

Franklin County Local Work Group (LWG) meeting agenda
December 9, 2022 10:30am

- Introductions **started at 10:38 am** Amanda Burton, NRCS/DC, Joe Roy MDIWF, Barry Southard, NRCS, Hannah Huber, FPAC-NRCS, Linton Robinson, Henry Hardy, Bob Leso, Corie Willard FCSWCD
- Overview of LWG **10:40am**
 - o Local input on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds for Franklin County in **Fiscal Year 2024**
- EQIP in Maine – explanation of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) application and contracting process and procedure
- Statewide and National Initiatives in 2023
 - o Statewide Initiatives/Fund Pools
 - Conservation Activity Plans (changing to Conservation Planning Activities)
 - Beginning Farmer (focus is on soil health)
 - Conservation Innovation Grants
 - Socially Disadvantaged
 - Water Conservation/Irrigation
 - Tribal Projects
 - High Tunnel Initiative (under Agricultural Management Assistance Program only)
 - New England Pollinator Partnership Project
 - o National Initiatives
 - Energy Initiative
 - Organic Initiative
 - Climate Smart Agriculture (new in 22) – a set of practices that reduce greenhouse gases and sequester carbon
 - Urban Agriculture (new in 22) – land managed for food/fiber in a landscape predominantly residential/commercial
 - Conservation Incentives Contracts (new in 22) – focus on pasture; core practices are Nutrient Mgt and Prescribed Grazing
 - o RCPP – EQIP
 - Maine Aquatic Connectivity Restoration Project – Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP)
- Review and Discussion of Identified Conservation Priorities in Franklin County
 - o 2023 priorities (unchanged from 2022):
 - Water quality
 - Soil erosion
 - Invasive plants & insects
 - Soil Health
 - Forest Management
 - Pollinator Conservation
 - Wildlife Habitat

Report on 2023 Local (Franklin County) EQIP Funding Pools (we are now limited in what we can have for fund pools - can only choose from Ag Waste, Forestry, Pasture, Cropland, High Tunnel, Wildlife, and new in 2022 a “unique local priority”) The new applications are a 3 part application.

- Animal Waste – 50% Of the 6 applications 2 were funded
- Forestry – 44% Of the 18 applications 4 were funded and included Invasive Species
- Pasture - 3% Of the 2 applications 2 were funded
- Cropland (including hayland) – 3% Of the 5 applications 1 was funded
No changes were made at this time to the percentages.
- Should we include a “unique local priority” for 2024? At this time, it was determined that unique funding was not needed to be determined specifically. High tunnels that needed advance funding are done so with (EQUIP) and there is a State fund pool for these tunnels through the Agriculture Assistance Program.
- The Local Work Group Tasks (for 2024 funding):
 - Conservation Priorities
 - Local Fund Pool Percentages
 - Should a unique local priority category be included?
 - Ranking Tools: Local Questions
 - Limited to 200 points per category, no limit to the number of points per question

At 11:27 It was determined to leave the percentages were they were, and at 11:30am there were no more questions to discuss.