

Summary of NHAMP presentation at the NRCS State Technical Meeting

NHAMP is certified by the NH Department of Agriculture and is part of the USDA state certified agricultural mediation programs. Matt administers programs in New Hampshire and Vermont. He observed that typically there are 3 to 6 NRCS cases a year in Vermont but few, if any, in New Hampshire. As a result, he wanted to increase awareness about the program to ensure that NRCS staff and others are aware of it.

NHAMP works with all USDA agencies including NRCS, FSA, RD, and the Forest Service. Nationally, the program is housed within FSA at USDA in HQ. NHAMP has staff mediators and a roster of 6 mediators spread throughout New Hampshire. All the mediators have special training in agricultural mediation.

Typical NRCS mediation cases include disputes over EQIP contracts, wetlands issues, grassland reserve programs, and other conservation programs. Matt provided examples of several NRCS cases he worked on in Vermont.

In addition to working on disputes that arise from adverse decision letters, NHAMP can also work on related problems such as where an adverse decision letter has yet to be issued, but there is a problem that is holding up the farmer/landowner's performance. Often it is easier to resolve these problems before the parties get entrenched in their positions and have less flexibility.

NHAMP mediators can help by assisting the parties communicate more effectively and generate and evaluate options for moving forward.