**Annotated Draft Agenda and Basis for Talking Points for Source Water Protection Meeting with NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs**

* **Introductions**
* **Purpose of meeting:** [Why are we here? State your goal for meeting with NRCS, then provide information in the points below that supports your goal.]

Key messages: We are seeking to develop a partnership based on mutual understanding, so that NRCS understands our source water concerns and we understand the NRCS programs that can protect sources of drinking water in our state. Both our programs focus on water quality and have a voluntary approach to landowner and operator participation. We have some ideas for geographic areas where we might be able to work together. *[Note: It is important to understand the flow of how NRCS works in your state, to know where to start building or strengthening the relationship, and to have the right people at your first meeting. In some states, the meeting might include the Resource Conservationist, for example.]*

* + **Source Water Protection Program** (Theme: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure) **State or local source water data:** [What is the foundation of your program’s source water protection priorities? What tools does your program use to identify priority watersheds (e.g., epa.gov/nutrientpollution/npdat or state-specific GIS maps or other tool)? Do you have GIS maps that you can share at this meeting? Or a before and after photo of a successful project? Are you willing to share your source water GIS files with NRCS (understanding that NRCS cannot share confidential farmer information, but may have aggregated information about conservation practices implemented at a larger scale)? Sharing this information can help identify targeted areas of mutual interest.]
  + **Source water priorities:** [specific watersheds, contaminants, sources. Key message: Conservation practices that USDA supports can help protect drinking water sources. Highlight examples of the conservation practices that might be helpful, e.g. stream buffers, fencing livestock out of streams and providing an alternative water source. See fieldtofaucet.org for some ideas.]
  + **Source Water Protection plans:** [examples of plans that included conservation practices and partners; success stories]
  + **Current partnerships** [relevant to ag-related projects; are any partners able to monitor water quality or bring other resources to the table?]
  + **Proposed project(s): opportunities for discussion** [Describe a specific source water protection project where you would like to work with NRCS to get conservation practices implemented to protect drinking water sources. Remember that it can take some planning time for any funds to be available. Many states conduct resource assessments by specific resource concern, water quality, for example. Inquire how your proposed approach might fit with their resource assessment and priorities. Key message: This project would protect (or help restore) an important water resource, and we look forward to a dialogue with NRCS on this or other options.]
* **NRCS overview**
  + **Current programs and priorities**
  + **Experience with implementing National Water Quality Initiative**
  + **Source water protection local priorities for 2018 Farm Bill**
* **Discussion**
  + **Potential joint project(s)**
  + **Additional information needed**
  + **Additional potential partners**
  + **Appropriate process to follow in contacting potential partners**
* **Next Steps**
  + **Source water program & NRCS contacts** [identify lead from your program and from NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, for follow-up discussions/actions]
  + [Note:*Once you've scoped this out, and something productive might happen, engage the leadership of your organization, so you can be clear with NRCS that you have the support of your program leaders. Also, to the extent possible, show a broad commitment from other partners.]*