

**PACD North Central Region Meeting  
Clinton County Conservation District, Mill Hall, PA  
October 12, 2018**

**Welcome and Introductions**

North Central Region Director Rob Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

In attendance: Jason Childs, Potter; Judy Becker, Northumberland; Mike Hubler, Northumberland; Bill Dietrick, Union; Bob Sweitzer, Centre; Nancy Corbin, Columbia; Nancy DiFiore, NRCS; Denise Coleman, NRCS; Jaci Harner, DEP; Erica Tomlinson, Tioga; Bill Kahler, Lycoming; Cam Koons, Lycoming; Mark Davidson, Lycoming; Sean Levan, Montour; Karl Brown, SCC; Mary Ann Bower, Clinton; Larry Butler, Clinton; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Matt Miller, PACD; Rob Shannon, Centre; Karen Books, DEP; Marcus Kohl, DEP; Holly Miller, Sullivan; Ed Zinser, Sullivan.

**Set date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on March 14, 2019 at the Clinton County Conservation District.

**Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

*It was moved by Mike Hubler and seconded by Jason Childs to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.*

**PACD Business and Report**

PACD Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh provided the following report:

- PACD executive board has hired Water Words that Work to create a Marketing Toolbox to work with new legislators. Hopefully by the end of 2018 the tips and sample documents and webinar will be ready.
- Judy asked for tips on how to handle difficult situations with legislators be added.
- Brenda suggested that everyone should try to attend meet-the-candidate forums if possible so that new legislators are introduced to conservation districts before getting to Harrisburg.
- PACD is looking for comments on the new projected budget. Do districts want a three-year budget again? Is a \$50-100 increase reasonable?
- Building sale update – first offer was not accepted, hopefully another is coming in soon.
- Ch. 102 and Ch. 105
  - DEP is trying to make a change to Greenport to make it more user friendly for permitting
  - Every staff member who needs access to e-permitting will need their own account
  - E-permitting should significantly save in postage
  - Karen is checking to try and get all districts notified of Ch. 105 info/webinars



Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller provided the following report for leadership development:

- Management summit – there were 68-69 attendees, which represented 52 districts
- A survey sent out about the current website showed that it needs updated. Half the respondents said they haven't used the website since 2009.
- Staff Conference is February 27-28 in Williamsport (possible topics include sexual harassment and respectful workplaces)
- Regional trainings for directors are coming soon!

## **Regional Sharing**

*Centre* – Bob Sweitzer said he is currently working on the annual budget proposals. He reported that the watershed specialist co-sponsored a free CREP workshop. They are hosting a Watershed Stewardship dinner on November 7<sup>th</sup>. The Envirothon coordinators meetings are currently happening throughout the state. With all of the flooding and stormwater issues this year they are getting more referrals from legislators.

*Union* – Bill Dietrick said they are building a children's learning station at the Lewisburg Children's Museum. It is a soil pit that the kids can crawl through. They are constructing most of it themselves. They have applied for a 200K NFWF grant to working on old BMPs on farms that need some updates. They are also working on their 10 year strategic plan in which they have three-year themes to focus on.

*Sullivan* - Holly Miller said due to high water their Elk Creek Stream Restoration was cancelled after day three. They were able to install a modified muddsill and two cross vanes. PA Fish and Boat and Chief Oil and Gas are partners on this project. They are working on increasing their education outreach projects and hosted a lumber mill tour, a Good Water = Good Coffee event, and have their annual banquet on Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Bradford* – Cathy Yeakel said their eel education project has hit a setback. They started with 30 eels but only three survived. She is working with USGS and Van Wagner to provide education on the importance of the eels to the area. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the interseeder. There are 1500 acres that were planted, the goal is 3000 acres. They also received a SIG grant to continue this project for the next three years. With all of the flooding this year, Bradford has had around 200 emergency permits issued.

*Clinton* – Mary Ann Bower said that they had the Farm City Family festival and the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Conservation Field days. They have hired a new watershed specialist. With the RCPP grant, the district has worked on soil health demo sites. They are working with the County on an MOU to purchase the building. The public meeting showing support was very helpful.

*Potter* – Jason Childs said they completed a large Dirt and Gravel project that was unpassable due to a slope failure. GSI came and completed soil nailing on a 100x65' section. There are fish and boat structures at the base of the slope. The project cost approx. \$185K. They are hiring a new Dirt and Gravel tech that may also help with e-permitting. Their new communications staff is setting up workshops and outreach including Citizen Science and the annual Ag meeting.

*Lycoming* – Mark Davidson said this was their second year in participating with the West Nile program and that this year was a very bad year for mosquitos. They are working on 8-10 sites for EWP with NRCS. The building project they have been working on will hopefully be finished soon.

*Tioga* – Erica Tomlinson said that they have spent most of the last few weeks working on issues from all of the flooding. They hosted Hometown Science which had around 25 booths. They are currently working on several stream projects in Canoe Camp that keep getting delayed due to rain.

*Northumberland* – Judy Becker said they host the West Nile program for five counties and are still doing the program this fall as they had some money left due to turnover in staffing. There have been approximately 70 cases of human West Nile this year. They had some important learning curves with a state historic hit on an Ag Bmp project that had GG funding and Bay Special Project funding. Luckily the Phase 1 study came back negative and the project will move forward. They hosted a Soil and Water Quality Day with NRCS and Schuylkill County Conservation District and had about 100 people attend.

*Columbia* – Nancy Corbin said that since she started in July she has had to hire four new people of their staff of seven. They have been working with their Source Water Protection Coalition on some mini-grants for drug take-back events. Their stream and Dirt and Gravel projects have also been delayed by weather. They are looking at about 20 projects for EWP. They hosted their annual Water Education Day with about 510 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

*Montour* – Sean Levan said that since they purchased their new building they have had four new addresses and are having trouble getting some of their mail. They have two students from local co-ops doing intern work with them. They are working on three barnyards and two manure storages. They have a Board Appreciation Night for their Ag Preservation Board, district board and local watershed groups. They are also out doing EWP flooding assessments.

Brenda reminded everyone to try to include legislators in the projects like the ones talked about for the regional sharing.

### **NRCS Report**

Nancy DiFiore highlighted the following items:

- NRCS is currently working under a continuing resolution
- Currently there are over 100 EWP sites in our region
- The 2019 Farm Bill has a streamlining initiative that includes a Conservation Application Ranking Tool
- NACD and NRCS were able to secure Technical Assistance Grants for five counties in PA.
- Deadline for signups for early obligation is 10/19/2018

Denise Coleman highlighted the following items:

- For any county with EWP – get letters in ASAP to secure funding
- The current Farm Bill expired Sept 30. EQIP has continued funding. RCPP is being held up.

- Good possibility of future NACD Tech Assistance Grants
- The streamlining initiative will involve CSP and EQIP
- The administration of NRCS and FSA are merging
- Area of possible concern: FSA is requiring that anyone interested in CREP needs proper permits before applying for the program
- There are several new hires and advertisements for positions throughout the state. Were down to 171 staff – full staff is 230

### **DEP Report**

Karen Books highlighted the following items:

- District audits are due by Dec 31<sup>st</sup>
- We received an allocation overview to show where funds come from
- There is a budgeting spreadsheet to look over and make suggestions on – there needs to be better reporting to show how funds are actually being spent
- Clean Water Academy list of courses was presented.

Marcus Kohl highlighted the following items:

- The recent flooding we've experienced seems to be the new norm
  - How/what do we do to address the issues?
  - Interest in county-wide task force to look into stream issues (working on small tributaries)
  - Approximately 400 emergency permits have been issued this year
  - Recovery needs to be – FASTER, SMARTER, and BETTER
- Bay update
  - WIP 3 – final seven years of the Chesapeake Bay plan
  - New WIP is county-based loads
  - Focus on good projects and get them into the plan
  - May prioritize money and permits if the projects are in the WIP
  - Get people out to see projects – i.e. Secretary of DEP
  - Counties will be approached soon
  - Lessons learned should be available soon from pilot counties
- Currently staffing in the region is good, however a few retirements are coming in 2019
- Looking for input on how staffing works, concerns, any needed changes, etc.

### **SCC Report**

Executive Secretary Karl Brown highlighted the following items:

- Don Koontz and Maryann Warren have been reappointed to the SCC
- Dirt and Gravel update
  - Annual conference had 49 districts present and about 100 municipal officials
  - Quarterly reporting is now online
  - QAQC visits – 16 visits so far this year
- It is time for director appointments – work with the Chief Clerk to ensure they have all the information they need
- REAP tax credit
  - \$10 million available this year

- Legacy sediment credits are available
- Nutrient management/odor management
  - There are revised animal weights
  - Emergency manure storage drawdowns
  - With all of the rainfall we may be seeing more of these requests
  - Documents were provided for working through this issue
  - Completed as plan updates
  - The admin and technical manuals are being updated - comment period open until Nov 16, 2018
- Spotted Lantern Fly
  - \$500,000 available for districts in the quarantine areas to do education, outreach, and control – so far eight districts have applied
- The SCC is working on a strategic plan – a survey was sent out – please provide input

### **DCNR Report**

Teddi Stark, Riparian Buffer Coordinator, highlighted the following items:

- Teddi presented a study that showed how to find landowners who are more willing to do conservation buffers and asked those interested in getting the maps and addresses to please contact DCNR.
- There are several different funding streams available for buffers.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.