

**PACD North Central Region Meeting
Clinton County Conservation District, Mill Hall, PA
March 14, 2019**

Welcome and Introductions

Rob Shannon welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

In attendance: Eric Nyerges, Union; Jason Childs, Potter; Bob Sweitzer, Centre; Judy Becker, Northumberland; Michael Hubler, Northumberland; Erica Tomlinson, Tioga; Carl Koch, Tioga; Peter Vanderstappen, NRCS; Mark Davidson, Lycoming; Carl Schlappi, Lycoming; Bill Kahler, Lycoming; Cam Koons, Lycoming; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Rob Shannon, PACD/Centre; Nathan Brophy, PACD; Andy Wodehouse, PACD; Nancy DiFiore, NRCS; Karen Books, DEP; Mary Ann Bower, Clinton; Holly Miller, Sullivan; Jacki Kerstetter, DEP.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The group discussed dates for the next region meeting. The next meeting will take place on October 3, 2019, at the Clinton County Conservation District.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided to those in attendance.

It was moved by Bill Kahler and seconded by Eric Nyerges to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Report: State Budget Proposal

Brenda reported PACD is requesting an increase in the conservation district line-items, as they haven't increased since fiscal year 2004-2005. She will be taking this to the General Assembly.

Conservation district funding has been transferred to the Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF) in the PA Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) budget. This is of concern, as moving the funding may mean it is overlooked, and it may be difficult to move it back.

It was moved by Erica Tomlinson and seconded by Jason Childs to approve the following:

PACD continues to support utilizing the Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF) to fund the Growing Greener program and its success in assisting local communities with natural resource projects. We philosophically oppose using funding from the ESF to pay for state agency administration.

Motion carried.



Brenda also reported that the Governor's proposed budget uses ESF funds to pay for DEP administrative costs.

It was moved by Eric Nyerges and seconded by Rob Shannon to approve the following:

PACD supports conservation district funding to remain in the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) fund and continue with the existing DEP funding structure.

Motion carried with 7 for and 1 against.

PACD Report: Conservation District Week

Brenda discussed Conservation District Week (May 5-11, 2019) and asked districts to think about what they want to do for the event. Any district interested in visiting with legislators in the Capitol should contact Brenda so that she can schedule appointments with the appropriate legislators. Brenda will be sending out template budget letters soon.

PACD Report: PACD Ways and Means Committee Motion

Brenda reviewed a motion from the PACD Ways and Means Committee.

It was moved by Mike Hubler and seconded by Larry Butler to support the PACD Ways and Means Committee motion to increase PACD dues by \$65 per district for fiscal year 2019-2020, \$55 per district for fiscal year 2020-2021, and \$45 per district for fiscal year 2021-2022, with the PACD Ways and Means committee to review the dues on an annual basis. Motion carried.

PACD Ad Hoc Building Committee Update

Brenda reviewed Ad Hoc Building Committee's decision to stop working with the current realtor and begin working with Coldwell Banker.

Regional Information Sharing

Union – Eric Nyerges reported that they received two Growing Greener Grants and are working on a three-year study with the US Geological Survey (USGS) on Turtle Creek to figure out how much erosion happens by natural processes.

Tioga – Erica Tomlinson reported that they received two PENNVEST grants totaling \$1.5 million to cover two farms and the district is a sponsor. There is an opening at the district. They will be holding a legislative luncheon on May 10.

Bradford – Cathy Yeakel highlighted a Woodchip Barnyard Open House and Field Day to take place on April 5 at Dewey Meadows Farm in Warren Center. She also reported that over 100 people attended a soil health workshop held on March 13. In addition, Earth Day planning is underway, and they now have a weekly column called "Conservation Corner" in their local newspaper to highlight different things throughout the year.

Sullivan – Holly Miller reported that the Sullivan County Conservation District annual report is in their local newspaper. Their seedling sale is underway with a lot of fruit trees ordered this

year. They will be attending the Legislative Day at the Capitol. The district had a rain barrel workshop and a pruning workshop

Clinton – Mary Ann Bower stated they are in the process of purchasing the building and property and signed an agreement March 1. Renovations to the building have begun. She also reported they had an Envirothon study day at Lock Haven University with agency representatives and had over 100 students in attendance. Their tree sale is underway. They had an erosion control workshop for contractors and municipalities. Mary Ann met with their new State Representative Stephanie Borowicz.

Lycoming – Mark Davidson reported their Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) projects are moving along. Their board dedicated \$10,000 to a grant program. Youth organizations and community groups are eligible to apply for up to \$2,000 for conservation projects. This year district is sponsoring one of the floating classrooms in the Susquehanna River Keeper Series on the Hiawatha. They are having a legislative breakfast on April 11 at the Genetti in Williamsport.

Centre – Bob Sweitzer reported they received two Growing Greener Grants, one grant is for plan writer assistance and the other is a \$1.7 million grant for ag BMPs on ten farms and four stream projects. They had a soil health conference with about 40 people in attendance. Their Chesapeake Bay Tech is doing pollinator presentations. For Conservation District Week he is reaching out to local legislators. They will be holding an Ag E&S workshop and are hoping for 50 people to attend. The Pennsylvania Envirothon still needs volunteers. The event takes place May 21-22 at the University of Pitt at Johnstown and Windber Park. Please think about sending staff to this great educational event!

Potter – Jason Childs reported they are having a legislative lunch next Thursday, March 21. They will be having a Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Program breakfast April 5 and are discussing prevailing wage, their Quality Assurance Board (QAB) will be present and they will be giving away a \$100 gift card. They rejuvenated their seedling sale and will be coming out on the plus side. They have some junior Envirothon teams interested in participating in their Envirothon this year.

Northumberland – Judy Becker reported they had their seventh annual winter meeting, a forum targeting farmers/municipalities. A Penn State meteorologist presented on heavy rainfall events. They received a PACD mini-grant to hold six manure management workshops. Their seedling sale is going on. They are meeting with DEP and NRCS to discuss a five-year funding initiative covering watershed assessments and implementation in the Warrior Run Watershed. Their legislative luncheon is scheduled for April 4.

Rob Shannon reported that a Penn State student project is taking place where students go to Costa Rica to help install biodigesters on small farms to create methane for cooking. Penn State also received a Growing Greener grant to provide funding for interns to write Ag E&S and Manure Management plans at conservation districts within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. In addition, Rob has been appointed to the Upper and Middle Susquehanna Regional Water Resources Committee, along with Cathy Yeakel from Bradford County Conservation District.

State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report

SCC Executive Secretary Karl Brown reviewed the following:

- Karl discussed the new curriculum presented by Penn State Extension called “Manure Management Planning for Youth Animal Projects” designed for 4H/FFA and classroom use.
- He also reviewed the Nutrient Management line item increase in the proposed budget.
- Karl reviewed a PowerPoint showing the status of DGLVR project money and their plans to address underutilization of the funding.
- The SCC is in the process of updating their strategic plan and will share and ask for input.
- Karl talked about the Spotted Lanternfly and provided information.
- The proposed Farm Bill was reviewed, along with the Restore Pennsylvania proposal.
- Rob Shannon asked about a standard chart of accounts. Karl said the SCC is trying to figure out logistics and are in discussion with auditors. They would like to set up a workgroup and will be reaching out to districts.

PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report

Karen Books, Water Program Specialist from DEP’s Conservation District Support Section, reviewed the different Unconventional Gas Well Fund (UGWF) Allocation Scenarios proposed by Armstrong and Lycoming Counties.

It was moved by Bill Kahler and seconded by Carl Koch to support fund allocations based on the 15-year well count instead of the current 5-year average (Lycoming proposal). Motion carried with 7 for and 1 against.

DEP Conservation District Field Representative Jaci Kerstetter discussed the State Fencing Program Pilot that is currently going on in Northumberland and Columbia counties to put in fencing projects from July 2019 to June 2020.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report

- Nancy DiFiore, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in Northeast Pennsylvania, distributed a summary of accomplishments for 2018.
- Nancy discussed the importance of the PACD Engineering Assistance Program employees.
- She also discussed NRCS Engineering Assistance, national policy, options, and the cost of technical assistance in the private sector.
- She also highlighted that if a farm doesn’t have a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) they are not eligible for NRCS funding.
- State Conservation Engineer Pete Vanderstappen reported that there are 120 Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) sites approved in the Northeast. EWP provides 75% of the funding. Usually the remaining 25% is covered by the landowner. However, DEP has come up with money to fund the remaining 25% so there is no cost to the landowner.
- Pete also reported that a new Ag Waste Facility Standard is being rolled out.
- PL-566 funding has become available and projects are being considered in Bradford, Westmoreland, Chester and Lancaster counties.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 pm.