

Local Working Groups in Rhode Island

Setting Natural Resource Priorities

Local Working Groups (LWG) provide recommendations on local natural resource priorities and criteria for conservation activities and programs. Recommendations may include, but are not limited to priority natural resource concerns in the local community, criteria to be used in ranking program applications techniques and for outreach.

Participants

The LWG is a diverse group of people with agricultural and natural resource interests. The local NRCS District Conservationist (DC) is the chair of each group. Members are diverse, with a focus on local agriculture and various natural resource issues. Agricultural land producers and non industrial private foresters representing a variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area, private woodland owners, representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations and representatives of other agriculture and natural resource agencies are welcome and should be represented.

To ensure that LWG recommendations take into account the broad scope of people served by USDA, members will include historically underserved groups, such as minorities; persons with disabilities; beginning and limited resource farmers; and socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

Meetings

The meetings will be conducted as an open discussion among members. Discussion will focus on identifying local natural resource concerns that can be treated using USDA NRCS programs and activities through the Farm Bill. All recommendations will be considered. LWG recommendations are to be submitted to the Designated Conservationist as appropriate, within 14 calendar days after a meeting.

Summaries for all Local Working Group meetings will be available within 30 calendar days of the meeting and will be filed at the appropriate local NRCS office.

Individuals attending LWG meetings will be given the opportunity to address the group if wanted. Opportunity to address non-agenda items will be provided if time allows at the end of the meeting. Presenters are encouraged to provide written records of their comments to the Chairperson at the time of the presentation, but are not required to do so.



Logistics

The LWG meets at least once each year. Other meetings may be held at the discretion of the Chairperson. Meetings will be called by the Chairperson whenever it is determined that there is business that should be brought before the group.

LWG meetings are open to the public. See the table for more information on your closest LWG. You can also view the LWG meeting schedule online at www.RI.nrcs.usda.gov.

LWG Benefits

- Ensures conservation needs are developed using community stakeholder input.
- Conservation needs are assessed and are used to help identify program funding needs and conservation practices at the local level.
- Priority resource concerns and high priority areas needing assistance are identified.
- Recommendations are gathered for USDA conservation program application and funding criteria, eligible practices and payment rates.
- Multi-county cooperation and partnership building where program funding and priority area proposals cross county boundaries.
- Recommendations for state and national program policy to the State Technical committee are gathered.

