



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
359 East Park Drive, Suite 2  
Harrisburg, PA 17111



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## State Technical Committee AGENDA Thursday, April 20, 2023

*This meeting will be conducted via Microsoft Teams internet conferencing as well as in person at our State Office, which is located at 359 East Park Drive, (USDA Conference Room), Harrisburg, PA . The meeting link and a call-in telephone number is provided at the end of this document. Handouts for subjects listed on the attached Agenda may be accessed on our website by using the following link: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-state-technical-committee-0>*

- 1:00 pm** Welcome – Denise Coleman, NRCS State Conservationist
- 1:10 pm** Presentation: Alley Cropping CIG grant – *Lessons Learned from the Field*  
Sara Nicholas, Policy Specialist, Pasa Sustainable Agriculture; Lisa Miskelly, project partner from Good Work Farm, Lehigh Valley, PA
- 1:50 pm** **Technical Reports**
- Engineering – Mark Buckwalter, Agricultural Engineer
  - Ecological Sciences – Dan Ludwig, State Resource Conservationist
  - Soils – Yuri Plowden, State Soil Scientist
- 2:15 pm** **Partnerships and Easement Programs Report**
- Partnerships and Outreach Updates- Susan Parry ASTC for Partnerships
  - Agricultural Conservation Easements Programs (ACEP) – Melissa Hanner, Easement Program Manager
- 2:30 pm** **Financial Program Reports**
- Updates – Jared Shippey, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Ryan Cornelius, EQIP Program Manager

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- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) – Ashley Lenig, Conservation Program Manager
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Adam Dellinger, Regional Conservation Partnership Program Coordinator

### **3:00 pm      Committee Input**

Do the State Technical Committee members have any suggestions for topics or agenda items for future meetings?

### **Dates for future State Technical Committee Meetings:**

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Thursday, October 19, 2023

## Microsoft Teams meeting

### **Join on your computer or mobile app**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 261 781 932 589

Passcode: wuaqAL

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

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*Helping People Help the Land*

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## Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting

May 2023

The Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting was held in the USDA Conference Room at the NRCS State Office.

Denise Coleman (Natural Resources Conservation Service): Denise welcomed everyone to the STC. She began by having all the participants introduce themselves. They started with NRCS staff and following their introductions, the non NRCS employees introduced themselves as well. After the greetings, Peter Hoagland, NRCS State Forester was introduced to give an overview on the first presenter. This project has been funded by an NRC, SCIG Conservation Innovation grant. It is so important because alley cropping can really help the crops protect soil, water resources, etc. They, however, realize that Alley Cropping has not been well adapted in Pennsylvania. He goes on to list some reasons why, such as the lack of technical knowledge on it. Peter goes on and introduces Sara Nichols and Lisa Miskelly.

Sara Nicholas (Policy Specialist at Positive Sustainable Agriculture):

was introduced and explains that she would like people to hear Lisa's perspective on the CIG project, as she is one of three farmers who worked on it. (See attached Hand-out) Sara explains that she will walk everyone through the grant and then is happy to answer questions at the end. There is a lot of excitement over this grant as there was a survey a couple years ago that saw out of 15 practices that members were asked to rate their interest on, Agroforest was at the very top. She goes on and defines Alley cropping. It is an ancient practice that has been around for a long time in Europe. The practice fell out of favor in the States, but it is increasing in popularity and adds diversity to farm production. There is a need for funding with alley cropping as it has been included as a practice that just does not have the resources to produce. With all, they set out to design three Alley cropping projects. They wanted to look at the resource concerns and would learn along with the field staff from NRCS as they went. They hired a consultant and picked three impressive farm managers. She invites Lisa to speak and share her experience as one of the selected farm managers. The farm is in Northampton County and is a 14-acre farm. Lisa was excited to be shown as a test farm for PASA to help educate other farmers in our community about this practice. Explains what kind of trees they have and put in alley cropping in about on about 3 acres of their 14 acres. Part of the appeal was to see vegetable crops on a somewhat larger scale for them, but still a tiny scale in the grand scheme of things for what they could put into allies. There are some concerns about the impact of rapidly changing climate and in the fall of 2021, they had multiple rainstorms within a month of each other. They hope to remedy the situation with a cover crop management system. Another concern was they live in a deer populated area and they didn't



have a deer fence to keep them out. They are hoping to put up a deer fence, but that is certainly a concern in terms of time and in terms of resources and how much more expensive and time consuming it is to plant crops for cropping when you also must protect every single one of those crops from deer year-round. Presentation turned back to Sara, who introduces the second farm. It is weavers way cooperative farm, and it is in the city of Philadelphia. They took this project because typical alley cropping puts rows of trees into existing vegetable beds or green fields that kind of reverse engineered this. They had an existing orchard and mostly vegetables into the alleys, and did some shifting around, some tearing out of orchard trees that were not very productive, and putting in trees that were productive with conditions. Three Streams Farm is the third farm. This one got a little bit of a late start, and the sink grants are learning opportunities for everyone. There was a committee of 30 and the farm manager and that is not necessarily risky for success. They had to get the couple that run this farm to hire a manager. Extracurricular funding costed \$5000, including free labor from farmers, them, and other participants. The CS was involved in each step we did the selection process in our CS, reviewed, and approved the final three farms. They came out to the very first visits to the farm site to assess the resource concerns and they visited subsequently to look at the design layouts plant selection. They suggest having things such as technical assistance as part of alley cropping processes as it was very beneficial and communicative. They close the presentation saying that they'd like to bring the grant to the western states. They answer questions, and afterwards Ashley thanks them for their time.

# Alley Cropping Design in Pennsylvania

A three-farm project completed through an NRCS CIG grant

Sara Nicholas and Lisa Miskelly, Pasa Sustainable Agriculture

## What is Alley Cropping?

Alley Cropping is one of 5 agroforestry practices supported by NRCS.

It is not a new practice, but has been out of use for many years in the U.S. and is experiencing a comeback in farmer use and interest.

Alley Cropping is the intentional integration of crops and trees in rows that maximizes farm biodiversity, income, soil health, and resource conservation.

Pennsylvania has included alley cropping as a practice “on the books” for a number of years, but has yet to fund an alley cropping contract through either CSP or EQIP.

## Overview of Pasa's CIG Grant

The ultimate purpose of this two-year CIG grant, awarded in October 2020, was to design alley cropping projects on 3 farms in Pennsylvania to assess the optimal design for farm income, resource conservation improvement, and practicality.

To date, we have completed alley cropping designs on three different farms in eastern and central Pennsylvania. We were able to leverage the CIG grant with private funders to raise \$ to implement the projects as well. All three have now completed their alley crop installations.

We also worked with our farmers and our design consultant, Interlace Commons, to finalize a set of recommendations to modify alley cropping conservation practices and cost scenarios.

# Good Works Farm





# Good Works field day



# Weavers Way Farm





## Weavers Way orchard alley





# Three-Streams Farm



## Field days





## Lunch made from the field



## Working with NRCS

NRCS reviewed and approved 3 final farms from pool of 20 applicants

Initial field staff visits to chosen farms to assess resource concerns

Field visits to farms to review design lay-outs, plant selection, how farms addressed resource concerns

Educational input - State forester Peter Hoagland involved in two alley cropping project presentations to farming/public listeners; 2021 Pasa winter conference, and a November 2021 Pasa listening session on the project.

Will work closely with PA staff to incorporate recommendations on conservation practice pricing and recommendations.

## Next steps and outcomes

Current and Next steps:

Shared recommendations to PA NRCS on conservation practices in January

Highlighted project results at the Pasa winter conference in February 2023

Presentation to the PA State Technical Committee meeting in April

Outcomes:

CIG grant leveraged private dollars for implementation, including a \$100,000 grant from RK Mellon to design additional alley cropping and silvopasture practices in western PA.


State legislators have introduced a state-level agroforestry program bill this session.



## Mature alley cropping site - Swallowtail Farm, Mercersburg



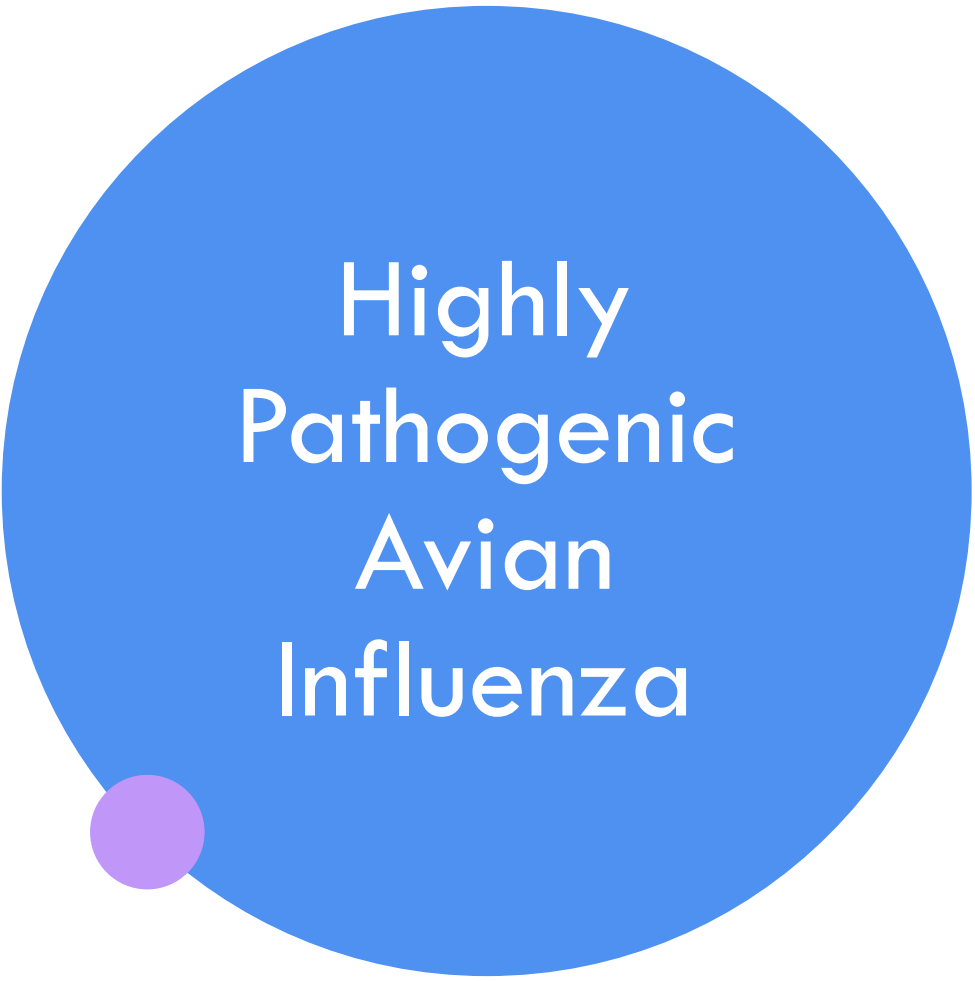

Mark Buckwalter (NRCS), Agricultural Engineer: was introduced and presented a report/update. (See attached Hand-out). He began by saying that he is covering the report today as Tim Peters is at boot camp. HPAI concerns have grown as additional operations have tested positive over the past two months. There were positive cases in Tioga, Lancaster, and Allegheny counties. As a result, visits on poultry operations are suspended. When projects require a visit to continue, the situation is considered on a case-by-case basis and reviewed by the area, state conservationist or the state conservation engineer. Additional precautions are taken, such as extra steps to avoid contact with the birds. Update on some standards: Four are out to be reviewed and reviews are due May 5th. Engineering tools and resources will be coming to the E Photog Section 1. They include some engineering practices such as standard drawings, details, guides, and spreadsheets. He also explains that ASTM C595 type L type IL cement is becoming widely utilized in the concrete industry. National offices have released a bulletin stating that cement is acceptable and should be allowed as an alternative. Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) finished their last project at the end of February. There were 32 projects total, and the disaster event was hurricane or tropical storm.



# State Technical Committee Meeting April 2023 ENGINEERING

Mark Buckwalter, PE





# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

## **NRCS**

- HPAI cases have increased the past two months
- NRCS is restricting visits to poultry sites. Visits involving poultry are considered on a case by case basis and reviewed by the ASTC and SCE.
- Continuing good biosecurity





# Standards Update

## **Standards released and comments due May 5, 2023**

- 368 Emergency Animal Mortality
- 457 Mine Shaft and Adit Closing
- 543 Land Reclamation, Abandoned Mined Land
- 578 Stream Crossing

# Website

## PA NRCS ENGINEERING



### Engineering Tools and Resources

To assist in the design of engineering practices, the following standard drawings, details, guides, spreadsheets, etc. are approved for appropriate use in Pennsylvania. All technical resources are available to the general public, and while all have been examined for technical adequacy the responsibility for proper application remains with the user. Before using any of the technical resources, the designer should verify they are adaptable to the site and that the design limitations are not exceeded. All standard details and drawings must be part of a specific site design that is reviewed and approved by an individual with the appropriate approval authority.

- [Construction Guides](#)
- [Design Guides](#)
- [Engineering Spreadsheets](#)
- [Fact Sheets](#)
- [Link to other Engineering sites](#)
- [NRCS Manuals and Handbooks with Pennsylvania Addendums](#)
- [Standard Pennsylvania Drawings](#)



# Concrete Type II Cement

- ASTM C595 Type II cement is becoming widely utilized by the concrete industry in lieu of Type I/II cement
- The NRCS National Design, Construction, and Soil Mechanics Center has released a bulletin regarding acceptance
- PA NRCS is working to update concrete specifications to allow for its use




## EWP Update

- As of February 24 2023 the last of 32 EWP projects resulting from Tropical Storm Ida damages was completed!
- The 32 projects spread over 12 Counties. 7 Counties in the NE and 5 in the SE region.
- There were agreements made with 14 different Sponsors including County Commissioners, Conservation Districts, Boroughs, Townships, a Watershed Alliance, and a Redevelopment Authority.
- The total construction cost for all the projects came to \$2.8M. (71K average project cost)
  - NRCS reimbursed \$2.09M (~75%)
  - PA DEP reimbursed the remaining 25%



Thank you

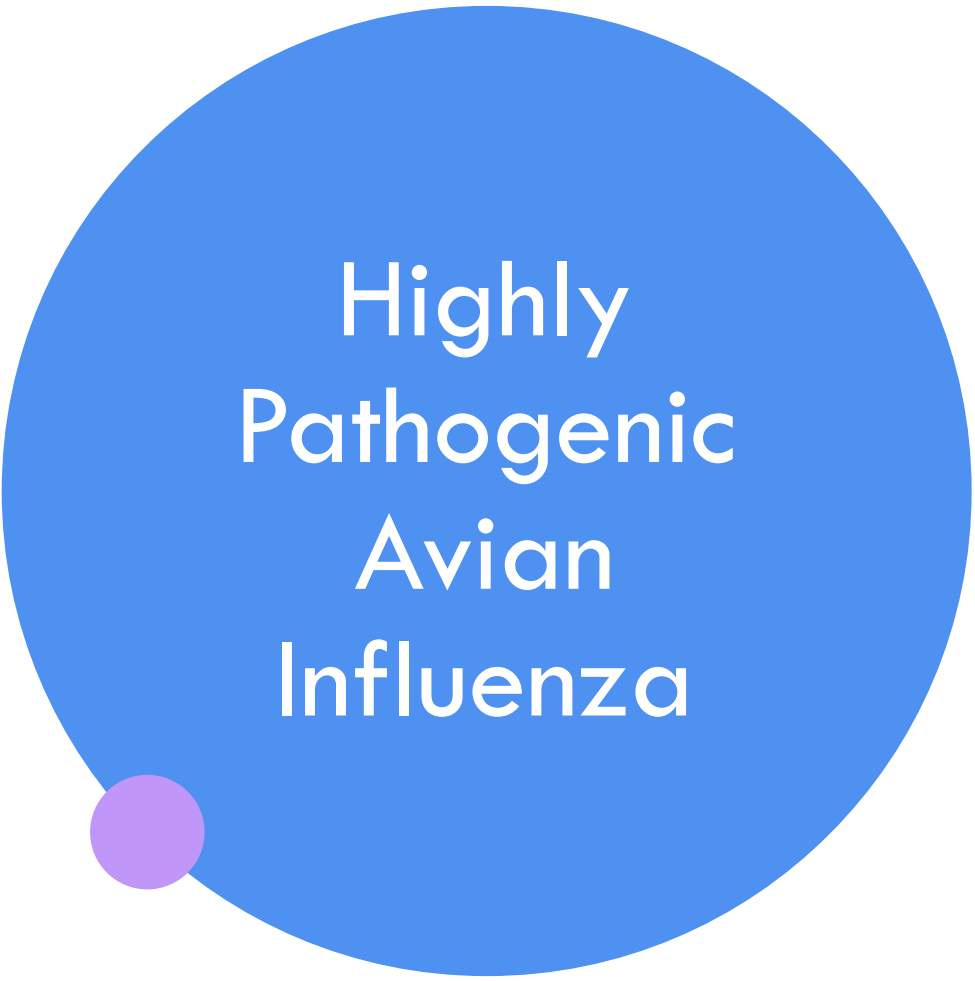

Dan Ludwig (NRCS), State Resource Conservationist: There are 5 conservation practices that are up for review that have been sent out to the State Technical Committee that are all under the forestry discipline. (See attached Hand-outs)



State Technical  
Committee Meeting  
April 2023  
**ENGINEERING**

Mark Buckwalter, PE





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Thank you

Yuri Plowden (NRCS), State Soil Scientist: There was a Pennsylvania Western Pennsylvania Mine Soil Survey update meeting last week and it was attended by close to 60 people. Partners and CS staff gathered an update on some of the work that our MLRA offices are doing in Western Pennsylvania. That webinar was recorded, so contact Yuri to view it.

Susan Parry (NRCS) Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships:

Outreach work is responding to feedback directly from folks to our leadership as well as to Congress looking at how we do business and maybe reaching out to nontraditional audiences as opposed to our traditional conventional operations. The focus is on how we can expand what we do and how we do it, seeking out new customers, certainly working with the urban AG subcommittee and some of the new partners that we've reached out to, we see that there are a lot more customers out there that could use our technical assistance and financial support. Building social media and website presence is the focus. (See attached Hand-out)



**Natural Resources  
Conservation Service**

# **Outreach and Partnerships**



**April 2023 STAC Meeting**

**2018  
FARM  
BILL**

# Outreach Work

- Responding to feedback
- Developing materials
- Strengthening partnerships
- Seeking out new customers
- Building website/social media presence
- Technical support!



## USDA's NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE - PENNSYLVANIA April 2023

No matter the size of your farm, having the knowledge you need to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on your farm is a powerful tool. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help urban and small farmers create a conservation plan that can serve as a road map towards improving the health and resiliency of your operation.

A conservation plan can enable you to make educated decisions for your farm, keep you from making costly management mistakes, and possibly help qualify you for financial programs.

The way we manage our soil has a greater impact on its ability to function than any other factor. Productive and resilient land can be obtained by using a soil health management system that incorporates these four simple principles:

- Minimizing disturbance from tillage and over-grazing
- Maximizing soil cover with residues and living plants
- Maximizing diversity with crop rotations and cover crops
- Maximizing living roots year-round with crops, forages and cover crops

Benefits can include increased soil organic matter, improved resilience to drought and floods, improved nutrient cycling, and overall increased profits.

This fact sheet lists common conservation practices that will help address natural resource concerns on your urban/small farm. To learn more about the assistance available for your farm and how to get started, visit your local USDA NRCS office. We can help you make the right choices to protect and improve your land and other natural resources.





# Learning Opportunities!

*Please join us for...*  
***Advancing Food Systems  
Lunch and Learn Webinar***  
**April 19, 2023 at 12 NOON**

## **Integrated Approaches for Expanding Urban Agriculture**

### **Areas of Focus:**

- 1. Role of Education in Urban Agriculture - Stephon Fitzpatrick, PA Agricultural Education Excellence Commission**
- 2. Wildlife Habitat and Sustainable Gardening (Pollinator Habitat) - Kass Urban-Mead, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation**
- 3. Role of Community Collaboration in Urban Agriculture Food Production - Cidalia Cornelio, Dungula Foundation for Community and Economic Development**
- 4. Environmental Sustainability of Urban Agriculture Ecosystems - Kefeni Kejela, USDA/NRCS**
- 5. Indoor Gardens as Climate Smart Practices – Joe Tetreault, Harrisburg University of Science & Technology**

To join, please register (or copy/paste) here: [Advancing Food Systems Registration Link](#)

People's Garden webinar series!

This bulletin at 04/17/2023 11:40 AM EDT

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# Learning Opportunities!

- Support for Small-scale farms, urban agricultural spaces and Community Garden Projects
- Sign-up for updates at [farmers.gov](https://farmers.gov)



## Join us for the People's Garden webinar series!

The People's Garden webinar series will begin on April 26 at 3pm ET and will feature experts from USDA and beyond who will share planting tips and resources that benefit community gardens. We'll also share on-the-ground stories of gardens making a difference by growing fresh, nutritious food for their communities. Webinars will be recorded and available for viewing on our website.

Register for the April 26 webinar and preview topics for upcoming monthly webinars at [People's Garden Webinars | USDA](#)

# Employment and Volunteer Opportunities!

Philadelphia, PA USDA Service Center:

Soil Conservationist (Resource Conservationist)

Statewide, PA – Location TBD:  
Outreach Coordinator

Earth Team Volunteer Program



The Management and Strategy Deputy Area is releasing the Program Participation dashboard as part of a new suite of Outreach, Equity, and Program Delivery dashboards. These dashboards illustrate program participation and distribution of financial assistance across demographic groups, including race, ethnicity, gender, and Historically Underserved (HU) categories. The dashboards rely on ProTracts financial assistance contract data and FSA Business Partner customer profiles, all updated daily.

This dashboard can be accessed through the following link: [Dashboard link](#)

#### DASHBOARD OVERVIEW

The Program Participation dashboard provides details about NRCS financial assistance program participation related to race, ethnicity, gender, beginning farmers and ranchers, limited resource producers, and veteran producers. It enables users to analyze the distribution of customers, contracts, contract acres, and obligations by location, fiscal year, program, and more. Deep-dive pages allow for analysis of practices, obligations, and contract modification.



#### DASHBOARD TRAINING

- "How can I explore the participation of a particular demographic group by slicing and dicing my data?" [Video link](#)
- "How does participation compare across programs and program years?" [Video link](#)
- "What are the top practices for Historically Underserved producers in my state?" [Video link](#)
- "Within FA programs, how are resources distributed across customers by ethnicity?" [Video link](#)
- "Does termination vary notably by demographic?" [Video link](#)

The full set of training materials can be accessed in this folder: [Link to training folder](#)

#### ALSO IN THIS DASHBOARD SUITE

- Demographic Data Quality
- Equity in Program Delivery



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#### DASHBOARD OVERVIEW

The Equity in Program Delivery dashboard focuses on measures of engagement and proportionate distribution to historically underserved (HU) producers. It enables users to assess equity of program delivery and identify opportunities for improving delivery to HU producers. Dashboard pages showcase the HU Index, HU Proportion of Obligations, and disparities in the distribution of contracts, practices, and obligations.



#### DASHBOARD TRAINING

- "How can I identify areas to target for improvement? (Background)" [Video link](#)
- "How can I identify areas to target for improvement? (Part 1)" [Video link](#)
- "How can I identify areas to target for improvement? (Part 2)" [Video link](#)
- "Within FA programs, how are resources distributed across customers by ethnicity?" [Video link](#)

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#### ALSO IN THIS DASHBOARD SUITE

- Demographic Data Quality
- Program Participation



## USDA Seeking Applications to Expand Conservation Assistance to Producers

Print this bulletin at 04/11/2023 08:05 AM EDT

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# Grant and Agreement Opportunities!

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### Reminder: USDA Seeking Applications to Expand Conservation Assistance to Underserved Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking applications for projects that will provide outreach to underserved producers and underserved communities about conservation programs and services and opportunities for students to pursue careers in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering up to \$70 million in cooperative agreements with entities for two-year projects that encourage participation in NRCS programs, especially in underserved communities and rural, urban and small-scale producers. **Proposals are due April 27, 2023.**

[Click here for details and a link to the notice of funding opportunity on Grants.gov...](#)





# Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production News

## Opportunities

- USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production [Composting and Food Waste Reduction Cooperative Agreements](#): applications due in [Grants](#) on June 15, 2023.

# PA State CIG 2023: Urban Farming Category

## NRCS Invites Proposals for 2023 Conservation Innovation Grants



USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) in Pennsylvania is now accepting proposals for its [Conservation Innovation Grants](#) (CIG) program. It is anticipated that a total of up to \$150,000 will be available to fund multiple one- to three-year projects. Single projects may be eligible to receive \$5,000 to \$75,000 in funding. Proposals are due by May 26, 2023.

[Read More](#)



# Questions/Comments?



Melissa Hanner (NRCS), Easement Program Manager: The anticipation is to acquire 6 farms through the ALE or ASAP agricultural land Easement Program, 7 farms through the RCPP Kittatinny Ridge program, and two farms through the RCPP Buffalo Creek Watershed program. (See attached Hand-out)



# Easement Updates



State Technical Advisory Committee - April 20, 2023  
Melissa Hanner, NRCS Easement Program Manager, Harrisburg PA  
[melissa.hanner@usda.gov](mailto:melissa.hanner@usda.gov)



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[nrcs.usda.gov/](https://nrcs.usda.gov/)

## FY2023 Projected Obligations

<b>Regular 2023 ALE</b>		
Adams (3)	301	\$478,000.00
Centre	112.07	\$224,140.00
Perry	140	\$77,000.00
Schuylkill	154.3	\$154,300.00
<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>707.37</b>	<b>Total Amount: \$933,440.00</b>
<b>RCPP #1847 Kittatinny</b>		
Cumberland (3)	351.11	\$545,601.00
Franklin	91.59	\$35,492.00
Schuylkill	229.32	\$229,320.00
<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>672.02</b>	<b>Total Amount: \$809,707.00</b>
<b>RCPP #2035 Armstrong Co Buffalo Creek</b>		
Armstrong (2)	187.32	\$189,320.00
<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>187.32</b>	<b>Total Amount: \$189,320.00</b>





## FY2023 Easements Closed



<b>1795-RCPP</b>			
Adams (3)	524.47		\$785,760.00
<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>524.47</b>	<b>Total Amount:</b>	<b>\$785,760.00</b>
<b>Regular ALE</b>			
Lackawanna	53.07		\$62,357.50
Adams	628.46		\$1,560,152.00
Lancaster	57.79		\$102,780.00
<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>739.32</b>	<b>Total Amount:</b>	<b>\$1,725,289.50</b>
<b>ACEP WRE</b>			
Lebanon	15.03		\$131,100.00
<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>15.03</b>	<b>Total Amount:</b>	<b>\$131,100.00</b>



# Ineligibility of Sites with PFAS and Biosolids

- **USDA Conservation Easements are Perpetual**
- **Prescreening Sites**
  - Farm visits and landowner interviews
  - Evaluate the risk of hazardous materials
  - For example, sites with oil and gas, and hazardous chemical spills are ineligible for easements.
- ***NEW* - Sites with PFAS contamination or a history of biosolid applications are ineligible.**



## Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) -

- **Fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist grease, oil, water and heat**
- **Many PFAS are a concern because they:**
  - **Do not break down in the environment**
  - **Move through soil and contaminate water**
  - **Build up in plants and animals (and food)**
  - **Exposure to PFAS linked to serious health effects**



## Sources of PFAS contamination -

- Landfills
- Industrial Sites
- Airports
- Military Installations
- Fire-fighting
- Biosolid Application  
(septage, sewer, wastewater)

Any level of PFAS is considered a potential risk.

Sites with PFAS contamination or a history of biosolid applications are ineligible for USDA Easements.



## Learn more about PFAS



### Environmental Site Assessment Search Tool

ESA Search Viewer (pa.gov) <https://gis.dep.pa.gov/esaSearch/>

- Select category “Beneficial Landuse”
- Use 1-mile as the “Use Search for Location to buffer”

This will display biosolid permits in the vicinity of your site

#### Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov>

<https://www.fda.gov>

<https://www.nebiosolids.org>

<https://gis.dep.pa.gov>





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Jared Shippey, Programs (NRCS), Assistant State Conservationist for

Programs: Most of the initial round has been pre-approved moneys been out to field offices. There is a continuation to obligate contracts, and currently we're looking at June 30 as the obligation deadline. This year, in fiscal year 23, we received about \$350,000 to do forest management plans and forest implementation in the central and northwestern part of the state. Typically, the western half of the state would receive about \$200,000 to do forestry practices. Another initiative that we received this year was through the Inflationary Reduction Act. They received additional money in equip and in CSP our Conservation stewardship program. They are looking to have about \$1.9 million of new projects through that RCPP conducted across the center of the state. Ryan takes over and explains that the fields have been busy getting out contracts. CARP has ended and inflationary payments known as pests help reduce the impacts of inflation. Deadline is September 1<sup>st</sup>. Ashley takes over and says if you go to grants.gov and search by opportunity number, you'll be able to see what you need to know about applying with your proposal for a project. This year \$50,000 projects can range between \$5000 and \$75,000. CSP allocation was two million \$558,180 and a deadline of May 1st, 2023, for those, and our CSP classic allocation was 6 million. The hope is to be able to fund all applications and have increased outreach this year to gain additional applications for the increased money.

Ryan Cornelius NRCS, EQIP Program Manager: Ryan was introduced and provided an update on EQIP and AMA. (See attached Hand-out) He noted that 91 contracts for EQIP and 1 contract had been obligated for FY 2023 as of this date. The obligations amounted to \$4 Million for EQIP and \$8640 for AMA and covered over 9500 acres total. He discussed Post-Inflationary Supplemental Payments (PISPs) to include the eligible practices that PISP is limited to.



United States Department of Agriculture



## Program Updates (EQIP & AMA)

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Pennsylvania, April 20<sup>th</sup> , 2023



*Ryan Cornelius*  
*PA EQIP-Program Manager*

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# FY23 Contracting Obligations to date:



<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b># OF CONTRACTS</b>	<b>\$ OBLIGATED</b>	<b>CONTRACTED ACRES</b>
<b>EQIP</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>\$4,090,182</b>	<b>9,525 ac</b>
<b>AMA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$8,640</b>	<b>2.1 ac</b>



# Post-Inflationary Supplemental Payments (PISPs)



- To reduce the impacts of inflation on participants and ensure that contracts can be implemented promptly, NRCS has made additional financial assistance (PISPs) available to participants with active EQIP contracts that include the scenarios most affected by higher commodity prices. To be eligible for a PISP, eligible practices must be completed between January 1, 2023, and September 1, 2023.
- Practices that have already earned a CARP that has been paid out are not eligible to receive a PISP. The deadline for installing CARP-eligible practices was December 31, 2022.
- PISP eligible practices only include:



325	High Tunnel System
327	Conservation Cover
367	Roofs and Covers
382	Fence
391	Riparian Forest Buffer
410	Grade Stabilization Structure
422	Hedgerow Planting
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation
443	Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface
464	Irrigation Land Leveling
490	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
512	Pasture and Hay Planting
516	Livestock Pipeline
528	Prescribed Grazing
533	Pumping Plant
558	Roof Runoff Structure
560	Access Road

561	Heavy Use Area Protection
574	Spring Development
575	Trails and Walkways
576	Livestock Shelter Structure
578	Stream Crossing
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment
614	Watering Facility
642	Water Well
643	Restoration of Rare or Declining Natural Communities
647	Early Successional Habitat Development/Management
655	Forest Trails and Landings
660	Tree/Shrub Pruning
666	Forest Stand Improvement

\*Not all practice scenarios are eligible for PISP





# Program Updates (EQIP & AMA)



# QUESTIONS?



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Ashley Lenig (NRCS), Conservation Program Manager: Ashley provided an update on Financial Assistance Programs to include *CIG*, *CSP*, and *EQIP-NWQI*. (See attached Hand-out) She indicated that the *CIG* Notice of Funding Opportunity has been announced. It indicates that \$150,000 will be funded for projects requiring \$5,000 to \$75,000 with an application deadline of May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. She listed the *CIG* priorities for funding awards. For *CSP*, she indicated that *CSP IRA* (Inflation Reduction Act, Climate Smart) has been allocated \$2,558,1180 and has a ranking deadline of May 1, 2023. *CSP Classic* has been allocated \$6 million and had a ranking deadline of March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. As for *EQIP-NWQI*, the program has been allocated \$1 million, and is working to fund as many applications as possible in the 5 Pennsylvania watersheds with *NWQI* or *General EQIP* money. Presently there are 3 applications Preapproved for \$975,190 and at least 4 are funded in other fund codes. There currently are no obligations. She concluded her presentation by saying that *CSP Classic* applications in statewide fund pools were selected for funding. Next, *CSP IRA* applications will be selected using the funds designated for climate-smart activities. Lastly, *CSP Classic* applications in geographic area fund pools will be selected. She noted that we expect to fund all applications and increased outreach efforts to garner additional applications for the increased money.



United States Department of Agriculture

*PA NRCS Programs Team*

A photograph of water cascading over dark, mossy rocks in a forest. The water is white and frothy as it falls. In the background, there are green trees and foliage.

# Financial Assistance Programs Update CIG, CSP, EQIP-NWQI

***Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting  
Ashley Lenig, Conservation Program Manager***

***April 20, 2023***

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

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# Presentation Outline

- **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
- **National Water Quality Initiative (EQIP-NWQI)**



# FY2023 Conservation Innovation Grants

- **The PA CIG Notice of Funding Opportunity is out.**
  - The NRCS Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO), Opportunity Number **USDA-NRCS-PA-CIG-NOFO0001289**, has been posted to Grants.gov and is open for applications through May 26, 2023. The opportunity can be found easily on Grants.gov through the basic search criteria by using the opportunity number, or by searching the CFDA of 10.912. It can also be found by filtering for All Department of Agriculture.
- **Expect to fund \$150,000**
- **Projects between \$5,000 to \$75,000**
- **Deadline to Apply: 5/26/23**
- **For questions, contact Ashley Lenig**



# FY2023 Conservation Innovation Grants

## Priorities

- **Carbon Sequestration**
- **Legacy Sediment**
- **Soil Health**
- **Water Quality**
- **Urban Farming**
- **Non-Industrial Private Forestland**





# Conservation Stewardship Program

Currently working on CSP Classic and CSP-IRA

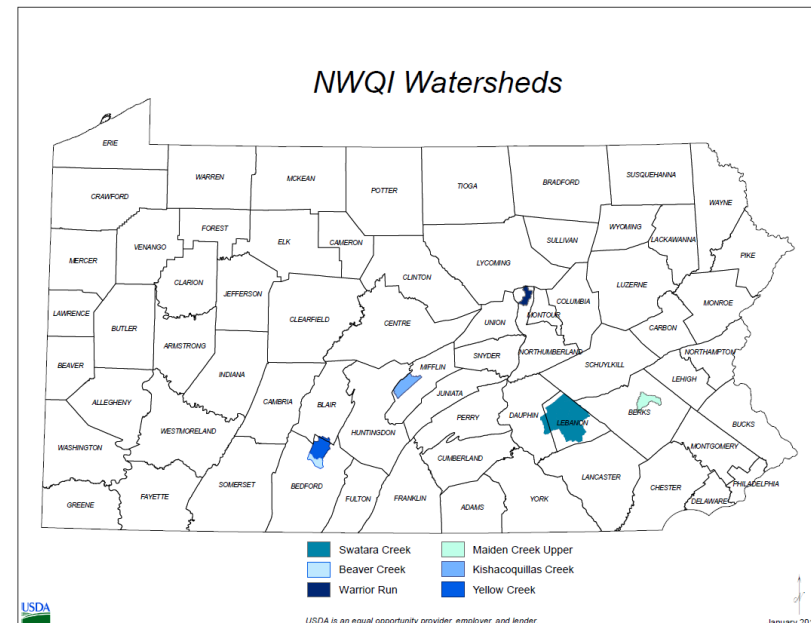
- **CSP IRA (Inflation Reduction Act, Climate Smart)**
  - **Allocation: \$2,558,180**
  - **Ranking Deadline: 5/1/23**
- **CSP Classic**
  - **Allocation: \$6,000,000**
  - **Ranking Deadline: 3/17/23**



# National Water Quality Initiative

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program – NWQI

- Allocation: \$1,000,000
- Working to fund as many as possible in our 5 watersheds with NWQI or general EQIP \$.
- Preapproved: 3 applications \$975,190
  - (at least 4 funded in other fund codes)
- Obligations: nothing yet



# Currently

**CSP Classic applications in statewide fund pools were selected for funding (organic, beginning, social disadvantaged)**

**Next, CSPIRA applications will be selected using the funds designated for climate-smart activities.**

**Last, CSP Classic applications in geographic area fund pools will be selected.**

**We expect to fund all applications and increased outreach efforts to garner additional applications for the increased \$\$.**



**Questions?**

**Comments?**



**Ashley Lenig**

**Conservation Program Manager (CSP, CIG, NWQI)**

**[ashley.lenig@usda.gov](mailto:ashley.lenig@usda.gov)**



United States Department of Agriculture



# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Update

Adam Dellinger

State Technical Committee Meeting

4/20/23



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# Fiscal Year 2023 RCPP Landowner Contracts

- **Currently writing contracts under three existing RCPP projects**
  - Buffalo Creek Watershed Conservation Alliance
  - Lancaster's Common Agenda for Clean Water
  - Turkey Hill Clean Water Partnership
- **20+ applications across those projects have been pre-selected for funding**
  - \$2,000,000 in RCPP funds
- **5 contracts have been obligated as of 4/12/23**
  - \$89,000
  - 710.22 acres



# FY22 RCPP Projects



- **Delisting Ag-Impaired Streams in Central PA**
  - Lead Partner: Chesapeake Conservancy
  - Award: \$9,996,006
  - Project Area: Lycoming, Union, Snyder, Clinton, Centre, and Huntingdon Counties
  - **PPA executed in February 2023**
  - **9 applications received in Round 1, for \$2,308,000**
- **Farmland Preservation and Climate Change Mitigation**
  - Lead Partner: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
  - Award: \$7,850,000
  - Project Area: Statewide
  - **Programmatic Partnership Agreement (PPA) currently in negotiation**



# FY23 Notice of Funding Opportunity



- **FY23 funding announcement not yet available**
  - RCPP projects can last up to five years and projects may be funded between \$250,000 and \$10 million over the life of the project.





# Please reach out with any questions

**Adam Dellinger, RCPP Coordinator**

**[adam.dellinger@usda.gov](mailto:adam.dellinger@usda.gov)**

**717-237-2206**



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Susan Parry announced the next STC Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>. She also asked for future meeting topic ideas.

END OF MEETING

\*No questions in chat\*

Next meeting: July 18th



## **Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting**

**May 2023**

The Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting was held in the USDA Conference Room at the NRCS State Office.

Denise Coleman (Natural Resources Conservation Service): Denise welcomed everyone to the STC. She began by having all the participants introduce themselves. They started with NRCS staff and following their introductions, the non NRCS employees introduced themselves as well. After the greetings, Peter Hoagland, NRCS State Forester was introduced to give an overview on the first presenter. This project has been funded by an NRC, SCIG Conservation Innovation grant. It is so important because alley cropping can really help the crops protect soil, water resources, etc. They, however, realize that Alley Cropping has not been well adapted in Pennsylvania. He goes on to list some reasons why, such as the lack of technical knowledge on it. Peter goes on and introduces Sara Nichols and Lisa Miskelly.

00/08/52 - Sara Nicholas (Policy Specialist at Positive Sustainable Agriculture): was introduced and explains that she would like people to hear Lisa's perspective on the CIG project, as she is one of three farmers who worked on it. (See attached Hand-out) Sara explains that she will walk everyone through the grant and then is happy to answer questions at the end. There is a lot of excitement over this grant as there was a survey a couple years ago that saw out of 15 practices that members were asked to rate their interest on, Agroforest was at the very top. She goes on and defines Alley cropping. It is an ancient practice that has been around for a long time in Europe. The practice

fell out of favor in the States, but it is increasing in popularity and adds diversity to farm production. There is a need for funding with alley cropping as it has been included as a practice that just does not have the resources to produce. With all, they set out to design three Alley cropping projects. They wanted to look at the resource concerns and would learn along with the field staff from NRCS as they went. They hired a consultant and picked three impressive farm managers. She invites Lisa to speak and share her experience as one of the selected farm managers. The farm is in Northampton County and is a 14-acre farm. Lisa was excited to be shown as a test farm for PASA to help educate other farmers in our community about this practice. Explains what kind of trees they have and put in alley cropping in about on about 3 acres of their 14 acres. Part of the appeal was to see vegetable crops on a somewhat larger scale for them, but still a tiny scale in the grand scheme of things for what they could put into allies. There are some concerns about the impact of rapidly changing climate and in the fall of 2021, they had multiple rainstorms within a month of each other. They hope to remedy the situation with a cover crop management system. Another concern was they live in a deer populated area and they didn't have a deer fence to keep them out. They are hoping to put up a deer fence, but that is certainly a concern in terms of time and in terms of resources and how much more expensive and time consuming it is to plant crops for cropping when you also must protect every single one of those crops from deer year-round. Presentation turned back to Sara, who introduces the second farm. It is weavers way cooperative farm, and it is in the city of Philadelphia. They took this project because typical alley cropping puts rows of trees into existing vegetable beds or green fields that kind of reverse engineered this. They had an existing orchard and mostly vegetables

into the alleys, and did some shifting around, some tearing out of orchard trees that were not very productive, and putting in trees that were productive with conditions. Three Streams Farm is the third farm. This one got a little bit of a late start, and the sink grants are learning opportunities for everyone. There was a committee of 30 and the farm manager and that is not necessarily risky for success. They had to get the couple that run this farm to hire a manager.

Extracurricular funding costed \$5000, including free labor from farmers, them, and other participants. The CS was involved in each step we did the selection process in our CS, reviewed, and approved the final three farms. They came out to the very first visits to the farm site to assess the resource concerns and they visited subsequently to look at the design layouts plant selection. They suggest having things such as technical assistance as part of alley cropping processes as it was very beneficial and communicative. They close the presentation saying that they'd like to bring the grant to the western states. They answer questions, and afterwards Ashley thanks them for their time.

00/46/12 - Mark Buckwalter (NRCS), Agricultural Engineer: was introduced and presented a report/update. (See attached Hand-out). He began by saying that he is covering the report today as Tim Peters is at boot camp. HPAI concerns have grown as additional operations have tested positive over the past two months. There were positive cases in Tioga, Lancaster, and Allegheny counties. As a result, visits on poultry operations are suspended. When projects require a visit to continue, the situation is considered on a case-by-case basis and reviewed by the area, state conservationist or the state conservation engineer. Additional precautions are taken, such as extra steps to avoid contact with the birds. Update on some standards: Four are out to be

reviewed and reviews are due May 5th. Engineering tools and resources will be coming to the E Photog Section 1. They include some engineering practices such as standard drawings, details, guides, and spreadsheets. He also explains that ASTM C595 type L type IL cement is becoming widely utilized in the concrete industry. National offices have released a bulletin stating that cement is acceptable and should be allowed as an alternative. Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) finished their last project at the end of February. There were 32 projects total, and the disaster event was hurricane or tropical storm.

00/53/32 - Dan Ludwig (NRCS), State Resource Conservationist: There are 5 conservation practices that are up for review that have been sent out to the State Technical Committee that are all under the forestry discipline. (See attached Hand-outs)

00/55/17 - Yuri Plowden (NRCS), State Soil Scientist: There was a Pennsylvania Western Pennsylvania Mine Soil Survey update meeting last week and it was attended by close to 60 people. Partners and CS staff gathered an update on some of the work that our MLRA offices are doing in Western Pennsylvania. That webinar was recorded, so contact Yuri to view it.

01/56/09 - Susan Parry (NRCS) Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships: Outreach work is responding to feedback directly from folks to our leadership as well as to Congress looking at how we do business and maybe reaching out to nontraditional audiences as opposed to our traditional conventional operations. The focus is on how we can expand what we do and how we do it, seeking out new customers, certainly working with the urban AG subcommittee and some of the

new partners that we've reached out to, we see that there are a lot more customers out there that could use our technical assistance and financial support. Building social media and website presence is the focus. (See attached Hand-out)

01/03/14 - Melissa Hanner (NRCS), Easement Program Manager: The anticipation is to acquire 6 farms through the ALE or ASAP agricultural land Easement Program, 7 farms through the RCPP Kittatinny Ridge program, and two farms through the RCPP Buffalo Creek Watershed program. (See attached Hand-out)

01/07/44 - Jared Shippey, Programs (NRCS), Assistant State Conservationist for Programs: Most of the initial round has been pre-approved moneys been out to field offices. There is a continuation to obligate contracts, and currently we're looking at June 30 as the obligation deadline. This year, in fiscal year 23, we received about \$350,000 to do forest management plans and forest implementation in the central and northwestern part of the state. Typically, the western half of the state would receive about \$200,000 to do forestry practices. Another initiative that we received this year was through the Inflationary Reduction Act. They received additional money in equip and in CSP our Conservation stewardship program. They are looking to have about \$1.9 million of new projects through that RCPP conducted across the center of the state. Ryan takes over and explains that the fields have been busy getting out contracts. CARP has ended and inflationary payments known as pests help reduce the impacts of inflation. Deadline is September 1<sup>st</sup>. Ashley takes over and says if you go to grants.gov and search by opportunity number, you'll be able to see what you need to know about applying with your proposal for a



project. This year \$50,000 projects can range between \$5000 and \$75,000. CSP allocation was two million \$558,180 and a deadline of May 1st, 2023, for those, and our CSP classic allocation was 6 million. The hope is to be able to fund all applications and have increased outreach this year to gain additional applications for the increased money.

01/10/55 - Ryan Cornelius NRCS, EQIP Program Manager: Ryan was introduced and provided an update on EQIP and AMA. (See attached Hand-out) He noted that 91 contracts for EQIP and 1 contract had been obligated for FY 2023 as of this date. The obligations amounted to \$4 Million for EQIP and \$8640 for AMA and covered over 9500 acres total. He discussed Post-Inflationary Supplemental Payments (PISPs) to include the eligible practices that PISP is limited to.

01/15/06 - Ashley Lenig (NRCS), Conservation Program Manager: Ashley provided an update on Financial Assistance Programs to include CIG, CSP, and EQIP-NWQI. (See attached Hand-out) She indicated that the CIG Notice of Funding Opportunity has been announced. It indicates that \$150,000 will be funded for projects requiring \$5,000 to \$75,000 with an application deadline of May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. She listed the CIG priorities for funding awards. For CSP, she indicated that CSP IRA (Inflation Reduction Act, Climate Smart) has been allocated \$2,558, 1180 and has a ranking deadline of May 1, 2023. CSP Classic has been allocated \$6 million and had a ranking deadline of March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. As for EQIP-NWQI, the program has been allocated \$1 million, and is working to fund as many applications as possible in the 5 Pennsylvania watersheds with NWQI or General EQIP money. Presently there are 3 applications Preapproved for \$975,190 and at

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01/19/48 - Susan Parry announced the next STC Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>. She also asked for future meeting topic ideas.

END OF MEETING

\*No questions in chat\*

Next meeting: July 18th

# **State Technical Committee Meeting**

## **Attendance Roster**

**April 20, 2023**

**Denise Coleman**

**Peter Hoagland**

**Susan Parry**

**Nick Albert**

**Jared Shippey**

**Dan Rosenberg**

**Andrew Currey**

**Kathryn Bresaw**

**Mark Buckwalter**

**Dustin Detwiler**

**Ryan Cornelius**

**Dimka Braswell**

**Jim Gillis**

**Joseph Havelka**

**Jennifer Christman**

**Justin Spangler**

**Chris Sigmond**

**Tom Ulrich**

**Kelly O'neill**

**Kent Adams**

**Ashley Lenig**

**Lisa Miskelly**

**Frank Schneider**

**Calvin Yahn**

**Tim Kinney**

**Cidalia Cornelio**

**Dan Ludwig**

**Yuri Plowden**

**Melissa Hanner**

**Adam Dellinger**

**Ted Evans**

**Tracy Coulter**

**Sarah Nicholas**

**Chris Sigman**

**Kurtis Wagner**

**Brenda Shambaugh**