

**Tribal Advisory Committee Meeting  
 USDA--Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 Oddfellows Hall – Lower Conference Room  
 415 Second Street  
 Davis, CA  
 Tuesday October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Carlos Suarez	NRCS State Conservationist
Enrique J Sanchez	Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
Cynthia Ford	Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
Arlene Dutschke	Ione Band of Miwok
Megan Van Pelt	Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
Suzanne Frazier	NRCS—Special Emphasis Program Manager
Dave Sanden	NRCS—Communication Specialist
Brett Matzke	Cortina Band of Wintun Indians
Jenny Johnson	NRCS (Auburn)
Alex Foster	Klamath Trinity RCD, Hoopa Valley Tribe
Charles Lwenya	Tule River Tribe
Rodney Robbins	Klamath Trinity RCD, Hoopa Valley Tribe
Meagen Baldy	Klamath Trinity RCD, Hoopa Valley Tribe
Creig Marcus	Enterprise Rancheria of Estom Yumeka Maidu
Carmeli Begay	Klamath Trinity RCD, Hoopa Valley Tribe
Connie Reitman	ITCC
Kevin Clancy	Bureau of Reclamation
Alix Tyler	Scott's Valley Band of Pomo Indians
Gayle Barry	NRCS—Special Assistant to the State Conservationist
Denise de Joseph	NRCS—Cultural Resource Specialist
Kenneth Holbrook	Maidu Summit Consortium
Curtis Tarver	NRCS – Fresno Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations
Hue Dang	NRCS – Davis—Conservation Planner
Elaini Vargas	Kashia Band of Pomo Indians & IAC

Blessing - Creig Marcus, Tribal Administrator for Enterprise Rancheria of Estom Yumeka Maidu

Carlos Suarez, State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Welcome and Opening Remarks

Carlos thanked everyone for assisting and continuous support. He had leading the USDA Hurricane Recovery efforts in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands after hurricane Maria and Irma. He expressed his joy at being back in California.

Carlos introduced Gayle Barry and her breadth of experience working with tribes in Montana, Oregon, as Regional Conservationist, for Northeast of NRCS. One of Gayle's main responsibilities will be to handle the day to oversee the NRCS Tribal Program in California.

Carlos addressed the issue of staffing, specifically for assistance to tribes. One of the main priority positions is to have a second state level Tribal Liaison to cover the Northern part of the state in conjunction with Pedro Torres covering the South. Carlos introduced Jenny Johnson, Tribal Conservation Planner in Area III. He also

mentioned bringing in more students and training them with tribal challenges and opportunities. Over 90 positions will be added to the agency, some foresters, soil conservationists, and engineers, including a new State Archeologist. One of her first efforts will be to finalize an agreement with State Historic Preservation Officer. Carlos lastly introduced Susanne Frazier, NRCS American Indian Alaska Natives Special Emphasis Program. She focuses on identifying barriers to participation in NRCS programs and encouraging NRCS employment opportunities within the American Indian Alaska Native population.

Tribal Representatives Introductions (see list of attendees)

NRCS Updates – Alan Forkey- (2018 Funding & Obligations Summary.pdf)

Alan reviewed the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Program Funding. This FY NRCS has 73 separate fund pools, 4 subaccounts for tribes. Tribes are eligible for historically underserved category. \$79 million was allocated to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) FY2018. See below.

Alan also mentioned \$1 million was allocated to Tribal Initiatives: Diverse Farming Operations, Traditional Plants Restoration, Forestry, and Rangeland. NRCS wants to identify what other subaccounts tribes want to take advantage of to increase the participation of the tribes in the programs.

\*Discussion: Carlos requested suggestions for outreach to tribes and the following were submitted:

- Send out newsletters including documented contract plans and share success stories.
- Expand website to include section for tribes
- Provide workshops
- Notify tribes of the closest field office with emails/newsletters
- Take more conservationists to the land and show problems
- Work with local Resource Conservation Districts to get local information to tribes

Alan continued to discuss the next signup batching period which is under a continuous resolution. Deadline for the next batching period will be November 16, 2018. Only includes a few fund pools and did not include the tribal fund pools.

Alan finished with an update with the status of the Farm Bill, (see CA Farm Bill Programs Summary FY2018) comparing the House and Senate versions that are being considered, as well as a discussion on Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) AFAs are used to transfer program funding to an eligible entity (tribe, multistate water agency) to accomplish the goals and objectives of a conservation program. You can find the comparison in the presentation slides attached.

Agreement with SHPO and cultural resources review process- Denise de Joseph

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consultation on the draft NRCS CA Prototype Programmatic Agreement is on hold until the NRCS CA can hire a permanent. State Cultural Resources Specialist (CRS) to oversee its implementation. A selection has been made for this position and Emily Castano started November 13th. Meanwhile, we are conducting standard Section 106 review for all EQIP undertakings subject to review. Batched tribal consultation for EQIP was relatively successful for FY2018 and will be continually improved. We anticipate having a draft copy of the PPA for tribes to review in the first calendar quarter of 2019. We will send notification to all consulting tribes prior to releasing the draft PPA review copy; we will likely post a PDF copy on our website to download. We would send a paper copy to tribes that request one.

Western NRCS Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Committee- Pedro Torres

Pedro Torres explained the function of Western Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Committee, a body that functions much like the State Tribal Advisory Committee, but to provide input to the Western NRCS Regional

Conservationist (Astor Boozer) on matters of regional, rather than State importance. Pedro further pointed out that there were no California tribes currently sitting on the Regional Committee and asked if any tribes had an interest in having a representative participate at the Regional level. Gayle added to the conversation that there is an application process and that the committee members should go back and discuss this with their tribes and let us know if there is interest.

\*Discussion:

- Need for action plan and setting goals for the committee
- Need for follow up on how TAC discussion is being incorporated into program
- Meeting notes should be available to TAC within 30 days of the meeting.
- Need for training for field staff on working with tribes. Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) courses that are planned. Two for the next calendar year and at least one more within the next 5.

Intertribal Ag Council (IAC) / NRCS Updates

- Conservation Planning for Traditional Plants Management Pilot – Hue Dang and Keir Johnson

The scope is to create four pilot projects to go through the conservation planning process at a deeper level. At the end of the conservation planning process, the tribes submit a report to NRCS on the applicability and functionality of the conservation planning process to meet their needs for traditional plant management and to begin exploring traditional ecological knowledge scenarios. Two of the tribes have been selected for participation there are still two spots available.

- Tribal Certified Planners Progress – Hue Dang and Keir Johnson

All planners need to have minimum level of training and proficiency on working with tribes. Currently across the nation there is five tribal members who have started receiving training. The agency would like to have tribal members who are certified and can do their own plans. It is a five-year plan for NRCS employees to be certified

- Updates on IAC / NRCS Natural Resources Internships – Keir Johnson and Elaini Vargas.

Elaini Vargas, Kashia Band of Pomo shared her experience working as an intern through the IAC/NRCS internship program. She had the opportunity to work with NRCS professionals doing field surveys, assist with outreach to her tribe and assist with tribal youth events.

Tribal Conservation Districts – Meagen Baldy (Tribal Conservation Districts – Meagen Baldy SAMPLES.pdf)

Meagen reviewed the history of forming Klamath Trinity Resource Conservation District (KTRCD) and how forming a tribal conservation district has been beneficial to the Hoopa Valley Tribe.

- Become self Gov/Tribal sovereignty
- Create a board of local people
- Build articles of incorporation
- Establish bylaws.
- Establish memorandum
- Develop 5yr plan
- Seek funding

Cultural Burning and the NRCS Planning Process – Pedro Torres. (USDA NRCS Rx Fire CA Pedro Edits.pdf)

Pedro covered prescribed burning practice and policy, associated practices and payment rates, NRCS CA prescribed fire program development, and strategies for successful Implementation.

- For an NRCS funded prescribed burn to be approved a Type 2 Burn Boss or Cal Fire must write the burn plan and be the lead during the implementation.

- Therefore, the actual technical design and implementation for prescribed burning will need to come from outside of NRCS.
- In order for an NRCS CA employee to include prescribed burning in a Conservation Plan they must have job approval authority (JAA).
- The JAA for prescribed burning in CA can only be assigned to an employee by the State Forester.
- Currently there is only one NRCS employee in the state of CA that has job authority to plan prescribed burning.

Some practices associated with prescribed burning are: **prescribed burn plan, fire break, prescribed burning, tree pruning, forest stand improvement, brush management, woody residue treatment and fuel break.** (See presentation for payment rates.)

New Developments in NRCS CA prescribed fire programs.

- Two to three new cost scenarios are being developed, Oak woodlands/grass, Timber litter light and Timber litter moderate.
- NRCS state forester is working with CalFIRE in Sacramento to better align CalFIRE Vegetation Management Program and other CalFIRE operations with NRCS programs.
- One Technical Service Provider (TSP) for prescribed fire has been registered with NRCS CA to provide contracted planning and implementation services to NRCS clients.

Considerations for Prescribed fire:

- Prescribed fire requires an incredible amount of coordination to adequately plan, cover liability, obtain permits/be compliant, organize and direct resources, adequately fund
- Partnerships are extremely useful in leveraging resources.
- Prescribed burn associations are useful organizations to accomplish burning.

Questions raised from the above discussion:

- Can an intertribal prescribed burn association be coordinated to share resources and take on organizational responsibilities?
- Can a subcommittee of the TAC assist in organizing that?
- Can NRCS coordinate a Prescribed Burn Association workshop?
- What is the window for cultural burning? Exact window?
- What is the difference between cultural burning vs prescribed fire?

Partner agency program presentations and updates

Kevin Clancy – United States Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation provided an overview of the funding opportunities for Native Americans. Kevin spoke on the Native American Affairs Technical Assistance Program and shared some successful projects. His presentation is also attached.

Discussion and Closeout:

Action Items:

- Need for training for field staff on working with tribes. Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) courses that are planned. Two for the next calendar year and at least one more within the next 5.
- Meeting notes should be available to TAC within 30 days of the meeting
- Develop an action plan for this committee and report follow up and incorporation into our programs
- Update the website with the help of public affairs.
- Work together to set up outreach meetings.
- Follow up with those that indicated they want to have NRCS at a tribal or intertribal meeting.

- Nominate someone from the TAC to sit on the Western Region if there is interest.
- Present at TAC meetings updates on progress made on action items
- Document success stories and post on Tribal Web Page.
- Notify tribes of the closest field office.
- Create a subcommittee on prescribed fire to work on the following:
  - Identify topics & subject matter experts
  - Outline how to obtain input?
  - How goals and objectives can be achieved?
  - How to identify who/what should be involved?
  - How many subcommittees are needed?
- Complete annual tribal update and determine where to focus outreach.
- DCs plan field visits with staff to visit local tribes to learn their resource concerns.

\*Actionable items were moved to the action register.