

**PACD North Central Region Meeting
Clinton County Conservation District, Mill Hall, PA
March 31, 2022**

Welcome and Introductions

Rob Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

In attendance: Matt Long, Lycoming; Bill Kahler, Lycoming; Rob Shannon, Centre/PACD; Cathy Yeakel, Bradford; Carrie Richmond, Sullivan; Jason Childs, Potter; Larry Butler, Clinton; Amanda Coleman, NRCS; Jaci Kerstetter, DEP; Jim Coslo, Centre; Susie Peters, Clinton; Daryl Miller Bradford; Nancy Corbin, Columbia; Erica Tomlinson, Tioga; Greg Bonsall, Union; Karen Books, DEP; Karl Brown, SCC; Kelly Stagen, PACD; Nathan Brophy, Northumberland; Sean Levan, Montour; Tim Peters, NRCS; Willie Null, Clearfield; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The group discussed dates for the next region meeting. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at the Clinton County Conservation District at 10:00 AM.

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 Cathy Yeakel to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Report

Executive Director, Brenda Shambaugh, provided highlights from her written report:

- **Conservation District Week April 10-16, 2022** – All conservation districts are encouraged to participate in Conservation District Week. Brenda recommended contacting elected officials regarding the state budget.
- **Invasive Species** – The federal government will be providing funding for a pilot PRISM (invasive species) program in Pennsylvania. The Governor's proposed Agriculture Department budget includes funding for PRISMs and additional funding to combat the spread of Spotted Lanternfly.
- **PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program** – PACD was recently awarded a Growing Greener grant in the amount of \$500,000 from DEP to offer an Ag Plan Reimbursement Program to conservation districts. A 20% match will be required from the landowner/operator.



- **Communication** – PACD continually updates its director and conservation district staff position listserves.
- **Education and Outreach** – PACD released a public service announcement (PSA) last fall about car maintenance to prevent pollution and another PSA in January about responsible use of deicers.
- **Clean Water Academy** – PACD continues to receive DEP funding for the Clean Water Academy (CWA) focusing on Chapter 102 and Chapter 105. Recently, PACD worked with DEP to provide training on the new PAG-01 General Permit prior to its rollout.
- **Ag Boot Camp** – Basic training will be held April 4-8, 2022, at the Keystone Conference Center, Ft. Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA. Level II training will be held April 25-29, 2022, at the Keystone Conference Center, Ft. Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA and the USDA NRCS State Office, Harrisburg, PA.
- **Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Mini-grant Program** – The 2022-23 mini-grant round opened in January.
- **102/105 Technical Training** – Virtual Technical Training will take place via Zoom March 29-31, 2022. 102/105 Basic Technical Training will take place in-person with a field component May 3-5, 2022.
- **Section 319 Virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting** – PACD is working with DEP to coordinate the meeting that will take place via Zoom May 18-19, 2022. Registration will open in March.
- **Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series** – The Watershed Specialist Webinar will take place October 5-7, 2022, via Zoom. Registration will open in August.
- **Leadership Development** – Over 200 attendees participated in the 2022 Hybrid Staff Conference that was held on February 16-17, 2022. Director Training workshops were held in February and March.
- **Conservation Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach Program Office** – PACD has extended the application deadline for the 2022 CREP mini-grant program to April 8, 2022. PACD partnered with Water Words That Work to offer farmer focus groups across Pennsylvania to discuss the CREP program. The updated Landowner Guide to Buffer Success is still available in print and electronic formats.
- **Riparian Buffer Sub-grants**
PACD is accepting sub-grant applications to implement multi-functional riparian buffers.
- **Legislative Activity**
All districts developed a “Highlights Page” document that was distributed to all PA House and Senate members. Follow-up with state legislators is encouraged.
- **Three-Year PACD Dues Schedule**
The PACD Ways and Means Committee and Executive Committee is recommending a three-year dues schedule beginning in July 2022. The proposed schedule is as follows:

2022-2023 Fiscal Year - \$130.00 increase (includes \$55.00 from the 2020-2021 fiscal year that was not implemented due to Covid)

2023-2024 Fiscal Year - \$75.00 increase

2024-2025 Fiscal Year - \$75.00 increase

- **PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference**

The PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference is tentatively set to take place in a hybrid format July 20-21, 2022, in Harrisburg. The Executive Council will meet in-person and virtually.

Regional Information Sharing

Each District highlighted three items to share with the membership:

Bradford: Cathy reported that their annual Earth Day celebration will be going on 4/23/22 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the conservation district with hands on activities, live animals, music and more! She said they are preparing for CAP Implementation and BMP Verification when funds become available and discussed turnover among district staff.

Centre: Jim discussed staffing levels and changes at the district. In addition, he discussed their intern program and using them for Ag BMP Verification and entering data into practice keeper.

Clearfield: Willie highlighted some upcoming district projects including, Dirt and Gravel Roads, 102/105 solar projects, and Ag/Watershed projects.

Clinton: Larry reported that the Dirt and Gravel Roads projects are ranked and discussed an incentive program to reward district staff members for their work, based on their annual review. He also reported that final payment for the purchase of the meeting building at Clinton CD is nearing!

Columbia: Nancy reported that they are busy with CAP Implementation and hiring interns for Ag BMP verification. She highlighted upcoming Ag conferences and workshops and discussed some educational programs they are putting on this spring/summer. A lot of projects are starting up!

Lycoming: Matt discussed the addition of a new staff member for Dirt and Gravel Roads. The district is starting small projects through growing greener Cover Cropping and purchased a 10-foot no-till drill. In addition, he said upgrades to their nature walk and CAP projects are kicking off.

Montour: Sean reported about staffing changes and discussed success with their intern program. He mentioned that he is excited to be able to work with the more urban areas through the CAP projects. In addition, their fish habitat projects are starting up.

Northumberland: Nathan reported that on May 6 2022, they will be participating in the Keystone 10 million tree program. He also discussed the mosquito program, staffing changes and upcoming projects.

Potter: Jason reported that education season is kicking off. Other things going on at the district include the annual seedling sale, dirt and gravel roads/low volume roads (DGLVR) ranking, annual DGLVR meeting, and stream crossing projects. Jason also discussed CAP implementation projects.

Sullivan: Carrie reported that they hired a new admin assistant. They are also having rain barrel workshops which were funded with PACD grants and mentioned the annual seedling sale.

Tioga: Erica said they just had their soil health workshop and a PAOneStop training. They are again experiencing staffing changes. Erica said they are doing estimates for CAP projects with NRCS, and costs are significantly higher this year. Tioga will have a legislative luncheon May 6.

Union: Greg discussed outreach efforts including a soil/manure sampling workshop, Ag land preservation 10,000-acre celebration at the end of May and a 65-year celebration for the Conservation District in late summer/early fall! Union is also experiencing staffing challenges.

DEP Report

Karen Books provided the following report:

- The Chesapeake Bay Technician contract renewals will be available in the coming months.
- Growing Greener Plus and Section 319 NPS Management grant rounds will be announced this spring.
- EPA Region 3 Animal Agriculture Assessment draft report is expected to be available for review and comment by April 1, 2022.
- The public comment period is open for the draft Trenchless Technology Technical Guidance document until May 18, 2022.
- The Chapter 102 ePermit system now includes new NOIs and amendments for the ESCGP-3 for earth disturbance associated with Gas Transmission Facilities.
- Conservation districts will now receive Chapter 105 email notifications from KEES for PennDOT projects.
- PAG-01 went live on March 1, 2022.
- The State Water Plan's ninth Statewide Committee meeting was held January 19 to review draft components of the State Water Plan Update document.
- The tenth Statewide Committee meeting is scheduled for May 11.
- The Chesapeake Bay Office is supporting county partners' BMP verification efforts.
- Volunteers are needed for the PA Envirothon.

Jaci Kerstetter reviewed her regional report.

SCC Report

Karl Brown provided the following report:

- He noted that Heidi Secord has been appointed PA FSA State Executive Director.
- Conservation district directors are reminded to complete their Statements of Financial Interests forms no later than May 1, 2022.
- As of February 24, 2022, 61 counties have submitted 2022 director nominations to the SCC.
- Gov. Wolf included \$3.5M in state funding in PDA's proposed 2022-2023 budget to support the implementation of the Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM).
- The SCC and DGLVR Center staff continue to work on revisions to the SCC's DGLVR policy regarding stream crossings and on the development of a new stream crossing standard and technical manual.
- Twenty-two counties are scheduled for DGLVR Program QAQC visits in 2022.
- The Conservation Excellence Grant program has expanded into seven counties in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

- The SCC received 347 applications for the REAP program for the 2021-2022 program year.
- SCC staff are preparing to ask for Commission approval of a new 5-year Nutrient/Manure Management Program delegation agreement in May 2022.
- The PA Attorney General has filed a civil action against Ms. Diane Comrey, an agricultural consultant and NM/MM planner. Per the press release, “Pennsylvanians who have paid for goods and services that haven’t been delivered should file a complaint or contact the Office of the Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection.”
- The SCC is asking that delegated conservation districts suspend all routine inspections of poultry facilities due to the elevated threat of HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza). The PDA’s Bureau of Animal Health is encouraging conservation district staff to practice enhanced biosecurity measures during the elevated threat.
- Farmers in 14 PA counties are invited to participate in a survey to inventory conservation practices on their farms that improve water quality.
- Discussions continue with stakeholders from Philadelphia to form a conservation district.

NRCS Report

- Amanda Coleman reviewed her handout and highlighted project accomplishments.
- Brenda asked what the funding levels look like since the federal budget was passed. Amanda reported that it looks like there appears to be more funding for projects.
- Amanda also discussed staffing vacancies.

Adjournment

It was moved by Larry Butler and seconded by Jason Childs to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 pm.