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Regular Minutes
AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team Meeting
Columbia, South Carolina

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PRESERVATION

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Date: December 20, 1996

Persons Present: Robert J. Eaddy, Farm Service Agency, Project Director
Walley Turner, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Project Director
Gregg White, Rural Economic & Community Development, Project Director

1. The team discussed the quarterly report due in January 1996. Each member reported on work progress their rural development teams had accomplished during the months of October, November and December.

2. Recruitment

NRCS now has 20 members on board.

RECD has 8 members on board

FSA has 5 members on board.

3. Training Activities

FSA conducted job skills training with their members during October 1995. During November and December the team members were involved in compiling and analyzing crop and livestock data from Extension Service, Land Grant Universities, USDA and the private sector on Alternate diversified crops and livestock. Community educational meetings with farmers are scheduled for January 1996.

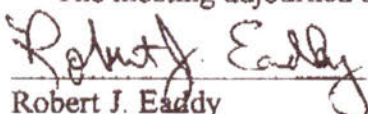
RECD conducted their orientation training October 30 - November 3, 1995.

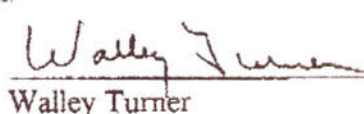
4. Cluster Meetings

Joint cluster meetings are now being scheduled for February 15, 1996.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.


Robert J. Eaddy


Walley Turner


Gregg White

Regular Minutes
AmeriCrops/USDA State Management Team Meeting
Columbia, South Carolina

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Date: October 25, 1995

Persons Present: Robert J. Eaddy, Farm Service Agency, Project Director
Walley Turner, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Project Director
Gregg White, Rural Economic & Community Development, Project Director

1. The team selected the following members to serve in each of the four functions:

- A. Project Management Liaison - Robert Eaddy
- B. Data Reporting Liaison - Walley Turner
- C. Cluster Meeting Liaison - Gregg White
- D. External Affairs Liaison - Walley Turner

2. Recruitment

NRCS now has 20 members on board.

RECD has 8 members on board.

FSA has 4 members on board and will recruit one more member next pay period.

3. Training Activities

FSA and NRCS conducted their orientation and administrative training October 2 - 13, 1995.

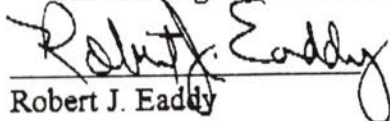
RECD will conduct their orientation training October 30 - November 3, 1995.

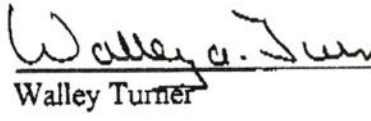
4. Cluster Meetings

Joint cluster meetings are now being scheduled for November 3, 1995.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.


Robert J. Eaddy


Walley Turner


Gregg White

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm
Service
Agency

Androscoggin/Sagadahoc FSA
27 Westminster Street
Lewiston, Maine 04240-3531

November 16, 1995

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TO: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA *Mike*
FROM: Mike Tardy, Maine USDA AmeriCorps Project Director, FSA
SUBJECT: Interagency Management Team

Maine AmeriCorps USDA has agreed to the following
assignments for the Interagency Management Team:

Project Management Liason-Richard Baird
Maine State NRCS Office
5 Godfrey Drive
Orono, ME 04473
TELEPHONE (207)866-7241
FAX (207)866-7262

Data Reporting Liason-Richard Baird

Cluster Meeting Liason-Michael Tardy
Androscoggin-Sagadahoc FSA Office
27 Westminster Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
TELEPHONE (207)783-9194
FAX (207)783-4101

External Affairs Liason-Michael Tardy

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL		# of pages ▶ 1
To <i>Joel Berg</i>	From <i>Mike Tardy</i>	
Dept./Agency <i>AmeriCorps</i>	Phone # <i>207-783-9194</i>	
Fax # <i>202-720-4614</i>	Fax # <i>207-783-4101</i>	
NSN 7540-01-317-7368	5099-101	GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

cc. Richard Baird, Maine USDA AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS
Arnold Roach, State Executive Director, FSA
David Musselman, State Conservationist, NRCS



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation
Service

P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C.
20013

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September 14, 1995

SUBJECT: Comments on the AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Teams

TO: Joel Berg, Director National Service USDA

I am providing you with my comments on refining the approach to State Management Teams for AmeriCorps USDA.

Page 3: The project management liaison meets the Corporation's request for a single USDA point of contact within a state. Complaints and questions from the Corporation or State Commissions should be directed to this person. Internal complaints and questions should go directly to the agency representatives. This role is for external contact, which the project management liaison would then take to the agency representative or to the group to resolve. Management responsibility still resides with project directors and managers who have designed the projects or are directly supervising the teams.

Page 3: The role described for the Data Reporting Liaison may be a duplication of services provided by the agencies. In FY'96, we are focusing on streamlining processes for implementing AmeriCorps. The initial attempt by the Corporation to have member enrollment and termination forms sent directly to the national service office is a process that should be perfected, rather than changed. The agency employees designated with the responsibility to complete or sign off on forms should send them directly to the national service. There is no need to insert anyone into this process. To do so decreases the efficiency. Instead, attention should be placed on working with the corporation to identify the problem areas and to make needed improvements. The fewer people to handle these forms the better.

What happens to forms once they get to the corporation? Assuming they are properly filled out and mailed to the correct address in a timely manner, the job is done. The issue then is with the corporation in entering the information into the data base and not having to duplicate their efforts. I will be asking project directors to send a roster to the national office indicating the list of members, dates that enrollment forms were sent in, dates of termination etc. These can be used as a reference, if there are questions we can track the member, but it is still the state agency who must respond.

Quarterly reports should remain the responsibility of each agency to coordinate and submit to the Department. This provides us with a comprehensive view of AmeriCorps

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implementation and accomplishments in our agency. The work that is being done through AmeriCorps is tied to the fiscal management of each agency. To assign this task to another person is a duplication of work. We should continue to improve the quarterly reporting within agencies and as a coordinated USDA project.

I would change the name of this position and have them take on some of the duties assigned to the Cluster Meeting Liaison and collecting forms for special service days such as the launch, M.L. King Day of Service and the National Service Day in April.

It would follow from these revisions, that your statement No. 3 on page 4 would no longer apply as a benefit of the new approach.

No. 2 is a benefit that we want, but there are inconsistencies between the vision for the culture of AmeriCorps and agency cultures. Creating congruency between the two is not a simple process that will occur from creating these teams. This should not be oversimplified.

I would reword No. 7 (pg. 4) to read: Increase in program efficiency and effectiveness through better agency coordination. Improve delivery of services and local problem-solving through coordination and shared expertise across agency lines.

No. 6 and no. 8 repeat the phrase "...bolstering the overall Team USDA reorganization efforts...", I would eliminate one.

I will be out of the office the entire week of September 18, 1996. Call me when you have the final revisions.



PAULA COLE JONES
Program Coordinator
National Service and
Volunteer Programs



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation
Service

P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C.
20013

September 15, 1995

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SUBJECT: Further Comments on the AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Teams

TO: Joel Berg, Director National Service USDA

I received your revisions to the proposed functions of State Management Teams. I regret the delay, but we need to have more discussion on the position of the Data Reporting Liaison. In this first year, the process of establishing an effective data base to account for the enrollment of AmeriCorps members and their completion of the program, did not work well. We are only one component in the system. There are problems that the Corporation must correct in order for this data base to work. I do not support the national office taking on the administrative load, in anticipation that things will be the same in FY'96. Under reorganization, our national office is to reduce/eliminate operations and processing.

The Corporation has reduced the number of member forms by half. This will ease an overburdened system and we do not know what other changes they have made to improve this process. All of these forms are filed in our state offices, and we do not need to duplicate this work. Currently, project directors are to send the forms directly to the Corporation when a member is enrolled. To give this responsibility to another entity, the Data Reporting Liaison, is not the best approach. With forty states in the program, if we insert another person in the process, you cannot expect to improve efficiency.

We should continue to do whatever is necessary to provide information for FY'95 projects, so that all eligible members receive their education benefit. We need to work with the Corporation on improving the system for FY'96. I have proposed that states send a roster to us, rather than enrollment and termination forms. This roster could be sent by us, to the Corporation for verification that the members are correctly entered into the data base. We would know ahead of time if there are problems, and we can contact the states to make corrections. This keeps forms going directly to the office that enters them into the data base. Our position is a proactive check and balance, that supports the Corporation in improving its system, and reduces paperwork and bureaucracy.

On the quarterly report, the interagency workgroup should hear what you are trying to accomplish in formatting the USDA report (September 26th meeting). This week we discussed consolidating and coordinating our accomplishments. We, at the national level, need a clear understanding of what our reporting needs are, and the best way to collect our information. To turn this over to the Data Reporting Liaisons, will only complicate the matter, before we have designed an adequate report format. Our decision should meet the needs of the Department in reporting accomplishments for the national service grant.

It is equally important, that we meet the needs of our agencies in accounting for allocations dedicated to national service.

To avoid further delay in setting up the State Management Teams, I recommend that we delete the Data Reporting Liaison role until we have reached agreement on the issues I've outlined in this memo. I support the following three positions: Project Management Liaison, Cluster Meeting Liaison and External Affairs Liaison.

Paula Cole Jones

PAULA COLE JONES
Program Coordinator
National Service and
Volunteer Programs

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Completely Accountable

USDA

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