

PACD North East Region Meeting
Monroe County Conservation District, Stroudsburg, PA
April 4, 2024

Welcome and Introductions

Region Director Tom Herbert welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He invited all attendees to introduce themselves.

In attendance in person and virtually: Dennis Beck, PACD/Cambria; Amy Brown, PACD; Chris Storm, Carbon; Tom Herbert, PACD/Luzerne; Jack Hanish, Luzerne; Josh Longmore, Luzerne; Kristina Heaney, Monroe; Craig Todd, Monroe; Kelly Stagen, PACD/Pike; Tara Mlodzienski, Pike; Jennifer Ramey, Susquehanna; Jamie Knecht, Wayne; Doug Deutsch, Wyoming; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Susan Parry, NRCS; Jennifer Mathews, NRCS; Doug Wolfgang, SCC; Jaci Kerstetter, DEP; Janet Creegan, DEP; Caitlin John Motz, Monroe; Caitlin Skibiel, DEP; Carl DeLuca, DEP; Shane Kleiner, DEP; Heather Smeltz, NRCS; Jenna St. Clair, Schuylkill; Kelsey Quinones, PACD

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for October 4, 2024, at the Lands at Hillside Farms Education Center, Shavertown, PA at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided to those in attendance.

It was moved by Jennifer Ramey and seconded by Kelly Stagen to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report:

Executive Director, Brenda Shambaugh reviewed her written report and addressed the following:

PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference - Planned for July 17-18, 2024, at the Penn State Conference Center. Registration to open in May. Working to make it a good event and encouraged attendance.

Motion from the PACD Ways and Means Committee - Brenda introduced the motion from the PACD Ways and Means Committee regarding a proposed \$500 voluntary donation as a short-term solution to existing financial shortfalls. It was also noted that this is separate from the \$75 increase to PACD dues for the 2024/25 year.

Sonia Wasco read the Statement from the PACD Executive Board dated March 5, 2024, that was provided in the meeting packet and offered comments and clarifications. She stated that the



projected budget shortfall is being reduced and that a meeting was held by PACD with the partners (SCC, DEP and NRCS) on March 1, 2024, with the commitment to meet quarterly moving forward. She spoke on behalf of the Lancaster County Conservation District and stated that they appreciate and respect the work of PACD.

Motion by Jack Hanish and seconded by Jenna St. Clair to support the motion from the Ways and Means Committee as written “The PACD Ways and Means Committee moved to recommend discussion for the potential of requesting a \$500 donation from the conservation districts to PACD as a short-term solution for the financial shortfalls currently existing.” Motion Carried.

Proposed Policies from the PACD Legislative Committee - Brenda described two motions from the Legislative Committee:

- Increase to Growing Greener Plus Grants Program Administrative Expense Limitation

The 5% ceiling on administration expenses for Growing Greener grants, which seemed feasible at the time it was passed, does not currently cover the actual administrative costs of implementing a Growing Greener grant. Reporting requirements are time-consuming, overhead costs have increased significantly, and restrictions on other funding sources have increased. PACD, conservation districts, and other organizations that rely on grant funding are struggling to cover administrative and overhead costs.

The Growing Green Plus Grants Program offered by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) funds projects aimed at reducing nonpoint source water pollution through local, watershed-based planning, restoration, and protection efforts. The PACD Legislative Committee supports legislation to increase the administrative expense limitation for the Growing Greener program to a minimum of 10% to better cover administrative expenses.

It was moved by Kelly Stagen and seconded by Jenna St. Clair to support the motion presented by the PACD Legislative Committee. Motion carried.

- Voluntary Installation of Riparian Buffers

This policy is proposed in response to HB 1275, which would prohibit land development in riparian buffer areas within 100+ feet of certain waterways to mitigate flooding issues and water pollution. The proposed legislation includes an exemption for agriculture.

PACD recognizes the significant environmental benefit of riparian buffers along surface bodies of water. PACD supports education and incentives for voluntary installation of riparian buffers as opposed to legislation allowing administrative agencies of the Commonwealth and municipalities to require buffers along any body of water more restrictive than current law and regulation.

A motion was made by Craig Todd and seconded by Kelly Stagen to discuss the proposed policy from the PACD Legislative Committee. Motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to oppose the proposed policy from the PACD Legislative Committee. Motion carried.

Brenda explained that each PACD region must consider the motion before it can be presented at the January 2024 Executive Council meeting.

Regional Information Sharing

A representative from each district present provided a verbal update and shared items of general interest to the regional members.

Partner Reports

- *Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report*
Carl DeLuca, Shane Kleiner, Jaci Kerstetter, Janet Creegan, and Cait Skibiel gave a verbal review of highlights from the DEP written report.
- *PA State Conservation Commission Report*
Doug Wolfgang gave a verbal review of SCC highlights.
- *USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report*
Heather Smeltz and Jen Matthews gave verbal reviews of highlights from NRCS's written report.

Brenda thanked NRCS, DEP and the SCC for their partnership with PACD on training opportunities and encouraged districts to express appreciation to our partners.

Adjournment

It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 PM. Motion passed.