

**PACD District Employees Minutes
Ramada Conference Center, State College, PA
10:00 am July 27, 2016**

Welcome and Roll Call

Chairwoman Sandy Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting and determined that a quorum was present.

Committee members in attendance: Sandy Thompson, McKean; Deb Wilson, Jefferson; Lance Bowes, Venango; Bob Sweitzer, Centre; Joseph Dietrick, Westmoreland; Steve Putt, Elk; Don Bowser, Fayette; Mike Price, Beaver; Mary Ellen Snyder, Lehigh; John Thatcher, Allegheny; Gretchen Schatschneider, Bucks.

Others in attendance: Donna Zofcin, Forest; Suzanne Black, Blair; Celina Seftas, Huntingdon; Jenna Fehr, Schuylkill; Sally Corrigan, Pike; Tom McClure, Erie; Jay Russell, Mercer; Greg Phillips, Westmoreland; Tricia McIntire, Clarion; Trudy Alexander, Clarion; Terry Fisher, PACD.

Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on February 9, 2016 were provided to members for their review.

A motion was made by Deb Wilson and seconded by Mary Ellen Snyder to approve the February 9, 2015 minutes. Motion carried.

Conservation District Training Opportunities

Terry Fisher reported on training opportunities for conservation district staff that PACD and their partners currently have planned for 2016 and 2017. Additional potential training opportunities that are being considered were also discussed.

Salary and Benefits Survey

Terry Fisher reported that to date thirty-nine districts have submitted completed surveys with information for 321 employees. After discussion the committee has decided to send one more request to district managers to complete the survey. The request will explain why this information is useful and that results will only be sent to district managers.

The deadline to respond will be August 31. Final result being sent to managers by the end of September 2016.

“Years of Service” Awards

The committee has determined it is important to recognize district staff and that “Years of Service” pins should continue to be awarded in future years. It was noted that staff and directors both appreciate the recognition.

A motion was made by Deb Wilson and seconded by Gretchen Schatschneider to recommend that PACD continue funding “years of service” pins, including pins for a new Five Year category. Motion carried.

Mentorship Program Proposal

The committee discussed the need and feasibility to set up a mentorship program to provide support and training to new E&S employees.

It was pointed out that DEP is already required to do training under the delegation agreements and that they should continue to provide the training to assure accurate and up to date information. The committee also noted that this is already being done informally between counties and there is no need to try to formalize it.

The committee has decided not to pursue creating a formal mentorship program at this time and encouraged districts ask DEP regional staff to provide additional training when needed.

Conservation Partnership Agreement.

The committee discussed the need for an agreement between the state’s district employees and other conservation partners with the stated goal of increased cooperation among those partners. The committee questioned the need for such an agreement, what outcomes are expected and what advantages may be realized for employees. There was also discussion regarding the authority of the committee to enter into an agreement on behalf of district employees. It was noted that New York has an active “Employee Association” who have signed a similar agreement.

Sandy Thompson will gather more information on the benefits and advantages of entering into such an agreement. She will also gather more information on Employee Associations. This topic will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Identify and Assess District Staff Needs

The committee discussed a need for additional training opportunities on E&S Enforcement Compliance. It was noted that the last comprehensive training on this topic was done in 2008. This training would best be done regionally, but an expanded enforcement component to the basic training would also be beneficial. Training may include inspection procedures, needed pictures needed, required documentation, etc.

A motion was made by Gretchen Schatschneider and seconded by Joseph Dietrick that PACD work with DEP to develop enforcement compliance trainings. Motion carried.

The committee also discussed a need for additional watershed specialist training. The discussion focused on the need for more training on technical issues such as flow rates, testing and monitoring, possibly in a hands-on “boot camp” style training format.

A motion was made by Lance Bowes and seconded by Steve Putt that PACD work with DEP to provide more hands-on training for watershed specialists. Motion carried.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Joe Dietrick and seconded by Bob Sweitzer to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 AM.