

**PACD North Central Region Meeting
Clinton County Conservation District, Mill Hall, PA
March 30, 2017**

Welcome and Introductions

Rob Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:07am.

In attendance: Judy Becker, Northumberland; Mike Hubler, Northumberland; Jason Childs, Potter; Rob Shannon, Centre; Karen Books, DEP; Susan Marquart, NRCS; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Karl Brown, SCC; Andy Wodehouse, PACD; Jacquelyn Rouse, Sullivan; Andy Trostle, Sullivan; Nathan Brophy, PACD; Nancy DiFiore, NRCS; Larry Butler, Clinton; Rick Ryan, Sullivan; Carl Schlappi, Lycoming; Mark Davidson, Lycoming; Bill Kahler, Lycoming; Robert Sweitzer, Centre; Bill Deitrick, Union; Craig Bingman, Snyder; Patty Havens, DEP; Erica Tomlinson, Tioga; Katie Mattern, DEP; Edward Zinser, Sullivan; Cathy Yeakel, Bradford; Maryruth Wagner, Columbia; Joan McCarty, Columbia; Mary Ann Bower, Clinton;

Rob reported that he recently attended a nutrient management orientation to get a feel for what types of training district staff have to go through, and he commended the State Conservation Commission for the professionalism of their staff. He also commended Sullivan County for bringing a copy of their annual report.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The group discussed dates for the next region meeting. The next meeting will take place on November 2, 2017 at the Clinton County Conservation District.

Brenda Shambaugh also asked the group to set a date to meet with Dana Aunkst of DEP. The meeting with Dana Aunkst will take place on May 30, 2017 at the Lycoming County Conservation District.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided to those in attendance.

It was moved by Cathy Yeakel and seconded by Mary Wagner to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Business

The first issue to be discussed was whether associate directors could serve as PACD Region Directors. There was a situation in the North East Region where an associate director was willing to take on the PACD Region Director position when no one else was willing to do it. The South West region added an amendment that associate directors must be officially appointed at the



district's annual meeting to be considered. The South Central region struck the wording "from that point forward" after the word "basis" and added "during their term as Region Director." Rob Shannon commented that the Executive Board was concerned because they felt that there should be enough volunteers from voting directors to fill the positions on the executive board. Ed Zinser commented he felt that it shouldn't be made easier to dodge regular directors' duties. Bill Deitrick commented that while he agreed with Ed's comments, he supports the amendment because he would not want to prevent one of his associate directors from being able to serve. Erica Tomlinson commented that we shouldn't push someone into a position if they don't want to do it. Judy Becker commented there are associate directors at her district who once served as voting board members. She values their participation as much as voting directors.

It was moved by Erica Tomlinson and seconded by Bill Deitrick to approve the PACD Bylaws amendment allowing associate directors to serve as PACD region directors, including all amendments. Motion carried.

There is a discrepancy in the PACD Bylaws regarding the voting rights of PACD Executive Board members. If there is more than one board member from a conservation district, should they both have a vote?

It was moved by Mike Hubler and seconded by Bill Kahler to approve striking the language in Article V of the PACD Bylaws, so that all PACD Executive Board members have a vote, regardless of district. Motion carried.

Brenda provided the following report:

- The Executive Board has made it a priority to include more directors at the regional and state levels. She thanked directors at this meeting for being involved.
- At the July PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference there will be an election for PACD officers, and there will be openings for 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President. Brenda asked that everyone please talk to their board members about the open positions. The nominating committee is chaired by MaryAnn Warren.
- The Governor announced his budget proposal to the general assembly. District line items have been kept constant. The General Assembly is very supportive of districts thanks to those who work with our legislators regularly. It will be a difficult budget year. She urged districts to have a contingency fund in place in case of a major delay.
- Brenda has been working on Growing Greener III legislation with the Growing Greener Coalition, but nothing has been introduced yet. She has been emphasizing that money in any new legislation should go toward funding BMPs.
- An extraction fee bill has not been introduced.
- Brenda discussed conservation district week, which will be April 23rd through April 30th. Because half of the general assembly is relatively new, we can't assume they know what districts do. Brenda is asking districts to do something that week to promote their work. As an example, Somerset is having a media event at the newspaper in their local area. They are inviting their legislators and county commissioners and are calling it "conversation on conservation." Potter just recently held their legislative event. Brenda asked any districts who have held a legislative event to send a follow-up letter thanking legislators for attending, with

a synopsis of what was discussed. Brenda also requested that districts play the PACD video during events. She or the PACD staff can provide a link to the video.

- Brenda reminded everyone that The Law Office of Andrew H. Shaw in Carlisle is available to provide legal work for districts at a reduced rate. Of course, it is in no way mandatory that districts take advantage of this program, but it is a service that PACD is providing. Brenda or the PACD staff can provide their information to any districts that need it.

Nathan Brophy and Andy Wodehouse with the PACD Engineering Assistance Program passed out a document about how the program can help districts with Growing Greener projects and provided the following information:

- Program staff work under the umbrella of NRCS for job approval and engineering.
- They realize that inspections can be an issue for projects. Although program staff often can't attend inspections, they do offer training for inspections.
- Program staff would like to be involved in project site showings and pre-construction meetings. The designer should also be present for these meetings.
- While staff try to get things done as quickly as possible, do make sure to allow plenty of time for an inventory and evaluation to be completed.
- They also reviewed the design request form.

Regional Information Sharing

Sullivan – The district deals with a lot of pipeline activity regarding Marcellus shale, and it has created a bit of work for them. There are a high number of absentee landowners. The district spends a lot of time answering questions from people who are not full-time residents. They have also been dealing with major flooding events. Finally, they are losing their manager shortly, so they will need to fill that position. Jackie Rouse showed everyone notebooks they have ordered with their logo on them. They will be giving them to farmers when they do inspections. They will also be giving them to Envirothon team members, in addition to a \$500 scholarship they give to the winners. Farmer director Andy Trostle was introduced; he has a dairy farm in Sullivan County and used SCC Conservation District Fund Allocation Program (CDFAP) funding provided for Best Management Practice (BMP) projects on his farm. Ed Zinser, District Treasurer, reported they used to fall under the county's audit but now use an independent auditor. They have implemented controls, so that financial items are checked by multiple individuals. This has helped with their audit. Jackie reported that she plans to become a full-time dairy farmer when she retires. She also noted that she will be coming to Harrisburg for conservation district week.

Snyder – Craig Bingman reported that they just held their annual awards banquet with Mike Klimkos as speaker. Every year they try to promote local ag products, and this year a local bakery provided something. They have also been doing their Bay inspections. The district is trying to cross-train, so that all staff can help out with the inspections. They are holding their annual Kindergarten Eco Day soon, which is similar to the Envirothon. Kids rotate through five stations. They are also looking to do an agroforestry workshop. They want to show landowners how to make a product from forestry besides timbering. He reported that they don't have anything planned for conservation district week yet.

Northumberland – Judy Becker reported that the district is administering the Mosquito-borne Disease Control Program for five counties; Northumberland, Columbia, Montour, Snyder, and

Union beginning in May. The district is holding their Legislative Luncheon the first week of April, and Judy will follow up with her legislators for conservation district week. The district also applied for a Bay Special Projects grant to fund BMPs for a farmer who has several open issues with DEP that need to be resolved.

Potter – Jason Childs reported that the district would like to hold a Farm to Forest tour for seventh-graders. They are holding a Farm and Fishes tour, where they will be visiting a local dairy farm and then going to visit a Fish and Boat Commission hatchery. They plan to take high school students this year. Tomorrow two high school students will shadow staff. The county is running a USGS groundwater study which the district is involved in. Continuous water monitoring equipment has been funded by Utica Shale company. They had their legislative lunch in March. The lunch started with district presentations followed by discussion with legislators and lunch afterwards. They will follow up with a letter for conservation district week. Several different potential aquatic organism projects may be coming up with Trout Unlimited. They also received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant to do culvert replacement in the Genesee headwaters. During their most recent open application round, they had 28 applications for the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program (DGLVR), including three low volume road projects.

Union – Bill Deitrick reported that a senior Bucknell University class used the Chesapeake Conservancy's imaging to identify stormwater hotspots. The district has received an educational grant for a billboard campaign like the one they ran several years ago. The billboard will say "Streams need trees, streams need space, streams need you." This year is the district's 60th anniversary, and they are having a celebration in July. The district will send a letter of acknowledgment to their legislators for their support during conservation district week.

Centre – Bob Sweitzer reported that the district has been following-up on severe flooding from October. Some areas had over eight inches of rain in four hours. They have been working with NRCS, county commissioners, DEP, municipalities, and legislators to fund five projects through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program. Last Saturday the district held a manure management and ag erosion and sediment control (E&S) workshop with 55 farmers in attendance. They are finishing up a Growing Greener (GG) Grant that funded two contracted plan writers to write E&S and manure management plans. They completed over 100 plans. They have submitted another GG grant to continue this program, due to the increase in requests for assistance. The district submitted a large GG grant for \$1.5 million for ag BMPs and stream restoration. Their E&S and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) workload has increased in addition to their increased DGLVR workload. They have been able to hire another technician, so they are now back to three. Tree sale and Envirothon season is now here. The district will be sending letters recognizing their legislators for conservation district week.

Tioga – Erica Tomlinson reported that the district is holding their Legislative Luncheon on May 19. They are inviting legislators to come to their new office for a tour. Their Women in Ag program is next week. They have five landowner cost-share projects for log deflectors; a grant from Shell is funding half of the projects. They had two PAOneStop trainings with 25 people in attendance. They have culvert replacement projects scheduled in June. They finished an Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) system. They are hosting every 9th grader in the county (approximately 450 students) for a field day in May.

Columbia – Maryruth Wagner introduced new director Joan McCarty, who was formerly an associate director for the district. The district held a Farm Safety Day, for which they partnered with Farm Bureau, FFA, and others. Women in Ag was held yesterday and was very successful. They held their second Soil Health Conference with Northumberland and Montour counties. A CREP dinner meeting for reenrollments will be held in April with a field day in May. They are in the process of discussing a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) application with Northumberland, Luzerne and Montour counties. For conservation district week, Mary is looking into obtaining a proclamation from the commissioners and some press coverage. Joan McCarty discussed Kocher Park, which the district owns. They were originally given four acres and now have 60 acres. They are currently working on a plan for an additional parking lot which will include a rain garden. They had a very successful winter walk at the park this year with 60 people showing up. Fishing Fun, designed for those with special needs, is coming up in June. There was a nice article about Kocher Park in Susquehanna Life magazine.

Clinton – Larry Butler reported that the district had completed 46 inspections as of their last board meeting. The commissioners have decided that the district should relocate to Lockhaven. They have entered into a grant with the US Geological Survey (USGS) to get private wells tested throughout the county. They received an RCP grant with the Chesapeake Bay office, Lycoming, and Centre, looking at soil health projects and working with farmers. They had a manure management and Ag E&S workshop with nine people attending. The district will be offering 75% cost share to farmers to have manure management and ag E&S plans completed. Their district will be part of the Bay SOP and inspection form review; their first conference call is on Monday. They will send letters thanking their legislators during conservation district week.

Bradford – Cathy Yeakel reported that the district is having an ag tour that will highlight BMPs for conservation district week. They are having their first Earth Day celebration that Saturday, which will be free to the public. The FFA is doing a chicken BBQ as part of the event, which is largely funded by gas companies. Shane Kleiner will be doing a presentation on wildlife rehabilitation and many organizations are providing their support. There are more farmers coming into the office for manure management and ag E&S plans. The inspections are encouraging people to complete their plans, even though the district is not involved. They are also doing an EWP project.

Lycoming – Mark Davidson reported that they are holding a legislative breakfast on April 13 for conservation district week. They have six EWP projects totaling over \$900,000. The district has also entered into the Mosquito-borne Disease Control program, for which they will be hiring one part-time person. Their Act 13 projects are wrapping up. Their watershed specialist has been involved with Trout in the Classroom. Their auditor of 20 years has backed out of doing their audit this year. The district is taking some of their funds and focusing on a stream debris removal effort. They are working with the Chapter 105 program to make sure they address it correctly. Their county commissioners are providing free dumpsters and landfill space. Sunoco Logistics is giving the district \$50K towards the project, as well. The district just had their annual banquet where Secretary Redding spoke. Bill Kahler reported on the PA Envirothon. He said that quite a few people from this region are represented on the State Envirothon Board, which met with DEP Secretary McDonnell, where they felt great support from him for the program. Kelly Heffner, who loves the program, was also present. They were impressed that about 100 former Envirothon

participants now work for DEP. They will be selling merchandise at this year's event. There are also three-minute and seven-minute versions of a video, featuring the Envirothon, on YouTube. He reported that they really need more volunteers for the event.

NRCS Report

- Nancy DiFiore discussed the EWP program and said she knows the process has been frustrating. There are six counties in this region negatively affected by flooding. EWP is handled at the national level by special agreement teams.
- Biosecurity is a critical issue. There was a high-risk outbreak in Tennessee where they had to destroy 10,000 birds.
- State CIG proposals are now being accepted until April 3rd. Noel Soto is the contact person.
- Susan Marquart discussed the RCPP program, noting that a number of districts had RCPP agreements in the past round.
 - RCPP is an opportunity for partners to work together to create a proposal to fund technical assistance for resource concerns using NRCS programs.
 - It was established in the 2014 Farm Bill. The current round is for fiscal year 2018, which is the last year of the current farm bill.
 - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) projects can all be funded through RCPP.
 - Funding is divided into three pools. The national pool is 40%, the critical conservation areas pool is 35%, and the state pool is 25%. Pennsylvania has two critical conservation areas: the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and the Great Lakes.
 - The lead partner puts in the application. They coordinate the project and enter into the agreement with NRCS.
 - A contribution requirement isn't specified, but most applicants provided a one-to-one match in the last round. As the process becomes more competitive, contributions are rising. They are now closer to one-and-a-half-to-one.
 - There are four criteria to determine funding: contributions and how partners will leverage funds; projects that can provide measurable results; innovation; and participation.
 - Pre-proposals are due in April and will be announced in June. Final award announcements will be in November.

DEP Report

Karen Books provided the following report:

- Kelly Heffner was promoted to Executive Deputy Secretary for Programs.
- Dana Aunkst is now Deputy Secretary for the Office of Water Programs.
- Watershed specialist applications are due March 17. If you can't meet that date, please submit applications to Aaron Ward ASAP. If you have any questions, please contact Aaron.
- Karen reiterated volunteers are still needed for the PA Envirothon.
- She mentioned Katie Mattern, the new DEP Field Representative.
- PracticeKeeper is currently being tested with pilot districts, including Clinton. DEP hopes to do training in April and potentially provide three licenses for each district.
- There have been three trainings through the Leadership Development Program for district chairmen, managers, and treasurers.

- Brenda Shambaugh reported that she met with Sean Furjanic regarding the Chapter 102 program, where she learned that DEP plans to hold regional trainings in lieu of the 102/105 Annual Meeting. They plan to hold train-the-trainer sessions this fall. PACD is urging DEP to provide regional sessions for districts this fall, as well. We have not heard anything about changes to the E&S trainings that are held in the spring. Mary Wagner commented that the annual trainings were not efficient. Mary Ann Bower commented she thinks the regional trainings are a good idea, but that almost two years is a long time to go without meeting. Mike Hubler commented that it is critical that the regional meetings be consistent.
- Karen Books also noted that DEP will be sending out a Ch. 102 newsletter on a regular basis.
- Patty Havens introduced Katie Mattern. Katie's background is in environmental conservation, and she is working to attend board meetings at all of the districts in the region.

SCC Report

Executive Secretary Karl Brown provided the following highlights from his written report:

- Karl emphasized the fact that eight directors are here and thanked them for being here.
- The Nutrient Management Workgroup has been working on updating the delegation agreement. The current agreement expires in June, and the SCC hopes to have the updates approved at the SCC meeting in May. The new agreement removes the three levels, includes an education component for odor management and manure hauler broker certification, gives districts the authority to review nutrient balance sheets, and includes provisions for Chapter 91 inspections, so that districts are covered.
- Trainings have been held for nutrient management, odor management, and manure hauler brokers, as well as the Ag Boot Camps and DGLVR trainings.
- The DGLVR admin manual will hopefully be approved on April 11. This year is the 20th anniversary of this program. The manual clarifies funds for stream crossings and addresses off-right-of-way work, among other issues. Six to seven counties will have quality assurance and quality control (QAQC) visits completed this year, and that will complete the first round of visits since funding increased.
- The SCC was handed a NFWF grant that PDA worked with for \$632,000. Partners contributed \$900,000. Thirty-seven farms are being funded with the goal to complete plans and exclude livestock.
- Penn State has completed their 10% verification of the voluntary BMP survey and EPA will accept the information. We will probably get an additional 1,000,000 nitrogen credits. NRCS is doing a similar project on remote sensing in the Potomac Watershed.
- A reminder that Statement of Financial Interest forms are due on May 1st.
- Karl emphasized the biosecurity issues that Nancy mentioned. Please make sure staff are practicing good biosecurity for people AND vehicles. Keep track of where the vehicle has been (type of operation).
- There are two districts currently transitioning from county to independent. There are resources available for districts faced with that decision
- Currently there is a question regarding whether districts are supposed to be giving veterans preference when hiring. The SCC is currently working on a legal interpretation for districts.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.