

STAC 1st QTR, NOV 30, 2023- MEETING MINUTES – PROGRAMS – ASTC – KATIE VAPORIS

Attendees

Jackie Byam – State Conservationist – NRCS
Katie Vaporis – NRCS
*Mason Peebles – NRCS
*Tracy Crow – NRCS
*Shelly Weckler – NRCS
*Michael Henn - SCCD
*Rusty Schwartz - AC NRCS (Douglas)
*Lynn Cornia - NRCS
*Brian Jensen-NRCS
*Alyssa Ludeke – NRCS
*Tristan Rice - WACD
*Sarah Anderson – Crook Co
*Brett Moline -
*Carmen Harne-Macintyre – Cody & Crook CD
*Dan Madsen – Sweetwater W & P
*Keela Deaton – NRCS
*Jonathen Sloan – State Forestry
*Ian Tator – WG+F
*Rory Karhu - NRCS
*Jennifer Hayward-NRCS
*Monte Bush - NRCS
*Bill Bunce - FSA
*Anita Bartlett-JCCD
*Michelle Huntington-CCCD
*Dennis Sun – Wyoming Round-up
*Cheyenne Love – CD
*Kelsey Beck - Pop Agie CD
*Lea Burgess-REF
*Caleb Carter – WCNRD Dist Mgr.
*Kristen.. – Med Bow
*Madison Herper –
*Jen Marken – NRCS
*Deena McDaniels -FSA
*Nicole Bandwarrant – TNC
*Dave Pellatz – TBEPEA
*Shaleas Harrison – WLA
*Shawn Kirkwood – Laramie
*David Waterstreet – WDEQ/WQD
*Mahonri Williams
*Michelle Christopher – WARWS
*Alexandria Jeffers – WDER

- *Katherine Hadley – NRCS
- *Lisa Ogden – Natrona
- *Eric Watson – NRCS
- *Cathy Rosenthal

Jackie Byam welcomed those online and in person to 1ST Qtr. STAC meeting of 2024.

Q1- 24 – Programs Meeting

Funding/ Allocation

- Initial advisory

Running on IRA

- Can do Agency.
- What can we take off the Field agencies?

Introductions

Katie Vaporis-

FY 24 Initial Allocations- spreadsheet shared overview with the group

Change from Division Allocations to County Allocations for 5 years- Giving a good try.

-State Initiative-

EQIP-divided to County.

-Water Management Entity Subaccount is new for this year

Initial EQIP allocation received from NRCS National Headquarters was roughly 20% less this year than previous years, that coupled with splitting from Division to County allocations resulted in less County allocations than we've seen in the last couple of years.

It was clarified that WME's can be Irrigation Districts.

The History of the discussion from moving from Division to County allocations was discussed. At the last STAC Meeting in July there were comments made that supported moving to County Allocations and there have been ongoing comments the last few years that people wanted to be more locally led, so the decision was made to go to "counties."

It was reiterated that if funds are not used in the county or in statewide subaccounts, those funds can be moved to ensure they are utilized.

Subaccounts and Ranking questions were reviewed, see attached.

FY 2024 Initial Allocations were reviewed, see attached.

It was clarified that the acronyms; CPA, DIA and CEMA stands for: Conservation Planning Activities, Design Implementation Activities and Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity.

Jackie informed the group the allocation was the “Initial Advisory Allocation.”

3 Funding Requests are available for Wyoming to request additional funds from NHQ:

Jan 5th

Apr 5th

July 5th

There was discussion about adding a question regarding farm size to the ranking questions to benefit small farms. It was shared that Policy does not allow ranking questions to reference size, to ensure there is no size discrimination.

Comment - Rory Karhu, AC-RM area - There is no discrimination in Park Co, many times smaller farms will turn down/decline a contract. We offer a lot of contracts and do have contracts with several small farms. Small farms will opt out more often, size independent.

There was a comment regarding the question on the ranking that refers to Easements that NRCS has a financial vested interest in. After discussion it was decided this question would be reworded for next year’s ranking.

Local Work group/updates:

Couties:

Albany –

Big Horn –

Campbell – Nothing New, have not met @ county level.

Carbon –

Crook – No changes – will get back to you.

Fremont – no input

Goshen –

Hot Springs –

Converse – No Changes to report

Johnson – Don't have any updates, please keep money in the country as much as possible.

Laramie – Not met.

Lincoln –

Park – Have not met yet.

Platte –

Sheridan –

Sublette – not met – excited to have a DC, keep more money locally.

Sweetwater –

Teton –

Uinta –

Washakie –

Natrona – Keep as much local as we can.

Weston – Support – keep as much local, DC use as needed, have not met yet.

Niobrara –

Medicine Bow – Not met yet.

It was asked whether the High Tunnel Sub-account was temporary. Jackie clarified that right now it is, NRCS will assess the demand at the end of FY 24 and decide if it is necessary for FY 25.

It was asked if the High Tunnel back log of applications was from the same area or spread out across the state, after reviewing the applications it was determined that they applications were spread out over several counties and not grouped into one or two.

Statewide Subaccounts:

Dec 13th Announcement for Farm Bill Funded Program's Batching Dates.

3 ACT NOW Fund Accounts-
Soil Health Nutrient Management

Herbaceous Weed Treatment

Forestry & Wildlife

Jackie – Act Now – Meant to be quick – (for the producer) no engineering, cultural resources
*complaint was – we take too long A to B move quicker.

IT was asked if stock water development would qualify for IRA and Katie answered that it is not one of the listed activities. It would have to be evaluated to support using it as a supporting practice.

The question was asked if there is any discussion of expanding options for unspent IRA dollars? Jackie answered that NRCS we must use those dollars; unused dollars must be sent back. We don't have the ability to move them to other things not on the CSAF list (IRA dollars)

Katie - Sub-committees and Volunteers:

Asked the members to reach out with county representatives' information so we can update information.

Anita Bartlett - will be the rep for Johnson Co and will serve as member of Urban Ag.
Shaleas Harrison -will serve as member of Urban and Easements
Michelle will serve as Urban Ag
Rory Karhu, acting AC – RM area NRCS to be added in place of Chet Fitzgerald
Carmen Horne-McIntyre to serve as member of Urban Ag.
Dan Madsen- to serve as member of Easements.

Partner Updates – FSA has added 4 2-year temporary positions (2 or 3 will be priority area)

Success Stories?
Concerns?

Next Meeting will be held February 22, 2024. - Recourses
