

PACD Southeast Region
Minutes of meeting
March 28, 2008
Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia, PA

Reading of Minutes - Corrections to minutes for Bucks County – Cathy Skwar- spelling
Motion requested to approve minutes as corrected from October 5, 2007 meeting.

- On a motion by Drew Gilchrist, Montgomery County CCD.
- Seconded by Donald Mack, Northampton County CCD.
- The Meeting minutes from October 5, 2007 were approved.

Welcome comments and introductions by Harold Kulp. Introduction and greetings to Linda Mackey – new DEP/ Field Representative

Reports from Districts

Berks – not available – all at their Legislative Breakfast

Bucks- Gretchen Schatschneider – new manager - reported on:

- Happy to be the new manager
- New Coastal Zone position hired – Jake Borden who will be working with Clean Boater Group and Recycling
- New Ag Tech position hired – Rachael Onuska who will be working on the REAP program.
- Watershed position vacancy – in interview process
- Watershed projects
 - New Plan for Neshaminy Creek – TMPC – Lake New Galena
 - Cooks Creek stream bank and new projects for stream
 - Watershed Group for Aquetong Group

Chester – Gaye Lynn Criswell reported on:

- Chester County adopted the Stormwater Delegation Agreement
- New Fee Schedule as of April 15 – this is a sliding fee schedule

Delaware- Ed Magargee reported on:

- Continued staffing problems although new secretary is now in place
- Watershed Specialist would like to go part time – county may not allow this
- MS4 program – RCND and eastern Delaware County to study tests in MS4- hopefully in compliance with the 28 outfalls and 20 facilities

Montgomery- Drew Gilbert reported on:

- Looking at Delegation Agreement
- Looking at updating fee schedule to accommodate workload
- Hired Kristina Henderson for Program Specialist/Coastal Zone/Flood Plane
- Tree Vitalize program has 38 acres and anticipate 27 additional acres in 2008

Northampton- Bruce Pysner reported on:

- Looking at Delegation Agreement
- Looking at updating fee schedule
- Watershed/Ag Tech position vacancy– this may become two positions
- Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Symposium

- Proposed Teacher Act 48 educational outreach in the fall
- Noted that this PACD meeting should hold the record for Director attendance

PACD Update – Susan Marquart, PACD Executive Director (see handouts)

- Budget and Funding – PACD staff continues to meet with legislators and their staff; Farm Bureau; Chesapeake Bay; County Commissioners Association regarding funding for conservation districts.
- Mary Ann Warren, PACD 2nd Vice president and County Commissioner from Susquehanna County, testified before the House Appropriations Committee after the Department of Agriculture's budget Hearing about the need to increase funding for conservation district.
- Surcharge on environmental fines and penalties discussed. A 10% surcharge on all fines and penalties could be a source for funding for the conservation districts if the bill is passed.
- Alternative energy with Ron Miller to gain \$10 million for conservation districts.

Senate Bill 1020 – Act 217 Amendments

- This will be in the appropriations agenda soon – the governor has assured that this will be signed

PACD Marketing Conservation Program

- Sub-committee and hired consultant
- Completed marketing survey with 183 responses
- Web meeting to target offices
- Phase I study to be presented at Annual Meeting in July

PACD Awards

- Nominations due for Ann Rudd Saxman Conservation District Director (or Associate Director) Excellence Award and the Conservation District Employee Excellence Award due by April 30, 2008. Not one employee nomination thus far.

PACD Capital Days

- Held on March 17 – the first time a Governor attended.
- Highly attended with 225 registered Directors from 37 counties. About 70 legislators attended
- Special Partnership Forum on Information Technology held after initial meeting to discuss changes to the federal computing system and NRCS's computers. They are under Homeland Security and have to have secure computers. There may be changes to the District system by October 1 and this may involve costs to the Districts.

New Format for July 2008 PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference

- Training for Conservation District staff incorporated into the conference.
- Would like sponsors to defray the cost
- Send potential sponsors to Molly Burns at 717-238-PACD

Good Search Shopping

- www.goodshop.com will raise revenues for PACD. Buy on line and PACD will get 1 – 10% on the sales. After getting on line – put in PACD so that they get the credit

Questions

- Discussion about registration and late registration fees. What if they only attend one day. Right now no difference in cost.
- ACT 217 – questions about nominating process and vacancy in mid term. Rather than receive a nomination – the associate director could replace a director that resigned mid-term to serve the term. Still appointed by county commissioners.

State Conservation Commission – Karl Brown - handouts

Commission meeting in March

- Ross Orner - reappointed to fulfill for four years
- Vacancy – Public Director – Mary Ann Warren – Susquehanna County PACD Second Vice President was recommended.
- Director nominations discussed – noted Chester and Montgomery Counties working on directors
- May 13 Commission Meeting –delegation agreement sent to every district
- Stormwater Delegation Agreement- tabled request to approve until they work through the issues to make it final. Noted that Chester County Adopted and Monroe and Westmoreland possibly to follow
- Note that if you don't want to take the Stormwater, just continue with the existing Delegation Agreement without changes
- Discussion of Qualified Local Programs and turning over to other entities. Districts have first choice – timing of decision tied to QLP and not within the regulations as of yet. It may be 1-2 years before DEP goes through the regulation changes.

Dirt and Gravel Road

- Approved allocations – almost the same amount to each district as last year
- Reassessment may make a difference in the allocation if conducted

Odor Management

- Commission approved regulations for odor management
New CAFO and new facilities –manure facilities require Odor Management plan
The commission was involved in reviewing and approving a Hog Nutrient Management Plan in York County

Commission Meeting May Agenda

- Odor Management Regulation Package

REAP Changes –see handout

- 290 BMPs went through with 277 approved for \$9.9 million
- Tax credits can be used within 15 years or sell the tax credit
- Memorandum-
Comments on how to make REAP better – take back to the Commission on May for review. Send in Grant Guidelines and Application

Fees for REAP – see handout

- Conservation districts may charge cost to recover of \$100.00 per application for verification and review of conservation plans
- Discussion on additional information on the BMP update sheet.

NRCS Update – Dan Dostie - handout

- Farm Bill not passed – extended until April 18, 2008. No technical service provider agreement because of funding.
- CNMPs and TSPs – 74 CNMPs totaling #372,000 have been contracted in EQIP Program Update
- Barry France announcing that for the Fiscal Year 2009 PA will go to a monthly application review cycle.

AMA (Agriculture Management Assistance Program)

- PA received \$ to reduce the backlog of unfunded prior year contracts

CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program)

- CRP and CREP have been extended to April 18, 2008

CSP (Conservation Security Program) see handout

- Looking for people doing a good job to want to do a better job and enhance their resources. Sign –up April 18 – May 16
- Targeted watersheds are the Lower Juniata River and Lower Delaware River

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)

- Over 2000 applications with 476 new contracts.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

- Three funding pools – National, Pennsylvania and Chesapeake Bay

FRPP (Farm and Ranch land Protection Program) - GRP (Grassland Reserve program) – WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive program) and WRP (Wetland Reserve Program) were discussed

Training

- Boot Camp – all slots are filled
- Basic Rusell II – April 17, 2008

Questions

- Comments that for CREP- the farmer/operator should be eligible for the payment not just the owner. Percentages should be able to be distributed on the contract. Question to be taken to Bill Foose.

Department of Agriculture – Bill Zollers

Farm Bill

- From attending Berks County Legislative Breakfast – a verbal agreement from legislators that it will pass with an additional \$4 billion over the 5 years.

Budget

- No more money in the Governor budget

REAP

- Monies almost all to no-till equipment
- Demonstration on Oley Fairgrounds on April 10 at 1:00pm for covercrops and no till equipment

Renewable Fuels

- Produce and use agricultural fuels on the farm

Leadership Development – Karen Ely and Susan Marquart

- Project from NACD- Operations Committee for training Conservation District Directors
- Web based for Directors to read through modules and possibly take a quiz – replaces CD's and easier to update
- Verification/ Recognition of Course – certificates...
- Consistency across the state
- 13 Core Functions called "Director Functions"

Open Records Act Workshops- Desiree Henning Dudley

- March 26 – May 1 workshops throughout region
- \$35 registration fee
- Irvil Kear – First Vice President recommended that a separate Directors meeting be held for this to discuss educating directors, staff on the Open Record Act

Next meeting – Friday, October 10, 2008 – back-up date Friday October 17, 2008

Respectfully Submitted,

Gaye Lynn Criswell
Recording Secretary