

**ACEP – WRE Sub-Committee Meeting
10/14/16**

Attendees: Tom Schleif, Ritch Nelson, Randy Epperson, Tami Nordman, Elbert Traylor, Buffalo Bruce, Robert Parker. Via Phone: Jon Denton & Scott Aden.

Agenda Item #1 - GARC 2017 Proposal

- All land use categories remained the same from FY 2016 except the Missouri River area split out irrigated and dry cropland as separate values rather than just one cropland value. It was felt that there was significant enough difference in value to warrant this change in land use categories.
- The AWMA completed by an independent real estate professional agrees with the University of Nebraska Market Survey that shows a 5% decline of agricultural land values from 2015 – 2016.
- GARC reductions from Fair Market Value across the state from West to East are 10%, 15%, 20% respectively.
- Again this year, if grazing rights are retained by the landowner, the resultant offer would be a 25% reduction from full easement value. If grazing rights are NOT retained by the landowner, the landowner could receive full 100% GARC value – the landowner would then need a Compatible Use Authorization (discussed how those work) before they are allowed to graze on the ACEP-WRE easement lands.

Questions & Answers:

- Why is there no “D – Riparian Forestland” in the West? – The assumption is being made that that category was not significantly different than the “Other” category. NRCS will reevaluate land use categories to determine if Riparian should be added to the West for next year’s AWMA.
- Is there any value in tracking the kind of Contracts (RRP, WREP, etc) in each area? – Tom stated that there are ways to track those & folks can pull them off the website and it would be nice to get that information out there.

Agenda Item #2 – ACEP-WRE 2017 Proposed Ranking Form – One week to respond with comments (10-21-16)

- Changes from previous years will allow each application to separate itself on its own merit. Changes from previous to FY17 are as follows:

#1: The points for Existing Wetland Manipulations.

- Changes in point to emphasize objective of WRE and account for elimination of Factor 15 ((Environmental Benefit Score).
- Discussion about requirement to comply with 404 regulation.

#8: Brought back Wetland Complex Association ranking factor – ranking points based on extent of losses. Comment about importance of possibly providing ranking points for isolated wetlands – or at a minimum record info in the database.

Old #8 (Carbon Sequestration) and old #9 (Contribution of Floodwater Attenuation) and old #15 (Environmental Benefit Score) were removed as these factors provided little to no separation between applications.

#11 (County Land Value Rating)” as revised to “Easement Cost per Acre” -based on estimated current FY GARC. This provides a more site-specific easement cost evaluation.

Elbert would like to see WQ factor 9 linked back to water management. – will need to review for possible enhancement next year.

Both gentlemen on the phone like the changes proposed to the 2017 Ranking Worksheet; that was also the consensus for those attending in person.

No other comments at this time.