

## **May 4, 2011 - Perry, GA**

The Georgia Civil Rights Advisory Committee (GCRAC) quarterly meeting was held, Wednesday, May 4, 2011 at the Houston County Government Building in Perry, GA. In attendance were: Amy Bell, Mary Branch, Margaret Dunn, Jason Gatch, Chris Groskreutz, Diane Guthrie, Dianna Hodge, Amos Jones, Ray Jones, Karla Martin, Sonya Merrion, Dee Pederson, Alvin Perez, Lee Reeves, Lee Rider, James Tillman, Daniel Westcot, and Katrina White. Other personnel present were: Edward Ealy and Gary Hankins.

Alvin Perez called the meeting to order.

### **Welcome and introductions:**

Dianna Hodge, Area 1 Representative

Minutes of the February 2, 2011 were approved as received with the following amendment. Farm Bill Workshop – November 30, 2010 held at the Franklin County Ag-Center in Carnesville, GA. This workshop was geared to Vietnamese poultry producers.

### **Chairperson Report: Perez**

- Completed mandatory training, “Working Effectively with Tribal Governments”
- Natural Resources Conservation Workshop – June 5 – 9, 2011, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC)
- Distribute vacancy announcements

### **State Conservationist Report: Tillman**

- Budget update
- Area 1 Civil Rights Review
- Special Emphasis Program Manager’s (SEPM’s) roles and responsibilities in program delivery/employment
- Update Annual Plan of Operations with results

Action item: Jimmy Bramblett will contact SEPM’s for findings. Mr. Tillman will meet with all SEPM’s and area representatives by June 30, 2011

### **Strike Force Initiative**

- 57 target Counties in Georgia
- Community Base Organization (CBO) formed in Albany
- Outreach projects and workshops

### **SEPM’s reports:**

Lee Reeves – American Indian/Alaskan native Emphasis Program

- Participated in “Ag in the classroom” – Midville Experiment Station
- Annual training postponed until 2012 due to budget
- Summer intern – Waynesboro field office
- Distribute vacancy announcements

American Indian Liaison report: D. Henry via e-mail

- Henry and Reeves are active members of the Southeast American Indian Workgroup and participate in bi-monthly teleconferences
- Six (6) USDA Interagency Regional Tribal consultation meeting have been held between
- October 2010 and January 2011
- John Harper, SEPM from FL resigned as Southeast Region Representative for American Indian/Alaskan Native Employees Association (AIANEA) and has been replaced with Georgia's Area 2, ASTC-FO Jack Lewis.

Diane Guthrie – Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Emphasis Program (GLBT)

- June 2011 National GLBT month

Dee Pederson - Federal Women Program

- Created Women's issues email list for employees interested in receiving extra information on women's issues
- Distribute vacancy announcements
- Distributed bookmarks highlighting Conservation Stewardship Week to elementary schools
- Eleven (11) females in the state were featured during Women History month

Katrina White – Asian American/Pacific Islander Emphasis Program (AAPI)

- Attended SEPM training – February 2 – 4, 2011
- Participated in AAPI teleconference
- Participated in SEPM audit teleconference
- May is AAPI month
- Distribute vacancy announcements

Sonya Merrion – Black Emphasis Program (BEP)

- Participated in BEP teleconference
- Career Fair to be held at Fort Valley State University March 23, 2011
- Six (6) outreach applications were funded in the Oohoopee River Soil and Water Conservation District
- Participated in Civil Rights audit teleconference
- Summer intern – Swainsboro field office
- Distribute vacancy announcements

Chris Groskreutz – Hispanic Emphasis Program (HEP)

- Participated in Farm Day programs in Hall and Franklin Counties
- Participated in HEP teleconference
- Participated in Civil Rights audit teleconference
- Attended East and West region Envirothon Competitions
- Shared scholarship and internship programs information
- SEPM training to be held in Atlanta, August 24-26, 2011

Jason Gatch – Disability and Veterans Emphasis Program (DEP/VEP)

- Distributed vacancy announcements to a network of Disability and Veteran program managers in other states

- Participated in DEP/VEP teleconference
- Contacted Fort Stewart Military Reservation to be placed on a list for attending career fairs hosted by the installation
- Attended Farm Bill program outreach meeting in Evans and Tattnall Counties
- Attended local high school FFA advisory committee meeting and agreed to serve a 2 year term on the board
- Volunteered to participate in high school career day events
- Participated in Civil Rights Review

### **Area Representatives Report:**

#### Area 1 – Margaret Dunn

- District Conservationist (DC) positions in Carrollton, Calhoun and Lawrenceville on hold
- Soil Conservation Technician position in Rome on hold
- Two (2) minorities (1 black female, 1 black male) serving as Acting DC positions in
- Carrollton and Lawrence
- Two (2) summer interns
- Farm field day in Pike County May 6th
- Multi-county outreach meeting to be held in Talbot County May 18th
- Area one appraisal – not aware of any Civil Rights concerns
- Organic field day at Rise n Shine Farms in Floyd County June 7th
- Dianna (Di) Hodge will serve as Area One representative effective today

#### Area 2 – Amos Jones

- ACES employee in the Commerce field office manned display at the 1st Annual Tree Festival in Jefferson on March 12th
- Commerce field office had a booth set-up at the Madison County Agriculture Celebration sponsored by the Madison County Farm Bureau on March 19th
- Dennis Brooks attended an Ag day and FFA day at the Georgia State Capital on March 22nd to recruit students for the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop (NRCW) to be held June 5th - 9th in Tifton
- Small farmers conference held in Athens, March 31st – April 1st
- Walton County career and College Expo held April 28th
- Blairsville field office staff participated in the annual Ag day for Woody Gap School System on April 29<sup>th</sup>
- Commerce field office staff participated in the Jackson County Ag day for 5th graders on May 3rd
- Field office personnel promoted USDA programs among the (Hmong and Vietnamese) resulting in three (3) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications selected for funding

#### Area 3 – Ray Jones

- Dawson field office staff attended a presentation honoring Black History Month held at the USDA Agriculture Research Center on February 24th
- Rich Hosmer gave a presentation concerning NRCS program eligibility for Historically Underserved producers at a Strike Force initiative meeting targeting irrigation concerns in Dawson

- Bainbridge field office staff assisted two (2) Historically Underserved producers with pasture planting and one (1) with rotational grazing
- Seminole field office staff mailed out letters to minority producers and landowners informing them of the Forestry field day to be held in Early County on March 26th
- Ray Jones participated in the Open House event with Fort Valley State University (FVSU) Agricultural Department and staff along with NRCS personnel to discuss how NRCS could enhance collaborate efforts with FVSU. NRCS personnel also discussed career opportunities with approximately 30 students.
- Ray Jones met with members of FVSU to discuss Conservation Planning Initiative to assist in outreach efforts to minority farmers. FVSU will enter into a Cooperative Agreement with NRCS to promote this initiative.
- Macon County field office staff is assisting three (3) Historically Underserved producers in EQIP- Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) with rotational grazing systems
- Steve Cleland and Daniel Westcot participated in the “Longleaf Pine Restoration Opportunities for small and Underserved Landowners” held in Jakin, GA on March 26th. A tour site visit was made to Mack Evans Farm, where participants observed longleaf pine restoration and silvopasture activities in operation.
- Morgan County field office staff and area engineers assisted Hispanic producer in completing his EQIP contract for his livestock operation

#### Area 4 – Amy Bell

- Georgia Organic Conference held in Savannah, March 11 – 12th
- District Supervisor in Bryan County along with district supervisors held outreach meetings in all Coastal Counties to inform the public of NRCS programs
- NRCS and Satilla SWCD co-sponsored a field day with the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association on April 21st in Brunswick
- Richmond Hill field office staff participated in career day at Richmond Hill Elementary School
- Richmond Hill field office staff and GA-SWCC representative Rahn Milligan attended Earth Day in Savannah
- Richmond field office staff participated and set up NRCS booth at the Pete Waller’s agrotourism Strawberry Festival
- Area 4 Organic training to be held May 10th at Relinda Walker’s Farm
- Two (2) Historically Underserve EQIP – Organic contracts approved

#### **New Business:**

#### Quarterly Reports:

- SEPM’s should wait for feedback from Mr. Tillman before submitting reports to NHQ
- Human Resources (HR) will assist SEPM’s with reports

Action items: Next report due June 27th and Sept. 26th

#### Human Resources – Lee Rider

- NRCS vacancies update
- Workforce profile
- Measurable goals

**FY 2011 – Annual plan of Operations:**

- Motioned and approved

**Cultural Transformation:**

- <http://culturaltransformation.usda.gov/>
- Data posted on shared site
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Mandates

**Travel:**

Area Reviews:

Area 4 – May 16-19, 2011

- (Eastman, Dublin, Swainsboro) – Civil Rights representative (Chris Groskreutz)

Area 3 – June 13-16, 2011

- (Bainbridge, Quitman) – Civil Rights representative (Di Hodge)
- (Madison, Commerce, Washington) – Civil Rights representative (Sonya Merrion)

**Resignation:**

- Alvin Perez, Chairperson, advised the Committee of his resignation of Chairperson of the GACRAC effective as of this meeting.

**Next meeting date:**

- The next quarterly meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 3, 2011 at the Houston County Government Building (old courthouse) in Perry, GA at 10:00 A.M.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.