NRCS-Wyoming State Technical Advisory Committee

Minutes of May 19, 2020 Meeting

1. Roll Call

- The NRCS-WY State Technical Advisory Committee meeting met by telecon at 10:00 am, Tuesday, May 19, 2020. It lasted approximately two hours.
- **NRCS Attendees:** Kresta Faaborg, John Hartung, Jamison Jewkes, Fred Harrell, Chuck Schmitt, Katelyn Voporis, Rusty Schwartz, Andi Neugebauer, Tiffany Hayes, Ben Bonella, Tim Kellogg, Aaron Waller, Lee Erickson, Brian Jensen, Tiffany Hayes, Carlos Roda, Justin Ross
- **Partner Attendees:** Mahonri Williams (BoR), Thomas Peterson (Ducks Unlimited), Dave Pellatz (TBGPEA), Cathy Rosenthal (WACD), Mark Hogan (USFWS), Dennis Sun (WYLR), Aaron Lumley (WSFD), Karen Pecheny (SCCD), Ian Tator (WG&F), Kristin Tilley (SCD), Andrea Bryce (FSA), Mike Henn (SCCD), Jennifer Hart (Campbell County CD), Michelle Christopher (WARWS), Michelle Huntington (Converse County CD), Jennifer Zygmunt (DEQ), Bobbie Frank (WACD)

2. State Conservationist Update, Rusty Schwartz, rusty.schwartz@usda.gov, Acting State Conservationist

- Based on Local Work Group recommendations, presentations by the LWGs will be postponed to the next STAC meeting in August 2020.
- Review of NRCS Wyoming Operational Posture: office are closed to the public, but appointments by phone are being accepted. Opening guidance is expected soon.
- Update on partner positions with NRCS: budget is the main factor at this time and does not support these positions

3. Programs Update, Kresta Faaborg, Kresta.faaborg@usda.gov, ASTC-Programs

- Animal Mortality program: NRCS has an emergency program for producers having to put down animals that can not be brought to market.
- Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool: learning more about CART and making changes and adjustments as needed.
- Easements: sign up is closed; 5 potential applications for ALE ($6.5 Million)
- Farm Bill updates: would partners be interested in a 2-hour call regarding Easements and Farm Bill? What is the preference for relaying the information?
  - Positive responses requesting a call to discuss the information
- EWP: is taking on a lot of changes with this Farm Bill regarding the process and we’re working through this.

4. Resources Update, Andi Neugebauer, andi.neugebauer@usda.gov, State Resource Conservationist

- Conducted training committee meeting last week; continuing to tentatively keep to the training plan
- Planner certification: getting a finalized policy for Wyoming sent to HQ in the next month
- National Resource Inventory (NRI): has begun out in the field and throughout the summer
- CART: spent a lot of time working on CART and training on CART
• LIDAR: might have LIDAR data to use in the next month or two
• CAMP: Conservation Agricultural Mentorship Program. Designed to get new NRCS employees up to speed on Ag. Would work with a producer/farmer/rancher for a year or so. Partners are working to identify potential producers to volunteer to be a mentor for this program.

**Subcommittee Updates**

5. Conservation Practice Standards, John Hartung, john.hartung2@usda.gov

- See attached:
- There were no objections to the recommendations made in the document; a decision memo will be created.

6. Practice Costs and Payment Rates, Aaron Waller, aaron.waller@usda.gov

- See attached:
- There were no objections to the recommendations made in the document; a decision memo will be created.

7. Watersheds and Source Water Protection, Andi Neugebauer, andi.neugebauer@usda.gov

- See attached:
- There were no objections to the recommendations made in the document; a decision memo will be created.


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- There were no objections to the recommendations made in the document; a decision memo will be created.

9. Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, Brian Jensen, brian.jensen@usda.gov

- Subcommittee met late last week.
- Rename to Wildlife Subcommittee (WHIP does not appear to be a program that is coming back any time soon)
- Good conservation about CRP
- Overview of Wildlife programs
• Future discussions planned for Wildlife practice standards and other programs
• Next subcommittee meeting planned for July

**FSA Comments by Andrea Bryce, andrea.bryce@usda.gov:**
  o General CRP closed on Feb 28; accepted and rejected offers returned to county offices
  o Request for conservation plans due to NRCS Aug 21; conservation plans due to FSA Sep 30
  o Continuous CRP closes Aug 21; conservation plans deadline is Sep 30
  o CRP grasslands closed May 15; accepted and rejected offers expected soon
  o FSA relies on NRCS to make recommendations to the Wyoming State Committee on the primary nesting season; in the past has been May 1 to July 15

  **Cost Shares:**
  o CRP Ranking:

**10. Easements, Katie Vaporis, Katelyn.vaporis@usda.gov**

• Planning a subcommittee meeting
• Have received 5 ACEP-ALE applications; no WRE applications received this year; no RCPP-ALE applications received this year
• Total ask for federal funds from the 5 ACEP-ALE applications is $6,782,500; Wyoming NRCS received $3,925,324 in FY20 funding
• If applications are eligible and we can proceed, we will be about $2,857,000 short; but there is an opportunity to ask for additional funding in July
• Rankings are a little different than previous years due to CART and internal processes, but questions are very similar; will review with the subcommittee

**11. Regional Conservation Partnership Program-RCPP, Jamison Jewkes, Jamison.jewkes@usda.gov**

• FY2019 announcement period that closed in December last year; Wyoming received 1 project for application that was entirely within Wyoming; and another application that overlapped into another state. Evaluations sent to national office; none of the projects were selected this year.
• We received guidance for the existing RCPP projects: they can renew their projects when they are close to being finished; application deadline is June 26 for projects that expire between Oct 1, 2020-Sep 30, 2021. Only 3 projects in the state can be considered for renewal

**12. Engineers Update, Chuck Schmitt, chuck.schmitt@usda.gov**

• PL566, Watershed Program, the next sign up is July 31.

**13. Final Comments**

• Rusty: the next meeting will include the Local Work Groups providing their input for 2021 programs
• **Next STAC Meeting will be held at the NRCS-Wyoming State Office conference room on Aug 18. More info will be provided as we get closer.**
• Notify Fred Harrell, fred.harrell@gmail.com of any edits needed to names/emails included in these minutes.