

**PACD North Central Region
Video Conference
October 22, 2020**

Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call

Region Director Dr. Robert Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

In attendance: Molly Burns, PACD; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Nick Yeagy, PACD; Mark Davidson, Lycoming; Mike Hubler, Northumberland; Joan McCarty, Columbia; Nancy DiFiore, NRCS; Dr. Robert Shannon, Centre; Mark Hamilton, Tioga; Eric Nyerges, Union; Cathy Yeakel, Bradford; Jason Childs, Potter; Carrie Richmond, Sullivan; Karen Books, DEP; Yuri Plowden, NRCS; Karl Brown, SCC; Jaci Kerstetter, DEP NCRO; Shirley Snyder, Northumberland; Nancy Corbin, Columbia; Erica Tomlinson, Tioga; Marcus Kohl, DEP NCRO; Mary Ann Bower, Clinton; Larry Butler, Clinton; James Coslo, Centre; Matt Miller, PACD; Jill Whitcomb, DEP; Judy Becker, Northumberland; Willie Null, Clearfield; Daryl Miller, Bradford.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, March 18, 2021.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The March 26, 2020, minutes were provided for review.

It was moved by Mike Hubler and seconded by Erica Tomlinson to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on March 26, 2020. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report

Brenda Shambaugh, Executive Director presented highlights from her the following report:

- The region has a virtual meeting with DEP Deputy Secretary for Water Programs Aneca Atkinson at 10:00 a.m. on December 2, 2020.
- She provided a legislative update on the 2020-2021 Budget, Third Party Reviewer Legislation, Statewide Expedited Review Legislation, the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program, and a bill that changes the definition of pollution (SB 619).
- She provided an update on work to create and fund regional areas to battle invasive species.
- She noted that Chapter 105 modules are in development for the Clean Water Academy (CWA) and provided information on additional CWA training opportunities.
- Brenda discussed the Riparian Buffer Sub-grants available from PACD.
- Fluvial Geomorphology Training is set to take place virtually November 9, 10, 12, and 13.
- Matt Miller provided a Leadership Development update and urged staff and directors to participate in these learning opportunities. Visit www.paleadership.org for information.



- Agricultural Conservation Training (Boot Camp) took place in a modified format and is scheduled for April 12-16, 2021, for Basic and April 26-30, 2021, for Level II.
- Two Chapter 105 webinars were recently held. Other 102/105 Technical Training is in process and more information will be available soon.
- Conservation District Watershed Specialist Meeting took place virtually October 6-8, 2020.

Regional Information Sharing

Bradford – Cathy Yeakel reported they received a 319 grant to do some stream work in one of their watersheds. They have had to cancel their outreach events this fall, though they were able to take part in their state game lands tour. They are busy working on their budget and audit.

Centre – Jim Coslo reported they have had some staff turnover, including Jim entering the manager position, finding his replacement in the E&S program, and hiring new nutrient management technicians. Brenda helped coordinate a meeting with the district and House Majority Leader Rep. Benninghoff. They also have a meeting scheduled with Senate Majority Leader Sen. Corman. They are finishing up their CAP for the WIP phase III.

Clearfield – Willie Null reported they are focused on moving forward and keeping things going. They also received a 319 grant and are beginning to start work on their WIP.

Clinton – Mary Ann Bower reported they received a 319 grant and are working on a watershed implementation plan for one of their watersheds, which will hopefully help them as they begin working on their countywide plan. They have been holding hybrid in-person/virtual board meetings in their outside pavilion. They hope to continue hybrid meetings inside, using social distancing, as it grows colder. She shared she will be retiring at the end of the year.

Columbia – Nancy Corbin reported they have been busy keeping outreach going within COVID limitations. They have held five or six well-received webinars. They held a Better Backyards program and webinar with about 40 attendees and about 20 people completed the Better Backyards certification program and received a sign to display in their yard. They had to cancel two summer camps but held their nature camp virtually using YouTube videos and Dropbox. They ordered and distributed trees for people in the county to plant through the 10 Million Trees program. They also planted some at the public park, holding a planting to improve the buffer along Fishing Creek. Their Cover Crop reimbursement program continues, as does their DGLVR program. They are looking to partner with Montour on the WIP.

Northumberland – Judy Becker reported they held a tire drop off with masks and social distancing and people stayed in their vehicle while staff unloaded the tires. A local boy scout troop helped with the project. About 33,000 pounds of tires were recycled. They are hiring a new E&S Technician to fill an opening left by their technician who retired. He also worked on the DGLVR program. She thanked the DEP North Central Region Office for their help during this time. The district also participates in the 10 Million trees program and is beginning work on their countywide action plan.

Potter – Jason Childs reported they have been working on virtual education and outreach and developing resources and learning plans. They held several workshops with limited attendance to allow for social distancing. They held hour-long one-on-one meetings with their municipalities to go over permitting and other related issues. They will forego a 75th anniversary gala but will be doing other things to mark the anniversary.

Sullivan – Carrie Richmond reported almost everyone in their office is new to their positions. They have been doing some education programs at their local conservancy and in schools.

Tioga – Erica Tomlinson reported they are working on wrapping up two large PENNVEST projects. They have been able to get some DGLVR and stream projects installed. They did a tire collection that gathered almost 1500 tires. They are also working on their WIP.

Union – Eric Nyerges reported they are working with Snyder to give away almost 8,000 trees through the Bay Foundation and the 10 Million trees initiative. They have been doing some education events with the local children's museum. They are currently working on annual planning and staff reviews. They plan to do more branding and marketing of who they are and what they do. They are also interviewing for a Bay Technician.

PA State Conservation Commission Report

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

- The district director appointment process is underway. Karl urged districts to speak to chief clerks and county commissioners about what vacancies they have and what they are looking for in directors to help with the selection.
- The new budgeting spreadsheet is due September 30. Contact Karen Books with questions.
- District audits are due to Karen Books December 31.
- Policies on drone utilization and appointing former district employees as directors or associate directors are out for a 45-day public comment period.
- The SCC is working to consider distribution of CDFAP funds earlier in future.
- DGLVR advance funding is out to districts.
- The DGLVR program completed 19 quality assurance visits.
- Environmentally sensitive maintenance (ESM) training is available remotely and in-person.
- Nutrient management regulations may be updated.
- Districts should check that nutrient management specialist certifications are not expiring.
- Conservation Excellence Grants were expanded to Franklin and Cumberland Counties.
- He discussed REAP program changes.
- Karl encouraged districts to have a remote connection available for fall and winter district meetings, so DEP field representatives and others can participate.
- Brenda urged everyone to get their quarterly reports to the SCC, so they can get funds out as quickly as possible.

PA Department of Environmental Protection Report

Jill Whitcomb provided highlights from her written report:

- She reviewed the recent DEP reorganization. Jill now oversees the conservation district section, the watershed support section, and a new ag compliance and inspection section. The conservation district field representatives will continue to work out of the regions but will

now report to Jill at central office. She will continue to work with the SCC on the nutrient management program. She is working to be as consistent as possible across the state.

- Jill provided an update on Nutrient and Manure Management Delegation Agreement Budget Amendments, Chesapeake Bay Technician and Engineer Specialist/Assistant Budget Amendments, CDFAP UGWF Allocation Worksheets, and ACT Applications.
- She is working to fill open positions as quickly as possible given the current hiring freeze.
- Jill's contact information is: jiwhitcomb@pa.gov | 717.783.5205
- A handout was included in the packet showing all the available training modules on the Clean Water Academy and Jill encouraged everyone to take advantage of this resource.

Marcus Kohl and Jaci Kerstetter provided a DEP Regional Update:

- Marcus Kohl thanked the districts for their work on WIP planning and for successfully working through the limitations surrounding COVID-19.
- Jaci reminded everyone about their county action plan initiative to finalize groupings.
- She announced that Toolbox information for all the counties is out.
- She reported that SRBC, who put together the toolboxes, is more than willing to meet with each county (or groups of counties) to discuss the toolboxes section by section.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Report

Nancy DiFiore provided highlights from the written report:

- They are beginning day 22 of their fiscal year, which begins on October 1. She expressed thanks for everyone working through COVID-19.
- She provided an update on NRCS regional office status. They are open and working on a rotational basis but are largely closed to the public. They are maintaining social distancing, conducting field visits, and working with producers in the field.
- They are currently filling nine staff vacancies including: openings in Mill Hall, Sunbury, and Mifflin County; technicians in Union and Snyder counties; a civil engineering technician in Bloomsburg; and a supervisory district conservationist in Towanda.
- She highlighted the NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, which was active in the 1950's and amended in 2000. She noted there are several different dam projects in different stages.
- She provided an update on the National Water Quality Initiative, Financial Assistance Programs, and Easement Programs for FY 2020.
- She provided information on program sign-up for FY 2021.
- She provided an update on the RCPP program and encouraged districts to contact program coordinator Susan Marquart at Susan.Marquart@pa.nrcs.gov with any questions or to talk about the program.

Yuri Plowden provide the following report:

- Yuri reported that the NRCS soils staff has a full complement. Keith Shadle is the new resource soil scientist in Bloomsburg and will also take over Envirothon duties. Chris Seitz is the new soil survey project leader in Mill Hall. Kefeni Kejela is the new soil scientist in Bedford. Please send Yuri any requests for assistance and she will forward them on.
- Soil survey data is now refreshed annually in July. This does not mean there will necessarily be changes in any one area, though there may be. If anyone has concerns or questions about

data changes, please let Yuri know. In this region, there will be new data in the northern glaciated portion of Potter County because of a 2019 update on alluvial fans.

Activities Conclude

It was moved by Eric Nyerges and seconded by Jason Childs to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.