

**WV NRCS Civil Rights Committee  
FY 2004 4th Quarterly Meeting  
August 4, 2004**

**Present:**

**Carlos Cole, Civil Rights Advisory Committee Chairperson  
Isaac Wolford, Disability Emphasis Program Manager  
Bryan Lee, General Member from the State Office  
Leslie Sears, General Member from the South Area  
Wanda Smith, Federal Women's Program Manager  
James Dodson, Black Emphasis Program Manager  
Rex Gardner, General Member from the West Area  
Vickie Scott, American Indian/Alaskan Native Program Manager  
Rebecca MacLeod, General Member from the East Area  
Casey Shrader, Hispanic Program Manager**

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**10:10 a.m. The WV NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carlos Cole in the conference room of the Mt. Clare Agricultural Service Center.**

**The minutes of the previous meeting dated May 12, 2004 had been electronically distributed for review prior to the meeting. Spelling corrections were made to names. No other additions or corrections were noted. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as distributed. Motion carried.**

**Chairperson Carlos Cole passed around a letter from Chief Bruce Knight dated May 24, 2004 about Civil Rights Accountability. The body of the letter reads:**

**“As the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) I am firmly committed to ensure NRCS compliance with Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity.**

**“The Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) can play a vital role with management to ensure that equal opportunity is present in all aspects of employment and program delivery. SEPMs also can assist managers in areas such as special recruiting, promotion panels, outreach, development and implementation of the Affirmative Employment Plan. In order to maintain diversity in our workforce, SEPMs must continue to receive your full support.”**

**A copy of the letter will be attached to the official hard copy of the minutes.**

It was noted that no “Robert’s Rules of Order” had been seen, though an email from Lillian Woods to Judy Topalanchik to order these books was noted. We need to check with Judy Topalanchik.

The Special Emphasis Program Managers gave reports:

**Casey Shrader - Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager’s report**

- Not all of budget spent yet

**Vicki Scott - American Indian/Alaskan Native Program Manager’s report**

- Scheduled for SEPM training August 23-25 in D.C.
- Not all of budget spent yet

**James Dodson - Black Emphasis Program Manager’s report**

- Scheduled for SEPM training August 23-25 in D.C.
- Plans to order books for library with remaining budget

**Wanda Smith - Federal Women’s Program Manager’s report**

- Provided a draft copy of Annual FWP Report to all present
- FWP Report format to be used by other SEPMs now
- Portion of budget left, plans to go on library additions
- Reported highlights from USDA and NRCS forums at Federally Employed Women conference

**Isaac Wolford – Disability Emphasis Program Manager’s report**

- Reasonable Accommodations – heads up that SEPMs, possibly other CRAC members, will probably be doing reviews of “Access to Facilities by Persons with Disabilities”

Casey Shrader reported on his presentation at the Principle Staff Meeting in June.

The CRAC reviewed their items of responsibility included in State Business Plan, and discussed changes, completions, and upcoming work. Those items were:

- Civil Rights Compliance Reviews have been completed in the South Area. James Dodson and Wanda Smith reviewed the Princeton and Union Field Offices. 2 additional reviews were planned, for Pt. Pleasants in the West and Martinsburg in the East. The East was possibly moved to Elkins and planned for July, but did not happen. The CRAC moved to request the status of Civil Rights Reviews. Vicki Scott will check with Pat Bowen about East Reviews.
- A Review of Awards was scheduled for this meeting, but Larry Sargent was absent, and did not send the information.

- **The CRAC helped Larry develop the Affirmative Employment Plan; item complete.**
- **The CRAC is currently looking at the state Outreach Plan, and drafting new items 8/4/04. Another CRAC meeting will be planned prior to the end of the current fiscal year for further work on this plan.**
- **Review of Training Requests was completed during the May CRAC Teleconference**
- **Discussion on Civil Rights Awards Policy and Draft Guidance – didn't get to in earlier meeting. Draft nomination form and draft policy recommendations developed in this meeting, will be forwarded to State Conservationist Lillian Woods.**

**Two SEPM's (FWPM Wanda Smith and DEPM Isaac Wolford) and the CRAC Chair Carlos Cole have expiring terms. The CRAC moved to recommend extension of these terms 1 year to keep experienced and trained staff on the CRAC in light of new responsibilities being loaded on the CRAC. The three staff involved each agreed to continue in their current SEPM/CRAC positions pending the State Conservationist's decision on this recommendation.**

**Chairperson Carlos Cole praised Vicki Scott for her AI/AN presentation at a West Area meeting.**

**The committee discussed the back burner status of the Retention/Recruitment team.**

**Casey Shrader reported on progress with the Civil Rights Advisory Committee Website Casey. Items noted for website:**

- **SEPM's needs list resource library contents or post their catalog**
- **Purpose of FWP needed included**
- **Casey Shrader requested CRAC minutes, but already has in electronic format**
- **Request SEPM poster be corrected and reproduced**

**The CRAC discussed the State Civil Rights Review upcoming in 2005.**

**CRAC achievements and fulfillment of responsibilities needs to be reflected as achieved on the State Business Plan.**

**The committee feels that CRAC meeting agendas should go out to all employees, like the minutes.**

**Chairperson Carlos Cole will draft a letter to STC Lillian Woods explaining our concerns about things the CRAC is to assist on, such as:**

- **Outreach Plan**
- **Review of Awards, but advisor Larry Sargent not present to provide the necessary information.**

**Copies of the letter will be sent to Charlotte Wertz and Larry Sargent.**

**Also, to be included in this letter, are recommendations for Outreach from CRAC. These could possibly be submitted by email or via a teleconference. Potential recommendations discussed:**

- **SEPM's work together to attend job fairs, etc.**
- **Make Direct Hiring possible at events with HR and management present (direct hire contact at NHQ is Denise Decker)**
- **Special recruitment, etc. for Interns and students.**

**Other items for the letter to State Conservationist Lillian Woods:**

- **CRAC will continue with implementation of the Long Range Plan. The CRAC consensus is to include items in state Business Plan for 2005 rather than do an individual CRAC Business Plan.**
- **More information is needed from Human Resources in order for SEPM's to be able to meet analysis and reporting requirements, such as the quarterly DN-714 Reports**
- **CRAC recommends that Larry Sargent be asked to send copies of DN-714 Reports with "open by addressee only" to CRAC prior to the next meeting.**
- **In the absence of nominations for DEPM and FWPM, the CRAC recommends extending terms for these 2 SEPM's by 1 year.**
- **The CRAC recommends term count for General Members begin as of October 1, 2004.**

**The committee thoroughly discussed the Civil Rights Award policy. Recommendations for Civil Rights Award Policy were developed, to be forwarded to STC Lillian Woods. This policy is in line with the National Civil Rights Award policy. This will allow a winning WV NRCS Civil Rights Award nomination to meet the criteria for a National NRCS Civil Rights Award nomination. The CRAC also developed a recommended Nomination Form for the Civil Rights Award.**

**Chairperson Carlos Cole is to send out copies of the 1999 outreach plan – our most recent.**

**Chairperson Carlos Cole is to send out copies of past state Civil Rights Review, and copies of those from other states he has obtained.**

**Wanda Smith will represent the CRAC at the next Principle Staff Meeting, not yet scheduled but due in late September or early October. She plans to present a summary of each Special Emphasis Program Manager's Annual Report and a summary of the Civil Rights Advisory Committee's Annual Report.**

**Casey Shrader will work on Outreach Plan Recommendations.**

**The next meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2004, 10 a.m. Morgantown, NRCS State Office. Casey Shrader is to schedule a conference room.**

**The meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.**