

State Technical Committee Meeting

NRCS/FSA State Office, Tolland, CT

April 10, 2019

Meeting Notes

Participants: Tom Morgart, Joyce Purcell, Nancy Ferlow, Carol Grasis, , Todd Bobowick, Javier Cruz, Dan DePietro, Kristin Walker, Deb Surabian, NRCS; Steve Winnett, EPA; Tom Worthley, Mike O'Neill, Rick Meinert, Kip Koleinskas, UCONN; Abbie Maynard, CAES; Doug Emmerthal, Chris Martin, Lisa Wahle, Judy Wilson, Audra Urbano, Dan Peracchio, DEEP; Wayne Woodard, TNC; Cameron Weimar, DOAG; Patricia Bisacky, Lori Mathieu, CTDPH; Lilian Ruiz CCSWC; Joseph Welsh Aquarion Water Company; Jean Pillo ECCD; Denise Savageau CACD

Welcome/Opening Comments/Review Agenda/Minutes: Tom Morgart

Tom reported on the status of the new Farm Bill, competitive agreements, Connecticut's new Commissioner of Agriculture, Bryan Hulburt.

Review Minutes of December 12, 2018: All

No additions or deletions were noted; minutes accepted.

Subcommittee Reports:

2018 Easement Subcommittee: Wayne Woodard

Wayne reported that the committee is looking for new members.

Wildlife Subcommittee: Judy Wilson

Judy reported that the committee is looking for new members.

Other Subcommittee: No discussion.

2018 Farm Bill Discussion

National Conservation Practice Standards-Review/Comment - Nancy Ferlow

Practice standards will need to be reviewed within one year of passing the Farm Bill. All comments from the general public are requested by April 25, 2019. Practice standards are located on the USDA/NRCS website, "NRCS Practice Standards open for review."

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Source Water - Thomas Morgart

Source water programs are the same for one year in the new Farm Bill. In 2020, the Farm Bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, authorizes increased RCPP funding and mandates that 10 percent of funds authorized for conservation programs must be used to protect

sources of drinking water. If a landowner implements an NRCS water practice, they could receive 15%.

Tom met with water quality companies and water authorities to discuss what NRCS has for programs to improve water quality.

Gypsy Moths - Tom Worthley, UCONN

There is severe defoliation in Eastern Connecticut due to Gypsy Moth activity. It could possibly cause public safety hazard with falling trees along road sides, parks and hiking trails.

Structural integrity will be lost after 3 to 5 years. The root system will rot and the tree will topple in whichever direction it leans. The sheer degree and extent of oak tree mortality in southeastern Connecticut, on the other hand, was unexpected and has overwhelmed many homeowners, Tree Wardens, foresters, and others. Chris Martin stated that 18,000 trees need to be removed from state park properties. Tom Morgart asked for input on what programs would be needed to assist with tree cutting and how it would affect the habitat.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Tom Morgart/Joyce Purcell

NRCS is currently accepting application for FY 2019 funding to be submitted by April 22, 2019 to be ranked for 2019; however, applications are accepted on a continuous basis. There is more information on the Connecticut NRCS website.

Program Allocation Update – Tom Morgart/Joyce Purcell

Joyce provided information on some of the changes that will take effect in 2020 from the 2018 Farm Bill.

2

Program Updates:

Program Ranking Dates and Initiatives – Carol Grasis

Carol reviewed the obligation dates:

EQIP – 4/19/2019 and 5/31/2019

CSP – 5/10/2019 and TBD

Resource Conservation Updates:

Payment Schedule: Nancy Ferlow

We use the NRCS payment schedule to pay 75% or 90% of the estimated incurred cost of practice implementation to the farmer, according to the NRCS payment practice. This schedule is located on the Connecticut NRCS website. 2020 payment schedule is in the processes of being developed and will be available in September.

Conservation Innovation Grants: Nancy Ferlow

Conservation Innovation Grants are available, with a total of up to \$250,000 for CIG in FY 2019. All non-federal entities (NFE) and individuals are invited to apply, with the sole exception of federal agencies. Projects may be between one and three years in duration. The maximum award amount for a single award in FY 2019 is \$75,000. Closing date for application is June 14, 2019 4PM EDT – applications are available on <https://www.grants.gov/>.

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)–Readiness Watershed (Farm River)– Javier Cruz
Javier had a meeting with the steering committee – Farm River. Anyone interested in being on the steering committee or wants any communication about the watershed should contact Javier.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Flood Plain Easements Watershed Dam Rehab –
Kristin Walker

Fifty-six applications were submitted for Round 3 Emergency Watershed Protection Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE) for Sandy. Twenty-eight applications in West Haven have been selected by national headquarters, and a draft sponsor agreement is being reviewed by the City of West Haven. Four additional easements have been selected to move forward from Madison. Additional work is being completed for Round 2, including demolition of one additional house and final restoration work on some of the completed parcels.

We are waiting on responses for funding (PL-566) to stabilize a streambank downstream of a bridge failure in Clinton and another streambank stabilization project in Chester.

There are currently two ongoing dam rehabilitation plans being developed on PL-566 dams: one in Ridgefield on the Norwalk Site 2 Dam, and three dams in the Farm Brook Watershed, Sites 1, 2a, and 2b. These dam structures are nearing their service life and are eligible for rehabilitation through a National Watershed Initiative through the Farm Bill. Once a rehabilitation plan is complete, a design of the selected alternative can be done, and the dam may go to construction; sponsors are responsible for 35% of construction costs. The Norwalk Site 2 dam selected alternative (best cost: benefit ratio) is leaning towards decommissioning of this dam.

3

Forestry Update – Chris Martin

Chris gave an update on the new hires for DEEP. He also discussed the 2020 State Forest Action Plan Survey and the scheduled round table meetings; the survey has been sent via e-mail and all are welcome to participate. It can also be located at:

<https://www.ctwoodlands.org/environmental-education/the-2020-state-forest-action-plan-let-your-voice-be-heard>

Roundtable Meetings for **Practitioners***: (*Practitioners include individuals who work in forestry, land conservation, environmental policy, or a related field).

[EASTCONN: Hampton CT](#). Tuesday, June 11th, 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM

[Naugatuck Valley Community College: Waterbury, CT](#). Thursday, June 13th, 1:00 - 4:30 PM

[Middlesex Community College: Middletown, CT](#). Tuesday, June 25th, 1:00 - 4:30 PM

Soils Update: Debbie Surabian

Soils staff provided soils data and interpretations for the CT ECO Aquaculture Mapping Atlas here: <http://cteco.uconn.edu/viewers/index.htm>. They also developed a soil interpretation called soil suitability for marsh migration, and discussed the amount of technical soil services and web soil survey downloads for FY2019.

RCPP Updates- Joyce Purcell/Partners

2018 Farm Bill will simplify funding authorities for program implementation
Overview of RCPP projects by partners

Open Discussion – All

Denise Savageau – There will be a CACD meeting at Foxwoods 8/25/2019 thru 8/28/2019
The Connecticut Conservation District spring plant and seedling sale are both underway. Order forms are available at <https://conservect.org/northcentral/plant-seed-sale/>

Judy Wilson – Would like the opportunity to contract with UCONN again for updated aerial photos statewide for the rabbit population.

Next Meeting: TBD

Adjourned at 12:30 PM.