover revenue drop with low commodity prices. Row crop insurance can cover prevented plantings due drought or other weather conditions. Loss must occur during insurance period.

The 2014 Farm Bill made crop insurance the risk management tool and expanded how insurance can reduce risks, which took some of the disaster programs and other risk management tools for farmers. It increased beginning farmer/rancher provisions, including allowing veterans not to count those years in service and providing better premium rates and higher yields. Yield exclusions were also provided for all insureds, so if the yield falls below 50% of a 10-year average in a county then it may be taken out of their database. This allows them to have a low yield that will not affect their future insurance, and they will be able to maintain higher yield averages and get higher indemnities for future losses.

Ten things to know about crop insurance (slides)

In 2015, NV data, for every \$1 in premium paid in, \$5 was paid out by crop insurance due to heavy losses that year. So far in 2016 for every \$1 in premium paid in, about \$2 is being paid out.

There is a lack of agents in NV, so looking into solutions to bring more homegrown agents in. Discussed what it takes to be a crop insurance agent.

Richard Lopez, Beginning Farmer Regional Coordinator, USDA-FSA- New Mexico State Office, area covers NM, AZ and NV.

Outreach goal to bring all of the 17 agencies of the USDA under one umbrella so when a beginning producer walks into a service center to have the basic agency info in sync to be able to share this info with producer, a one stop shop info resource center. USDA has dedicated \$5.6 Billion to run through FY2017 on beginning farmers including veterans. Serving veterans to assist them in farming or ranching goals. Gave example of providing information to producer who has come into office, but NRCS could not help with home well, but another agency had a program so the producer was referred and able to get the help needed.

Discussed value added grant and how this program can help producers and how other agencies can share this information with producers they are working with. We are all this together and need to ensure producers have all the tools/info needed to succeed. Look outside of the box like nonprofits working with agencies and USDA for land acquisition, to bring new focus to rural areas and their population to help veterans and others.

How can we integrate resources to make a difference? Shared examples about rural areas where two grocery stores closed down in rural NM and getting groceries was 70 miles round trip. Through partnership efforts, they were able to develop a quasi-government grocery entity to help these communities in NM. Now they are bringing food boxes out to low income families to be able to get fresh produce at \$20 a box and on SNAP its \$10/box.

Biggest challenges are land tenure and access to capital for new producers and how we can help these producers. Examples of urban farm pilots are being offered along with water to help new producers gain experience and have land to produce and as they do well they get larger amounts of land to expand. How do we maximize the land, extend the growing season? By expanding hoop houses, drip system and other “normal” conservation practices to urban producers.

How do we help provide experience to new producers? Look outside the box on “unused” agricultural land such as corners of irrigated land that is not used.

Help producer focus on maintaining good farm business records, loss, profit, income/loss statement so when they come in needing help, they have records they need. Farm number for a lot even in urban areas for agriculture production.

Carl Clinger in Lovelock commented to Clint about beginning farmer loan. Carl is president of NV Goat Producers Assn. and told Clint, numerous people contact FSA about selling raw milk, but that is illegal in NV. Carl encouraged Clint to educate staff that they are not able to help with loans for selling raw milk.

Bill Elder, Asst. State Resource Conservationist (PPT/handout), How Local Work Group resource concerns are integrated into NRCS Program and Technical Delivery

Take a common resource concern, such as weeds (invasive species) which are a common problem in NV and the west. Most LWG have it on their priority list. How is an issue considered? The first thing we do is look at the weed problem and translate that into a resource concern. NRCS has five resource concerns: soil, water, air, plants, and animals, (SWAPA) and more recently added human/social resource concerns and energy. In thinking about these resource concerns, where would we find weeds? Plants.

Conservation Planning is the foundation for sound program delivery. Handout with Natural Resource Concerns (showed slide of handout) for degraded plant conditions from pests/other plants, wildfire hazard, and based on these conditions, the weed issue becomes a resource concern. Matrix of where this resource concern applies then you look at the land types: Crop, range, pasture, etc. This resource concern plant/pest pressure on these lands or even in barnyard, which can contribute to other problems.

NRCS delivers technical and financial assistance on private lands and funded by federal government. In order for NRCS to do our thing, we have to consider the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The reason NRCS is able to do what we do in compliance in NEPA is because it's a scientific process to deliver programs and services to private lands without going through environmental assessments and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), a required activity by NEPA – unless one has a waiver...NRCS does, which sets us apart from other agencies.

What are the practices NRCS can use to address this invasive species problem? We have a table called Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE), which keeps us in compliance with NEPA and a tremendous tool. Each white box has a number in it, which shows the impact of applying that practice to the land, where negative numbers means a negative impact. A Conservation Planner uses this tool to make conservation recommendations. Alternative generation, or practices used in combination, that are necessary. Sometimes there are other issues, for example a water body in the area where spraying is not a good idea. This matrix is what helps NRCS provide sound assistance and sound advice to a landowner. Once we go through the conservation planning process and develop the alternatives and landowner select alternatives. For the technical aspect, the landowner tells us what they want to do, where and when they want to do it to address the resource concern.

Gary Roeder, Asst. State Conservationist for Programs, and the policy the agency follows for the LWG to advise NRCS at the local level about the highest priority concerns in their area. This is very helpful since

we are at a disadvantage because we cover a lot of area with high volume public lands that separate private lands. We are dry across the state and not a lot of difference of what folks do on the landscape and struggle with similar issues. Provides DC what the priority concerns are, and how to rank applications on what conservation practices provides the most benefit. Screening application defines what priority it falls in. Explained low priority project to higher priority projects for funding. Single step or multiple step to solve or improve resource concern(s) or doing all they can to address resource concern identified. LWG can work with the DC on the local/state ranking questions to tweak them on how they are asked to get the type of projects at the local level. We are required to use National Questions. Need to know what type of projects are going on in the local area. We are trying to be transparent in all areas.

Maggie Orr asked if there is a time of year that we need to have that information to NRCS? Gary said, before we release tools for the Fiscal year's upcoming programs, which is around Aug/Sept. Maggie asked why so late this year is there a lag? Ray said we are getting into the heart of it, and this is where everyone has to do their part. Normally NRCS has STAC meeting with NVACD to get participation and feedback. Ray has heard that if NRCS has STAC at another time, we will not have participation. In order to meet policy and to get the feedback NRCS needs in a timely manner, need to have LWG outside of STAC meetings with active participants.

Eric King asked Ray to characterize what granulation from various agencies? Policy (handout) shows individuals that must be on STAC committee. LWG is also a committee with individual's names who are responsible for holding these meetings. Policy believes in this so strongly, that if LWG don't meet, the DC has to move it forward and so if LWG aren't there, then we still have to do it and go off our own knowledge to get folks together who will talk to us.

Ray reading policy on handout: Each STAC must include representatives from **all** of the following: NRCS, FSA, FSA State Committee, U.S Forest Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, each federally recognized tribe/government encompassing over 100K acres in state, Assn. of SWCDs, state agriculture agencies, fish and wildlife, forestry, water resources, ag producers, non industrial private ag lands, nonprofits, agribusiness and other federal agencies and other knowledgeable on environmental impacts. STAC and LWG to look like the state of NV.

NRCS receives financial assistance of \$6 to \$8 million a year of taxpayer money gets allocated to me as State Conservationist to distribute through Farm Bill Programs that have gone through a public comment periods and been authorized from your taxpayer dollars to benefit producers in the State of Nevada. This is so important that USDA sets it up to have programs that are publicly commented on, and then have groups provide feedback and provide feedback on how to implement at the local and state level. You have the authority as a group, not as individual, this is what we think is best for Nevada.

All great opportunities comes with a lot of responsibility and is going to take a lot of work. It is going to require some changes to the system, but if we can make those changes to the system, you become more knowledgeable about the process on what NRCS and our partners and producers are doing to get more dollars on the ground more effectively. Then we are winning.

Bill Elder recommend each CD to come up with top five resource concern issues to share with LWG, STAC and Ray, to hit the needs in each area. A resource concern can be local as well as statewide.

Ray Dotson: The national questions and percentages are set by headquarters, and we can't change those. The state questions count 25% and you can help with developing these questions and how they should be weighted with 250 points that can be allocated. Questions can be weighted to influence how best taxpayer money is utilized in the state by giving that feedback to NRCS.

Maggie Orr asked if NRCS could attend one of the CD meetings to explain this process for the members. It is hard for her, not going through the process how to explain it.

Ray told Maggie as elected leader of NVACD that he will be coming to her on for identifying names for LWG and STAC official members and go through process with the local group.

Dick Reason wanted to make sure that their high concern is also NRCS high concern. Ray: I hear you, same argument, system is designed to let you have control at the local level but the STAC is going to have to look at the whole state and figure out how we are going to take questions to make them representative for the state. CDs working with LWG and STACs letting them know what the top priority is.

Ray you should be able to see questions and what the rankings look like, and other information to give you info to make informed decisions, but no PII info. Dick Reason warned about prior STAC meetings where farmers/ranchers voices were lost. Ray said it would resemble Governor Sandoval's Sagebrush Ecosystem Council, which has all different sectors that represent Nevada. When CDs are having meetings and they voice issues that has to be funneled through LWG and STAC. We do not always get what we want every time and often times it is slow.

Turned floor back to Bill, questions. Eric question what LWG have had good responses in NV Eureka County in packet has feedback from LWG

Agee: In Elko Co. we have Elko Co. Assn of CD, it has 8 CDs and if we expanded it to have other groups can we use that as our LWG? DC be a member of LWG but not leading it. CD meeting, top issues forwarded to LWG then to STAC for state perspective.

DC can provide assistance with set up issues and turning those into resource concerns and outcome. Ray Use VTC where we need to and provide access. Ray's info is on the internet and he is available to talk too.

Eureka Conservation District regarding groundwater resource for Diamond Valley, Gary Roeder, Asst. State Resource Conservationist for Programs (Letter)

Excellent example of how LWG and locally led conservation can impact EQIP and other programs. Asking NRCS to set up separate fund pool in Diamond Valley.

Dick Reason the situation is the same all over the state with over allocation, it should go to any over allocated water basins, but DV is worse.

Barbara, no federal funding for CD, groundwater issues, sediments, need to find way to fit into the picture from funding to working groups cause we didn't fit criteria. Using Tahoe CD as example and need take good hard look, we represent the whole state.

Maggie, Dick's thought get LWG going for drain projects with listing of LWG and uncomfortableness that it was too formal with some of the groups. There may be push back in rural areas even if you are on CD, you are too tied to the government. Make meetings informal, and be careful about other agencies that they are much smarter than we are. Maggie, set this up to win and not fail.

Ray: we are putting good solid conservation on the ground. Can't let social issues affect our good work on the landscape and keep putting projects on the ground

Gary: Partners can be involved at locally level to focus on comprehensive problem solving.

Gary Roeder, State Conservationist for Programs: NRCS Programs-Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Easement Programs, 2017 funding pools

2016 comparison from 2015 (handout)

Trend data for Sagegrouse Contracts (handout)

Need to make sure what happens in the past, and we have had late signups and had to have other batching periods so it's critical we keep up outreach opportunities, RMPs with BLM,

Proposed fund pools for FY17 under 2014 Farm Bill, none added. Nine locally led fund pools and state fund pools. (Handout)

Addressing Eureka request it is in the local fund pool with Elko, so target funds NRCS would have to split Eureka and Elko or use state fund pool to allocate additional funds with ranking questions for that area.

Eureka Co. District Letter, what they want to address, prioritize in that basin, working with state water rights. (Handout)

Ray said the biggest tool is management, the irrigation water management. NRCS contracts do not have many irrigation water management. How do we get producers to use IWM as management tool?

Flood irrigated to center pivots, using bunch of water just at slower rate. If you do not have IWM to manage water, help promote using management practices around the state.

Gary: Conservation innovation grants submitted to national headquarters by Jan. 9th. More detail are on the NRCS website.

RCPP: NV NRCS has had three pre-proposals requested from last FY that were requested to submit full proposals under evaluation for the national fund pool. Each year NV NRCS receives allocation for state sponsored RCPP funding, but last year we did not receive funding because we did not have any applications. Significant partners leveraging these funds so will request pre-proposal in March or April of this year for FY18 funding. Ray said NHQ has called asking why Nevada is one of the last states with no state funded RCPP. It is decided in the state for funding. Anyone who wants to put in a proposal with partnerships to leverage funds including CD, FFA, to do something that achieves conservation outcomes on agricultural land in NV. Think along national policy, the more partners you have the better to leverage funding and technical assistance. Fund distribution is based on lifetime of proposal. Following national guidelines to select state proposal.

Gary: Easement program: Concurrence from STAC on geographic area rate caps for wetland reserve easement (WRE). For FY17 same as FY16. Last year we discussed use of wetland reserve easements with a reserved grazing right option where landowner could retain grazing rights. (Handout/slide/map) Reserved grazing rights is worth 25% reduction if landowner selects that option. Handout breaks out enrollment options, Sagestep wetlands and desert wetlands throughout the state. Could not focus on specific areas of the state so we submitted whole state might be eligible. Still have to meet land and person eligibility. Wetland easement enrollments with wildlife habitats that are compatible with livestock grazing require outlined grazing management provisions in an exhibit to the deed. Worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Nevada Dept of Wildlife (NDOW) on this proposal for evaluation. Maggie asked about the difference between Sagestep and desert. Gary: because climate, grazing dates and plant communities are different.

Dick Reason values of ground varies drastically what is worth what in small areas. In our area, as we get into water right issues and things change dramatically. One area would be over allocated area, water becomes so valuable that it shoots land prices up. Farm ground needs to be protected, but these rates will not work to accomplish this. The water is worth more on some of these grounds than the entire farm is producing. Cannot make it one size fits all. **Concurrence by STAC of rates.**

CSP Key Concept changes (PPT) to make it more flexible and provides more opportunities. Feb. 3, 2017 application deadline. Want CD and LWG sponsor outreach events on CSP. Ray asked everyone to tell five folks about CSP. Gary went over ppt slides. Private lands, not public lands. Similar to EQIP in many ways. Associated agricultural land exemption is like center pivot corners, where it is not being managed as part of ag operation. During renewal process, you can enroll new acres bought. If you participated in EQIP and finished it, you are probably ready to participate in CSP. Explained enhancements like basic irrigation water scenario to a higher water management. Can do an enhancement bundle. Enhancements linked to NRCS conservation practice standards.

CSP opportunities in Nevada to improve operation, natural resources and be paid for taking conservation to a higher level.

Maggie inquired about putting the CSP presentation on NVACD website.

Dick Reason does not want NRCS looking at something so broad that you do not help Diamond Valley, they are worse than rest of us.

Barbara every CD aware of this and share information presented today with timelines. Communication and feedback as a priority that would be an asset.

Brigit here to coordinate with NRCS, CD, water quality, riparian restoration, work on private lands and working to leverage funds. Committed funds to RCPP proposal.

Carl asked about minutes from last year's meeting. Carl and Dick have brought up, we used to meet longer and we ran over today. There are many things we skimmed over so encouraged by town hall meetings. Committees to look at subjects and committees never met. Encouraged Ray to follow through with town hall meetings.

Eric King, inquired about more video outreach to share information. PAS Heather Emmons who is on detail has completed videos with more to come.

The meeting ended at 12:35 p.m.