

MICHIGAN TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 15, 2018

CALL TO ORDER	Garry Lee, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL	Matt Smego for Laura Campbell (MI Farm Bureau); Adam Cook (MLICA); Amy Frankmann (MI Nursery & Landscape Association); Lynn Henning (SRAP); Jim Hudgins (USFWS); Debra Huff (Michigan Forest Association); Joel Johnson (FSA); Mike Parker (MDNR); Mike Smalligan (MDNR); and John Switzer (MDARD) were present.
OTHERS	Mike Cook (MLICA); Abby Smith (NRCS); Becky Otto (NRCS); Kim Wieber (NRCS); Dale Allen (FSA); Nichol DeMol (Trout Unlimited); Karen Potter-Witter (Michigan Forest Association); Brian Thomas (NRCS); and Rick Woodford (NRCS).
MINUTES	<p>Garry welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for coming to the meeting. The minutes from the March 28, 2018 meeting were reviewed and, hearing no changes, accepted as presented.</p> <p>Garry asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda. There were no changes to the agenda, and the meeting continued.</p>
<i>NEW BUSINESS</i>	
FY 2018 Program Status (Sign-up and Contract Implementation)	<p>Program Coordinators, NRCS</p> <p>Becky Otto shared some information regarding EQIP sign-up and contract implementation for FY 2018. She shared a PowerPoint presentation containing information regarding the top-ranked EQIP practices by obligation and the number of contract items in FY 2018. She also presented some tables which represented the top EQIP practices applied in Michigan in calendar year 2018 ranked by payment amount and number of contract items. She shared a table which showed the FY 2018 obligations & contracted acres for each of the various EQIP subaccounts.</p> <p>Abby Smith shared information regarding CSP activities in FY 2018. The new activities contracted in CSP for sign-ups 2017-1 & 2018 Renewals was 7,163.1 acres. The total number of CSP acres contracted in 2017 was 299,476.7 acres. During the CSP 2018-1 sign-up, 105 applications were selected for a total of approximately 39,000 acres with estimated annual payments totaling \$815,000.</p> <p>Brian Thomas also gave an update on FY 2018 ACEP activities.</p>

	Seventeen parcels were acquired for a total of 2,166 acres in FY 2018.
FY 2019 ACEP-WRE Easement Compensation	<p>Brian Thomas, ACEP Coordinator, NRCS</p> <p>Brian presented the FY 2019 ACEP-WRE Easement Compensation process. The compensation offered for an easement or 30-year contract enrollment will be the lowest of the following: 1) the fair market value (FMV) of the land using either a Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practices (USPAP) appraisal or an area wide market analysis (AWMA); 2) the geographic area rate cap (GARC); or 3) an amount voluntarily offered by the landowner.</p> <p>NRCS-Michigan plans to use USPAP appraisals to determine the FMV. In addition, each State Conservationist must adopt at least one GARC for his or her State. If USPAP appraisals are used to determine FMV, the GARCs must be set as a percentage of FMV and must include a not-to-exceed dollar value. In 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 the state was divided into two regions based on the percent of agricultural land and forested land for the purpose of establishing GARC not-to-exceed values. Michigan’s GARC not-to-exceed amount was based on a combination of the USDA-NASS 2018 Pasture Value by State and the 2018 Cropland Value by State for the two geographic areas. The not-to-exceed amounts were reduced to reflect the value of the reserved rights retained by the landowner.</p> <p>Brian presented the recommendation that NRCS-Michigan proceed with the same methodology for 2019 using updated cost information from NASS.</p> <p>The MTC concurred with this recommendation, and it will be forwarded to the State Conservationist for final approval.</p>
FY 2019 EQIP (NWQI, Practice Lists, Allocation Formula, Blanding Turtle Subgroup)	<p>Becky Otto, EQIP Coordinator, NRCS</p> <p>Becky presented various EQIP topics to the MTC for discussion, beginning with the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Watershed Selection. The NWQI was established as a joint initiative with State water quality agencies and the Environmental Protection Agency in FY 2012 to address agricultural sources of water pollution, including nutrients, sediment, and pathogens related to agricultural production, in priority watersheds throughout the country.</p> <p>The current watersheds included in this initiative in Michigan are the Pigeon Creek-Kalamazoo River Watershed (Calhoun County), Hayworth Creek Watershed (Clinton County), South Fork of Hayworth Creek Watershed (Clinton County), and Doty Brook Watershed (Clinton County). An NWQI “subgroup” meeting was called on August 1, 2018, to discuss the status of these watersheds, possible withdrawal, selection</p>

of new watersheds, and a readiness pilot project for source water protection.

The subgroup recommends that work in the existing Michigan NWQI watersheds continue with increased outreach and coordination between NRCS, MDEQ, and the local conservation districts. The subgroup does not recommend new watersheds for FY 2019 under NWQI or the pilot project for source water protection but will explore possibilities for additions in FY 2020. The criteria for a watershed to be considered for FY 2020 includes: 1) the watershed is impaired, threatened, critical or has a total maximum daily load plan; 2) the watershed has a State-approved watershed management plan; and 3) there is sufficient technical capacity and producer interest in the watershed to meet the initiative's goals.

Question: Why didn't the subgroup want to add more watersheds?

Answer: There would be a significant increase in workload for State agencies to conduct monitoring, some watersheds did not have watershed plans in place, and some did not meet the specific criteria.

The MTC concurred with this recommendation, and it will be forwarded to the State Conservationist for final approval.

Becky then shared the FY 2019 practice list with the committee. As per Title 440-Conservation Programs Manual, Part 515.81B(1), conservation practices, including CAPs and approved activities, for EQIP will be made available within each State based on approval by the State Conservationist, considering the advice from the State Technical Committee.

The recommendation to the MTC is to maximize the available conservation practices to ensure the appropriate tools are available to address natural resource concerns in Michigan.

The MTC concurred with this recommendation, and it will be forwarded to the State Conservationist for final approval.

Becky then presented the allocation formula currently used for EQIP funds in Michigan. As per Title 440-Conservation Programs Manual, Part 515.61C(1), "The State Conservationist, considering the advice of the State Technical Committee or Tribal conservation advisory council, must develop a formal allocation formula for allocating funds to address program and national priorities, natural resource concerns, priority geographic locations within the State or Tribal lands, to ensure that funding is targeted to appropriate priorities."

The current allocation formula first considers statutory funding requirements (10% historically underserved, 5% wildlife, and 60% livestock), and national and State initiatives. The remaining funds are distributed across four areas of the State based on soils and data from

	<p>the 2012 AgCensus, including amounts of cropland, pastureland, woodland, agricultural operations and animal operations in each of the four areas of the State.</p> <p>The results of the allocation formula are then compared to the final allocations from prior years and adjusted, as needed. Finally, allocations are adjusted based on current-year demand.</p> <p>The recommendation presented to the MTC was to continue the use of the process described above to allocate EQIP funds in Michigan, contingent upon the 2018 Farm Bill.</p> <p>The MTC concurred with this recommendation, and it will be forwarded to the State Conservationist for final approval.</p> <p>Becky also invited any interested partners to be a part of a subgroup regarding the Blanding's Turtle.</p>
<p>Future MTC Meeting Dates</p>	<p>Kim Wieber, ASTC-Programs, NRCS</p> <p>Kim informed the MTC that the future MTC meeting dates are October 24, 2018; January 16, 2019; April 17, 2019; July 17, 2019; and October 23, 2019.</p>
<p>Partner Updates</p>	<p>Debra Huff (Michigan Forest Association) shared with the committee that the MFA annual meeting was approaching and encouraged them to visit michiganforests.com for more information. Mike Parker (MDNR) gave an update on CRP SAFE. Matt Smego (Farm Bureau) said the county annual meetings will be taking place soon. Mike & Adam Cook (MLICA) shared that their organization is working on renewing an MOU with NRCS nationally. John Switzer (MDARD) said the Western Lake Erie Basin continues to be a priority. An edge-of-field monitoring project is currently taking place. There are efforts to extend the CREP agreement one more year. Joel Johnson (FSA) shared that there is a 24,000,000-acre national cap on CRP and also gave an update on the CRP audit in Lenawee County.</p>
<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>The meeting was opened up for any public comment. Nichol DeMol (Trout Unlimited) thanked the committee for the chance to sit in on the meeting.</p>
<p>Closing Remarks</p>	<p>Garry thanked those in attendance for their time, contributions, and participation in the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.</p>