

**PACD North West Region Meeting
Jefferson County Conservation District, Brookville PA
October 30, 2018**

Call to Order

North West Region Director Cliff Lane welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

In attendance: Fred Fiscus, DEP; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Matt Miller, PACD; Dan Dostie, NRCS; Karl Brown, SCC; Lance Bowes, Venango; Tracey Crawford, Crawford; Susan Marquart, NRCS; Jo Ann McCready, Lawrence, Sandy Thompson, McKean; John Green, DEP; Lori Boughton, DEP; Don Koontz, Mercer; Randi Tyler, PACD TAG; Jeff Werner, NRCS; Cliff Lane, McKean; Shaun Wessel, Jefferson; Tom McClure, Erie; Jay Russel, Mercer; Donna Zofcin, Forest; Kerry Fetter, McKean; Jim Miller, DEP; Ian Harrel, Butler; Trudy Alexander, Clarion.

Date of Next Meeting

The group determined that the next meeting will take place on March 27, 2019, at the Mercer County Conservation District Office.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided for review.

It was moved by Don Koontz and seconded by Donna Zofcin to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as presented. Motion carried.

PACD Report

Brenda provided highlights from her written report:

- PACD has commissioned Water Words that Work to develop a Marketing Toolkit to help conservation districts publicize the great work they do.
- The toolkit will be useful to reach out to legislators, particularly new legislators coming in after November. It is critical to get to know these legislators before the new budget cycle.
- Regional grant opportunities may be available for areas battling damage from recent storms.
- The PACD three-year budget cycle is coming to an end. Brenda asked if a) the districts would like to look at a new three-year budget, and b) if the districts would be open to a small dues increase of \$50 to \$100, should a dues increase be needed. The group indicated they support another three-year budget cycle and a small dues increase, if needed.
- PACD is moving on November 9. The current PACD building at 25 North Front Street in Harrisburg is listed for sale.
- PACD is looking at combining the Legislative and Conservation Committees. They address similar issues and it is hard to obtain quorums. It was suggested that we try to increase



director participation, and consider changing the Conservation Committee agenda to reflect potential and upcoming conservation issues, rather than focusing on current legislation. The group agreed that we should see how a combined meeting in January might go.

- In July, the PACD Executive Council voted to create an ad hoc committee to provide input on the sale of the Harrisburg building and the purchase of the condo. The PACD Executive Board is asking the membership if they want them to move forward with an ad hoc committee, given where we are in the process. The group indicated that an ad hoc committee seems unnecessary at this point.
- Chapter 105 ePermitting is live. PACD submitted names to DEP to create an auxiliary committee to discuss Chapter 102 ePermitting, and is supporting the districts' requests to offer a paper option for plain sect applicants and applicants without computer access. DEP will provide a draft proposal to a small group of districts who volunteered to review it before it goes out to the larger group. Brenda took feedback and comments from those present.

Legislative Update

Brenda strongly suggested that districts touch base with their legislators between November and January. She stressed that, while especially important for districts with new legislators, this is important for all districts. For all intents and purposes, the legislative session is now over. Once legislators arrive back in Harrisburg, they will be busy with a new legislative session and a flurry of meeting requests. Brenda encouraged districts to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with them locally before they get back to Harrisburg and are overwhelmed with meeting requests and legislative activity.

Brenda highlighted a number of bills from her written report, including:

- HB297 - Legislation that will exempt DGLVR projects from prevailing wage will likely be reintroduced during the new session.
- HB1932 - Brenda gave kudos to DEP, NRCS, and the SCC for helping us to convince Rep. Zimmerman that this legislation, requiring a 90 day review process, would make the issue worse, not better.
- HB2647 - This legislation allows for an NPDES waiver process for construction sites that result in a land disturbance of more than one, but less than five, acres.
- HB1959 - This legislation allows for third-party permit reviewers. The South West Region passed a motion opposing third-party reviewers.

It was moved by Cliff Lane and seconded by Lance Bowes to support the South West motion to oppose third-party permit reviewers. Motion carried.

Update from the PACD Engineering Assistance Program

Randi Tyler (PACD TAG) discussed her work on a number of completed and ongoing projects.

Leadership Development Update

Leadership Development Coordinator Matt Miller provided a program update.

- The Management Summit took place September 5-6, 2018, with 69 attendees from 52 districts.



- Some of the topics from the Management Summit will continue during the 2019 Staff Conference, which will take place February 27-28 at the Genetti in Williamsport. Registration should open in mid-November. Maintaining a respectful workplace will be among the topics to be discussed.
- Matt is coordinating five training sessions for district directors in March 2018. There will be one each in the North West, the South West, South East, and North East, and one in a central location. Johan Berger stressed the importance of director development and asked the district managers and directors to provide Matt with recommendations and suggestions for useful director development topics.
- Funds are available for strategic planning grants. Please contact Matt if you are interested in taking advantage of these funds.
- Updating the program logo is underway.
- The program is hoping to offer a web-based platform in 2019 for online training.

District Information Sharing

Butler – Ian Harrel reported that their new tech hire is doing well.

Venango – Lance Bowes reported that their DGLVR projects are winding down for the year and that well-plugging grant bidding will begin shortly.

Clarion – Trudy Alexander reported that they have submitted two Growing Greener grant applications and that they have a well-plugging project underway.

Forest – Donna Zofcin reported on the formation of the Douglas Carlson Rural Land Trust.

Lawrence– Jo Ann McCready reported that their watershed projects are underway and provided details on an educational outreach event called Senior Days.

Mercer – Don Koontz reported that the Sandy Creek Watershed project is underway and construction is nearing completion on DGLVR projects. He also reported that they are speaking Carnegie Museum of Natural History on the possibility of a collaborative climate change research project.

Jefferson – Shaun Wessel reported that habitat improvements for their lake project were delayed by heavy rains, sediment removal is underway for the Big Run flood control project, and they are working on an aquaponic greenhouse project involving students from IUP.

Erie – Tom McClure reported on the development of a nature center at their district that will include wildlife mounts on loan from the PA Game Commission, which they plan to have open by April 2019. Additionally, their Memorial Tree Trail project has been expanded, and they have also been involved in installing BMPs at local vineyards through the PA Vines program. They are also currently preparing for a fundraiser in conjunction with the district's 70th anniversary.



McKean – Sandy Thompson reported that their district has been involved on 43 outreach/education events that have reached over 3800 people, including Jr. Envirothon, Big Brothers/Big Sisters events, Streamside workshops, and BMP tours with legislators. The district hired a former intern as a full-time Resource Specialist, and their board is discussing a replacement for their Recycling Director who resigned. Additionally, they have completed 9 stream stabilization projects, 13 DGLVR projects, and 2 Ag projects.

SCC Report

Executive Secretary Karl Brown provided highlights from his written report.

- MaryAnn Warren and Don Koontz were reappointed to the Commission.
- The 2018 DGLVR workshop held in September was a success.
- The SCC is migrating the DGLVR program to online GIS quarterly reporting.
- The SCC has performed 16 quality assurance and control visits and has six more to go.
- The conservation district director appointment process is on-going.
- REAP tax credits are available.
- Revised standard animal weights for the Nutrient and Odor Management Program are effective October 1, 2019.
- If emergency manure storage draw-down is needed due to the massive rains, please work with the SCC regional nutrient management coordinator.
- They are taking recommendations for the nutrient management manual update.
- PDA made grant funds available for districts in the spotted lanternfly quarantine zone. Completed agreements ranging from \$10,000 to \$150,000 are coming back to the SCC. The PDA website offers online training on identification and management. PDA has other grants available to reimburse landowners to cover contractor costs related to pest management.
- Will be undertaking a strategic planning/SWOT analysis and encourage input.

DEP Report

Fred Fiscus provided handouts, including a general report, a spreadsheet of District State Agency Program Allocations and Fees Collected for FY 2017-18, The Local Role in Developing a Countywide Action Plan, and Clean Water Academy Courses.

- District audits are due at the end of the year.
- He reviewed a spreadsheet showing the annual funding for conservation districts from various sources.
- DEP and SCC staff are asking districts for feedback on submitting an annual budget spreadsheet to the SCC before the fiscal or calendar year.
- The DEP Bureau of Clean Water will be providing online training through new online learning system software. They are hoping to have the online learning system, which they are calling the Pennsylvania Clean Water Academy, online this fall. The system is being demonstrated at the regional Chapter 102 meetings. District staff are encouraged to contact Diane Wilson to review courses and/or offer suggestions for new course development.
- Bay districts have the opportunity to help develop Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP. DEP wants to work with county-based stakeholders to develop and submit a county-based action plan to meet local reduction goals. Fred provided an fact sheet with additional information.



- In order to be reimbursed, Bay districts must input BMP data into PracticeKeeper prior to submitting invoices for that work.
- DEP is extending the Ag Planning Reimbursement Program, which reimburses ag operators and landowners for consultant fees for creating manure management plans, nutrient management plans, and ag E&S plans.

NRCS Report

Dan Dostie provided highlights from his written report.

- He pointed out an article highlighting Pennsylvania's accomplishments of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative and charts covering preliminary NRCS program data for 2018 and other information.
- NRCS is under a continuing resolution, and is moving forward without a Farm Bill. They will continue taking applications for AMA, EQIP, RCPP-CSP, and RCPP-EQIP.
- They are streamlining planning and program delivery and will be rolling out the Conservation Application Ranking Tool (CART) in February 2019.
- He touched on highlights for 2019 RCPP projects,
- Dan introduced Charlie Hanner, who replaced Lorin Boggs in August and has a strong technical background in soils and wetlands. Charlie reported that he has worked in Delaware, Maryland, and Ohio. He has family in the area and looks forward to meeting and working with everyone.
- The Soil and Water Conservation Society conference is coming to Pittsburgh in 2019 with a theme of Bridging the Divide: Uniting Rural and Urban Landscapes for Conservation.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

