

**PACD South West Region
Video Conference
October 5, 2020**

Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call

Region Director Emil Bove welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

In attendance: Emil Bove, Westmoreland; Molly Burns, PACD; Shannon Wehinger, PACD; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Dana Drake, DEP; Mike Price, Beaver; Doug Beri, Indiana; Gregory Phillips, Westmoreland; Heather Manzo, Allegheny; Jeff Pflug, Beaver; Jeff Werner, NRCS; Jennifer Dann, Washington; Jonathan Burgess, Allegheny; Jill Whitcomb, DEP; Karen Books, DEP; Karl Brown, SCC; Lisa Snider, Greene; Mark Critz, PDA; Matt Miller, PACD; Ron Rohall, Westmoreland; Yuri Plowden, NRCS; Aileen Evan, DEP; Will Brogan, DEP SWRO; Todd Thornburg, Washington; John Dryzal, Centre.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on March 30, 2021.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on March 31, 2020, were provided for review.

It was moved by Mike Price and seconded by Doug Beri to approve the minutes of March 31, 2020, as presented. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report

Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh provided highlights from her written report.

- She provided a legislative update on the 2020-2021 Budget, Third Party Reviewer Legislation, Statewide Expedited Review Legislation, the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program, and a bill that changes the definition of pollution (SB 619).
- She provided an update on work to create and fund regional areas to battle invasive species.
- She noted that Chapter 105 modules are in development for the Clean Water Academy (CWA) and provided information on additional CWA training opportunities.
- Brenda discussed the Riparian Buffer Sub-grants available from PACD.
- Fluvial Geomorphology Training is set to take place virtually November 9, 10, 12, and 13.
- Matt Miller provided a Leadership Development update and urged staff and directors to participate in these learning opportunities. Visit www.paleadership.org for information.
- Agricultural Conservation Training (Boot Camp) took place in a modified format and is scheduled for April 12-16, 2021, for Basic and April 26-30, 2021, for Level II.
- Two Chapter 105 webinars were recently held. Other 102/105 Technical Training is in process and more information will be available soon.



- The Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series will take place virtually from 8:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. daily October 6-8, 2020.
- Danielle Kalp is still working closely with the Somerset office to provide engineering assistance for this region.

Regional Information Sharing

Westmoreland – Greg Phillips reported the district has held three remote engineer workshops that went very well and had excellent attendance. They can provide certification and charge \$20 for each attendee. The sessions have been very well received. They are working with municipalities on MS4. Westmoreland has a legislative program. Their board members and associate members meet with legislators, the district sends email campaigns, and they encourage partners to contact legislators in support of the district. The districts annual appeal begins this week. Their outdoor kitchen is ready for testing as a farm-to-table opportunity. They had their DGLVR program Quality Assurance Control (QAC) review. Their board is going to be looking at their budget. UGWF funds are reduced and they expect reduced plan review revenues.

Washington – Todd Thornburg reported employees have been working remotely and have been very patient and resilient in dealing with the situation. Their strategic plan is completed and ready for board review. The staff all provided input on the plan, which runs through 2024. They lost an E&S technician in late spring and hired a new technician virtually. They will now be training that individual. He thanked PACD and DEP for the Clean Water Academy for providing remote learning for new technicians. He will be working on a training plan for the new technician. They had their DGLVR QAC review, as well, and he appreciated that feedback.

Indiana – Doug Beri reported they are not in their new building yet due to setbacks from COVID-19 and are hoping to be able to move in later this fall. They are working in the office on a rotating schedule. Everyone works at home or in the field with one or two days in the office. They are holding virtual Envirothons. They are conducting some of their grant activities virtually using videos and other methods. They are still completing field work and have one more DGLVR project to finish up. They are expecting reduced permit review fees, but their projected budget should be balanced barring other major reductions. They held an in-person legislative tour with social distancing and masks at the end of August.

Greene – Lisa Snider reported the board approved their fourth year of Greene County's Reinvestment in Agriculture: Cost Share Enhancement Program (GRACE), which is funded by Act 13 and the district. They put in a good number of BMPs through that program and are working with almost 100 new farmers. They are finishing up some large DGLVR projects and have others starting. Everything else is business as usual. They are all back in the office.

Centre – John Dryzal reported they were able to complete their strategic plan update. They held their large stakeholder meeting prior to COVID-19 and were able to continue planning remotely. The board adopted the updated plan in August. They have two new initiatives. One is invasive species and the other is stormwater management. They completed a streambank stabilization project and are awaiting the Growing Greener announcements to start on some additional projects. They have a project with some barnyard and other BMPs in-process. On October 16,

they are holding their annual legislative breakfast. They have changed to a larger venue to allow for social distancing and capacity guidelines. They are going to be developing their Bay County Action Plan (CAP). They have been back in the office full-time since June.

Beaver – Jeff Pflug reported they are working with DEP to reclaim the Chapter 102 delegation. They are revamping and updating all their delegations and the district operations in general, including implementing quality and organization systems to increase and improve communication and organization throughout the district. Education is taking place virtually. They have been working in the office since May, but the office is only open to the public by appointment and with social distancing.

Allegheny – Heather Manzo reported they have pivoted to an online permit application system, which is working well. Their business has not slowed. Expedited permit review has been a great boon for them. They are working with an excellent consultant to complete a new strategic plan to create resiliency and ensure activities are in line with the mission. They are trying to budget for next year given the reduction in UGWF funding, which was not ideal. They are planning two budgets for the next year; one assuming flat funding and another that assumes a 25% reduction. They are doing several virtual educational projects, including an upcoming drinking water series. They had three new directors this year and two long-standing member terms are expiring. They hope to be hiring a new resource conservationist. They are working to improve their diversity and inclusion. They are going to survey the regulated community in the spring and fall to get an idea of what is coming up in the next six months, so they can better forecast staff workload and budgeting.

State Conservation Commission Report

Executive Secretary Karl Brown provided the following highlights from his written report:

- The district director appointment process is underway. Karl urged districts to speak to chief clerks and county commissioners about what vacancies they have and what they are looking for in directors to help with the selection.
- The new budgeting spreadsheet is due September 30. Contact Karen Books with questions.
- District audits are due to Karen Books December 31.
- Policies on drone utilization and appointing former district employees as directors or associate directors are out for a 45-day public comment period.
- The SCC is working to consider distribution of CDFAP funds earlier. Brenda urged everyone to get their quarterly reports to the SCC, so they can get funds out as quickly as possible.
- DGLVR advance funding is out to districts.
- The DGLVR program completed 19 quality assurance visits.
- Environmentally sensitive maintenance (ESM) training is available remotely and in-person.
- Nutrient management regulations may be updated.
- Districts should check that nutrient management specialist certifications are not expiring.
- Conservation Excellence Grants were expanded to Franklin and Cumberland Counties.
- He discussed REAP program changes.
- Karl encouraged districts to have a remote connection available for fall and winter district meetings, so DEP field representatives and others can participate.

PA Department of Environmental Protection Report

Jill Whitcomb provided highlights from her written report:

- She reviewed the recent DEP reorganization. Jill now oversees the conservation district section, the watershed support section, and a new ag compliance and inspection section. The conservation district field representatives will continue to work out of the regions but will now report to Jill at central office. She will continue to work with the SCC on the nutrient management program. She is working to be as consistent as possible across the state.
- Jill provided an update on Nutrient and Manure Management Delegation Agreement Budget Amendments, Chesapeake Bay Technician and Engineer Specialist/Assistant Budget Amendments, CDFAP UGWF Allocation Worksheets, and ACT Applications.
- She is working to fill open positions as quickly as possible given the current hiring freeze.
- Jill's contact information is: jiwhitcomb@pa.gov | 717.783.5205
- A handout was included in the packet showing all the available training modules on the Clean Water Academy and Jill encouraged everyone to take advantage of this resource.

Dana Drake provided the following report:

- The Southwest Region Office staff will continue to help fill in for the field representative position as much as they can. She encouraged districts to continue to let Aileen Evans know their board meeting schedules so they can continue to participate.
- DEP is under a hiring freeze, but the Southwest has been granted exceptions for three positions. One is a new permits chief with the goal of having two permitting sections, one for 102 and one for 105. They also hope to add a new engineer to the permitting side and an engineer to the CRI section, which will report to Aileen. The engineer will provide engineering guidance and support to districts, similar to that which Darl used to provide.
- There is a virtual roundtable on November 6.
- The ePermitting go-live date is still November. There will likely be an update/reboot to the Chapter 105 ePermitting, as well.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Report

Jeff Werner provided highlights from the written report:

- He highlighted the NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, which was active in the 1950's and amended in 2000. He noted there are several different dam projects in different stages including 15 in western PA.
- He provided an update on the National Water Quality Initiative, Financial Assistance Programs, and Easement Programs for FY 2020.
- He provided information on program sign-up for FY 2021 and noted that EQIP round one applications are due by October 16.
- He provided an update on the RCPP program and encouraged districts to contact program coordinator Susan Marquart at Susan.Marquart@pa.nrcs.gov with any questions or want to talk about the program.
- He provided an update on NRCS regional office status. They are open and working on a rotational basis but are closed to the public. They are maintaining social distancing, conducting field visits, and working with producers in the field.

Yuri Plowden provide the following report:

- She addressed updates to the soil survey.

- She announced they have a new soil scientist in the region, Kefeni Kejela
- She will look to set up an urban soil survey update with interested districts in the region

PA Department of Agriculture Report

Mark Critz providing the following report:

- He thanked everyone for the work they are doing and confirmed the Department strongly supports their efforts.
- They are currently working under the 5/12 budget which ends at the end of November.
- The time between the election and November 30 will likely be very busy. He urged everyone to be prepared.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mike Price and seconded by Todd Thornburg to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.