

**PACD Executive Council Meeting
Holiday Inn Harrisburg (Hershey Area), Grantville, PA
July 20, 2023**

Call to Order

President Kelly Stagen welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Roll Call

Secretary Charles Duritsa called the roll. Thirty-one districts answered the roll, which constituted a quorum.

Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

Secretary Charles Duritsa presented the minutes of the previous meeting on January 26, 2023.

It was moved by Sandy Thompson (McKean) and Sam Worley (Franklin) to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2023, meeting. Motion carried.

President's Report

President Kelly Stagen thanked Pike County Conservation District Manager Michele Long, the conservation districts, her fellow board members, and the PACD staff for all of their support during her presidency.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh provided a summary of PACD staff projects:

- Director of Operations Amy Brown manages the organization's finances, manages PACD's 15 grants, and provides human resources support for the office.
- Bookkeeper and Administrative Assistant Brian Cooper provides bookkeeping services and assists Amy with grant tracking and reporting.
- Project and Event Specialist Molly Burns is our longest-standing employee at 21 years. She coordinates many events for PACD, including the PACD Winter Meeting, Joint Annual Conference, and fall and spring region meetings. She organizes Chapter 102 Technical Training, including special training sessions such as the Verbal Judo sessions that took place this spring. She coordinates the Conservation District Watershed Specialist Meeting and the 319 grantee meeting and works on the PACD awards program.
- Director of Communications and Education Shannon Wehinger is our next longest-standing employee with 20 years at PACD. She manages all of PACD's communications, including the weekly Front Page e-Newsletter, the monthly rewind, social media presence, and website. She also manages the popular nonpoint source mini-grant program and coordinates Ag Boot Camp Basic, Level II, and Conservation Planning. She also coordinates the poster contest and works on the PACD awards program.
- Funded by the State Conservation Commission, Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller coordinated the 3rd Annual Conservation District Video Awards in February and a



seminar on Employment Law for Conservation Districts at three locations this winter with a follow-up webinar in March. Matt coordinated a CliftonStrengths for Conservation Districts initiative that included winter workshops and a spring leadership webinar series. Upcoming events include the Management Summit & Pre-Con in September and a Fall Leadership webinar series tentatively scheduled for November. Matt also administers a strategic planning grant program for CDs.

- Program Manager Holly Miller manages the Ag Plan Reimbursement Program, the Lawn Conversion Program, the PRISM Pilot Program for the northwest conservation districts, and two riparian buffer subgrant programs. She also runs the CREP Outreach Program Office, including the CREP Mini-grant Program.
- Funded through an agreement with DEP, Instructional Designer Chris Grimsley coordinates the Clean Water Academy for DEP, including development of online courses, narration, organizing course design and images, and creating quizzes for review.
- PACD is also working on a new Certified Planner Program, funded by the SCC and NRCS. Through this program, PACD plans to hire six staff to assist with conservation plans, Act 38 nutrient management plans, manure management plans, and ag erosion and sediment control plans. The initial funding is for two years, and the program is based on the PACD Engineering Assistance (TAG) program.
- Brenda thanked the districts who provided funding to defray the cost of the salary survey. PACD hopes the membership finds the information helpful.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Sonia Wasco presented the financial reports for Fiscal Year 2022-23, which were provided prior to the meeting. She noted the PACD Ways and Means committee and executive board both reviewed the reports. The PACD Executive Board reviews the financial reports monthly and follows any items that have come in above or below expectations. Sonia reported all 66 conservation districts are in good standing and thanked them for their support.

It was moved by Sonia Wasco and seconded by Donna Zofcin to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

NACD Director's Report

NACD Alternate Director Kelly Stagen provided a report on behalf of Cliff Lane who was traveling back from the NACD 2023 Summer Meeting in Bismarck, North Dakota. She reported that NRCS Chief Cosby spoke at the meeting, with a rousing message about working together to achieve conservation goals. Kelly shared Cliff's recommendation that everyone look up two North Dakota farms: the Black Leg Ranch, which demonstrates innovative cover crop usage, and the conservation demonstration farm Menoken Farm. As the committee chair, Kelly was pleased to share that NACD approved the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee report.

New Business

PACD Conservation Committee Report

Committee member Josh Longmore (Luzerne) provided the following report:

- The PACD Conservation Committee met on June 29 with a quorum.
- PACD Program Manager Holly Miller provided a summary of subgrants funded by various

partners and available through PACD. She noted there is a list of subgrant programs available on the PACD website through the Education Tab under Apply for a grant. She described sub-grant opportunities for districts including CREP Education and Outreach, Ag Plan Reimbursement, Lawn Conversion, Riparian Buffer Programs, and the PRISM Pilot Program for north west counties.

- PACD Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh reported on a recent meeting with the Governor's Transformation Officer Ben Kirshner to discuss conservation districts and permitting timeframes, noting that districts issue permits quickly when they receive a complete and accurate application. PACD offered to assist in developing changes to the permitting process.
- Brenda also reported on a recent meeting with DEP Secretary Richard Negrin and several DEP staff to discuss districts' local focus and mission, including voluntary compliance and common goals between the agency and districts, and noted that districts can help DEP by showing support for partnership opportunities.
- The committee discussed the new Certified Plan Writer program funded by the SCC and NRCS, PACD will hire six new certified planners to provide districts with assistance in plan writing. The program will function similarly to the Engineering Assistance (AKA TAG) Program. As with the TAG program, the cost of plan development is covered by the program.
- A brief legislative update was provided.
- The committee had no motions to bring to Council.

PACD District Employees Committee Report

Committee member Sandy Thompson (McKean) provided the following report:

- The PACD District Employees Committee met on July 12 with a quorum.
- PACD Program Manager Holly Miller provided a report and list of 2023 & 2024 training opportunities coordinated by PACD.
- PACD Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller shared information on upcoming Leadership Development Program training.
- Doug Beri from Indiana will take over as delegate for the Northeast Conservation District Employees Association and Sandy Thompson will be alternate.
- During the meeting, the committee identified district staff needs, including:
 - Conservation district staff need timber harvesting training
 - Teleworking
 - Salary increases as a result of the salary survey project
 - Conservation district insurance
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Education and Outreach Committee Report

Committee member Kelly Stagen (Pike) provided the following report:

- The PACD Education and Outreach Committee met on July 6 with a quorum.
- Jennifer Fetter with Penn State Extension spoke about the Dive Deeper Conference to be held in Harrisburg in September. She also provided an update on the Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training as part of the ACAP legislation. The center will hold trainings, hire an engineer, and focus on workforce development.
- Kathleen Banski from DEP was unable to attend the committee meeting but provided

information on the DEP Environmental Education Grants program. There will be a webinar on the grant program in September and the application deadline will be November 15.

- Brenda Shambaugh from PACD provided updates on association projects.
 - PACD is coordinating a conservation district booth at Ag Progress Days.
 - The Lawn Conversion Program begins this month and has an educational component.
 - A pilot PRISM program is in progress in the northwestern part of the state.
 - The Ag Plan Reimbursement Program has 236 plans approved in less than a year.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Legislative Committee Report

Committee member John Dryzal provided the following report:

- The PACD Legislative Committee met on June 27, 2023 with a quorum.
- Marel King, Pennsylvania Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission spoke about proposed legislation amending the PA Clean Streams Law and allowing municipalities to require fencing to keep livestock out of streams. The committee passed a motion to be reviewed by the PACD membership at the PACD Fall Region Meetings and considered at the Winter Executive Council meeting.

PACD recognizes the significant environmental benefit of streambank fencing, in a pasture used for grazing, to restrict livestock access to the stream. PACD supports education and incentives for voluntary installation of streambank fencing as opposed to legislation allowing administrative agencies of the Commonwealth and municipalities to require fencing along a stream.

- Brenda Shambaugh reported that PACD has been meeting with legislators and others to support conservation district funding, and both the House and Governor's proposed budgets maintain conservation district funding levels. PACD is optimistic, but the state budget has not passed the entire PA General Assembly.
- Brenda also highlighted several pieces of legislation PACD is currently monitoring:
- SB 350 – Third party review legislation – PACD opposes this legislation and sent a letter to the House State Government Committee explaining our opposition.
- SB 286 – Redefines pollution – PACD opposes this legislation and sent a letter of opposition to the Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee.
- There seems to be some support for language in the budget or fiscal code to fund a statewide invasive species program, though it may not happen during this budget cycle.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Operations Committee Report

Chairman Dennis Beck provided the following report:

- The PACD Operations Committee met on July 14 with a quorum.
- There were no motions from the PACD committees or the Spring PACD Region Meetings.
- As mentioned during the PACD Legislative Committee report, the Legislative Committee did pass a motion that will go to the PACD Fall Region meetings for discussion.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Ways and Means Committee Report

- The PACD Ways and Means Committee met on July 13 with a quorum.
- The committee reviewed the draft financial reports for Fiscal Year 2022-23. Once passed by the council, the financial reports will be filed for audit.
- The committee reviewed the PACD draft budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24. The committee is pleased the PACD Executive Board acted on their recommendations and passed the budget on May 2, 2023.
- The committee reviewed the three-year dues structure and had no recommended changes.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council

Proposed PACD Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24

Treasurer Sonia Wasco presented the proposed PACD budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and entertained questions.

It was moved by Donna Zofcin (Forest) and seconded by Ray Gorman (Cambria) to approve the PACD budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24. Motion carried.

Election of Officers

PACD Nominating Committee Chair Ron Rohall presented the following slate of candidates:

- President; Dennis Beck, Cambria
- 1st Vice President: Emil Bove, Westmoreland
- 2nd Vice President: Kelly Stagen, Pike
- NACD Director: Ron Rohall, Westmoreland

President Stagen called for nominations from the floor. No nominations were presented.

It was moved by Dion Campbell (Northampton) and seconded by Jack Hanish (Luzerne) to approve the slate of officers as presented. Motion carried.

Partner Reports

PA Department of Environmental Protection

Water Program Specialist Jacquelyn Kerstetter provided the following report:

- The Nonpoint Source Management Program Annual Report for federal FY 2022 is available for review on the DEP website. The purpose of the report is to inform the public and EPA about Pennsylvania's progress in reducing nonpoint source pollution to our surface waters.
- The Bureau of Clean Water has posted a final updated SOP for Chapter 102 inspections. The SOP can be found on the Clean Water Academy under the Chapter 102 Resource Center.
- DEP is conducting a poll to gather data from across the state to learn the different district processes and procedures for complaint response for agricultural erosion and sedimentation control. DEP field representatives will be reaching out to gather this information.
- The new five-year Chesapeake Bay technician agreements are out for FY 23-24.

PA State Conservation Commission

Executive Secretary Doug Wolfgang provided highlights from his written report:

- He noted the conference is an excellent example of partnership.
- He thanked everyone for the good work they do.
- Doug also noted that the Commission wants to tell the story of what the conservation districts do, particularly with the ACAP program.
- He provided updates on several SCC programs, including the Nutrient Management Program, the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program and REAP.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

State Conservationist Denise Coleman provided copies of the *Pennsylvania NRCS Strategic Plan 2023-2027*. She highlighted several NRCS programs in Pennsylvania and reported NRCS is opening a service center in Philadelphia.

Adjournment

It was moved by Doug Beri (Indiana) and seconded by Jennifer Ramey (Susquehanna) to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.