

PACD North East Region Meeting
DEP Northeast Regional Office, Wilkes-Barre, PA
October 12, 2018

Welcome and Introductions

PACD North East Region Director Kelly Stagen welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested a roll call.

In attendance: Audrey Wargo, Carbon; Carl Deluca, DEP; Tim Ference, Luzerne; Jack Hanish, Luzerne; Adam Schellhammer, Monroe; Chuck Gould, Monroe Nancy DiFiore, NRCS; Dan Dostie, NRCS; Jen Matthews, NRCS; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Nathan Brophy, PACD; Andy Wodehouse, PACD; Matt Miller, Leadership Development Coordinator; Michele Long, Pike; Kelly Stagen, Pike; Jenna St. Clair, Schuylkill; Jamie Knecht, Wayne; Doug Deutsch, Wyoming; Dorne White, Wyoming; Bob Robinson, Wyoming; Johan Berger, SCC

Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for April 5, 2019, at the DEP Northeast Regional Office at 10 am.

Approval of Minutes for the Previous Meeting

Motion made by Jenna St. Clair to approve meeting minutes from the October 20, 2017. Seconded by Audrey Wargo. Motion carried.

Marketing Toolkit

Brenda Shambaugh (PACD) reported that the Pennsylvania General Assembly will have a significant number of new members following the November election. PACD will play a vital role in educating new legislators regarding conservation districts and their important roles. Shambaugh recommends districts meet with candidates before election day and follow up with new legislators after the election. PACD executive board has hired a public relations firm called Water Words that Work. The firm will be developing a marketing toolkit that districts can use to assist in outreach and public relations. The toolkit will be ready for use by the end of 2018 and will be accessible via the PACD website. Kelly Stagen stressed the importance of showcasing the positive work the districts complete through the many programs they administer. Dan Dostie (NRCS) recommended showcasing the toolkit at the annual Soil and Water Conservation Society conference coming up in Pittsburgh.

Regional Grant Opportunities

Adam Schellhammer (Monroe) provided an update on regional grant opportunities. The SCC suggested regions take on larger scale regional projects to bring grant funding to the districts. Monroe and Pike counties have been exploring ways to form a cooperative committee with the



goal of evaluating problem sites throughout the region and performing floodplain restoration projects within the Delaware River Basin. Wayne, Pike, Monroe, Northampton, and Lehigh counties are within the region being evaluated. Michele Long (Pike) explained that the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI) has already identified several priority areas within the Delaware Watershed. Long stated the region may be able to work with the DRWI to identify project areas and generate funding. The group discussed other grant programs and funding sources that may be used toward regional floodplain restoration projects.

PACD Budget

Shambaugh provided an update on the PACD budget. The executive board would like to know if the region would like to continue working with a three-year budget. The group agreed the three-year budget should continue. Shambaugh asked if the region was open to a small dues increase of \$50-\$300. No objections were made to a potential dues increase.

Legislative and Conservation Committees

Shambaugh reported the legislative committee has had a difficult time having a quorum at their meetings and PACD is considering combining the committees in an attempt to streamline their functions. The executive committee recommended trying to consolidate the committees at the January meeting and, if successful, request a bylaws change to make the merger official. Michele Long (Pike) suggested changing the focus of the conservation committee to programmatic updates from DEP for the districts and leave legislative issues to the Legislative Committee. The group expressed concerns with communication between the DEP and districts and ways the Conservation Committee could be used to help. Shambaugh reviewed the role of the Conservation Committee as stated in the bylaws.

Ad Hoc Building Committee

Shambaugh reported that the process of purchasing the new condo, placing the downtown building up for sale, and coordinating the move to the new condo has all moved more quickly than anticipated. Because of this, the PACD Executive Board is questioning the necessity of an Ad Hoc Committee to deal with building-related issues at this time. Shambaugh asked the group if they felt an Ad Hoc Building Committee is necessary at this juncture. The group agreed that the Ad Hoc Building Committee would not be necessary at this time. Shambaugh provided an update on the status of the downtown building and new condo.

Chapter 105 e-Permitting

The Chapter 105 e-Permitting system is now live. Paper submissions will be accepted until further notice. Staff are waiting for applicant submissions to determine the needs of the public and to adjust in-house procedures for processing permit applications. The group discussed the new system.

Chapter 102 E-Permitting

DEP is working with Monroe, Cumberland, and Chester County staff to develop the chapter 102 E-Permitting system, which is tentatively scheduled for implementation April/May 2019. Schellhammer expressed concerns with some districts' technical capabilities and additional costs associated with an entirely electronic permitting process. Shambaugh reported that DEP asked

her for a list of five to six additional conservation district employees that can help test and develop the system, especially districts in more rural areas.

Legislative Update

Shambaugh provided a legislative update. There are only four days left in the legislative session and she does not anticipate movement on any major environmental bills prior to the close of the legislative session. Shambaugh reviewed several bills that could impact district-related programs. House Bill 297 would exempt DGLVR projects from the prevailing wage requirements. House Bill 1932 regarding nutrient management reviews did not come out of committee. House Bill 1959 regarding third party permit reviews passed the House but stalled in the Senate. Shambaugh anticipates this bill resurfacing during next year's legislative session. She also noted that Growing Greener announcements are anticipated to come out within the next two weeks.

TAG Engineers Update

TAG engineers Nathan Brophy and Andy Wodehouse provided an update of projects and activities that they have been working on throughout the counties.

Leadership Development Program Update

Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller provided an update on Leadership Development Program activities. The Management Summit was held last month. The staff conference is being planned for February 2019 in Williamsport. A redesign for the program's website is ongoing, with content being updated, removed, and added as necessary. The Leadership Development Committee is exploring ways to use webinars as a training tool between in-person meetings/trainings. The group discussed the program's strategic planning grant opportunities and submission deadlines.

Dual Role of NE Regional Director

Kelly Stagen explained that, since the election of officers in July, she is currently serving as both PACD secretary and North East Region Director. She asked the group if they had any objections to this dual role. The group had no objections.

Regional Information Sharing

Carbon – Audrey Wargo reported that they are working on two large E&S plans associated with a hospital and a PennDOT road-widening project. Their first grade poster winner is going on to the national competition.

Monroe – Adam Schellhammer reported that they are working with landowners to complete Riparian Buffer restoration projects through a PACD Riparian Buffer grant. They are also hosting a fundraiser with Northampton county. Their district gave their Economic Development and Planning Commission members a tour of a LandStudies site in Lancaster that was highlighted at the PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference.

Schuylkill – Jenna St. Clair reported that many communities in their county are impacted by flooding. The district is working to have a Regional Flood Recovery Manager through the county

to deal with flooding concerns/issues. The district recently took on the West Nile Virus program for the first time. They are looking to do a Strategic Plan in the near future.

Wayne – Jamie Knecht reported that they are working to increase forestry education and outreach. They are holding spotted lanternfly learning sessions. She recommended districts check on DGLVR projects, as all of the rain we have gotten may have impacted recent installations.

Wyoming – Doug Deutsch reported that the district lost an ag technician recently and are looking to fill the vacancy. They finished a PACD mini-grant project called *Chat and Chew* that talked about multiple topics for the backyard. They are hosting their annual banquet on November 9 with a speaker on Spotted Lanternfly.

Luzerne – Tim Ference reported that they have a Municipal Engineer and Contractors workshop upcoming in November.

Pike – Michele Long reported that the watershed specialist position at the district is now vacant. The district is reviewing 2018 accomplishments and developing a 2019 action plan. They sent letters to legislators regarding HB 1959, and stressed the importance of consulting conservation districts when considering bills that impact district functions. The Scenic Rural Character Preservation Program Groundwater Level Monitoring Grant has been completed.

Partner Reports

State Conservation Commission (SCC) – Johan Berger reviewed the written SCC report.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Nancy DiFiore provided an update. She reported that Emergency Watershed Protection Program funding is available for seventeen counties. A local workgroup was held regionally to help identify resource concerns.

PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – Carl Deluca provided an update. All Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permits will be issued out of the DEP Southcentral Regional Office. CAFO inspections will remain within each individual region. Deluca provided updates regarding compliance and enforcement for the Chapter 102 program. He reported that the PA Clean Water Academy will be up and running in late fall 2018. He noted that district audits need to be to Karen Books by December 31, 2018.

Adjournment

Motion made by Bob Robinson to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jenna St. Clair. Motion Carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.