



Meeting Agenda

November 1st, 2017

5:00 PM (tour of new office space)

USDA Service Center, 4014 Lake St Homer, AK

- A. Call to order: 5:48pm
- B. Roll call: Charlotte Crowder, Gena Grobarek, Jessica Guritz, Chris Rainwater, Tim Alzheimer, Devony Lenher, Karin Sonnen, Kyra Wagner, Otto Kilcher, Meg Mueller calling in.
- C. Approval of the Agenda: motion to rearrange, put NRCS report first, no objection
- D. Visitors
 - a. *NRCS Report Space: phone stay the same, build out by dec 1, move in by Jan 1, when will Bruce get tech done? Parking? Computers?*

Notes from NRCS Field Office

Delivered by Meg Mueller, District Conservationist

Conservation Planning and Programs:

EQIP - Program announcement made this week. Complete applications need to be submitted by 11/30/2017. Eligibility criteria need to be met by 1/12/2018. Ranking by 2/16/2018. Expect that obligation would be done by the end of April. Much program info uploaded to the Alaska NRCS website. www.ak.usda.gov> Programs > Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Local Working Group - Can delay until spring, at least. Local ranking questions in FY18 will be local to the subaccount, rather than local in a geographic sense. The questions will be used to rank according to greatest conservation benefit. If many projects are similar and rank exactly the same, EQIP/ProTracts assigns a tracking code that is essentially a random number – it takes out any hint of favoritism. FY18 ranking questions can be found under the link “FY 2018 EQIP Fund Pools” (above).

Working Lands for Wildlife - Need to compare design with what’s available in FY18 payment schedule and present to Ninilchik Native Association.

Other:

NRCS Agreement Accounting for Space and Support - Alaska NRCS must document concrete deliverables and equate them to the cost of space and IT support. For example, SWCD can write X wetland determinations for the space and Y conservation plans. Where have an agreement that pays an SWCD for determinations, those required for space/support will be in addition to the ones that need to be completed per an existing Cooperative Agreement. Work items funded with an agreement cannot be considered towards space. Generally, anything that is the district’s normal responsibilities can’t be

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considered. The Wasilla NRCS office has contracted with the Palmer district do conservation plans to equate to what we pay for their computer/space, etc. That's where we need to head with all of the space agreements. Consider getting at least one staff member through the planner training to write plans, do the wetland determinations, provide nutrient management assistance, or brainstorm with local staff to find unidentified tasks and work. You may have a training budget in an existing Cooperative Agreement that can accommodate this. Cassie said there is not additional funds now, except for the NACD training grant. SWCD funding (using non-NRCS funds) of the training can count as contribution for space. Please phrase deliverables in measurable quantities that would be accomplished in a year's time, or more, such as plans, hours, certifications, determinations. Agreement in place by January 1, 2018.

Homer Staffing – Sean Willison from Fairbanks has accepted an unofficial offer. No EOD date yet. Signed another AD-332 request for GS-09 Soil Conservationist. Not sure when that will be announced – watch for it on USAJobs.

Homer Space – Anticipate a move before January.

Meg Out of Office: At Farm Bureau this Friday, in Palmer Nov 28-29, Leave around Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year.

E. Approval of the Minutes: Gena moved, Tim seconded, approved *requested that Kyra get more details about ARLF and it's status for next meeting, can we take cooperators off the list?*

F. Visitors (continued)

- a. Jessica Guritz: Temporarily working for us on nutrient management recommendations and other office work. She has been working in Fairbanks and will be moving to Anchorage. *Send Jessica's "soils for relators" class info to all board members.*
- b. Charlotte: Recently featured in our newsletter. *Gena hasn't gotten the newsletter*
- c. Other guests

G. Financial Report: Tim motioned to approve, Otto seconded

H. Manager's Report

A. Land Use: Trails

- a. **Watermelon Trail:** No new updates
- b. **Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area:** Devony will be attending the next KBay/Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area Plan Review committee meeting while Kyra is gone.

B. Water Quality

- a. **Anchor River:** Recently rewrote ACWA grant (EPA funds) for a new timeline. DEC plans to announce the program recipients in December, work could start in March if awarded.

C. Agriculture/Soil

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- a. **NRCS & Employees:** In a recent conversation with Cassie and Bob from NRCS state office, we were told that NRCS is generally making the plan to only supply one computer per district. This will inhibit our ability to supply them with the compliance work they require. Luckily, Devony can still do certain tasks without a security pass or NRCS computer. *NRCS training can be done on AgLearn with a login and password*
- b. **Specialty Crop Block Grant:** Still have not heard from the Div of Ag on the consumer/restaurant survey grant. Funds have not been released at the national level.

D. Invasive Weed Program

- a. **Weeds program:** Matt spent last week in Anchorage at the state-wide CNIPM conference meeting with old and new folks in the invasives field. Matt did great, making no presentations, but featuring in many and giving a few impromptu speeches. He narrowly avoided being on the board, but is appointed to Statewide Elodea Working Group and Statewide Invasives Communication Network.

E. Education

- a. **Ag in the Classroom:** Earlier this month, Kyra and Heidi from Kenai went up to a training in Anchorage for indoor gardening curriculum for teachers. Hosted by the Alaska Botanical Gardens, representatives from around the state participated in the training, including folks from Chena Hot Springs and from Prince of Wales Island.
- b. **People's Garden:** We got a bunch of hats, posters and books from the old People's Garden project in DC. Let Kyra know if you want one. *Invite Michelle Obama back up here!*

F. Administration

- a. **Vacations:** Kyra is out for the next two weeks. Brad is out for the next month. Matt will take two weeks off in December. Jessica will be leaving the office Friday for Anchorage, but can still do nutrient management recommendations till Brad gets back.
- b. **The Fall Newsletter:** The newsletter went out, partially in paper, partially online. We managed to find about 60 emails. One person has responded to the request in the paper newsletter to go paperless and gave us their email.
- c. **BLM Audit:** We are going to have to create policies that better outline our dedication to equal employment opportunities for everyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Luckily, the state EEO office contacted us and has been quite helpful with the process. *Meg: NRCS has EEO regsto look at/copy.*
- d. **New office space:** We will be in the Frontier Building with extra space at Top Shelf Storage. The move should happen in December with the plan to be completely out of our present location by January 1. There is A TON OF STUFF TO MOVE. Expect a detailed moving schedule at the December meeting. Get ready to enlist all your friends, neighbors and family. *Gena gets wheels and a dolly, Chris a flat bed with a lift*
- e. **New office space agreement:** With the move, NRCS will be redoing our office space agreement and, as promised, will now expect some kind of work trade compensation. After talking to Bob and Cassie, it is clear that they will help us

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Homer Soil & Water

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come up with something that works for everyone. They suggested we look for extra funding support through NACD. *NACD membership: renew \$101 for bronze Otto motioned Tim seconded*

I. Old Business

- a. Earning office space: AACD \$50000 from state (if granted) could be used to meet match for the NACD
- b. Ethics: got the AK executive branch ethics act *get the cliff notes for next meeting*
- c. Employee evaluation for district manager next meeting

J. New Business

- a. Office move

Adjourned 7:54

Next Meeting December 13, 2017, at 5pm

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