

Association of Northeast Extension Directors

Meeting Notes and Action Items

NEED March Retreat – Session 1
 March 2, 2026
 2:00-4:00 PM ET

Attendance: Bill Miller, Andy Turner, Amy Loader, James McKane, Jason Bolton, Erik Ervin, Lisa Townson, Jeff Hyde, Jinhee Kim, Jenn Volk, Brian schilling, Tsakani Ngomane, Gulni Ozbay, Ali Dunigan.

Agenda item	Action taken/To take
<p><u>Welcome and NEED Business</u></p> <p>Accept February meeting summary and affirm today’s agenda.</p> <p>Project updates & tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NEED Seed Grants – Due date for letters of intent is March 2nd. NEED decided that Ali will review letters of intent based on simple rubric. Those that meet all requirements would be asked to submit a full proposal. Those that do not, will not. Full proposals will be reviewed by a committee -- Jason Bolton, Brian Schilling, Erik Ervin. - Awards Celebration Webinar – Coming up on March 20th. If you have not registered, please do! If you have not passed the information on to your LGU/staff, please do! https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/0FM-Cu04RF-ck3XhCxcLjw - ECOP Awards – Pass to Ali for information. https://awards.extension.org/ <p>Committee updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECOP (Lisa Townson) – ECOP has received a proposal from ASSNA asking for ECOP endorsement of a new nutrition education program plan. ECOP representatives want to make sure NEED members feel represented during that discussion. Reach out to Lisa, Andy, and Jinhee for a direct discussion if needed. - ECOP (Andy Turner) – Working on the Positive Youth Development sub-group of the Pillars (cross Extension and research) effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motion to accept the February meeting summary and to affirm the March Retreat Session 1 agenda – A. Loader/ E. Ervin/ Carried - NEED members are asked to register to attend the NEED Awards Celebration Webinar.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LEAD21 (Amy Loader) - Amy has been voted as the new Chair of the LEAD21 Board of Directors. - Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (Brian Schilling) – The RRDC has an incredible amount of data. Ideas from a recent board meeting include: Sabbatical opportunities for faculty (esp. data scientists and those interested in integrated data sets) and increased use from family and consumer sciences Extension professionals. - Extension Foundation Board (Erik Ervin) – The board will have a retreat at the University of Nebraska in April. - 4-H National Congress Board (Jeff Hyde) – Working on choosing a new event vendor for the event. This change will open the door for important discussions around timing and location. - ECOP 4H National Leadership Committee (Bill Miller)– Bill Miller’s term is winding down at the end of the summer. We should have a strong replacement. Our perspectives are unique and important. Bill has a priority of improving the way 4-H nationally invests in the science of the impacts of 4-H youth development. Will be putting together a team to create a Hatch Multistate Project on 4-H impacts. 	
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<p>Learning from the Western Region: Presentation and Discussion</p> <p>Welcomed Doreen Hauser Lindstrom, Executive Director of the Western Extension Directors Association (WEDA) and Dr. Kristopher Elliott, WEDA Chair-elect, and Vice Provost for Extension and Engagement and Director of the Oregon State University Extension Service.</p> <p>This is our final regional briefing! The Western Region is prepared to share...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How WEDA works. 2. What WEDA cares about now. 3. What WEDA members are excited about looking forward. <p>Other notable items of discussion included...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WEDA has great onboarding though Doreen. Very focused on providing value to new directors. - Adjustments to meeting structures - WEDA meetings are 2 hours. Purposeful effort is 	<p>No actions taken.</p>
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<p>made to make sure island territories can engage as fully fledged parts of WEDA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative culture is paramount. Members want to help and assist each other – not competitive. - WEDA values commmanderie beyond work – Open meetings with “question I have to ask” to make sure there is a clear opportunity for no-judgement connection. 	
<p>How will USDA’s R&D priorities be implemented by NIFA</p> <p>NEED welcomed Dr. Kal Kalavacharla to give a presentation and have a discussion with NEED.</p> <p>USDA R&D Priorities press release: https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/12/30/secretary-rollins-announces-new-priorities-research-and-development-2026.</p> <p>There was robust discussion on how NIFA will be implementing the priorities. NEED noted two items that NIFA should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intergenerational success in farming is important. This means investing in new farmers and helping farmers transition out. What tools are available to an older farmer who is passing off a farm or land to a new younger owner? - NIFA should be thinking about how to evaluate proposals for the Research Facilities Act – those with the most need may also have the least available assets free to put together a strong proposal 	<p>No actions taken.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p> <p>The 2nd session of NEED’s March retreat is Friday March 6, 12pm-2pm. Much of the conversation will be focused on the many assets of Extension programming and revenue generation including a review of the data NEED members submitted.</p>	