

STAC 4TH QTR, JULY 18, 2023- MEETING MINUTES – PROGRAMS – ASTC – KATIE VAPORIS

Attendees

Jackie Byam – State Conservationist – NRCS
Katie Vaporis – NRCS
Mason Peebles – NRCS
Tracy Crow – NRCS
Judy Sambrano – NRCS
Rusty Schwartz - AC NRCS (Douglas)
Brian Jensen-NRCS
James Bauchert – NRCS
Alyssa Ludeke – NRCS
David Mosley-NRCS
Shawn Follum – NRCS
Andi Neugebauer-Bailey – NRCS
Chet Fitzgerald – AC – NRCS
Jennifer Hayward-NRCS
Chris Bove-NRCS
Tyler Therkildsen-NRCS
Ryan Clayton-NRCS
Monte Bush - NRCS
Bill Bunce - FSA
Mindy Mead-Fish and Wildlife
Anita Bartlett-JCCD
Michelle Huntington-CCCD
Dennis Sun – Wyoming Round-up
Carrie ...-SCCD
Amanda O’Keefe -WCCD
Jaime Tarver -Campbell, Crook, and Weston Co CD
Cheyenne Love – CD
David Waterstreet - DEQ
David Cart-NRD Weston Co
Alex Jeffers-DEQ Cheyenne
Kyle .. -Trout Unlimited
Cathy Rosenthal. -Lower Wind River CD
Michael Henn - SCCD
Kelsey Beck - Pop Agie CD
Muhamed ...-BOR
Lea Burgess-REF
Caleb Carter – WCNRD Dist Mgr.

Jackie Byam welcomed those online and in person to 4th Qtr Stac meeting.

State tech – revamp them, be more focused, in depth, like to meet and have results.

Focused – Programs –

- Changes for next year – October
- What accomplished prior year
- Open forum – agenda items come from all of you
- Time for partner updates
- What’s going on in partnership
- More engaging
- Quarterly – as well
- New format
- Urban ag
- Small farm – what looks like in Wyoming, if wish to be member – copy Judy
- Update – Conservation Innovation Grants – CIG classic to be announced
- August on site trial
- Thank you for taking time for this meeting.

Katie Vapors – FY23 Allocations slide – 75%, 79% at Division, Equipment Joint Chiefs

Questions – Obligation

10 million \$ in ASP – Big Game, 3 million asap – ALE – don’t have %

Think will spend 13 million dollars.

Bill Bunce FSA, ? feel for regional. Will look that up.

BREAK

Work Groups –

Division 5 - Jaime Tarver – Campbell County - April 18th meeting– good discussion, diverse county, Crook – forest. Counties – how they should be weighed – recommend partner input, prior to be finalized. Program rangeland 70%, forest 20%, cropland 10%. Resource concerns – Cheyenne – anything to add, no. Improvements – Sarah/Caleb anything to add? Email presentation.

Division 1 – Amanda O’Keefe – Washakie County, March 29th meeting– Concern – pest pressure from 13 to 7 invasive species issues. 5/6 wind water/livestock. 4 of us – cons dist – change watershed. Discussion – high tunnels, high tunnel funded through AMA – if result from meet – high tunnels food for food production. Alex/Joyce. Conservation Easements, land use plan, address land use, sub div – how to keep ag? Question Have resource concerns – how rank, 1- field settle, water depletion, 5 wind water, pest pressure 13 to 7. Invasive species, Wind and water erosion Livestock protection, 4 out of 6 priority watershed?.

Katie – Wind Break – statewide.

Division 2 – Kelsey Beck - Fremont County – water quality and quantity, livestock, fire management, source water depletions, pest pressure, urban ag, Thank you subcommittee. 70/30 split rangeland, high tunnel, irrigation – 26 ½ %, urban ag 5%, native seed – completing projects, concern native seed.

Katie question Div 2 – Partners hear of native seed unavailability?

Anita – annual is an issue, UW extension (Sheridan) looking into it/Brian ? growing/harvesting.

Katie – good to know Brian aware – we will look into how affect contracts. Local for local feed source.

Division 3 – Mike Henn – Sublette County – Rank 1 – Sources water depletion, 2 – livestock, 3 – concentrated erosion. Discussion on other general concerns. Last year practice large lethal carnivore conflict (have not heard). Payments for livestock water development low – due know adjustment, know there is that inflation. Geo fencing – get that approved practice. Have pilots within county look into under farm bill. Tools to increase ability to show benefits of head gates and diversions to rank better – This year's concerns: Getting GEO fencing approved as a practice.

Jackie question – nonlethal updates and working on payment rates – movement coming, are being added. Payment rates are being looked at by NHQ.

Katie – talk of geo fencing, not sure if being consider. Regional scenario – cost. GEO fence- we are trying to figure out how NRCS can make it work without payment schedules. (Buy towers, rent collars)? We are always evaluating fencing for Wyoming. *Planner override option in CART (head gates and diversions)

Monte – Wyo/Idaho/Colo -looking at geofencing. Supplies/shipping costs

Andi -comment – geo fence- CIG or look at/seek funding, looking at it. Buy tower – rent collars? Being looked at nationally – always reviewing scenario. Resource concerns – use plan / overwrite function. Use tool that is used cross country, encourages use at field level. ? Man – Only commercially rent available – restructure towers/network/collars. Especially big game – wildlife friendly – successful. Determine/think outside the box/work without more infrastructure.

Andi – Please share with us and we will forward on. Person will give update/running pilot.

Katie – If you see that you don't like, talk to your DC's. State Program mgr for ranking tool/ your priorities – rank and please give feedback.

Division 4 – Carrie – Individual county groups – may go back county by county. Sheridan mailed surveys – top rank – water & plants, soil conservation/soil health. Lot of funding sources, 319 grants. Agreed to max opportunities among funding sources. Recommendations – prescribed, modify for achievable goal. Ecological site – to be developed. Make landowner deliver results. Recommendations- consultant timeline, consider NRCS and land trust-get more support.

Jackie – Potential Partner – establish for 2024.

Katie – ASAP timeline – Resource Tech. Katie reiterates Jackie with ASAP ALE for 2024. Timeline all programs, create internal committee, when receive guidance/post.

Katie plan to get publish sooner – try to move sign up to fiscal year, specific date – if make it easier for landowners to make all aware.

Division 4 – Anita Bartlett – Johnson County – Carrie (Sheridan County) specific - #1 spraying invasives in the black, as fire coming, continue to be issue. Look at RCPP – invasive coming in. Irrigation/rain/livestock/water. Push to target underserved – white male – underserved. Geo phishing – invoice for cost share. Sheridan sent out surveys prior to their meeting. Feedback indicated concerns regarding water, plants, and soil health. A lot of discussion on prescribed grazing and making it an attainable practice. Producers indicated they see prescribed grazing as difficult. Voiced they would like to have producer/landowner monitor, not NRCS.

ACEP- comments indicated producers would like a consistent timeline (year to year). Comment regarding establishing a liaison between NRCS and land trust. Anita - RC's- invasive species, Range irrigation, Livestock water, Spraying invasives in the black?
How to fund that outside of EQIP? Pending costs are up, payments are still low.

Jackie – underserved HU Categories Definition – Underserved – who are we missing – what communities are not being served? Not race, gender, equity – diversity. Lot of diversity in Wyoming. We are looking into a liaison position for FY24. (partner position).

Comment from back of room: Underserved “reach out”, the white male farmer is now underserved.

Katie – David looking at location of contracts – we can see who is underserved – locality – because why? Smaller communities, geographically – where are we missing producers. ACEP timelines, we are working on that with FO's and LT (etc.) For timelines for all programs we are hopeful for an internal NRCS committee?

Katie – agreed.

Jackie – Reach all customers.

BREAK

Division 6 – Micelle Huntington, Converse/Niobrara – May 24th meeting – Priorities not changed, 2 mail, Water/major insufficient water deliver, ground and surface quality and quantity, and 2 – plants. Forest/wildfire encroachment plant productivity, invasive grasses and plants. Productivity and health, grazing management. Need to finish projects – ground water, ongoing drought. Ranking questions. Thoughts opinions, stay at division or go back to counties. Converse board– publicly recognize. Thank you to Kenny Wolf and Todd – good to help get funded. Thank you to Stac for listening. Wind tunnel (Niobrara). Concern 528 – Prescribed grazing. more technical question's contact DC's. IRA funding questions. Want to apply again thru IRA – conversation would like to continue. LWG voiced they support staying as a Div vs. split to counties.

Jackie – Kenny brought up and working on it.

Division 6 - Ryan Clayton – Goshen County – – Jaime (Torr) Goshen. Pilot for County. Lingle, improve all 3, distribute. Questionnaire sent out prior to meeting. Feedback indicated concerns are: Irrigation Efficiency, Livestock Feed and water, and Source Water depletion.

Division 8 – 15 questionnaires sent and completed. Irrigation and soil health and _____. Underserved producers.

Shawn with Laramie Co CD– Cons. Degraded plant, wind and water erosions, Source water depletion –. Spec education opportunities, different funding.

Division 7 – Chris Bove - Albany County – separate work groups – LWG prefers to dissolve DIVs and go back to Counties. Albany Co – 1 fund pool, Carbon – 1 fund pool. Merge together. Land use in order. Range, irrigated, wind, water, source help, production. Simplify – planning implement – reduce staff workload. Increase funding – prioritize soil survey, bring attention – Laramie field office. Platte County – wind/water/degraded plant/livestock/pest pressure/plant pest pressure. RC’s, Degraded plant condition. Wind and water erosion. Forest health. Source water protection

Rusty Schwartz – Platte County - epidemic having concerns. 4 things they talked about. RC’s Wind and water erosion, Degraded plant condition, Pest pressure, Livestock production, ***prairie dog epidemic is concerning***

Katie – Statewide sub accounts, high tunnel, Stac wanting to decrease sub accounts, get into division, want to make majority happy.

Comments?

Jackie – Any division have high tunnel? No reply.

Mason – urban ag. How many high tunnel didn’t get funded? Reply from Div 2: 1 or 2

Jackie – RMA/AMA – come late – tagged for high tunnel. Is that enough?

Michelle Huntington - Basic ?, if apply thru high tunnel, with AMA, how does the funding cycle work? Is it equip?

Katie – both announced at same time, we can announce another time.

Anita – Did all funding get used?

Katie – Yes, evenly split high tunnels/windbreaks. Ran into issue 10 high tunnels tied. Ama program – fund all the ties or none of them. Windbreak – moved \$ to high tunnel. We can move, if specific fund can’t get.

Question: Windbreak funds not used, can they be moved to high tunnels.

Answer: yes, we made that “specific” at the state level.

Katie - Is there a need to bring back statewide sub-accounts for high tunnels?

Anita - We are fine w/o it

Katie: -Should we have and invasive species sub-account?

Reply not recorded.

Monte – not all high tunnels got funded – but rolled over.

Katie – presentation NRCS – Div sub accounts/Initiatives. CIG Conservation Initiative grants.

Anita – mass number not funded.

Katie – Is there a need to add high tunnel sub account back?

Anita – fine with that.

Katie – Should we have/add statewide/ acreage, sub accounts?

Anita – Is that original?

Katie – Yes. We can move funds.

Jackie – 50 livestock, 5 big farmer, 5 CIG, 25 of free \$.

Katie – RCPP/CSP/GCI/CSP

Jackie – Division – reg to county accounts. % by districts/county, go to county accounts – less funds. Do we want bigger pot? Do we want to go lesser funds? Pros – higher \$ go to / County – less \$. Pro – focus – Con – might not get it.

Anita – Based on practices – invasive – most go to Sheridan – still see them getting \$. Where dealing with invasives – encroach on sage grouse – which encroaches on ____?

Katie – ranking pools – program and resource staff.

Brian Jensen – Wildlife, stream irrigation, infrastructure. Decent amount of SGI funds have gone to invasives. WLFW has gone to streambank, etc.

Jackie - We could do it under Big Game or SGI.

Anita -If they didn't do the treatment but did the practices, can they apply now with different practices?

Jackie - Yes.

Jackie - RCPP would be good to address invasives..... and RCPP IRA.

Anita – as issues reoccur.

Jackie – invasive wildlife if aligns with practice codes – can do under big game/sage grouse.

Anita – once in program meet, can do invasive.

Katie – work together – Program Managers came from field.

Jackie – RCPP – encroachment. Working on – match requirement, less if able to find for match. Talk with Jackie/Katie for proposals. Encourage conversation. IRA options. Climate smart practices. Nutrient, hay land practices, same that have been doing for 80 years. Look at programs/opportunities, embrace as reliance. RCPP would be good to address invasives..... and RCPP IRA.

Caleb - historically, forest, range and cover cropWe would have 1 ranking pool and all apps would compete against each other? IF we split to counties?

Katie – Yes.

Katie – Do think of statewide sub accounts. Want you to give feedback, move forward for FY2024, division or county? Subcommittees.

Chat – Mike Henn – change from county have discussion before making decision. 5 int in more local – more discussions.

Suggestion from room -More info for FO on how to stack EQIP and Grassland CRP.

Jackie – Co accounts – division funding and how many counties is that enough for you to do. Go back, talk to work group/discuss/provide recommendations.

Katie – needed to cut down sub accounts – take a while.

Tracy – hinder % to go to counties.

Katie – more time consuming.

Mason – Happy to talk about Equip.

Jackie – Andi – having one ranking tool, ie CART not working – try to let CART work, it does work, allows components, one ranking tool work best for everyone. Streamline – try to make jobs easier in the background.

Katie/Jackie – create local work group session on CART to see how process works. Get training going. Andi – 100% in agreement with that.

Katie – deadline for feedback – **county/ division by end of FY. Sept. 29th – get recommendation to do county or division.**

Michelle – interested in hearing feedback from counties/pilots.

Pilot – Ryan/Mason/Chris/Tyler

Mason – Laramie obligated by March – not have to wait – was nice – talking with local using local \$. Downside can't have multiple high priorities.

Chris – really is prioritize – ranking reflects that. Can change priorities every year. Gets complex if mix it.

Ryan – What wa said correct. Levels playing field – reward offices that get theirs accomplish.

Jackie – go to smaller. Did you have to change how planned? One system at a time.

Ryan – Majority haven't had more than 2 at a time. Can usually get top funded. Range projects soak up a lot of \$.

Caleb Carter – Clarify div – historically forestry/range cover would not have division. Would rank against each other.

Katie – yes.

Bill Bunce – FSA – Grant Stombaugh – Outreach. One open – West Side – Wind River area – Cultural. Thank you to Alyssa and Katie for pinch hitting. Known nationwide for work WY NRCS has done. Cheyenne to Colorado – metropolitan than previous years. Happy to work with us, thanks.

Jackie – Work on – waiver STAC/grassland, revisited, don't need a waiver, can protect grassland – grasslands CSP.

Bill Bunce – FSA - Congress listening center – Jackie, RD, Business Council. Great team, limitations look at AGI, need to wipe out – Why?

BREAK –

ACEP-ALE-GSS Discussion

Katie – Big Game – what about eastside? In policy – GSS little to no invasive. Will speak with other states. Recommendation from STAC with justification as definition. Call out – if move forward, need discussion.

Mindy – Any new discussion based on funds not designated? Was there any indications or proposed areas that met criteria?

Katie – get big game map w/IRA to show also on designation. If we want to expand the ACEP area for IRA we need to hear from STAC by Aug 7th.

Jackie – Greatland Grassland Bulletin 300-23-41 Aug 7.

Stac response Aug 7 if want to expand need summary/maps/literature.

Erica Hansen: Sage grouse biome? Expand the boundary?

Jessica...: Also, in favor of the sage grouse biome in IRA

Mindy: regarding GSS, if any area of sage brush (grouse?) biome would easement language change to ensure sage brush (grouse?) is protected. *Katie, im not sure if they were talking sage brush, sage grouse or both, I'm sorry*

Katie reply: to follow up with some reading over the language of specific deed.

Sub-committee structure update

Anita - If big stuff like GSS comes up and you know ahead of time can you send something out so we can talk to DC's and others in our district?

Katie - Yes.

Anita – does area can't have invasive? Whole area or more target? Or little to none?

Katie – designated.

Mindy – inclusion include development?

Katie – yes. ALE for working ranches/farms.

Mindy – orange/red on map?

Katie – higher threat.

Erica Hansen – they NRCS work with feedback – expand working land with wildlife. Providing science support – getting talking points together – can pass along.

Jessica – Erica support of discussion, sagebrush funding that can come into Wyoming and interest to see scientific data. If are going to do GSS – 75% of easement – huge deal. Work thru part of that – appreciate work going through.

Katie – Sage grouse to IRA and big game covering most of state. Justification needs to be strong – need needs to be there.

Mindy – GSS? Area for sagebrush will easement protect – or specify sage brush specification. Easement yes, sagebrush not as much.

Katie – reinstated – grazing plan implemented into that.

Mindy – Can chemically treat- how if do these how do we ensure sage protected.

Katie – **send out concerning this with meeting information.** Deed restriction – can look and see if anything specific for this? What does it look at it for Wyoming.

Aug 7 deadline - July 31 – to use to combine one proposal.

Anita – information sheet – Katie for this bulleting specifically for expanding IRA.

Anita – specify county. **Send follow up – information out to STAC. Subcommittee structure update.**

National Water Quality with Forestry, Urban Ag, Local Work group, disband – Easement/Cons std/wildlife/EQIP. Send out list – recommendation for another subcommittee.

Jackie – Wildlife. Add local work group. Cons. Std review – already a team. Practice payment review. Easement programs – cover with meeting, adding URBAN and local work group.

Recommendation – Internal Easement subcommittee – add back in.

Michell – practice active – where is that position – under Resource Economist. Andi – interview this Friday.

Jackie – local work group combined. Specific once resolved no longer issue.

Katie – Chairs – Rust/Chet Local work group rep. Thank you for maintaining forestry.

Partner updates – how can we help.

Anita – Finished 1.3 mill project. 3 diversions, thru EQP and grant \$.

Jackie – Field day?

Anita – anyone welcome for field day.

Jackie – Kelsey Bec – super appreciative funding Engineering position, looking to supply and keep.

Alexandria Jeffers – available in chat – shard.

Mindy – Fish wildlife – 2nd round of interviews moving forward.

Dennis Sun – Wyoming Round up – Welcomes stories, promote what doing, tool for everyone.

Jackie – Anita – Story for round up? More partner updates.

Question's

Michelle – like this format to be able to dive into this.

Anita – agree – more in depth like this.

Thought Qrtly – Can we shoot ? if we know something coming up?

Katie – more specialized meetings – able to send out to specific subcommittee.

Katie – Appreciate participation – keep bringing idea to us. Piloting – Appreciate follow up and action items.