

**PACD North West Region Meeting
Kinzua Bridge State Park, McKean County
April 18, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.**

Welcome – Cliff Lane opened the meeting with introductions and a welcome.

Those in attendance: Sandy Thompson, McKean; Cliff Lane, McKean; Kerry Fetter, McKean; Bob Wright, McKean; Dan Hartle, McKean; Jody Groshek, McKean; Don Koontz, Mercer ; Jay Russell, Mercer; Tom Shaffer, Mercer; Donna Zofcin, Forest; Steve Putt, Elk; Tom McClure, Erie; John Hallenburg, Erie; Deb Wilson, Jefferson; Shaun Wessell, Jefferson; Tracy Crawford, Crawford; Lance Bowes, Venango; JoAnn McCready, Lawrence; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Randi Tyler, PACD TAG; John Green, DEP; Fred Fiscus, DEP; Karl Brown, SCC; Susan Marquart, NRCS, Harrisburg; Zenik Crespo, NRCS, Clarion; Tom Schaffer, Mercer.

Set Date for Next Meeting – The next meeting was set for October 24, 2017 at the Erie County Conservation District.

Approval of minutes from previous meeting –A motion by **Lance Bowes from Venango and seconded by Kerry Fetter from McKean, carried unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.**

PACD Business – Brenda Shambaugh, PACD Executive Director

Brenda reports that the PACD Executive Board is committed to encouraging Directors and Associate Directors to participate in PACD meetings. She thanks the Directors and Associate Directors in attendance.

There will be openings on the Executive Board for First Vice-president and Second Vice President next year. Brenda explained the responsibilities for these positions.

Harrisburg Update - The Governor held Conservation District budget lines constant in the budget presented in February. The House later cut most lines in the budget, including Districts. Conservation Districts were cut \$500,000 (both PDA and DEP lines). PACD will be working to get funding back.

Brenda reminds Districts to recognize Conservation District week next week with the public and legislators and the importance of support for Districts. Almost half of house and senate members are new so communication with legislators is important at this time.

Discussion was held about a future Growing Greener 3 grant program.



PACD had contracted legal services with a firm in Cumberland County. Districts can work directly with the firm and do not have to go through PACD.

Brenda introduced Randi Tyler to discuss TAG program. Randi explained that she can provide technical assistance, mainly in agriculture. Randi does field visits to help determine project costs prior to grant application submittal. She can do inventory analysis, quality assurance, and design. Training is also offered through her office.

Brenda let group know that Dana Aunkst from DEP is willing to meet with Districts in each region again. Districts present are interested in another meeting. It was scheduled for June 1 at 10 am at the Jefferson County Conservation District. Dana is now Deputy Secretary for all District programs for DEP. Deb recommends that other Northwest Region DEP staff be invited again. Brenda will follow through on this request. Brenda let group know there will be no set agenda, more open discussion.

PACD Bylaws Amendments:

1. **Article VIII-Region Directors** -Amendment is proposed new language to the 2016 Fall Amendment, which would allow an Associate Director to serve as PACD Region Director. Below is new language that reflects the amendment proposed by the PACD South West Region: **(proposed changes in red)**

Article VIII – Region Directors

Section 1. Election of Region Directors

*Each PACD Region will elect a District Director **or Associate Director** in good standing to serve as Region Director. **Any Associate Director elected to serve as Region Director must be officially appointed as an Associate Director by their Conservation District’s Board of Directors, on an annual basis, from that point forward.***

Each Conservation District in good standing in attendance at its respective PACD Region shall have one vote, which shall be cast by a certified Voting Delegate of the Conservation District. If more than one candidate is seeking election, the election shall be by secret ballot. A candidate shall be elected by a simple majority.

The Region Director will serve a term of two years and may be re-elected. Elections will take place at the PACD Region Meeting after the PACD Annual Meeting in odd-numbered years.

A motion by Tom McClure from Erie to oppose the change, seconded by Donna Zofcin from Forest County. Motion carried to oppose this by-law change.

2. **PACD Bylaws Conflict:** Voting Rights of PACD Executive Board Members - Executive Board has determined an amendment is needed to clarify voting rights for PACD Executive Board members, in the case that there is more than one board member from the same conservation district. According to the *PACD Bylaws, Article V, Section 1*, in the event that there are two or more PACD Executive Board members from the same conservation district, only one of those individuals may vote. According to the *PACD Bylaws, Article VI, Section*

I, PACD Executive Board members each have one vote at all PACD Executive Board meetings. These two items are in apparent conflict with one another.

ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Membership

The officers of the PACD and the six Region Directors shall constitute an Executive Board which may, at the call of the President, meet between Executive Council Meetings to act on behalf of the PACD. The National Association of Conservation Districts Director shall serve as an ex-officio non-voting member of the Executive Board. Each Conservation District represented on the Executive Board shall have one vote; and in the event any Conservation District shall be represented by more than one person (for example, by more than one officer or by an officer and a Region Director), such Conservation District shall determine and shall advise the Secretary which person shall have the right to vote.

A simple majority of the membership of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the business of the meeting.

ARTICLE VI – VOTING

Section 1. Voting

Each Conservation District shall have one vote at PACD Region Meetings and Executive Council meetings which shall be cast by its Voting Delegate, or by an Alternate Voting Delegate, selected and certified on behalf of the Conservation Districts as provided below. To be entitled to vote, the Conservation District must be in good standing by having paid its dues during the previous PACD fiscal year; provided upon a showing of extenuating circumstances by a Conservation District, the Executive Board, at its discretion, may permit a late payment or waive all or part of the unpaid dues.

Executive Board members shall each have one vote at all Executive Board meetings.

Those persons identified as being members in Article II, Section 1 shall have no voting rights unless they serve as members of the Executive Board, or unless they are Voting Delegates or Alternate Voting Delegates certified to vote on behalf of a Conservation District.

Affiliate Members have no voting rights.

A motion by JoAnn McCready from Lawrence County to strike wording in red in Article V and keep wording in red in Article VI, seconded by Steve Putt from Elk County. Motion carried. Lance Bowes from Venango County and Kerry Fetter from McKean abstained. Deb Wilson from Jefferson County also requested additional information about the impact of this change and the decisions the Executive Board could make.

Regional Information Sharing:

Erie – Tom McClure –Tom has been reaching out to local legislators to introduce himself and CD to them with good success. He will be following up with marketing packet, which will include an invitation to their seedling sale to meet staff and volunteers. District is currently working on strategic planning and the District recently received a Greenways grant for a new wetlands boardwalk trail on Headwaters Park which may also acquire additional acreage to add to park property. They are also working on VINES –water quality program for grape growers.

Lawrence – JoAnn McCready reported on Earth Day, Envirothon, Park-a-Palooza, Nature & Geology camp, and Ag Encounter educational events. Ag Encounter at fairgrounds for all 4th graders. The District was involved in watershed improvements following flooding events on McKee Run. Flooding damaged roads and property. Funding was obtained from DEP to get emergency funds for repairs. District will be having an Open House about the McKee Run Watershed; problems, solutions, watershed health, property repairs. Every resident in watershed received an invitation to attend. A new intern from Westminster College is helping with Envirothon preparation and working with ALLARM for training materials for volunteers.

Jefferson – Deb Wilson reported on ongoing stormwater plan reviews for all municipalities. Two CFA grants have been received for flood control work. District has a May deadline for DGLVR applications with 15 expected and she recommends getting legislators on board with prevailing wage change bill.

Brenda interjected and said a Legislative breakfast meeting in Indiana County resulted in a new bill regarding prevailing wage. Legislation would exempt District (and municipality on DGLVR) from prevailing wage.

Their watershed conservationist is working on tree planting projects and water testing. They have an upcoming project to put in fish habitat and handicapped access on Kyle Lake. To celebrate Conservation District week, Deb has a proclamation and contact will be made with legislators.

Crawford – Tracy Crawford reported on sending letter and proclamation for Conservation District Week. District is currently working on Master Plan and public survey, as well as a new plat book. Recently held their Tree Sale and the Envirothon is coming up. They had an Allegany County college student work on video interviewing the oldest living CCC member, which the District will be posting the online.

McKean – Sandy Thompson reported the during Conservation District Week the District will travel to Harrisburg to meet with legislators, the county commissioners proclaimed Conservation District week, and they will also be conducting Arbor Day programs in all county elementary schools. Sandy shared information about a six county Conservation District workgroup and the success with shared workshops. She also shared a document about the impacts of the District regarding economics and education utilized for funding and marketing.

Forest – Donna Zofcin reported on moving their office into the courthouse. DGLVR applications were recently due. District is working on a lake habitat project and is helping Clarion County with an Earth Day event. Donna sent a proclamation to county commissioners for Conservation District Week.

Elk – Steve Putt plans to send a legislator letters next week for Conservation District Week. Elk has had a busy spring with numerous workshops and events (BMPs, Native Plants, Erosion Control in Forests, Manure Management, and hosted the two day ESM course). Steve further explained the multi-county workgroup and working across region lines.

Mercer – Jay Russell reported on their upcoming Earth Day trout stocking event. They are working with county for flood control dam maintenance work. Educational events included fly-tying course and macroinvertebrates. Field and Stream donated fly tying vices and volunteers donated time. Jay is also working on compiling information for a letter to legislators for next week for Conservation District Week.

Venango – Lance Bowes plans to share an informational document with legislators during Conservation District Week. He will meet with them next week to discuss restoration of funding at state level. District is gearing up for field season and finishing up grant projects. District is applying for CFA Act 13 grants- for well plugging and construction of an accessible trail. Lance added that the Allegheny River was the winner of the PA River of the Year and the Penn Soil RC&D Council is providing mini-grants as well as a need for additional sponsors.

Partner Reports

SCC- Karl Brown, Executive Secretary – Karl distributed his report and reviewed the status of the NM Delegation Agreement Update, The DGLVR Program Administrative Manual Update, Conservation District Fee Schedule Updates, and PDA Receiving NFWF Water Quality Grant. Karl reminded Districts that PA Ethics Statement of Financial Interests are due May 1st and went into detail of a few conflict of interest issues which were also included in his report. Butler and Cambria counties are going through reorganization from County to District employees. He asked for input on the recent Board/Director/ Financial training. John Green let group know that training materials and taped trainings are on Leadership Development website. He also reported on two upcoming trainings in June - Manager's Summit in State College and New Managers Boot Camp. Discussion was then held on the question of a veteran's preference for employees during the hiring process. Any local government, affiliated with county, must give veterans preference. The Commission and DEP are working with attorneys on template for independent districts that would give further guidance on Veteran's.

DEP – Fred Fiscus, Conservation District Support Section Chief

Fred distributed a report and reviewed DEP's Executive Staff reassignments, the Governor's proposed 2017-18 budget, PA House Bill 218, status of Watershed Specialist Grant applications, a new North Central Region Conservation District Field Representative, an update on Practicekeeper, an overview of the Regional District Director and Staff Trainings, and Commonwealth Drought Declaration update

NRCS – Zenik Crespo, Resource Conservationist

Zenik shared information about the current status of high tunnel project funding, provided an update on the RCPP program for bird habitat in forests, stated there is a June 5 deadline for Chesapeake Bay Restoration funded projects and gave an update on Emergency Watershed

Program projects due to flooding. She also stated that NRCS has information about biosecurity for AI and shared information on the new Client gateway system.

NRCS - Susan Marquart

Susan provided additional information about the RCPP program. Partners can identify a specific conservation program needs for a geographic area. RCPP taps State funding pool, national funding, and critical conservation pool (now Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes). Applications for 2018 are due April 21. For the future it is hoped this program will be included in the next farm bill; 2018 is last year in current farm bill.

A motion by Deb Wilcox of Jefferson County, seconded by Steve Putt of Elk County to adjourn the meeting carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:49.

Respectfully Submitted

Jody Groshek, Communications & Outreach Director, McKean County