

LOUISIANA STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

NRCS CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

NOVEMBER 28, 2012

RECORD OF AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m., and welcomed the meeting participants. (See attendance list attached.) Edwards reviewed the agenda and commented on the highlights of items to be discussed.

Edwards stated Kevin Norton, NRCS State Conservationist, is in Washington, D.C., working on the Senate Ag Committee for a short thirty day detail. Britt Paul will be the Acting State Conservationist while Norton is out.

Leslie Michael was Acting Area Conservationist in Area I and is now the permanent Area Conservationist. Area Conservationists have had a title change to Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (ASTC/FO).

Steve Cruse is now Assistance State Conservationist for Programs.

Chief White announced his retirement effective December 3, 2012. Jason Wellar, Chief of Staff, will be Acting Chief until a new Chief is appointed.

Marlin Jordan will be retiring on January 3, 2013.

The last committee meeting minutes were handed out for review. The minutes were accepted. All LASTC meeting minutes are being posted on the Louisiana NRCS Technical Committee website.

◆ **FARM BILL UPDATE**

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, gave on the Farm Bill and current status of the Louisiana0 Programs.

On September 22, a continuing resolution passed Congress that will fund the federal government through March 27, 2013, which is a limitation of funds for the Farm Bill Programs. Conservation will continue to be delivered on the ground with a few changes to the existing programs because of the expiration of the existing Farm Bill.

◆ **NRCS PAYMENT SCHEDULES/COST LIST**

Johanna Pate, NRCS State Rangeland Management Specialist, stated that last year NRCS went to a regional cost list. Louisiana is in the Delta Region which consists of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. All practices are listed and have a payment rate in the cost list. Pate discussed cost scenarios. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/.](http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/))

◆ **ON-FARM ENERGY INITIATIVE**

Mary Gilford, NRCS State Conservation Engineer, discussed the On-Farm Energy Initiative offers assistance to producers in the planning and implementation of energy conservation. It enables the producers to identify ways to conserve energy on the farm through an Agricultural Energy Management Plan. A Farm Energy audit is a valuable tool that helps producers understand how energy is used on their farm. It provides guidance that can help producers prioritize action and plan equipment upgrades that improve energy efficiency.

◆ **PROGRAMS UPDATE**

Steve Cruse, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, reported on FY 2012 EQIP Update that 1100 applications for 185,000 acres was obligated for \$223,280,71. For FY 2012 WHIP 28 contracts for 3400 acres was obligated for \$800,000. For FY 2012 CSP 259 contracts for 250,000 acres was obligated for \$5,000,000. For FY 2012 WRP 47 easements closed for 22,917 acres. There was 55 signed agreements for easements for 19,426 acres. There was 33 restoration contracts completed for 17,000 acres. The eligible applications was 132 for 23,000 acres. The program is not moving forward on any application until the Farm Bill is passed. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/.](http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/))

◆ **ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI COTTONWOOD WRP MEMO**

Steve Cruse, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, discussed an agreement between the NRCS leadership in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi regarding the planting of Eastern Cottonwood trees on WRP easements. To ensure technical recommendations and WRP program policies are being delivered consistently in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, the

State Conservationists of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi facilitated a multi-state review of the tree and shrub establishment practices and program opportunities in the region. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/.](http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/))

◆ **DEVELOPING A NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY THROUGH STAKEHOLDER**

Jan Boydston, LDEP Environmental Scientist Senior, discussed Developing a Nutrient Management Strategy for Louisiana. The Mississippi Atchafalaya River Basin (MARB) drains approximately 41% of the contiguous United States. US Geological Survey (USGS) models show the majority of MARB nutrient loadings come from sources upstream of Louisiana and a significant portion is associated with non point sources (such as agricultural and urban runoff). Seasonal fluxes of increased nutrients associated with runoff impact local water bodies are a factor in development of a summer hypoxia zone in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Management of nitrogen and phosphorus is needed to improve the quality of local water bodies and to help reduce the size of the Gulf of Mexico hypoxia zone. Management must include collaborative action for both non point sources and for regulated point source discharges.

Louisiana's Nutrient Management Strategy formed a core team of: CPRA, LDAF, LDEQ, and LDNR. They developed a Louisiana framework based guidance from task force, Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) and EPA framework elements. ([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/.](http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/LASTC/))

◆ **GENERAL TOPICS AND CLOSING COMMENTS**

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, reminded members about membership in the State Technical Committee are free if members know someone who would like to participate in the committee.

Members were asked if they were agreeable to the new four meeting a year. A spring meeting in Lafayette, a winter meeting in Alexandria and two teleconferences.

The group agreed.

◆ **NEXT MEETING DATE**

No specific meeting date was set. Members will be notified when the date is scheduled. 12:25 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned

LOUISIANA STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

NRCS CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

NOVEMBER 28, 2012

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Scott Edwards, USDA-NRCS
Johanna Pate, USDA-NRCS
Steve Cruse, USDA-NRCS
Mari Gilford, USDA-NRCS
Mike Cooley, USDA-NRCS
Marlin Jordan, USDA-NRCS
Mike Kennedy, USDA-NRCS
Charles Guillory, USDA-NRCS
Steve Cruse, USDA-NRCS
Jerry Urserly, USDA-FSA
Larry Allain, USGS
Michael Schooler, LDAF/OSWC
Andy Dolan, USFWS
Steve DeMaso, GCJV/USFWS
Jan Boydstun, LDEQ
Gwen Berthelot, LDEQ
Cody Cedotal, LDWF
Marty Floyd, LWF
Alicia Wiseman, DU
Doug Daigle, LA Hypoxia Working Group
Jeff Durand, LRGA
Dwight Landreneau, LSU AgCenter
Carrie Castille, LDAF
Clifton Vining III, GLCI
Paul Davidson, BBCC
Ronnie Ulmer, TNC