

Kentucky State Technical Committee

August 26, 2014

NRCS Conference Room - Lexington, KY

9:30 a.m.

Meeting Summary

PowerPoints referenced in this summary are found under the header "Presentation Materials" on the [August 26th meeting page](#).

The main Kentucky State Technical Committee webpage may be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Welcome, Introductions and Opening Comments – Karen Woodrich

Kentucky NRCS State Conservationist and State Technical Committee Chair Karen Woodrich welcomed the group. She thanked everyone for their support while she was on detail to the national NRCS headquarters.

She mentioned that the Farm Bill passed in February (2014) and that some programs were consolidated, noting that the Farm Bill offers a great opportunity for partnerships. She stressed that leveraging was the current buzz word to bring new/additional funds to the state. A lot of focus is on water quality, water quantity, and soil health, but all resource concerns are important. Following her brief comments, she asked the group of 43 to introduce themselves. A copy of the attendee list is attached.

State Conservation Funding – Kim Richardson

Ms. Woodrich introduced Kim Richardson, Kentucky Division of Conservation Director, who discussed the State Cost Share Program, Water Quality Trading Pilot, and Direct Aid to Conservation Districts.

She shared that State Cost Share has been in place since 1994 and started at about \$600,000. The Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funds came into effect in 1998, and about \$110,500,000 worth of conservation has been put on the ground. The annual amount has been as high as \$11.6 million (fiscal years 2001 and 2002) and as low as \$2.5 million in recent years.

Ms. Richardson explained how the Kentucky MSA revenue is distributed. State cost share is a small part of the ag portion of the MSA revenue. For State government FY 2014, there is \$90.8 million; of this amount, state cost share is \$2.5 million. In fiscal years 2015 and 2016, looking at \$6 million for state cost share. (The \$6 million is for 2015; none currently planned for 2016).

She then discussed "Correctives Measures" process. When a landowner receives a notice of violation (NOV) from the Kentucky Division of Water (DOW), they are instructed to contact their local conservation district. Landowners are eligible for up to \$20,000 a year to remedy the

violation. Up to five percent of State Cost Share funding can be retained to assist these landowners.

Ms. Richardson then discussed a Water Quality Trading Program which is being piloted in six counties in the northeast part of the state. The pilot gives landowners opportunities (money) to install best management practices (BMPs) that address nutrient management; and permitted sources (industry) to buy credits to meet regulatory requirements. The initial project has received \$100K. Counties included in the pilot are Carter, Boone, Greenup, Elliott, Mason, and Bracken. Counties in Ohio and Indiana are also participating.

American Farmland Trust, Electric Power Research Institute and others have been involved. The pilot is off to a good start. Landowners only get credit for new practices, not existing conservation. A baseline is set and anything added is how their payment is determined. It's payment for the farmer, and long term benefit for industry credits. Several questions were asked:

Question: Where did the money come from?

Answer: Private industry funding from Electric Power Research Institute.

Question: Is the \$100K for the three participating states or just Kentucky.

Answer: Just Kentucky.

Question: What is the process to identify landowners/participants for the water trading program?

Answer: Since it was a pilot, it was up to the conservation districts to find the conservation minded farmers who were willing to make the extra effort. Public notice didn't find participants, so this year they were sought out. More information is on the internet (search "Tri-state water quality trading".)

Ms. Richardson then spoke about Direct Aid. This is funding appropriated from the General Assembly (HB 235) which goes to conservation districts. Fiscal years 2015 and 2016 amount is \$950,000 each year to be used for all 121 conservation districts. Districts can use these funds for their personnel and office space. Kentucky Division of Conservation gets close to \$3 million in request every year and it is not possible to fully fund each CD.

For more details of Ms. Richardson's presentation, please see her [PowerPoint presentation](#).

New Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Introduction and Remarks – Gregory K. Johnson

Karen Woodrich introduced Gregory K. Johnson, the new Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) Commissioner. Mr. Johnson worked at the NRCS national

headquarters in Washington, D.C., for 7 years and retired in 2011. After retirement, he returned to Kentucky (where he started his USDA career), and served on the Fayette County Conservation District Board. He is also an active member of the Fayette County Farm Bureau. He mentioned that KDFWR has been active on the State Technical Committee. While in Washington, he worked on 2008 Farm Bill and believes that the State Technical Committee is a good avenue for USDA and for all partners. He noted that KDFWR has a good relationship with NRCS and is a results-oriented organization. He cited successes in the Green River CREP including the tripling of quail populations. He wants to continue the relationship with NRCS and wants to continue to build partnerships with others to reach common goals. He said he is very accessible and welcomes calls and emails. He invited the attendees to Frankfort office and tour of the Salato Wildlife Center. He offered to host a future meeting of the State Technical Committee at the KDFWR Frankfort office.

New TNC State Director Introduction and Remarks – David Phemister

Ms. Woodrich next introduced David Phemister, the new The Nature Conservancy (TNC) State Director. Mr. Phemister was with TNC Virginia Chapter for 12 years, and prior to that, he worked for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). In introducing himself, he said he is from Virginia and that farming and agriculture is central to who he is. He arrived August 7th and is getting settled in Lexington. He was in government relations and worked on the policy side of the new Farm Bill working to shape policy and then the last 10 months lobbying to get the bill passed. TNC is thrilled to see the Farm Bill passed as it is one of their highest domestic priorities. TNC in Kentucky has had a long relationship with the State Technical Committee. He believes that the key to the Farm Bill's success is getting it implemented, not just passed, and the key to that is the relationships among partner groups.

He then highlighted a few topics of interest to TNC in Kentucky. In Western Kentucky, TNC has been working with NRCS and others on wetland restoration through the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). TNC submitted a RCPP in the Mississippi River Basin Critical Conservation Area (CCA) but did not get invited back for a full proposal. They are working to see that CREP re-enrollments are happening. In central Kentucky, TNC is addressing high-bank erosion along the Green River. In Central Appalachia and in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, they are working with the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) to keep the forests in working lands. He said that there is a lot of excitement in TNC about these, and other projects. They are currently working on a new strategic plan.

The question, "what are long range goals for land owned along the palisades?" was asked. Mr. Phemister responded that TNC has a lot of land in preserves and easements. They are working with new nature preserves and working to get people out to the preserves to get them interested and connected and passionate about the protection of these lands. Jeff Sole, also of

TNC, added that between Fort Boonesboro and Frankfort, TNC has about 1,000 acres in nature preserves and another 1,000 acres purchased and then sold to counties or nature preserves. TNC has also worked with landowners to get into the Purchase of Agricultural Easements (PACE) program. He said there are about 2,500 protected acres from Shakertown to the US 25 bridge.

Following TNC's presentation, Ms. Woodrich spoke about the Farm Bill and how some programs will be phased in and some need to be implemented right away. This has been a chaotic process to go through since the passage of the Act in February. Secretary Vilsack wants all agencies to look at their policies to streamline and make it better.

Resource Conservation Partnership Program – (RCP) – Deena Wheby

Assistant State Conservationist Deena Wheby discussed the new Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCP.) She reminded the committee that she introduced the new program at the February State Technical Committee meeting the week after the Farm Bill was approved, but had no details to share. She said that the program is a competitive one which uses existing NRCS programs [Environmental Quality Incentives Program [EQIP], Conservation Stewardship Program [CSP], Agricultural Conservation Easement Program [ACEP] and Healthy Forests Reserve Program [HFRP]) along with partner leveraging to address resource concerns.

An Announcement for Program Funding (APF) was published on May 27, 2014, and pre-proposals were due from partner on July 14, 2014. She said that more than 600 proposals were received nationwide requesting more than \$2.8 billion (\$394 million is available for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 combined.) NRCS believes this response demonstrates how willing partners across the nation are willing to work together to further conservation stewardship on agricultural lands.

She said the pre-proposals were ranked (National and CCA at the national level and State proposals at the state level) and that approximately 230 applicants were invited to submit a full proposal which is due October 2, 2014 (original published deadline was September 26, 2014.)

Ms. Wheby said that the 600 pre-proposals included the support of about 5,000 partners who committed to a match of about \$3 billion. USDA had a goal to double the federal investment, and the pre-proposals did this. Please see her [PowerPoint presentation](#) for more details as to from where the applications were received, in which funding pools, etc. She noted that Kentucky had a number of applications submitted including 14 in the state pool (one of the highest states), three (as lead state) in the national pool and four in the Critical Conservation Areas (CCA) pool. Each state was only allowed to submit their two highest ranked pre-proposals for full proposal submission. In addition to the two state proposals, Kentucky

partners were invited to submit full proposals for three national and four CCA proposals. ([See PowerPoint](#) for specific project listing.)

Landscape Restoration Partnership between NRCS and USFS: Triplett Creek – Partners

Ms. Wheby introduced the project reminding the Committee that the project was approved just before the last State Technical Committee meeting in February. She showed a slide of the 13 projects approved nationwide as well as a slide of the Triplett Creek project area. (See [PowerPoint presentation](#) for these maps and other information.)

She said that although it was a project established and approved between NRCS and the US Forest Service (USFS), that there are many other partners involved as well. She introduced Tony Burnett, NRCS Supervisory Natural Resources Manager, to speak first and said that other partners would also have the opportunity to discuss what their organization was doing as part of this project.

Mr. Burnett said that the project was kicked off with a media campaign and coordination meetings between a number of entities. Those included NRCS, USFS, KDFWR, Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF), TNC, Rowan County Conservation District and the Northeast Rowan County Firewise Council.

NRCS received \$250,000 of federal fiscal year 2014 EQIP funding for this project and immediately held ranking periods. Of the 28 applications taken, 15 were determined to be eligible. There have been a number of non-traditional NRCS customers who have never had a farm serial number, and the Farm Service Agency has helped tremendously to help these applicants with their paperwork to become eligible for USDA programs. KDFWR and KDF have also been instrumental in working with customers. It is anticipated that all of the EQIP funding will be utilized.

There will be traditional practices, streambank stabilization, and 319 funding (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act funding for nonpoint source management from EPA through the Kentucky Division of Water). From the forest land side, there will be traditional forest stand improvement practices as well as biomass reduction practices. TNC has helped identify a "model applicant" with property adjacent to USFS land who will install practices that can be used as a showcase for other interested persons. This project focuses on a public-private interface and the partners look forward to future years.

Paul Finke, USFS, worked with NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations Tony Nott to develop the proposal in December 2013. Mr. Finke said that fire suppression is costly and that they usually exceed the limit that is identified for wildland fire. They then "borrow" from other projects. The (USFS and NRCS) Chiefs wanted more of a "landscape" restoration

partnership to get conservation on private lands to help with national forestland. There will also be work completed on federal land.

One big objective this year that was included in the proposal was (options different than prescribed burning) was mechanical. USFS didn't have a needed piece of equipment (a masticator), but with the funds USFS received for this project, they have purchased a masticator, and will take possession of it soon. They will then do demonstrations with the equipment which will benefit habitat and fuel reduction activities. This is intended to be a three year project and USFS hopes it will be funded for three years although there have been no promises. USFS has been guaranteed fiscal year 2015 funding and with those funds, they hope to purchase an excavator and steer skid to demonstrate and use across boundaries.

Bill Lorenz, Deputy Forest Supervisor and currently acting as Forest Supervisor, mentioned that this was a "project of opportunity" as NRCS and USFS are located in same building in Winchester. Work has previously stopped at the boundaries of private and federal lands and this project will help with better collaboration. He thanked those involved with recent watershed assessments. There is some septic system work being done in the Red Bird District. He said USFS wants to continue partnerships to cross boundaries between federal (including US Parks) and private efforts.

Ms. Woodrich talked about although this is a "Two Chiefs" project, it takes state/local efforts as well and then she introduced Leah MacSwords, Director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

Ms. MacSwords explained how USFS funding comes down to federal as well as to state agencies. She said that she got a request to see how much money they wanted for this project. They are receiving \$453,000. KDF will work on wildfire risk reduction. In Rowan County alone, they have responded to 110 wildfires on 1,100 acres with a value \$413,922 of lost value due to fire. With the funding KDF received, they will use \$200,000 for community grants for Firewise activities. Activities will include removing hazardous fuels, improve signs for emergency response, and to improve access where large emergency response vehicles can't get to. They will also have a coordinator for workshops, information, outreach, and help prepare communities to apply for the community grant funds.

The rest of the money will be used for landowner assistance. They will contact all the landowners with whom they've worked with to do practices (even outside of EQIP funding.)

They will pilot a Woodlands Steward School and will contract with University of Kentucky to work on publications and outreach to provide more educational opportunities for landowners in this area. She said that KDF is the link between the landowners and federal and that KDF already has committed funds for three years.

Dan Figert of the KDFWR said that his agency will bring a position to the table to help with the wildlife benefits of this project.

Laura Knoth, Kentucky Corn Growers, asked about pollinator habitat in this area. Ms. Woodrich mentioned that NRCS has a pollinator habitat effort and it is included as a Conservation Stewardship (CSP) enhancement, and that FSA has opportunity with CRP. Zak Danks, KDFWR biologist, mentioned that the “conservation cover” practice has an opportunity to help with pollinator habitat. While the practice may not mention pollinators, it has many opportunities for such. There is also a Pollinator Habitat Conservation Activity Plan (CAP). Mr. Burnett explained that this is an opportunity through EQIP where, if granted this through an EQIP contract, a landuser hires an approved Technical Service Provider to develop a Pollinator Habitat conservation plan with them. There is then potential in following years to implement the practices identified in the plan through EQIP.

Ms. Woodrich asked the committee that if they have other ideas for projects like this, to let her or her staff know so NRCS can try to develop other similar projects.

Conservation Compliance – NRCS and FSA

Ms. Woodrich introduced the next topic by saying that tying compliance and crop insurance is one of the phased-in approaches from the Farm Bill and that FSA is the lead on Conservation Compliance, and NRCS is the technical source. She said the speakers will talk about what we know (not much new since 1985 except a new form), and then the committee will know what we know and how to move forward.

Randy Smallwood, NRCS State Agronomist, represented State Resource Conservationist Mark Ferguson to discuss Conservation Compliance and the recoupling of crop insurance to conservation compliance. He was followed by Faye Brown, Farm Service Agency Agricultural Program Specialist.

Mr. Smallwood provided a [fact sheet](#) from July 2014 ([see handout](#)). As NRCS talks about compliance, farmers are sometimes surprised to learn that compliance is still around. This mostly affects new ground is being broken out, or new people. As far as changes, this is how it works today: A producer comes into FSA and identifies what land they want to crop. If no determination has been made, NRCS will look at map/soils, and determine if the field is considered Highly Erodible Land. This is basically any sloped land without infiltration.

Reading from the fact sheet that was provided, he emphasized that the “Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions aim to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and to protect wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide. HELC and WC provisions apply to all land that is considered highly erodible or a wetland, and that is

owned or farmed by persons voluntarily participating in USDA programs, unless USDA determines an exemption applies.”

He said that in 1996 compliance was linked to crop insurance and then sometime later unlinked. The 2014 Farm Bill relinked the two.

Farmers self-certify with FSA that they have a system that adequately treats the land. NRCS does spotchecks - typically around 800 per year. Out of the 800, some the agency can give variances or exemptions to, and some who are found out of compliance and will lose eligibility for that year. During the review, the plan and/or the systems are reviewed - one or the other has to treat the land.

Mr. Smallwood provided a second handout entitled “[NRCS Conservation Compliance Developments – 2014 Farm Bill](#)” and said that the recoupling to crop insurance will come into effect this fall.

As far as changes, if you are a current USDA participant, you are in the system and eligible for benefits, you will continue to move ahead without any changes. For new people who have not participated in USDA programs, or who have broken out new land, they will be affected.

Most producers will not notice a change and will continue to self-certifying that their system or plan meets compliance requirements. However, it is important that they understand what they are self-certifying to.

For those landusers wanting premium subsidy only, new participants will have up to 5 years to develop and implement a plan. If they are currently found out of compliance, then will have 2 years to develop and implement. Those that need technical assistance from NRCS will receive a priority for assistance. New producers waiting for a determination from NRCS cannot be found out of compliance and cannot lose their premium subsidy during this time.

Ms. Woodrich interjected that she wants to ensure folks understand that the NRCS role hasn't changed and don't anticipate it changing except workload. This is all we know at this time.

Next, FSA Agricultural Program Specialist Faye Brown described the FSA roles which includes determining eligibility based on the NRCS technical determination, taking actions on exemptions, and maintaining records. She reiterated that the eligibility for premium subsidy paid by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) to compliance with HEL and WC provisions will be effective with the 2015 crop year.

She provided a copy of the new [Form AD-1026](#), “HEL and WC Certification” (version dated 6-30-2014) ([see copy here](#)) and stated that changes to the AD-1026 form include the following:

- Broken down into a two part certification
- Number of questions requiring a “yes” or “no” answer from the producer has been reduced by 50 percent
- Check boxes are utilized instead of questions for provisions that do not apply to most producers.
- “yes” questions require referral to NRCS
- Part B, item 3A will be check if the producer has FCIC crop insurance and has never been subject to HELC and WC provisions
- Appendix has been expanded to provide more information to producers
- More information concerning the applicability of HELC and WC to first time subjects, forth coming

She stated that FSA is still waiting for more information as we roll out the Farm Bill. For details of Ms. Brown’s presentation, see her [PowerPoint presentation](#).

A question was asked if NRCS participants are told to fill out an Ag Water Quality plan. The response was that a conservation plan fulfills this (AWQ) need, and more NRCS field folks are asking if they have one. Ms. Woodrich added that NRCS is trying to get the word out, get folks plans, so there's not a mad rush in June 2015 to get the plans/forms done.

Ms. Brown identified FSA employee Debbie Beehn as the FSA SO specialist. Ms. Woodrich offered NRCS staff to go out and talk to groups if needed.

Rural Development Report – Tom Fern

Ms. Woodrich then called on Tom Fern, Rural Development (RD) State Director, for any comments. Mr. Fern said he appreciates the partnerships RD shares with all the folks in the room. He mentioned Strike Force Initiative and Promise Zone, saying priority points are given for some programs for being in the Promise Zone. RD just closed refinancing Harlan Hospital to keep the hospital open and 200+ jobs. Kentucky has 73 Strike Force Initiative counties and all USDA leaders working to enhance and build efforts in those counties along with state, local, grass roots, and faith based organizations. RD has also been involved in the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) initiative along with Congressman Hal Rogers and Governor Steve Beshear, which works to enhance economic development in Eastern Kentucky. RD is having a successful year in all programs and exceeding their allocations. This year they have had \$800 million in loans and grants, other programs. Again, he thanked everyone in the room for their partnership with RD.

NRCS Engineering Standards Updates and Update to the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices – Coleman Gusler

Ms. Woodrich thanked Mr. Fern for his comments and then introduced NRCS State Conservation Engineer Coleman Gusler.

Mr. Gusler briefly discussed that NRCS has practice standards that are required to be followed for program participation. He talked about the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) and updates required. He said that policy required that each conservation standard will be reviewed/updated every five years and that some practices in the FOTG are used regularly in Kentucky and some are not. Please see Mr. Gusler's [PowerPoint presentation](#) for additional information including specific practice standards that are to be updated.

Ms. Woodrich added that she asked Mr. Gusler to do this because folks sometimes want to know why a program standard changed, why we don't have something another state has, etc. It is important that you know that they are being updated. Also, the standards and the entire FOTG is available on the NRCS website at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg/> The practice standards are found in Section IV.

LiDAR – Steve Crabtree

Ms. Woodrich next introduced NRCS GIS Specialist Steve Crabtree. Mr. Crabtree introduced David Chen and noted that he was hired through a student conservation program and now continues to work with NRCS through an agreement with the Fayette County Conservation District.

Mr. Crabtree said that he would discuss how NRCS is using LiDAR, noting that LiDAR is an acronym for "light detection and ranging". He said it shows "precise ground surface data" and is a laser based system gathered from a small plane. For NRCS, the agency is interested in ground surface elevation and he noted that it is very accurate for this purpose.

With NRCS and partnership funding, Kentucky has good coverage of the state, moving from west to east. Within three years, the state should have full coverage. Currently, 72 counties are covered. In its raw form, the huge datasets are not user friendly. The benefit is what can be done with the data driven tools.

All NRCS field offices use ARC GIS software, with LiDAR where available, integrating different database information to make practical use of it through tools in ARC GIS. Field offices receive pre-processed LiDAR derivatives including smoothed, bare-earth digital elevation model (DEM); slope; concentrated flow; and depth grid. From this, field offices can generate very detailed slope elevations plus concentrated flow.

Mr. Crabtree showed several aerial photographs with detailed slope information, and concentrated flow, including on a very flat field (to show can pick up even small rills). See his [PowerPoint presentation](#) for these images and other details of his presentation. He said this is useful for conservation practice design and that practical use of the data is what it's all about. He summarized by saying that the desire is to make the data easy to use by GIS users (not experts) and added that the agency is moving toward getting this data in the cloud where the process will be done remotely (server based).

The question was asked if the accuracy change when you get into forest and mountainous areas. Mr. Crabtree responded that data is collected with leaf-off, but coniferous areas are harder to get the data, although the data is still quite accurate. The vendor has to meet a certain number of points hit the ground. The data is still certified for two foot contours in Eastern Kentucky and that the accuracy does vary. It was mentioned that the Department of Transportation uses two meter data for road design.

One of the attendees mentioned that downed trees will show up on LiDAR as sinkholes - that's how accurate it is. Mr. Crabtree said that smoothing helps with these kinds of things. See additional information in Mr. Crabtree's [PowerPoint presentation](#) including different field tools (runoff/curve number, contour, cross section/profile, slope, concentrated flow, ground area) that are available.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Pooling Area Discussion – Deena Wheby

Deena Wheby gave a brief overview of how Kentucky's "General EQIP" pooling areas have changed over the years going from 14 smaller areas to four larger areas (each one broken into cropland and pastureland.) She asked if the group had any comments or thoughts on the pooling areas, ranking cut-off dates, state initiative funding pools, etc., to let her know. She also said that if there was enough interest that she would arrange for an EQIP subcommittee meeting of interested persons. She asked that attendees let her know after the meeting or later via email or phone.

WRP/ACEP-WRE Compatible Use Agreements and Review of FY 15 Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) – Doug Hines

Ms. Woodrich next introduced Douglas Hines, NRCS Easement Acquisition Specialist, who made a presentation regarding Compatible Use Agreements and Geographic Area Rate Caps for the wetlands easement program. Detail of his presentation may be found in his [PowerPoint presentation](#) and [handout](#).

Mr. Hines discussed history of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), its repeal and movement to the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE)

component. He mentioned NRCS and TNC had partnered on WREP and that NRCS had also partnered with The Mississippi River Trust on WREP, both in Western Kentucky. He said that existing easements will continue to be WRP easements; new ones will be ACEP-WRE.

He then discussed WRE and WRP compatible use guidelines for Kentucky. He noted that easements are strict. Landowners keep the title, right of quiet enjoyment, control of access, recreational uses, and subsurface resources. Through WRP/WRE, there is a provision for compatible use which in certain situations, on a temporary basis (1-5 years, not to exceed 10), can be granted to landowners. Mr. Hines passed out a [handout](#) entitled "Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Compatible Use Guidelines for Kentucky." These guidelines were developed by a subcommittee and they have worked on it for some time now. Reoccurring compatible uses have been worked out in detail so they can be granted in a timelier manner. Routine practices include native grass management, mowing of access roads and embankments, management of shallow water areas, wildlife food plots, early successional habitat management, operation of water wells, use of exiting hunting blinds, use of temporary hunting blinds, and control of noxious/invasive plants. Please see the [handout](#) for additional details.

He also covered easement compensation in the way of Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC). He explained some states use appraisals, and some use market analysis to determine WRP/WRE easement compensation. Kentucky does not have uniform geography and topography to use market analysis statewide so Kentucky uses some of both (appraisal and market analysis). In fiscal year 2014, due to the timing of receiving ACEP funding, Kentucky WRE offers were limited to counties with market analysis. For fiscal year 2015, NRCS is in the process of obtaining market analysis for several counties in addition to the ones that exist for 2014. This will help roll out the fiscal year 2015 program in a timely manner.

Comments on the GARC are received on an ongoing basis and much input has been received. NRCS pays 95 percent of the appraisal value or the market analysis value, so the agency is paying most of the appraised value. Each state makes that determination. Some states pay 80 percent, some in the 90s.

Ms. Woodrich mentioned that Kentucky is one of the top five states in WRP, so we received additional funding for (old) WRP. She appreciates the partners who have helped with this. She noted that NRCS and the partnership have really grown the program over the years.

Discussion, Announcements, and Closing Comments – Karen Woodrich

Ms. Woodrich announced the dates of the next three State Technical Committee meetings: They will be on Thursdays as follows: December 11, 2014; April 16, 2015; and a date to be determined in August 2015 (plans to work around the State Fair).

She informed the committee that NRCS will be moving to third floor of the building NRCS currently occupies. FSA and RD will be on second floor. The December meeting may be at a different location that month. She thanked everyone for coming and said that she is looking forward to RCPP and other partner activities.

Ms. Woodrich asked if there were announcements or other topics of discussion from the group. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

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Link to PowerPoints:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ky/technical/stc/?cid=stelprdb1259225>

Handouts:

- Conservation Fact Sheet July 2014
- Developments Sheet Conservation Compliance 2014
- AD1026-1026 Appendix
- ACEP WRE and WRP Compatible Use Guidelines

State Technical Committee Attendees (August 26, 2014)

Karen Woodrich, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (Committee Chair)

Faye Brown, USDA – Farm Service Agency

Tom Fern, USDA – Rural Development

Travis Hale, Kentucky Department of Agriculture

David Wayne, Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Ray Smith, University of Kentucky

Jim Roe, Kentucky Division of Water

Kim Richardson, Kentucky Division of Conservation

Brent Harrel, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Lee Andrews, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Doug Wilson, TASK, Inc. (TSP)

Ben Koostra, Limestone & Cooper (TSP)

Dave Maples, Kentucky Cattlemen Association

Zeb Weese, Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund

Laura Knoth, Kentucky Corn

Jeff Sole, The Nature Conservancy

Bill Lorenz, US Forest Service

Paul Finke, US Forest Service

David Chinn, Monty's Plant Food

Brad Lee, University of Kentucky

David Phemister, The Nature Conservancy
Ed Thompson, USDA 1890 Program, Office of Advocacy and Outreach
Don Dott, Kentucky Nature Preserves
Tim Hughes, Kentucky Division of Biofuels
Pete Cinotto, US Geologic Survey
Myrissa Christy, Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD)
Greg Johnson, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Dawn Riley, Monty's Plant Food
Jack Stickney, Kentucky Rural Water
Dan Figert, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Leah MacSwords, Kentucky Division of Forestry
Pam Snyder, Kentucky Division of Forestry
Tim Joice, Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Danny Hughes, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Zak Danks, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Deena Wheby, USDA – NRCS
Coleman Gusler, USDA – NRCS
Mark Ferguson, USDA – NRCS
Tony Burnett, USDA – NRCS
Doug Hines, USDA – NRCS
Randy Smallwood, USDA – NRCS
Steve Crabtree, USDA – NRCS
David Chan, USDA – NRCS

AGENDA

Kentucky USDA State Technical Committee

August 26, 2014
9:30 a.m.

NRCS State Office
2nd floor conference room
771 Corporate Drive
Lexington, Kentucky



9:30 a.m.	Welcome, Introductions and Opening Comments	Karen Woodrich NRCS State Conservationist and State Technical Committee Chair
9:45 a.m.	State Conservation Funding	Kim Richardson Kentucky Division of Conservation Director
10:00 a.m.	New KDFWR Commissioner Introduction and Remarks	Gregory K. Johnson Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commissioner
10:15 a.m.	New TNC State Director Introduction and Remarks	David Phemister The Nature Conservancy State Director
10:30 a.m.	Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	Deena Wheby NRCS Assistant State Conservationist
10:45 a.m.	Landscape Restoration Partnership between NRCS and USFS: Triplett Creek	Partners
11:15 a.m.	Conservation Compliance	Mark Ferguson NRCS State Resource Conservationist Faye Brown Farm Service Agency Agricultural Program Specialist
11:35 a.m.	NRCS Engineering Standards Updates and Update to the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices	Coleman Gusler NRCS State Engineer
11:50 a.m.	Lidar	Steve Crabtree NRCS GIS Specialist
12:05 p.m.	EQIP Pooling Area Discussion	Deena Wheby
12:20 p.m.	WRP/ACEP-WRE Compatible Use Agreements and Review of FY 15 Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)	Doug Hines Easement Acquisition Specialist
12:30 p.m.	Discussion, Announcements, etc.	Group
	Closing Comments	Karen Woodrich



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