

**PACD North Central Region Meeting
Clinton County Conservation District, Mill Hall, PA
March 14, 2019**

Welcome and Introductions

Rob Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

In attendance:

Set Date for Next Meeting

The group discussed dates for the next region meeting. The next meeting will take place on October 3, 2019 at the Clinton 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 Bill Kahler and seconded by Eric Nyerges to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Report

Brenda reviewed the 2019 Spring Region Meeting Report.

State Budget Proposal

Brenda reported she is requesting an increase in Conservation District funding in the PA Department of Agriculture proposed budget, as it hasn't increased since the 2004-2005 fiscal year. She will be taking this to the General Assembly.

Conservation District Funding has been transferred to the Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF) in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's proposed budget. There is concern that this will get overlooked as it is a large document and once something is taken out of the fund, it is hard to get it back in. In addition, the Governor's proposed budget uses ESF funds to pay for DEP administrative costs.

It was moved by Erica Tomlinson and seconded by Jason Childs that "PACD continues to support utilizing the ESF to fund the growing greener program and its success in assisting local communities with natural resource projects. We philosophically oppose using funding from the ESF to pay for State agency administration". Motion carried.



A motion was also made by Eric Nygeres and seconded by Rob Shannon that “To support Conservation District Funding to remain in the DEP Fund and continue with existing DEP funding structure”. Motion carried with 7 for and 1 against.

Conservation District Week

Brenda discussed Conservation District Week (May 5-11, 2019) and asked Districts to think about what they are doing. Any district interested in visiting with legislators in the State Capitol should contact Brenda so that she can schedule appointments with the appropriate legislators. Brenda will be sending out template budget letters in the near future

PACD Ways and Means Committee Motion

Brenda reviewed a motion made at the January 31, 2019 Executive Council meeting forwarded from the PACD Ways and Means Committee to be discussed at the Spring Region Meetings.

It was moved by Mike Hubler and seconded by Larry Butler to support the Ways and Means Committee motion to increase the dues in 2019-2020 by \$65 per district, \$55 for fiscal year 2020-2021, and \$45 for the fiscal year 2021-2022. The Ways and Means committee will review the dues on an annual basis”. Motion carried.

PACD Ad Hoc Building Committee Update

Brenda reviewed Ad Hoc Committee’s decision to stop working with current realtor. The new realtor is Coldwell Banker.

Regional Information Sharing

Union – Eric Nygeres reported that they received two Growing Greener Grants and are working on a 3 year study with USGS on Turtle Creek to figure out how much erosion happens by natural processes.

Tioga – Erica Tomlinson reported that they received two PENNVEST grants totaling \$1.5 Million to cover two farms and the District is a sponsor. There is an opening at the Tioga County Conservation District and May 10th they will be having a legislative luncheon.

Bradford – Cathy Yeakel highlighted a Woodchip Banyard Open House and Field Day to take place on April 5th at Dewey Meadows Farm in Warren Center. She also reported that over 100 people attended a soil health workshop held on March 13th. In addition Earth Day planning is underway and they now have a weekly column called “Conservation Corner” in their local newspaper to highlight different things throughout the year.



Sullivan – Holly Miller reported that the Sullivan County Conservation District annual report is in their local newspaper. Their seedling sale is underway with a lot of fruit trees ordered this year. They will be attending the Legislative Day at the Capitol. The district had a rain barrel workshop and a pruning workshop

Clinton – Mary Ann Bower stated they are in the process of purchasing the building and property and signed an agreement March 1st. Renovations to the building have begun. She also reported they had an Envirothon study day at Lock Haven University with Agency representatives and had over 100 students in attendance. Their tree sale is underway. They had an erosion control workshop for contractors and municipalities. Mary Ann met with their new State Representative, Stephanie Borowicz.

Lycoming – Mark Davidson reported their EWP projects are moving along. Their Board dedicated \$10,000 for a grant program. Youth organizations and community groups may apply. They will award up to \$2,000 for conservation projects. This year they will be sponsoring one of the floating classrooms in the Susquehanna River Keeper Series on the Hiawatha. They are having a legislative breakfast on April 11, 2019 at the Genetti in Williamsport.

Centre – Bob Sweitzer reported they received two Growing Greener Grants, one grant is for plan writer assistance and the other is a 1.7 million dollar grant for ag BMPs on 10 farms and 4 stream projects. They had a soil health conference with about 40 people in attendance. His Chesapeake Bay Tech is doing pollinator presentations. For Conservation District Week he is reaching out to local Legislators. They will be having an Ag E&S workshop and hoping for 50 people to attend. Lastly, the Pennsylvania Envirothon still needs volunteers. The event takes place May 21st and 22nd at the University of Pitt at Johnstown and Windber Park. Please think about sending staff to this great educational event!

Potter – Jason Childs reported they are having a Legislative lunch next Thursday, March 21st. They will be having a DGR/LVR breakfast April 5th and discussing prevailing wage, their QAB will be present and they will be giving away a \$100 gift card. They rejuvenated their seedling sale and will be coming out on the plus side. They have some junior Envirothon teams interested in participating in their Envirothon this year.

Northumberland – Judy Becker reported they had their winter meeting forum which has been going on for 7 years targeting farmers/municipalities. One topic included heavy rainfall events which was presented by a Penn State meteorologist. They received a PACD mini grant to have 6 manure management workshops. Their seedling sale is going on. They are meeting with DEP and NRCS to discuss a 5-year funding initiative covering watershed assessments and implementation in the Warrior Run Watershed. Their Legislative luncheon is scheduled for April 4th.



Rob Shannon reported that a student project is taking place where students go to Costa Rica to help install biodigesters on small farms which creates methane for cooking. He also said Penn State received a Growing Greener grant to provide funding for interns to write Ag E&S and Manure Management plans at Conservation Districts within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Also, he has been appointed to the Upper and Middle Susquehanna Regional Water Resources Committee along with Cathy Yeakel.

SCC Report

Karl Brown reviewed the following:

- Commission Meeting – Karl discussed the new curriculum presented by Penn State Extension called “Manure Management Planning for Youth Animal Projects” designed for 4H/FFA and classroom use. He also reviewed the Nutrient Management line item increase in the proposed budget and its intent.
- Dirt and Gravel Roads – Karl reviewed a power point of where project money stands and plans to address the issue of funding not being utilized.
- Strategic Planning – The SCC is in the process of updating their strategic plan and will share and ask for input.
- Karl spoke about the lantern fly and provided information.
- The proposed Farm Bill was reviewed along with the RESTORE Pennsylvania proposal.
- Rob Shannon asked about standard charts of accounts. Karl said the SCC is trying to figure out logistics and are in discussion with auditors. They would like to set up a workgroup and will be reaching out to districts.

DEP Report

- Karen Books reviewed the different UGWF Allocation Scenarios presented by Armstrong and Lycoming Counties.

It was moved by Bill Kahler and seconded by Carl Koch to “Support the 15-year allocations based on the 15-year well count instead of the current allocation”. Motion carried with 7 for and 1 against.

- Jaci discussed the State Fencing Program Pilot that is currently going on in Northumberland and Columbia counties to put in fencing projects from July 2019 to June 2020.

NRCS Report

- Nancy DiFiore reviewed her handout and provided the PA NRCS FY 2018 Accomplishments document.



- Nancy discussed the TAG employees and their importance. She also discussed NRCS Engineering Assistance, National Policy, options and the cost of technical assistance in the private sector. She also highlighted that if a farm doesn't have a CNMP they are not eligible for NRCS funding.
- Pete reported that there are 120 EWP sites approved in the Northeast. 75% of the funding comes from EWP and usually 25% of the cost is covered by the landowner. DEP has come up with money to fund the remaining 25% so there is no cost to the landowner.
- Pete also reported that a new Ag Waste Facility Standard is being rolled out.
- PL-566 funding has become available and projects are being considered in Bradford, Westmoreland, Chester and Lancaster counties.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 pm.

