

Kentucky State Technical Committee

April 28, 2016

NRCS State Office, 1st Floor Conference Room
771 Corporate Drive, Lexington, Kentucky

Meeting Summary

PowerPoints referenced in this summary are found under the header “Presentation Materials” on the April 28, 2016, meeting page. The main Kentucky State Technical Committee webpage may be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Welcome, Introductions and Opening Comments – Karen Woodrich

State Conservationist Karen Woodrich opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m., welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. She said the group had not met for a while and that she appreciated everyone’s patience as the USDA offices had moved within the building.

She reminded the group that they serve as a technical advisory committee not just for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, but for all USDA agencies. She then introduced Tom Fern, Rural Development (RD) State Director, who gave a few RD updates and introduced Anthony Hollinsworth, who has recently been selected as RD’s Community Programs Director. Mr. Fern thanked all the partners for their assistance and said to let him know if RD could be of assistance to any of them.

Via photographs (as they could not be in attendance), Ms. Woodrich introduced two new NRCS state office Ecological Sciences staff members. Adam Jones, Natural Resources Specialist, came from the State Office Easements Staff. He is assuming the role formerly held by Sid Brantley is now responsible for grazing management, nutrient management, and pest management. She also introduced Cliff Drouet, Natural Resources Specialist, who replaces Jerry Adams. Mr. Drouet is responsible for forestry and Customer Service ToolKit, NRCS’s planning tool. Both of these gentlemen report to State Resource Conservationist Mark Ferguson. She also noted that Coleman Gusler, State Conservation Engineer, has new (additional) responsibilities including the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program and watershed rehabilitation. She identified that Tony Nott, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Eastern Kentucky, is on detail to the state office to fill in behind Jack Kuhn who retired April 1st. She also said that she is trying to backfill that position which is responsible for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetlands Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE), and Healthy Forests Reserves Easements (HFRP). Tony will act in this role until it is filled.

She also announced that Marcinda Kester, Farm Service Agency’s Farm Programs Chief, is leaving Kentucky. FSA has a new employee, Jacob Bowman, on the Conservation Programs Staff and he was asked to introduce himself. Mr. Bowman said that he fills the position vacated by Faye Brown when she retired. He said has spent some time with US Forest Service and the Wildlife Service. He said he has a lot to learn and is open to others to help him.

Ms. Woodrich also noted that Reed Cripps is now the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) manager for NRCS. While CRP is administered by FSA, NRCS provides technical assistance.

Ms. Woodrich then asked everyone present to introduce themselves. A list of attendees and the organization they represent is attached.

In other announcements, Ms. Woodrich said that the 71st Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) International Annual Conference will be held in Louisville July 24 – 27, 2016. She said that there will be good information shared at this meeting and encouraged the group to attend. The meeting will be held at the Galt House and a tentative agenda is on the SWCS website at <http://www.swcs.org/>

She said that the Ag Water Quality Authority is trying to revitalize itself under Kentucky Division of Conservation Director Kim Richardson's leadership. She reminded the group that state law requires any person with 10 or more acres devoted to agriculture to have an ag water quality plan.

Ms. Woodrich mentioned that there is a group being put together by the Kentucky Farm Bureau called the Kentucky Water Resources Board and they hope to be in place by July. Their goal is to address water quantity issues facing the Commonwealth.

Ms. Woodrich then introduced Dennis Chessman, NRCS Soil Health Division, Southeast Regional Team Leader. She said although he is on a regional staff, that Kentucky is fortunate to be able to host him here.

Soil Health – Dennis Chessman

Mr. Chessman presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Why soil health matters and the NRCS commitment to it".

He discussed the challenges in Kentucky and the United States noting that between 1982 and 2007, the US lost 41 million acres to development, 23 million of which was active farm land. Losing land to development means we can't grow food and fiber. He also noted that the world and US population is growing and carbon dioxide levels are increasing. He discussed the differences in natural system vs. cultivated systems, and said that we need to better manage the hydrology, amount of carbon sequestered, and the system resistance and resilience. He talked about the "downward spiral of soil degradation" in annual systems, saying that historically, soil organic carbon declines over time, and that soil carbon is the "keystone" for all soil physical, chemical, and biological processes and properties. He gave the definition of soil health as "the continued capacity of the soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans." He said that there are both challenges and opportunities present.

He said that NRCS promotes several simple principles as help for unhealthy ag soils: (1) Minimize tillage and other disturbance, (2) Keep the soil surface continually covered, (3) Have growing plants present as much as possible, (4) Increase plant diversity, and (5) properly manage inputs. He said that one of the challenges is how to adjust the general principles for specific regions and systems.

He said that healthy soils store more carbon. Carbon comes in through the plant, out through the soils. Carbon continually cycles with respiration sending it back. For this reason, it is important to keep plants growing throughout the year to keep the cycle going. The question is, how do we

get there? We need to help producers and service providers understand the basic processes, assess current soil health status, and help landusers develop and implement an appropriate plan, adjusting as needed. He said we also need economic information for broader adoption. He said it was hard to challenge growers when they are thinking about short term returns.

Mr. Chessman briefly discussed new NRCS Soil Health Division, saying that there are 19 new positions scattered around the country, and that the goals of the Division are to leverage partners, ensure scientific basis, evaluate economics, and to quantify benefits.

He believes we can reverse the downward spiral of soil degradation, especially those associated with over tillage and lack of crops year round.

Details from Mr. Chessman's presentation may be found by viewing his PowerPoint which is linked on the Kentucky NRCS State Technical Committee webpage. He opened the floor to any questions.

It was asked if demonstration farms will be utilized to promote soil health. Mr. Chessman responded that yes, as states identify them that it is a great idea to set up farms, invite neighbors to see and learn. Ms. Woodrich added that there are opportunities with the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), and if Committee members know of these kind of desired soil health projects, to get with either Mr. Chessman or Steve Blanford, state soil scientist and Kentucky soil health lead. She said that Dennis has done a lot of work and research to learn the needs of Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia and she is glad to have him here.

Mr. Chessman offered to the group to reach out to him to carry on the conversation including concerns and criticisms. A final question was asked regarding development (loss of farm land to concrete) and what we could do about that. Mr. Chessman responded that while we're not going to stop urbanization, or increasing population, that we need to work to increase productivity on land that remains for agriculture, asking, "Can we do a better job managing soils that remain?"

Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee – Steve Kull

Ms. Woodrich then called on Steve Kull, Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF), who discussed the Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. He said that the USDA Forest Stewardship Program (which KDF administers) requires a committee similar to the State Technical Committee to help provide guidance for programs. KDF will be revising the Kentucky Forest Action Plan in 2020 and decided to ask that the State Technical Committee serve as the Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. He said that KDF will ask this group to provide input on the plan as well as other topics. He said that the plan covers similar interests as this group already has (soil health, water quality/quantity, etc.). He distributed the 2010 Kentucky Forest Action Plan Priority Area Map saying that although KDF works statewide, that priority areas have been identified. He said more information as well as the assessment is on their website at forestry.ky.gov

Ms. Woodrich asked if he any specific need from the Committee today and he said not today, but if they have any issues that they can feel free to bring them to his attention.

He said he will be asking for input closer to the time of plan revision. He wants to make it a working and lasting document with updates and revisions as necessary.

He also added that the more he works with other states, the more he appreciates the relationship that we have here in Kentucky and looks forward to that continuing.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) – Mark Ferguson

Next, Mark Ferguson, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, discussed the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) opportunity. He said that the purpose of CIGs is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. There is an opportunity to apply for a national grant as well as a state grant. The state CIG “topics” are Soil Health and Water Quality. He said that the funding comes from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and that Kentucky has set aside \$225,000 for this year’s CIGs. Funds are for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years. The maximum award for state CIGs is \$75,000 and it requires a 1:1 match (match can be any combination of cash and in-kind funding.) He discussed the review process noting that the State Conservationist will make the final selections for state grants.

For the national competition, there are three topics, which is less than in previous years. The national competition also did away with “pre-proposals” now seeking only full proposals. The three national topics are (1) projects that describe innovative environmental enhancement and protection approaches and technologies for the primary benefit of historically underserved producers, veteran farmers or ranchers, or organizations comprised of or representing these individuals or entities, (2) projects that develop, demonstrate and/or quantify the impacts of innovative conservation systems and their component practices or approaches in an agricultural setting that improve/protect ground and/or surface water quality (edge of field monitoring fits here), and (3) projects that demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of leveraged public/private impact investments in working lands conservation.

There is \$20 million available at the national level for this year’s CIGs. The maximum award is \$2 million with the same required 1:1 match as the state requirement. The review process is similar to the state process, with the NRCS Chief making the national selections.

Proposals for national consideration are due May 10, 2016. State proposals are due May 31, 2016. The grant application information is available on the Kentucky NRCS website State CIG Website: <http://www.ky.nrcs.usda.gov> (navigate to Programs/Financial Assistance/CIG).

You may also contact Mr. Ferguson or Deena Wheby for a copy of the CIG announcement for program funding.

Mr. Ferguson then highlighted a sample of current state funded CIGs including:

- University of Kentucky (UK) – Phosphorous Runoff Potential in Major Row Crop Soils of KY
- Grow Appalachia – Delivery of Soil Health Innovations to Historically Underserved Producers in Appalachia KY
- Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) – Increasing Outreach to Women Landowners

- Kentucky State University (KSU) – Soil Health Assessment-Use of Manure, Cover Crops and Crop Rotation in Small Scale Farming
- UK – Study of the Effect of Cover Crops on Soil Health and Nitrogen Fertilizer Response

A question was asked if there was much interest in CIGs. Mr. Ferguson said that NRCS usually gets two to three applications on the state side and several from the national competition. Applications come from a variety of groups, not just universities.

See his PowerPoint presentation for more details.

Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP) – Reed Cripps

Ms. Woodrich reminded the group of the importance of bringing partner leveraging to the table, whatever project it is that we are working on together as NRCS can't always provide 100 percent anymore. One of the available collaboration opportunities is the Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP). She then introduced Reed Cripps, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships, to discuss the current RCPP proposal submission opportunity.

Dr. Cripps discussed how RCPP may be used to achieve partner goals. He said that RCPP came about in the 2014 Farm Bill, but previously there were other programs that provided similar opportunities. The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) under which the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) was conducted was one such program.

This year there is \$235 million available nationwide. RCPP assistance is delivered through the authorities and rules of existing NRCS programs including Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and in Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs), the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program ("watersheds"). Partners can help determine what we do with program funds, but it must be within the statutory limitations of the programs.

There are three pools to which proposals may be submitted: National (for projects that cross state lines), State (single state only), and CCAs (Kentucky is in the Mississippi River Basin CCA.) CCAs are regional and have specific goals and priorities that may be different than national or state goals and priorities. Last year Kentucky received approximately \$1 million for state projects.

Dr. Cripps said that he would be happy to visit with partners and guide them, but the idea needs to be the partners.

Pre-proposals are due May 10, 2016. The pre-proposal is fairly simple and is not much more than a submission of an idea. If selected, then a full proposal will be required. If it is selected to continue to the next level, then NRCS will negotiate with the partners for the terms of the final project. It is not too late to submit a pre-proposal for this year.

There is no set "match" such as a 50/50, but there needs a "significant contribution" on the part of the partner. There will be a negotiation at the end of the process to finalize the partner

contribution, however, the higher contribution proposals are more likely to be looked at favorably.

Other federal dollars may be used as part of leverage. State cost share or local cost share is good hard cash match. What we call a contribution for RCPP is somewhat flexible.

Dr. Cripps briefly discussed several of the potential new proposals for the purpose of informing those at the meeting in case they may want to partner with one of them. He identified project proposals as potentially coming from Wayne County Conservation District, Clinton County Conservation District, Grow Appalachia (seasonal high tunnels), The Nature Conservancy (drainage water management), and UK Cooperative Extension (forestry conservation activity plans).

He reminded the group that RCPP is not just funding to do what you wanted; it must follow existing program rules. He also stated that outreach is not reimbursable (but could be used as part of the significant contribution) and that NRCS is really not looking for technical assistance expertise. He said that projects that have broader appeal than just your own group would likely fare better. Again, he offered his assistance if needed.

Next, Dr. Cripps presented updates for existing and newly approved RCPP Projects:

Projects approved in 2015:

- Managing Poo – this state level project is an animal waste management project, helping to producers not be in violation. This project is offered statewide.
- Cerulean Warbler – this national level project is to help create habitat along the Appalachian Mountains by reforestation of abandoned coal mines. The partners are trying to plant American Chestnuts. This project is offered in parts of Eastern Kentucky.

Both of these projects have farmer applications currently being evaluated.

New (2016) Projects' Overview:

- Seeding Marginal Lands in Eagle & Elkhorn Creek Watersheds (Scott County Conservation District, et.al.) – This project includes neighboring counties to implement conservation practices in the Elkhorn and Eagle Creek Watersheds. It has \$300,000 available.
- Overgrazing & Soil Degradation on Horse Farms (UK) – This statewide project is to help make equine owners aware of NRCS activities and how to leverage more conservation practices on equine operations.
- Precision Conservation Management (IL Corn Growers, et.al.) – This project was submitted two years ago as an Illinois-only project and asked for a large amount of funding. It was not selected for funding. It was resubmitted for 2016 consideration and included Kentucky, Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois. It still requested a significant amount of funding (\$2 million). It was approved, however the funding amount was negotiated to a lower level. The project is offered in certain focus areas. In Kentucky, those areas coincide with previously identified Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) focus areas. The project intends to help landusers implement EQIP and CSP, targeting nutrient management. Irrigation is not included in this project. Kentucky will begin receiving funding in fiscal year 2017.

A comment was made from an attendee that there had been no money spent yet on the Managing Poo project. Kim Richardson, Kentucky Division of Conservation (DOC) Director, stated that this was not the case, that a number of state cost share applications had been approved for Conservation Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs.) Deena Wheby, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, explained the EQIP process and said that eligible applications were being evaluated now. The process as determined by the project partners was that participants would sign up and receive CNMPs from state cost share (DOC) and then apply to NRCS for potential EQIP funding.

There being no more questions regarding RCPP, Ms. Woodrich then introduced Deena Wheby to report out on State Technical Committee activities since the last meeting and to discuss program activities.

Committee Input from e-mail Requests and Subcommittee Meetings – Deena Wheby

Deena Wheby, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, reported to the Committee updates from email requests and subcommittee meetings that have been held since the last full State Technical Meeting. She reminded the Committee that they serve in an advisory capacity to NRCS and other agencies of USDA on the implementation of natural resources conservation provisions of Farm Bill legislation. She said that Standard Operating Procedures had been published in the Federal Register several years ago which require subcommittees to report back to the full committee. She said that Kentucky used to have standing subcommittees, but now when the need arises for a subcommittee meeting, the entire committee is invited and members can attend or not attend depending on their interests. She said that agencies also sometimes seek input via email if a regular meeting is not scheduled and the input is needed in a timely manner. She asked for input regarding if standing subcommittees should be reestablished. There were no comments but she said that comments could be submitted to her on this subject at any time.

Since the last full Committee meeting, there has been one Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) subcommittee meeting as well as e-mail requests for input for the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARC). Although emails were sent to the full committee following each of these asks/meetings, she briefly went over the results.

CRP

- Subcommittee meeting held August 13, 2015
- The purpose of the meeting was to provide recommendations for the establishment of zones for the CRP Grasslands Program.
- Report was provided via email to full committee on August 17, 2015
- Ms. Wheby offered if anyone didn't have that and wished to have a copy, to contact her.

WRE GARC

- E-mail request on December 9, 2015
- Provided the opportunity to review the methodology and results and provide any comments, recommendations, or express any concerns
- Comments were that NRCS methodology (same as used in previous years) was acceptable, as were the resulting GARCs

NWQI

- E-mail request on December 14, 2015
- Sought comments on ending Headwaters of Hinkston Creek NWQI project and replacing it with Cane Run – Dix River
- Comments were favorable and replacement was made

NRCS Programs Updates

EQIP, WHIP, CSP, ACEP-ALE – Deena Wheby

Ms. Wheby provided program updates (covering end of year for federal fiscal year 2015 and current 2016 status) for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Agricultural Land Easement (ALE). She reminded attendees that the numbers shown in her presentation have been rounded and are for informational purposes only. They are not meant to be used for “official” agency numbers for use outside of this presentation, and if official numbers are needed (for any publication or other use), to please contact her. Specific details of the following summary may be found in her PowerPoint presentation.

She said that in federal fiscal year 2015, NRCS received about 500 more EQIP applications than the previous year, requesting more than \$31 million (up by about \$11 million from 2014.) Statewide, 630 contracts were funded for about \$9.8 million. This represented about 24 percent of the request by number, and 32 percent of the request by dollars. This is down significantly from 2014. She said that there was an unfunded backlog of over 2,000 applications requesting more than \$21.2 million at the end of the year. This is far more than the 1,300 for \$8.7 million in 2014 backlog. She showed maps of where the 2015 applications were received and contracts granted.

She then gave the current status of fiscal year 2016 EQIP activities. She said the state initial allocation was \$11.8 million which is up about \$2 million from last year. She showed the breakdown of the different “pots” of EQIP money, briefly discussing the StrikeForce Initiative. She said Kentucky was expecting additional EQIP funding in the way of StrikeForce and Climate Change.

The first EQIP application evaluation period ended November 20, 2015. From that period, 1,250 applications were received requesting \$22.8 million. Application numbers were down from the same period last year, but dollar requests were significantly higher. She said that there were 79 applications for Conservation Activity Plans which is also down from the previous year at this time. The first round of applications approved consisted of 373 contracts for \$7.3 million. She gave additional breakdowns of applications and funding which may be found on her PowerPoint presentation. The second EQIP application cut-off was March 18, 2016, with approvals to be made soon.

She reminded the group that although the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) was repealed in the 2014 Farm Bill, that there are still nine active WHIP contracts and Kentucky NRCS continues to service these contracts. She said that NRCS will spend at least five percent

of the EQIP funding on wildlife habitat practices and activities. (Traditionally the state spends far more than that.)

She then discussed the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). She said that the 2015 general sign-up received 256 total applications and 84 were approved. This is up from 34 contracts approved in 2014. The number of acres under contract more than doubled from the previous year. These contracts will have a \$575,000 annual obligation for each of the next five years. A CSP renewal option was offered for the first time in 2015 for prior year contracts that were expiring. Of the 96 eligible contracts, 45 were renewed, representing almost 23,000 acres and more than \$335,500 per year obligation (times five.) She also showed maps of the 2015 CSP contracts are located.

The 2016 CSP application period ended March 31, 2016. Total applications numbered 181, representing 60 counties. NRCS is in process of evaluating these applications now. Similar to last year, there is also a renewal option for expiring contracts. Of the 55 eligible existing contracts, 45 have submitted applications to renew. This is a non-competitive process, although certain program requirements must be met.

She then discussed the Agricultural Conservation Easements Program (ACEP). She said that this program takes the place of the several easement programs which were repealed by the 2014 Farm Bill. Those programs are the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). ACEP has two components – the Agricultural Lands Easements (ALE) which provide the former functions of FRPP and GRP; and the Wetland Reserves Easements (WRE) which provides for the former functions of WRP. She discussed the basics of the ACEP-ALE saying that the government does not hold these easements (which is the same as FRPP was, but different than GRP was.) ALE requires an eligible entity who must be able to acquire, manage, monitor, enforce the easements in perpetuity, as well as to provide matching funds (some can come from landowner donation).

In fiscal year 2015, 1,468 acres of ALE came under contract. This represents 15 parcels and a federal investment of over \$2 million. The participating entities were the Fayette County Rural Land Management Board and the Compatible Lands Foundation. Applications have been received for 2016 ALE from two entities. They have requested \$1.8 million in funding to acquire 11 easements on 1,300 acres.

She said that we don't talk much about FRPP (now ACEP-ALE) but since the beginning of the program, Kentucky has helped acquire 251 easements on approximately 40,000 acres with nearly \$40 million of federal funding. When the federal, partner and landowner contributions are combined, this is almost \$86 million in value. These acres are protected for agricultural use in perpetuity.

In her earlier presentation, Ms. Wheby briefly discussed State Technical Committee subcommittees. As a follow-up to this, she said that CSP will look a little more like EQIP beginning in 2017 and that State Technical Committee input is being sought for ranking questions, state priorities, etc. She also said that NRCS would like State Technical Committee input on how EQIP is working including state priorities, pooling areas, number of ranking cut-offs per year, percent of dollars distributed to each, ranking and screening questions, etc.

To gather Committee input, she announced that CSP and EQIP subcommittee meetings would be held (in person) on May 31, 2016. CSP will be held in the morning from 10:00 a.m. until noon, and EQIP will be that afternoon from 1:30 until 4:00 p.m. Persons who are not able to attend the sessions may also submit any written comments to her at deena.wheby@ky.usda.gov. She also said she would send an invitation out to the Committee and have it posted on the web.

ACEP-WRE, HFRP – Tony Nott

Tony Nott, acting NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Natural Resources Planning, gave an update for the easement programs. He began his presentation by showing the amount of easement funding Kentucky has utilized since 2004. He summarized Healthy Forests Reserve Program (six easements left to close) and Emergency Watershed Program – Flood Plain Easements (all closed). He provided the number of 2015 ACEP-WRE applications and easements; as well as the number of 2016 applications received, and the number of offers to be made. He showed a map of WRP and ACEP-WRE easement locations across Kentucky, noting that most are in the western part of the state, but saying that wetland easements are important statewide. More details regarding Mr. Nott’s presentation may be found by viewing his PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Woodrich expressed her thanks to partners for helping NRCS deliver conservation programs including easements. Next, she called on Coleman Gusler, NRCS State Conservation Engineer, to give an update on the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program. She stated that parts of what NRCS does for EWP is being transitioned out of state. The EWP contracting process is now handled by a national team so you may see different names on correspondence. We ALL must be diligent in adhering to timeframes in order to execute the program efficiently.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Watershed Rehabilitation – Coleman Gusler

Mr. Gusler stated that he had recently been assigned responsibility for EWP. He reminded the group that the purpose of EWP is to assist project sponsors to implement emergency measures to address threats to life, property, etc. The program must work through a state or local sponsor. In 2015, there were three EWP “events”. The exigent sites from those events have been completed.

He stated that there are two types of EWP – exigent and emergency. Exigent cases are those that need to be addressed right away. Emergency cases are those that are urgent such as a road or structure is threatened, but will not likely fail tomorrow.

The projects identified as exigent are completed, but Kentucky has \$2.2 million left on the “emergency waitlist.” This amounts to approximately 20 projects. These will likely be going on through the summer.

Mr. Gusler then discussed watershed rehabilitation. He said this was upgrading existing watershed dams across the state. He said NRCS and cooperating sponsors installed 202 watershed dams across the state over the past 60-plus years and that 200 are still operating today. He said many of these need upgrades to bring them up to current standards, mostly because the hazard level changed when houses were built below the dam that were not there during original construction. He said NRCS would work through the sponsors to bring them up to code. NRCS

is currently working to rehabilitate two structures within the Red Lick Watershed (the Berea water supply), and one in the East Fork Clarks River Watershed in West Kentucky.

Ms. Woodrich reminded the group that RCPP could be used for watershed activities.

Discussion, Announcements, Etc. - Group

Ms. Woodrich opened the floor to anyone who had announcements or other information to share. There were none. She also said that if there were topics for the next meeting agenda, to let Deena know. She also said that we would plan for two more meetings this year (not including any subcommittee meetings) and asked for feedback regarding the number of meetings. She thanked everyone for their feedback and for the input from partnerships.

The next full Committee meeting dates are August 11, 2016, and December 8, 2016.

The CSP Subcommittee will meet May 31, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. The EQIP Subcommittee will meet on May 31, 2016, at 1:30 p.m. Both meetings are open to any individual with interest in the program.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Meeting Attendees

Name	Representing
Karen A. Woodrich	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tom Fern	USDA – Rural Development
Jacob T. Bowman	USDA – Farm Service Agency
Ed Thompson	USDA – Office of Advocacy and Outreach
Meredith Scales	Kentucky Dairy Development Council
Dave Maples	Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association
Pam Snyder	Kentucky Division of Forestry
Steve Kull	Kentucky Division of Forestry
Bill Steele	Kentucky Division of Forestry
Kim Richardson	Kentucky Division of Conservation
David Chinn	Monty’s Plant Food
Jennifer Hickerson	Kentucky Dairy Development Council
Ben Koostra	Limestone & Cooper (TSP)
Cindy Finneseth	Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD)
Harold Duckworth	Task, Inc.
Doug Wilson	Task, Inc.
John Cambron	Kentucky Division of Water
Brent Burchett	Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Jeffery Sole	The Nature Conservancy
Henry Duncan	Kentucky Woodland Owners Association
Jack Stickney	Kentucky Rural Water Association
Tim Joice	Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Brent Harrel	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Don Dott	Kentucky Nature Preserves
Joe Cain	Kentucky Farm Bureau
Dan Figert	Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Anthony Hollinsworth	USDA – Rural Development
Dennis Chessman	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Mark Ferguson	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Coleman Gusler	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Katherine Belcher	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tony Nott	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Reed Cripps	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Deena Wheby	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service