

Leaders in Conservation

Fostering Partnerships While Strengthening Civil Rights



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

2016 Executive Summary

The second annual national joint leadership meeting of the Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO) and Women in NRCS (WIN) was held August 5th and 6th in St. Louis, Missouri. This diverse and unique offering of training, professional development and mentoring was made possible through support from the NRCS Office of the Chief, the



Nick Vira, Ivan Dozier, and Christine Taliga



Cara Clark and Drenda Williams

sponsoring State Conservationists, JR Flores of Missouri and Ivan Dozier of Illinois, the Missouri and Illinois Chapters of the Soil and Water Conservation Societies (SWCS), Women Land and Legacy, the Xerces Society, the Missouri Pheasants Forever and the National Employee Development Center (NEDC).

This year's program drew on the diversity, civil rights, and partnership components of leadership and provided attendees valuable tools to assist the Agency with its program delivery to underserved communities and in supporting a diverse network. A strong technical track included in the program, served to strengthen our participants' Conservation Delivery repertoire with contributions from the NRCS Ecological Science Division, the world renowned Missouri Botanical Gardens and Zoo, and the Xerces Society.

Training for Conservation Professionals

- Effective Special Emphasis Program Management (SEPM)
- Women Caring for the Land
- Managing for Excellence

"This is what good government looks like." — Kirk Hanlin, Assistant Chief, NRCS



Strengthening Civil Rights

58 NRCS employees contributed and participated in these professional development opportunities through a partnership with the National Employee Development Center. Managing for Excellence provided many up and coming employees the opportunity to attend the leadership conference and the unique opportunity to interact with agency leaders. Women Caring for the Land provided attendees a greater understanding of different communication styles to make a successful connection with women land owners. The SEPM training included a full two-day program that culminated in a leadership panel interactive session joined by the national civil rights committee members. The National Civil Rights Advisory Committee meeting was held in coordination with these training opportunities, further providing networking and professional development for the training attendees.



Top NRCS Leaders Empower Employees

From the Assistant Chief to Regional and State Conservationists, employees and agency leaders benefited from the opportunity to interact, network, recruit and mentor. The Assistant Chief, Kirk Hanlin, spent two days in the field interacting with Missouri NRCS staff sharing his experiences and providing staff members the opportunity to meet with him and interact. Mr. Hanlin went on to provide a great presentation and interact with conference attendees. Seven state conservationists, two regional conservationists, two national headquarters division directors and national headquarters staff, shared their expertise, mentoring advice and encouragement with program attendees, over two days of presentations. Incorporating technical presentations, leadership development, and mentoring, with the interaction of NRCS's top leaders served as inspiration to aspiring NRCS staff. Attendees were provided a unique experience to interact with leaders and others from across the nation.

Additional Educational Offerings

The technical offerings continued into Friday and Saturday evenings and included topics ranging from cultural competency and LGBT, to bringing back pollinators, native cover crops, and remote sensing. A total of 79 conference registrants participated in six break-out sessions included accountability, civil rights, leadership and technical tracks focusing on NRCS programs and initiatives.



The diverse offerings of technical training was geared to benefit employees in their daily activities. Ample opportunities for mentoring and supporting fellow employees and their individual development was also provided.