

SCS CRC Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2011

Members/Advisors Present

Myra Jones
Amy Maxwell
Daniel Cabaniss
Bobby McQueen
Antron Williams
Jayson Mas
Tria Yang
Brad
Kellee Melton
Clifford Thornton
Terron Hillsman

Members/Advisors Absent

Staci Henry
Ann English
Odessa Armstrong

I. Call to Order

II. NRCS State Conservationist

III. FY 2010 Treasurer's Report (Tria Yang) Waiting on a budget.

IV. Ongoing Activities.

- (a) Civil Rights Reviews FY 2011- QAR's will be delayed due to budget. 2 more were scheduled for this year but are on hold (Terron Hillsman)**
- (b) Review 2011 Plan of Work-everyone has one month to do their updates and submit to Staci.**
- (c) FY 2011 Budget—Went over current budget where Mr. Thornton suggested break down of budget even more. Show what conference, what's taught, what are you going for, how does it benefit the state? Amy suggested if there is no Cultural Awareness Day, then SEPMs should step up and do something on the watershed level.**

V. Federal Women's Program Manager

Myra discussed the Women in NRCS (WIN) website, has submitted her quarterly report, attended a teleconference. WIN has bids out right now for the creation of the website. They are modeling the website Hispanic Emphasis Program website. A bid reading will be in mid to late May.

VI. Black Emphasis Program Manager (Antron)—

- a. Had to miss last teleconference. The conference he attends is pending budget.
- b. Black Cowboy Festival / NRCS workshop will be held 1st Thursday in May Please let landowner know. Had spoke with a possible intern, but cannot hire due to budget.

VII. Disability Emphasis Program Manager (Bobby)

- a. Met with vocational rehab and Kim Johnson about how to encourage employment for veterans and the disabled.

VIII. Hispanic Emphasis Program (Jayson)

- a. Took refresher SEPM training
- b. Conference is on hold
- c. Keeping in touch with prospective employees (soil cons)
- d. Hispanic and Asian census data was presented showing that these two groups are the fastest growing demographics

IX. Asian Pacific Emphasis Program Manager (Tria)

- a. Teleconference in February on budget plan and conference
- b. Trying to develop a limited English translation book for farm bill programs
- c. Developing a network for translation (providing support for others in different states/counties to come to for help in translation)
- d. Had a planned to attend conference in Minnesota but cannot attend due to budget but he did send SC information for the conference
- e. Asian Pacific poster contest is currently ongoing
- f. Shared the meaning of his name: actually pronounced D—aa which means sword/knife.

X. American Indian Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager (Daniel)

- a. Intern/employment databases are being kept up to date
- b. South East American Indian Workgroup numbers have reduced due to amount of RC&D Coordinators on committee
- c. Been working with two tribes (Catawba's and Waccamaw's)
- d. Been working with recruiting in high schools (sharing videos) hopes to do the same with the two tribes this year.
- e. It is an election year. Currently tribes in SC are working toward building/starting a casino.

XI. GLBT Emphasis Program Manager

XII. Members at Large Report

XIII. Outreach Report

- **Happy National Volunteer Week!** April 10-16, USDA NRCS in South Carolina is spreading the good news about the Earth Team Volunteer program. SC Earth Team Coordinator Sabrenna Bryant created a web page feature at http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/SC_EarthTeam.html which includes a news release (distributed to state wide media Friday, April 8th) and she provided tools to field offices to thank volunteers. Maxwell reported that progress is being made around the state in response to Ms. English' challenge that all SC offices utilize at least one Earth Team volunteer this fiscal year. The SC Earth Team Volunteer video (*being produced by an Earth Team Volunteer!*) is wrapping up production, with the final chapter filmed last Friday in Berkeley County at an environmental education field day (thanks to DC Angel Sams for arranging the video shoot).
- Maxwell and Bryant exhibited at the **2nd annual Farmville** last Saturday which took place at *EdVenture Children's Museum* and offered SC NRCS a chance to spread the good news about conservation to a wide audience. Folks in attendance were very interested in pollinators and their decline, and coincidentally, the children's museum is preparing to open an [outdoor butterfly exhibit to illustrate the importance of pollinators.](#)
- The **second funding application period began this week for the EQIP Organic Initiative**, and Maxwell sent out a statewide and field customizable news release and a front page web feature on the sign up was created to emphasize the May 20 deadline.
- Maxwell raised the issue of educating landowners/customers/general public that generally we do not offer grants (a common misconception), rather most of our financial assistance is offered via cost-share. She has encountered many people lately who ask her about NRCS grants, and we all need to make sure that we emphasize how our financial assistance works via cost-share.
- Maxwell distributed copies of the **1st and 2nd quarter SC Civil Rights Assessment** that was recently submitted as required by headquarters. The report provides info. on issues such as outreach successes, compliance with Title VI and VII, EEO and CR training for employees, procurement goals, and the report highlighted the fact that SC NRCS exceeded the set aside allocation of 5% to beginning farmers and 5% to socially disadvantaged farmers through EQIP. For FY 2011, SC NRCS has allocated 13% to beginning farmers and 11% to socially disadvantaged.
- Maxwell reported that USDA had revealed their new website, and that soon, the NRCS national and SC NRCS website would look much the same. Check it out at www.usda.gov.
- Maxwell is working with the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives to plan and host Farm Bill eligibility workshops** which will take place in Florence on June 11th and in Nesmith (Williamsburg County) on July 9th. More details to follow as these dates approach.

XIV. Title VI Advisor Report

- a. Went over SC Civil Rights Assessment
- b. New and beginning Farmer School—36 students; it's a 9 month program (2 days/month- 1 day class 1 day field).
- c. Amy mentioned that it's a 3 year program that will be accepting applications for year 2 soon.
- d. Need to work with producers to explain why they are not eligible (if not)
- e. All obligations are due by the 1st of July so there will be an update at the next meeting
- f. Work to get more landowners involved in easements.

XV. Title VII and Employment Report

- a. Kim was not present but Antron said that Toni and Ann want everyone to go through affirmative action and employment.

XVI. Other Advisors (Clifford Thornton)

- a. Staffing Update—Evelyn Whiteside started this week and Terron Hillsman is now acting in Toni's position. Mrs. English will be selection Clifford's Position Soon.
- b. Tricia McCalla has accepted a new position and her position is listed today.
- c. Stephanie Hix has started (replaced Marty Bright-Rivera)
- d. Pat Turner retired and Mrs. English has a panel for this position and will choose the new person in the next few days.
- e. Budget—anticipating funds, but has not received them yet.
- f. "marinated" on CRP- Will be getting CRP hours soon (and will be added to timesheet) so need to earn CRP right now.
- g. Looking at reducing overhead through vehicles, cell phones, and credit cards
- h. Reorganization—Leonard Jordan and Chief are in strong support of our reorganization. It is at the department now for approval. DSC is one of the only states not organized by areas.
- i. Budget—Continue to maintain vehicles ie. Car washes, oil changes, etc.
- j.

XVII. Next meeting July 13, 2011

XVIII. Adjourn

Other Advisors—Terron Hillsman and Clifford Thornton

Next Meeting

- April 13, 2011

Draft 4/19/2011

SNH