

**PACD South East Region Meeting Minutes
Berks County Conservation District, Leesport, PA
October 28, 2021**

Call to Order

PACD Region Director Piper Sherburne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. She asked that everyone around the room and on the call introduce themselves and mention the agency they represented.

Virtual and in-person participants: Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Dean Druckenmiller, Berks; Geoff Price, Berks; Gretchen Schatschneider, Bucks; Chris Strohmaier, Chester; Ed Magargee, Delaware; Adele Bon-Shannon, Lehigh; Holly Kaplan, Lehigh; William Erdman, Lehigh; Jessica Buck, Montgomery; Dion Campbell, Northampton; Ted Veresink, Northampton; Piper Sherburne, PACD SE Region Director, Berks; Kelly Stagen, PACD President, Pike; Frank Schneider, SCC; Charles Hanner, NRCS; Denise Coleman, NRCS; Linda Mackey, DEP; Matt Miller, PACD.

Election of Region Director

It was moved by Ed Magargee and seconded by Ted Veresink to elect Piper Sherburne as PACD South East Region Director. Vote was unanimous in favor of electing Piper Sherburne.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on March 24, 2022, beginning at 9:30 AM, location to be announced.

Approval of Minutes

Piper Sherburne called for amendments to the minutes. None were presented.

Motion by Ed Magargee and seconded by Gretchen Schatschneider to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2021, meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously. There were 2 abstentions.

PACD Business Report

Brenda provided verbal highlights from her written report:

- *Roundtable Meeting* – Brenda announced an opportunity to meet with Deputy Secretary of Water Programs Aneca Atkinson will be upcoming at 9:00 AM on October 13th.
- *Staff Changes* – Brenda announced that Phil Gardner retired after over 20 years of service and will be replaced by another full-time person. Hiring process will begin in October.
- *Monday Weekly Newsletter* – Brenda announced that if there were any people not receiving the PACD Weekly Newsletter and would like to be added to receive it to contact PACD.
- *Leadership Development* – For anyone wanting more information about the Strategic



Planning Grant, contact Matt Miller at PACD.

- *Ag Boot Camp* – Looking to go back to fully in-person training in the spring.
- *Non-point Source Grants* – Brenda announced that there were over 60 grants awarded in the Non-Point Source Prevention Mini Program.
- *Education & Outreach* – Brenda announced a PACD PSA was sent to districts on the benefits of vehicle maintenance for the environment and the PACD social media has been very active.
- *CREP Outreach* – Brenda announced PACD will post recommendations and work has begun for CREP education and outreach.
- *QuickBooks Training* – Brenda announced that PACD put together a QuickBooks training that was free for members and instructed basic, advanced, and payroll levels of training. Over 200 people participated.
- *Riparian Buffer Sub-Grants* – Still approx. \$170,000 left, a total of 22 grants have been completed. Brenda announced that PACD has applied for a cost share Riparian Buffer grant.
- *Chapter 102/105 Training* – Training is scheduled to be held in Spring 2022. PACD is looking to work with DEP as well as NRCS on the Clean Water Academy training.
- *Watershed Specialist Webinar* – Set to be held on October 5th – 7th 2021.
- *PACD Winter Meeting* – PACD will be holding its annual winter meeting in-person on January 26th to January 27th at the Wyndham in State College, PA. This meeting will be held jointly with the SCC.
- *Statewide Ag Meeting* – A virtual meeting in February 2022 is currently being planned.
- *Legislative Activities* – Starting July 1, 2022, a campaign will be put together to help districts gain more funding. Funding hasn't been increased since 2004. PACD has put together an Ad-Hoc committee to plan for the campaign. The committee will be having month-by-month projects if conservation districts want to be involved. The committee has sent an email to the PA Secretary of Agriculture and DEP giving preliminary budget priorities.
- *Ag Conservation Assistance* – If passed by the PA General Assembly, funding will come from Federal Stimulus money.
- *Growing Greener* – (SB 525) Funding will be a 1-time Federal Stimulus money payment.
- *Small Projects* – (HB 591) PACD at an earlier date voted to oppose HB 591 as it is currently written. The committee felt uncomfortable voting in favor due to lack of information.

Motion to oppose HB 591 as currently written was made by Doug Beri. Seconded by Emil Bove. Motion passed unanimously.

District Information Sharing

- **Berks** – Held their 75th anniversary celebration over the summer. They awarded \$20,000 in scholarships during that time. They are searching on new office space. Also, they will be hiring a sixth E & S technician because they just signed onto a PCSM delegation agreement, and a full-time DGRLVR staff person. They will have 2 new director openings on their board.
- **Bucks** – Tonight is their 60th anniversary dinner and they are going on a farm tour. They just hired 2 new employees, but their watershed specialist and senior ag tech are also leaving. They are now working on a dredging operation and dam restoration project. The dredging

material is going on agricultural fields. Also, the counties Natural Resources Committee is being reinstated.

- Chester – Going to reduce their office space because they are going to a permanent hybrid schedule. They are assuming that they will exceed their budget for fees for services but are concerned that the fees will decrease next year, so they are looking at their current fee structure. The last time they had a fee increase was 2017. The new county payroll company has experienced many glitches.
- Delaware – The county is instituting a Sustainability Commission and has asked the CD to become the focal point of the Commission.
- Lehigh – Now has a NOT technician who is focusing on reducing their backlog. The CD has a new permanent worksite policy which will be a hybrid schedule. The district also started a PA Master Naturalist Program.
- Montgomery – Hired a second engineer to design and review PCSM plans. They have received 2 tree revitalization grants. They are also working with a municipality to assist homeowners. The CD is continuing to work on a hybrid schedule.
- Northampton – The County just finished their budget hearings, and the CD thinks they will have access to a larger conference room in a county building. They completed an Act 48 teacher program and participated in a county festival. The CD received two SLF grants. One of them is to put netting around a vineyard and treat the netting. They also recently held an education program for local farmers.

State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report (Handout)

Frank Schneider provided the following report:

- Frank noted that the SCC recently hired Sherri Law for the DGLVR program. Sherri comes from Huntingdon County Conservation District.
- Frank mentioned they are still working a hybrid office schedule for their staff
- Frank talked about the Conservation District Director appointment process that is underway
- He recommended that conservation districts offer ways for board members, agencies, and the public to participate in meetings through conference calls or video conference.
- He discussed the amendments to the Sunshine Law (SB 554)
- He gave an update for the Nutrient Management/ Manure Management Delegation Agreement Work Group
- He discussed the formation of the Regulatory Revision Process
- He gave information on the DGLVR Program Stream Crossing Document Development & Review. (Many questions from the directors on this item)
- He talked about the REAP tax credit program application period that opened August 2nd.
- He discussed the Agricultural Linked Investment (Agrilink) Program
- He discussed the Conservation Excellence Grant Program Allocations
- He gave information on the SCC 2020-2021 Awards announcement

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report (Handout)

Linda Mackey provided the following information:

- She discussed that they will be announcing the 319 Grant recipients soon.
- She gave information about the Growing Greener Grant program and plans on announcing the awards over the winter.

- She discussed the Watershed Specialist grant agreements
- She discussed the Chesapeake Bay Technician and Engineer Agreements review
- She discussed the PACD Growing Greener CREP Grant
- She discussed the PACD Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative Grant
- She talked about the Clean Water Academy and maintaining Attachment B forms in the Clean Water Academy
- She gave information on the Exceptional Value Wetlands Webinar
- She talked about PA's Phase 3 Watershed implementation plan newsletter for the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- She discussed that the Pilot and Tier 2 counties continue to prepare Milestone and annual reports. The Tier 3 and 4 counties are in the final stretch of CAP Development.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report (Handout)

Charlie Hanner provided the following report, referring to the PA NRCS Conservation Update for the South East region:

- Charlie discussed the Beaver Creek Dam project in Chester County
- He gave information about Ag. Boot Camp II held in-person in August
- He gave an update on the Soil Survey Refresh and a Delaware County Soil Survey
- He gave an update on FY 2021 Farm Bill Programs status.
- He announced that NRCS is investing \$50 Million in New Cooperative Agreements for Racial Justice and Equity.
- He gave an update on the LiDAR data for Pennsylvania.
- Denise Coleman, PA State Conservationist, also spoke about new federal Covid vaccine requirements.

Piper Sherburne thanked everyone for their time and input on all discussions.

Adjournment

It was moved by Chris Strohmaier and seconded by Dean Druckenmiller to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 P.M. Motion approved unanimously.