

**PACD Conservation Committee
Videoconference Minutes
January 8, 2025**

Welcome and Roll Call

Chairman Josh Longmore called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

Committee members in attendance: Josh Longmore, Luzerne; Bill Clouser, Clearfield; Doug Goodlander, York; Piper Sherburne, Berks; Carl Goshorn, Cumberland; Matthew Long, Lycoming; Dave Stoner, Franklin;

Guests and staff in attendance: Abby Frey, Columbia; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Christopher Thompson, Lancaster; Dean Druckenmiller, Berks; Denise Coleman, USDA NRCS; Holly Miller, PACD; John Dryzal, Cambria; Molly Burns, PACD; Shannon Wehinger, PACD; Susan Parry, USDA NRCS; Tara Burnham, Pike; Tom McClure, Erie; Vincent McCollum, Cumberland

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Josh Longmore presented the minutes of the June 20, 2024, meeting for review.

It was moved by Piper Sherburne and seconded by Carl Goshorn to approve the June 2024 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Great Lakes Commission Meeting

Erie County Conservation District Manager Tom McClure presented to the group.

He reported that, in November 2024, the Great Lakes Commission hosted a meeting in Michigan to kick off their Conservation Workforce Project. The project aims to improve conservation district recruitment and retention and will benefit all conservation districts (not just the ones surrounding the Great Lakes).

Tom provided some background about the Great Lakes Commission, then shared the presentation he provided during the November meeting and highlighted the many differences between Pennsylvania and other states. Most notably, Pennsylvania's conservation districts generally have more responsibilities and more staff than districts in many other states. He also reviewed the project timeline, which runs well into 2026.

NRCS State Conservationist Denise Coleman thanked Tom for mentioning the ongoing agreement between EPA and NRCS to provide restoration funding for the Great Lakes. She



noted the agreement has been in place for many years and that Pennsylvania receives \$200,000 to \$300,000 in funding each year, which is available to Erie and Potter Counties. They also have conservation technical assistance funding available.

PACD PRISM Grant Update

PACD Program Manager Holly Miller provided an update on the [PACD NW Pennsylvania Pilot Program](#). The program promotes citizen science, tapping local awareness, and gaining local participation through partnerships with agencies and local organizations. She highlighted some successful projects, including an invasive species removal project, guided walking trail signage and an educational guided pontoon boat tour at lake Wilhelm. All projects aimed to increase awareness and removal of invasive species. Denise Coleman noted that NRCS does invasive species control and brush management in forested areas, so there is opportunity for landowners.

Future Ideas for PACD Conservation Initiatives

Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh asked the committee members if there were any conservation initiatives they would like to pursue. Suggestions included:

- The Chesapeake Bay restoration goals are expected to be updated in 2025, and it would be good to get ahead of that if possible.
- The PA Department of Agriculture is launching a new agricultural advisory committee for the Chesapeake Bay, and it would be beneficial for districts to be represented. Denise Coleman encouraged PACD to reach out to DEP and the SCC about this, as NRCS participates in an advisory capacity.
- Emerging data about how agriculture contributes to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Districts should keep abreast of this issue as it moves forward. Brenda confirmed that Doug Wolfgang has discussed this, as well.
- There has been a lot of discussion about large-scale solar farms and their impact on agricultural land. PACD may want to investigate policy on decommissioning and bonding for these sites, perhaps to support legislation.
- In addition, some large-scale solar sites are undertaking mass grading and compaction, which destroys soil quality and makes it difficult at best to return that land to farming. It was noted that this could potentially be addressed by DEP through the permitting process.
- Protecting preserved farmland from large-scale solar farms. (CCAP and PSATS may be a useful resource, as well.)

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

