

JOINT MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: LOCAL WORKING GROUP AND STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PURPOSE: To provide joint guidance for Local Working Group meetings and State Technical Committee meeting in Maine in calendar years 2020-2021 in regards to COVID-19.

Maine NRCS Instruction 180-382 for Local Working Groups (LWGs) and State Technical Committee (STTC) Recommendations, Input and Review of Program Delivery Information states “LWG will meet each year during the months of October, November, December or January to discuss the priorities and recommendations for NRCS program delivery in the subsequent fiscal year.”

During current COVID-19 pandemic, the following steps are recommended:

- It is strongly encouraged that LWG and STTC meetings should be held via video-teleconferencing services (Zoom or Microsoft Teams) whenever possible.
- If a virtual or video meeting is not feasible, all mask/social distancing/crowd limit guidelines should be strictly followed, with options for anyone who doesn’t want to attend in person to submit input before and after the meeting. If possible, options for call-in or video conferencing of an in-person meeting should be available.
- The function of the LWG is to provide recommendations on the local natural resource priorities and criteria for USDA conservation activities and programs. As LWGs are normally chaired by the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), NRCS District Conservationists should work closely with SWCDs to ensure current State of Maine pandemic guidance is followed, and public input in the LWG process allowed in a safe manner.
- If a LWG meeting is held in person, it will not be held in a USDA Field Office due to social distancing recommendations. In-person meetings must follow current State of Maine pandemic guidance. (*Guidance as of Oct. 1, 2020 is below.*)

Per Maine Executive Order 55 FY 19/20 and COVID19 Prevention Checklist Industry Guidance (Maine Department of Economic and Community Development) Last updated: Jun 17, 2020:

Phase 2: Public and Community Buildings

- The number of individuals that can gather in a shared space must not exceed the limit established by the [Governor's Executive Order](#), currently set at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors.
 - People in a shared space must be able to maintain 6 feet of physical distance. If a space cannot accommodate individuals maintaining 6 feet of physical distance, further restrict the number of individuals allowed in that space beyond the limits established by Executive Order.
- Limit the total occupancy of buildings to 5 visitors or patrons per 1,000 square feet of visitor-accessible space. (Updated 6/17/20)
 - While 5 visitors or patrons per 1,000 square feet is the maximum number at this time, managers should consider the following factors that can increase transmission risk in their building and may decide to set a lower capacity limit, such as 3 per 1,000 square feet, if present:
 - Poor ventilation, i.e. little outside air circulating in
 - Confined spaces that make physical distancing difficult

/s/

Matt Walker
STATE CONSERVATIONIST
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Maine

/s/

Carol Weymouth
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Maine Association of
Conservation Districts

DATE: October 9, 2020