

# State Technical Committee Meeting

9/25/2013  
9:30am – 11:30pm  
Audubon, The MacLane Center  
84 Silk Farm Road  
Concord, NH 03301

Meeting Called By: **Rick Ellsmore, STC, NH NRCS** Type of meeting: **State Technical Committee**  
Facilitator: **Rick Ellsmore, STC, NH NRCS** Note taker: **Shari Cohen, NRCS**

## Attendees:

Rick Ellsmore, Shari Cohen, Robert Johnson II, John Hodsdon, Artie McCollum, Sarah Holmes, Roger Noonan, Ted Kendziora, Rodger Krussman, John Lanier, Jan McClure, Eric Williams, Gregg McPherson, Vicky Stafford, Tim Fleury, Amy Oulette, Joe Short, Rob Riley, Jess O'Hare, Simon Thomson, Rob Clark, John Greene, Jim Oehler, Rebecca Yohe, Pam Gilbert

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## Meeting Minutes

### Agenda Item: Welcome, Introductions, and Partner Updates

#### **Rick Ellsmore, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service**

*Began the meeting at 9:40 am.*

### Members Updates

#### **Gregg McPherson, Rural Development (RD):**

Molly Lambert has retired - Ted Brady is the new State Director, he comes to us from Senator Leahy's office – He will be a huge asset to us.

#### **Jan McClure, The Nature Conservancy:**

Working under WHIP contract at Ossipee Pine Barrens - we were able to mow and burn 50 acres and getting more done – we are updating a management plan w the contractor – We are working on another WHIP contract for planting seedlings & saplings on 30 acres (working with SPNHF).

#### **Jim Oehler, NH Fish & Game:**

We will be hosting a Non-game and Endangered Wildlife Program 25th Anniversary Celebration, hoping you'll be there - we had a 1 day farm bill field tour w John Green & Sarah Holmes, as well as the Coordinator from Fish & Wildlife in Washington DC – We talked about importance of getting a new Farm Bill passed w Rick Ellsmore & Don Keirstead.

#### **Artie McCollum, Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge (FWS, NFWR):**

The CT River was named 1st National Blueway and then a 2nd one named in Arkansas. These designations were reneged w a hearing in the House - CT River folks came to the hearing w Representative Kuster there – currently, the Blueway system is on pause.

#### **Colin Lawson, Trout Unlimited:**

We are working w NRCS to do a spatial analysis for WRP and aquatic restoration - did field evaluations and are beginning to permit them now.

#### **Ted Kendziora, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS):**

We did evaluations of 8 New England Cottontail (NEC) projects (5 w NRCS), all are successful - planted plants and shrubs, all surviving well - re: breeding at pen, we saw 2 of 8 NEC w a plan for them to overwinter in NH then release - we released a NEC on the Bellamy & traced it; it went to 5 different managed areas within 5 miles.

**Simon Thomson, Senator Ayotte's Office:**

The Senator is in DC now so will have an update soon - house passed a CR and she is hoping for more discussion to permanently fund the government.

**Rebecca Yohe, Merrimack County CD:**

Working to finish up grants, another soils workshop for fall & annual plant sale.

**Vicky Stafford, Rockingham & Strafford County CD:**

Working on restoration projects w NRCS – We have implemented an equipment lending program to small farmers.

**Rodger Krussman, The Trust for Public Land:**

Celebration in Durham for a WRP project w Town of Durham to protect drinking water & NEC habitat - working on couple of projects; a WRP in Strafford & FRPP on CT River in Piermont – TPL has coverage in VT & NH.

**Roger Noonan, President NHACD and NE Farmers Union:**

Lots of districts having work group meetings that you should involve yourself with as grassroots initiatives gets the word to Rick/NRCS & the folks in Washington D.C. - invasive species makes up most of the work that we are doing – also busy in local & regional food systems - FSMA also has impacts on water quality & wildlife, working w congressional partners - was able to show examples of impact on riparian areas.

**John Greene, Congressman Kuster's Office:**

The Congresswoman is happy to support conservation efforts for the CT River (she sent a letter to the Secretary) and Farm Bill – This is my first meeting and I am here to listen.

**John Hodsdon, Belknap County CD:**

We have survived 2 party takeovers w commissioners – Belknap County has a focus on wetlands and resources, and local foods – We will have our annual meeting in 2 weeks.

**Tim Fleury, Forester, UNH CE:**

You will start to see mortality in some trees in the next 2-5 years (mostly ash trees).

**Amy Oulette, Food & Ag Program, UNH CE:**

We have full staffing right now, including 3 new Food & Ag staff – We have a full calendar of programs this year – Please see our website.

**Jess O'Hara & Joe Short, Northern Forest Center: *Presentation on agenda***

**John Lanier, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI):**

Working w NRCS on NEC and Northern Young Forest Project w landowners in the North Country – I am a wildlife TSP for NRCS – We could have lots of projects up north with willing landowners as they would get on board with programs if they could - A landowner in Grafton wants a state of the art program on huge acreage, we have TNC, NRCS, WMI, F & W, Conte, etc. teamed up to put world class management plan this land - We're also pursuing grants for habitat work.

**Rob Riley, Northern Forest Center:**

Last week we closed on a large community forest with the Ammonoosuc Land Trust for permanent access and management.

**Rob Clark, US Forest Service (*state and private foresters*):**

Dave Welsh retired in June, we are advertising to fill his position - Emphasis less on timber operations and more on urban for water quality.

**Eric Williams, NH Department of Environmental Services (DES):**

The nonpoint source management plan is heavily regulated by EPA and is left to states to manage – There are 2 components where watersheds are priorities for both healthy & unhealthy; major/ minor sources and action steps to address and accomplish in 5 years (for the major source) - timber harvesting is a minor source because it is adequately controlled - storm water, septic, chloride, road salt & ag are the ones we will address with an action plan – We met w several groups over the

summer (passed out notes) and will present the whole plan to those interested - we will have a complete draft posted on our website in the next month.

**Sarah Holmes, Representative, Senator Shaheen's Office:**

We held a FSMA hearing at Dartmouth and would like to encourage folks to comment, it is important to the Senator that your voices are heard – We are hopeful that a Farm Bill will pass – The Senator understands that sequester is not a responsible way to move forward and is interested in a long term debt solution.

**Pam Gilbert, Grafton County CD:**

We will have our Fall Conservation Tour on Oct 18th in Grafton/Lyme at the Tollando Farm.

**Robert Johnson, II, NH Farm Bureau:**

FSMA update, please submit your comments.

**Rick:** Roger Noonan and I would like to thank our Congressional folks for their support.

***There is a change in today's agenda; FSA is unable to attend - they are at an all-employee meeting.***

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**Agenda Item: Farm Bill, Programs Update, Priorities**

**Presenter: Rick Ellsmore, NRCS**

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

***General discussion & questions around forestry plans:*** Average sizes of plans are 150-200 acres - mostly new plans.

**Rick:** Conservation Stewardship Program is more popular in the Midwest states but we have 5 new contracts.

**Rodger Krussman:** asks a question around WHIP and municipally owned land in the Farm Bill

**Sarah:** There is opposition from the western states because of the public/private landownership issues.

**Amy Oulette:** Program update - field specialist conducting research in North Country - in Grafton & Carroll we have research going on w veggies

**Rick:** If there is not a new Farm Bill we will not have WRP, it expires in 2013.

**Roger Noonan:** We are using tilling practice and zone tillage to protect soil by rolling down winter rye w a rented roller crimper from Cheshire County – This addresses erosion and water quality as well.

*Break*

**Agenda Item: Northern Forest Center Presentation**

**Presenters: Rob Riley, Joe Short & Jess O'Hare**

*\*PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

**Rob Riley:** Our focus is the relevance of economics, working forests, and value streams - we're helping to substantiate that – We are working in 4 states across 5 sectors with 30 million acres, in 34 counties within NH, VT, ME & NY.

**Questions**

**Rick:** Are you involved with Northern Pass?

**Rob:** No we are not directly involved - we address biomass as opposed to electricity.

**Rodger K:** What practices are you verifying?

**Joe:** CA marketplace using Air Resources Board (ARB) standards - we are looking at possibilities for aggregation of smaller landowners - you need a couple of thousand acres to be viable for CA - those projects are towards ARB standards - using

American Carbon Protocol

**Rodger K:** Have you looked at farm & forest land and nitrogen / phosphorus savings?

**Joe:** we haven't yet found a way to get at that but are looking.

**Rodger K:** Are there efforts under way for a residential home heating model to put in place in other geographic areas?

**Rob:** We are in Northeast Kingdom & Adirondacks.

**Rodger K:** Where is the raw material for the pellets coming from?

**Rob:** Some locally & other locations (British Columbia, South) - trying to keep it as local as possible - it's a regional market.

**Rick:** the economics of what NFC is doing is very important and needs to be emphasized.

Much of the NH success is due to Roger Noonan going to bat for us in DC.

### **Roger Noonan: Farm Bill Update**

- Senate passed Farm Bill this summer (SNAP cuts \$4 billion) and has appointed conferees (Leahy, VT).
- House passed Farm (only) Bill and recently passed a Nutrition only Bill with \$ 40 billion in cuts -realistically looking for \$20 billion - House has a procedural vote ahead before appointing conferees.
- Conference committee will need to come back with SNAP cuts of less than \$10 billion to garner democratic support.
- Best case scenario; Farm Bill before Thanksgiving. Worst case; New Year's Eve extension.
- At some point we need to address the likelihood of an extension and make a strong case for the expiring programs that return tremendous value to NH and New England.
- Rural Development, Conservation, Organic, BCAP, REAP - The Senate and House Ag committees do not want to talk of extension. The President has pledged to veto an extension.
- The Secretary of Ag is ramping up implementation of the 1949 law to eliminate the threat of \$8/gal milk (which is what finally moved Congressional action to come up with last year's extension).
- Either way we'll have less program money, greater need, and reduced CTA to implement programs.

### **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)**

- Comments close Nov 16
- Comments also close Nov 16 for the EIS
- Please comment, it is important
- FSMA has a bog impact to Ag, wildlife, water - we've sought an environmental impact rule;  
I met w Sarah Biddlemen EPA - preventative controls also has impact - farms are good for the environment - there are a lot of waters that won't meet the standards so we are working w FDA & making progress – The goal now is to change it from a proposed rule to a proposed draft rule and I encourage you to work w your constituents.

**Sarah:** Lorraine Merrill has been emphasizing that people should talk about specific aspects of their operation.

**Roger N:** All of the impacts of this rule are important.

**Rob:** Seeing a decline in philanthropic support in Rural vs. Urban - folks don't get local forestry as much as food - are you really focused on Ag only, or can we dovetail to focus on woodland as well?

**Roger N:** Yes, many farmers have a majority of forest land - the rural/urban divide and the impact of Farm Bill \$'s in rural communities - The Northeast is where we bridged the rural/urban divide - lots of SNAP

**Rick:** Next meeting will be 1/8th in Concord and hopefully we will have more updates.

*Meeting Adjourned 11:47 AM*

