

Minutes of the SC NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee

10:00 AM October 10, 2007

Members/Advisors Present

Lynette Savereno-Chairperson & MAL (Member at Large)

Sabrenna Bryant-Vice-Chairperson & MAL

Cliff Eaddy-Treasurer & AIANPM

Charlie Ogg-Secretary & MAL

LaKeisha Hill- BEPM

Lisa Good-FWPM

Wayne Henderson-DEPM

Rafael Mendez-HEPM/APIPM

Elyse Benson - MAL

Antron Williams - MAL

Craig Ellis-Title VI Advisor

Dory Reeves-Title VII Advisor

Amy Maxwell-Outreach Advisor & 1890's Liaison Advisor

Members/Advisors Absent: None

Visitors Attending:

Mr. Walt Douglas – State Conservationist

Mr. Doug Deaderick – Assistant State Conservationist (O)

- I. Call to Order. Savereno called the SC Civil Rights Committee (CRC) to order at 10:05 AM.
- II. Welcome to new CRC members. Savereno welcomed new CRC members Elyse Benson and Antron Williams. Savereno also welcomed Mr. Deaderick to the meeting. Mr. Deaderick stated he appreciates and supports the work of the CRC committee and was glad to have the opportunity to observe the meeting.
- III. Approval of minutes. Bryant made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2007 meeting. Henderson seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- IV. Treasurer's Report. Eaddy distributed and reviewed the FY07 CRC budget. The end-of-year balance is \$7,145.50
- V. Ongoing activities and approaching deadlines.
 - a. *SEP and CRC 2008 Business Plans of Operations.*
 - Savereno asked SEP managers to begin thinking about programs for inclusion in the FY08 business plan, and to submit their items by the December meeting. She also asked SEPMs to consider materials and

literature that might be suitable for field offices. She believes \$7000 is too much money left in the account.

- Maxwell emphasized SEPMs should not pay for NRCS materials; NRCS materials are free. Savereno advised SEPMs to plan in advance so purchases are paid for by August 15.
 - Benson asked where the money in the CRC budget comes from. Ellis stated the money comes out of the SC NRCS budget with approval by Mr. Douglas. Savereno asked SEPMs to submit budget requests by December. The CRC budget is allocated in January. The business plan can be pared, if necessary, when the budget is received.
- b. *Current Development Articles.*
- Maxwell said there will be a late Fall edition. Articles are due by October 31, may be 2 to 3 paragraphs in length, and will also be posted on the SEP web pages.
 - Bryant will submit an article about Cultural Awareness Training (CAT).
 - Mendez will submit an article about Hispanic awareness.
 - Eaddy will submit an article about Native American awareness.
 - Savereno suggested submitting articles on accomplishments as well.
- c. *Training for members.* Benson and Williams will attend the CRC new member training (Roles and Responsibilities) in Atlanta August 2008.
- d. *Civil Rights Reviews & Reports.* Bryant attended the Lancaster field office review in September. She said it was a good review. Savereno asked what good things about the review may be shared with other FOs to aid their success. Bryant said all the documentation was in exceptional order. Mr. Deaderick said one noteworthy aspect is that Ann Christie, Lancaster DC, ensures all partners are aware of their civil rights roles and responsibilities. Partners know who to contact for information when necessary.
- FY08 reviews and committee members attending: Greenwood (1/24), Good; Hampton/Allendale (3/13), Williams; Laurens (5/8), Hill; Edisto/Savannah RC&D (7/23), Ogg; Foothills RC&D (8/14), Benson.
 - Savereno informed Benson and Williams that committee members attend the reviews conducted by Mr. Deaderick and Mr. Curtis Hall. Mr. Deaderick will send out the checklist of items FOs are required to have on file and posted, including the responsibilities of the attending CRC member.
- e. *2007 CRC Plan of Work Updates.* Savereno said she received nearly all the SEPM updates and will submit the Annual Report to Mr. Douglas after it is compiled.
- f. *2007 National Civil Rights Award.* Savereno said Roy Todd will be nominated by SC to receive the National Civil Rights Award.
- g. *Time period for release of minutes to the field.* Hill asked if CRC minutes can be released to the field at a more timely date, rather than waiting two months for approval and then release. Bryant made a motion for the minutes to be approved by the CRC after two circulations via email and

submitted to the field within approximately two weeks following the meeting. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- Maxwell requested sending the link to the minutes rather than an attachment because attachments slow down servers.

VI. AIANPM Report. Eaddy suggested SEPMs contact Janie Davis with the SC Minority Affairs Commission to find out what information is available that might be beneficial to SEPMs.

VII. BEPM Report. Hill distributed information regarding the Texas NRCS Mentor Program. The Texas program is administered under the Federal Women's Program. Hill continues to research ways to revise and/or revitalize the SC mentoring program.

- She took a course entitled "Effective Mentoring".
- Hill suggested assembling a Mentoring Program Committee at a later date.
- Reeves said she does not see any issues with separating the mentoring program from the career intern program.
- Hill will attend the BEPM annual meeting in December at New Orleans, budget dependant.

VIII. DEPM Report. Henderson has submitted an article for *Current Developments* and will prepare a Success Story.

IX. FWPM Report. Good reported on the recruitment fair she and Mike Banks attended Oct 3, 2007 at Clemson. She indicated students said they want to work summers for with NRCS because of the great pay for summer work, not to become permanent NRCS employees.

Good reviewed health and professional business magazines for women but was not pleased with the examples. She will wait until the budget is approved before deciding whether to secure subscriptions.

X. HEPM/APIPM Report. Mendez attended the HEPM meeting at Bloomington, MN and will attend the APIPM meeting at Miami. He asked the Public Affairs Specialist to contact Hispanic magazines about submitting NRCS articles. Maxwell said the protocol is to first go through the National Office, but it is best to first build the media base locally.

- Mendez shared an outreach program conducted by Idaho. NRCS placemats are used by Mexican restaurants. The place mats describe NRCS programs and how Hispanic customers may obtain assistance. Mendez will forward the information to Maxwell and Bryant.
- Hispanic dictionaries have been distributed to field offices.

XI. MAL Report. No report.

XII. Outreach Report.

- Maxwell informed the CRC that a CESU agreement has been finalized and signed between SC NRCS, Clemson University, and the Penn Center. NRCS is providing funds to these partners to initiate a 2-year demonstration project in Jasper County to start and test a SC Small Farmers Wholesale Auction Market. Per the agreement Clemson will be the fiscal partner, and Penn Center will guide the day to day set up and operation. Maxwell has a teleconference scheduled with the steering committee next week after which the plan will commence.
- Maxwell reported that the SC Dept. of Ag. is spearheading a project to create and fund a <http://www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/> MarketMaker website for SC which allows small and niche farmers to promote their products online and increase their selling power. NRCS is interested in being a founding partner, and is working with SCDA to follow up on this.
- Kirk Thomas, founder of *Outdoors Without Limits*, met with Maxwell in Edgefield to discuss outreaching to disabled landowners. His effort centers on creating local chapters in counties throughout the nation. NRCS and the Districts could assist Thomas with outreach efforts and coordination.
- Maxwell defined her role as outreach coordinator, and emphasized that while small and limited farmers were a major target audience, there are other audiences, non-traditional customers, that we can also target.

XIII. Title VI Report.

- Ellis distributed PROTRACTS reports for EQIP and WHIP showing male/female distributions. EQIP is okay. Small Farmers are combined with EQIP. WHIP needs more diversity.
- About 1million dollars was spent last year in SC for Small Farmers.
- New and Beginning Farmers will be separate from Small Farmers. Applicants will show qualifications for the program and will be subject to checks.

XIV. Title VII Report. Reeves reviewed selections in the past 3 months and explained that we are expanding use of the Career Intern program and decreasing use of the Student Program. She indicated information on South Carolina vacancies were sent to the 1890 schools and Clemson and UGA.

- Reeves reported two new career intern soil conservationists are hired, two others are scheduled.
- Three former career interns were converted to permanent.
- The resource soil scientist position at Walterboro was filled.
- A state office administrative assistant transferred to Veterans Administration.

- Three student interns worked this past summer. SC is moving away from the student intern program because the retention success is low. SC has better retention with career interns.
- XV. Cultural Awareness Training. Savereno commended Bryant, (CAT Chair) and the entire CAT committee for their work preparing for CAT. Overall, comments from attendees regarding CAT and the facilities were good.
- XVI. Election of FY08 Officers. Savereno passed the CRC Chair position to Bryant.
- Henderson nominated Hill as Vice-Chair. Eaddy seconded the motion. Motion passed.
 - Eaddy nominated Williams as Treasurer. Hill seconded the motion. Motion passed.
 - Benson nominated Ogg as Secretary. Good seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- XVII. Other Business. Eaddy commended Savereno, on behalf of the CRC committee, for “such a good job” serving as Chair. Mr. Douglas expressed his appreciation to the entire committee and volunteered himself and the SLT to assist in any way.
- XVIII. Next Meeting. **The next meeting of the CRC is 10:00 AM December 12th 2007. Other FY08 meeting dates will be February 13, April 9, June 11, August 13, and October 8.**
- XIX. Adjourn. Savereno called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Eaddy made the motion to adjourn. Henderson seconded the motion. Motion passed. The CRC adjourned at 12:10 PM.