

**PACD North Central Region Meeting
Clinton County Conservation District, Mill Hall, PA
September 24, 2024**

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Rob Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

In attendance: Matt Long, Lycoming; Bill Kahler, Lycoming; Rob Shannon, Center/PACD; Cathy Yeakel, Bradford; Carrie Richmond, Sullivan; Amanda Coleman, NRCS; Rachel Fish, DEP; Jim Coslo, Centre; Greg Bonsall, Union; Karen Books, DEP; Doug Wolfgang, SCC; Dennis Beck, Cambria/PACD; Jason Winey, Snyder; Carl Deluca, DEP; Marlan Graham, DCNR; Jesse Monroe, DCNR; James Smith, DCNR; Justin Monroe, DCNR; Alexa Bixel, Clinton; Erin Trouba, Penn State Extension. Attending on Zoom - Erica Tomlinson, Tioga; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Yuri Plowden, NRCS; Susie Peters, Clinton; and Kevin Brown, Bradford.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at the Clinton County Conservation District.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

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

It was moved by Greg Bonsall and seconded by Carrie Richmond to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report

Brenda reported that PACD still needs a director to fill the treasurer position for the PACD Executive Board. In addition, director committee members are needed for the Conservation Committee, the Operations Committee, and the Education and Outreach Committee. If you are interested, please let Brenda know.

Proposed Policy from the PACD Legislative Committee: Brenda presented a proposed policy from the PACD Legislative Committee:

PACD recognizes the significant environmental benefit of protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources through Best Management Practices (BMPs). PACD supports education and incentives for voluntary installation of BMPs.

The region decided to neither support nor oppose the motion.



Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh provided highlights from her written report:

Legislative Update: The PA General Assembly passed the state budget, which included \$6.8 million in CDFAP funding for conservation districts for a total of over \$10 million. In addition, the budget fiscal code included a dedicated fund of \$50 million per year for the PA Clean Streams Fund. If you have not done so already, please consider thanking your House and Senate members for this much-needed dedicated funding.

PACD Winter Meeting: The PACD winter meeting will be virtual. Committee meeting times are highlighted in Brenda's report.

Joint Annual Conference: The Joint Annual Conference will be in person, hosted by the Westmoreland County Conservation District, at Seven Springs on July 16-17, 2025. More information will be forthcoming.

Certified Planner Program: The SCC and NRCS provided funding for PACD to have a certified planner program. PACD has hired six certified planners, who are housed in NRCS offices. They are PACD employees, and their function is to work in the field with the conservation districts with landowners to get plans written and certified by NRCS.

TAG Program: There are eight TAG employees across the commonwealth providing technical assistance.

Leadership Development: The Management Summit in State College was well attended. There are several seminars and workshops coming up, so be sure to go to paleadership.org for specific dates and times.

PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program: At the SCC Meeting the commission passed a motion for a two-year, \$1 million grant to continue the program.

CREP Mini grant Program: The program has \$75,000 available. If you want to have an educational event, please reach out to PACD.

C2P2 Multifunctional and Conventional Riparian Buffer Program: There is \$46,000 available and funds require a 50/50 match. The match can be provided by the Penn State Master Watershed Stewardship Program and CBF's Keystone 10 million Trees Program. Contact Holly Miller for more information.

Lawn Conversion Program: DCNR awarded PACD with \$100,000. Thirteen projects covering 18 acres have been approved for funding. All money has been obligated and PACD is working with DCNR to see if they can secure more funding.

Invasive species: The USDA Forest Service awarded PACD \$100,000 for a pilot program in NW PA. We are halfway through the program grant, which provides funding for education and outreach and treating/managing invasive species. PACD hopes what we learn will be used to develop a statewide program.

Ag Boot Camp Training: Training was conducted and more will be coming up in May 2025.

Chapter 102 Basic Technical Training: This will take place in May of 2025. Stay tuned for dates.

Verbal Judo Workshop: This training will take place on October 16-17, 2024, at Toftrees Resort in State College.

Clean Water Academy: PACD hired Kelly Davidson as the new Water Resources Trainer. There have been 40,000 course completions and new training is always in development.

Regional Information Sharing

Each District highlighted three items to share with the membership:

- *Bradford*: Cathy reported that they completed their budget for 2025. Bradford will be having their green career day event on Friday with over 200 kids registered to attend. They currently have 2 DGLVR Technician openings. They have received 4 applications for their Manchester Scholarship, and they are looking into possibly doing a conservation related podcast.
- *Centre*: Jim discussed their Farm City Event and Annual Banquet. Centre also has an intern who is working while she is going to school. They received a donation for scholarships. They are updating their Goals for their 2025 CAP and have a farm tour planned in October.
- *Clinton*: Alexa reported they had their Farm City event which was a success, and they are currently receiving Dirt & Gravel Roads applications.
- *Lycoming*: Matt reported that they will be doing some EWP projects due to flooding from Hurricane Debbie. They hired a new DGLVR Technician and are hiring a new E&S Technician to help with the PAG-02.
- *Snyder*: Jason reported that they are wrapping up the 3rd phase of their stream restoration project with the PFBC. They also had an ag BMP tour and 5th grade outdoor ed event.
- *Sullivan*: Carrie reported they are having a Dirt and Gravel Roads Breakfast on Friday. They are working on ACAP and CAP projects and will also be having an Ag Breakfast in October.
- *Tioga*: Erica reported that Tioga had their hometown science event with more than 120 people in attendance. They are currently wrapping up their EWP projects.
- *Union*: Greg reported that they had a field day in August. It was their first one in 10 years and had 120 people registered. The field day covered soil tests, manure injections, cover crops and more. The district is looking at updating their strategic plan. Greg also discussed their social media efforts and expanding them.

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Report

DCNR representatives provided the following report:

- The award announcements for the 2024 C2P2 grant round will be announced this fall. The 2025 grant round will be open January through April 2025 and there will be an informational webinar on November 7. Registration is required.
- If you are involved with community and watershed forestry grants, the match is no longer 1:1 it is now 20% of the overall project cost.
- DCNR would like to get Project Learning Tree trainings back up and running.

PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report

Carl DeLuca provided the following report:

- He reviewed personnel updates at the Department and is working on a new flowchart.
- Winter spreading letters went out the week of September 9 to CAFO's.

- DEP manure management (MM) plan workbook shortform courses are now open on the Clean Water Academy (CWA).
- There will be MM booklets at the roundtable meeting for counties to take home with them.
- PAG-02 General Permit was published in the PA Bulletin and goes into effect Dec. 8, 2024.
- Chapter 105 permitting improvements are being completed.
- The Department's attorneys are reviewing the updated Statements of Policy (SOPs)

PA State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report

Doug Wolfgang provided highlights from his written report.

- He noted that the state budget included \$35 million for ACAP and \$5 million for nutrient management administration.
- The DGLVR Program conference is being held in Dubois, PA, October 8-10, 2024.

NRCS Report

Amanda Coleman reviewed her handout and highlighted project accomplishments:

- Amanda highlighted a farm in Lycoming County that completed a 9.1-acre buffer and converted cropland to rotational grazing.
- She discussed partnerships and their importance in getting large projects completed.
- She discussed the watershed program and highlighted two projects in Tioga County.
- Yuri Plowden reminded everyone that the soil survey is being refreshed on web soil survey. Some new reports have been added. Soil organic carbon monitoring is being conducted, and a technical session will be available in Dauphin County on October 11.

Adjournment

It was moved by Cathy Yeakel and seconded by Greg Bonsall to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 PM.