



Maine Association of Conservation Districts

Working for Maine's Conservation Districts

PO Box 541 Portland, ME 04112

Maine Soil and Water Conservation District Local Working Group (LWG) Meeting Minutes

Meeting/Project Name	Southern Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District LOCAL WORKING GROUP MEETING		
Date of Meeting:	1/24/24	Time	10am-Noon
Minutes prepared by: A. Wotton		Location	Houlton, ME
Attendance at Meeting			
Name	Department / Division	Name	Department/Division
Philip Quint, Jr	NRCS staff	Lauren Ouellette	Maine Forest Service
Ethan Hill	NRCS staff	Angela Wotton	SASWCD staff
Daniel George	NRCS staff	Meg Mitchell	MOFGA
Erica Peabody	Potato Producer	Bill Sheehan	Maine DEP
Kirsten Thompson	Maine DEP		

Local Working Group Meeting Minutes, Southern Aroostook SWCD

The meeting of the SASWCD Local Working Group was held at the USDA Service Center, 304 North St, Houlton on January 24 from 10am – noon.

Following a welcome, introductions, and brief review of the role of the Local Working Group (LWG) by Phil and Angie, funding pools and ranking documents were provided for discussion of FY2025 needs.

Discussion for the following local issues are as follows:

General:

Ranking elements for every funding pool category that states “Applicant has been unsuccessful getting funded for the past two years” is not allowed. LWG will need to distribute those points within each local issue.

Cropland: Cropland has funding through EQIP as well as Climate Smart and Urban Ag (both statewide pools). Last year the group decided to relook at the percent of allocation points to see if they should be reduced based on applications versus contracts. Percent continues to be applicable to field office needs.

Ranking elements within cropland seem to capture a diverse set of resource concerns and the LWG advised to leave as it is currently written. Point values changed by increasing “address soil health...” with an additional 10 points.

Ag Waste: Generally, have 3 -5 ag waste projects to rank each year and this year, ag waste practices will also be part of the Climate Smart program’s statewide pool. Discussion on whether ag waste includes compost, i.e. silage or potato culls, and the answer is yes. Also discussed whether questions fit livestock operations that are smaller and it was decided that the current wording applies.



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The 50 points from “Applicant has been unsuccessful getting funded for the past two years” was split evenly between the two remaining ranking elements.

Pasture: Last year LWG decided to temporarily remove all 5 points and apply to Forestry category for one year only with a discussion on whether to reinstate points at this LWG meeting. Group decided to leave unchanged as related applications can apply through statewide funding pool and/or FSA continuous CRP. Despite no allocation, the 40 available points were divided as follows: 20 points to “fencing livestock out of a perennial stream or waterbody,” 10 points to “implementation of rotational grazing,” and 10 points to “incorporates principles of soil health including mob grazing or alternative forage crops.”

Forestry: Continue to have a lot of interest in forestry (23 forest management plans last year alone). Local issues to remain the same but add the 25 points from “unsuccessful getting funded for the past two years” to “Application addresses erosion on stream crossings.”

Wildlife: No ranking elements word changes. Available 30 points divided evenly between “Enhance or create a shelter belt, riparian buffers, and hedgerow plantings for wildlife habitat and corridors” and “Application addresses invasives.”

The group recommended the following allocation percentages:

2025 EQIP Funding Pool Category	Percent of FO Allocation
Cropland (includes hay)	53
Pasture	0
Animal Waste	25
Forestry	17
Wildlife	5

The meeting adjourned at noon.