

**PACD South West Region Meeting
Westmoreland Conservation District, Greensburg, PA
March 16, 2017**

Call to Order

Region Director Michael Price called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

In attendance: Charles Duritsa, Westmoreland; Joe Dietrick, Westmoreland; Michael Price, Beaver; Jim Shaner, Beaver; Phil Wilson, PACD; Lisa Snider, Greene; Meade Meyers, Somerset; Mari Meyers, Somerset; John Dryzal, Cambria; Adam Cotchen, Indiana; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Fred Fiscus, DEP; Karl Brown, SCC; Jeff Werner, NRCS; Clarence Weyand, Somerset; Lenny Lichvar, Somerset; Joe Kraft, NRCS; Chuck Kubasik, DEP; Phil Gardner, PACD; Jan Lauer, Allegheny; Greg Phillips, Westmoreland.

Fall Region Meeting Date

The fall region meeting date was set for October 12, 2017, at 10:00 AM at the Westmoreland County Conservation District.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided for review.

It was moved by Joe Dietrick and seconded by Jim Shaner to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on November 3, 2016. Motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Bylaws Change – Article VIII

Brenda Shambaugh explained that one last regional vote was required on proposed changes to Article VIII. Questions were asked about how other regions felt about the changes and there were explanations given, that it was amended to be voted on annually, and that more involvement was wanted by directors.

Motion made by Jim Shaner and seconded by Joe Dietrick to approve the proposed change to Article VIII of the PACD Bylaws, which would allow associate directors to act as region director, as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Bylaws Change – Article V

Brenda Shambaugh explained the options to those present. There was some discussion about allowing each member to vote, how a board could have three members but very unlikely and that steps are taken to do what can be done to keep a majority from one district.



Motion made by Jim Shaner and seconded by Joe Dietrick to delete language in Article V to be consistent with language in Article VI, which will allow one vote for each PACD Executive Board member, regardless of district. Motion passed with one negative vote.

News from PACD

- Don Koontz will not be running for president. PACD 2nd Vice President Chuck Duritsa will run if nominated.
- PACD is seeking candidates for 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President.
- Dana Aunkst is willing to meet with each region for discussions once again. The group set the meeting for May 4 at 10 AM at the Westmoreland County Conservation District.
- Plans are being implemented to hold a Conservation District Week to meet with legislators. The dates are set for April 23- April 30. Plan is to have districts hold a legislative event, a tour, or send a letter and show off some projects to local legislators.
- Growing Greener legislation has not been introduced yet. A program similar to Growing Greener is to be used for the Environmental Stewardship Fund.
- PACD supports an extraction fee for large users of water with some exemptions such as municipal suppliers and agriculture. The fee did not address the use of AMD water usage and that fee would apply to the buyer.

Regional Information Sharing

Armstrong

- Date set for Legislative Breakfast is March 31.
- Date set for a planting day with Americorps, county commissioners, mayors is April 4.
- The Geotrail has had 158 people log in since December 2016.
- Mobile Lab is in the works through a partnership with the Carnegie Science Center to show off some natural-gas-powered equipment with possible unveiling date of August 15 or 17.

Cambria

- There is now a Memorandum of Understanding in effect essentially stating that all future employees of the Cambria County Conservation District will be moved from being county employees to being Conservation District employees. This was done due to Cambria County losing population which reduces the number of county employees.
- Was able to start and complete two projects in February due to warm weather
- Visited by Secretary Redding.

Indiana

- Working on moving the district to a new office building in the Windy Ridge development.
- QAB meeting has the dirt and gravel roads program getting two separate grant rounds.

Somerset

- Passed out and discussed some articles in the 2016 Annual Report.
- Looking to Rehab all four of the Oven Run AMD treatment sites this year.
- Cottage town AMD system getting some attention for some possible rehab work.

- The Barron Farm stream mitigation project, that was paid for by PennDOT funding due to Route 219 road construction, has been completed. Will be used as a demonstration project.
- Planning a luncheon with the local media newspaper (The Daily American) for April 27 at 11 AM called Conversation with Conservation. Other district members will be invited and a former district intern may unveil a GIS project. Legislators will be encouraged to attend.

Westmoreland

- There have been some staffing changes. Cathy left to work closer to home. Christy will move into Cathy's position and they will be hiring for two new positions. Also Rob Cronauer and Chelsea Walker were given promotions.
- There has been some involvement with the Regional Trail Corporation on the trail running through Murrysville, PA and connecting to the Allegheny Passage.

Allegheny

- There has been ongoing training on the new Practice Keeper program.
- Four board members have retired.
- The strategic plan calls for more focus on customer outreach.
- DCNR has appropriated 2,000 trees over five years for riparian buffer planting. The Allegheny Watershed Alliance will be overseeing the project.
- There are two groups forming municipal watershed associations: Chartiers and Plum

Greene

- Have been getting the word out more to the public about the help the district can give to farms and reinvigorating the use of the district for doing more ag work.

Beaver

- There has been a spike in requests for the district to meet with schools.
- Plans are being implemented to put an education center at the airport.
- Pittsburgh airport and DEP are working to drop water level in a pond on airport property allowing for food for ducks and geese.

State Conservation Commission Report

Karl Brown provided a written report/handout and noted the following:

- Discussed update on work between SCC and the Nutrient/Manure Management Program Delegation Workgroup.
- Reached an agreement on a delegation agreement and ROMs (Required Output Measures).
- The agreement and ROMs are under review by DEP and PDA legal and policy offices.
- PDA has been recently awarded a \$632,000-plus grant from the NFWF Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund for local water quality improvement.
- There has been a proposed minor increase in membership fees.
- PA Ethics Act requires public officials and employees to complete and file a Statement of Financial Interests form no later than May 1.

PA Department of Environmental Protection Report

Fred Fiscus provided a written report/handout and noted the following:

- Kelly Heffner was appointed Executive Deputy Secretary for Programs.
- Dana Aunkst will oversee Water Programs and Water Resource planning.
- Discussed contingency plans due to a tight budget.
- The PA Envirothon needs volunteers. You must go through a background check to volunteer.
- Practice Keeper Update.
- Commonwealth Drought Declaration Update.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Report

Jeff Warner provided a written report/handout and noted the following:

- Discussed High Tunnel project in Somerset County.
- State CIG grant proposals were discussed. Deadline is April 3.
- Information about the Wetland Preserve Program can be obtained in local offices.
- Vacancy in SW PA for a District Conservationist.
- Information on training opportunities is included in the handout.

Western PA Center for Abandoned Mine Reclamation Report

Andy McAllister provided the following report:

- Looking at funding from sources other than the 319 Grant.
- PA could lose over \$2 Million in SMCRA funding per year over the next five years.
- Discussed using future money now, but not plans to put the money back in the fund.
- New administration released the budget, but clarification is needed on the language used to eliminate certain parts of funding.
- Good Samaritan protection is working its way through SMCRA helping to keep conservation districts that operate AMD treatment sites protected from liability.

PACD Engineering Assistance Program

Phil Wilson and Phil Gardner from the PACD Engineering Assistance Program provided a handout and contact information, which they discussed.

Adjournment

It was moved by Adam Cotchen and seconded by Dave Rupert to adjourn at 12:35 PM. Motion carried unanimously.