Executive Report

The 2017 annual National Joint Leadership meeting, a product of collaboration between the Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO), The National Organization of Professional Women in NRCS (WIN), and the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees (NOPHNRCSE) was held March 17th and 18th in Grapevine, Texas, following a week of Mission-related training in the same location.

This unique and diverse offering of training, professional development, motivation, and mentoring was made possible through the outstanding partnership of Mr. Salvatore Salinas, Texas State Conservationist, the National Employee Development Center (NEDC), the hard work of the employee organizations, and the support and assistance of NRCS National Leadership from Headquarters and across the nation.

The 2017 program built on the success of prior collaboration, drawing twice the number of attendees as in 2016, and demonstrated the value-added benefit to considering diversity and inclusion, civil rights, and partnership components of leadership. Attendees came away with valuable tools for Agency program delivery to underserved communities, a renewed sense of purpose and engagement, and ways to translate leadership to every job title and situation.
Training for Conservation Professionals

- Special Emphasis Program Manager Training
- Leadership Training
- Soil Health Workshop

Building Cultural Competence

- Improving Conservation Delivery for Women Land Owners and Producers
- Working Effectively with Asian-American Pacific Islander Producers
- The National Civil Rights Advisory Committee to the Chief (NCRACC) met in Grapevine to lend its support to the partnership.

Developing Successional Leadership

- Supervising for Excellence
- Managing for Excellence
- Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery

Associate Chief for Operations Tom Christiansen provides inspirational opening remarks.

Texas State Conservationist Salvador Salinas accepts outstanding partner award from WiN President Karri Honaker.
Top NRCS Leaders Empower and Inspire

Twenty State Conservationists made the investment of time and energy to participate in the Leadership meeting, with eleven more top agency leaders including Regional Conservationists, Directors, Branch Chiefs, and Associate and Deputy Chiefs representing the full spectrum of National Headquarters.

Each one shared expertise and experience, was available for informal conversation, and encouraged and inspired program attendees over two days of presentations and activities.

More than 165 participants from NRCS nationwide contributed to and participated in these professional development opportunities through a partnership with the National Employee Development Center (NEDC).

Managing for Excellence afforded to many field staff members the chance to attend the leadership conference and to interact with agency leaders in the course of completing mandatory training.

The Special Emphasis Program Manager training was a two-day program culminating in an interactive leadership panel session joined by the NCRACC members meeting at Grapevine.

Improving Conservation Delivery for Women Land Owners and Producers provided attendees a greater understanding of different communication styles to make a successful connection with women land owners.

The offering of Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery, in conjunction with the Leadership Training, made a great combination of theory, skill, knowledge, and seeing it all put into action by real agency leaders.
Additional Offerings

To jump-start the leadership training and include staff arriving Thursday or leaving Friday, the lobby became the site of a participatory dance hour, with Misha Vargas of NOPHNRCSE taking the lead with an introduction to Salsa dance, followed by Jenny Johnston of APIO encouraging all to try the steps, gestures, and meaning of the Hula dance in Polynesian culture.

Employee organization members serving on the planning committee learned about agency procedures and protocols by working through them to prepare for the event.

Scholarship and award presentations were woven into the meal and evening times. An auction to benefit scholarship recipients was held Friday evening, featuring many items donated by, and often created by, agency staff members with skills and talents quite outside their job descriptions.