

Montana STAC Minutes

October 17th, 2023, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Helena, MT



Attendance:

NRCS: Kyle Tackett (Partnerships), Kelley Barkell (FA Programs), Kale Gullett (SRC), Alex Dado (State Soil Scientist), Mindy Gauthier (AC), Celie Meier (NRCS State Forester), Maddie Mason (NRCS Economist)

FSA: Maureen Wicks (State Executive Director, Les Rispens (FSA Farm Program Director), Tami Hahn

DNRC: Stacey Barta

NGPJV: Catherine Wightman

MTFWP: Heather Harris

Heart of the Rockies: Gary Burnett

Montana Association of Conservation Districts: Rebecca Boslough-King

PPJV: Josh Vest

MALT: Marcus Strange, Brian Ohs

Northern Plains RC: John Brown

WWF: Aaron Clausen

NCAT: Danielle Duni, Allison Cooley-Agee

Montana Stockgrowers Association: Ellie Brighton

MT DEQ: Steve Carpenedo

EPA: Eric Trum

Montana Association of Conservation Districts: Rebecca Boslough-King

MT Department of Ag: Ian Foley

Opening Remarks

Tom Watson, NRCS State Conservationist

Tom welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation.

Maureen Wicks, FSA State Executive Director

Maureen introduced herself and thanked attendees for showing up and looks forward to interacting with the group.

Kyle Tackett, NRCS ASTC - Partnerships

Explained purpose of the State Technical Committee. The Montana State Technical Committee (STC) serves in an advisory capacity to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) on the implementation of conservation technical and financial assistance. In Montana, the NRCS State Conservationist and the Farm Service Agency State Executive Director will co-chair the Montana STC, which is composed of representatives from Federal and State agencies, American Indian Tribes, agricultural and conservation groups, and agricultural and forestry producers.

Kelley Barkell, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Financial Assistance Programs

Kelley provided an overview of the FY 23 programs obligations and top 10 practices. Also discussed the FY24 CSAF practice list.

Maddie Mason, NRCS Economist

Maddie introduced herself and gave the group an introduction to the work she is doing. She is working on several cost/benefit "1-pagers" for conservation practices and working on forest management

economics. Maddie handed out a Woody Encroachment document that she created that looks at the forage loss and economic impact of woody encroachment. Maddie asked the group what ideas they have for integrating economics into the work we collectively do.

Kale Gullett, NRCS State Resource Conservationist

Kale gave a short presentation on staffing updates related to the Plant Material Center and Snow Survey.

Celie Meier, NRCS State Forester

Celie gave a presentation as co-chair of the forestry sub-committee on the updates being made to the Fuel Break (383) and Firebreak (394) practices. This work has been ongoing in the subcommittee and she is now seeking comments from the full committee. She will provide Kyle with materials after the meeting to email out to the full committee with a deadline for comments by October 31st.

Marcus Strange, Executive Director Montana Association of Land Trusts (MALT) and Brian Ohs (MALT) Presentation on MALT. We will highlight a different partner at each meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

Missoula, March 12th
Great Falls, July 16th

Adjourn: 1:00pm

Meeting handouts and presentations are available by emailing Kyle Tackett (kyle.tackett@usda.gov)

- Woody Encroachment in the Blackfoot Valley economic analysis
- Fuel Break/Firebreak presentation
- FY23 Programs Update presentation
- Snow Survey/Plant Materials Center Update presentation