

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee

10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 -- Telephone (518) 457-3738

STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 15, 2012

**State Office Building, Conference Room A
207 Genesee Street, Utica, NY**

Present

D. Stein, D. Brass, J. Dickinson, C. Colby - Voting Members; M. Latham, Director, B. Steinmuller, T. Clark, J. TenEyck - Div. Land & Water Resources, J. Rusnica, DAM; L. Prezorski, Dutchess SWCD, D. Tuxill - DEC; M. Stephenson, P. Wright, USDA NRCS; P. Black, B. Davis, SUNY-ESF; C. Mural - NYFB; B. Wohnsiedler, Jefferson Co. Soil & Water Conservation District.

Call to Order: D. Stein, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:15 am. Introductions were made around the room.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by D. Brass to approve the April 2012 Minutes; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Correspondence:

B. Steinmuller discussed a letter from a farm in Columbia County addressed to Laura Sager, Executive Director of the Columbia County SWCD, thanking the District for their efforts in securing the ACRF Conservation funding to repair crop fields after the floods of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. As a result of the assistance provided by the District, the farm fields are ready for planting in 2012. B. Steinmuller provided a brief status of the ACRF Conservation Program and asked the Committee if they would like to have a SWCC Meeting and ACRF tour planned for the fall.

Hydrologic Soil Group Worksheet Revisions Report – Peter Wright:

P. Wright, State Engineer with NRCS, gave the Committee a presentation on evaluating runoff predictions with new precipitation amounts, new storm distributions, and changes to the Hydrologic Soil Groups (HSG). The updates to the Hydrologic Soil Groups were done so that the data is consistent with the current criteria for determining group assignments, as defined in the National Engineering Handbook, Part 630, Chapter 7. Previously, HSG criteria were qualitative, based on interpretation of group descriptions. Currently, the criteria to define each group are quantitative based on the HSG calculation directly from soil properties in Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) data. Importantly, for some soils, the range of possible values for a property may overlap the separation between one HSG and another, meaning that a soil in one county may be in a different group than a soil of the same in another county.

Major changes to hydrologic soil group data in New York:

- **More soils in group D.** The range of depth to seasonal high water table for group D is greater than was previously used in New York, so more soils are included in this group. [Group D soils have high runoff potential. They have very low infiltration rates when thoroughly wetted and consist chiefly of clay soils with a high swelling potential, soils with a permanent high water table, soils with a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and shallow soils over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very low rate of water transmission (0 to 0.05 in/hr).]

- **More soils in dual groups.** For soils in groups A/D, B/D, or C/D, the first letter applies to the drained condition and the second applies to the undrained condition. Which single group to use may depend on the area in question. For example, on a watershed basis, group D would likely be the best choice. On the other hand, for a specific site or field, the appropriate choice of hydrologic soil group would depend on whether or not the site has been drained.

Sources for hydrologic soil group data:

- Soil Data Mart and SSURGO database o 'RUSLE2 Related Attributes' report
- Web Soil Survey and Soil Data Viewer o Soil Properties and Qualities tab / Soil Qualities and Features

Reference: National Engineering Handbook, Part 630 Hydrology, Chapter 7 Hydrologic Soil Group. January 2009.
<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=21422>

For more information please see the presentation titled State Committee EFH2. The presentation and fact sheet was emailed to all SWCDs in NYS from Virginia Weston on May 17, 2012. If you wish to obtain a copy, please contact Virginia Weston at virginia.weston@agriculture.ny.gov. For additional details on the revised HSGs please contact:

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2012 Farm Bill Update - B. Steinmuller, M. Latham

B. Steinmuller provided a summary of the 2012 Farm Bill discussions and mark-up that left the Senate Agriculture Committee late last month. The Senate Agriculture Committee proposed Food, Farm and Jobs Bill, consolidates the Conservation Title's 23 conservation programs into 13. B. Steinmuller told the Committee that the following information was generated from a review of the Conservation Title mark-up and is subject to change and/or additional information as it becomes available.

Overall the Conservation title calls for a 10-percent cut – about six-billion dollars – over 10 years to Title II Farm Bill programs.

Repealed programs in the proposed Senate version 2012 Farm Bill include:

1. **Comprehensive Conservation Enhancement Program** – Repealed and apparently no provisions to continue funding of existing contracts and not combined with other existing or newly established programs.
2. **Emergency Forestry Conservation Program** – Funds to carry out existing program contracts will be made available through Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) funding.
3. **Wetlands Reserve Program** – This program will be combined with the newly established Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (Subtitle H). Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from the Commodities Credit Corporation.
4. **Farmland Protection Program and Farm Viability** – The Farmland Protection Program will be combined with the newly established Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (Subtitle H). The proposed bill does not appear to contain provisions to fund the Farm Viability Program.
5. **Grassland Reserve Program** – The Grassland Reserve Program will be combined with the newly established Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (Subtitle H). Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from the Commodities Credit Corporation.
6. **Agricultural Water Enhancement Program** -This program will be combined with the newly established Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Subtitle I). Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from the Commodities Credit Corporation.
7. **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program** – Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from EQIP. It appears that EQIP will have project consideration that includes wildlife habitat.

8. **Great Lakes Basin Program** – The EQIP provision H gives the Secretary authority to prioritize resource concerns of regional or national significance. It appears that the GLBP will be combined with a potential special consideration for funding through EQIP and the newly established Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Subtitle I). Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from the Commodities Credit Corporation.

9. **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program** - The EQIP Subtitle H gives the Secretary authority to prioritize resource concerns of regional or national significance. It appears that the CBWP will be combined with a potential special consideration for funding through EQIP and the newly established Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Subtitle I). Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from the Commodities Credit Corporation.

10. **Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative** - The proposed bill does not appear to contain provisions to fund the CCPI. Funding to carry out existing contracts will be made available from the Commodities Credit Corporation.

11. **Environmental Easement Program** - The Environmental Easement Program will be combined with the newly established Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (Subtitle H).

Major New Programs Established in the 2012 Proposed Bill:

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (Subtitle H).** Established for the conservation of eligible land and natural resources through easements or other interests in land. The purpose of the program is to combine the purposes and coordinate the functions of the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), the Grasslands Reserve Program, and the Farmland Protection Program.

The program is intended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, protect the agricultural use and related conservation values by limiting non-agricultural uses of that land, and protect grazing uses and related conservation values.

- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Subtitle I)** – This program will implement eligible activities through partnership agreements with eligible partners, including a State or unit of local government. \$500 million will be made available over five years for this Subtitle. The purpose is to combine and coordinate the functions of the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, and the Great Lakes Basin Program.

Subtitle I includes provisions for the Secretary to designate up to 8 Critical Conservation Areas based on multiple criteria, such as the degree to which multiple States are affected and have existing regional, State, bi-national, or multistate agreements or plans.

It is unclear what the allocation to New York State would be at this point. The Secretary will determine funding allocation based on the demand in each State, and proportional to historical funding allocations and usage by all States.

Proposed Funding for Major Programs:

Conservation Program	2008 Act	2012 Proposed Senate Bill	Difference
EQIP	\$7.325 Billion	\$8.05 Billion	\$725 Million
CRP	\$100 Million	\$25 Million	\$(75) Million

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), includes Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Funding = \$8.05 Billion over five years (FFY 2013 – 2017). EQIP proposes a 60% set-aside for livestock. This is down from 75% of the current 2008 Act.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)* = \$2.2 Billion over five years (FFY 2013-2017). This new Subtitle combines all easement programs. Under minimum terms and conditions, there is a clause that allows an entity to use its own terms and conditions. This may be important to NYS because the state FPIG Program is more protective of viable agricultural enterprises while the federal program is more protective of the agricultural land base.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program* = \$500 Million over five years (FFY 2013-2017). A provision should be added to provide for block grants to states to augment existing state conservation programs that meet the goals and complement the federal Farm Bill Programs. Provisions that defer funds to alternative multistate water resource agencies should not be supported as it would not be consistent with USDA programming and may compete with state funded programs. The Regional Equity provisions should be supported as it appears to be more progressive and a realistic view of distribution of funding.

*New proposed programs consolidating existing programs noted above.

Other Opportunities and Highlights:

Topics discussed during the Department's Farm Bill listening sessions last year included comments from conservation professionals and producers to simplify the Conservation Title. The proposed Senate bill advances these recommendations by consolidating many major conservation programs into EQIP and other newly established comprehensive program areas. Many of the consolidated programs were not overly prescribed by producers in NY and the efficiencies gained through this may simplify and streamline conservation delivery.

A cursory review of the Senate language appears to demonstrate a continued commitment to conservation with an increase of EQIP funds from the 2008 Act. EQIP is the flagship program of the Conservation Title and by far the highest prescribed and funded of all the Farm Bill Programs in NYS. Overall, the 2012 Senate version cuts Farm Bill Funding by \$23 Billion. It appears that the decrease to the Conservation Title does not represent the deepest cuts in the overall Farm Bill.

The Conservation Reserve Program (Subtitle A) strikes "filterstrips devoted to trees and shrubs" and inserting "filterstrips and riparian buffers devoted to trees, shrubs, or grasses." This wording appears to add flexibility to the implementation of conservation buffers to include herbaceous buffers as a substitute for forest buffers in eligible lands.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (Subtitle B) defines the term "Conservation Stewardship Plan." The plan aligns very closely with the NYS AEM tiered framework. If each State Conservationist is given authority to promulgate program eligibility based in part on the use of existing State programs, then AEM may be able to serve as the structure for producer participation. There should also be enhancement options applied to Highly Erodible Lands (HEL). With this option, many producers in NYS would benefit based on the topography of the State. The maximum payment of \$200,000 may be set too high and, as a result, limit the availability of funding to smaller farms, specialty crops and organic producers.

Secretary designation of Conservationist Priority Areas has been removed from the proposed title. These special provisions have been combined with consideration through EQIP and the newly established **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Subtitle I)**. This proposed Subtitle will continue to be the provision that authorizes NY NRCS to collaborate with the State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Soil and Water Conservation Committee and Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Grant Program:

STATUS OF ROUNDS 1-17

Of 629 contracts, 178 are active, and 425 are complete. 22 contracts have been cancelled during the life of the program. There are 4 Round 17 NPS projects pending. There have been 14 contracts closed out in 2012.

Staff Approved Amendments

Onondaga SWCD – Onondaga Lake WS AEM Imp Project – Round 16 – C700981

Request: change in BMP's

Reason: landowner replacing 2 acres of filter strips with 100 acres of cover crop plantings

Note: Cliff Frasier, Region 5 AEA, approved the change in BMP's

Previous amendments: none

Round 19 RFP –

Record of Recusal: B. Steinmuller asked if those District employees with the exception of the President of the NYSCDEA and farmers who may wish to apply for Round 19 leave the room in order to recuse from the discussion. B. Wohnsiedler, Jefferson County SWCD, left the meeting before Round 19 discussions commenced. All present Voting Members remained in the room as they disclosed no interest in applying for Round 19 AgNPS funding.

B. Steinmuller reviewed the timeline for the development and release of the Round 19 AgNPS RFP. He told the Committee that the RFP is scheduled for release late in August or early in September. B. Steinmuller presented a report including notes from the previously held TAC meeting on May 10th. B. Steinmuller asked for the Committee's direction and consideration of a number of TAC recommendations. Discussion ensued regarding the following recommendations:

The TAC recommends increasing the preference points for Conservation Buffers according to the following progressive graduation:

- Access Control, NRCS Standard 472 = 2 Points awarded to the aggregate proposal score (Standard Attached)
- Use Exclusion + Herbaceous Buffer, NRCS Standard 390 = 3 Points to the aggregated score (Standard Attached)*
- Use Exclusion + Forest Buffer, NRCS Standard 391 = 4 Points to the aggregated score (Standard Attached)*

For cropland conservation, all of the farms would have to propose to implement either the herbaceous or forest buffer and the proposal would be eligible to receive the points for the buffer systems installed. If all farms in the proposal committed to implement one of the practice systems for lesser points and others committed to propose the system yielding the highest points, the proposal would receive the appropriate points for the lesser practice system.

J. Dickinson moved to approve the TAC's recommendation to increase the preference points for Conservation Buffer Practice Systems according to the progressive graduation noted above; seconded by D. Brass. Motion Passed; Carried.

Consideration for Karst Topography and other sensitive areas: Discussion ensued about an idea that was raised at the last TAC meeting regarding the possibility of assigning preference points for projects that address karst and other areas prone to ground water contamination. It was noted that the tools available to document these areas are not adequate to provide the Districts and SWCC staff with enough quantifiable data to assign preference points. The assignment of preference points must be done as objectively as possible.

The Committee reached consensus to agree with the TAC recommendation to instead of preference points for projects that address critical ground water issues, recommend adding wording to the

Identified Need/Opportunity section of the Proposal Rating Sheet that focuses attention on these types of projects.

Policy of cost-sharing roofs and covers: The Committee agreed to continue support for this alternative. The TAC recommended developing a screening tool for cost-sharing covered HUAs, by Runoff Mgmt, and other systems that requires the applicant to review various planning considerations, operation and management requirements and other factors. The screening tool would be certified by the District, local office and planner if different from the District and required with applicable Round 19 applications.

D. Brass moved to approve the development of a screening tool for proposals that include the implementation of a cover or roof as a component to Heavy Use Areas, Barnyard Runoff Management, and other systems; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Cost-Share Eligibility for the Development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) or Whole Farm Plans (WFPs): Since the inception of the AEM Base Program, most planning efforts have been supported through the non-competitive aforementioned program. However, farm specific CNMPs and WFPs can be too costly to support with AEM Base Funding and the AgNPS Grants Program can still be a mechanism to fund these plans. There has been increasing identified need for plan development through AgNPS to meet federal program, TMDL, and other requirements and considerations. The TAC discussed the consideration to further incentivise comprehensive planning activities through the AgNPS Program. The TAC recommends allowing AgNPS assistance payments to be used to cost-share the costs associated with the development of a Tier 3B CNMP or Tier 3C WFP and subsequent plan update costs for two additional years.

J. Dickinson moved to approve the TAC's recommendation to allow AgNPS assistance payments to be used to cost-share the costs associated with the development of a Tier 3B CNMP or Tier 3C WFP and subsequent plan update costs for two additional years; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Approaches/Pre-Requisites for Cover Crop and Feed Management Proposals:

Agronomic Practice Systems: Cover Crop: Continued for projects approved and contracted through Round 19, Cover Crops will be eligible for cost-sharing for a three year term instead of the previous one year cost-share period to allow sufficient time to demonstrate the value of the practice to the farmer. As with all BMPs cost shared through AgNPS, the cover crop practices must be planned prior to submitting a proposal to the State Committee. The NRCS Conservation Practice Job Sheet for Cover Crop (340) should be modified as a new AEM planning tool for cover crops. Example modifications would include a declaration of the resource concerns and certification of project completion. The TAC recommended modifying the NRCS Conservation Practice Job Sheet for Cover Crop (340) for the development of an AEM planning tool to be used as the pre-requisite for proposing the implementation of cover crops.

J. Dickinson moved to approve the TAC's recommendation to modify the NRCS Conservation Practice Job Sheet for Cover Crop (340) for the development of an AEM planning tool to be used as the pre-requisite for proposing the implementation of cover crops; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Nutrient Management: Precision Feed Management: Precision Feed Management is a unique practice system that emphasizes the relationship of feed management experts and farmers to maximize yields while balancing nutrient imports and exports. This practice system has not been widely geographically utilized. However, precision feed management has been supported in defined areas and the projects have been successfully completed with a team of conservation professionals led by CCE. The vast majority of the expenses related to the practice are consultant or contractual services with a much lesser extent related to actual implementation costs. As a result of the unique combination of technical "planning" services and implementation expenses, it is recommended that the new AEM Tier 2 Management of Feed Nutrients Worksheet be utilized as the planning pre-requisite tool for each farm proposing to implement precision feed management.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of the AEM Tier 2 for Management of Feed Nutrients as a core worksheet or an optional one to assess a farm's interest in precision feed management. D. Stein asked if the Committee would

consider a motion to establish the Tier 2 for Management of Feed Nutrients as a "specialty" worksheet instead of a core assessment tool.

J. Dickinson moved to approve the TAC's recommendation to utilize the AEM Tier 2 for Management of Feed Nutrients as the planning pre-requisite tool for each farm proposing to implement precision feed management through Round 19 of AgNPS and to consider the use of the Tier 2 for Management of Feed Nutrients as a specialty worksheet rather than a core assessment tool; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

The Round 19 AgNPS RFP discussion was concluded at 11:55. B. Wohnsiedler re-entered the meeting at the conclusion of the Round 19 AgNPS agenda item.

Honoring Peter Black for his 27 years as a SWCC representative from ESF: D. Stein asked for a few moments to recognize and honor Dr. Peter Black for his 27 years of service to the SWCC and a lifetime of achievement protecting and improving natural resources in the state and world-wide. B. Steinmuller and M. Latham presented a plaque to Peter.

The plaque read: Presented by the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee to Peter E. Black – For your dedication and support of conservation efforts as an Advisory Member of the State Committee for over 27 years. You are to be commended for your lifetime commitment to conserve natural resources for today and for generations to come.

Agricultural Environmental Management Base Funding (ABF) Split for SFY 2012-2013 B. Steinmuller asked if those District employees, with the exception of the President of the NYSCDEA, and farmers who may wish to apply for Round 19 leave the room in order to recuse from the discussion since the funding for AEM Base originates from the same line item that funds the AgNPS Program. B. Wohnsiedler, Jefferson County SWCD, left the meeting before the ABF discussions commenced. All present Voting members remained in the room as they disclosed the fact that they had no interest in applying for Round 19 AgNPS funding.

AEM Base Program/Ag NPS Program EPF Funding Split – B. Steinmuller

Estimated Need for AEM Base Funding for Year 9 (2012 – 2013)

- ✓ Anticipate 52 Districts to participate
 - ✓ 13 Districts will be eligible for Enhanced funding at up to \$75,000
 - ✓ Anticipate 12 Districts to request Enhanced funding; $12 \times 75,000 = \mathbf{\$900,000}$
 - ✓ Anticipate 33 Districts to participate at \$40,000; $33 \times 40,000 = \mathbf{\$1,320,000}$
 - ✓ Anticipate 4 Districts to participate at \$30,000; $4 \times 30,000 = \mathbf{\$120,000}$
 - ✓ Anticipate 3 remaining Districts to request a total of **\$20,000**
 - ✓ Total anticipated need for year 8 = **\$2,360,000 (\$2.36 M)**
- **Request that a total of \$2,500,000 (2.5 M) be set aside for the 2012/13 AEM Base Program.**
- ✓ This request will provide for a \$140,000 cushion in case of an underestimation of District requests.
 - ✓ History has shown that we can expect at least 20% of the funds set aside for the Base Program to be returned for use in the Ag NPS Program by July of 2013.

D. Brass moved to approve the request that a total of \$2,500,000 (\$2.5 M) be set aside for the 2012-2013 AEM Base Program; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Conservation Technical Advancement Program Update – L. Prezorski

L. Prezorski provided an update on the Conservation Technical Advancement Program. Prezorski told the Committee that we are making considerable progress advancing various elements of the CTAP. Funded from the NRCS Contribution Agreement, the Department is working on finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SUNY Cobleskill to provide the college reimbursement for the review of their diverse curriculum to target skill sets for Conservation District and NRCS personnel. SUNY Cobleskill is the first college to work with the SWCC on this effort with the goal of also working with SUNY Morrisville and other Agriculture and Natural Resource focused schools.

L. Prezorski also informed the Committee that she is working with SUNY Cobleskill and partners on the first ever "Conservation Boot Camp." The event that will be held at SUNY Cobleskill is a hands-on training created for Conservation District employees with less than two years experience, or any employee wishing to gain an understanding of agricultural operations. The one-week program will be held June 25 – 29, 2012. For more information or interest, please contact Lauren Prezorski at lauren.prezorski@agriculture.ny.gov.

L. Prezorski also advised the Committee that an AEM Training is being planned for November 13 -14th, 2012 in Auburn to roll-out the new AEM Tier 2 Worksheets. Districts wishing to participate in Year 9 of the AEM Base Program will be required to attend. The training costs will be covered by the Ecosystems Based Management Program funding. For more information or interest, please contact Lauren Prezorski at lauren.prezorski@agriculture.ny.gov.

L. Prezorski noted that she is working with Mike Latham, through the National Association of Conservation Agencies (NASCA), on planning a Native Pollinators Workshop designed for policy makers in New York State. Discussion ensued about the possibility of holding a SWCC Principals Meeting dovetailing the Native Pollinators meeting. If the SWCC would like to pursue this possibility, an ACRF Conservation focused meeting and potential tour could be planned. The workshop and meeting is planned to be held in Cobleskill.

L. Prezorski noted that she is working hard to coordinate and expand our network of eligible instructors. It is important to continue expanding the partnership to include new experts and instructors to teach and train other District Personnel and to engage in the CTAP. To this end, Prezorski has developed a white paper outlining a formal District Mentoring Program that would provide financial reimbursement for qualified District personnel to mentor their peers in various skill sets to get more conservation on the ground. The program would be coordinated at the SWCC office and include targeted goals to evaluate success.

Advisory Member and Other Reports:

NYSCDEA, J. Lieberum – J. Lieberum advised the Committee of the upcoming NYS Envirothon to be held on May 23rd and 24th at Hobart William Smith College. Lieberum also told the Committee about the

Department of Health (DOH), P. Kaczmarczyk – DOH will be moving to Corning Towers in the near future.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), L. Telega – L. Telega told the Committee that CCE is strategizing on how best to organize their services to maximize boots on the ground. Telega spoke about creating regional teams that can be better coordinated with CCE's customer needs. He spoke about how increasing the number and efficiency of the boots on the ground relies on healthy county appropriations. CCE is also advocating doubling operating budgets from approximately 7% state reimbursement to approximately 14% reimbursement.

SUNY Environmental Sciences and Forestry (ESF), P. Black – P. Black thanked the group for the warm welcome back to the SWCC and for honoring his many years of service. P. Black told the group that he is working with SUNY Press on publishing a book that is a collection of essays derived from the "Water Drop" segments that he produced for the local NPR station in Syracuse. For more information please visit: <http://www.sunypress.edu/p-5618-water-drops.aspx>.

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), M. Stephenson – M. Stephenson told the group that Don Pettit is the new State Conservationist for New York. He will report to Syracuse next week.

Stephenson advised the group that after consulting with partners, the Ball Creek, Bemus Creek and Chadakoin River watersheds of Chautauqua Lake were selected for the National Water Quality Initiative. EQIP technical and financial assistance (\$39,629) will be offered during a signup that will continue through June 15. For more information please consult: ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NY/Programs/eqip/2012/ny_nwqi_fact_sheet.pdf.

NRCS's Mission Assignments with FEMA are winding down. FEMA Long Term Community Recovery officials met with NYS DOS last week, and the federal agencies assigned to FEMA (NRCS, RD, HUD, and EDA) to release the Recovery Plans for Prattsville, Greene County, Blenheim, Schoharie County, Margaretville, Delaware County and Owego, Tioga County. EWP is still in play in NY. Since NRCS started the FEMA Mission Assignment, they have seen over 410 disaster sites, completed over 180 Damage Survey Reports, and have requests that equal \$55.7 million.

NY Farm Bureau (NYFB), C. Mural – NYFB is working very hard to ensure that a new Federal Farm Bill will be approved this fall. C. Mural reiterated the importance of the Act to NYS farmers. Mural discussed many other initiatives that are making their way through state and federal legislatures, not all of them positive. She spoke about the many bills that are not politically viable but are being introduced because it is a presidential election year. FB is trying hard to communicate with its constituents on the viability and potential effects of these bills.

Ecosystems Based Management (EBM), L. Prezorski – L. Prezorski advised the Committee that an Ocean Action Plan sponsored through EBM is being developed in NYS. Prezorski also reported on the progress of the AEM Tier 2 Worksheet revisions. The worksheets that are being revised with an interagency expert panel are:

- Soil Management
- Pasture Management
- Forest Management
- Stream and Flood Plain Management
- Irrigation Water Management
- Petroleum Bulk Storage (SPCC)

New York Association of Conservation Districts (NYACD), C. Colby – C. Colby advised the Committee that the Northeast Regional NACD meeting will be held in NYS this year. The meeting will be held in Corning in August.

SWCC/L&W Director M. Latham – Sometime in June/July there will be agriculturally focused emergency management meetings that will coordinate various state agencies that have a stake in the process. Kelly Nilsson, Emergency Management Coordinator, for the Department of Agriculture and Markets is coordinating the meetings. Her email is Kelly.nilsson@agriculture.ny.gov. Latham advised the Committee that discussions with DEC on hydrofracking are beginning to happen. The Department continues to advocate for District's roles in the process.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on June 19, 2012 Location TBD (Albany area).

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

To access the audio-cast of this meeting, please visit the New York State Department of Agriculture website at: www.agriculture.ny.gov.