

PACD Education and Outreach Committee Meeting
Wyndham Garden State College, Boalsburg, PA
January 22, 2020 | 11:15a.m.-12:15p.m.

MINUTES

Acting Committee Chair Bob Robinson, Wyoming County Conservation District

Committee members in attendance: Cathy Yeakel, Bill Clouser, Kelly Stagen, Bob Robinson, Ted Veresink, Jody Groshek, Sharon Pletchan, Jack Hanish, Joan McCarty

Guests in attendance: Jonathan Burgess, Ray Gorman, Doug Deutsch, Matt Miller, Shannon Wehinger (notetaker)

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m. There was a quorum.

Welcome and Introductions

Acting chair Bob Robinson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of July 2019 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on July 17, 2019 were provided to members for review.

It was moved by Kelly Stagen and seconded by Cathy Yeakel to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on July 17, 2019. Motion carried.

PACD Updates

Farm Show

Kelly Stagen reported that she staffed the booth. She found the diversity of counties that she talked to be outstanding. Our booth had “Compost, recycle, or trash” cornhole to play to draw folks in and temporary tattoos were available as prizes. A lot of people talked to Kelly about CREP. Kelly encouraged everyone in the room to represent conservation districts and volunteer at the event. She had people coming up to ask her questions on stormwater, recycling, and what conservation districts do. She reported that Sunday was general public, and on Monday there were more producers coming to the booth.

PACD thanks NRCS for allowing us to co-locate with them again this year.



Shannon Wehinger also provided information on the conservation district booth at the PA Farm Show. 506 one-on-one contacts were made from 38 PA counties. Thirteen conservation districts sent representatives to staff the booth.

It was requested that this information be shared with districts to encourage support of sending volunteers in the future. A free parking pass is provided to volunteers.

Urban Wildlife Kits

The PA Game Commission offered conservation districts the opportunity to host Urban Wildlife Kits. Sixty-one districts agreed to host a kit. Kits are scheduled to be available at the staff conference in February.

DEP EE Grant

PACD wrote a \$3,000 DEP environmental education grant for template watershed signage. If funded, the grant will allow PACD to work with Franklin County Conservation District and a graphic designer to create three template signs in Microsoft Publisher. The topics will include buffers, macroinvertebrates, and fish structures. The templates will be available for districts to change as much as they'd like.

Eels in the Classroom

Cathy Yeakel gave a presentation on Bradford County Conservation District's American Eel Pilot Program. During an Annual Green Career Day for 8th graders, an eel was pulled out of the lake. This sparked Cathy's interest in finding out more about the eels. Dams have hurt the population. Eels promote native mussels and eat aquatic invasive species, so the district is interested in increasing their population. They want to make this program appropriate for all ages. For the project, Cathy obtained a Scientific Collectors Permit from PA Fish & Boat Commission and a fishing license. The largest cost was the tanks.

In 2018, the district got 30 eels. They used PVC pipes for the eels to hide in and used commercial food in the tanks. 73% died off because they didn't eat the commercial food. Two eels survived until they swam into the filter and died.

In May 2019, 15 eels were delivered. They feed them blood worms. They all survived. Now that they are bigger they eat trout worms. In fall/winter, they are less active and bury themselves under the rocks. They prefer more moving water and oxygen so they added that. They added a lid. They got aquarium rocks and sticks from the stream. The eels will be released to the Susquehanna River in June/July.

The district developed a curriculum that is currently at the Department of Education for review. The district wants to do it one more year to continue testing the process before releasing the information to schools.



Van Wagner is also doing this in his classroom. His school introduced the eels to the stream. Cathy played a song Van Wagner wrote about eels and shad that he hasn't released yet.

Public Service Announcements

Shannon Wehinger let the committee know that as part of PACD's strategic plan, PACD will create public service announcements in 2020.

New Business

Jack reported that the spotted lanternfly is moving into Luzerne County and will be in Bradford County soon. It is also in Pike County and Western PA.

Adjourn

It was moved by Ted Veresink and seconded by Kelly Stagen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

