

Local Working Group Meeting- Franklin County
November 28, 2011

Meeting Minutes:

The annual meeting of the Franklin County Local Work Group was held at the West Farmington Grange Hall #12 on Nov. 28th from 10 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.

The meeting was attended by Senator Tom Saviello; farmer/landowner and State Representative Russell Black; Consulting Foresters: Peter Tracy, Mike Kankainen, Robert Leso; farmers/landowners: Randy Hall, Rodney Hall, Sally Peniuk, Sandra Griswold, Fred Hardy (County Commissioner), Pamela Prodan (Foothills Land Conservancy), Ed Wurple, Linton Robinson, Sandra Webber, and Evangeline Taett; Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District (FCSWCD): Pam Harnden (Chairperson), Thayden Farrington (Member), Patty Cormier (Maine Forest Service Forester and Board Treasurer), and Rosetta Thompson (Executive Director); USDA Farm Service Agency: Gary Raymond; USDA NRCS personnel: Paul Hersey (District Conservationist) and Jade Gianforte (Soil Conservationist).

Pam Harnden opened the meeting at 10 a.m. and introduced Paul Hersey, District Conservationist. Paul spent the next hour reviewing and discussing the 2011 program allocation summary, 2012 EQIP application requests, and the Franklin County Resource Assessment priorities. The group then recommended the following sub-categories and allocation percentages:

Animal Waste:	53%
Forestry:	40%
Cropland:	2%
Pasture:	3%
Small Farm Irrigation (Water Conservation):	1%
Seasonal High Tunnel:	1%

It was recommended that organic applications within Franklin County be addressed in the State-wide initiative instead of creating a sub-category since Franklin County has had success in the past with handling Organic applications in this manner.

The local ranking questions from last year were then reviewed and the group made recommendations to keep questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 the same as last year. They recommended two new questions-numbers 4 and 8. The group finished up by recommending the amount of points to award each question. Below is a summary of the local ranking questions that were discussed:

1. Plant condition: Noxious & invasive plants and plant pests do not meet QC at the benchmark condition but will with the proposed action? If yes, award **40 pts**.
2. Water Quality: Excessive nutrients & organics in surface water (Non-forestland) not at the QC at the benchmark condition but will be with the proposed action? If yes, award **60 pts**.
3. Water Quality: Excessive suspended sediment & turbidity in surface water not at the QC at the benchmark condition but will be with the proposed action? If yes, award **60 pts**.
4. Is the applicant certified organic? If yes, award **20 pts**.
5. If the applicant previously had, or currently has an EQIP contract, has it been and is it now on schedule and in full compliance? If yes, award **15 pts**.
6. Is this the applicant's first EQIP contract application? If yes, award **15 pts**.
7. If forestland, are the land units included in this application certified in a verifiable third-party

forest certification system such as the American Tree Farm System, Forest Stewardship Council Certified Group, or Certified Resource Manager's client pool? If yes, award **20 pts.**

8. Does the application include a roofed HUA and/or roofed waste storage facility? If yes, award **20pts.**

The following item was also discussed during the meeting:

Sandra Webber and Evangeline Taett brought up concerns about stream bank erosion and the need for stabilization of major streams and rivers such as the Sandy and Carrabassett. Paul stated that EQIP can no longer address these issues on major watercourses. Russell Black and Tom Saviello stated that this issue is being addressed at the state level and progress is being made with DEP to resolve some of these concerns.

The meeting participants had questions on how much "weight" these local questions have on the outcome of the total ranking score. Since, Paul and Jade did not yet have the National and State ranking questions for 2012, they could not fully answer this question. The example was given that a ranking score is typically 500-1500 points and the local questions would typically come into play in a tie-breaker situation.

Sally Peniuk brought up a concern that she felt dairy farms were getting funded in priority over goat farms. Jade Gianforte explained that funding is never based on type of farm, but on the existing resource concern presented on the farm. No one type of livestock has priority over another. Tom Saviello also stated that a farm with manure running into a stream would have a higher funding priority than a farm with several hundred feet of field between the manure source and water source.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.

Recorded by:
Jade Gianforte
and
Rosetta Thompson