

# Minutes of the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

## 10:00 AM June 11, 2008

### Members/Advisors Present

Sabrenna Bryant-Chairperson & MAL  
Antron Williams -Treasurer & MAL  
Charlie Ogg-Secretary & MAL  
Rafael Mendez-HEPM  
Cliff Eaddy- AIANPM  
Wayne Henderson-DEPM  
LaKeisha Hill- BEPM  
Lisa Good-FWPM  
Amy Maxwell-Outreach Advisor & 1890's Liaison Advisor  
Craig Ellis-Title VI Advisor  
Dory Reeves-Title VII Advisor

### Members/Advisors Absent:

Elyse Benson - APIPM

- I. Call to Order. Bryant called to order the SC Civil Rights Committee (CRC) at 10:00 AM.
- II. Approval of minutes. Henderson made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2008 meeting. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- III. Treasurer's Report. Williams passed out the updated CR budget. Bryant said Benson needs \$2700 in the Asian Pacific Islander Emphasis Program since it is now separate from the Hispanic Emphasis Program. CAT also needs an additional \$1500. \$1300 from AIANEP, \$1200 from FWP, \$1500 from HEP, and \$2000 from Outreach projects will cover additions of \$1000 to APIEP, \$1500 to CAT, \$500 to DEP.
- IV. Ongoing activities and approaching deadlines.
  - a. *Current Developments* Articles.  
Bryant reported she or Maxwell will submit an article in July. Mendez will submit an article in August.
  - b. *Candidate for Civil Rights Award*  
Bryant said it is time for nominations for the Civil Rights Award. Hill asked if criteria or guidelines are available for nominators to follow when considering nominees. Maxwell said no such criteria or guidelines are recorded; historically the CR committee has taken nominations from within the committee, decided on the nominee, and submitted that name to the State

Conservationist for approval. The only criterion followed was ensuring CR activities of the nominee were above and beyond basic elements in the performance plan. Reeves reminded the CR committee the recipient's name is submitted for the National Civil Rights Award, and there are established, lengthy, national criteria. Discussion ensued as to whether the committee should open nominations to all employees. Hill asked if supervisors should submit nominations. Eaddy suggested supervisory DCs submit nominations. Henderson stated nominations can be from any occupational group (technicians, engineers, soil scientists), not just conservationists. Good suggested emailing a letter to all employees soliciting nominations. Maxwell concurred, saying the letter should come from the State Conservationist. Bryant will work with Pat Turner to draft a letter for Mr. Glasgow to all employees soliciting nominations. The letter will include national criteria for nominators to follow when considering nominees.

V. AIANPM Report.

Eaddy will attend the AIANPM annual training conference in Spokane, WA.

Eaddy, chair of the Southeast American Indian Workgroup, a nine-state workgroup, said the group has finalized its workgroup plan. The plan is being circulated for signatures.

VI. BEPM Report. Hill reported the following:

Magazine Subscription -Minority Landowners has not been purchased.

Attended Laurens CR Review April 7th

Attempted to coordinate recruiting trip to Alabama A&M University starting back in March but that fell through. Plans are to conduct a recruiting trip before the end of the fiscal year.

Forwarded Career Intern application materials to list of students obtained from National BEPM.

Hill applied for the Black Female vacancy on National CRAC committee.

	Regular Travel	Training Travel	Training Tuition	Supplies & Material	Total	Comments
<i>Total Budget</i>	\$ 400.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 4,150.00	
Black History Month						Posters, S.O. Bulletin Board
Civil Rights training for CRAC Members		\$ 888.98				Las Vegas, Dec 11-14,2007
	.1					Alabama A&M or

Recruiting	<u>400.00</u>					other HBCU
Diversity Magazine				.1		Statewide-1 year
Subscription				<u>700.00</u>		subscription
Other Training						Training
<i>Current Total</i>	<b>\$ 400.00</b>	<b>\$ 888.98</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 700.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,988.98</b>	opportunity/ not yet identified

Plan to complete before end  
of fiscal year.

- VII. DEPM Report. Henderson reported the new Laurens Service Center is under construction. He gave to the FSA CED a building checklist to ensure with the contractor that the building meets handicap accessibility requirements.

He received a report from the National DEPM on new college student hires (students with disabilities) from the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). As of May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 384 students were hired but NRCS hired none. USDA hired 19 students partitioned as follows: Foreign Ag. Services hired 3, Forest Service hired 13, Farm Service Agency hired 2, and Risk Management Agency hired 1. Henderson expressed concern that NRCS hired none but attributed that to the nature of our work. Reeves stated, too, that many students with disabilities do not meet NRCS degree requirements.

Henderson referenced the new poster, "And Justice for All". Bryant will make it available for all field offices to download and print. The poster is required to be posted in all offices.

Henderson reiterated from his statewide-email sent May 27, 2008 that all announcements for public meetings conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will include instructions for participants in need of accommodations in order for them to attend and fully participate in the event. Some examples of accommodations include but are not limited to wheelchair accessibility, interpreters, special diets (if food is provided), or alternate forms of material (such as in Braille). Bryant will post the meeting guidelines on SharePoint.

Maxwell said she was reminded by Mr. Glasgow that State Technical Committee meetings are open meetings. She will begin announcing the meetings in *The State* newspaper two to three weeks prior to meeting dates.

The next DEPM teleconference is June 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM.

VIII. FWPM Report.

Good reported she submitted an article to *Current Developments* during Women's History Month.

Good reported the Laurens Field Office Civil Rights review was conducted. She reminds field offices that the updated Sexual Harassment Policy should be in File 230 Equal Opportunity

Good reported sending to all employees a PowerPoint presentation developed by the National Federal Women's Program Manager defining Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

Good will submit a request to Bryant to subscribe to business women's magazine.

IX. HEPM Report.

Mendez reported the National Hispanic Poster contest deadline is August 1, 2008.

Mendez subscribed to a local Hispanic newspaper.

Mendez will attend the National Association of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees meets July 7-11, 2008 at Madison, WI.

X. APIPM Report. The CR committee received approval from Mr. Glasgow to separate APIP from HEP, and he approved Elyse Benson as APIPM. Bryant recognized the China PowerPoint Benson routed to the field offices. Bryant also submitted the following report prepared by Benson concerning APIP Heritage Month:

Just days after I got my official appointment as APIO representative, it was my month! Rafael got me started with a boatload of emails from the national APIO coordinator. Thanks, Rafael. I sorted through them and about a hundred others and distributed a select few to the SC user group. I also assembled a few slides from my trip to China and sent them out as well. This email was posted on the national website and was also emailed to the PAS in Nevada who shared it with the whole state.

I have requested the opportunity to attend the APIO conference held jointly with the American Indian and Alaska Native group in the magical city of Spokane, WA the week of Aug. 10-15. I sent Frank Wilcox a reasonably ballpark estimate of \$2700. I am requesting the CRC to transfer the APIO funds set aside for Rafael over to me for the purpose of attending this conference. I would really like to do better next year as the heritage month representative, and this conference will give me a chance to meet others SEPM's and gather ideas and information.

- XI. MAL Report. Bryant will review the CRC action items and ensure they are complete as FY08 closes.
- XII. Outreach Report.  
Maxwell indicated SC NRCS was notified that their video nomination for Small Hispanic Farm Family of the Year was not selected by the NOPHNRCSE's judging committee as the winner. She did indicate she was preparing to select a small farmer to video and nominate as Farmer of the Year for the NOPBNRCSE's competition.
- XIII. Title VI Report.  
Ellis reported a portion of cost-share monies from the new farm bill are directed to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Limited Resource Farmers, and New/Beginning Farmers. However, the rules are not yet written so NRCS is waiting to find out how these groups will be defined.
- XIV. Title VII Report.  
Reeves reported on progress with the Electronic Official Personnel Folders (EOPF). These folders eventually will be available via the internet for employees. For now, only Reeves has access to the folders. Once the folders are made available to employees, employees will be encouraged to review them for correctness.

Reeves reported on progress with the Linc Pass identification card employees will use to access government facilities. Government Services Administration (GSA) is administering the Linc Pass project, which is mandated by Homeland Security. An instructional letter will come out very soon notifying employees of two locations where they will go to begin the process for obtaining their Linc Pass. Beginning July 7, 2008, employees will carpool to the sites where fingerprints and photo IDs will be taken. Four to six weeks later employees will return to that site to receive their Linc Pass.

All employees who have not updated their personal information in ICAMs are receiving emails notifying them to do so. Correct personal information is imperative for their Linc Pass to be correct.

Reeves stated HR is accepting applications for four career intern positions. Notice was sent to universities, including the 1890's schools. Positions are available in Florence, Georgetown, Lancaster, and Jasper counties.

Maxwell initiated some general discussion about recruiting early in high schools to fill NRCS positions. Ellis said the SLT is looking at ways to fill positions with college students with specific career objectives rather than students who only want a summer job.

Reeves said HR will announce DC positions in Orangeburg and Hampton-Allendale counties. HR will also announce to fill the State Conservation Engineer position vacated by Rippe’.

- XV. Cultural Awareness Training  
Hill reported the CAT committee is finalizing plans for CAT on August 21, 2008 at Seawells Restaurant.
- XVI. Other Business.  
Henderson reported he and Robby Holcombe did the layout of the parking area at Lake Rabon Recreational Area, Site 32, in Laurens County. The parking area is shaped like the NRCS raindrop logo, a tribute to the work NRCS did on the recreational area.
- XVII. Next Meeting. The next meeting of the CRC is 10:00 AM August 13, 2008.
- XVIII. Adjourn. Bryant called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Hill motioned to adjourn. Eaddy seconded the motion. Motion passed. The CRC committee adjourned at 11:50 AM.