

**PACD South West Region Meeting
Westmoreland Conservation District, Greensburg, PA
March 8, 2018**

Call to Order

Region Director John Thatcher called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

In attendance: Michael Price, Westmoreland; James Shaner, Beaver; Charles Duritsa, Westmoreland; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Fred Fiscus, DEP; Karl Brown, SCC; Jennifer Dann, Washington; John Hewitt, Washington; Ron Rohall, Westmoreland; John Thatcher, Allegheny; John Dryzal, Cambria; Ray Gorman, _____; Susan Moon, Somerset; Phil Wilson, PACD; Janis Long, Indiana; Adam Cotchen, Indiana; Chuck Kubasik, DEP; Kelly McLaughlin, Allegheny; John Scott, Allegheny; Meade Meyers, Somerset; Mari Meyers, Somerset; Ron Schwartz, DEP; Joe Dietrick, Westmoreland; Dave Rupert, Armstrong; Lenny Lichvar, Somerset; Jeffrey Warner, NRCS; Randy Weinberg, Carnegie Mellon; Deborah Lange, Carnegie Mellon; Don Newman, Allegheny.

Fall Region Meeting Date

The fall region meeting date was set for October 4, 2018, at Westmoreland CD at 10 AM.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided for review.

It was moved by Joe Dietrick and seconded by Adam Cotchen to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on March 16, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

PACD Business & Report by Brenda Shambaugh

- Tim Shaffer from DEP is willing to meet with districts once again to discuss concerns. Preliminary date set for May 31st 2018 at 10:00 AM at the Westmoreland Conservation District.
- Discussed the acceptance of the Strategic Plan (Handout).
- Gave advice to district managers for the highlights page given to legislators.
- 65 of 66 districts handed in their highlights page.
- Discussed Conservation Week events in April 2018.
- Inviting legislators to events would be better on Thursdays and Fridays. because of their obligation to be at the Capital during the early party of the week.
- Requested strengthening relationships between districts and our partners.



- Expect an earlier approved budget due to election year.
- House of Representatives are finishing up budget hearings, good amount of support being shown to Conservation Districts.
- Advertising for a Professional Engineer to fill vacancy at Somerset Tech. Office.
- Advertising for a Leadership Development Coordinator.
- \$250,000 grant awarded from DCNR for Riparian Buffers over the next 3 years.
- Mainly looking for multi-purpose buffers (walnut trees, blueberry bushes etc.)
- Karl Brown discussed a recent request passed by the Senate on permitting (handout provided). The study will include the Conservation Districts permit review process and the DEP permit reviews. The Committee will be looking for ideas for improvement.
- Fred Fiscus briefly discussed House Bill 226 (handout provided)
- Brenda will be accepting comments and relaying them to the appropriate individuals.

Discussed the continuance of the PACD Winter Meeting

- Possibility of moving to only 1 state meeting.
- Possibility of moving to quarterly regional meetings to conduct business and voting.
- Possibility of just keeping the meeting going as before to help keep interaction between agencies going, but possibly integrating training into the meeting as well

Presentation of Army Corps. Of Engineers Study on Climate Change Presentation

Regional Info Sharing

Allegheny County

- Plan reviews increased
- A Junior Envirothon was recently added
- Recently hired on 2 new interns due to demand
- A recent spike in urban agriculture
- Updating farm roads using new practices working out well

Armstrong County

- Looking to move into new offices in April
- The mobile environmental display is slated to visit 16 counties and the Joint Annual Conference, possible partnership with media station WQED
- Recently finished a stream reclamation project and working on installing a new passive AMD treatment system

Beaver County

- Seeing a gas well drilling increase due to new Shell cracker plant
- Looking to do a Conservation District week event that invites all legislators to do a meet-and-greet with the public

Cambria County

- Transition from county employees to district employees going well
- Hired new staff members in November
- Looking forward to utilizing the new Leadership Coordinator to help with future planning

Indiana County

- Conservation District Week activity is set for April 19th and includes a legislative breakfast
- Building a new office with a \$925,000 grant, making the building as “green” as possible and includes a 50 person meeting room to host events
- Recently awarded final approval to hire a watershed specialist
- 2 Ag projects going to construction very soon

Somerset County

- Handout of 2017 Annual report
- 2 Oven Run AMD projects moving to construction, 2 more to be designed
- Looking at ways to improve ALD system in Lambertsville
- SLAC sponsored and event called “Lakefest” and a few days later the lake was drawn down to remove fish so the dam breast and spillway can be re-constructed

Washington County

- Moving into new office space which will house USDA and FSA possibly in July
- Working on 4 Growing Greener projects
- Doing a lot of pipeline work permit processing

Westmoreland County

- Installing and Rehabing retention basins funded by Growing Greener
- Doing an Engineer workshop on the 22nd and 23rd of March
- Americorps people are working out great, looking to hire more in the future
- Integrated water plan to be unveiled in the near future
- Record number of complaints for permits, looking for ways to expedite the process

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

- Discussed Governor's proposed FY 2018-2019 State Budget
- Discussed new Watershed Support Section Chief
- Still need Envirothon volunteers for 2018 PA Envirothon
- \$737,000 Still Available for CBP Ag. Planning Reimbursement Program
- Discussed dates of upcoming events

State Conservation Commission Report

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

- Discussed Program areas of proposed Governor's FY 2018-2019 budget
- Discussed Timber Harvest work groups assisting DEP
- Discussed Spotted Lanternfly
- Discussed the 2016 CD Audit statements
- Financial disclosure forms due may 1st 2018
- DGLVR 5 year agreement changes and allocation formulas

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Report

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

- Discussed 2016 through 2020 strategic plan availability
- 95,000 conservation practices implemented with NRCS help
- CIG Proposals being accepted through April 27th
- Discussed 2 new RCPP Projects for 2018
- Discussed Spring Training Opportunities

Adjournment

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 1:20 PM. Motion carried unanimously.