

**PACD South Central Region Meeting Minutes
Cumberland County Conservation District, Carlisle PA
October 29, 2024**

Welcome, Introductions and Roll Call

Interim South Central Region Director Sonia Wasco called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. with a quorum present.

Participants: Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Sonia Wasco, PACD/Lancaster; Adam McClain, Adams; Chas Heberlig, PA DEP; Chris Santore, DEP; Trevor Weaver, Mifflin; Lori Glace, Juniata; Dave Scamardella, DCNR, Hannah Hartman, Lebanon; Shane Kleiner, DEP; Orsolya Lazar, DCNR; Dave Stoner, Franklin; Seleen Shives, Fulton; Erin Trouba, Penn State CACAT; Brent Kaylor, Lebanon; Charlie Hanner, NRCS; Tim Peters, NRCS; Doug Wolfgang, SCC; Carl DeLuca, DEP; Dennis Beck, PACD/Cambria; Carl Goshorn, Cumberland; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Kelsey Mummert, DCNR; Donna Fisher, Blair; Chris Thompson, Lancaster; Jennifer Lentz Kovak, Bedford; Susan Parry, NRCS.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting to be held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at the Cumberland County Conservation District.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were provided for review.

It was moved by Carl Goshorn and seconded by Adam McClain to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report

Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh provided highlights from her written report.

- Proposed Policies – During their meeting on July 1, 2024, the PACD Legislative Committee proposed the following policy: *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.*

During their meeting on October 4, 2024, the PACD North East Region proposed the following alternative policy: *PACD recognizes the significant environmental benefit of protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources through Best Management Practices*



(BMPs). PACD supports programs of education and increased incentives and funding for voluntary installation of BMPs.

There was discussion about the two policies. It was noted that the amended version will be distributed to all conservation districts, and the districts will have the ability to vote on the amended version.

It was moved by Trevor Weaver and seconded by Dave Stoner to approve the original policy, proposed July 1, 2024:

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.

Motion carried.

- Legislative Report – Two days currently left in the General Assembly, which will restart in January. More funding for DGLVR has been proposed. Districts are encouraged to talk with their legislators. A template letter was provided for district use.
- PACD Winter Meeting – The virtual PACD Executive Council meeting will take place on January 30, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.
- PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference – Hosted by Westmoreland July 16-17, 2025, at Seven Springs Resort. Participants are encouraged to bring their families. Lots of activities planned.
- Certified Planner Program – PACD hired six certified planners that are housed at NRCS Technical Centers in Dauphin, Erie, Bucks, Indiana, Wayne, and Franklin Counties. The focus is I&Es on EQIP/ACAP projects. Straight ACAP projects are third priority. New planners are working towards certifications.
- Engineering Assistance Program (TAG) – Continuation of existing long-term program. Houses 2 engineers and 6 technicians in NRCS offices around the Commonwealth. 1 engineer and 1 technical position currently vacant.
- Building for Tomorrow Leadership Development – Clifton Strengths ongoing through April 2025, Strategic Planning Grants up to \$1,500 are available, 2024 Management Summit held September 18-19 in State College, 2024 New Manager Training held in conjunction with the Management Summit, Fall Leadership Webinar Series scheduled for October – December, and 2025 Employment Law Seminar to be held in February 2025.
- PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program – moving forward with added funding from the SCC which provides \$1,000,000 over a two-year period.
- Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach Program – applications being accepted on a rolling basis - \$75,000 still available for outreach and field days.
- C2P2 Multifunctional and Conventional Riparian Buffer Program – applications being accepted - \$46,000 available, 50:50 match is required. Available match sources suggested include Penn State's Master Watershed Steward Program, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Keystone 10 Million Trees Program through volunteer hours and trees.
- Lawn Conversion Program – funding provided by DCNR – all funds have been allocated and PACD is looking for additional funding.

- Invasive Species – Pilot program using PRISM (Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management) – NW PA – data given to Invasive Species Council and the General Assembly. Hoping to use this data for a statewide program.
- Education and Outreach – PACD’s *Front Page* and Social Media platforms. Had 57 Facebook posts, 46 Tweets, 44 Instagram Posts, and 45 posts on LinkedIn. In addition, Statewide messaging sent to all conservation districts and provides posts for Pollinator Week, National Farmer’s Day, and National Water Quality Month.
- Ag Boot Camp Training – Basic level set for March 2025. Two sessions of Level II will be held in April and May 2025. The application period opens in January 2025. Intro to Conservation Planning training is scheduled for November 19-21, 2024.
- SPEED Program – Brenda deferred to Carl Deluca, DEP – covered under Carl’s report.
- Chapter 102 Basic Training – planned for May 2025 in-person with a field component.
- Verbal Judo Workshop – planned for October 16-17, 2024. The program teaches techniques to redirect emotionally charged verbal attacks to generate voluntary compliance, improve verbal communication skills, and gain enhanced professionalism.
- Pennsylvania Clean Water Academy – Kelly Davidson joins PACD as the new Water Resource Trainer for online training center.
- Statewide NPS Education Office Activities – funding has switched from PACD’s long-standing Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grant and PACD will no longer coordinate this after January 1, 2025. Please reach out to PA DEP for future rounds. Starting in 2025, the Section 319 Virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting and the Conservation District Watershed Specialist Meeting will be hosted by PA DEP.
- PACD Treasurer – Brenda stated the need for a conservation district director to serve as PACD Treasurer. Sonia is currently filling the role, but she has termed out.

Regional Sharing

- Adams – Fully staffed (12 FT), 14 ACAP contracts underway and 1st project completed. Received 9,000 trees from the Chesapeake Bay 10 Million Trees Program.
- Bedford – Fully staffed (9 FT / 1 PT), ACAP and CEG projects – heavy use areas and storages and partnering with NRCS EQIP. CAP – 4 streambank improvement projects finished and two more finishing in partnership with Trout Unlimited & Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Formed a building exploration committee due to USDA relocation.
- Blair – ACAP & CAP projects – 2 new manure storages and 2 stream projects. Completed I&Es for future projects. CAP Riparian Buffers programs will continue using 2025 funds and Cover Crop Program using CAP and ACAP funding.
- Cumberland - large Dirt & Gravel Road Project on Ridge Road in Mount Holly Springs first phase completed in partnership with the Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads and DCNR. The center said that it is within the top 3 of the worst roads that they have worked on. 9 agencies and partners came together for this collaboration and check presentation! There is still work to do in South Middleton and Dickinson Townships. Fully staffed (10 FT, 1 PT Engineer, 1 PT E&S staff, and 1 PT administrative assistant). Estimating about 250 PAG02 renewals and letters.
- Franklin – ACAP \$820,000 this year which has all funding allocated from the original funds, CEG \$ 375,000 allocated. CAP – 3 stream restoration projects, one project \$1 Million in funding and future \$1.4 Million stream restoration project for 2025 planned focusing on

stream flooding and road relocation. Held Chapter 102 workshop with 50 participants, Conservation Farm Tour held in August, Legislative Tour held in September showcasing stream restoration, solar farms, and farm BMPs; solar farms – one is 11,000 acres and another is 850 acres under construction with 4 more in process, PAG02 – 45 renewals. Staffing includes 1 PT hire. Sam gives his regards that he was unable to make it today.

- Fulton – ACAP – several underway including a 3-year cover crop incentive program, 1 grazing project completed, 4 other projects are underway – 3 are EQIP Partnerships for Dairy, CAP – Tall Timbers (Fulton CCD Campus) project will install BMPs demonstrations on campus and includes conservation landscaping, riparian buffers, pollinators, and pervious pavement. Future improvements include a pavilion, community gardens, and food plots. 7-acre conservation landscaping demo – battling weed seeds and working with extension and agronomist.
- Juniata – Full staff (7 FT), ACAP – all original funds allocated with partnerships through EQIP. Five completed and 1 in process, and 4 currently under contract and in bid/quote stages. Revamping LAB Policy for new round of funding. ACAP workshop to be held November 8 showcasing 3 projects: 1 manure lagoon (dairy), 1 heavy use area / stack pad (beef), and 1 stack pad / heavy use areas (organic hog). CAP – finished 2 stream restoration projects this year (~2500 total) and have one wetland restoration project underway to be completed in 2025.
- Lancaster – ACAP – fully allocated – leveraging extra practices to add/include a buffer -pay 100% instead of 90/10, seeing that the weather this year has affected crop productions. DGR – hosting an ESM Certification Training, met with Lancaster City Mayor and will be implementing an infiltration project through LVR for \$800,000. 2025 largest budget yet at \$15.6 M. Farmers getting a discount from the “stormwater” tax if district inspects farms and they have their required plans: manure management, nutrient management, conservation plan, erosion and sediment control plan, etc. and implementing BMP schedule in plans. 2025 will be Lancaster CCD’s 75th Anniversary! Planning a Gala event for September. Capital campaign to update their building – out of room to house 58 employees (and NRCS) – looking to redesign and add back conference rooms that have been used to house staff.
- Lebanon – new leadership, including Hannah’s first meeting here – Board chair (Brent) is also new with Randy stepping down. They are receiving lots of support. 4 farms preserved – about 450 acres, new program for pre-sidedress nitrate testing, manure injections program has 23 applications processed with 9 more interested, Doc Fritchey TU – looking at CAP/ACAP for stream gauges for water monitoring, and E&S workshop had 120 designers / contractors attend and was very well received.
- Mifflin – CAP had four stream restoration projects installed, and one stormwater and turf conversion at the Lewistown County Club includes 20 acres of lawn conversion! ACAP has a backlog of projects, with 4th round of applications being accepted in January. Water monitoring on 24-30 sites annually and results are posted on their website.

Partner Reports:

- DCNR – Urban Forestry – Kelsey Mummert reported on Lawn to Habitat (previously Lawn Conversion) Program – C2P2 grants will be announced in November. 2025 C2P2 grant round will open in January, close in April – Grant match reduced from 50% to 20% and includes a post-planting maintenance of up to 20%. Watershed Management Team has funding for Riparian Buffers, Lawn to Habitat for public/private lands and requires a 20-year agreement.

Current grants include Food Forests – tree planting and tree care with direct contracting for smaller projects that are \$50,000 or more for large and small tree stock on public land, NFWF Grant for planting trees on private land in the Chesapeake Bay – Susan Hartley is South Central contact. Dave Scamardella – Fall fire season – currently a fire locally in the Michaux – DCNR does not have control over burn bans, local municipal government establishes these protections and are a minimum 30-day requirement – reminder that controlled burns do not happen at this time due to unfavorable controlled conditions.

- **DEP** – Acting Bureau Director, Carl DeLuca - reported on personnel restructuring updates – Jill Whitcomb is the Acting Deputy Secretary for the Waterways Programs, Carl DeLuca is the Acting Bureau Director (BWRNSM), and Kate Bresaw is the Acting Program Manager (NPS Division). DEP’s Manure Management Plan Workbook and Short Form Course is now open on Clean Water Academy. Field Reps handed out Manure Management Plan Workbooks – if more needed, please contact your field rep. SPEED (Streamlining Permits Economic Expansion and Development) – workgroups in discussion – listening sessions being held for Q&A next one November 5th. 2024 PAG-02 General Permit Renewals – guidance posted on Clean Water Academy Course – all renewals must be post-marked by December 7, 2024. Chapter 105 Permitting Improvements – GP Registration Form, Instructions, and General Permit-Aquatic Resources Impacts Table and Pilot for GP Joint Permit Applications, SOPs, and Online Bridge and Culvert Tool. Chapter 105 Wetland Determination Training and Future CWA Program Announcement. DEP’s Environmental Education Grants Program now accepting applications due November 15, 2024. Growing Greener and Section 319 Grants – GG applications are in final stages of review – NPS Mini-grants through Watershed Specialists are now held through DEP - \$5,000 per district and will be rolled into Quarterly Reporting. Chesapeake Bay Program – two-year milestone for Tier 2 Counties – updates due October 2, 2024 and final documents due December 1, 2024. Annual progress reporting due December 1, 2024. DEP Round tables – next week - Day 1: Agriculture, Day 2: E&S.
- **SCC** – Executive Secretary, Doug Wolfgang – ACAP – dedicated funds \$35 Million for FY 2024/2025 through the Clean Streams Fund from personal income taxes, CACAT Practice Approval System (PAS), Ag Conservation Keystone Training. Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Annual Conference Oct 8-10 in Dubois, efforts underway to see added funds for the program, QA/QCs continue across the state, policy & planning advisory committee underway. Nutrient and Odor Management Program – grow to over 1,200 farms and nearly 268,000 acres across the State, 52 districts delegated with Nutrient Management Program. Conservation research projects funded through NM Federal administrative funds. REAP – new application in August and all funds potentially committed by September 1. Sustainable Ag Board - \$1 Million in funding in EPA most effective basin (MEB) for soil health, climate, and sustainable ag projects to fill gaps in financial and technical assistance for small diversified farms. Ag Innovation Grant - \$10 Million new initiative for projects that ensure food security and economic stability while balancing sustainability and resiliency. Grants are currently open through November. Miscellaneous – efforts to create 67th Conservation district in Philadelphia, 2024 Leopold Conservation award finalists announced at 2025 Farm Show on January 6, 2025. RFP for CEG public – private partnership initiative and Food Processed Residuals (FPRs) workgroup report and pending legislation. Commission restructuring, including a new director position.

- **NRCS** – Charlie Hanner – report features Wetland Restoration Project in Lebanon County on Randy Leisure’s property – wetland walk planned for Spring 2025, 2025 Ag Conservation Technical Training “Ag Boot Camp” Basic to be held in Lewisburg, Union County, and Level II training to be held at Fort Indiantown Gap in Lebanon County. Inflation Reduction Act for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – \$21 Million spent in South Central Pennsylvania. Report highlights PA NRCS adding Foresters to staff, NRCS Watershed Programs, RCPP Cooperative Association project \$2.3 Million with Land O’ Lakes that will work with feed management, digesters, and roofed HUA’s.
- **PACD** – PACD President, Dennis Beck – 4th Regional Meeting – 20 years with district board, 10 years as Chair, wanted to say that there is more cooperation between districts & state agencies, realize that benefits of Conservation districts and on-the-ground work. He would like to thank the agencies for their work and working towards the same goals and for going in the same direction on behalf of PACD Executive Committee.

Adjournment

Motion made by Dave Stoner and seconded by Carl Goshorn to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 PM. Motion carried.