

**PACD Executive Council
Video Conference Minutes
July 29, 2021**

Call to Order

Chairman Mike Price, PACD President, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

PACD Awards Recognition

PACD NC Region Director Dr. Robert Shannon presented the awards.

- Legislator Leadership Award Recipient
Senator Gene Yaw, Environmental Resources & Energy Committee Chair
- President's Award Recipient
Lisa Jo Suhr, PACD Operations Director (Retired)
- Maurice K. Goddard Award for Excellence in Environmental Recreation
Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Ann Rudd Saxman Conservation District Director Excellence Award
Robert (Bob) Robinson, Wyoming County Conservation District Director
- Conservation District Employee Excellence Award
Matthew Golden, Erosion and Sedimentation Technician, Washington County Conservation District
- Conservation District Employee Service Recognition Awards – 30 Years of Service
Brian Sneeringer, Adams County Conservation District
James Coslo, Centre County Conservation District
Debra Dressler, Juniata County Conservation District
Donald Williams, Somerset Conservation District
- Conservation District Employee Service Recognition Awards – 35 Years of Service
Anthony Quadro, Westmoreland Conservation District
- Conservation District Trash Champion
Washington County Conservation District
- PA Poster Contest Winners
K – 1st Grade: Cora Petrunak, Lehigh County
2nd – 3rd Grade: Riley Thomas, Cambria County
4th – 6th Grade: Brock Wharton, Cambria County
7th – 9th Grade: Evelyn Warner, Cambria County
10th – 12th Grade: Kathryn Polstra, Columbia County



Roll Call

Secretary Charles Duritsa called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

Secretary Charles Duritsa presented the minutes for review.

It was moved by John Akers and seconded by Sam Worley to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2021, meeting as presented. Motion carried.

President's Report

Mike Price thanked PACD Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh and staff for keeping everything moving during the pandemic. He noted that staff are working in the office on a rotating schedule and are all available during office hours by both phone and email.

Executive Director's Report

Brenda Shambaugh provided the following report about upcoming events and PACD activities undertaken over the past six months:

- Directors are encouraged to contact PACD to sign up for the PACD Directors Listserve and weekly eNewsletter PACD Front Page.
- PACD developed a new Public Service Announcement, which was played for those present.
- PACD has made over 300 posts to social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- PACD has also developed a shared messaging program to help districts supplement their social media posts and distributes a monthly message for districts to post on their social media accounts.
- The Nonpoint Source Pollution Educational Mini-Grant Program is currently funding 62 active projects. Brenda thanked DEP for continued funding for this program.
- PACD is currently coordinating Basic and Level II Ag Boot Camp and Intro to Conservation Planning in coordination with NRCS.
- The CREP Outreach Program Office, funded through a Growing Greener grant, recently held several training webinars for CREP partners. The office has also updated the Landowners Guide to Buffer Success and has been working with Water Words that Work to undertake market research and develop a marketing plan to promote the CREP program.
- The Multifunctional Riparian Buffer Sub-grant for Conservation Districts, funded through DCNR, is going strong.
- PACD is partnering with our auditor SEK, CPAs & Advisors to hold free QuickBooks training for the membership. Registration is open and the training sessions will take place in August and September.
- PACD hosted several webinars through our Chapter 102/105 Technical Training grant from DEP. We are currently coordinating a series of virtual 102/105 fall region meetings with DEP and are hoping to provide in-person 102/105 Basic Technical Training in the spring.
- The 2021 Watershed Specialist Meeting will take place virtually October 5-7, 2021.
- The Leadership Development Program, funded through the SCC, held a virtual staff meeting in February. Training for new managers was launched in May and continues with both a virtual and in-person component. The Building for Tomorrow 2021 Management Summit will take place in-person in September and a Fall Leadership Development Webinar Series on Succession Planning & Management for Conservation Districts will take place in October

and November.

- The Clean Water Academy (CWA) provides on-going technical training for district staff. In addition to a wide variety of courses, the CWA includes recordings of past webinars. District staff represent about half of the 8,500 combined completions and certifications earned through the CWA.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Sonia Wasco provided the following report:

- The year-to-date balance sheet is in good standing, with nothing of concern.
- The balance sheet reflects a change of just over \$1,056,000. The primary reason for this change is that PACD closed out a long-running cost-share grant in May and returned \$441,000 of unspent funds. There was also a cash-flow difference with our grant income and many budgeted events were held virtually at a lower cost.
- We are well within budget for the year.
- In reviewing the P&L we can see the full fiscal year, and everything is in line. The pandemic did result in less income and less expense due to fewer projects being completed.
- PACD is pleased to report that all districts have paid their dues.

It was moved by Jeff Pflug and seconded by John Akers to accept the treasurer's report and file the report for audit. Motion carried.

NACD Director's Report

Clifford Lane provided the following report:

- The NACD summer meeting was held last week in Chicago, marking the anniversary of the first NACD meeting in Chicago 75 years ago.
- U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Sec Tom Vilsack spoke at the conference.
- There was a conservation forum, during which one project demonstrated that minimum tillage can increase carbon sequestration by thousands of pounds.
- Pennsylvania now serves on the Stewardship and Education Committee, where Kelly Stagen's art background was very helpful in developing a new logo.
- The next Northeast Region Meeting will take place in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, November 1-3, 2021, and Cliff encouraged everyone to attend.

PACD Conservation Committee Report

Committee Chairman Josh Longmore provided the following report:

- The PACD Conservation Committee met on July 8, 2021, with a quorum.
- The committee received an update on Chapter 102 from Paul Grella, the new DEP Environmental Group Manager for the NPDES Permitting Division.
- PACD Software Specialist Nick Yeagy provided information on resources available on the DEP Clean Water Academy.
- DEP Engineer Lee Engel provided an update on ePermitting.
- The committee discussed solar farms in Pennsylvania.
- Forester and Westmoreland Conservation District Chairman Ron Rohall reported on the Timber Harvest Manual.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD District Employees Committee Report

Committee member Sandy Thompson provided the report on behalf of Chairwoman Jamie Knecht:

- The PACD District Employees Committee met on July 9, 2021, without a quorum.
- PACD Program Manager Holly Miller reviewed training opportunities coordinated by PACD and provided a list for reference.
- PACD Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller shared information on upcoming Leadership Development training.
- Sandy Thompson and Kelly Stagen gave a report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and provided a brief history of the recently completed survey.
- Jamie Knecht and Jenna St. Clair expressed a need for Chapter 102/105 Filing System training.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Education and Outreach Committee Report

Committee Chairwoman Laura Anderson provided the following report:

- The PACD Education and Outreach Committee met on July 14, 2021, with a quorum.
- PACD Director of Communications and Education Shannon Wehinger reported on the public service announcement PACD released on leaving a buffer. Another PSA will be created for the fall.
- PACD is also producing social media posts for the districts to use each month. The posts are meant to supplement the district's social media content and provide a consistent message across the state.
- PACD staff member Nick Yeagy showed the committee the Clean Water Academy and the trainings now available to the public.
- Committee member Emily Shosh from Potter County Conservation District gave a presentation and demonstration of how StoryMaps can be used for educational purposes.
- Dan Rhodes from Bradford County Conservation District demonstrated the district's underwater drone, an innovative tool the district is using for education. Footage is available on Bradford's Facebook page.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Legislative Committee Report

Committee Chairwoman Donna Fisher provided the following report:

- The FY 2021-22 state budget passed the General Assembly with level funding for the conservation district lines in both PDA and DEP.
- The committee discussed several pieces of legislation:
- SB 28 and HB 139 propose third-party permit reviewers.
- SB 535 proposes a statewide expedited review program.
- SB 465 proposes to create a new agricultural conservation assistance program to put more BMPs on the ground, using the DGLVR program as a model.
- SB 545 would create a pollution threshold below which a pollution event would not need to be reported.
- SB 525 proposes creating a new Growing Greener program.

- HB 591 would create a small-project NPDES permit program for projects under five acres. The committee voted to oppose HB 591 as currently written. This motion will go through the PACD policy process beginning with the Fall Region Meetings.
- The group also discussed potential changes to the PA Sunshine Act.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Operations Committee Report

Chairwoman Kelly Stagen reported that the PACD Operations Committee was cancelled due to a lack of agenda items and will meet again in January.

PACD Ways and Means Committee Report

Committee Chairwoman and PACD Treasurer Sonia Wasco provided the following report:

- The committee met on July 20, 2021, with a quorum.
- They reviewed and approved minutes from the two previous meetings.
- The committee reviewed the year-end financial reports.
- They reviewed the draft PACD budget.
- The committee discussed creating a new three-year dues schedule fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

Proposed PACD Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22

Treasurer Sonia Wasco presented the proposed PACD budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22.

It was moved by John Akers and seconded by Eugene Metcalf to approve the PACD Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 as presented. Motion carried.

Election of Officers

Westmoreland Conservation District Director and Past PACD President Ron Rohall thanked Dr. Rob Shannon from Centre and Bob Robinson from Wyoming for serving with him on the PACD Nominating Committee and presented the following slate of candidates:

- Kelly Stagen, Pike, President
- Dennis Beck, Cambria, 1st Vice President
- Emil Bove, Westmoreland, 2nd Vice President

It was moved by Cliff Lane and seconded by Ray Gorman to accept the slate of candidates as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Partner Report from the PA Department of Environmental Protection

Jill Whitcomb provided the following report:

- The Clean Water Academy is an excellent resource and allows DEP to provide timely and responsive information to the districts.
- DEP held a PracticeKeeper Q&A with the conservation districts on July 15. The session was recorded and will be housed on the CWA for anyone to view. The Q&A is applicable to nutrient management specialists and watershed specialists, as well as ag technicians.
- DEP has provided a list of contacts that will be housed on the CWA as a resource for

conservation districts.

- DEP staff are returning to the office in a hybrid schedule and will continue to meet with districts virtually and in-person.
- DEP currently has four field representatives and four vacancies, which they are actively looking to fill. They will let everyone know as soon as they are able to post these positions.
- Grant rounds for Section 319 and Growing Greener Plus closed on June 25. DEP received 14 319 applications totaling \$4.3 million and 180 Growing Greener Plus applications totaling \$55 million. Staff are ranking and scoring these applications and hope to be able to award the Growing Greener Plus funds by the end of the calendar year.
- The deadline for proposals for the NFWF Pennsylvania Most Effective Basins (PA-MEB) grants program is tomorrow. This program is for projects that accelerate implementation of cost-effective agricultural best management practices in the Chesapeake Bay.

Partner Report from the PA State Conservation Commission

Karl Brown provided the following highlights from his written report:

- Karl thanked the PACD and conservation district boards and staff for their hard work, particularly through the pandemic.
- At their July meeting, the SCC renewed the Leadership Development agreement with PACD.
- Karl expressed appreciation for Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller and his hard work to coordinate the program, particularly over the last year, as he has adapted to provide leadership development opportunities virtually.
- Heidi Secord from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, a former Monroe County Conservation District Director, has been appointed to the commission.
- The SCC has returned to the office part-time, working a hybrid schedule. Staff contacts were provided and continue to be available for district needs.
- The SCC will be presenting awards during Ag Progress Days, which is their first opportunity to do so in-person.
- Karl reviewed new sunshine law requirements.
- The REAP tax credit program opens August 2 and continues to be a resource to offset the costs to implement ag best management practices.
- The Conservation Excellence Grant program allocations were provided in the written report.

Partner Report from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Drew Gilchrist reported on the Multifunctional Riparian Buffer Sub-grant for Districts:

- This program is an excellent partnership. DCNR provides the funding, PACD administers the grant, and the districts use their unique local relationships to work with landowners and implement the projects.
- PACD Program Manager Holly Miller is currently administrating the program, which was created using a one-time funding source through PENNVEST.
- Two rounds of funding were distributed to PACD. Unusually, through the original funding source, the program was able to cover 100% of project expenses and funded maintenance.
- PACD has applied for additional funding through a new funding source. If received, the funding will be available in 2022 and will require a 50% match.
- Drew noted there is still a small amount of the original funding available and encouraged anyone interested in applying to contact Holly Miller at the PACD office.

Partner Report from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Acting State Conservationist Pete Vanderstappen provided the following report:

- Pete reported he will be handing the State Conservationist duties back to Denise Coleman sometime in mid-August.
- EQIP – Anticipate allocating a little over \$24 million for approximately 378 contracts.
- AMA – Have 15 contracts for about \$600,000.
- CSP – Have obligated about \$8 million combined for CSP renewal and CSP classic.
- Pennsylvania was able to spend \$400,000 as a pilot state for Climate Smart, which will be rolled out nationally next year.
- Pete highlighted several RCPP projects including *Improving Forest Health Through Aggregation* with Nature Conservancy PA/DE Chapter as lead partner, *Common Agenda for Clean Waters* with Lancaster Clean Water Partners as lead partner, and the *Turkey Hill Clean Water Partnership* with Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay lead partner.
- NRCS employees have begun masking indoors in the eight counties currently designated hotspots in Pennsylvania. Hotspot locations will likely change as infection rates fluctuate.
- NRCS has a reentry plan to return to in-office work full-time, which will likely begin sometime in October.
- He thanked Nancy DiFiore for her help and support during his time as Acting State Conservationist.
- He provided an update on the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. The Hibernia Dam in Chester is completed. The Beaver Creek project is starting (\$2.3 million). Four dams are in the planning phase, all in Lackawanna tributaries in Wayne. Thirteen assessments have been completed (2 in Mercer, 1 in Venango, and 10 in Washington). They are using consultants to do five dams in various design phases (Core Creek in Bucks, Kintz Creek in Pike, Hamilton and Beechwood in Tioga, and Rainbow in Crawford). They have completed design for Conneautville Dam in Crawford. Three land treatment projects are in the planning phase in Chester, Westmoreland, and Wyoming, with another planned in Lancaster.
- He noted that climate change is going to create an increasing need for flood control.

Adjournment

It was moved by John Akers and seconded by Josh Longmore to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.