

PACD Education and Outreach Committee Meeting
Held Virtually
January 11, 2024 | 10:00-11:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Committee Chair Laura Anderson

Committee Members in Attendance: Laura Anderson, Joan McCarty, Jason Singer, Kelly Stagen, Cathy Yeakel

Guests in Attendance: Janet Creegan, Dean Druckenmiller, Sallie Gregory, Chris Grimsley, Kelcy Marini, Wendy McRoberts, Holly Miller, Tara Mlodzienski, Jen Novak, Susan Parry, Brenda Shambaugh, Lillian Theophanis, Erin Trouba, Nate Wardle, Shannon Wehinger (notetaker)

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. There was a not quorum.

Welcome and Introductions (Chairperson)

Chair Laura Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of July 2023 minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on July 6, 2023 were not approved because there wasn't a quorum.

PACD Updates

PACD Director of Communications & Education gave an update on Farm Show participation. NRCS once again is allowing PACD to share their booth space. This saves PACD money and we are required by the Farm Show to have the booth staffed at all times. Sharing the booth eliminates this issue. Ten districts sent volunteers along with the Envirothon and we could not participate without them.

PACD Instructional Designer Chris Grimsley provided an update on the Clean Water Academy. Chris reported that in 2023, there were 1,599 unique users. 75% of those are return learners. The average number of courses completed per district staff was 14. There were 7,248 courses completed in 2023. After 5 years, the Clean Water Academy continues to grow. New courses are continually being added.



Partnership with PA Department of Health

Nate Wardle, Special Response/Projects Manager, Department of Health (DOH), spoke about the Pennsylvania Department of Health's initiative to address the changing climate from a public health perspective.

Nate spoke about the work the DOH is doing to address a changing climate. Environmental justice is a big issue and goes hand in hand with health equity. DOH is aiming to make those groups more resilient. They are building capacity and adding climate and health activities into their current projects.

The DOH is working from their State Health Improvement Plan 2023-28. Their goal is to increase life expectancy of Pennsylvanians and eliminate health inequities. Their first objective is to improve air quality. Objective two is to reduce heat-related illness. Objective three is to increase childhood lead testing. One of their key strategies is to plant more trees. They are working with PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) on that goal. Their next strategies include educating on the importance of trees (municipalities and legislators).

Districts are welcome to join the State Health Improvement Plan group, help implement their work in environmental justice areas and suggest new strategies. Nate can be contacted at nwardle@pa.gov.

Brenda Shambaugh spoke about PACD's mini-grant programs and suggested that this may be an opportunity to expand that program with the DOH.

Ag Conservation Stewardship Certificate

Erin Trouba, Penn State Extension Educator at the Center for Agricultural Conservation Assistance Training, introduced the Ag Conservation Stewardship Certificate Program and Ag Literacy Week.

The mission of the Center for Agricultural Conservation Assistance Training is to help develop the workforce for agricultural conservation positions. Erin's role is to work with students at the university level on the Ag Conservation Stewardship Certificate. Undergraduate students can complete the certificate program. There is an internship component and Erin is looking to hear from districts on how they may partner with districts to have opportunities for these interns. They would also like to offer job shadowing over the upcoming spring break. Erin can be contacted at ect5075@psu.edu.

Erin also promoted Ag Literacy Week which is March 18-22. They have books and other materials available to coordinate with teachers.



Brenda Shambaugh mentioned the job shadowing spreadsheet that Shannon put together last year. This information was shared with Erin.

The question was raised about job shadowing guidelines and liability coverage. The students may be covered if they are signed on as a volunteer. Sallie Gregory said the new STEEL standards encourage job shadowing so the need to address this will just increase. If the student is in a private vehicle, is there liability, etc. Laura suggested partnering with NRCS's Earth Team program to cover liability.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

