

PACD Education and Outreach Committee Meeting
Held Virtually
July 11, 2022 | 1:00-2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Committee Chair Laura Anderson

Committee Members in Attendance: Laura Anderson, Kristen Currier, Emma Grubbs, Joan McCarty, Michael McKelvey, Emily Shosh, Jason Singer, Kelly Stagen, Ted Veresink

Guests in Attendance: J.T. Bandzuh, Janet Creegan, Shane Kleiner, Susan Marquart, Tamara Peffer, Brenda Shambaugh, Caitlin Skibiell, Shannon Wehinger (notetaker), Chelsey Weyant, Nick Yeagy.

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. There was a quorum.

Welcome and Introductions (Chairperson)

Chair Laura Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of January 2022 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on January 11, 2022 were provided to members for review.

It was moved by Ted Veresink and seconded by Jason Singer to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on January 11, 2022. Motion carried.

PACD Updates

Ag Progress Days is coming up August 9-11, 2022. PACD will host a conservation district booth. Several district staff have stepped up and volunteered to staff the booth. There is only 1 spot left, and August 11 from 9am-1pm for one person. Contact Shannon to volunteer.



PACD created a Training Needs Assessment for Environmental Education. The information will be used to guide what environmental education focused courses could be made available in the Clean Water Academy (CWA) online training resource. New staff find the CWA particularly helpful. Information on conservation districts and how they function with partners is an important topic to cover for new staff.

After the needs are prioritized, PACD will ask districts to contribute content so districts can emulate each other's programs and not reinvent the wheel. Nick will make a survey of the topics and send it out through the Environmental Educator's listserve in order to prioritize topics.

Updates to Science Standards

Tammie Peffer, PA Department of Education, spoke to the group on updates to the PA Science Standards.

In 2020-21, the standards were due for updating. Environment and Ecology are a standard woven in and not a separate standard. The updated standards were approved by the State Board of Education in January 2022. The standards are based on a K-12 Framework for Science Education

Conservation districts can help schools do phenomenon-based education. The new focus is student centered, phenomenon focused (something they witnessed themselves through the real world, a book, or a movie, for example), inquiry based, for every student. The phenomena must be grounded in real-world scenarios that are engaging, relevant, and accessible.

The focus is for students to make sense of the world around them and solve problems. Students become critical thinkers and problem-solvers that can apply their knowledge in novel, real-world situations.

Districts are important partners in this learning and discovery process and teaching students to think critically. Professional development opportunities will be coming. Districts would be great partners for these efforts in addition to the intermediary units (IUs).

Outside partners (such as conservation districts) will help teachers bring in the depth and knowledge on the topics. Teaching the teachers best practices for natural resources will be important.

The new standards are all about having students be actively engaged. District staff are encouraged to join <https://pdesas.org>. Email Tammie if you are interested in being more involved. Her email is tpeffer@pa.gov.



Tour of NatureWorksPark

J.T. Bandzuh and Chelsea Weyant from Blair County Conservation District, gave a virtual tour of the new and exciting exhibits the district developed for their NatureWorksPark property.

Chelsea spoke about how the 15-acre property was purchased in 2012. The district received \$250,000 from DCNR – Community Conservation Partnership Program in 2016. The total project cost for phase one is \$608,000. (Phase 2 will be the new office building and a hoop house.)

The park includes a wetland mitigation area that has a composite deck boardwalk. They have two pavilions and had picnic tables donated by the Rotary Club. They have an amphitheater with seating rocks. They have educational signage installed. They use QR code signs some of which were funded by PACD Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Educational Mini-grants. The QR code links go to educational videos. There is an urban agriculture garden.

The district was gifted three turtles, so they have a native turtle exhibit. The turtles act as mascots for nonpoint source pollution prevention. They also have free little libraries which cost \$400 each. A local engineering firm donated them. The park additions and improvements are ongoing. They have charcoal grills, rain barrels, and improved trashcans.

Maintenance is done by district staff. Mowing is done by prison system volunteers and highway crew. District staff mows the more intricate areas. The Master Gardeners and others weed and put down wood chips. The partnerships with the community made this possible. Visit <https://natureworkspark.org/> for more information.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

It was moved by Kelly Stagen and seconded by Ted Veresink to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

