Chair’s Corner

Summer is here! The transition from spring to summer is not only busy with the demands of planting this year’s crops but also with many Civil Rights observances. Beginning in May with Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Memorial Day followed in June by Pride Month and Juneteenth. These observances act as important reminders for us to take a moment to appreciate those who have sacrificed to improve our daily lives and celebrate their achievements. Additionally, they provide us with the opportunity to learn about our past and hopefully take away lessons gained by those who came before us, or as Maya Angelou said far more eloquently, “history, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.”

This past quarter, the Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) has been busy with several activities including participating in the Field Office Civil Rights reviews, developing a Welcome Committee for employees new to TN NRCS, and gathering insights from Field Offices with high Historically Underserved customer program participation. Going forward we will be working on developing a structure to provide regular state-wide Civil Rights Trainings and a process to update the Photo Directory regularly and make it more easily available to all employees. We were extremely lucky to have NRCS Chief, Terry Crosby, address us at our last CRAC meeting which was held during his visit to TN. He mentioned how important the work of a CRAC is to ensure that we not only have a diverse workforce but also a talented one. We greatly appreciated him taking the time to speak to us.

The CRAC wants to hear from you! Please let us know if there are any topics, you’d like more training on, or if you have any other questions, comments, or suggestions. It is our job is to advise leadership on Civil Rights actions needed to provide both equal opportunity to our employees and customers and to do that effectively it helps to hear about the unique experiences of our employees across the state. You can submit your comments HERE and they will be kept anonymous unless you choose to enter your contact information. You can also always reach out to me directly at Katherine.Brewer@usda.gov.

We would also like to invite you to apply to be a part of the CRAC. We will have openings for FY2023 so if you are interested and want to be in the loop on those opportunities please reach out to a current member. If you are interested in joining the committee, or just learning more about what we do, please consider attending one of our meetings as a guest.

I hope you all enjoy the summer whether that means family vacations or just dodging the heat, and I hope to hear from you soon!