

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 -- Telephone (518) 457-3738

State Committee Meeting

State Office Building
207 Genesee Street, Utica, NY
December 15, 2015

Meeting at a Glance:

- The Agricultural Non-Point Source Round 22 Round 22 RFP was approved.
- The Climate Resilient Farming RFP closed on Monday, December 14th. Proposals are currently going through a completeness and eligibility review. A ranked list of scores should be available to the SWCC by the February 2016 Meeting.

Present:

D. Stein, Chair; J. Dickinson, D. Brass, Voting Members; B. Steinmuller, Assistant Director; C. Frasier, B., B. Bzduch, SWCC; G. Kist, NRCS; PJ Emerick, CDEA; L. Williams, Farm Bureau.

Call to Order

D. Stein called the meeting to order.

Review and Approve Minutes

D. Brass moved to approve the November 10, 2015 draft minutes; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed, carried.

Correspondence

There were no correspondence made available for this meeting. B. Steinmuller advised the Committee that letters will be sent out to District who have outstanding contracts in need of closing-out.

Agricultural Non-Point Source Program Discussion, B. Bzduch

Status Report

Appended to the minutes below.

Round 21 Plan of Work Update

B. Bzduch gave an update on the plan of work review and contracting process for Round 21. There are 26 out of 39 plans of work in and forwarded to the Department's Counsel's office for review and processing. One award is being turned back due to the farmer having already completed the BMP system with their own funds.

Amendments for State Committee Review

Region 1

Cattaraugus County SWCD – Conewango Creek Ag Nutrient Management Project – Round 20 – C701147

Request: Change in Landowner

Reason: The original Landowner has sold the operation and the new landowner would like to continue with the project. The new landowner is committed to completing the project as originally proposed.

*Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, approves the change in landowner.
Previous Amendments: None*

Region 3

Schoharie County SWCD – Eureka Farms Ag Waste Storage Project – Round 20 – C701187

Request: Change in Budget

Reason: The District would like to move funds from Engineering Services line to the BMP Implementation line because the project came in over estimates and engineering costs were under estimate. The cost share percentage will remain the same.

*Note: Cliff Frasier, Region 3 AEA, approves the change in budget.
Previous Amendments: None*

Region 4

St. Lawrence County SWCD – C. Putman – Round 20 – C701185

Request: Change in Budget

Reason: The District is requesting to move some unspent engineering funds to personal services to cover additional hours of work provided by the District. The District is as requesting to move the remaining unspent engineering funds to BMP implementation line to provide additional BMP funds to the Landowner. The cost share percentage for sponsor and landowner will increase slightly.

*Note: Bob Brower, Region 4 AEA, approves the change in budget.
Previous Amendments: None*

Round 22 – RFP/Application Review and Consideration of Approval

B. Bzduch handed out a current timeline for AgNPS Round 22. Consensus was reached approving this timeline (appended below). B. Bzduch distributed copies of the Round 22 Application Form containing the SWCC requested questions concerning expansion related practice systems. Bzduch directed the SWCC's attention to page 4, question 15A. – G. Discussion ensued regarding the need to gather information through these questions on the factors concerning expansion related practice systems. The SWCC will be analyzing the answers provided to these questions to determine the need and scope of a potential policy to address re-occurring farmer participation in the program. The proposal evaluators will be instructed not to score the proposals any differently based on the answers to these questions. The only existing scoring criterion on expansion related practices deal with cost-effectiveness stating that for expansion related practice systems, a higher landowner contribution is given than what is required by law. Further discussion ensued on the clarity of the questions and the need to accompany the new questions with detailed instructions in the RFP Highlights and future webinars.

In addition, Bzduch and Steinmuller re-introduced the request from DEC to consider adding another factor in receiving the four preference points under the Proposal Rating Sheet. DEC is asking for preference for projects that are in a watershed with a DEC approved 9 element plan. Discussion ensued. The Committee thought the request had merits. *However, they would like the DEC to give a thorough presentation at an upcoming meeting so that the details and benefits of the 9 element plan can be discussed before consideration is given to add this category to the list of potential preference.*

D. Brass moved to approve the Round 22 RFP and Application Form; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Annual Plan of Work Approval

The following Annual Plans of Work for 2016 District activities were approved: Allegany SWCD, Clinton SWCD, Rensselaer SWCD, Wayne SWCD and a resubmitted plan for Cortland SWCD.

J. Dickinson moved to approve the above referenced Annual Plans of Work; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Partnership Reports

NYACD, D. Brass- is also a NYACD Divisional Rep and as such provided a brief report to the Committee on NYACD efforts to hire a new Executive Director. Brass noted that interviews were recently held and a decision reached. Currently, NYACD is awaiting a response from the selected candidate.

NYSCDEA, PJ Emerick – Thank you very much for allowing me to provide a brief report on the NYSCDEA.

- During the December CDEA meeting, the 2016 WQS event planning was finalized.
- The potential for a Leadership Conference in 2016 was discussed.
- CDEA is seeking award nominations. Award nomination information is available from Division VIII representative Anne Marie Calabro
- CDEA is looking into the CREP re-enrollment issue. Lydia Brinkley from the USC provided a report on the concerns.
- PJ will be representing the NYSCDEA at the upcoming NACD meeting in Reno, Nevada.
- The next CDEA Board meeting will be held in January or February at the Crowne Plaza in Syracuse. Once the date is finalized, an agenda will be sent out to everyone.

State Committee, Cliff Frasier – advised the Committee that the SWCC Municipal Sub-committee Meeting will be held in January. Once a date is finalized, an agenda will be sent out. Frasier also advised the Committee on the status of the recently awarded projects through the Consolidated Funding Agreement (CFA). This past round included both the DOS's Waterfront Revitalization Program as well as DEC's Water Quality Improvement Program. Districts have historically received substantial support for conservation projects through these programs and this year's solicitation through the CFA has proven no different. The SWCC extends their congratulations to Districts receiving awards and projects through local partners. The SWCC would also like to thank the DOS and DEC for their on-going support of Conservation District activities through these programs.

NY Farm Bureau, L. Williams – updated the Committee on the recently held Annual Meeting. Williams also discussed the status of the new CAFO Permit. Steinmuller thanked L. Williams on her brief and told the Committee that he will ask Greg Albrecht and Mike Latham to give the Committee a full update on the drafting of the new permit.

USDA-NRCS, G. Kist – provided a report on the CR that is currently funding the federal government including USDA-NRCS programs and operations. Kist also provided an update on the RCPP. Kist noted that two full proposals were submitted in the State, one for the Great Lakes (Genesee River) watershed and one for the Upper Susquehanna Watershed. Kist finally reported on the 4-Way Partnership Meeting that will be held on Thursday, December 17th at the NRCS State Office. The focus of the meeting will be on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that serves as the foundation for the conservation partnership.

State Committee, B. Bzduch – advised the SWCC that the staff will be focusing on increasing the timeliness of reporting for the AgNPS contracts, including interim and final reporting.

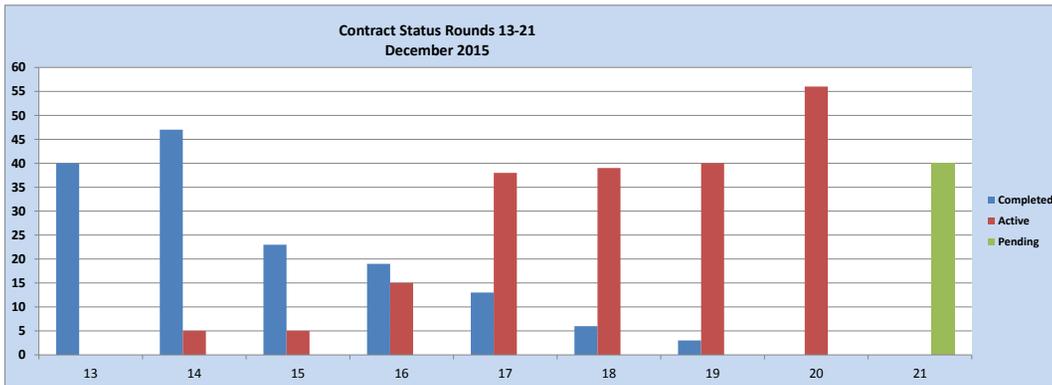
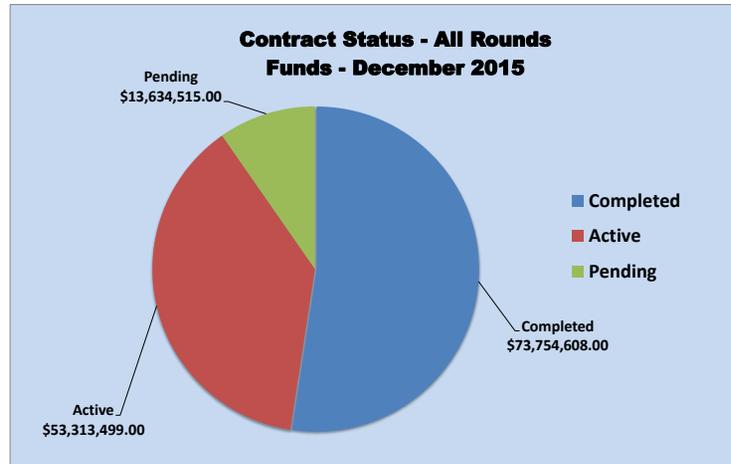
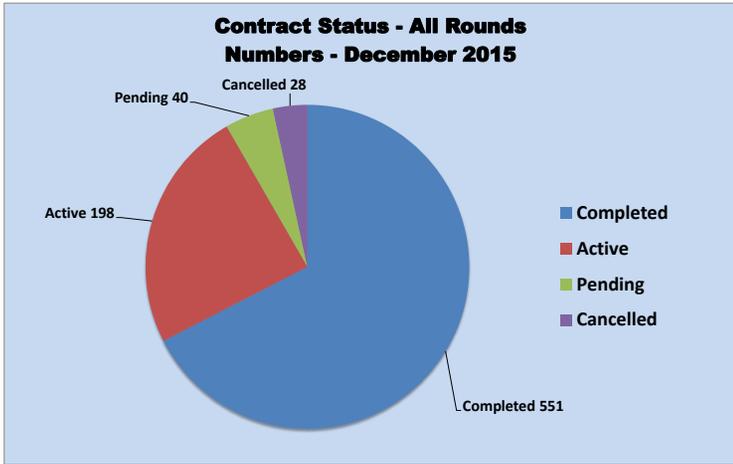
State Committee, B. Steinmuller – noted that the Climate Resilient Farming RFP closed on Monday, December 14th at 4:30. In response, the RFP received applications for \$2.5 million (\$1.4 million was available), and all three tracks are oversubscribed. 17 applications were received, from 12 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, demonstrating interest and commitment by farmers to climate change concerns. The proposals are currently undergoing a completeness and eligibility review and will be scored over the next few weeks. Steinmuller indicated that the ranked list and resolution authorizing awards should be made available to the Committee in February.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for January 19, 2015 in Albany, NY. A videoconference will be available for this meeting with specific information and satellite locations identified on the upcoming agenda.

Audiocast of this meeting is available at:

<http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/webcasting.html>

December 15, 2015 SWCC Meeting, Utica, NY



Round	Active	Active Funding	Cancelled	Cancelled Funding	Completed	Completed Funding	Pending	Pending Funding
13	0	\$0.00	2	\$0.00	40	\$7,557,564.69	0	\$0.00
14	5	\$2,082,287.82	1	\$0.00	47	\$9,449,451.98	0	\$0.00
15	5	\$1,630,212.95	1	\$0.00	23	\$5,095,971.98	0	\$0.00
16	15	\$4,458,345.15	3	\$0.00	19	\$3,828,365.92	0	\$0.00
17	38	\$9,758,732.75	0	\$0.00	13	\$1,547,946.28	0	\$0.00
18	39	\$9,878,742.45	0	\$0.00	6	\$1,754,984.65	0	\$0.00
19	40	\$11,817,433.05	2	\$0.00	3	\$786,039.13	0	\$0.00
20	56	\$13,687,745.11	0	\$0.00	3	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
21	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	40	\$13,634,515.46



Timeline for Development and Release of Round 22 RFP
AgNPS Grant Program

August/September 2015 – Hold TAC meeting to discuss AgNPS Program policies / procedures and make recommendation for any substantial changes to program policies and / or RFP

December 2015 – Present RFP to SWCC for review and approval

January 2016 - Release RFP

February 2016 – Hold RFP training webinar on proposal submission and other significant changes

February 2016 – Initiate Q&A

March 2016 - Conclude Q&A to allow time for the SWCC review

March 2016 – Present Q&A to the SWCC for review

April 2016 - Proposal submission date (Monday 4:30 p.m.), review proposals for eligibility

Late April 2016 - Hold TAC Meeting of reviewers to discuss review process and format

Late June 2016 – Scores due back to the SWCC Albany Office

Late June/Early July 2016 – Hold TAC Meeting of reviewers to discuss scores

July 2016 – Present ranked list to the State Committee for approval

July/August 2016 – Have final ranked list and project descriptions ready for release of awards

August/September 2016– Upon release of awards, send out plan of work materials

October 2016 – Receive and review plans of work and develop contracts

January 2017 – Have fully executed contracts in place