

**ST. JOHN VALLEY SWCD – NRCS
LOCAL WORKING GROUP MEETING
FISCAL YEAR 2019 EQIP DELIVERY**

March 7, 2018 @ 10:00am
NRCS Field Office Fort Kent

Attendees: Mike Starr – Woodlot Owner, Yves Levesque – Certified Logging Professional, Larry Guimond – Woodlot Owner, Beef Cattle Producer and Logger, Duane Theriault – Potato Producer & Woodlot Owner, , Alex Zetterman – Beef Producer, Woodlot Owner & SWCD Employee, Anthony Tardif – SWCD District Mgr., Eric Giberson (DC) – NRCS, Kelsey Ramerth (SC) – NRCS.

Meeting called to order: 10:05

Introductions & Overview:

- Everyone introduced themselves around the room
- Eric went over the purpose, and objectives of the Local Working Group
- Eric went over the 2017 obligated contracts. Eric noted an implementation rate of 43%
- Eric indicated that funding under the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program was not available in FY2018.
- EQIP Local Fund Pool priorities and allocation breakdowns from past fiscal years were presented for review by the group. Eric presented a funding pool worksheet to the group as part of the packet and indicated some initial suggestions based on number of current EQIP applications and feedback from landowners during the planning season. Eric was seeking a consensus recommendation from the group. The meeting was then open for discussion around the table.
- The FY 2018 EQIP Local Delivery Report was briefly reviewed by the group prior to moving onto a consensus recommendation to the DC for 2019 local fund pool percentages and priorities.
- The remainder of the meeting focused on discussion of local pool ranking questions and point value assignments and a final recommendation to the DC.

FY 2018 Local Fund Pool Recommendation:

Category	Percentage	Priority
Cropland	50.00%	H
Animal Waste	15.00%	H
Forestry	30.00%	H
Irrigation	0.00%	L
Pasture	4.00%	M
High Tunnels	0.00%	L
Wild Life	1.00%	M
Total Percentage	100.00%	

FY 2019 Local Fund Pool Final Recommendations:

Category	Percentage	Priority
Soil Health	36.00%	H
Cropland (Structural)	25.00%	H
Livestock Waste	10.00%	H
Pasture & Hayland	8.00%	H
Intensive Grazing	3.00%	M
Local Irrigation	4.00%	M
Forestry	14.00%	H
Wildlife	0.00%	L
Total Percentage	100.00%	

Local Ranking Question and Assigned Points:

St. John Valley EQIP Local Fund Pool Ranking Questions for FY 2019

(Sum of questions for each category must add up to 250 points)

Soil Health

1. Will the applicant be completing a comprehensive soil health assessment prior to and after implementation of the soil health conservation plan (i.e. University of Maine Soil Health Assessment, Cornell Soil Health Tool, Haney Soil Health Test) **45 points**
2. Will planned conservation practices substantially reduce the Soil Tillage Intensity Rating as measured in RUSLE II or the Integrated Erosion Tool? **25 points**
3. Will planned conservation practices change the Soil Conditioning Index from a negative score to a positive score as documented in RUSLE II or the Integrated Erosion Tool? **40 points**
4. Will soil cover be maintained for 75% of the duration of the planned crop rotation in the conservation plan? **75 points**
5. Will multi-species cover crops be utilized in the conservation plan to address overall soil health issues (i.e. compaction, soil organic matter depletion, soil structure, waterholding capacity)? **60 points**
6. Will the participant attend soil health workshops and/or participate in soil health field day events? **5 Points**

Cropland (Structural Practices)

1. Will planned practices have a direct positive impact on documented water quality degradation by eliminating or reducing sediment entering a water body from a field or fields adjacent to the water body? **125 points**
2. Will planned practices significantly reduce gully and ephemeral gully erosion on the land unit by reducing the length of slope that surface water travels? **75 points**
3. Will planned practices substantially reduce sheet and rill erosion on the land unit as measured by RUSLE II or the Integrated Erosion Tool? **50 points**

Livestock Waste

1. Does the application address water quality resource concerns from a livestock operation that has a direct connection through surface water flow to waters of the state (i.e. Perennial or intermittent water body)? **125 points**
2. Does the application assist the participant with managing nutrients from livestock waste on cropland, hay land or pastureland by extending the days of available manure storage as documented in the CNMP? **50 points**
3. Do planned practices in the application substantially reduce or eliminate contaminated surface water from leaving the farmstead area, as documented in the CNMP? **75 Points**

Pasture and Hayland

1. Will planned practices increase species composition and soil health on the land unit(s) under the conservation plan? **50 Points**
2. Will planned practices reduce weed pressure and invasive species on the land units(s) under the conservation plan? **75 Points**
3. Will planned practices provide continuous cover on land units that have had a history of annual tillage for 5 years or more? **125 Points**

Intensive Grazing

1. Does the application address 3 or more resource concerns utilizing structural and agronomic practices as part of a grazing system (i.e. Inadequate Water, Plant Productivity, Soil Compaction, Inadequate Feed)? **100 points**
2. Are practices being planned to keep livestock out of waters of the state? **100 Points.**
3. Are practices being planned that will assist the participant in lengthening their grazing season, thereby reducing the need for purchased feed? **50 points**

Local Irrigation

1. Will the participant implement soil health practices such as cover crop and conservation crop rotation in addition to irrigation practices on the same land unit? **100 points**
2. Will the participant be drawing water from an approved regulated water source? **75 Points.**
3. Will the conservation plan include water source development as determined by NRCS standards and specifications? **50 points**

Forestry

1. Is Pct. 666 (Forest Stand Improvement) being utilized in the application to address structure AND composition in the stand as recommended by a licensed forester? **100 Points**
2. Does the forestry prescription include a treatment to address forest health or reduce the risk of invasive insects or pathogens? **50 Points**
3. Does the application address resource concerns in a treatment area that includes softwood plantations, or sugar bush for maple syrup production? **50 Points**
4. Does the application address soil erosion resource concerns associated with surface water quality degradation (i.e. Access roads, stream crossings, sediment deposition)? **50 Points**

Wildlife

N/A

Meeting Adjourned @ 12:05pm

Minutes prepared by: Anthony Tardif