

State Technical Committee Minutes

Richmond, Virginia

May 22, 2012

Wade Biddix, NRCS ASTC-Programs, opened the meeting at 10:04 a.m. and welcomed the group. Everyone introduced themselves and the organizations they represent. He also announced that handouts were available on the front table.

Attendance: Wade Biddix (*NRCS*), Jack Bricker (*NRCS*), Jon Roller (*Ecosystem Services*), Pat Paul (*NRCS*), Libby Norris (*CBF*), Emily Horsley (*FSA*), David Kriz (*NRCS*), Blaine Delaney (*NRCS*), Jessica Rhodes (*USFWS*), Patricia Stansbury (*VABF, WRIR*), Chad Wentz (*NRCS*), Ron Wood (*NRCS*), Jeremy Stone (*NRCS*), Alan Spivey (*VA Forage/Grasslands Council/VA Cattlemen Assn.*), Gary Moore (*DCR*), Blair Krusz (*Virginia Agribusiness Council*), Betsy Bowles (*DEQ*), Chris Teutsch (*VCE/VFGC*), Philip Reed (*VOF*), Todd Groh (*VDOF*), Maribeth Pettigrew (*NRCS Recorder*).

Jack Bricker – NRCS – Opening Comments: We will have a discussion today facilitated by Blaine Delaney on the Field Office of the Future. Our intent is to get ideas from partners on how to best serve the public in case of more budget cuts. We have a lot of great comments back to us already from mailings we've done; many of you may have responded and Blaine will include the comments we've received up till now. In July we will be developing a "white paper" and turning the results into NHQ where our feedback will be combined with results from every state.

Updates:

- Virginia has received the Two Chiefs award for the partnership efforts between NRCS and the Virginia Department of Forestry.
- Our new financial system is finally in place, so we are again making Protracts farm bill payments.
- The Secretary of Agriculture will be here in Richmond tomorrow meeting with various groups.
- Backlogs are significant for program funds. Wade will be covering that topic.
- What is the status of the new Farm Bill? House has not been positive about us having one. The up side is that we won't have much change and won't have to learn new programs. There is a concern that we will see about \$23 billion in cuts if a new farm bill is developed. However, if we stick with the current one, \$40 to \$50 billion dollar cuts are projected –

Blaine Delaney facilitated the Field Office of the Future Discussion. Blaine referred the group to the 6 page handout (included in attachments). NRCS is trying to brace for change. Obviously, organizations and nations have to adapt to change or they perish. We are trying to project how we can change to keep our organization functioning. We are looking at a 5 year projection.

Here in Virginia, we are trying to get feedback from different groups. There is an online questionnaire; Blaine asked how many in group had accessed it and filled it out. About half of the people in attendance said they had.

A handout with 5 questions was distributed. Blaine pointed out the charts on display and explained the discussion/voting process planned. He stressed that we are not looking for field office locations to consolidate or close – that kind of specificity. We're looking for what needs to be provided in terms of services.

He has taken the results from the on-line survey and tried to group them. He asked the group to consider questions 1 and 2 as posted on the wall and look at current results as listed; then he asked what other ideas the group has and gave them approximately to 5- 10 minutes to consider and then write their ideas on sticky notes for compilation.

First Question: What are the **advantages** of reducing the number of Service Centers?

1a. Reduce Costs

- Reduce overhead
- Operating cost savings
- Less rent

1b. Diverse Workforce and specialization

- Diverse skills – employees
- Promote skill development
- Divide workload based on skills

1c. It is better for NRCS to go to farms to meet customers than for farmers driving to meet them.

1d. NRCS co-located with other partners

1e. None

2nd Question: What are the **disadvantages** of reducing the number of Service Centers?

2a. Increased travel time for staff and customers

2b. Loss of personal relationships and trust

- Level of service decreases
- Loss of “local” knowledge
- Less interaction with partners/SWCDs

2c. Loss of employees

2d. Reduced workload

- Less time in field due to increased travel time
- Lower application rates from producers

2e. None

Chris Teutsch made the comment that he thinks sometimes cost savings projections can be overstated. Patricia noted empty office space that would be left unused if offices are combined.

Advantage: Jon Roller suggested that there could be a travel cost savings for the customer with consolidation, not just for NRCS.

Chris mentioned that the support staff for the DC could potentially be decreased.

LIST ADDITIONS:

1f. One-stop shopping w/consolidated offices for multiple agencies

2f. Cost savings overstated or increased cost.

2g. Adding to vacant office space in rural landscape

2h. Less support and technical staff available to DC

2i. Decreased efficiency in delivering programs and federal services.

Third question: Do you think NRCS currently has information technology (i.e. computers, software, broadband service, electronic gadgets) needed to move into the future? If no, explain.

Gave group 5 minutes to consider new ideas besides these:

3a. Wireless network security access

- Broadband insufficient
- Remote access Problems

3b. Poor IT support

- Inadequate number of staff
- Inadequate skills

3c. Computers not ready

- Lag behind technology
- Software and hardware

3d. Vehicles not ready

- Go “mobile office”
- Laptops, iPads, etc.
- Lack of cell phones

Blair commented that mobile services will demand better IT support, so that will be a bigger need. Gary talked about importance of integrating the systems – will need an automated system of reporting to the NEINE. Libby commented on need for seated computers in the field offices for support so there is access to toolkit and such to help out. DEQ is working on going paperless, Betsy commented – electronic signature capability, etc. – so that is something that’s needed. If things come in as paper, has to be converted to electronic access. Going paperless will be a positive – electronic filing allows for remote access. Libby also noted a need for an integrated GEO database – she and Betsy both said that most of the agencies are going that way. Todd raised the question of the lack of compatibility between the way the partners systems work and NRCS – “where’s the ‘easy’ button?”

3e. System integration needed

3f. New automated NEINE reporting

3g. Partner access to NRCS computer systems

3h. Go paperless

3i. Integrated Geo-database

3j. Compatibility of software between partners

Fourth Question: What other suggestions do you have to **reduce operational costs** and make the field office **more efficient** for the future?

4a. Reduce paperwork

4b. Telework/Mobile Office

4c. Alternate work hours (evenings/Saturdays for customers working 40 hrs./week); seasonal hours??

Philip commented on a need perhaps to look at GIS locations of actual farms and try to put locations centrally. Libby suggested idea of having alternate work hours – seasonal hours. Jon suggested that NRCS rely more on TSP providers and not try to do so much themselves. Libby pointed out 3,7, and 11 on list – suggested combining those and providing service for efficiently – could be a matter of more field assistance from other partners. Patricia suggested that perhaps there might be more training or cross training that could be done and also that there might be a need for more language translation services. Chris suggested that there might be more flexibility working from home or vehicle – goes with telework idea. Todd suggested online application process for producers and maybe online certification process for partners. Betsy talked again about a need for less paperwork – some kind of comprehensive database that would allow staff and partners to have electronic input ability – remote access.

4d. Intelligent location planning

- Density of providers
- Transportation options

4e. Increase TSP providers/Reduce application requirements

4f. Use teamwork with partners to get /efficiently which provides better service and customer support

- 4g. Cross-training and language skills
- 4h. Online application for producers and online certification for partners
- 4i. Consolidated database for staff and partners

Moving on to 5th Question: Blaine asked them to write down any “Other” and then asked group to prioritize. After everyone has done it, will poll group and see if certain things jump off the page. Then will specifically discuss other suggestions and spend time on any that seem to be number one priorities.

Votes recorded. Libby noted that she felt like it wasn't a valid assessment to look at the state as a whole, because it completely depended on the current NRCS/SWCD staff and personalities in each field office – some really work well already and some do not. It varies widely across state.

Recording of votes had one 1st for Farm Bill Programs; one 1st for State Cost-share programs; five 1sts for Conservation Planning; two 1sts for Conservation Practice implementation and certification. Votes for 1st for OTHER: Outreach and Easement Monitoring

Votes for 2nd place: There were 4 for Conservation Planning, 2 for Conservation Practice Implementation and Certification, 1 for Engineering and 2 for more training. There was also talk of a need for more efficient bundling of state and federal cost-share programs.

Group members were asked to go around to the sheets on wall and place their votes for the top 4 priorities with the little circle stickers they were given. That tally is not included here.

Ended discussion at 11:27.

Wade Biddix – NRCS – Wade thanked the group for participating in this discussion and providing input, both in this meeting and through other channels (Internet questionnaires, etc.). Then he commenced the regular part of the STC meeting by asking for reports:

Emily Horsley/Gary Moore – FSA – (handout attached) CRP/CREP – The handout reflects enrollment goals tracking. One thing Emily wanted to point out is that this report tracks on-going progress toward the goal; it is **not** a month to month tracking – numbers may legitimately go down from month to month. For instance, sometimes they reflect contracts that expire. She explained some of the changes that are happening with their requirements and mentioned that specifically with equine producers some changes have been made that will help with that area. Things are continuing to progress.

Dan Solomon – EQIP (absent) Wade presented the report for Dan – he reviewed the CBWI spreadsheet (handout); mentioned that there are \$12.5 million out there – the handout reflects the way the CB funds are split up right now. There is an on-going sign-up that continues through the end of May. Once all those applications are in hand, we will go through another ranking process. That will be completed by the second week of June. We have enough applications already to commit the rest of the funds available. Wade encouraged group members to read through the handout at their leisure. Overall, we are in good shape (On handout, Trout Unlimited should be CCPI – needs correcting – Libby noted.)

On EQIP handout, Wade pointed out summary data and noted some of the areas that have just been set up – Todd asked re: last two columns. Those are waiting for “pre-approvals”. First four columns reflect current status of approved contracts.

Wade discussed the funding process and provided this as information. He feels this year has gone very well. We have had great partner support to allow us to allocate the monies we've received. Chris asked if there was an evaluation tool in place to determine success of the program monies spent. Response: Certain things are harder to measure than others. It is easy to count the outputs such as feet of fence or acres installed but it is

difficult to determine the exact water quality benefits of various practice installations. Alan Spivey noted that he sees a lot of pastureland being used for cropland and projects a negative effect on the land. Mr. Parker in last meeting talked about competing with prices. That is reality. Some farmers have been converting timber tracks, Philip Reed said. These things are not without environmental impact.

Ron Wood – NRCS – Referred group to the applications spreadsheet handout and reviewed the numbers, pointing out the number of applications and the amount of monies requested.

Wade summarized: In all cases, our programs are looking good. We have funding for all of our CSP applications. Currently doing field verifications to ensure that what the applications include is valid. The other piece Wade wanted to mention is the CIG spreadsheet. We received 8 pre-proposals. Have only \$150,000 to spend. Over \$300,000 was requested for projects. We will make funding decisions based on full proposals. Response to query: We are not required to pick any of these. We want to look at projects that will improve soil and water quality.

Easement Programs

Jeremy Stone – NRCS – GRP/WRP/FRPP – (handout) –reviewed. Jeremy asked that members should let him know if they are aware of easement applications planned so that we can request sufficient funds, specifically for FRPP. Then he reviewed the handout. All the site visits have been made. We have received far more GRP applications than we are able to fund.

Wade Biddix – (NRCS) Wade provided a statement on the Local Work Groups that we'd like to ask partners to include if they have any kind of newsletter going out (handout). Farm Bill 2013 – It may be that we will continue new programs or it may be that we get new stuff. Involvement of this group is needed as we prepare for the rollout – input from Local Work Groups by end of June is one way this will happen. At that point, the staff will come together and review. At next STC meeting, we will have LWG results and will discuss with this group.

We may even have a budget by the next STC meeting. We are looking at organizing some sub-committees, depending on where things are at the end of July. Idea is that by August and September, we will have subcommittees to deal with issues that come up in LWG discussions and current status of budget and where the farm bill is. May have to prioritize on where any money we will have will go.

AGENCY UPDATES:

Chad Wentz – NRCS – mentioned we are working in a regional payment schedule group – trying to set up cost schedules for FY13 program. Hoping to have that in place by November.

Patricia Stansbury (VABF) – They are in the process of hiring an Executive Director. Things are still up in the air right now. Patricia is looking for some people with knowledge of Farm Bill to appear on radio show.

Libby Norris – CB – CCPI is the focus this month; they are really busy right now helping field staff.

Chris Teutsch – (VCE/VFGC) They have a new livestock specialist – Brian Campbell at Southern Piedmont AREC; annual field day on July 26. Research demonstration area will be featured – NRCS is helping with that – will begin at 4:30 pm. Announced the following: Southern Piedmont Research Station Annual Field Day on July 26 @ 4:30 p.m.; Southern Piedmont Forage Tour in Virgilina on Aug. 23; Northern VA Summer Forage tour at Sky Meadows State Park on Aug.15; and Virginia Forage and Grassland Council's Winter Forage Conferences (same at all locations – keynote speaker: Jim Gerrish) – January 22, 2013, in Northern VA; January 23, 2013, in Weyers Cave, VA; January 24, 2012, at Wytheville, VA; and January 25, 2013, in Blackstone, VA.

Alan Spivey - (VA Forage/Grasslands Council/VA Cattlemen Assn) – Jason Carter will be the new director for Cattlemen’s effective July 2nd – it won’t be Bill McKinnon anymore. Carter is an extension agent, very knowledgeable.

Todd Groh – (VDOF) – DOF is going through some reorganization. Handout. Secretary has approved new plan that will begin July 1st. Work areas are indicated on chart/handout. The department is planning on “going mobile”. They will be selling 3 of the office buildings; funding from that will go toward purchasing laptops and smart phones for foresters and technicians. They will be set up to work from their pick-up trucks. Details of paper files are still being worked out. Right now they are working into the indicated areas. This is a big change for some foresters who have worked in one county their entire careers. The Department is trying to go where the need is. That is the focus. Each one of the colored areas will have a central office. This will be evolving as changes begin.

We also are looking for a budget to be released. Governor/General Assembly are still back and forth with discussions. Things are still up in the air depending on budget. That is currently causing a problem with applications. State Reforestation of Timberland (RT) budget. GA matches/contributes – forest products tax – industry is paying taxes and that goes mainly toward pine industry and pine reforestation. Rates have been increased for site preparation and planting.

Philip Reed – Virginia Outdoors Foundation – 39,000 acres in easements last year – this year is slow. Not seeing nearly as much interest. Would like our NRCS people to keep eyes open to work for permanent easements.

Betsy Bowles – DEQ – As part of CB watershed implementation, partners and DEQ and Dept. of Ag have come up with strategies to do onsite assessments looking for water quality concerns – going in and helping to determine if there is a problem and how to deal with problems – doing this statewide, not just CB – VDACs partnership – working together ; looking for outreach opportunities with this as well with any of our partners – can’t name them all. Wade asked re: strategy – is this a plan for regulation? Response: They are looking for holes/gaps in programs. One they have found is that EPA has made a lot of comments about regulation – lack of permits, especially with small dairies. Rather than just increase threshold, they are trying to determine the scope of the problem. Stewardship act with VDACs – looking for voluntary approaches with farmers but would allow DEQ to still determine if it’s being effective. Ag stewardship act – going that route brings in other options. They are looking at each operation for site specific concerns and addressing needs. They are developing an MOU to work with VDACs on this. At some point, this will become DEQ guidance. It is somewhat of a response to EPA concerns. They don’t want to just blanket state with more permits, but look at what is really needed and use the resources already in place to determine real need. EPA continues to have presence – that isn’t going away

Soon we will be seeing Notices of Intent – another regulatory action – amend and reissue animal feeding operation – that is coming up for renewal; there is another in the main VPA regulations. They are trying to coordinate this and make it consistent.

Blair Krusz – VAC – Katie Frazier will be coming in to take over the VA Agribusiness Council officially on July 1 – She will be working with national issues and also reacting to what’s been done with GA.

Wade Biddix – (NRCS) – Informed the group that we are in the process of updating the official list for the State Technical Committee and may be inviting other entities to participate. He adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:40 p.m. and thanked everyone for coming. He also announced that the next STC meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2012, at 10 a.m.

				Applications									Contracts			Financial Standing		
				Pending		Eligible		Preapproved		Approved						%		
State	Initiative	Fund	Allocation	Count	Est. Cost	Count	Est. Cost	Count	Est. Cost	Count	Acres	Cost	Count	Acres	Obligation	Obligated	Potential	Funding Left for Pending Eligible
EQIP 2008																		
	Certified Organic	FY12 Certified Organic	\$123,793.00	1	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	2	\$61,106.50	0	0.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %	49.36 %	\$62,686.50
	Organic Transition	FY12 Organic Transition	\$219,302.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	4	\$132,233.00	2	105.00	\$31,375.00	3	20.10	\$27,763.00	12.66 %	87.26 %	\$55,673.90
	On-Farm Energy	FY12 On-Farm Energy	\$135,492.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	2	17.00	\$96,437.00	1	1.00	\$15,600.00	11.51 %	82.69 %	\$39,054.00
	Seasonal High Tunnels	FY12 Seasonal High Tunnels	\$417,333.00	14	\$40,462.40	18	\$133,678.80	7	\$45,312.80	3	7.60	\$20,256.00	50	364.45	\$332,159.40	79.59 %	95.30 %	\$19,604.80
	State	Upland Wildlife Habitat Creation	\$158,762.00	7	\$7,000.00	7	\$38,407.50	30	\$158,776.60	0	0.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %	100.01 %	(\$14.60)
	EQIP Totals		\$1,054,682.00	22	\$47,462.40	25	\$172,086.30	43	\$397,428.90	7	129.60	\$148,068.00	54	385.55	\$375,522.40			\$177,004.60
WHIP 2008																		
	CCPI - State	CCPI - DGIF	\$85,000.00	0	\$0.00	3	\$12,359.00	5	\$80,691.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %	94.93 %	\$4,309.00
	CCPI - State	CCPI - Trout Unlimited	\$85,000.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %	0.00 %	\$85,000.00
	G Winged Warbler	Golden Winged-Warbler WLFW	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	7	\$42,011.00	0	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0.00 %	0.00 %	\$0.00
	WHIP Totals		\$170,000.00	1	\$0.00	10	\$54,370.00	5	\$80,691.00	0	0.00	\$0.00	0	0.00	\$0.00			\$89,309.000

State Technical Committee
Agenda

May 22, 2012 - 10:00 a.m.
Richmond NRCS State Office
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Ste. 209

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| Welcome and Opening Remarks | NRCS - Bricker |
| Field Office of the Future Questionnaire | NRCS - Delaney |
| Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CREP) | FSA - Horsley
DCR - Moore |
| Status of FY-12 Program Funds
EQIP, CBWI, CSP and CIG
Organic, High Tunnel and Energy
GRP and WRP
FRPP | NRCS - Biddix
NRCS - Wood
NRCS - Dunaway
NRCS - Stone |
| FY-13 Farm Bill Program Offerings
Local Work Groups - Input Due by July 1
State Technical Committee Meeting in July
Subcommittee Meetings/Discussions in August | NRCS - Biddix |
| Agency Updates | All |



Next Meeting - July 24, 2012

Field Office of the Future

Facilitated Questions

1. What are the **advantages** of reducing the number of Service Centers?
2. What are the **disadvantages** of reducing the number of Service Centers?
3. Do you think NRCS currently has **information technology** (i.e.: computers, software, broadband service, electronic gadgets, etc.) needed to move into the future? If no, explain.
4. What other suggestions do you have to **reduce operational costs** and make the field office **more efficient** for the future?
5. Which activities could be **better shared or coordinated** between NRCS and SWCDs and how?

_____ Farm Bill Programs

_____ State Cost-Share Programs

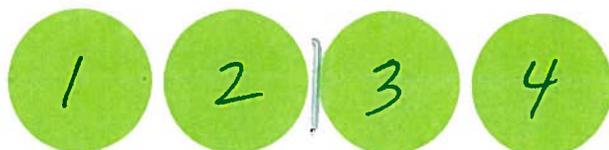
_____ Conservation Planning

_____ Conservation Practice Implementation/Certification

_____ Engineering

_____ Training

_____ Other (please identify)



What are the advantages of reducing the number of Service Centers?

- 1 There is a cost savings that can be diverted into program delivery operations. RC
- 2 Operational costs reduced: RC
- 3 Are we assuming reducing the number of service centers leads to a reduction in staff? If so, then no advantages... current service centers are over-worked as stands now. If service centers are closed and all of the current employees are retained, then the advantage would be that offices are sold to offset costs, and therefore able to fund current employees and programs. O
- 4 NONE N
- 5 Reduce rental costs. Better time management. RC
- 6 Reduces administrative costs. RC
- 7 More money for programs. RC
- 8 NRCS field staff potentially colocated with more partners, leading to more opportunity for coordination and collaboration. Funding could go to hiring more technical staff for NRCS instead of rent. Technical staff can better share administrative staff and equipment, and better assist one another. O
- 9 Cost saving, and possibly greater efficiency if planned correctly RC
- 10 Money saved in rent could be used to improve mobile technology i.e., cell phones , mobile computing, hire more technicians RC
- 11 None N
- 12 Saving money RC
- 13 consolidation of services O
- 14 If they are co-located with other partners, it reduces the need to travel to other sites to get the work done. O
- 15 Over head will be reduced - rent, utilities, number of IT servicing locations, etc. RC
- 16 None to the Public N
- 17 None identified at this time. N
- 18 Budget reductions for rent. RC
- 19 reduced need for admin overhead RC
- 20 Less cost Less staff O
- 21 less cost to the taxpayer RC
- 22 Cut rent, office equipment, vehicles, etc. RC
- 23 Cost savings in utilities and rent RC
- 24 Overhead costs of maintaining a building RC
- 25 Reduce rent cost. RC
- 26 Will spend less money on office space and possibly on services since many farmers won't ever make it in. RC

REDUCE COSTS = RC
DIVERSE WORKFORCE = D
LESS GOVERNMENT = L
OTHER = O
NONE = N

- 27 Cost savings **RC**
 - 28 Budget reductions through rent reductions. Should allow more staff positions to serve clients. **RC**
 - 29 It is better for NRCS staff to come to farms than for farmers to come to an NRCS office. It shows that NRCS staff value farmers time and understand that each farm is unique. **O**
 - 30 There are no advantages. **N**
 - 31 Office costs (rent, computer systems, copiers, etc.) **RC**
 - 32 It may or may not reduce rental space... **O**
 - 33 A lot of centers are short staffed and if consolidated into a more central location, personnel can cover other duties that have been neglected in the past due to being short of staff help. **D**
 - 34 savings on rental expenses **RC**
 - 35 Reduced cost of renting space, reduced administration of office staff, more time for technical staff to work in the field. **RC**
 - 36 Possible alternate work sites that become closer to public needs. **O**
 - 37 Cost savings Possible concentration of resources/expertise in regional office **D**
RC
- Regionalizing Service Centers would be the next logical step to implement a continuing process of staff technical specialization and supervision. Implementation of NRCS programs many times already requires the assistance of regional engineers and specialized technical staff, and the approval of supervisory District Conservationists. Regionalization might also assist in aligning NRCS field office staff with other state conservation partners such as DCR and potentially allow for co-locations. **D**

2

- What are the disadvantages of reducing the number of Service Centers?**
- Increased Travel Time (staff+clients) = I*
Loss of Personal Relationship + Trust = L
Loss of Employees = LE
NONE = N
Reduced Workload = L
- 1 reduced presence of NRCS in certain areas, which can cause the perception that NRCS is not active in specific geographic areas of the state. **I**
 - 2 Reduction in staff, slower response time and increased work load. **LE**
 - 3 Loss of employees Potential loss of landowners enrolled in programs (too far to travel to another service center, so they don't enroll) **LE**
 - 4 Less Participation in Programs thus resulting in less Conservation on the Ground **L**
 - 5 None known. **N**
 - 6 Decreased interface with partners. **L**
 - 7 Less visibility for the agency and their programs. More difficult for customers to meet NRCS. **L**
 - 8 Farmers will feel abandoned; might not make extra effort required to drive greater distance to sign up for programs. NRCS will spend more funds on fuel and vehicle upkeep. NRCS employees will either work longer days or have fewer hours to do technical work due to time spent driving to customers. **L and I**
 - 9 Reduced level of customer service **L**
 - 10 Difficulty coordinating with local Soil & Water Conservation Districts. **L**
 - 11 More gas will be consumed. More travel time. to farms **I**
 - 12 NRCS provides a "service" to its' clients/customers. Reducing the nbr. of Service Centers reduces NRCS ability to provide those services. Voluntary programs are only successful through the development of long term relationships and trust. If a client/customer sees a different face every time there is a question that trust is destroyed and the program will fail. Reduced cooperation among landowners. This has already been experienced in a number of areas when the service center concept was instated. Our local offices were shut down to locate to a service center and this cost more money and alienated our customers. The service center cost more than all the local offices combined. **L**
 - 13

7

- 14 It usually results in laying off staff and we need more staff not less *LE*
- 15 Too far to drive, people don't like to travel far to meet with staff -- inconvenient. Lose the local feel/interaction between community in which you live/work. Makes it hard on employees who may have to increase their commuting time. Confuses customers about where they need to go to be serviced. *I and L*
- 16 Cooperators may not be willing to cross locality boundaries or may not think its worth the 30 mins drive to a FO. Service turnaround time may lengthen. *I*
- 17 More Energy used to drive further Distances A diconnect with NRCS and the Landowners Landowners/Operators will not get the Service as they do now Less out reach to new Landowners/Operators Less progam awareness *I and L*
- 18 Lose personal contact w/ producers. Less productive work day b/c staff will spend time driving to and from locations. Longer driving time and associated expenses for both staff and producers. *I and L*
- 19 Challenges of servicing our customers and providing adequate follow-up. *L*
- 20 less customer service; increased milage and vehicle use; reduced client participation due to decreased interface and travel time/mileage to come into a "local" office for assistance; *I and L*
- 21 Less consumers Less public *O*
- 22 customer distance and time increase to get or apply service. *I*
- 23 Many landowners will not use our services if there is not a local office and if they have to drive too far. *I*
- 24 With escalating gas prices in the next 5 years, need to stay within 50 miles of customers *I*
- 25 Not as convenient for the stakeholders to receive assistance *I*
- 26 Loss of site identy and outreach to customers. A place will be needed to protect historical information such Engineering field books and designs. *L and O*
- 27 To hard for farmers to get to the centers. Staff may not have the knowledge of local, on the ground information, since they are not in the community. Longer distance drives for staff to make site visits. *I and L*
- 28 Lack of customer service and project implementation. *L and W*
- 29 Less contacts with the clients coming to the office. *L*
- 30 Farmers in some regions will inevitably feel neglected or unimportant. *L*
- 31 Lower customer base. Increase Cost (travel and rent) *L and W*
- 32 Less productive staff when factoring in travel times. *I and W*
- 33 A reduction will make it hard for our clients, customers to be fairly treated. also will make a hardship on staff. Increased staff in a central location means a larger office, more fuel and upkeep on vehicles. Also will mean possible laptops and more IT> *L and O*
- 34 I don't know about it being a disadvantage as I see consolidation being very instrumental in being able to deliver programs and assistance more effectively. *N*
- 35 loose contact with producers less interaction with local soil and water conservation districts loose employee longer commute for employees and producers longer time to reach producers won't be able to service as many *I and L*
- 36 Loss of office space to accomodate files and supplies *O*
- 37 Longer travel times for both staff and ag producers for site visits and assistance. Possibly longer wait times for office asistance or site visits. Potential lack of familiarity with local conditions/Issues due to distance from regional office Regionalizing Service Centers would reduce the presence of NRCS in local county offices and their ability to cooperatively implement federal/state programs with local conservation partners, particularly county soil and water conservation districts. These county offices will continue to operate dispite the absence of NRCS and potentially other federal agencies, but the loss of these agencies will very likely create a significant economic and technical capacity impact. Local conservation partners such as soil and water conservation district staff may rely on NRCS field office staff for training and approval authorities which could be impacted. In addition, the absence of NRCS staff in the local county offices could affect access to landowner files and data by local conservation partners unless constructively addressed in advance of any regionalization change through local access of federal data platforms. *L and O*

3 15. IT Issues

- 1 Programs need to be better and faster (ex: GIS) Ability to share information with partners/ Accessibility *WN*
- 2 What is needed is more Mobile data such as Laptop Computers and GPS units and providing employees with Cellphones *V*

3 Could be improved if field staff had smart phones or small portable laptops (15" or iPad type) to conduct their work when away from the office setting. ✓

4 I don't know the answer to the question but I had to pick an answer. ○

With more and more internet based software, offices will need more and faster broadband service in the future.

5 Employees will need the ability to use their own device such as smartphones and home computers for telework and field work. WN

6 mobile computing- ipads, ✓

Wireless Network Security/Access = WN
Poor IT Support = IT
Computers Not Ready = C

7 Computers and software are being updated every day..... C

WN
V
8 We do not have adequate speed to efficiently service our producers in the office.

9 Mobile office in a vehicle will be the future deliver mode. All employees will need mobile phones. Vehicles Not Ready/Go Mobile = V

Other = ○

10 IT is constantly changing. It makes sense for field staff to have tablets/ipads and the ability to sign contracts electronically. ✓

11 Better IT support IT

↙ C and IT

12 I feel NRCS is behind times with technology.. Out computers and technology rolls out and is installed 2 years later. When it rolls out it is still 3 years or more behind. IT is slow due to understaffing and over working. Not fair.

13 technology is usually 3 years behind by the time it is released to the field staff. C

14 Lack of computers for field staff but more importantly--lack of capable IT personnel to maintain equipment C and IT

If regionalization is implemented for NRCS field offices as noted previously, a comprehensive IT system of will be required to increase coordination with SWCDs to supplement the absence of NRCS and potentially other federal agencies

15 at the county offices. A regionalized IT communication and data system will allow Increased integration of agricultural conservation programs, technical and administrative staff to effectively continue federal program services through a office regional system. WN, C and ○

4 What other suggestions do you have to make the field office more efficient for the future?

1 Implement strategies to reduce paper consumption. Reduce Paperwork

2 One big efficine ywould be cellphones for all field staff: # 3

3 Explore whether skilled admin staff or more technicians could assist your best technical experts in meeting their admin responsibilities so that they have more time to use their technical skills.

4 Web meetings - using cameras and internet for long-distance meetings that are still face-to-face

5 Encourage more telework agreements for at least 1 day per week and provide secure access to work software from employee devices, such as smartphones and home computers.

6 more Technicians working across county lines Staffing Issue

7 Work as a team with all local partners to better serve clients.

↙ Reduce Paperwork

8 Reduce the amount of paperwork by reducing redundancies in the customer folders. There is too much focus on paperwork and not enough time for field work and ensuring practices are doing what we are paying for them to do.

9 More field technologies such as updated laptops etc. # 3

10 Continuity of training, guidance, and programs across the state/country.

more use of qualified partners to support staff activities and work with the clients in the field. regular coordination with other agency staff to streamline the client's process to get the practices installed; take a hard look at the engineering backlog to address getting projects designed in a timely manner -- otherwise, the client is likely to lose interest.

12 Get back to the basics of working with landowner and reduce the paper we are generating for the files. Reduce Paperwork

13 Add a contract specialist to the staff of every service center. Staffing Issue

14 Since may of our clients are part time farmers; we need flexible work hours to meet with them. However you cna argue the point that they need to take off from work if they need our services.

- 15 Program reviews should be constructed to provide positive work guidance for field staff, not just an agreed to item. All levels of NRCS must strive for the field to provide a quantity of quality service to customers.
- 16 Reduce administrative paper of eng. and BMP practices. Reduce State Office Staff. *Reduce Paperwork*
- 17 less paperwork. The producers don't read the entire spec packet, why send it? Also, it is redundant to fill out the same information multiple times. I.e job sheets, coversheets, and some specs. Let's fill it out once and move on. *Reduce Paperwork*
- 18 If NRCS and FSA are to work together as close partners and I think they should... they should do contract management and payments and allow NRCS to do conservation planning and technical assistance and "inspecting" and documentations.
- 19 When the office sends out mailings to landowners it should require a return postage paid stub to be returned to the office. If it is not returned by a said time line, remove that person from your mailing list as they are 99.9% of the time just tossing your information into the trash. You can narrow your selection down to the most respondent or engaged owners. This adds to the ability of increased efficiency all around the board and maximizes limited resources.
- 20 have better technology that works. be able to access file electronically in the field. be able to certify practices and report items in the field. less paperwork!!!! streamline software for conservation planning. reduce verbage in jobsheets to make them more producer friendly.
- 21 NRCS has previously been integrating IT systems for mobile office access of specialized technical field staff. This integration should be considered for expansion to all NRCS technical staff as well as access by local conservation partners such as SWCDs. The potential increased reliance of local partners to implement joint federal and state programs with landowners will require seamless communications and data sharing to be effective.

What could be better shared or coordinated with partners?

- 1 A strategic planning process where efforts are streamlined to cut costs and reduce overlap.
- 2 Better communication between agencies.
- 3 Ability to share information systems to more quickly assist landowners in their conservation program efforts
- 4 Easier access for Districts to NRCS Planning Tools ie ToolKIT
- 5 FSA could do the accounting.
- 6 NRCS need to hire more engineering expertise, which is in very short supply in other STC agencies.
- 7 Not clear what you're asking here... Identify overlaps/redundancies in customer service and then identify who is best suited to continue providing that service
- 8 More coordination between VA-DCR and NRCS on State Cost-share program recommendations to VA Legislature.
- 9 Sharing and coordination are essential for success in program implementation. NRCS and SWCD's are working well together now any decrease in level or effort on either side will be devastating.
- 10 Better communication Better notification Reduce paper pushers and get more field staff that will cooperate with local partners to get conservation on the ground.
- 11 NRCS and SWCDs already work well together -- there is no reason to change something that works.
Need better coordination between the offices. No reason that NRCS and SWCDs can't know each other's programs and sell the best one for the customer's needs to the customer. Would still need separate contracting/budgeting, etc. If there is a good understanding of each others programs, practice implementation and certification could be shared in the field as well. Training is pretty well shared now, but there is always room for improvement by sharing training needs.
- 12 Through regular mandatory meetings like the current JED trng. sessions
- 13 Working TOGETHER. We are all here for the same thing.....Protecting our resources. The different "pots" of funding should not matter.
I would suggest that these state/federal Service Center be seperated to partners and citizens can better understand each-players role and responsibility. Improved cross training in each others positions could help with communication through the conservation planning process and would help more effecifely deliver the appropriate cost share program. Hope NRCS and SWCDs will continue and expand upon the cooperation that is already established. SWCD staff and NRCS staff can aid each other in providing info. on both Farm Bill Programs and State Cost-Share Programs to clients, conservation planning, implementation/certification, engineering, and training. NRCS and SWCDs should be working together to successfully accomplish the mutual goals and objectives. Should share space when possible and resources. Work with the SWCDs to prevent duplication of planning and prevent year to year planning as in common for SWCD
- 14 current policy. Whole farm planning, corridation of programs to meet landowners goals and objectives would assist with this greatly.

work more as a team - and meet together with clients and discuss possible options prior to meeting with the clients.
18 Regular meetings to discuss various conservation program options and changes so that everyone working with clients in the field know various options and who is working with whom.

19 Work together

20 Through landowner assistance field days that bring in several partners to disseminate information.

21 Both are natural partners in program delivery.

22 NRCS needs to provide greater engineering assistance to clients and training to district employees.

Ongoing coordination of Farm Bill and state cost-share programs is very important. Farmers don't always distinguish
23 between state and federal funding and some programs require both (like CREP). The coordination of new state programs (RMPs, nutrient credits) will be very important in the next few years.

24 Sharing equipment and cert. BMP practices.

25 SWCDs need to understand the importance of proper practice implementation/certification and be qualified to performed these activities. Training should be all inclusive for those that need it.

26 proper management and cooperation and communication between both staff's.

27 Monthly meeting with said staff.

28 better communication with staff.

29 Encourage positive customer relations between SWCD & NRCS personnel

If regionalization is implemented for NRCS field offices, a comprehensive system of increased coordination with SWCDs
30 will be required to supplement the absence of NRCS and potentially other federal agencies at the county offices.

Increased integration of agricultural conservation programs, technical and administrative staff will be needed to effectively continue federal program services through a office regional system.

31 In my opinion, SWCD and NRCS appear to coordinate well.

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
Sign-up Progress**

As of 5/22/2012

Chesapeake Bay -

1,798 contracts approved
16,804 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 8,196
Current Allocation: 25,000

Southern Rivers -

2,152 contracts approved
14,262.4 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 737.6
Current Allocation: 15,000

**CP-33 -
Habitat Buffer
For Upland Birds**

238 contracts approved
1,696.4 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 803.6
Current Allocation: 2,500

**CP-36
Longleaf Pines**

19 contracts approved
384.9 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 3,365.1
Current Allocation: 3,750

SAFE

Culpeper Basin Bird Habitat Restoration

CP-38A – (Forested Riparian Areas)

AVAILABLE ACRES: 500

CP-38E – (Native Grass Areas)

CP-38C

*Restoration and Management of
Eastern Shore Migratory Bird
Tree/Shrub Habitat*

AVAILABLE ACRES: 300

CP-38C

Statewide Tree Planting

AVAILABLE ACRES: 500

CP-38D

Longleaf Pine

14 contracts approved
361.5 acres
AVAILABLE ACRES: 638.5
Current Allocation: 1,000

EQIP Funds Status 5_21_2012

Account Name	Allocated	Contract Approval	Pre-Approved Apps	Funds Remaining	Eligible Apps HIGH	Eligible Apps MEDIUM
Virginia	\$11,079,834.22	\$4,934,414.03				
Aquaculture	\$75,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CCPI-Ches Bay Foundation	\$250,000.00	\$0.00	\$111,741.00	\$138,259.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CCPI-Fish America	\$800,458.00	\$206,685.00	\$507,846.00	\$85,927.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NWQI - Wolf Creek	\$152,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$152,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NWQI - Somerton Creek	\$152,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$152,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
NWQI - Mollys Creek	\$152,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$152,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Livestock in Confinement - Christiansburg	\$2,073,439.00	\$1,027,867.00	\$1,045,572.00	\$0.00	\$711,967.00	\$0.00
Livestock in Confinement - Farmville	\$1,029,334.00	\$242,928.00	\$746,927.00	\$39,479.00	\$0.00	\$131,900.00
Livestock in Confinement - Harrisonburg	\$302,312.00	\$170,304.00	\$132,008.00	\$0.00	\$290,369.00	\$0.00
Livestock in Confinement - Smithfield	\$407,567.00	\$226,947.00	\$180,400.00	\$220.00	\$0.00	\$106,120.00
Cropland - Christiansburg	\$154,295.00	\$134,584.00	\$16,160.00	\$3,551.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cropland - Farmville	\$65,137.00	\$51,092.00	\$11,561.00	\$2,484.00	\$0.00	\$13,752.00
Cropland - Harrisonburg	\$202,711.00	\$77,913.00	\$87,000.00	\$37,798.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cropland - Smithfield	\$756,600.00	\$289,377.00	\$408,463.00	\$58,760.00	\$0.00	\$44,070.00
CAP 102 CNMP Development	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 104 Nutrient Management Plan	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 106 Forest Mgmt Plan	\$80,000.00	\$52,755.00	\$24,235.00	\$3,010.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 114 Intergrated Pest Mgmt	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 118 Irrigation Water Management Plan	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 122 Energy Audit Headquarters	\$40,000.00	\$11,190.00	\$8,970.00	\$19,840.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 124 Energy Audit Field Operations	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CAP 130 Drainage Water Management	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Forestry - Statewide	\$600,000.00	\$404,358.63	\$185,450.00	\$10,191.37	\$473,711.00	\$57,333.00
Pasture - Christiansburg	\$550,734.00	\$536,162.00	\$0.00	\$14,572.00	\$1,271,063.00	\$36,751.00
Pasture - Farmville	\$459,488.00	\$315,876.00	\$126,578.00	\$17,034.00	\$335,749.00	\$49,844.00
Pasture - Harrisonburg	\$485,558.00	\$202,975.00	\$94,923.00	\$187,660.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pasture - Smithfield	\$133,609.00	\$0.00	\$8,500.00	\$125,109.00	\$0.00	\$32,278.00
Beginning Farmer	\$516,769.00	\$287,183.00	\$0.00	\$229,586.00	\$1,847,741.00	\$158,634.00
Limited Resource Farmer	\$108,154.00	\$102,904.00	\$5,250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Socially Disadvantaged	\$288,628.00	\$18,628.00	\$270,000.00	\$0.00	\$120,669.00	\$15,694.00
FY12 EQIP Reserve	\$14,219.00	\$9,360.00		\$4,859.00		
FY12 CIG State Component	\$150,000.00	\$0.00				
TOTALS				\$1,455,119.37	\$5,051,269.00	\$646,376.00

CBWI Funds Status 5_21_2012

Account Name	Allocated	Contract Approval	Pre-Approved Apps	Funds Remaining	Eligible Apps HIGH	Eligible Apps MEDIUM
Virginia	\$12,496,311.00	\$4,027,823.28				
Sub Funds	\$12,496,531.00	\$3,519,495.50				
CBWI - Animals in Confinement	\$4,959,289.00	\$1,013,657.00	\$3,790,720.00	\$154,912.00	\$302,704.00	\$37,550.00
CBWI - Cropland	\$2,519,145.00	\$1,393,876.00	\$1,025,268.00	\$100,001.00	\$111,535.00	\$0.00
Forestry CCPI	\$155,615.00	\$68,821.00	\$86,300.00	\$494.00	\$5,000.00	\$65,150.00
Forestry CCPI Forest Management Plan	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CBWI - Limited Resource Farmer	\$103,949.00	\$103,949.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CBWI - New Farmer	\$1,001,324.00	\$29,760.00	\$877,271.00	\$94,293.00	\$63,421.00	\$0.00
CBWI - Pasture	\$2,519,145.00	\$834,001.50	\$1,474,312.00	\$210,831.50	\$93,490.00	\$31,020.00
CBWI - Socially Disadvantaged	\$75,458.00	\$29,312.00	\$46,146.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Smith Creek Showcase Watershed-Cropland	\$213,740.00	\$26,958.00	\$186,782.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Smith Creek Showcase Watershed-Pasture	\$286,380.00	\$19,161.00	\$70,076.00	\$197,143.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Shenandoah Valley RCD_CCPI	\$412,485.00	\$0.00	\$412,485.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Trout Unlimited	\$47,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$47,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
			TOTALS	\$806,674.50	\$576,150.00	\$1,382,824.50
FY12 CBWI Reserve	\$201,001.00	\$508,327.78		(\$307,326.78)	FMMI conversion	

FRPP :: Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program

1. Acquisition is proceeding on 6 FRPP easements.
2. FY-12 applications so far total \$2,930,000 in Areas 1, 2, and 3.
3. Several more applications are expected this fiscal year.
4. Work is beginning on FRPP State Plan for FY-13; if your organization is considering an FRPP application in FY-13 please contact Jeremy Stone so he can include information on the potential application in the plan.

GRP :: Grassland Reserve Program

1. Acquisition is proceeding on 2 GRP easements FY-11, totaling 235 acres; closing is expected within FY-12.
2. Pre-approval offer was made and accepted for one new FY-12 GRP easement for 23 acres in Rockingham Co., using all FY-12 funds, \$90,584; title search and environmental database search are underway.

WRP :: Wetlands Reserve Program

1. Acquisition is proceeding on 9 WRP easements FY-11 (& prior), totaling approx. 400 acres; closings are expected within FY-12.
2. Restoration plan (WRPO) design and implementation are underway on 7 closed WRP easements, totaling 273 acres; plus one ten-year restoration agreement of 3.4 acres; WRPO design is concurrently underway on the 9 easements in the acquisition stage.
3. WRP Team site visits on FY-12 applications were completed and applications ranked.
4. 10 pre-approval offers were made and accepted in these counties, spending most of the \$879,118 allocated enrollment FY-12 funds; title search and environmental database search are underway.

Culpeper	Greensville	Rappahannock
Fauquier	Isle of Wight	Shenandoah
Grayson	Prince William	Washington

Jeremy P. Stone, Easement Specialist, FRPP Manager, (804) 287-1666, Jeremy.Stone@va.usda.gov

Diane D. Dunaway, Easement Specialist, WRP & GRP Manager, (804) 287-1634, Diane.Dunaway@va.usda.gov

FY 2012 CIG APPLICATIONS

Applicant Name	Project Name	Project Purpose/Overview	Area(s) Affected	Total Project Funding	Federal Share	Years
1 Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation	Virginia Wetlands Catalog	The catalog will be developed for known and predicated wetlands prioritized for multiple mitigation benefits (i.e. wetland, restoration, enhancement, preservation, and creation). The Catalog will be of particular value to VA NRCS staff, as an innovative tool for screening opportunities for wetland restoration, enhancement and preservation.	Statewide	\$100,000	\$50,000	2
2 American Farmland Trust	Increasing Adoption of Pre-Sidedress Test (PSNT) Recommendations for Seasonally Adjusting Rates in Farm Nutrient Management Plans	Expand crop producers' adoption of nitrogen use efficiency by demonstrating the efficacy of using the PSNT management tool to make seasonal adjustments to the recommended nitrogen rate within a nutrient management plan; and demonstrate the effectiveness of combining nutrient management technical assistance, farmer soil testing and performance guarantees to achieve high rates of adoption by producers.	Rockingham & Augusta Counties	\$97,465	\$45,000	2
3 Virginia No-Till Alliance	Innovative Cropping Systems using Diverse Cover Crops and Manure Injection	This project will demonstrate innovative approaches to building soil health through high diversity cover crop mixtures coupled with the added benefits of injected versus broadcast manure.	Augusta County, Shenandoah Valley Region	\$120,940	\$40,000	3
4 Hanover-Caroline Soil & Water Conservation District	Feasibility of Multispecies Cover Crops in Central Virginia Cropping Systems to Affect Water Quality	To improve the soil quality and reduce dependence on chemical methods of fertility and weed control. Documentation of changes in soil quality shall be utilized to demonstrate how the methods of tillage, planting, grazing, and residues affect the improvement in soil quality. Producers will be the decision makers for planting and cover crop termination methods, through conventional means or rolling cover crop, promoting innovation.	Carolina, Hanover, Lancaster, King George, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland Counties	\$54,930.15	\$27,353.75	3
5 Water Stewardship, Inc	Assessment, verification and monitoring of impacts on soil and water quality of extensive water quality BMP implementation in Muddy Creek Watershed, Rockingham County, VA	To identify and assess the short-term effectiveness of agricultural BMP's implemented recently on working farms and dairies and estimate the effects of these water quality BMP's on soil quality	Rockingham County	\$119,941	\$49,941	3
6 Center for Science, Economics and Environment	Evaluation of pollinator benefits from NRCS conservation practice standards.	Evaluation of pollinator benefits	Statewide	\$50,000	\$25,000	1
7 Virginia State University	Market opportunities for longleaf and shortleaf pine plantations in Virginia	Determine the economics and market feasibility of longleaf and shortleaf pines in Virginia	Statewide	\$48,000	\$24,000	2
8 Virginia Tech	Managed Grazing for Improved Soil Health and Environmental Protection	To demonstrate how alternative types of grazing management affect soil health and nutrient loss in pastures.	Steeles Tavern, Va Blacksburg, VA	\$150,000	\$75,000	3
			Total	\$741,276	\$336,295	

Did not recommend going to full proposal

Local Working Groups Seek Input on Conservation Programs

Farmers and other landowners will have an opportunity to provide advice on priorities for many USDA conservation programs at upcoming Local Working Group meetings being held across the state by Soil and Water Conservation Districts during May and June. Ideas generated from these meetings will be used to identify local priorities and provide recommendations to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on how federal programs and dollars can be used most effectively. Local working groups are composed of agricultural owners and operators, professionals representing agricultural and natural resource interests and other individuals who are familiar with natural resource issues. To find out when the meeting is scheduled in your area or to become a member of a Local Working Group, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

REORGANIZED REGIONS AND WORK UNITS

Beginning July 1, 2012

