

## ND State Technical Committee Meeting – June 26, 2025 – Notes

Today's meeting was held at the North Dakota Heritage Center and State Museum. The Facilitator for today's meeting was Mark Hayek, Assistant State Conservationist (Partnership Coordinator) with NRCS.

Dan Hovland, State Conservationist, NRCS, welcomed everyone to today's meeting. Dan introduced Jimmy Emmons, Assistant Chief, NRCS, and provided a brief background.

Dan Hovland then gave a brief update on FY '25 Funding/Budget saying that ND NRCS will return 7 million dollars to National Headquarters due to limited purchasing ability, contract cancellations, and no Notice of Funding Opportunities. Dan talked about staffing and Partners. With the restructuring, ND NRCS planned for staffing of 310 across the state and after the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP), we are at 208. Dan said that we currently have 37 agreements totaling approximately 18 million dollars. Dan discussed the future priorities for ND NRCS to fill current vacancies which include 13 Conservation Team Lead positions and 11 District Conservationist positions. Dan also discussed the Soil Health Calculator that has had its first run through by the ND State Leadership and would like the State Technical Committee to review and provide feedback when it is closer to being finished. A question was asked whether Partners would be able to attend Area meetings to be able to be more engaged and provide feedback on topics.

Dan Hovland discussed the purpose of the State Technical Committee Meeting, Dan mentioned having more engagement and feedback to help with conservation priorities, discuss standards, specifications, and what is missing, outreach, technical assistance, and educate our partners and producers. Dan said that ND NRCS is wanting to set up subcommittees to Soil Health, Tribal Advisory, and Wildlife. **Dan said to let Mark Hayek know if anyone would be interested in being on a subcommittee.**

Jarvis Keney, Assistant State Conservationist (Programs), NRCS discussed program updates and caps. Refer to handouts. The State Technical Committee discussed that a lot of contract cancellations were AFO's not being able to secure extra funds and/or not being able to find well drillers and pipeline installers. **Please provide any input for practice payment caps to Mark Hayek or Jarvis Keney by 07/11/2025.**

Jennifer Vetter, Assistant State Conservationist (Compliance), NRCS introduced Matt Waclawik to discuss the National NRCS Wetland Minimal Effect Determination Process and Decision Matrix. Refer to handouts. **Please provide any input on the National NRCS Wetland Minimal Effect Determination Process and Decision Matrix to Jennifer Vetter by 07/31/2025.**

Beau Peterson, Program Director, FSA, discussed the North Dakota CRP cost share rates and what the new proposed rates are. Refer to handouts. Beau mentioned that ND FSA currently has 14 County Manager position vacancies. **Please provide any input on the CRP cost share rates to Beau Peterson by 07/18/2025.**

Dan Hovland and Mark Hayek thanked everyone for attending the State Technical Committee Meeting and providing feedback.

Next Meeting: Tentatively first week in November 2025.