

LOUISIANA STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
USGS WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

APRIL 10, 2013

RECORD OF AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m., and welcomed the meeting participants. (See attendance list attached.)

Dr. Phillip Turnipseed, USGS, welcomed the group to the USGS Wetlands Research Center.

W. Britt Paul, Acting NRCS State Conservationist, for the next sixty days stated Kevin Norton, NRCS State Conservationist, is in Washington, D.C., working on the Senate Ag Committee on a detail. Steve Cruse was Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (ASTC/FO) is now Assistance Conservationist for Programs. Due to the budget, Louisiana was realigned to two Areas for the remainder of the fiscal year. Leslie Michael is Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (ASTC/FO) in Area I and Randolph Joseph is Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (ASTC/FO) in Area II.

Edwards reviewed the agenda and commented on the highlights of items to be discussed.

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.

◆ **LOCALLY LED-PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERNS**

Scott Edwards, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, commented on the locally led process.

Each parish holds one or more public forum locally led meetings. Public forums may also include producer meetings/field days or any other opportunity to gather local input on local resource concerns. Local resource concerns that are identified at these meetings are documented by the District Conservationist and entered into a state database.

Following the public meetings, a list of all identified resource concerns within each Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is presented to the parish Local Work Group (LWG) for collaboration. After hearing the recommendations and comments of the LWG, the SWCD Board prioritizes the local resource concerns identified within the district.

The complete list of all resource concerns and the report of statewide SWCD prioritization is then presented to the State Technical Committee (STC) for state prioritization. Each represented group of the STC votes for the priority resources concerns for Louisiana. Below are the voting results:

2014 Locally Led Conservation Initiative List of Resource Concerns	LASTC Vote
Soil – Soil Erosion – Sheet, rill and wind	43
Water – Insufficient Water – Inefficient use of irrigation water	42
Soil – Soil Erosion – Concentrated flow erosion	39
Water – Water Quality Degradation – Excessive sediment in surface waters	39
Plant – Degraded Plant Condition – Undesirable plant productivity and health	36
Plant – Degraded Plant Condition – Excessive plant pest pressure	33
Animal – Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate feed ad forage	33
Animal – Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife – Habitat degradation	30
Water – Excess Water – Ponding, flooding, seasonal high water table, seeps, and drifted snow	24
Water – Water Quality Degradation – Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters	21
Soil – Soil Quality Degradation – Organic matter depletion	19

Animal – Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate livestock water 16

Soil – Soil Erosion – Excessive bank erosion from streams shorelines or water conveyance channels 16

These results will be posted on the NRCS state web site at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/technical/stc/>

◆ **PROGRAMS UPDATE**

Steve Cruse, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, reported on funding levels for all farm bill programs including special initiatives SPCC, GoMI, NWQI, MRBI and Working Lands for Wildlife.

FY 2013 EQIP, 339 contracts were written for 45,638 acres which obligated \$6,936,383.00.

FY 2013 CSP and WRP allocations as of this date have not been received from National Headquarters.

◆ **USFWS MAPS OF ESA LISTED AND CANDIDATES SPECIES**

Andy Dolan, USFWS State Private lands Coordinator, stated the USFWS has recently completed shapefiles on aerial imagery for the Endangered Species Act (Federally) listed species and candidate species found in the NRCS Section 7 Programmatic Consultation. These maps show areas known to be important as habitat for these species. The USFWS had previously provided similar maps for a listed species (LA black bear) and these maps became important for planning and implementing a science-based protocol to aid in recovery efforts using Farm Bill Conservation Programs. These new maps will allow NRCS planners to use updated information for more comprehensive and effective planning for the remaining listed and candidate species.

([Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/technical/stc/)
[http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/technical/stc/.](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/technical/stc/))

◆ **TRI STATE WRP RESTORATION DECISION MEMO**

Steve Cruse, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, commented on the tri state decision memo for the Wetland Reserve Program. This memo was developed to address changes in the recently revised 612

Tree and Shrub Establishment Conservation Practice Standard. The purpose of this document is to record the agreement between the NRCS leadership in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi regarding the planting of Eastern Cottonwood trees on Wetlands Reserve Program Easements.

◆ **PARTNER UPDATES OF NEW ACTIVITIES**

Jerry Ursery, FSA, had a meeting conflict and submitted the following on CRP: CRP General Sign-Up 45 is May 20 through June 14, 2013. Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during this sign-up. CRP participants with contracts expiring on September 30, 2013, may submit offers. In addition, producers at any time, when authorized (no deadlines announced), can participate in CRP continuous sign-up, in which producers can enroll the most environmental sensitive land.

Doug Daigle, LA Hypoxia Working Group, stated that BP Funds need to be directed to reduce nutrient loading to the dead zone of the Gulf of Mexico. Daigle asked members to remember this when they are called upon for guidance.

Ernest Girouard, LA Master Farmer Program LSU AgCenter, the Master Farmer Program helps agriculture producers address environmental issues due to production of agriculture. This is a certification program that has certified 33 farmers last year. In addition to Master Farmer, LSU AgCenter is working on a program with NRCS and Ducks Unlimited on Irrigation Efficiency Evaluation Project.

Dwight Landreneau, Associate Vice-Chancellor LSU AgCenter, reported Dr. Paul Coreil Director LSU AgCenter, retired last month and today is Landreneau's last day before retirement. Dr. Rogers Leonard will be the STC representative.

Alicia Wiseman, Ducks Unlimited, reported on the Rice Stewardship Program. DU entered into a Field to Market Group which is an alliance to sustainable in agriculture. National Ducks Unlimited has formed a partnership with USA Rice Federation.

Chris Coreil, NRCS Agronomist, reported on Field to Market – The Keystone Alliance Fieldprint Calculator Beta Testing Opportunity. This tool is to help producers analyze how their decisions relate to sustainability.

Dr. Phil Turnipseed, Director USGS Wetlands Research Center, has plans to obtain services of a Quest Kodiak airplane from FWS which is a single engine turbo prop that has volume in the fuselage for LIDAR, hyper spectral scanner,

and synthetic aperture radar for remote sensing analysis. The Wetlands Research Center is doing a post Sandy impact science impact study with the National Wetlands Research Center going until 2016. The Center is meeting with ULL to build an annex which would double the space of the Center with a 300 person conference center.

Luke Lewis, Regional Biologist NWTF, reported on NWTF activities in Louisiana:

- NWTF is working with the LA NRCS DC's to deliver 22 Longleaf site visits and management plans for private landowners in LA during 2013-14. The grant also allows for NRCS support and delivery of two landowner field days during this period.
- May 23, 2013, NWTF will be working with NRCS, USFS, and many state and federal agencies and NGO's to host a Longleaf Landowner Field Day on the Kisatchie Ranger District in Natchitoches Parish.
- Initial plans for hosting a Longleaf Academy for professional foresters and wildlife biologist are planned for September 16 -19, 2013, near Woodworth, LA. NWTF will be working closely with all state and federal partners to provide this professional meeting.
- NWTF in LA is working with the TNC/National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant in west central LA to deliver site visits and management plans for 25 landowners in 6 parishes during the next 2 years. This is in addition to the NRCS Longleaf Initiative with NWTF.
- NWTF is also working with NRCS DC's in LA under the NRCS TSP authority to deliver CAP 142 Wildlife plans to landowner in LA. Approximately 10 CAP 142 Wildlife plans are scheduled to be requested to the state conservationist for approval during the next 4-5 months. Two CAP 142 plans under EQIP have currently been approved for completion with the NWTF biologist for FY 2013.

[\(Copy of this presentation can be viewed at LASTC Web Site
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/technical/stc/.\)](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/la/technical/stc/)

Michael Schooler, LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Soil and Water, reported on PL-319 Watershed Projects. There are eight active projects, three which in cooperation with the National Water Quality Initiative.

Charles Guillory, NRCS State Soil Scientist, reported on Soil Health/Soil Quality a nationwide initiative. Soil health is the ability of soil to produce food and fiber and help the environment. Organic matter content will increase infiltration rate and reduce surface runoff of the soil improving soil quality. Practices to improve soil are diverse cover crops, legumes, and cereal crops, and conservation tillage practices. A rainfall simulator trailer tool is being built to help NRCS demonstrate these practices. The rainfall simulator is a mobile

unit that has an oscillating rain head that has 6 trays that can have different conversation practices with up to six percent slopes that catch the runoff and water infiltration of the soil. With soil reorganization, the Opelousas Soil Survey Office closed and NRCS filled two resource soil scientists' positions. Mitchell Mouton in Opelousas and Joel Bolin in Ruston provide technical soil services to our clients and internal and external.

Terry Clason, NRCS Forester, reported on cover crops. Clason had great success working with the tillage radish which increases organic matter to improve soil and water quality.

◆ **GENERAL TOPICS AND CLOSING COMMENTS**

W. Britt Paul, Acting NRCS State Conservationist, stated NRCS appreciates the partnerships with every entity. Members were encouraged for feedback to get the best conservation system on the ground in Louisiana.

◆ **NEXT MEETING DATE**

No specific meeting date was set. Members will be notified when the date of the teleconference is scheduled in May.

11:50 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned

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LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

APRIL 10, 2013

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Scott Edwards, USDA-NRCS
Britt Paul, USDA-NRCS
Steve Cruse, USDA-NRCS
Mari Gilford, USDA-NRCS
Randy Cheveallier, USDA-NRCS
Chris Coreil, USDA-NRCS
Terry Clason, USDA-NRCS
Tim Landreneau, USDA-NRCS
Mike Kennedy, USDA-NRCS
Charles Guillory, USDA-NRCS
Tania Nanna, USDA-NRCS
Phil Turnipseed, USGS
Larry Allain, USGS
Michael Schooler, LDAF/OSWC
Joey Breaux, LDAF/OSWC
Andy Dolan, USFWS
Rob Smith, USFWS
Barry Wilson, GCJV/USFWS
Kristen Kordecki USGS/GCPLCC
Steve Brock, USFWS/LMVJV
John McCoy, USGS
Brad Lamb, USEPA
Gwen Berthelot, LDEQ
Cody Cedotal, LDWF
Marty Floyd, LWF
David Fruge, LDNR
Alicia Wiseman, DU
Doug Daigle, LA Hypoxia Working Group
Kyle Soileau, LDAF
Dwight Landreneau, LSU AgCenter
John Westra, LSU Ag Center
Ernest Girouard, LSU Ag Center/LAMFP
Clifton Vining III, GLCI
Paul Davidson, BBCC
Ronnie Ulmer, TNC
Ron Seiss, TNC
Brad Lamb, EPA
Jerry Boos, EPA
Luke Lewis, NWTF
Cynthia Edwards, CG Prairie LCC
Carrie Monroe