

**PACD Executive Council
Videoconference Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Call to Order

President Dennis Beck called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Roll Call

Secretary, Interim Treasurer, and South Central Region Director Sonia Wasco called the roll. Thirty-seven conservation districts answered the roll call, which constituted a quorum.

Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

Sonia Wasco presented the minutes of the previous meeting on July 17, 2024.

It was moved by Emil Bove (Westmoreland) and seconded by Dave Stoner (Franklin) to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

President's Report

President Dennis Beck welcomed everyone and thanked them for their support of the Association. He thanked the membership, his fellow PACD Executive Board members, the PACD staff, the PACD Ad Hoc Budget Committee, and our partners such as USDA NRCS, DEP, the SCC, and DCNR for supporting the association. He invited everyone to join PACD at Seven Springs July 16-17, 2025 for the PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and supporting the association. She reported on the past six months of accomplishments for each PACD Harrisburg employee and the projects and programs they lead.

Treasurer's Report

Sonia Wasco presented the Treasurer's Report as of December 31, 2024. She noted that \$102,765 of \$168,490 in dues has been paid by 41 conservation districts and thanked the districts who have submitted their dues. She reported the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 audit has not been finalized but will be completed soon. She reviewed and presented the Balance Sheet and Year-to-Date Profit & Loss, noting they were also reviewed by the PACD Executive Board and Ways & Means Committee. The Ways & Means Committee did not have a dues proposal for the next three fiscal years, but the PACD Executive Board will develop one for discussion.

It was moved by Kate Wehler (Elk) and seconded by Rob Shannon (Centre) to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.



NACD Report

NACD Director Ron Rohall and NACD Northeast Representative to the NACD Board Cliff Lane provided a report. Ron reminded districts to pay their NACD dues to support all the great advocacy work NACD does for districts at the federal level. He encouraged PACD members to participate in NACD committees and subcommittees. The annual meeting is coming up in ten days in Salt Lake City and the 2025 NACD Northeast Region Meeting will be held in East Syracuse, NY, September 21-25, 2025. The NACD Urban and Community Conservation (UAC) Grant Initiative is open. If you receive non-Farm-Bill federal funding that may be cut (319 program, mine reclamation, emergency watershed protection, non-Farm-Bill NRCS programs), please send that information to Cliff, Ron, or PACD staff.

Committee Reports

PACD Conservation Committee

Chair Josh Longmore (Luzerne) provided the following report:

- The committee met on January 8, 2025, with a quorum.
- Erie Conservation District Manager Tom McClure reported to the group about a project headed by the Great Lakes Commission.
- Holly Miller provided an update on PACD's "Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management" or PRISM program. This pilot project will help inform creation of a statewide program to combat invasive species on a regional basis.
- The group discussed ideas for future conservation initiatives. Ideas included keeping abreast of emerging data about agriculture as a source of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS; as well as several issues related to large-scale solar farms.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD District Employees Committee

Chair Holly Kaplan (Lehigh) provided the following report:

- The committee met on January 10, 2025, with a quorum.
- PACD Program Manager Holly Miller shared information on training opportunities coordinated by PACD.
- PACD Leadership Development Manager Matt Miller shared information on upcoming Leadership Development training.
- The committee discussed district staff needs, including PracticeKeeper training, and received an update from the Ad Hoc Budget Committee.
- There was a request for recommended Clean Water Academy (CWA) course lists to help onboard new staff, such as the one available for E&S technicians.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Education and Outreach Committee

Chair Laura Anderson (Wyoming) provided the following report:

- The committee met on January 14, 2025 with a quorum.
- The committee received a report on the district booth at the PA Farm Show. USDA NRCS coordinates the space and allows us to be co-located with them. The location is excellent, and district volunteers had quality interactions with the public.
- PACD Water Resource Trainer Kelly Davidson gave an update on the Clean Water Academy

- PACD is hosting a free webinar on the legislative process on Feb. 5 from Noon–1:00 p.m.
- Courtney Raker, Executive Director of the PA Envirothon shared opportunities to be involved and video resources being developed for teachers. Thanks to sponsorships, state Envirothon competition registrations will be free this year.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Legislative Committee

Chair Donna Fisher (Blair) provided the following report:

- The PACD Legislative Committee met on January 16, 2025, with a quorum.
- SCC Executive Secretary Doug Wolfgang thanked the districts for helping obtain dedicated funding for the PA Clean Streams Fund and funding for ACAP.
- State Conservationist Denise Coleman provided a brief update on federal funds and programs. She stressed the urgency of locking down the Inflation Reduction Act funding so Pennsylvania can use those funds for conservation projects.
- Brenda Shambaugh provided an update on the proposed policy from the PACD Legislative Committee, and the alternative policy proposed by the PACD North East Region. These will come before Council under New Business.
- Brenda also provided an update on the PACD Ad Hoc Budget Committee, which will consider asking the legislature for an increase in CDFAP funding.
- Brenda provided an update on the Ag Plan Reimbursement Program, and Denise Coleman added that NRCS has \$2 Million set aside to implement conservation practices on farms in Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program.
- Donna and several other committee members volunteered to form a subcommittee to consider conservation district priorities PACD can pursue via legislation and/or negotiating with the partnership. Potential topics discussed included increased funding for watershed specialists and raising the prevailing wage threshold.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Operations Committee

Chair Emil Bove (Westmoreland) provided the following report:

- The PACD Operations Committee met on January 23, 2025, with a quorum.
- The committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.
- The committee also forwarded two proposed policies from the PACD Region Meetings to PACD Executive Council for consideration. As part of the motion, the committee recommended that Chairperson Beck clearly explain the voting procedure to those present and call on someone from the North East region to explain the differences between the policies.
- Brenda Shambaugh explained how the funds in the Conservation District Fund Allocation Program (CDFAP) are distributed.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

PACD Ways and Means Committee

Chair and PACD Treasurer Sonia Wasco (Lancaster) provided the following report:

- The PACD Ways and Means Committee met on January 22, 2025 with a quorum.
- The committee approved the minutes of the July 11, 2024 meeting.

- They reviewed a summary of financials for the first half of FY 2024/2025.
- The group discussed PACD's current and potential future funding opportunities.
- The committee suggested the PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference Planning Workgroup create a subcommittee to work on obtaining larger sponsors.
- The committee discussed the current and potential new dues amounts.
- The committee had no motions to bring before the council.

Items from the Fall PACD Region Meetings

Proposed Policies Supporting Education and Incentives for Voluntary Installation of BMPs

President Dennis Beck called on Legislative Committee Chair Donna Fisher to explain the language of the original policy. He called on North East Region Director Tom Herbert to explain the alternate language proposed by the North East Region, which specifically incorporates the words 'programs' and 'funding.' Dennis and Tom both explained the voting process.

It was moved by Mary Burris (Berks) and seconded by Dave Stoner (Franklin) to approve 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.

A voice vote was inconclusive, so a roll call vote was taken. Motion failed 9 for 25 against.

It was moved by Emil Bove (Westmoreland) and seconded by Kelly Stagen (Pike) to approve the following policy:

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

Motion carried 28 for and 8 against.

Partner Reports

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Assistant Director of Stewardship, Protection, and Conservation Matthew Keefer provided a report on behalf of PA DCNR, including appreciation for the partnership between DCNR and Pennsylvania's conservation districts; working through changes at the Federal level; current grants available; invasive spongy moth; native canker worm; wildfire awareness; and their pilot Adopt-a-Tree program.

PA Department of Environmental Protection

Acting Program Manager for the DEP Nonpoint Source Management Division Kathryn Bresaw provided highlights from their written report, including updates on the Growing Greener grant awards; the SPEED program for Chapters 102 and 105; the pilot programs for Chapters 102 and 105; PA Chesapeake Bay BMP reporting; the 2025 CAP Implementation Block Grant Awards;

and the Second Annual Clean Water Gathering.

PA State Conservation Commission

Executive Secretary Doug Wolfgang provided highlights from their written report including ACAP funding, particularly related to potential funding changes at the Federal level; the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program; the Nutrient and Odor Management Program; the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP); the Sustainable Agriculture Board; the Ag Innovation Grant Program; guidance regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI); the PA Ag Conservation Stewardship Program (PACS); progress on forming a Philadelphia conservation district; the PA Farm Show and Leopold Conservation Award; the new Ag Advisory Committee; the Conservation Excellence Grant Program; the Ag Plan Reimbursement Program in partnership with PACD; and more.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

State Conservationist Denise Coleman provided highlights from their annual report including applied practices for FY 2024; funding by watershed; investments in private working lands; 2024 water quality, landscape restoration, and other initiatives; easement activity; progress in the Kittatiny Ridge Priority Area; the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) program; the Emergency Watershed Protection program; and training offerings. She reported they are still full steam ahead with Farm Bill program. Pennsylvania has obligated \$33 Million of the \$41 Million in Pennsylvania Inflation Reduction Act funds allocated to the state. Those funds are on pause.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.