

**PACD South East Region Meeting
Henning's Market, Harleysville PA
April 4, 2019**

Call to Order

South East Regional Director, Piper Sherburne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:35AM.

In attendance: Ted Veresink, Northampton; Sharon Pletchan, Northampton; Jessica Buck, Montgomery; Brian Boyer, Berks; Joe Rosenbaum, Berks; Chris Strohmaier, Chester; Ed Magargee, Delaware; Gretchen Schatschneider, Bucks; Piper Sherburne, Berks; Karen Books, DEP; Bill McFadden, Lehigh; Johan Berger, SCC; Susan Marquart, NRCS; Evan Corondi, Berks; Charles Hanner, NRCS; Jeff Sholly, PACD; Bill Erdman, Lehigh.

Date of Next Meeting

The group determined that the next meeting will take place on October 31, 2019, at the Henning's Market in Harleysville at 9:30AM.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided for review.

It was moved by Bill McFadden and seconded by Ed Magargee to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as presented. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report

Brenda provided highlights from her written report:

State Budget Proposal: The Conservation District line within the Department of Agriculture budget is proposed to remain the same while there is a proposed increase to the Nutrient Management fund. Another change to the budget discussed was that DEP administrative costs would be taken from ESF funds; the PACD Executive Board passed a motion opposing and requested all regions discuss this resolution and pass a motion.

It was moved by Gretchen Schatschneider and seconded by Ed Magargee to support the PACD Executive Board motion: "PACD continues to support utilizing the 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 Environmental Stewardship Fund to pay for agency administrative costs." Motion carried.

Discussion continued concerning the proposed changes to the State budget where the



Conservation District funding in the DEP budget is proposed to remain the same but was transferred to the Environmental Stewardship fund (ESF).

It was moved by Bill McFadden and seconded by Gretchen Schatschneider to support Conservation District funding in the DEP General Fund to continue in the existing funding structure. Ed Magargee led a discussion concerning the risk of negative impact on funding levels with district opposition and the subsequent possibility of competition between districts and other environmental groups for ESP funds. Motion carried with one abstention from Ed Magargee.

HB414 – Legislation has been introduced by Rep. Zimmerman that will require issuance of E&S and ESCGP permits within 45 days of the submission of the application unless it is found administratively incomplete or fails to comply with the provisions of Chapter 102. Approval within 20 days of receipt would be required for any E&S or ESCGP permit applications submitted by a licensed engineer, land surveyor or geologist. Brenda stated that she has requested this bill be removed from the agenda as it opposes PACD policy. Discussion ensued encouraging education of the committee members about current policies and procedures already in place (i.e. Regional Permit Coordination Office (RPCO)).

It was moved by Bill McFadden and seconded by Chris Thompson to oppose HB414. Motion carried.

HB-509 – This legislation has been reintroduced allowing for third-party permit reviewers. South East Region previously passed motion opposing HB1958 which mirrors this legislation; there was no new motion.

Draft DEP Soil and E&S Control Manual for Agricultural Operations and the Proposed DEP E&S, NPDES Administration Manual (Section 6) - Brenda reported that the district comments were provided to DEP for both documents. Copies were distributed at the meeting.

Conservation District Week – May 5-11, 2019 – Brenda strongly encouraged that districts hold some type of Legislative event this Spring; outreach templates were sent to all districts in an email yesterday. She stated that more districts were scheduled for Capitol visits than previous years. PACD will resend all district highlight pages to legislators in May.

PACD Ways and Means Committee motion – At the January 31, 2019 meeting a motion was passed by PACD Executive Council to increase the dues in FY2019-2020 by \$65 per district, \$55 the following fiscal year and \$45 for the subsequent following fiscal year with an annual review. The increase will cover required inflationary costs. Bill McFadden, as a representative of the committee, explained that once the building sells, they may be able to decrease the dues which is why an annual review is factored.

It was moved by Bill McFadden and seconded by Jessica Buck support the flat rate dues increase in fiscal year 2019-20 by \$65 per district, \$55 for fiscal year 2020-21 and \$45 for fiscal year 2021-22 with hard review by the committee upon the sale of the PACD building. Motion carried

Ad Hoc Building Committee Update – Brenda reported that the previous contract with the realtor ended on 2/2/19 and they have met with three new realtor companies choosing Coldwell Banker which is more familiar with the Harrisburg market. Brenda sent a link to the video the realtor put together; the new realtor is providing a weekly report and will be paid 6% unless they represent both buyer and seller whereas the rate will be reduced to 5%. A showing was proposed for April 3, but the potential buyer ended up being delayed and it had to be rescheduled.

Director Listserve – Approximately 30 districts have provided PACD with their board's email addresses. Brenda is still requesting as many email addresses as possible to improve communication. Sharon Pletchan brought the attention to the fact that managers are not aware of what is being sent to the directors. Discussion ensued that the list serve email does not identify to which list serves the information was sent. Sharon Pletchan suggested to address the body of the email to Managers and Directors when it goes to both parties; Brenda agreed this would be a good solution. Johan Berger stated that there may be an issue with the email system.

District Information Sharing

Berks – Dean Druckenmiller reported that they have an E&S position open and may hire a professional engineer however they are still working out the funding. Their seeding sale will be ending this month, they are planning a Backyard Basics event for this Spring, and they have about a million dollars in DGLVR project undergoing construction this summer. The Board appointed an associate director as their legislative liaison. They announced that, by the end of this year, they will have the 'Trout in the Classroom' program in all county school districts.

Bucks – Gretchen Schatschneider reported that they will be temporarily down one E&S tech this Spring due to medical leave. They are ramping up their SLF program focusing on municipal properties for control and education outreach for agricultural lands as the farmers are more comfortable controlling on their own once they have the information. They are performing egg scraping, surveying for banding and control and are going to be picking contractors soon for control projects on municipal properties. All old money is committed for DGLVR and they are hoping their projects will be completed by the deadline. They have an Act 13 grant to implement a forebay/wetland project near a lake on a County park and plan to perform local visits with their legislators.

Chester – Chris Strohmaier reported that he plans to meet directly with their new legislators. He is awaiting consultant submissions for the new PAC pilot program. They will be implementing a new fee schedule on April 22, 2019. Gaye Lynn remains on the ePermitting committee, so he can report that the implementation for Chapter 102 continues to be pushed back due to problems with Chapter 105 and Oil and Gas ePermitting programs. The 102 program may be up and running in Fall 2019; it has been confirmed that district service and permit fees will be submitted directly to the districts whereas the system will collect the disturbed acreage fees. Brenda stated that she will be meeting with Aneca Atkinson soon, so please update her with any concerns. Chester did not apply for SLF grant, but would be looking into it for the next grant round. Johan Berger reported that the next grant round is not yet established. Johan clarified that Penn State Extension's roll in the SLF program is education, outreach and research but they are now stating they do not have enough time, so district assistance is needed. They have a wait list for LVR projects, but they do have old money left to spend for DGR. Chris reported struggles with

technical assistance involved with the EPA funds for Chesapeake Bay. Their Board approved a new outreach position which will assist with Chapter 102 inspections as well as follow-up with district funded agricultural projects to ensure proper maintenance.

Delaware – Ed Magargee reported that they have three riparian buffer projects with the Tree-vitalize program. They are the County’s MS4 coordinator and are still awaiting response on their waiver application from DEP. The Eastern Delaware County Stormwater Collaborative (involving 9 municipalities) put together a joint PRP plan and plan to implement projects within a County park. Delaware currently only has the LVR program, but no one is certified to apply for grants. Ed plans to speak to legislators directly.

Lehigh – Bill McFadden reported that they have completed their office expansion and added two additional administrative staff members, bringing their staff to a total of 15; in addition, there will be two part-time summer staff for the mosquito program. SLF bands were received and sent out to the municipalities for installation. SLF information was sent out to each legislator and showed to be a good primer for discussion. They received an NACD grant for Urban Agricultural project in Allentown. Bill may partner with neighboring districts to visit shared legislators.

Montgomery – Jessica Buck reported that they will be hiring an Ag. tech this spring which would again bring them to full staff; they will also be going through an office remodel this summer. They held a developer’s workshop in February, an engineer’s workshop in March with neighboring districts and are planning a NOT workshop. They have chosen a college and County park for their SLF control projects this summer. They have four DGLVR projects under construction this Spring. Chapter 102 plan review submissions are currently slow and they have a Chapter 102 program listening session scheduled in April with Dean Auchenbach of Central Office DEP.

Northampton – Sharon Pletchan reported that they received their Act 48 renewal to offer continuing education workshops for teachers and they have an Agricultural workshop planned for October. The Envirothon is fully funded by sponsorships again this year, Legislators were invited to the event (2-3 typically attend the event). A SLF banding workshop is scheduled for April 15th; they are focusing on municipal and agricultural properties for assessment for control. A municipal trail project has been selected for control with PDA assistance, however an amendment to the SLF grant agreement is needed prior to moving forward with the project. An Ailanthus assessment training event is proposed with PDA and USDA on a County park this Spring to assist with getting all County and volunteer staff trained to be able to assist with future inventories. We hired a full-time Ag. Tech in January, Jim Clauser, previous Carbon CCD manager, he is in the process of being trained; we plan to assist NRCS and hope to receive the TA Assistance grant. There are projects scheduled to be approved next week which will allow us to spend all old LVR money and some DGR; we are working with another municipality and hope to have another DGR project approved to be able to have old DGR funds contracted by the deadline. Sharon expressed concerned for their EWP project as an update has not been provided and further property damage is occurring. Sharon also reported that they are working with their County to provide an additional Chapter 102 staff member this year to increase field presence.

Update from the PACD Engineering Assistance Program

Jeff Sholly provided an update on the projects they are working on; he stated that they are providing EQUIP assistance in Lancaster and have completed a project in Monroe. Jeff stressed concern for the finalization of the E&S Control Manual for Agricultural Operations in that NRCS is changing their soil loss calculations methods.

Spotted Lanternfly Presentation – presentation was provided by Evan Corondi over lunch, describing the Berks control program.

SCC Report

Johan Berger provided highlights from a written report:

- Previous 5-year agreement DGLVR funds are required to be contracted and entered into GIS by May 24, 2019 to be factored into FY19-20 allocation. The amount of previous agreement funds which are contracted and not spent will be deducted from the FY19-20 allocation, any unspent previous agreement funds will result in exclusion in FY19-20 allocation.
- Manure Management Planning for Youth Animal Projects Program booklet is now available.
- Highlighted change in Farm Bill, the Conservation Excellence Grant Program, may result in additional district funds for ACT and Nutrient Management, but we are very early in the budget process; most likely would be only available for the Chesapeake Bay.
- Discussed Governor Wolf's new infrastructure initiative, 'Restore Pennsylvania'; impact for districts is unknown at this time.
- A working draft was provided for the SCC Strategic Plan which provides the notes from listening sessions; a draft copy will be provided to districts for review. SCC's goal is to adopt a finalized plan in May.
- Additional SLF grant funds are still available to districts currently in the program.
- REAP tax credits are still available
- Discussed the new pilot program, PA Agricultural Conservation (PAC) Recognition Program. They are working with Lancaster, Chester, Adams and Franklin CCDs to test the process for a program roll-out in spring/summer 2019.

NRCS Report

Charlie Hanner provided highlights from his written 2018 annual and southeast region reports as well as a handout discussing updates to the Farm Bill:

- Reported that ToolKit does go to the Bay module
- Provided highlights of the new Farm Bill: programs are the same with more emphasis on wildlife and organic transition.
- EWP (14 sites are in the south east region) - procedures have changed but they have completed all engineering and have been in communication with the sponsors to move forward with property access agreements; it is possible for project reassessment if further damage has taken place. The Federal Easy Grant system will be used for distribution of the funds.
- EQIP – working towards obligating contracts by the end of the month; allocations are about the same as last year. It is important to get the information uploaded to express commitment and future need.
- WRE is in the application period until about mid-month, followed by field work.

- Boot Camp level I is underway, over 80% of the attendees are from districts. Boot Camp level II is scheduled for April 29 to May 3.
- The Soil Health training is already overbooked.
- Wetland training is being offered with US Army Corps of Engineers August 6-8 at Bald Eagle State Park
- NRCS continues to support the Envirothon events
- RCPP is renewed in the Farm Bill with changes; three funding pools have been reduced to two; unsure how it will work with other programs (i.e. EQIP, etc.). They will need new policies before the next grant round can open, hope to open the round later in the summer. Funding has increased.

DEP Report

Karen Books provided handouts including a general report and CDFAP Allocation Scenarios

- A few more State Envirothon volunteers are needed
- Manure Management plan writing workshop facilitator training is now available on the Clean Water Academy
- State Water Plan Committee is again ramping up, additional directors are still needed for the Lower Susquehanna and Potomac basins.
- Reviewed 5-year spudded well trends and discussed CDFAP Allocation Scenarios presented to SCC at the March 12, 2019 meeting from Armstrong and Lycoming CCDs. Since district's were not represented at the March meeting, they wanted to send them through the regions; the final decision would be made at the July meeting. Brenda informed the group that all but the south west region opposed the Armstrong scenario. No motion was taken.

Adjournment

It was moved by Ted Veresink and seconded by Bill McFadden to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:03PM