

## **Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting**

**July 18, 2023**

The Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting was held in the USDA Conference Room at the NRCS State Office on July 18, 2023.

**Denise Coleman (NRCS)** (Natural Resources Conservation Service) opened the meeting at 1 PM. Denise welcomed everyone to the STC meeting. After the greetings, **Damian Loeper (District Conservationist-Dolphin County)**, was introduced, and speaking in his additional role as the **Urban Conservationist for the city of Harrisburg, PA**, proceeded to introduce Mr George Payne who is the Director of the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority. He explained that Mr Payne and his staff are working to develop the long-term overnight plan for community gardens in Harrisburg. George and his staff are working hard to secure various grant fundings through the state, through EAP, local foods, local people, or through the different USDA programs that are available.

00/02/51 - George Payne, Director of Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority Developing a Comprehensive Urban Ag Plan for the City of Harrisburg, is with Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority and is the director of projects. He outlined the redevelopment authorities' mission is to redevelop vacant and unused property into productive use, including green space and urban agriculture. The stakeholders include public entities, city of Harrisburg, departments of planning, parks and recreation, health inspection, as well as some municipal agents or quasi municipal authorities. The local food local places committee has an urban agriculture comprehensive planning work group, and they meet bi-monthly, and it's primarily composed of himself, city planning, urban growers, Penn State extension, as well as USDA. The goal was to provide guidance for residents, non-profits, and commercial urban agriculture enterprises. The outcomes would be to establish compliance with city regulations and ordinances that govern the neighborhood, and a handbook that provides guidance and resources for everyone, and a comprehensive urban agriculture plan. Complying with noise ordinance, farm equipment such as tractors, power, equipment, or generators should operate only between dawn and dusk. The parameters for typical measurements like high tunnels, fencing and barriers and pest prevention ordinances would be to have fences to prevent pests. For beekeeping ordinances, there are ground hives, they should be allowed on acres on only 1/4 of an acre or more and limited and only 5 hives. Commercial gardens and Urban farms ordinance are that properties there should be hours of operations allowable and residential districts, licensures signs and parking. Upon completion, this handbook would be presented to City Administration and City Council for review and ratification. When approved, it would establish permanent urban agriculture enterprises and gardens/farms throughout the city would have a systematic framework and urban sensitive plan. The principles and method behind this effort is to promote, not restrict urban agriculture while addressing residential matters such as noise, waste, air quality and health and agriculture standards. To regulate the objective while leaving the means flexible, and to incorporate research using plans from other municipalities and subject matter expert arenas. He continued by describing how the effort has progressed to this date.

## BACKGROUND

**Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority's (HRA)** mission is to redevelop vacant, unused property into productive use, including green space and urban agriculture. HRA applied and received:

- **EPA Brownfield Areawide Planning Grant for South Allison Hill**. The Plan completed in 2019, noted and incorporated residents' need for easier access to grocery stores and for fresh produce, consistent with Harrisburg as a food desert.
- **Local Foods Local Places (LFLP)** 2020 EPA/USDA Technical Assistance, leveraged by the Brownfield Plan, coordinated local urban growers and stakeholders and developed a food development strategy which included creating for the city, an

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

## LOCAL FOOD LOCAL PLACES STAKEHOLDERS

- Public Entities: City of Harrisburg Depts. of Planning, Parks and Recreation, Health Inspection; Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority; Capital Region Water.
- Community, Service and Health Agencies: Hamilton Health Center, TriCounty Community Action, Salvation Army, Central PA Food Bank, Penn State Extension, residents, etc.
- Local Urban Farm Developers: Wildheart and Joshua Farm; The Bridge Eco-Village; Soul Proprietor Farm; Shadow Garden; City FARM and T.U.R.F. Inc., Ngozi, Inc.

The Urban Agricultural Comprehensive Planning Committee is a working group from this LFLP-Hbg Coalition that meets bimonthly primarily composed of HRA, City Planning, Urban Growers, and Penn State Extension.

## GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goal: Provide guidance for residents, non-profits, and commercial urban agriculture enterprises.

Outcome 1: City regulations and ordinances that would govern residence plots, community gardens, commercial gardens, urban farms, husbandry, indoor and outdoor farming, Farmers Markets.

Developed with stakeholder input, to be presented to City Administration and City Council for review and ratification.

Outcome 2: A handbook that provides guidance and resources for what, where and how to engage in whatever type and scope of urban agriculture activity.

Outcome 3: Permanent urban agriculture enterprises and gardens/farms throughout the city promoted by a systematic framework and urban sensitive plan.

## PRINCIPLES AND METHOD

Promote not restrict urban agriculture while addressing urban residential collocation matters such as noise, waste, air quality, smell, and health and agriculture standards.

Regulate the objective leaving the means flexible e.g., identify acceptable level for noise during times of operation rather than codify what agricultural machinery is allowed or restricted.

Incorporate Research using plans from other municipalities and subject matter expert arenas. PennState Extension, USDA, NRCS, Urban Ag. plans from Pennsylvania e.g. Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Cumberland County, and from similar and larger municipalities nationwide e.g. Detroit, Flint, Baltimore, and from universities.

## CURRENT WORK TO DATE

### Table of Contents:

### Glossary of Terms

### Urban Agriculture in Medium to Heavy Residential Zones:

- I. Noise Ordinance
- II. Odor and Air Guidance
- III. Structures and Storage Ordinance
- IV. Fencing, Barriers, Pest Prevention Ordinances
- V. Waste Management Ordinances
- VI. Beekeeping Ordinance
- VII. Domestic Fowl Ordinance
- VIII. Miniature Goats, Sheep and other Animals Ordinances

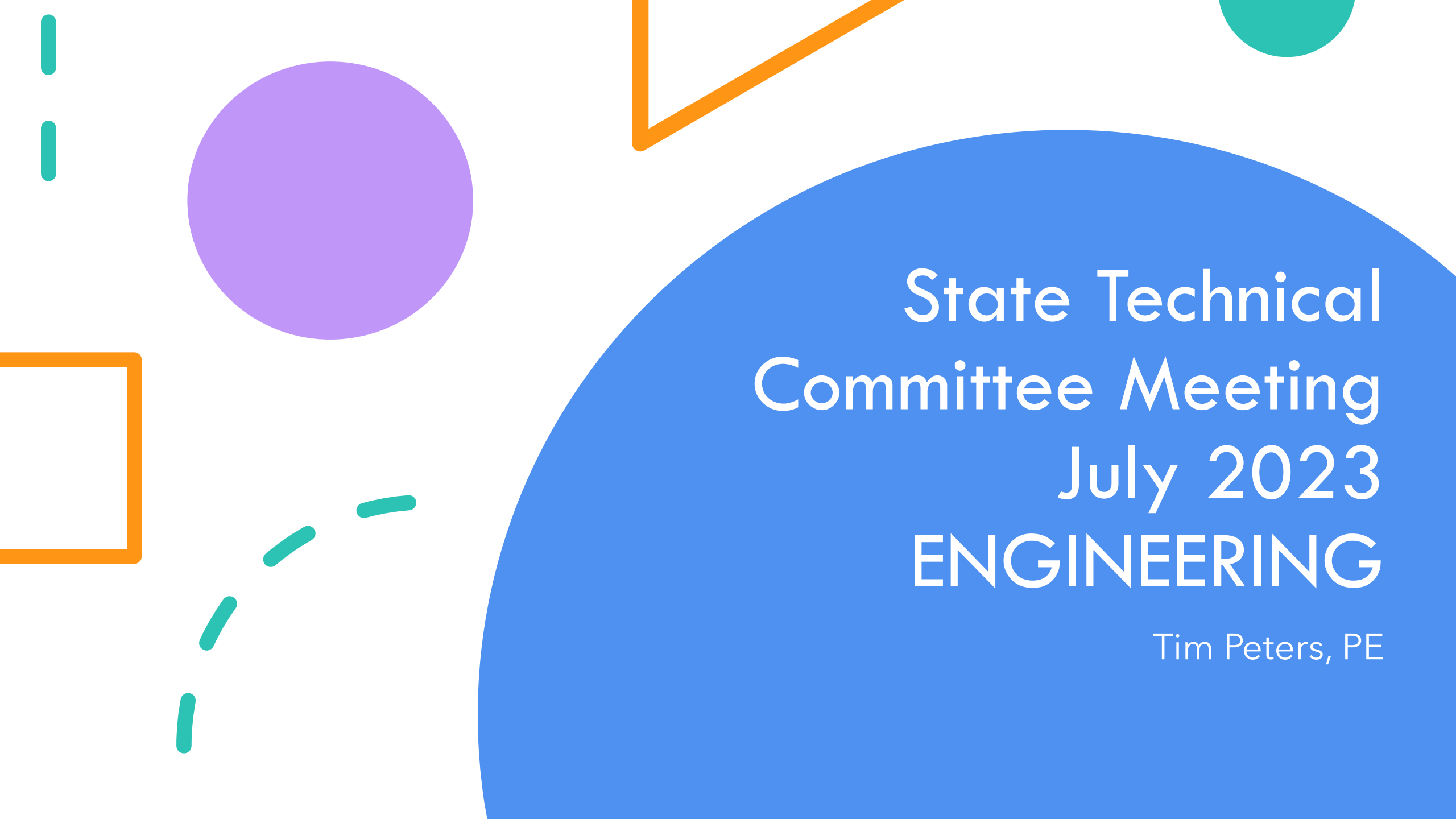
### Urban Agriculture Business:

- IX. Commercial Gardens and Urban Farm (Partial or Full Business Use)
  - Ordinances for sale venue onsite – hours of operation allowable in residential districts
  - License requirements
  - Signs and Parking
- X. Farmers' Markets Ordinances

### Urban Agriculture Zoning and Placement

00/33/37 - Tim Peters (NRCS), Agricultural Engineer, was introduced and presented a report/update on Engineering. He indicated that two Standards were sent out last week for review by the State Technical Committee. He then reviewed those Standards and the changes involved. He asked the membership to review these at their earliest convenience. His goal is to get these standards finished and ready to release along with some other ones that were sent out earlier in the year and to upload the Standards on eFOTG by Oct.1<sup>st</sup>. He asked that if anyone would have example projects or been involved with a project that used a vegetative treatment area on a slope that's deeper than 6% and it's been operated and managed well, to please email the information to him. He stated that two more Standards were about to be released for review. They are #635 - Vegetated Treatment Area and #378 - Pond. He took a moment to discuss each of those Standards. Tim mentioned that the Engineering Tools and Resources have been copied to eFOTG and will be removed from our public website at a future date. These include Construction Guides, Design Guides, Engineering Spreadsheets, Fact Sheets, links to other Engineering sites, NRCS Manuals and Handbooks with Pennsylvania Addendums and Standard Pennsylvania Drawings. He noted that users will be redirected from the public website to the new location. He discussed Concrete Type IL Cement which is becoming widely utilized by the concrete industry in lieu of Type I/II cement. PA NRCS is working to update concrete specifications to allow for its use. He noted that future trainings include Agricultural Conservation Technical Training (Basic) Boot Camps that are coming up in August, and that currently 27 persons have registered. This training is being coordinated with NRCS and Penn State. He indicated that the effects of the recent storms in Pennsylvania are being reviewed to determine evidence of compromised residences/businesses for streambank erosion or buildings that could be in jeopardy and need protective measures applied.





State Technical  
Committee Meeting  
July 2023  
**ENGINEERING**

Tim Peters, PE



# Standards Update

## **Standards released and comments due August 11, 2023**

- 656 Constructed Wetland
- 606 Subsurface Drain



# Standards Update

## **Standards Coming Soon**

- 635 Vegetated Treatment Area
- 378 Pond

# 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](#)
- [Links 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



# Agricultural Conservation Technical Training (Basic)

- Added August session
- Penn State is coordinating with NRCS
- Currently have 26 registered



# EWP Update

- Mid July Storms
- Reviewing evidence for compromised residence/business from streambank erosion



Thank you



00/57/01 - **Mark Goodson (NRCS), State Agronomist**, was introduced to provide updates for Ecological Sciences. Mark announced that a series of draft Conservation Practice Standards were recently sent out. It is requested that they be reviewed by members of the State Technical Committee and comments returned to Ted Evans, NRCS ([ted.evans@usda.gov](mailto:ted.evans@usda.gov)) by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Our NRCS here in Pennsylvania wrapped up a three-year evaluation of an interim Practice Standard for Annual Forages and Grazing Systems. The final report was sent out to the National Grazing Specialist, and Pennsylvania's NRCS recommended that it be converted into a National Standard. This is the first year NRCS in Pennsylvania is evaluating interim practice standards 812 - Raised Beds, 821 - Low Tunnels and 823 - Organic Management. He noted that these practices are eligible for financial assistance through EQIP. He also announced that PA NRCS will be providing a Stream Assessment Training for Field Staff in August. This training would teach them how to utilize SVAP2 (Stream Visual Assessment Protocol). This assessment is required when Conservation Planners are looking to plan and help landowners implement CPS 395 - Stream Habitat Improvement and Management. The assessment is comprised of 15 elements that looks at stream condition, riparian condition, effects of nutrients, and instream conditions for aquatic habitat.

## Ecological Sciences

Draft CPS were sent out by Ted Evans. Comments are due back to Ted by August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The practice standards are:

- 390 Riparian Herbaceous Buffer
- 548 Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment
- 592 Feed Management
- 644 Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 658 Wetland Creation
- 659 Wetland Enhancement

-PA NRCS wrapped up a 3-year evaluation of interim practice standard 810- Annual Forages in Grazing Systems. Final report was sent to the National Grazing Specialist. PA recommended that it be converted into a national CPS. This practice supports the use of annual forages to either bolster forage supplies during the grazing season, extend the grazing season, or improve soil health. Most commonly, it would be utilized to grow and graze summer annuals and cover crops on cropland or to renovate existing pastures.

-PA NRCS is in the first year of evaluation for interim practice standards 812- Raised Beds, 821- Low Tunnels, and 823- Organic Management. These practices are eligible for financial assistance through EQIP.

-PA NRCS will be providing a stream assessment training for Field Staff in August to teach them how to utilize SVAP2 (Stream Visual Assessment Protocol). This assessment is required when conservation planners are looking to plan and help landowners implement CPS 395- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management. The assessment is comprised of 15 elements that looks at stream condition, riparian condition, effects of nutrients, and instream conditions for aquatic habitat.

-You can mention that you just wrapped up Soil Health Training

**01/00/34 - Yuri Plowden (NRCS), State Soil Scientist**, was introduced in her role as the State Compliance Specialist and provided an update on what is happening with Pennsylvania State off-site methods for Wetland Determinations. The national Food Security Act that was enacted in 1985, as amended, requires that USDA program participants comply with wetland conservation provisions. What that means is that as a USDA program participant, you are not allowed to drain or convert a wetland in order to grow commodity crops. The National Food Security Manual (NFSAM) provides internal agency policy related to the Wetland Conservation provisions of the Act. The Food Security Act wetland determination process requires a technical determination of whether an area is a "wetland", then a separate and independent determination of whether any exemptions to the Wetland Conservation provisions apply. NRCS makes or approves certified wetland determinations for USDA Program participants by developing and utilizing off-site and on-site wetland identification procedures. We have written an off-site method recommendation which follows policy and submitted it to National Headquarters for review and it will eventually be published this year in the Federal Register....hopefully prior to the next State Technical Committee Meeting. She noted that if anyone would like to review the document in advance, to please contact our office.



United States Department of Agriculture

Pennsylvania  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Wetlands

## State Off-site Methods for Wetland Determinations



Pennsylvania  
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Food Security Act of 1985 as amended  
requires USDA program participants to  
comply with wetland conservation  
provisions.



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The National Food Security Act Manual (NFSAM) provides internal agency policy related to the Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions of the Act.

The Food Security Act (FSA) wetland determination process requires a technical determination of whether an area is a [wetland](#), then a separate and independent determination of whether any exemptions to the WC provisions apply (assignment of WC labels).



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## Details are in the CFR in 7 Part 12

- NRCS makes or approves certified wetland determinations for USDA Program participants
- NRCS shall: Develop and utilize **off-site** and on-site wetland identification procedures



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Pennsylvania will be developing SOSM based on a template recently provided by National Headquarters.

State Offsite Methods must go through federal register process for public comment.

Plan is to post PA version to federal register prior to next STC

Contact Yuri Plowden, NRCS State Soil Scientist,  
[yuri.plowden@usda.gov](mailto:yuri.plowden@usda.gov) if you are interested in seeing an advanced copy.



**01/04/37 - Susan Parry, (NRCS) State Conservationist for Partnerships and Easements.** Susan proceeded to provide a Partnership update. She noted that part of her role is to work with partners, one of which is the growing segment in small scale Urban Agriculture. NRCS has been funding these projects in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh areas among others. We will have had six projects funded through the People's Garden initiative and certainly we want to be fair and equitable and look at other areas. So, in other cities besides Philadelphia, we are looking to expand into those areas with funding and opportunities and technical assistance through that. They are looking to add human resource concerns so that we can address some of the equity issues within the urban areas that we're working with. She announced that in FY-24, expansion will be to include smaller cities and urban areas within metropolitan statistical areas. That new technologies and practices are being considered to better assist non-traditional customers. She discussed new Outreach initiatives such as working with partners through national agreements to address barriers to NRCS program participation, staff and farmer trainings, staffing of the Philadelphia Service Center and hiring of a State Outreach Coordinator. Susan continued with an Easement Update by discussing a recent event at Hanover Shoe Farms in Adams County. It is known as one of the largest horse breeding operations in the eastern United States. It was attended by at least fifty people. There were eleven easements covering 1785 acres on the historic Hanover Shoe Farm. Six of the easements were enrolled using ACEP ALE and RCPP cost-share programs that covered approximately 1460 acres. Moving on to Easement Updates, she noted that NRCS helped to enroll 12 Easements, protecting 1,800 acres of agricultural land since April 2022. Three RCPP Easements (524 acres) were enrolled in partnership with PDA. Nine ACEP ALE Easements (1276 Acres) were enrolled in partnership with PDA and the Land Conservancy of Adams County. She reported seven new ACEP-ALE Easement contracts were obligated (funded) for 752 acres and five new RCPP Easement contracts obligated (funded) for 484 acres (Additional 2 ACEP ALE and 6 RCPP applications pending). She also reminded everyone that the new Easement application deadline is set for November 1st.

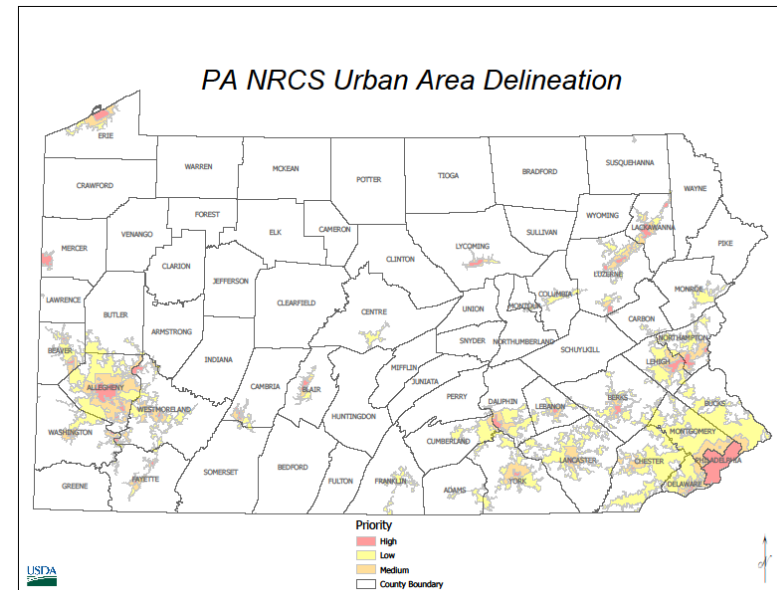
# Partnership Updates

## Small Scale/Urban

- PA NRCS - FY 24 Expansion to include smaller cities and urban areas within Metropolitan Statistical Areas.
- National Small-scale/Urban Working Group considering new technologies and practices to better assist non-traditional customers.

## Outreach

- Working with partners through national (equity) agreements to address barriers to NRCS program participation.
- Staff and Farmer trainings (NY, PA, NJ)
- Philadelphia Service Center staffing
- Hiring of State Outreach Coordinator



# Easement Updates

A combined effort of federal, state and local partners recently completed the purchase of **11 Easements** covering **1,785 acres** on the historic Hanover Shoe Farm in Adams County.

Contributors included:

- NRCS
- PA Department of Agriculture
- Adams County Land Preservation
- Land Conservancy of Adams County

1,460 acres and 6 Easements were purchased using ACEP ALE and RCPP cost-share.



Hanover Shoe Farms, Inc.

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service



# Easement Updates



## Easement Closings

- NRCS helped to purchase 12 Easements, protecting 1,800 ac. of agricultural land since April 2022
- 3 RCPP Easements (524 acres) purchased in partnership with PDA
- 9 ACEP ALE Easements (1,276 acres) purchased in partnership with PDA and the Land Conservancy of Adams County

## FY2023 Contracts

- 7 New ACEP ALE Easement contracts obligated (funded) for 752 acres
- 5 New RCPP Easement contracts obligated (funded) for 484 acres (Additional 2 ACEP ALE and 6 RCPP applications pending)

## New Easement Applications

- November 1, 2023 - Sign Up Deadline

Questions? [susan.parry@usda.gov](mailto:susan.parry@usda.gov)



**01/17/03 - Jared Shippey (NRCS), Assistant State Conservationist for Programs**, was introduced and provided an overall update for Financial Programs. He noted that the Field Offices are working hard to finish up our FY23 allocations. The program managers have been pre-approving some final applications and balancing the accounts and we're hoping to get finished up earlier this year than we have in previous years, with the field being busy with construction and all sorts of other things. He reviewed some new funding opportunities that were worked on this past year such as: EQIP Inflation Reduction Act Funds in EQIP and CSP. Those funds were allocated specifically to those programs targeting climate smart practices; EQIP Organic Transition Initiative. This is one that we got a little bit later in the year, but it's to promote that new practice, the 823 Organic Management, that was previously mentioned. Some applications have been received, and we are looking for those to continue through FY2024; A new fund code was created with EQIP this year for minor soil erosion. We were awarded funding for the Joint Chief Landscape Initiative, which looks at promoting forestry in our North Central northwestern part of the state. This gives an additional \$300,000 just targeted towards that specific area in partnership with the Forest Service and many other partners. EQIP, AMA and RCPP for the first round sign ups deadline is November 1st, which will be consistent with what we did for our fiscal year 23. CSP is January 1<sup>st</sup>. He reviewed the FY23 Allocations for AMA, EQIP, CSP, Joint Chiefs Forestry LRP, NWQI Golden-Winged Warbler and Greatlakes Restoration. He outlined the upcoming deadlines that included FY23 contracting obligations that are to be completed by August 11, 2023. For FY 2024, EQIP/AMA/RCPP first round sign-ups to be accomplished by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and the CSP Classic (2024) first round sign-up is to be completed by Jan 1, 2024.



# Financial Assistance Program Update

2023 State Technical Committee

July 18, 2023



# Updates

- Add ins for FY 23: EQIP IRA, EQIP OTI, EQIP Minor Soil Erosion



Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activities List<sup>[1]</sup> FY2023



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>[2]</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity	
Soil Health			B000BFF1	Buffer Bundle#1*	
			B000CPL24	Cropland soil health management system*	
			B000CPL25	Climate smart advanced soil health*	
		327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
				E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
				E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
				E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
				E328E	Soil health crop rotation
		328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
				E328G	Crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement
				E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
				E328O	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
		329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
				E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
				E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
				E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
				E329E	No till to reduce energy
		332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)		None Available
		340	Cover Crop (acres)	E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
				E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
				E340C	Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
				E340D	Intensive orchard/vineyard floor cover cropping to increase soil health
				E340E	Cover crop to minimize soil compaction
				E340G	Cover crop to reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excess soil nutrients
				E340H	Cover crop to suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles
		345	Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (acres)	E340I	Using cover crops for biological strip till
				E345A	Reduced tillage to reduce soil erosion
				E345B	Reduced tillage to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
				E345C	Reduced tillage to increase plant-available moisture
				E345D	Reduced tillage to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
		386	Field Border (acres)	E345E	Reduced tillage to reduce energy use
				E386A	Enhanced field borders to reduce soil erosion along the edge(s) of a field
				E386B	Enhanced field borders to increase carbon storage along the edge(s) of the field
	E386C			Enhanced field borders to decrease particulate emissions along the edge(s) of the field	
	E386D			Enhanced field borders to increase food for pollinators along the edge(s) of a field	
	393	Filter Strips (acres)	E386E	Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field	
	412	Grassed Waterways (acres)	E393A	Extend existing filter strip to reduce water quality impacts	
	484	Mulching (acres)	F412A	Enhance a grassed waterway	
			F484A	Mulching to improve soil health	
			F484B	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch	
	585	Stripcropping (acres)	F484C	Reduce particulate matter emissions by using orchard or vineyard generated woody materials as mulch	
	601	Vegetative Barriers (feet)		None Available	
	603	Herbaceous Wind Barriers (feet)		None Available	



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>22</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Nitrogen Management	590	Nutrient Management (acres)	ES90A	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses
			ES90B	Reduce risks of nutrient loss to surface water by utilizing precision agriculture technologies
			ES90C	Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses on pasture
			ES90D	Reduce risks of nutrient losses to surface and groundwater by increasing setback awareness via precision technology
Livestock Partnership	366	Anaerobic Digester (number)	None Available	
	632	Waste Separation Facility (number)*		
Grazing and Pasture	512	Pasture and Hay Planting (acres)	ES12A	Cropland conversion to grass-based agriculture to reduce soil erosion
			ES12B	Forage plantings that help increase organic matter in depleted soils
			ES12C	Cropland conversion to grass for soil organic matter improvement
			ES12D	Forage plantings that help increase organic matter in depleted soils
			ES12E	Forage and biomass planting that produces feedstock for biofuels or energy production
			ES12I	Establish pollinator and/or beneficial insect and/or monarch habitat
			ES12J	Establish wildlife corridors to provide habitat continuity or access to water
			ES12L	Diversifying forage base with interseeding forbs and legumes to increase pasture quality
	528	Prescribed Grazing (acres)	ES28A	Maintaining quantity and quality of forage for animal health and productivity
			ES28D	Grazing management for improving quantity and quality of food or cover and shelter for wildlife
			ES28E	Improved grazing management for enhanced plant structure and composition for wildlife
			ES28F	Stockpiling cool season forage to improve structure and composition or plant productivity and health
			ES28G	Improved grazing management on pasture for plant productivity and health with monitoring activities
			ES28H	Prescribed grazing to improve/maintain riparian and watershed function- elevated water temperature
			ES28I	Grazing management that protects sensitive areas -surface or ground water from nutrients
			ES28J	Prescribed grazing on pastureland that improves riparian and watershed function
			ES28L	Prescribed grazing that improves or maintains riparian and watershed function-erosion
			ES28M	Grazing management that protects sensitive areas from gully erosion
			ES28O	Clipping mature forages to set back vegetative growth for improved forage quality
			ES28P	Implementing Bale or Swath Grazing to increase organic matter and reduce nutrients in surface water
	550	Range Planting (acres)	ES28R	Management intensive rotational grazing
			ES28S	Soil Health Improvements on Pasture
			ES28T	Grazing to Reduce Wildfire Risks on Forests
			ES50A	Range planting for increasing/maintaining organic matter
			ES50B	Range planting for improving forage, browse, or cover for wildlife

Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name <sup>(2)</sup> (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat	311	Alley Cropping (acres)		None Available
	342	Critical Area Planting (acres)		
	379	Forest Farming (acres)		
	380	Windbreaks/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (feet)		
	381	Silvopasture (acres)	E381A	Silvopasture to improve wildlife habitat
	390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover (acres)	E390A	Increase riparian herbaceous cover width for sediment and nutrient reduction
			E390B	Increase riparian herbaceous cover width to enhance wildlife habitat
	391	Riparian Forest Buffer (acres)	E391A	Increase riparian forest buffer width for sediment and nutrient reduction
			E391B	Increase stream shading for stream temperature reduction
			E391C	Increase riparian forest buffer width to enhance wildlife habitat
	420	Wildlife Habitat Planting (acres)*	E420A	Establish pollinator habitat*
			E420B	Establish monarch butterfly habitat*
	422	Hedgerow Planting (feet)		None Available
	612	Tree/Shrub Establishment (acres)	E612B	Planting for high carbon sequestration rate
			E612C	Establishing tree/shrub species to restore native plant communities
			E612G	Tree/shrub planting for wildlife food
	645	Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (acres)	E645B	Manage existing shrub thickets to provide adequate shelter for wildlife
			E645C	Edge feathering for wildlife cover
	666	Forest Stand Improvement (acres)*	E666A	Maintaining and improving forest soil quality*
			E666D	Forest management to enhance understory vegetation*
E666E			Reduce height of the forest understory to limit wildfire risk*	
E666F			Reduce forest stand density to create open stand structure*	
E666H			Increase on-site carbon storage*	
E666I			Crop tree management for mast production*	
E666J			Facilitating oak forest regeneration*	
E666K			Creating structural diversity with patch openings*	
E666L			Forest Stand Improvement to rehabilitate degraded hardwood stands*	
E666P			Summer roosting habitat for native forest-dwelling bat species*	
E666R	Forest songbird habitat maintenance*			
E666S	Facilitating longleaf pine regeneration and establishment*			
Restoration of Disturbed Lands	453	Land Redamation, Landslide Treatment (acres)		None Available
	543	Land Redamation, Abandoned Mined Land (acres) <sup>(3)</sup>		
Energy, Combustion, and Electricity Efficiency	372	Combustion System Improvement (number)		None Available
	374	Energy Efficient Agricultural Operation (number)*		
			E533C	Install VFDs on pumps <sup>(4)</sup> *
			E533D	Switch fuel source for pumps <sup>(4)</sup> *
	672	Energy Efficient Building Envelope (number)*		None Available
670	Energy Efficient Lighting System (number)*			
Wetlands	657	Wetland Restoration (acres)*		None Available
Rice	449	Irrigation Water Management (acres) <sup>(4)</sup>	E449B	Alternated Wetting and Drying (AWD) of rice fields



# FY 23 Allocations



➤ AMA	\$ 400,000
➤ EQIP	\$26,097,037
➤ CSP	\$11,471,827
➤ Joint Chiefs Forestry LRP	\$ 350,000
➤ NWQI	\$ 1,300,000
Golden-Winged Warbler	\$ 425,000
➤ Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	\$ 325,000



# Upcoming Deadlines

- FY2023 contracting obligation  
08/11/2023
- FY2024 EQIP/AMA/RCPP first round sign-up  
11/01/2023
- FY2024 CSP Classic 2024-1 first round sign-up  
01/01/2024

**01/26/00 - Ryan Cornelius, NRCS PA EQIP Program Manager,** was introduced and provided an update on EQIP and AMA. Ryan indicated that as of this date, 349 contracted amounting to \$22.3 Million and covering 45,239 acres. AMA has 12 contracted amounting to \$199,129 that covers 30.9 acres. He discussed Post-Inflationary Supplemental Payments (PISPs) covering how to become eligible for a PISP, as well as what Conservation Practices were eligible. The completion deadline for those eligible practices being September 1, 2023.





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## Program Updates (EQIP & AMA)

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Pennsylvania, July 18<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>349</b>	<b>\$22,362,984</b>	<b>45,239 ac</b>
<b>AMA</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$199,129</b>	<b>30.9 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

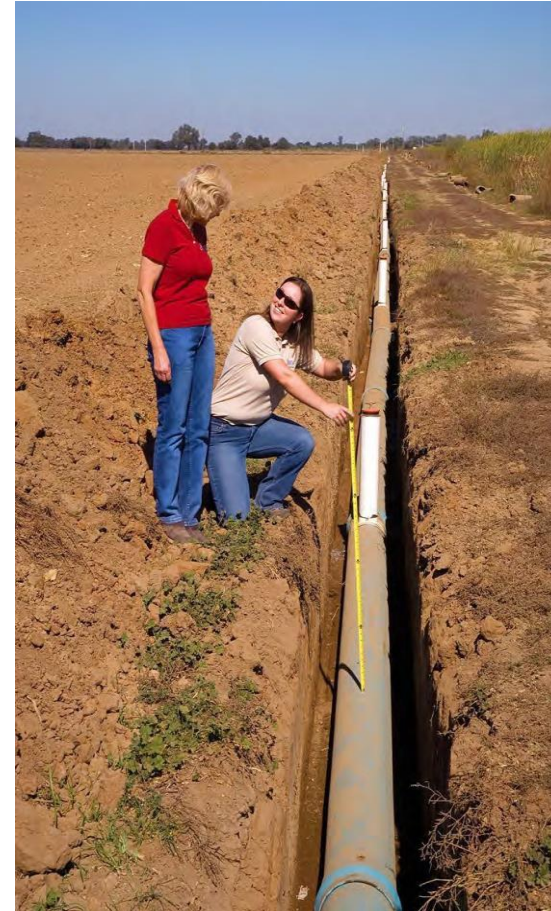




# Program Updates (EQIP & AMA)



# QUESTIONS?



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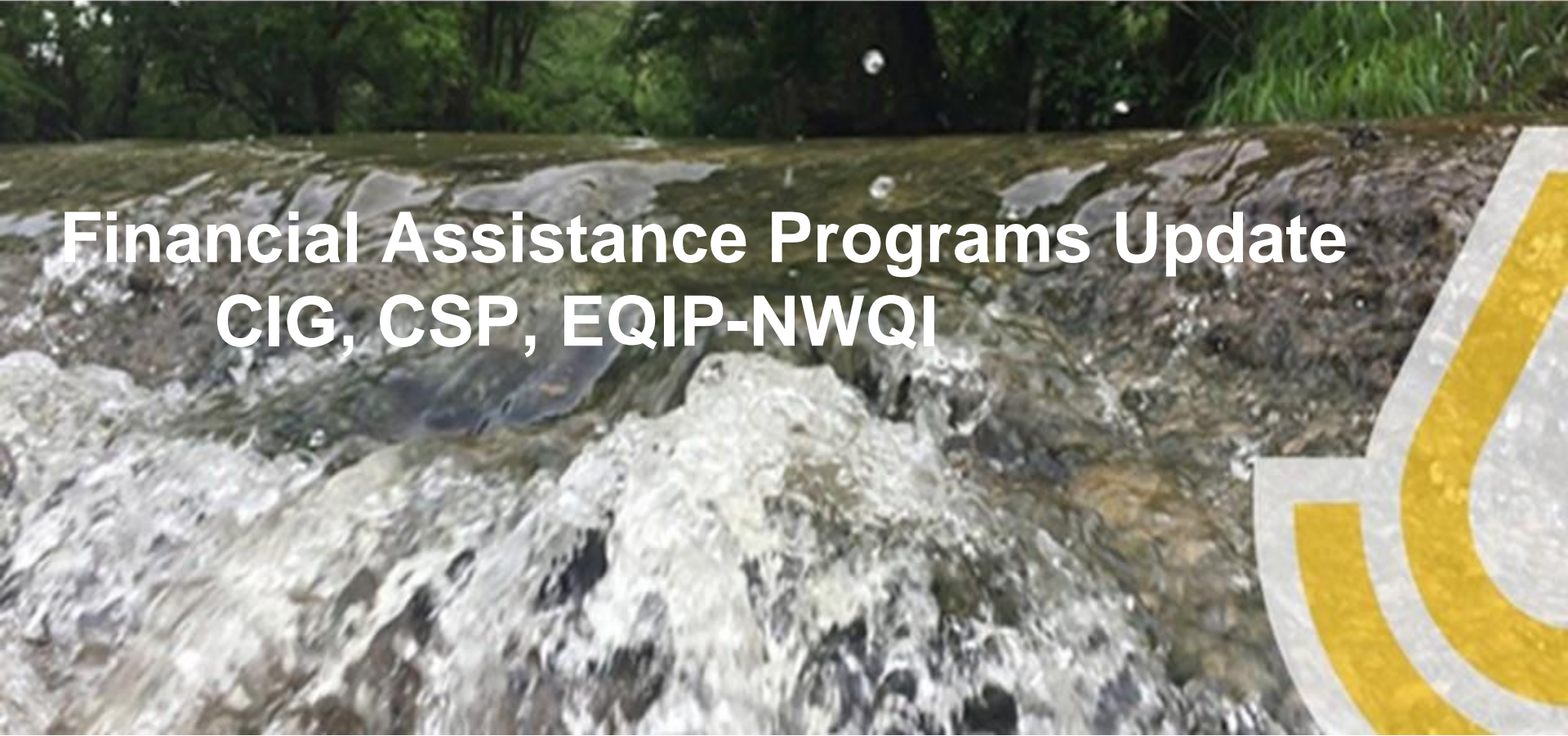


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*PA NRCS Programs Team*

A photograph of a stream flowing over mossy rocks in a forest. The water is white and frothy as it cascades down the rocks. The background is a dense green forest.

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

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

***July 18, 2023***

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# Presentation Outline

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



# FY2023 Conservation Innovation Grants

- **We have ranked our applications and are planning to to fund 3 agreements this year.**
- **Processing comments and will reach out soon to applicants.**

## 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
  - 90% obligated
    - 74 \$2,303,377 18,412.9 acres
- **CSP Classic**
  - Allocation: \$6,200,000
  - 58% obligated

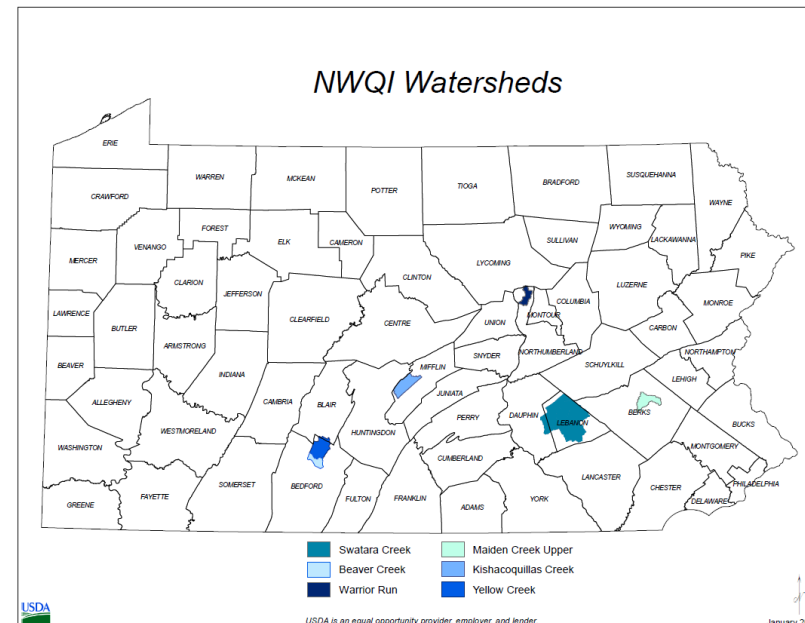
CSP 2023-1	94	\$3,490,183	46,332.6 acres
CSP 2023-2	3	\$97,998	889.3 acres



# National Water Quality Initiative

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program – NWQI

- Allocation: \$1,300,000
- Working to fund as many as possible in our 5 watersheds with NWQI or general EQIP \$.
- Preapproved: 5 applications \$1,331,742
  - (at least 7 were funded in other fund codes)
- Obligations: \$631,466



# National Bulletins

## **NB 300-23-33 LTP – National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Watershed and Source Water Protection Area (SWPA) Selection and Criteria for Planning and Implementation Phases of NWQI – Fiscal Year (FY) 2024**

- provides information on NWQI, justification to withdraw existing NWQI and proposing new NWQI watersheds

## **NB 300-23-28 LTP – Refining Source Water Protection Local Priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024**

- provides an opportunity to update high priority areas for source water. Working with drinking water partners to identify updates for protection and the assoc. potential threats





**Questions?**

**Comments?**

A stack of four sticky notes in shades of purple and yellow, with a yellow pencil resting diagonally across the top. The background is a solid blue color.

**Ashley Lenig**

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

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

**01/33/57 - Adam Dellinger (NRCS) NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program Coordinator**, was introduced and provided an update on RCPP. He indicated that contracts are currently being written under four existing Projects, those being: the Buffalo Creek Watershed Conservation Alliance; Lancaster's Common Agenda for Clean Water; Turkey Hill Clean Water Partnership; and Delisting Ag-Impaired Streams in Central Pennsylvania, which is new. He noted that 26 applications for financial assistance for conservation BMPS that have been pre-selected for funding this year and that'll use about \$3.25 million in RCPP funding in total. He noted that 14 contracts have been obligated as of July 14, 2023, amounting to \$984,667 and covering 3,878.62 acres of land. He continued to provide actions being taken on current projects. He stated that if your organization is interested in applying for their own project, the 2023 application period is open right now. For this round, \$500 million is available for projects and half of that funding is coming from our standard Farm bill authorization and the other half comes from the Inflation Reduction Act. This program will continue to be well funded and there should probably be another application period starting in early 2024.

**01/37/37 - Denise Coleman (NRCS)**, discussed further questions that were put in the chat. There being no further topics to discuss, Denise closed the meeting by announcing that the next State Technical Committee Meeting will be held on October 19<sup>th</sup>. She noted that there has been a request to cover the topic of Legacy Sediments.



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# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Update

Adam Dellinger

State Technical Committee Meeting

7/18/23



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# Fiscal Year 2023 RCPP Landowner Contracts

- **Currently writing contracts under four existing RCPP projects**
  - Buffalo Creek Watershed Conservation Alliance
  - Lancaster's Common Agenda for Clean Water
  - Turkey Hill Clean Water Partnership
  - **Delisting Ag-Impaired Streams in Central PA (NEW!)**
- **26 applications across those projects have been pre-selected for funding**
  - \$3,251,091 in RCPP funds
- **14 contracts have been obligated as of 7/14/23**
  - \$984,667
  - 3,878.62 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
  - **Contracting ongoing**
- **Farmland Preservation and Climate Change Mitigation**
  - Lead Partner: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
  - Award: \$7,850,000
  - Project Area: Statewide
  - **Programmatic Partnership Agreement (PPA) executed in June 2023**
  - **Funding available for entity held forest and farmland easements and climate-smart practices.**
    - **Contracting begins in FY24**



# FY23 Notice of Funding Opportunity now open



- \$500 million available in FY23
  - Funded from two separate authorizations: the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA).
  - NRCS will prioritize using IRA funds for projects that will implement climate-smart agriculture conservation activities
- Projects may be funded between \$250,000 and \$25 million over the life of the project (5 years).
- Due Date: Proposals must be received by 4:59 p.m. on August 18, 2023.
  - Contact me ASAP if you are interested in a proposal for this year







# 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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## Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting

July 18, 2023

The Pennsylvania State Technical Committee Meeting was held in the USDA Conference Room at the NRCS State Office on July 18, 2023.

Denise Coleman (NRCS) (Natural Resources Conservation Service) opened the meeting at 1 PM. Denise welcomed everyone to the STC meeting. After the greetings, Damian Loeper (District Conservationist-Dolphin County), was introduced, and speaking in his additional role as the Urban Conservationist for the city of Harrisburg, PA, proceeded to introduce Mr George Payne who is the Director of the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority. He explained that Mr Payne and his staff are working to develop the long-term overnight plan for community gardens in Harrisburg. George and his staff are working hard to secure various grant fundings through the state, through EAP, local foods, local people, or through the different USDA programs that are available.

00/02/51 - George Payne, Director of Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority Developing a Comprehensive Urban Ag Plan for the City of Harrisburg, is with Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority and is the director of projects. He outlined the redevelopment authorities' mission is to redevelop vacant and unused property into productive use, including green space and urban agriculture. The stakeholders include public entities, city of Harrisburg, departments of planning, parks and recreation, health inspection, as well as some municipal agents or quasi municipal authorities. The local food local places committee has an urban agriculture comprehensive planning work group, and they meet bi-monthly, and it's primarily composed of himself, city planning, urban growers, Penn State extension, as well as USDA. The goal was to provide guidance for residents, non-profits, and commercial urban agriculture enterprises. The outcomes would be to establish compliance with city regulations and ordinances that govern the neighborhood, and a handbook that provides guidance and resources for everyone, and a comprehensive urban agriculture plan. Complying with noise ordinance, farm equipment such as tractors, power, equipment, or generators should operate only between dawn and dusk. The parameters for typical measurements like high



tunnels, fencing and barriers and pest prevention ordinances would be to have fences to prevent pests. For beekeeping ordinances, there are ground hives, they should be allowed on acres on only 1/4 of an acre or more and limited and only 5 hives. Commercial gardens and Urban farms ordinance are that properties there should be hours of operations allowable and residential districts, licensures signs and parking. Upon completion, this handbook would be presented to City Administration and City Council for review and ratification. When approved, it would establish permanent urban agriculture enterprises and gardens/farms throughout the city would have a systematic framework and urban sensitive plan. The principles and method behind this effort is to promote, not restrict urban agriculture while addressing residential matters such as noise, waste, air quality and health and agriculture standards. To regulate the objective while leaving the means flexible, and to incorporate research using plans from other municipalities and subject matter expert arenas. He continued by describing how the effort has progressed to this date.

**00/33/37 - Tim Peters (NRCS), Agricultural Engineer**, was introduced and presented a report/update on Engineering. He indicated that two Standards were sent out last week for review by the State Technical Committee. He then reviewed those Standards and the changes involved. He asked the membership to review these at their earliest convenience. His goal is to get these standards finished and ready to release along with some other ones that were sent out earlier in the year and to upload the Standards on eFOTG by Oct.1<sup>st</sup>. He asked that if anyone would have example projects or been involved with a project that used a vegetative treatment area on a slope that's deeper than 6% and it's been operated and managed well, to please email the information to him. He stated that two more Standards were about to be released for review. They are #635 - Vegetated Treatment Area and #378 - Pond. He took a moment to discuss each of those Standards. Tim mentioned that the Engineering Tools and Resources have been copied to eFOTG and will be removed from our public website at a future date. These include Construction Guides, Design Guides, Engineering Spreadsheets, Fact Sheets, links to other Engineering sites, NRCS Manuals and

Handbooks with Pennsylvania Addendums and Standard Pennsylvania Drawings. He noted that users will be redirected from the public website to the new location. He discussed Concrete Type IL Cement which is becoming widely utilized by the concrete industry in lieu of Type I/II cement. PA NRCS is working to update concrete specifications to allow for its use. He noted that future trainings include Agricultural Conservation Technical Training (Basic) Boot Camps that are coming up in August, and that currently 27 persons have registered. This training is being coordinated with NRCS and Penn State. He indicated that the effects of the recent storms in Pennsylvania are being reviewed to determine evidence of compromised residences/businesses for streambank erosion or buildings that could be in jeopardy and need protective measures applied.

**00/57/01 - Mark Goodson (NRCS), State Agronomist**, was introduced to provide updates for Ecological Sciences. Mark announced that a series of draft Conservation Practice Standards were recently sent out. It is requested that they be reviewed by members of the State Technical Committee and comments returned to Ted Evans, NRCS ([ted.evans@usda.gov](mailto:ted.evans@usda.gov)) by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Our NRCS here in Pennsylvania wrapped up a three-year evaluation of an interim Practice Standard for Annual Forages and Grazing Systems. The final report was sent out to the National Grazing Specialist, and Pennsylvania's NRCS recommended that it be converted into a National Standard. This is the first year NRCS in Pennsylvania is evaluating interim practice standards 812 - Raised Beds, 821 - Low Tunnels and 823 - Organic Management. He noted that these practices are eligible for financial assistance through EQIP. He also announced that PA NRCS will be providing a Stream Assessment Training for Field Staff in August. This training would teach them how to utilize SVAP2 (Stream Visual Assessment Protocol). This assessment is required when Conservation Planners are looking to plan and help landowners implement CPS 395 - Stream Habitat Improvement and Management. The assessment is comprised of 15 elements that looks at stream condition, riparian condition, effects of nutrients, and instream conditions for aquatic habitat.

**01/00/34 - Yuri Plowden (NRCS), State Soil Scientist**, was introduced in her role as the State Compliance Specialist and provided an update on what is

happening with Pennsylvania State off-site methods for Wetland Determinations. The national Food Security Act that was enacted in 1985, as amended, requires that USDA program participants comply with wetland conservation provisions. What that means is that as a USDA program participant, you are not allowed to drain or convert a wetland in order to grow commodity crops. The National Food Security Manual (NFSAM) provides internal agency policy related to the Wetland Conservation provisions of the Act. The Food Security Act wetland determination process requires a technical determination of whether an area is a "wetland", then a separate and independent determination of whether any exemptions to the Wetland Conservation provisions apply. NRCS makes or approves certified wetland determinations for USDA Program participants by developing and utilizing off-site and on-site wetland identification procedures. We have written an off-site method recommendation which follows policy and submitted it to National Headquarters for review and it will eventually be published this year in the Federal Register....hopefully prior to the next State Technical Committee Meeting. She noted that if anyone would like to review the document in advance, to please contact our office.

**01/04/37 - Susan Parry, (NRCS) State Conservationist for Partnerships and Easements.** Susan proceeded to provide a Partnership update. She noted that part of her role is to work with partners, one of which is the growing segment in small scale Urban Agriculture. NRCS has been funding these projects in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh areas among others. We will have had six projects funded through the People's Garden initiative and certainly we want to be fair and equitable and look at other areas. So, in other cities besides Philadelphia, we are looking to expand into those areas with funding and opportunities and technical assistance through that. They are looking to add human resource concerns so that we can address some of the equity issues within the urban areas that we're working with. She announced that in FY-24, expansion will be to include smaller cities and urban areas within metropolitan statistical areas. That new technologies and practices are being considered to better assist non-traditional customers. She discussed new Outreach initiatives such as working with partners through national agreements to address barriers to NRCS program participation, staff and

farmer trainings, staffing of the Philadelphia Service Center and hiring of a State Outreach Coordinator. Susan continued with an Easement Update by discussing a recent event at Hanover Shoe Farms in Adams County. It is known as one of the largest horse breeding operations in the eastern United States. It was attended by at least fifty people. There were eleven easements covering 1785 acres on the historic Hanover Shoe Farm. Six of the easements were enrolled using ACEP ALE and RCPP cost-share programs that covered approximately 1460 acres. Moving on to Easement Updates, she noted that NRCS helped to enroll 12 Easements, protecting 1,800 acres of agricultural land since April 2022. Three RCPP Easements (524 acres) were enrolled in partnership with PDA. Nine ACEP ALE Easements (1276 Acres) were enrolled in partnership with PDA and the Land Conservancy of Adams County. She reported seven new ACEP-ALE Easement contracts were obligated (funded) for 752 acres and five new RCPP Easement contracts obligated (funded) for 484 acres (Additional 2 ACEP ALE and 6 RCPP applications pending). She also reminded everyone that the new Easement application deadline is set for November 1st.

**01/17/03 - Jared Shippey (NRCS), Assistant State Conservationist for Programs**, was introduced and provided an overall update for Financial Programs. He noted that the Field Offices are working hard to finish up our FY23 allocations. The program managers have been pre-approving some final applications and balancing the accounts and we're hoping to get finished up earlier this year than we have in previous years, with the field being busy with construction and all sorts of other things. He reviewed some new funding opportunities that were worked on this past year such as: EQIP Inflation Reduction Act Funds in EQIP and CSP. Those funds were allocated specifically to those programs targeting climate smart practices; EQIP Organic Transition Initiative. This is one that we got a little bit later in the year, but it's to promote that new practice, the 823 Organic Management, that was previously mentioned. Some applications have been received, and we are looking for those to continue through FY2024; A new fund code was created with EQIP this year for minor soil erosion. We were awarded funding for the Joint Chief Landscape Initiative, which looks at promoting

forestry in our North Central northwestern part of the state. This gives an additional \$300,000 just targeted towards that specific area in partnership with the Forest Service and many other partners. EQIP, AMA and RCPP for the first round sign ups deadline is November 1st, which will be consistent with what we did for our fiscal year 23. CSP is January 1<sup>st</sup>. He reviewed the FY23 Allocations for AMA, EQIP, CSP, Joint Chiefs Forestry LRP, NWQI Golden-Winged Warbler and Greatlakes Restoration. He outlined the upcoming deadlines that included FY23 contracting obligations that are to be completed by August 11, 2023. For FY 2024, EQIP/AMA/RCPP first round sign-ups to be accomplished by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and the CSP Classic (2024) first round sign-up is to be completed by Jan 1, 2024.

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**Full Name**

1-582-210-4910

1-717-344-0127

Anderson, Christopher

Bob Hartman (Guest)

Boger, Jared - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Bouknight, Adrian

Coleman, Denise - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Cornelius, Ryan - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Coville, Robbie

Dean Druckenmiller

Dellinger, Adam - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Dimka Braswell (Guest)

Evans, Ted - FPAC-NRCS, PA

George Payne

Grant R. Gulibon

Hanner, Melissa - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Hoffman, Laurel - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Julia Smith (Guest)

Katie Ombalski

Kinney, Timothy - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Kristen Hughes Evans (Guest)

Lenig, Ashley - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Loeper, Damian - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Megan Blackmon

Meghan Rogalus, PDE (Guest)

Parry, Susan - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Peters, Timothy - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Plowden, Yuri - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Schneider, Frank

Schwartzner, John

Shaffer, Lauren

Shippey, Jared - FPAC-NRCS, PA

Wismer, Stephen - FPAC-NRCS, PA