

**Missouri State Technical Committee
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Conducted via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting
10:00am – 11:30am, Wednesday, August 25, 2021**

Introductions & Welcome

David Doctorian, NRCS ASTC Partnerships & Initiatives, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees to the meeting. Approximately 32 individuals were online and participating. David introduced the Directors of both the Farm Services Agency (FSA) and NRCS.

Scott Edwards, NRCS, State Conservationist

Mr. Edwards welcomed everyone in attendance. Introduced himself as Missouri State Conservationist. He gave a summary of current NRCS priorities and activities. Edwards discussed Missouri as having significant progress with EQIP contracting and being ahead of previous years efforts. Thanks to State Cost share, Missouri is a leading state in the nation for delivering conservation efforts on the ground. Edwards also addressed CRP workload and potential future funding to support improved delivery of technical assistance to interested producers.

Jeremy Mosely, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Acting State Executive Director

Introduced himself, his duties and appreciates the value of working together within USDA, NRCS and partners. Jeremy discussed the current FSA workload and current program activities such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).

Allen Powell, Farm Services Agency (FSA) Conservation Programs Specialist, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) update

Mr. Powell provided an overview of ongoing CRP enrollment and signup efforts and shared maps and slides with the assistance of Michelle Berry, FSA. There is a current movement from a county-based program delivery to a Hydrologic Unit Code-based system (HUC). Moving in this direction will require a review of the total cropland acres in Missouri and the percentage of cropland acres eligible. We are currently at a 25% limit or approx. 5.4 million acres, from an original 33% limit. Powell reviewed current Conservation Priority Areas (CPA) in place, in MO.

Powell discussed producers desiring to enroll in CRP being able to select improved grass mixtures to increase their enrollment opportunity by as much as 50 or 60 evaluation points. Powell also reviewed selected counties current enrollment and what impacts a shift from a county, to HUC boundary, may have. FSA has worked with partners the last year or so to develop suitable maps to identify potential HUC boundaries. The review included using HUC boundaries to address the best opportunities to improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and related factors. New tools to identify enrolled acres, ineligible acres, and potential acres, have improved the opportunity to target potential future enrollments.

Powell invited questions regarding potential enrollment changes. There was a question regarding managing invasive species on enrolled acres and the challenges facing a producer. Autumn olive and Sericea Lespedeza were specifically mentioned as well as the need for a cost share incentive to manage these species. There was a comment about being smart with seeding guidelines and establishment dates and methods to obtain the best grass and native forb mix possible. There was a question regarding tree establishment versus native grass establishment. Continuous CRP has seen increased incentives and rental rates to attract potential enrollment. This should attract producer interest in enrolling Continuous CRP acres.

In summary, there was positive discussion and comments regarding the overall shift from county based to HUC based boundaries for CRP in Missouri. There were no negative or dissenting opinions presented during the meeting.

Powell mentioned Missouri FSA will be submitting the final package to move to HUC boundaries to National HQ for approval, by the end of September. If approved, the HUC boundaries will be in place for the next General CRP signup enrollment period to be offered. FSA requested comments from partners or individuals in the next seven to ten days, or approximately by September 8, 2021.

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Seeing no more questions from participants, the meeting ended at approximately 10:55 am.

David Doctorian closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their input and questions. Thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting Adjourned 10:55am