



Somerset County SWCD

70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan ME 04976

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Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District 2017 Local Working Group (LWG) Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 21, 2017 from 1:30 – 3:00pm @ USDA Skowhegan Service Center (70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan, ME)

Attendees:

Joe Dembeck, executive Director – Somerset County SWCD, Ron Desrosiers, NRCS Skowhegan Service Center District Conservationist, Nick Pairitz, NRCS Skowhegan Service Center Soil Conservationist, Scott Speck, County Executive Director – USDA Farm Service Agency, Patty Cormier, Maine Forest Service District Forester, Brad Santy, Dairy Farmer – Skowhegan.

Joe Dembeck, Somerset SWCD Executive Director, called the meeting to order and thanked attendees for their participation. Introductions followed, with each person stating their name and organization/department/town of residence or land ownership. All participants were provided with a packet that included: meeting agenda, 2016 LWG Meeting Minutes, summary sheets on NRCS programs, NRCS Maine FY 2018 financials by categories (state and Skowhegan Service Center), copies of Application Ranking Summary for Animal Waste, Forestry, Cropland, Pasture categories, and payment rates sheet.

Joe provided an overview of the responsibilities and duties of the Local Working Group.

The attendees were asked to review the 2016 LWG meeting minutes. No questions or comments were received on the minutes and the group unanimously approved the minutes.

Nick Pairitz (NRCS Soil Conservationist) explained how Local Working Group recommendations were utilized to provide input for the Environmental Qualities Incentives Program (EQIP). Nick directed the attendees to the meeting packet where he briefly described several non-EQIP programs and their deadlines. Programs highlighted were CSP, Pollinator Habitat, ACEP, and CIG. Scott Speck (FSA County Executive Director) then briefly reviewed two FSA programs: CRP (continuous sign-up) and Emergency Forestry Restoration (EFR) in response to damage in Somerset County from October 2017 wind storm.

Nick then reviewed the EQIP funds received by Maine for FY 2018 and how those funds were allocated national required allocations (ex. Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, etc.), Maine state allocations (CIG, CAPS, High Tunnel, etc.), and then Somerset County allocation. The % of allocations to local categories for FY2018 were reviewed to provide the meeting attendees a basis for discussion on FY2019 Somerset County allocations by category.

Nick asked Joe to provide a quick summary of results from the 2016 Natural Resource Assessment report for Somerset County. Joe highlighted the Somerset County survey respondents' feedback that water quality (surface and groundwater) protection and management



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were reported as the resource of highest concern. This concern resulted in high importance placed on animal waste management, cropland erosion control, forestry erosion control, and protection of surface waters from development in/near the riparian zone.

Patty Cormier (MFS District Forester) asked what the FY 2018 applications were by category. Nick provided a review of the applications: Animal Waste (6); Forestry (13); Cropland/Hayland (7); and Pasture (2).

Brad Santy (dairy farmer Skowhegan) asked how well the Skowhegan Service Center is anticipating needs (applications) in the categories. Ron Desrosiers (NRCS District Conservationist) stated that it is often hard to forecast application numbers per category as well as \$ amount per application. Ron stated that in recent years the Skowhegan Service Center has received numerous applications per funding category and that the review process has worked well in identifying the highest priority projects to fund. Nick provided a rough breakdown of applications funded per category compared to total number of applications submitted for FY 2018.

Animal Waste – several applications funded through Maine state allocation and others from County allocation.

Forestry – about 70% of applications were funded

Cropland/Hayland - about 1/3 of applications were funded

Pasture – both applications will be funded, but might be through other programs which the applications are also eligible to be funded.

The group again reviewed prior year fund pool categories and percentages, inquiring if the percentages for fund pools addressed the need. Scott asked about high tunnel funding. Nick noted that all funding for high tunnels comes from a state allocation category not the county allocation. Brad asked Ron about emerging issues or trends he saw in regards to activities in the categories that the group should consider. Ron stated that he felt cropland practices that reduce erosion and protect soil health in fields continuously planted in corn will continue to be a major concern and will likely increase as farms try to produce more of their own feed. Scott commented that maybe cropland allocation should be increased.

Joe reminded the group that the changes made at the 2016 LWG to the local fund pool categories was due to anticipated increases in applications for forestry related projects. One of the areas anticipated for increase demand under the forestry category was management of invasive plant species. Ron noted that only a couple of applications have come in with the focus over the last two years.

Patty asked if there was a means under the EQIP forestry funds or another NRCS program for loggers to have access to bridge mats for temporary use. The Maine Forest Service only has steel bridges for loan, but they require larger equipment to install and retrieve. Ron felt that maybe a CIG project by the District teamed with a logger or Maine Forest Service might be a possibility.



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It would not be applicable under EQIP as the crossing structure is focused on elevating problems (erosion, aquatic organism passage) at a specific location on a specific property.

Joe made a proposal to the group to consider the following % allocation for Somerset County in FY 2019:

Animal Waste – 74%

Forestry – 13%

Cropland/Hayland - 10%

Pasture – 3%

The group discussed the merits of this proposal and when polled the group unanimously recommended to accept this proposal for Somerset County FY 2019 local fund pool categories.

The group then reviewed the Application Ranking Summary sheets (Animal Waste, Forestry, Cropland/Hayland, and Pasture) and no suggestions on edits were provided.

The group reviewed the practice payment rate sheets and no suggestions on edits were provided.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by: Joseph Dembeck, Executive Director – Somerset County SWCD
January 2, 2018*



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Resource Concern	% of Local Allocated Funding	Previous Year 2016	Previous Year 2015	Previous Year 2014	Previous Year 20__
Animal Waste	74 %	74 %	74 %	74 %	
Forestry	13 %	16 %	8 %	8 %	
Pasture	3 %	5 %	8 %	8 %	
Cropland/Hayland	10 %	5 %	10 %	10 %	
Soil Health	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	
Water Quality	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	
Local Fund Pool	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	
Seasonal High Tunnels	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	
Irrigation	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	
Wildlife	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	
TOTAL	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	

Meeting/Project Name	Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District LOCAL WORKING GROUP MEETING		
Date of Meeting:	(12/21/2017)	Time	1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
Minutes prepared by: J Dembeck	USDA Skowhegan Service Center, 70 East Madison Road, Skowhegan, ME 04976		
Attendance at Meeting			
Name	Department / Division	Name	Department/Division
Joe Dembeck	Somerset SWCD		
Ron Desrosiers	NRCS – Skowhegan SC		
Nick Pairitz	NRCS – Skowhegan SC		
Scott Speck	FSA – Skowhegan SC		
Brad Santy	Dairy Farmer - Skowhegan		
Patty Cormier	MFS- District Forester		

Local Working Group Meeting Minutes, Somerset County SWCD
 January 2, 2018

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 Contact Joseph Dembeck at (207) 474-8323