

**Civil Rights Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**February 2, 2012**  
**10:00 A.M.**  
**Des Moines, IA**

Agenda items are in bold and underlined.

\* Denotes Action Items

Attendees: Larry Beeler, Damarys Mortenson, Paul Vondra, Lya Williams, Laurel Foreman, Scott Eischeid, Clint Miller, Lori Schnoor, Rubyana Neely, Dean Gronemeyer, Adam Stiegelmeier, Michelle Williams, Laura Greiner, Rob Lawson, Trish Mootz, and Alan Lauver. Julie Falcon via conference call.

**SEPM Reports** (included)

**Area Civil Rights Reports** (included)

**CRAC Business Plan** (lead by Trish Mootz)

The CRAC members discussed the draft business plan.

\*Trish will make updates and provide final plan to Rich Sims for approval.

**High School Outreach/Recruitment Plan** (lead by Lya Williams)

Tool to use for outreach to students, step process

Rough draft – out for review

\*Lya will send out to committee. (see attachment)

**FY2012 Diversity Day** (lead by Laurel Foreman)

Laurel gave update on the upcoming Diversity Day. It's scheduled for March 27, 2012, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM. Two speakers are lined up. Subcommittee will continue to work on conference call logistics.

**Update on Outreach efforts to Women/Absentee Landowners** (lead by Lori Schnoor)

Subcommittee looking into other ways to complete outreach

**Quarterly Outreach Report streamlining** (lead by Trish Mootz)

The CRAC members discussed the need to avoid reporting twice for outreach and Civil Rights activities.

New this fiscal year, NRCS has combined two reports into one.

\*Trish will check on the difference between outreach and Civil Rights.

\*Damarys will send out the Civil Rights spreadsheet that is being used by offices in Area 1 to report their CR activities; other Area Reps can use if they see fit.

## **Other Business**

### **Civil Rights Compliance Review Guide** (lead by Lya Williams)

\*Lya will send out the revised guide to the committee. (see attachment)

\*Area Reps get feedback/suggestions from your AMA and ASTC(FO) on the guide before our next scheduled meeting (May 3, 2012). Comments are to be sent to Trish.

### **Student Locations** (lead by Trish Mootz)

Iowa NRCS received 140 applications for student intern program. 8 new interns will be hired this summer. (6 soil conservationists and 2 foresters) Seven students will be returning from last year. A 1.5 day tour will be held in SW Iowa for our interns.

The FY2012 meeting schedule for the Civil Rights Advisory Committee will be the first Thursday of the second month of each quarter. The next meeting will be May 3, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

*Rob Lawson*

## **Special Emphasis Program *Accomplishment Report***

### **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Program**

*Quarterly Report  
December 30, 2011*

1. **Communications**-Sent informative emails to all Iowa NRCS employees on Coming- Out Day October 2011. Also had article on President Obama's commitment to the GLBT community submitted to Iowa's "Crossroads of Diversity" October, 2011. Also established a GLBT Share Point site on Iowa NRCSs webpage.
2. **Working with Leadership**-No action yet (January presentation to Leadership Team is planned as well as lead in Iowa's Diversity Day in March)
3. **Recruitment and Outreach**-400 word article on USAJOBS sent to AccessLine, Iowa's largest GLBT newspaper in August 2011.
4. **In-reach** –Working with National GLBT Program to amend PAW performance element to include sexual orientation and gender identity.
5. **Projects**-No action yet (Diversity Day planned for March 2012)
6. **Youth Activities**-No action yet
7. **Special Emphasis Month(s)**-No action yet (Plan weekly informative emails to Iowa NRCS employees plus training/education opportunities).
8. **Training**-No action yet (Leadership Team to have GLBT training in January. Civil Rights compliance reviews planned for 2012)

Submitted by Laurel Foreman, GLBT Program Manager

Des Moines, Iowa

December 2011

## **Disability/Veterans Program Manager Update**

**FY2012 1st Quarter (Oct-Dec)**

**Iowa NRCS CRAC Meeting – February 2, 2012**

I sent all Iowa NRCS & partner employees National Disability Employment Awareness Month Weekly Updates via email. The 4 part series addressed topics related to Disability Awareness Month throughout October 2011. Topics included Iowans with Disabilities: 2011 Fact Sheet, The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities, Disability Awareness "Quick Quiz", Myths and Facts about People with Disabilities.

I recruited at the Federal Recruiting Event for People and Veterans with Disabilities on October 17, 2011 with Trish Mootz.

I forwarded all Iowa NRCS job vacancies to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS).

I sent all Iowa NRCS employees Veterans Day 2011 information via email.

**Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager**  
**FY 2012 Quarterly Accomplishment Report**

**Quarter 1:** October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011

**State:** Iowa

**Submitted by:** Paul Vondra-HEPM

**Date:** January 9, 2012

---

The information you provide is critical to monitor and maintain an effective Hispanic Program. The information is also utilized to complete NRCS' annual MD-715 EEO Program Status Report, FEORP, and other national reports. *(Please refer to page 2 for the quarterly report component explanation and examples.)*

**1. Barriers or Potential Barriers**

**2. Recruitment**

- **October 25, 2011:** Hosted an NRCS booth at the Waterloo West High School Career Fair . Four hundred fifty 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders rotated through the career fair asking potential employers what we do and what the requirements are for getting into this field of work. Approximately 20% of the students were of minority groups; 15% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. We talked to about 25 students.
- **October 28-29, 2011:** Attended Iowa Latino Conference Muscatine, Iowa and had a table at their Career Fair. Talked with a number of Hispanic Students about careers. Made contacts with University of Iowa Center for Diversity and Enrichment, Iowa State University, Luther College, Northwest Iowa Community College, and Hola America, a English/Spanish newspaper. On display were brochures of NRCS what we do and who we are, NRCS careers, and Notice to Hispanic and/or Women Farmers and Ranchers Claim notice.
- Currently our state is recruiting for 6 student trainee soil conservationist and 2 student forestry trainees.

**3. Career Development**

**4. Promotions**

## **5. Community Outreach**

- **October 27, 2011:** Submitted article for Crossroad to Diversity, a joint state-wide newsletter provided to and by USDA--FSA, NRCS, and RD employees.

## **6. Communications**

- **October 3, 2011:** Provided Spanish translation to Public Affairs Specialist; a NEWS RELEASE "USDA Claims Process Still Available For Hispanic or Women Farmers".
- **November 9, 2011:** Completed translation into Spanish the Step-by-step sign-up brochure with the Spanish translation team.

## **7. Collaborating with NRCS Leadership**

## **8. Youth Activities**

## **9. Hispanic Heritage Month**

- **Oct. 7, 2011:** emailed statewide presentation on Hispanic Heritage Month.
- **October 20, 2011:** emailed statewide news about West Liberty, IA as the first Hispanic Majority town. (NPR-News.)

## **10. Other Assigned Projects and Duties**

AIAN EPM FY2012 Q1 Report  
Submitted by Clint Miller

November was AIAN Heritage Month. I sent 4 emails statewide, and received both positive and negative feedback. All NRCS offices should have received and displayed AIAN Heritage Month Poster.

I assisted the BEPM and HR with recruiting at ISU Ag Career Fair 10/18/11. There were several other USDA agencies recruiting also.

I forwarded all NRCS job announcements to the National AIAN SEPM for wider distribution.

Iowa Federal Women's Program

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report FY2012 (October-December)

Lori Schnoor, FWP Manager

- September – Attended a Women's Networking Conference. Met several attendees and discussed NRCS. Received two student's information and forwarded them student internship information.
- Worked with Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN) to set up a women landowner meeting and tour. 20 women attended to discuss conservation on their land and to identify barriers.

## Area 1 Civil Rights Report for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter FY 12

The following individuals have retired from Area 1 since October 1, 2011: Sheila Cox, Jeff Kestel, Jay Ford, Renae Braun, Keith Edwards, Greg Jahn, Deb Vonnahme. These retirements will create employment opportunities as positions are filled.

Several Offices reported activities involving the distribution of Women and Hispanic Landowners Claims Process poster. Offices also reported the review of the NRCS Civil Rights policies with the office staff and SWCD commissioners.

Outreach Activities include:

The Carroll DC assisting with recruiting at the ISU Fall Career Fair.

Rock Rapids. Lyon County Farm Bill Landowner Workshops - Dec 7th Inwood, Dec 8th Larchwood, Dec 15th George, Dec 16th Rock Rapids. Buffers and filter strips, CSP, EQIP, WHIP, CRP. PF/SWCD/NRCS sponsors.

Cherokee. Field Staff spoke at an ISU Extension workshop on high tunnel systems. 25 people were in attendance - equal number of male & female

Sergeant Bluff office staff led 14 Briar Cliff University Environmental Studies' students (7 female) on a tour of conservation practices and principles in rural Woodbury County. This is an annual event. They also worked with the City of Sioux City on prairie planting at the water treatment plant. The city called after a presentation made to the local garden club

Denison Field Office held mock interviews with 5 FFA students, one Hispanic. Students are interested in a career in agriculture. Assisting 8 female landowners with EQIP applications. Two had read the EQIP newspaper article.

Sibley Field Office. Radio spots promoting SAFE program were done on local radio station. Two contacts have results from promotion to date.

Orange City. Nelva Huitink spoke to 22 college students about conservation and NRCS programs.

Other offices reported the distribution of news articles, annual reports and classroom education activities. Also several offices reported providing assistance to female landowners and developing various program contracts with female landowners.

## Civil Rights Report for Area 2 NRCS

1st Quarter 2012

Submitted by Rubyana Neely

### Recruitment and retention:

### Employee Development:

Monthly civil rights topics were written by Clarion, Fort Dodge, and Garner FO.

### Field Office Reports:

The Polk and Jasper offices hosted a Women, Food & Agriculture Network workshop on September 21 at Chichaqua Bottoms. Ten women landowners attended the meeting that included discussion and information on NRCS programs and a tour of conservation practices in the field.

Women's Conservation Luncheons were held in Butler County on 7-11-2011 with 10 women guests in attendance and in Franklin County on 9-14-11 with 24 women guests in attendance. The focus of the morning program was to compare and contrast commonly used backyard conservation practices with large field scale conservation practices. ISU Extension presented information on mulching and rain gardens which were compared to information on conservation tillage/no-till and wetland restoration presented by Max Blodgett - NRCS Soil Conservationist. After the lunch, the groups were treated to a tour of an outstanding local garden.

All other counties in area have negative reports.

## A3 First Quarter Civil Rights Report F.Y. 12

Submitted by Julie Falcon

Recruitment and retention: Nothing new to report

Promotions/Minority Advancement: Nothing new to report

Employment Development: Nothing new to report

Area Office Report: Nothing new to report

**Anamosa-** Participated in Women landowner meeting held in conjunction with Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties. There were at least 22 women present with four from Jones Co. Approx. thirty women were invited from Jones County.

**Decorah-** The Winneshiek SWCD held its annual VIP meeting 12/8/11 with over 30 people in attendance. NRCS gave a presentation on USDA programs highlighting accomplishments to the group of local units of government, local leaders and friends of the conservation effort.

**Charles City-** Assisted a female with an EQIP applicant. Assisted 2 beginning farmers with CSP and EQIP contract applications.

**Independence-** Sent out letters to landowner in Buffalo Creek Watershed resulting in 3 applications from female landowners for EQIP 2012 and 1 application from female landowner for CSP 2012.

**Manchester-** Women landowner meeting held in conjunction with Dubuque, Jones, and Jackson counties. The morning meeting was for questions and answers. The afternoon bus tour showcased conservation practices and answered any of their questions. There were over 22 ladies present with three from Delaware Co. Over fifty women were invited from Delaware County. Four female landowners were interested in the EQIP sign up. An additional five were contacted in regards to applying conservation practices. Three ladies were assisted with practice application through the EQIP. Four female landowners were assisted with CSP certification and payment. Four female producers were assisted with information for the CRP.

**Maquoketa- Sent** out News Release on WHIP 2012 and Forestry cost share to Jackson Co. papers, and Jones will use Forestry article as well. The staff worked with female landowner to help resolve erosion concern resulting in an EQIP application. Presented information about NRCS forestry services and cost share opportunities to local landowners and Maquoketa Isaac Walton League members. 18 people were in attendance including 3 women.

**New Hampton-** Mailed out to 50 cattle producers letter regarding EQIP funds for ag waste structures.

**Toledo-** Assisted 5 female landowners with EQIP applications.

**Vinton-** Technical and financial information was sent to 45 acreage owners (non-farm) concerning the repair of windbreaks damaged in this past summer's wind storm. Received 7 windbreak repair applications eligible for state disaster funds and 2 applications were from female landowners.

**Waterloo-** Ridgeway spoke at Career day at West High School with to 60-70 students and distributed NRCS career information. Falcon spoke at Career day at East High School with 100-125 students and distributed Careers in Conservation pamphlets.

**Waverly-** Posters were hung and discussion occurred for Hispanic & Disability Awareness months. Assisted 10 female landowners with State cost share applications for windbreaks.

**West Union-** Sent letter out to grazing producer invite them on a 1-1 site visit with Grazing specialist. Met with 5 producers; 2 female producers. Four signed EQIP applications. 140 Newsletters sent out to producers within the Nutting Creek watershed to promote various conservation programs resulting in 2 new EQIP applications.

**Waukon-** Conducted county wide effort to inform landowners of federal and state conservation programs. Over 150 contacts were made resulting in 62 new applications including 4 from beginning farmers and one physically disabled producer.

# Area 4 Civil Rights Report – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2012

## Recruitment and retention:

Nothing to report

## Employee Development:

### Area Office/Field Office Reports:

**Greenfield F.O.** – Phil Patterson, Environmental Specialist, and Alan Lange, District Conservationist, met with the Nodaway Valley High School Science Class and talked about conservation issues in Adair County and careers in NRCS. Two females were in the class.

Ruth Holan, State Technician, Nancy Antisdell, District Employee, and Linda Dickerson, State Secretary, decorated a Christmas tree for the Adair County Memorial Hospital Auxiliary's Tour of Trees. The tree was decorated with a conservation theme using handmade ornaments featuring different conservation practices, personalized ornaments with staff and commissioners' names, and Thank You Farmers ornaments. The star crowning the top of the tree read, "The best gift you can give is preserving the topsoil for future generations". Over 500 people attended the fund raiser on Saturday, December 3. Besides the open house, an evening meal catered by the Bridgewater Fire Department, was served to approximately 75 persons including women and several new Asian Pacific doctors and hospital staff that may never have been exposed to conservation practices and USDA programs.

The field office received two free-standing display racks and the DC chose brochures and pamphlets of broad interest to the public. A schedule has been prepared for each town in Adair County and an Earth Team Volunteer sets up the displays and rotates the location every two weeks. The Notice for Compensation for Claims of Discrimination to Hispanic and/or Women Farmers and Ranchers has been displayed in the racks. We have hopes the public will become more aware of our office and the services we have to offer.

**Osceola F.O.** – Assisted an API landowner who is hand harvesting local ecotype seed for their CRP CP-25 planting. Osceola staff also assisted an Amish landowner with a contour bufferstrip layout along with other technical assistance. They also submitted articles for "The Notice for Compensation for Claims of Discrimination to Hispanic and/or Women Farmers and Ranchers".

**Logan F.O.** – Outreach done by direct mailing to invite 75 female producers to the Women, Land & Legacy Level 2 meeting in Harlan along with a news release to area papers and Farm Bureau. Meeting had 48 in attendance with 8 female and 2 male from Harrison County.

**Harlan F.O.** - Women, Land, & Legacy Level 2 meeting held at McKee Community Room with 48 people participating on November 28, 2011.

**Leon F.O.** – The office distributed fliers regarding "The Notice for Compensation for Claims of Discrimination to Hispanic and/or Women Farmers and Ranchers" throughout the county.

Quarterly Meeting  
FEB 2, 2012

OCT/NOV/DEC

## **Area 5 CRAC Report, Lya S. Williams**

Recruitment and retention

Calendar of event

Promotions in the Area pertaining to minority advancement

New things in the employee development area

### **Cedar & Muscatine Counties (MU)**

Cedar County: Two high school kids volunteered and 1 will be volunteering this spring. It could lead to summer employment.

Muscatine: 2 college students from Muscatine Community County, one from Ghana and the other from Cameroon, will start in late March.

The Cedar/Muscatine Management Unit had a booth at the Muscatine Community College career fair in October and discussed government employment and volunteer opportunities with a diverse group of students.

DC assisted the Hispanic Program Coordinator at the Iowa Latino Conference by discussing employment with NRCS and volunteer opportunities

### **Williamsburg, IA**

November 16, 2011 the Iowa County Women, Land and Legacy (WLL) committee (11) met in Williamsburg to evaluate 8/24/11 Listening session and plan follow up programs. December 14, 2011 the Iowa County Women, Land and Legacy committee (8) met to plan a WLL Information meeting on Estate planning for women landowners. Scheduled for 1/10/2012.

### **Oskaloosa, IA**

Female Soil Conservationist has accepted a transfer to the Winterset Field Office to take place this spring.

### **Davis & Wapello Counties (MU)**

December – Wapello SWCD voted to extend female employee appointment as a part time district employee

December – Davis SWCD voted to hire a female college student as part time district employee DC worked with new female federal technician on an 18 month “new employee training plan”

DC worked with female district employee in Davis County for career development. Informed her of technical experience needed to obtain a higher GS rating.

### **Ottumwa Engineering Office – Civil Rights Representative (LSW-A5)**

The Iowa Chapter of National Organization of Black Professional NRCS Employees will promote careers in Agriculture on Education Day on January 28, 2012 at I’ll Make Me World in Iowa (IMMAWII). IMMAWII is an annual African American Celebration held in Des Moines, Iowa

BROCHURE completed called “WOMEN OF NRCS Sharing their Stories Growing Careers”. It featured women working for NRCS in Iowa. The brochure discussed their career path and what was the key to their success. It is available for download on Iowa’s NRCS Homepage. Hard Copies were sent to all field offices

Calendar of Events:

KTVO News of Kirksville interview of myself for African Americans making a difference in the Heartland of Iowa – air on Feb 7, 2012 as a part of Black History Month Ottumwa High School Presentation to encourage students in the career of Agriculture – February 8, 2012

**Submitted by**

**Lya S. Williams, Area 5 Representative**