

**PACD South Central Region Meeting
Zoom Webinar/Conference Call
March 24, 2020**

Welcome

Region Director John Akers welcomed everyone to the meeting with a quorum at 10:01 a.m.

In attendance: John Akers, PACD SC Region Director; Susan Marquart, NRCS; Sally Tengeres, Perry; Karl Brown, SCC; Katie Doster, Lebanon; Johan Berger, SCC; Dan Dunmire, Mifflin; Charlie Hanner, NRCS; Fred Fiscus, DEP; Chris Snyder, Juniata; Donna Fisher, Blair; Kristopher Abell, PA Invasive Species Council; Mark Kimmel, York; Seleen Shives, Fulton; Thomas Forsythe, Berks; Ana Turosky, PACD; Dave Stoner, Franklin; Jennifer Kovacs, Bedford; Chris Thompson, Lancaster; Matt Miller, PACD; Molly Burns, PACD; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD.

Date of Next Meeting

The group determined that the next meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on September 29, 2020, at the Cumberland County Conservation District.

Date of Meeting with Aneca Atkinson

Brenda Shambaugh explained that DEP Deputy Secretary for Water Programs Aneca Atkinson is interested in meeting with each region to encourage and improve communication. The group determined that the South Central Region would meet with Deputy Secretary Atkinson on October 14, 2020, at the PACD office.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

John Akers asked if there were any amendments to the minutes.

It was moved by Mark Kimmel and seconded by Donna Fisher to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019, minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Bylaws Change by Armstrong to Move to NW Region

Brenda Shambaugh explained that the Armstrong County Conservation District would like to move from the PACD South West region to the North West region, so they are in the same region for both PACD and DEP. This will require a change to the PACD Bylaws.

It was moved by Donna Fisher and seconded by Dave Stoner to support a PACD Bylaws change to move Armstrong County Conservation District to the North West Region.



Brenda asked to hold discussion on the invasive species funding policy until after the presentation from the PA Invasive Species Council, as the presentation will provide information pertinent to the motion.

PACD Report

Brenda provided verbal highlights from her written report:

- *Clean Water Academy* – PACD’s Nick Yeagy is working hard to add new learning to the Clean Water Academy on an on-going basis.
- *Multi-functional Riparian Buffer Sub-Grants* – Funding is available, and we continue to accept applications.
- *Ag Boot Camp* – Basic will take place in two parts: in-class via webinar April 6-9, 2020, and in the field September 9-11, 2020, at the Dauphin County Agriculture and Natural Resources Center. Dates for Level II are pending.
- *102/105 Technical Training* – Basic will take place June 16-19, 2020, and Topic-based will take place September 16-18, 2020. Both will take place at the Wyndham Garden State College.
- *Fluvial Geomorphology Training* – Postponed until the late fall. Dates to be determined.
- *Chesapeake Bay Education Office* – This office has been hosted by PACD for many years and has been discontinued by DEP due to funding cuts by EPA. As a result, PACD has discontinued the Clean Water Farm Award, the Manure Management Mini-grant Program, and hosting County Implementation Plans on our website. The 2020 Chesapeake Bay Program Conservation District and PA Agency Staff Meeting did take place through a different DEP grant. However, we are currently unsure about future meetings.
- *Leadership Development Program* – Brenda provided an update on Matt Miller’s program activities, including the recent regional director training sessions, which drew a total of 145 attendees.

Presentation from the PA Invasive Species Council (PISC)

Kristopher Abell, PISC Coordinator, provided a presentation on behalf of the Pennsylvania Invasive Species Council. The presentation provided information about PISC, an overview of Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA), how these might be coordinated in Pennsylvania, and examples of other, similar, coordinated activities.

Motion on Invasive Species Policy

Brenda provided some additional background on the proposed policy.

It was moved by Tom Forsythe and seconded by Dan Dunmire to support the following motion:

PACD encourages the PA Department of Agriculture and related agencies to develop a delegated agreement with conservation districts to provide funding and authority to battle invasive species.

Motion carried.

State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report

Executive Secretary Karl Brown provided the following report:

- Karl reviewed a document tracking new dates for training opportunities that have been rescheduled.
- He thanked districts for sharing their Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) with Karen Books. The SCC has been trying to assist districts with their questions as they work through this process.
- He reviewed a draft document defining the new Conservation District Advisory Committee.
- He discussed the Draft Conservation District Drone Policy.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report

Fred Fiscus provided the following report.

- Karen has received COOPs from all 66 districts and is updating the spreadsheet daily as updates come in.
- He discussed the Fiscal Year Budgeting Spreadsheet for conservation district staff, which was distributed via email prior to the meeting and displayed for those participating online. He reported that he provided this to the commission in January and was approved by the commission in March. It will take effect on July 1, 2020. Several districts have piloted the spreadsheet and had no major issues. Districts do not need to submit the CDFAP year-end Financial Statement.
- The SCC has established a Conservation District Financial Management Workgroup. The workgroup will oversee the development of an accounting and administrative procedures manual containing a standard chart of accounts and/or a comprehensive financial management system.
- Summer Kunkel the new Acting Director of the DEP Office of Water Resources Planning.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report

Charlie Hanner provided the following report:

- Offices are closed to the public and staff are taking turns to rotate into the offices to handle needed items. Remaining staff are teleworking. They are trying to support field work as much as possible. The Dauphin office has been closed completely for the time-being.
- Toolkit has been decommissioned and replaced by Conservation Desktop, which is cloud-supported. That package is up and running.
- He reviewed the PA NRCS Conservation Update for the SC region.
- The Soil Survey is undergoing update on an on-going basis.
- They have begun the process of assigning Ecological Sciences Job Approval Authority (ESJAA) to those for whom it applies.
- He reviewed the FY 2020 Farm Bill Programs Allocations.
- NRCS has extended the application deadline for the Conservation Stewardship Program to May 29, 2020.
- NRCS is accepting On-farm Conservation Innovation Trial proposals through May 11, 2020.
- NRCS is accepting Regional Conservation Partnership Program's (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA) proposals through May 18, 2020. Susan Marquart encouraged anyone who is interested to get in touch with her for more information.
- He reviewed the Pennsylvania Bulletin with Ecological Sciences and Planning Spring/Summer Training Opportunities.
- He encouraged anyone who needs to get in touch to reach out him via email or cell phone.

Regional Discussion

The group discussed what districts are doing about their tree sales. York will likely be cancelling theirs. Sally with Perry noted that they have about 100 orders and are moving forward with their tree sale on a curbside pick-up basis. Lancaster has delayed theirs until May 9 and will be implementing drive-up distribution similar to Perry.

Mark Kimmel reported that the York County Senior Level Envirothon is cancelled.

The group discussed plans for upcoming board meetings. Franklin will cancel theirs unless there is urgent business, in which case they will hold the meeting via conference call. Bedford said they are doing the same. Chris Thompson reported Lancaster would like to hold theirs remotely and he plans to follow up with Matt from PACD about potentially using the Zoom platform.

Conservation District Week

Brenda reported that conservation district week will most likely need to be postponed. It was originally going to take place the week of May 3-11, 2020, with the legislative day taking place that Wednesday. We would like districts to move forward with letters and other correspondence and plan other activities for the fall.

Adjourn

It was moved by Dave Stoner and seconded by Donna Fisher to adjourn the meeting at 11:59 a.m. Motion carried.