

Steve Bertjens report on Wildlife Subcommittee of the STC

The Wildlife Committee had a meeting on 11/07/11 and will be meeting on Dec. 15 to develop strategies for promoting (SAFE) State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement.

Susan Butler provided the Wildlife Committee the following information regarding State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) and General CRP:

Statewide SAFE acres:

12,750 ac. = current WI cap
7,405 ac. = approved contracts
8,829 ac. = in progress + approved

Southwest Grasslands SAFE acres:

5,000 ac. = current WI cap
3,174 ac. = approved contracts
3,874 ac. = in progress + approved

Central WI Grassland SAFE acres:

1,000 ac. = current WI cap
189 ac. = approved

The Wildlife Committee had questions regarding whether there was an increase in tree planting acreage versus grass in sign-up 41 due to ranking changes that provided more points for trees. Looking at three major CRP counties in the SW it appears this is a non-issue. Please note we cannot determine if acres are re-enrolled or new plantings.

Tree Planting Acreage Enrolled in Sign-up 41

Iowa County	Dane County	Lafayette Count
CP3=0	CP3=3	CP3= 0 ac
CP3a=0	CP3a=37.3 ac	CP3a=3.7 ac

Data related to current CRP in WI & snapshot of most common practice acres:

372,060 ac= total acres enrolled
139,268 ac= CP10 -grass already established
44,645 ac= CP3a -hardwood tree planting
37,301 ac= CP2 – native grasses
16,000 ac= CP25 – rare and declining habitat
33,000 ac= CP1 – introduced grasses (cool season)
21,529 ac= CP11 – trees already established
16,444 ac= CP22 – riparian buffers
8,584 ac= CP23 – wetland restoration

CREP has 42,422 out of our 100,000 acre limit enrolled.

All reports and statistics available to the public on CRP, back to the beginning (1986) are available on the FSA national website at the following link:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=rns>

FY12 EQIP and WHIP: Key Dates

- For FY 12 there will be three application periods.
 - Period 1 ends February 3, 2012
 - General EQIP, WHIP, and CCPI
 - Organic, Energy, Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives
 - Period 2 ends March 30, 2012
 - Organic, Energy, Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives
 - Period 3 ends June 1, 2012
 - Organic, Energy, Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives

New Practices for FY12 EQIP in Wisconsin

- 114-Integrated Pest Management Plan (Conservation Activity Plan)
- 130-Drainage Water Management Plan (Conservation Activity Plan)
- 311-Alley Cropping (Organic Initiative)
- 344-Residue Management, Seasonal (Organic and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives)
- 345-Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till (Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives)
- 346-Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till (Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives)
- 355-Well Water Testing (Organic Initiative)
- 374-Farmstead Energy Improvement (Energy Initiative)
- 436-Irrigation Reservoir (Energy and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives)
- 441-Irrigation System, Micro Irrigation (Organic and Seasonal High Tunnel Initiatives)
- 511-Forage Harvest Management (Organic Initiative)
- 554-Drainage Water Management
- 587-Structure for Water Control
- 643-Restoration and Management of Declining Habitat

Regional (MI, MN, WI) practices for 2012

- Fence (382)
- Brush Management (314)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Pipeline (516)
- Pest Management (595)
- Cover Crop (340)
- Watering Facility (614)
- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Heavy Use Area Protection (561)
- Shallow Water for Wildlife (646)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Forage and Biomass Planting (512)
- Irrigation System, Sprinkler (442)
- Pumping Plant (533)
- Wildlife Upland Habitat Management (645)

Conservation Reserve Program Readiness Project

CRP Training Initiative -Project Overview

A new **USDA-NRCS national training initiative** will help states meet demand for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general and continuous sign-up while maintaining the quality of CRP plans.

The Conservation Reserve Program Readiness Project will work with NRCS, FSA, and partner organizations to develop training materials and host training sessions for Technical Service Providers (TSP) and for organizations with which NRCS has Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Participants in the trainings will learn how to develop, implement, and evaluate Conservation Reserve Program inventories, plans, and documentation. Specifically, the CRP Readiness Project will:

- Develop national curriculum, including ensuring national consistency of content as appropriate and development of eco-region and state-specific content. Input and content will be provided by the National Steering Committee, NRCS State Offices, and course instructors.
- Deliver onsite trainings to support CRP readiness in high priority states. High priority states will be determined by NRCS State Offices and located to maximize the training effectiveness. Onsite trainings will be complemented with distance learning technologies to foster ongoing contact and skill-building among private sector professionals (e.g. online discussion/mentoring groups, follow-up webinars on topics of interest to NRCS, MOU organizations, and course participants).
- Develop and deliver a suite of practice-specific and conservation tool training sessions focusing on areas of CRP management. These sessions will have a unified national curriculum with opportunity for states to add training on practice standards and local/state/eco-regional concerns, policies and practices. Session subjects may include, but are not limited to, Rusle2, WEPS, WinPST, Native Pollinators, Habitat Guides, CPA-52/Resource Assessment, Invasive Species Management, Mid-Contract CRP Management and practice-standard implementation for forestry, riparian buffers, range management, wildlife enhancement.
- Transition national CRP core training and up to three selected practice-specific and conservation tool training sessions to a distance learning delivery platform that maintains critical field components.



Students learn about species management

In addition to the development and delivery of CRP trainings, the CRP Readiness Project will work with NRCS, FSA, and partners on the following policy-related products:

- A customer service delivery policy for TSPs to help ensure landowners receive consistent and courteous service.
- A plan for the development of NRCS and FSA policy and infrastructure to address needs that both agencies have related to training and contracting with qualified TSPs for CRP planning.



Conservation Professional Training Program

About Us

The Conservation Professional Training Program is a multi-state initiative designed to increase conservation practice implementation among rural landowners by increasing the knowledge, skills and professionalism of the conservation advisors they interact with. This multi-state, multi-organizational partnership guides and facilitates the development of training programs and courses that provide the skills necessary for evaluating, marketing and implementing conservation practices with landowners.

The courses within the Conservation Professional Training curriculum are developed by a team of professionals including University professors, Extension staff, conservation agency staff and stakeholders (including professionals from the audiences served by the courses). Courses are kept current to the latest accepted best management practices and are adapted across state boundaries based on differences in eco-regions, environmental concerns and state regulations.

Since 2003 the program has trained over 600 Technical Service Providers (TSP's) in the public and private sector. Conservation professionals from participating states have taken part in a wide range of traditional and emerging conservation training programs. TSP's have trained in Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning (CNMP), Conservation Planning and 595/Pest Management plans. More than 200 CNMPs were written by planners trained by the program.

Project Timeline

- Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting:
November 30/December 1, 2011
- Core Curriculum Development:
December 2011 – mid January 2012
- Pilot deployment of Core Curriculum:
Late January 2012
- Full deployment of Core:
February – March 2012
- Development of Supplemental Courses:
February – June 2012
- Deployment of Supplemental Courses:
April – August 2012
- Quality Assurance Plan Review and Mentoring:
June – September 2012
- Final Impact Evaluation and Report:
December 2012

Steering Committee

A National Steering committee will consist of project staff and NRCS (states and headquarters), Farm Service Agency (FSA), NACD, state agencies, certifying organizations with NRCS MOUs, tribal nations, and other stakeholders.

Project Evaluation

The quality assurance and evaluation for this project will include:

- Establishing baseline information on current state capacity to support CRP sign-up, including the role of TSP's in CRP.
- Developing a system of tracking participants in the program in order to determine the role TSPs play in a developing CRP contracts post-training.
- Deliver a follow-up national webinar with trained individuals that focuses on successes and common problems.
- For each participant that submits a CRP plan, plan quality and completeness will be checked on the first plan developed. One additional check may be provided if quality or completeness, as determined by a designated external reviewer, is lacking in the first plan.
- Produce a final evaluation report that will describe 1) progress made in meeting demand for CRP sign-up, 2) the role of the CRP Readiness Project in building capacity, and, 3) contextual or policy factors that are either supporting or impeding project goals.

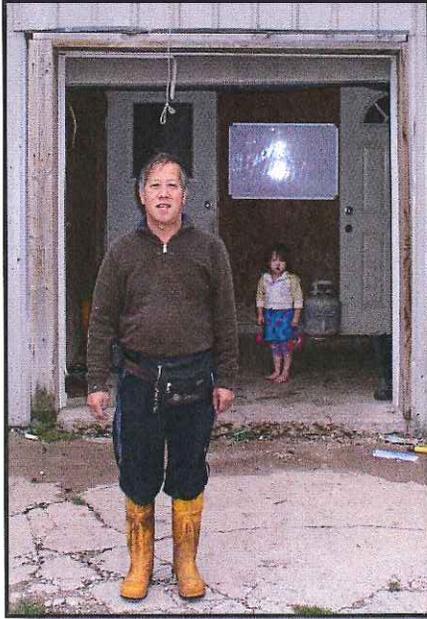
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Nhiacha Enterprise

Focusing on the watershed



Keeping the water clean

Nhiacha Yang, a Hmong farmer in the Green Bay area, wasn't quite sure what to think about getting advice from NRCS. There was some apprehension on his part about applying for government programs. John Malvitz, District Conservationist in Brown County, knew that there was a manure runoff concern on his farm given its location near a stream. One day, John stopped by to talk with Mr. Yang and explain how NRCS could help him solve some of the issues with his barnyard. Despite the language barrier, and after several visits from John, Nhiacha understood what practices would be planned to improve his barnyard, how to apply for NRCS assistance and finally, what it took to install the suggested practices.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Conservation Beyond Boundaries

NRCS is working with its conservation partners in the eight-state area to combat invasive species, protect watersheds and shorelines from non-point source pollution, and restore wetlands and other habitat areas.

Through financial assistance and technical assistance, NRCS is assisting private landowners with conservation planning and a variety of conservation practices, such as cover crops, conservation crop rotations, filter strips, prescribed grazing and wetlands restoration.

Nhiacha Enterprise is a farm located in Neshota River Watershed, an area targeted for water quality improvement through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The enterprise is primarily a butchering facility that processes chickens, hogs, beef, sheep and goats. Many of these animals are held in outdoor lots, or in the barns on the farm. The barnyard lots were in poor condition, with very little or no vegetation posing a manure management issue. The flow of water from the barn roofs were an additional problem washing manure and runoff into an intermittent stream. A survey of the site was completed and a full design of the improved barnyard was presented to Nhiacha. He applied for and was granted an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract funded through the GLRI. The practices installed included a new concrete barnyard and a reception tank built to intercept the waste runoff. Roof gutters were installed on some of the buildings to stop the rainwater from running across the barnyard.

Nhiacha was very grateful for the assistance NRCS provided to him and is impressed with the success of the project. He is working with NRCS to help others in the Hmong community learn about NRCS programs.

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SPECIAL SEMINAR



“Soil Information from NRCS
for Research, Extension,
and Teaching”

By

Jon Hempel
Director, USDA-NRCS,
National Soil Survey Ctr., Lincoln, NE

Monday, November 21, 2011

@ 11 am

Room 357 Soils Bldg.

ABSTRACT – The National Soil Survey Center (NSSC) has a long history of supporting the activities of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. The Center operates collaboratively with NRCS staff, university researchers, other NRCS Centers, and private and public partners to advance the production, integration and utilization of soil survey information within NRCS and the user community.

To support this structure, the NSSC has major data holdings, internet information, physical resources and individuals to support the understanding and use of these resources. The NSSC has five major focus areas that support this information, including the following core functions; research and laboratory support, Ecological Site Inventory Information, IT development for the NCSS mission (Web Soil Survey, NASIS) and leadership for the development of new technology (GIS, remote sensing, proximal sensing), National Soil Survey Information System (NASIS) interpretations, Soil Survey Standards (Soil Taxonomy, National Soil Survey Handbook, National Soil Survey Manual and training). Individuals from these focus areas are available to assist partners involved in research, outreach and extension and teaching.

The National Soil Survey Center also has a long history of international collaboration on many important soil science and soil survey initiatives including development (continued) of soil taxonomy, coordination of IUSS Divisions, Commissions and Working Groups and most recently facilitation of the GlobalSoilMap.net project and leadership for the North American Node.