

**PACD South East Region Meeting Minutes
Henning's Market, Harleysville, PA
September 29, 2022**

Call to Order

Region Director Piper Sherburne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

Participants: Dean Druckenmiller, Berks; Taylor Lawrence, Berks; Larry Kehl, Berks; Gretchen Schatschneider, Bucks; Chris Strohmaier, Chester; Ed Magargee, Delaware; Kevin Frederick, 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; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Karl Brown, SCC; Charles Hanner, NRCS; Karen Books, DEP; Linda Mackey, DEP; Nick DiPaolo, Northampton; Jeff Sholly, PACD; Robert Page, DEP; Tim Peters, NRCS;

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on March 23, 2023 beginning at 9:30 AM, at Henning's Market, Montgomery County.

Approval of Minutes

Piper Sherburne called for a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting as presented.

Motion by Chris Strohmaier and seconded by Ed Magargee to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2022, meeting as presented. Motion carried.

PACD Business Report

Brenda thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. She also introduced Doug Wolfgang, who will be the new Executive Secretary for the SCC in January 2023.

- *Cambria County Conservation District Motion* – Brenda discussed the Cambria County Conservation District motion for PACD to hire a consultant to do a salary comparison study. The completion of the study would provide valuable data to present to legislators on why the increased funding is needed going forward.
Gretchen Schatschneider made the motion to support Cambria County's request for PACD to hire a consultant, seconded by Ed Magargee. Motion carried unanimously.
- *Statewide PACD Meetings* – Brenda mentioned that the PACD Executive Board has decided to hold the 2023 Winter Meeting virtually. She mentioned the PACD Executive Council meeting is tentatively set to take place on January 26th 2023 with committees to take place virtually between January 1 and January 20, 2023. The PACD Executive Board has asked all regions to discuss the 2023 Joint Annual Conference format & location.



- Education & Outreach – Brenda announced that in June 2021, PACD developed a shared messaging program that districts can use to supplement their social media posts (Facebook & Instagram) and have a shared message across the state.
- Ag Boot Camp – Brenda informed that the Basic Training Boot Camp was held April 4-8 2022 with 32 attendees, and Level II Boot Camp was held April 25-29 2022 with 27 attendees at the Keystone Conference Center at Fort Indiantown Gap in Annville, PA. She also mentioned Intro to Conservation Planning will be held November 1-3 2022.
- Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Mini-Grant Program– Brenda discussed that the 2021-2022 Nonpoint Source Pollution mini-grant round concluded in May 2022. She mentioned that there were eighty-six projects completed by 49 conservation districts reaching over 13,530 adults. The mini-grants totaled \$146,863. She mentioned the 2022-2023 mini-grant round opened in January and thirty-three projects from twenty-five districts were funded for \$60,000.
- Clean Water Academy – Brenda mentioned that the Clean Water Academy has had approx. 26,000 course completions with conservation districts accounting for roughly half of this figure with around 14,000 completions collectively. She also mentioned that conservation districts also have 410 training program completions. She discussed that PACD continues to work with DEP to develop eLearning courses for the Clean Water Academy focusing on Chapter 102 and 105 topics.
- PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program – Brenda announced that PACD was awarded a Growing Greener grant in the amount of \$500,000 from DEP to offer an Ag Plan Reimbursement Program to conservation districts from 2022-2024. She mentioned a 20% match will be required from the landowner/operator or the conservation district. Eligible plans include Manure Management (Ch. 91), Nutrient Management (Ch. 83), and Ag E&S (Ch. 102).
- Riparian Buffer Sub-grants – Brenda notified the districts that PACD has two Riparian buffer programs available. The *Multi-functional Riparian Buffer Sub-grant for conservation district* program still has approx. \$40,000 available and there is no match requirement. A total of 40 grants implementing over 126 acres of buffers have been awarded funding from this program since 2018. *The Riparian Buffer Sub-grant for conservation districts* program has been continued due to a C2P2 grant from DCNR awarded to PACD. While multi-functional buffers are preferred, conventional buffers are eligible as well. There is still \$95,000 available and there is a 50/50 match required.
- Lawn Conversion Grant – Brenda announced PACD will be receiving a \$100,000 C2P2 grant from DCNR to offer a Lawn Conversion Sub-grant Program for Conservation Districts. The goal of the program is to offer lawn conversion training to conservation districts and distribute funding to lawn conversion projects across PA.
- Invasive Species – Brenda mentioned that an iMapInvasives training was offered to conservation district staff on June 28, 2022. There is a recording of the training available. Please contact Holly Miller if interested. Brenda also mentioned that PACD was awarded a landscape Scale Restoration Grant from the USDA Forest Service to offer a PRISM pilot program in northwestern PA.

- 102/105 Technical Training – Brenda announced chapter 102/105 training will take place in-person with a field component May 23-26, 2023 at the Red Lion Harrisburg-Hershey in Harrisburg, PA.
- Section 319 Virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting – Brenda discussed the Section 319 virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting took place via zoom May 18-19, 2022. Details for the 2023 session are in development.
- Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series – Brenda announced that the Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series will take place October 5-7, 2022 via Zoom at no cost to districts.
- Leadership development – Brenda mentioned the 2022 Management Summit was held September 13-15 at the Wyndham State College and attended by over 50 management staff from across the state. A Fall Leadership Webinar Series is scheduled for late October and early November and Letters-of-Intent are being accepted through December 2 for the 2022-2023 Strategic Planning Grants program.
- Legislative Activity – Brenda discussed that in addition to the salary survey findings for the next state budget request, that they are planning a change to the format for the highlights page. This year’s highlights will focus on a sincere “thank you” to legislators and what districts have been able to accomplish with the additional state budget funding. PACD will also be developing and distributing a white paper explaining the conservation district history and mission, the potential programs administered by districts, and the necessity of partnering with related agencies.
- PACD Engineering Assistance/TAG Program – Brenda asked for input and feedback from the districts if there would be enough interest to expand the TAG program. The general consensus from the district representatives attending the meeting is that there would be a benefit to expanding the TAG program.

District Information Sharing

- *Bucks* – The annual anniversary celebration is tonight. They have a full board complement with new leadership. They are in the process of strategic planning. They are working with PALMS for a boat cleaner program.
- *Chester* – Their 75th Anniversary is next week. They are involved in the county CAP meetings. They are doing farmer outreach and want to expand their education and outreach program. The county is allowing for a staff salary increase through a compensation survey.
- *Delaware* – They are purchasing new equipment and a new transporter. They will be updating their filing systems and new database. They will be installing a multifunctional buffer soon and a live stake nursery.
- *Lehigh* – They will be celebrating their 75th anniversary year. With new funding they are adding a new conservation ecologist position.
- *Montgomery* – Their ag tech is out until November, and their other ag tech is leaving soon, but their summer intern was a huge success.

- They are expanding their education and outreach activities. They are adjusting their review fees in the near future. They mentioned that the region DEP compliance has significantly improved. They are excited to begin their lawn conversion program. It was pointed out that public partners can participate in the program if it goes through the conservation district.
- *Berks* – They held a few workshops, including a Chapter 102 Engineering workshop and a Dirt/Gravel Road workshop. There will be a tire collection in November. They are ramping up for ACAP and have formed a committee. They purchased an educational mobile unit.
- *Northampton* – A cover crop program was implemented with about \$23,000. There will be a board bus tour with legislators attending. They plan on adding a Coordinator position in January and are hiring a new ag tech position.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report (Handout)

Karen Books provided the following notes on her written report:

- The new Chapter 102 inspection report is out, and districts are expected to begin using it by October 3, 2022.
- The NPDES PG 13 draft permit goes out October 1, 2022, and districts are asked to comment.
- The new field representative for the DEP Southeast region will be on board in a few weeks. Karen explained some ways field representatives can be of help to conservation districts.
- The Chesapeake Bay office has been re-organized and is now the Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Non-point Source Management.

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

Charlie Hanner and Tim Peters provided highlights from the PA NRCS Conservation Update including that there is \$6.2 million in EQIP, RCCP, and CSP funding.

State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report (Handout)

Karl Brown provided the following notes on his written report:

- New director appointments are currently underway.
- Karl reviewed some changes in SCC personnel and noted he will retire at the end of this year.
- Eric Cromer is currently working on the ACAP funding paperwork and how best to administer it. ACAP is part of the Clean Streams Fund and all ACAP money must be committed by December 31, 2024, and that all money must be spent by December 31, 2026. ACAP money will be handled similar to that for DGLVR projects. The comment end date will be October 21, 2022.

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

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.