

State Technical Committee Meeting		9/26/2023	
		9:00am – 10:00pm	
		Virtually-Microsoft Teams	
Meeting Called By:	<i>Rebekah Lauster, NH NRCS</i>	Type of meeting:	State Technical Committee
Facilitator:	<i>Jeremy Fowler, NH NRCS</i>	Note taker:	<i>Kim Zaleski, NRCS</i>

Attendees: Rebekah Lauster, Kimberly Zaleski, Jeremy Fowler, Julicia Myers, Abby Nichols, Jasen Stock Jeff Painter, Jeff Holmes, Marilyn Milne, Shawn Jasper, Marika Labash, Ted Kendziora, Karl Honkonen, Cara Cargill, Gregory Jordan, Kim Bakker, Breanna Barlow, Katherine Zink, Ryan Hyde, Melissa Macheras, Robert Graham, Bill Fosher, Elizabeth McKenna, Kaitlyn Nafziger, Misty Sinsigalli, Matt Larkin, Michael Marchand, Wendy Weisiger, Paige Henderson, Kira Jacobs, Jessica Rock, Tracey Boisvert, Brooke Stubbs, Annica McGuirk, Heather Grybas, Donna Hepp, Jeremy Delisle, Matt Brown, Don Keirstead, Tabitha Edwards

Member Updates

Rebekah Lauster Acting State Conservationist- Planning a lot for our fiscal year 24 programs. IRA challenge is going to increase this year with even more additional funding. Able to have an All-Employee meeting in May- great accomplishment since Covid. Continue thru FY23 and FY24 IRA have allowed to do additional hiring- been hiring boots on the ground, 15-20 new employees Jan – Planning for FY24 programs--

Jeffrey Holmes- Farm Service Agency- See PPT slide. - Wrapping up drought projects- ongoing FY23 projects in Grafton from FY22 flooding. Carrol county tied to disaster declaration from Maine- projects ongoing. Cheshire and Sullivan projects from July's flooding. Making request to implement EFRP in Cheshire County to help cleanup effort. Current disaster declarations ongoing in NH from flooding and excess moisture-Credit Jeremy Delisle from UNH Co-Op- work done from frost and freeze surveys- widespread- lost stone fruits in Feb – most other fruits damaged in May. \$15million in losses from frost freeze; not including loss from excess moisture. Some Senators out to orchards to survey the damage. Hoping for assistance from Congress for AD hoc relief- IRA- Farm Loan programs dealt with delinquent borrowers- at least 60 days delinquent, some took out personal loans, evaluating on cash flow basis- Section 22007 \$2.2 billion budget- address producers who experienced discrimination prior to FY21 to USDA Farm Loan programs-Anyone prior to 2021 that had suffered what they felt was discrimination from USDA farm loan programs, they have until the 13th of January to apply for assistance; originally the 31st of October was just extended last week into January

Rural Development- Misty Sinsigalli- Biggest push is hiring-down high % of staff- Rural Energy for America Program received billions of \$ over 10 years- from 2 applications deadlines to quarterly basis-Staff of 3 for business programs- Business Programs Director, Energy Coordinator, and Technician. If anyone has questions, please call or email Misty- Energy and Utility programs created are mainly out of main office- call about any program. Flooding in July had staff in FEMA disaster recovery centers for a month. Housing program was able to expand repair program up to 40K in grants to home repairs- still available and taking applications. Income requirement -depending on location- not a requirement. Ask Misty for more information. Community programs for municipalities and non-profits- expect to see more money this FY for disaster recovery and technical assistance. Could include water and wastewater storm water, town hall. Still seeing inquiries around flood- Water and wastewater and storm water program- working with Johnson and Ludlow communities to help their systems from the flooding- continue to work with FEMA on this. We expect to see more programs from IRA this year- Encourage anyone to reach out with any questions.

Marques Munis- ASTC-Programs- See PowerPoint-

Elizabeth McKenna- Shaheen's Office- Working hard to keep gov't open. Monitoring very closely- Senator was at Apple Hill Farm few weeks ago to discuss Agricultural relief- Discussed frost and moisture damaging crops- will continue to fight for disaster assistance, difficult fight through end of year as well.

Ryn Hyde- Congresswoman Küster's Office- Funding government is #1 priority- as leader of Democrat coalition, working hard to bring Congress together to fund the government. Recently sent a letter to RMA about crash quality option. Producing a bill to

support Organic Market Development grant recently launched by USDA last spring- as get closer to Farm Bill- Democrat coalition 40-45 key priority bills focus on vitalizing rural areas through broadband employment, strengthening nutrition programs to combat food insecurity, providing certainty for growers and producers, particularly beginning young and socially distance disadvantaged, produced enhancing research capacity to bolster trade promotion and marketing and expanding international markets. Farm Bill listening session Aug 29th Commission Jasper, Jeff Holmes, Sarah Waring, Don Keirstead, & Julie Davidson from NOVA.

Robert Graham- Senator Hassan's Office- Senator been involved with orchard visits and Great Bay Oyster farms-visiting about coastal resiliency issues- funding the government is #1 priority.

Paige Henderson- Congressman Pappas' office- trying to avert a shutdown- heard about concerns of impacts- in regards to SNAP might be a 1 month runaway or current applications.

Matt Brown- State Engineer NRCS-see PowerPoint.

Tabitha Edwards-Outreach Coordinator- NRCS-Agency's overall outreach intent-Extend outreach to all customers with an emphasis on historically underserved and new customers. Historically underserved customers include veteran, beginning, socially disadvantaged, limited resource/income, and others. We work towards outreach goals by sharing program information with farmer led groups, watershed collaboratives and other community groups that share common conservation goals and interact with ag producers/forest operations. I'm happy to share NRCS program information about technical and financial assistance with partners/partners new employees; so more people in the conservation community are aware and able to share resources/direct interested potential applicants to NRCS. Regional Conservation Partnership Program-intends to expand conservation initiatives by partnering with groups that have a shared mission to address resource concerns in the state. Program processes are in the process of being improved to streamline the process and increase communication on the local level.

Easements-Program is also going through updates to streamline and adjust to reflect tremendous growth in land values.

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Kira Jacobs- Environmental Protection Agency -The Forest Service landscape scale restoration grant, they were able to fund the National Association of Conservation Districts and we have been working for three years on a Northeast Mid Atlantic Forest and Water Partnership

Shawn Jasper-Commissioner of Agriculture- Working with legislatives on – working with food bank and buying produce from local farms- concern on the long term buy ability and what to do if building up a dependence on these programs and the funding goes away- Some may be aware of national program of Ag business – received \$30million federal grant run thru NE region- NY and Cornell- still under development. An issue dealing with is the organic certification with the current staffing- if we lose 2 people, we could out organic farmers at risk who certify with us- working with Milford, NH to look at options; 2 weeks ago, Agricultural Advisory board met- unanimously continue to support organic certification only if able to do at a break-even point. Not viable- prices would be too high. Currently working on a disaster relief bill- would set things like a minimum average income to qualify- minimum loss in the last year- would cap amount of money paid to a farm-question is- will there be enough money to fund this bill? May not be a lot of funding available.

Rebekah- Thank you for your partnership and work- looking forward to FY24 and what it has to offer. Next STAC meeting forthcoming.