

**PACD South Central Region Meeting Minutes
Cumberland County Conservation District, Carlisle, PA
April 8, 2022**

Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call

Due to Interim Region Director Sonia Wasco's absence, Brenda Shambaugh called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Virtual and In-person Participants: Adam McClain, Adams; John Akers, Bedford; Jennifer Lentz Kovacs, Bedford; Donna Fisher, Blair; Carl Goshorn, Cumberland; Sam Worley, Franklin; David Stoner, Franklin; Chris Snyder, Juniata; Chris Thompson, Lancaster; Randall Leisure, Lebanon; Jeff Hill, York; Jeff Sholly, PACD TAG; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Kelly Stagen, PACD President; Karl Brown, SCC; Karen Books, DEP; Yuri Plowden, NRCS; Dan Ludwig, NRCS.

Region Director Election

No nominations were received for the SC Region Director position.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in person, if possible, on October 5, 2022 at the Cumberland County Conservation District.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided for review

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2021 minutes was made by Donna Fisher and seconded by Chris Snyder. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report:

Brenda provided verbal highlights from her written report:

- *Conservation District Week* – Brenda encouraged all districts to participate and to contact their legislators using the templates that were provided
- *Invasive Species* – Brenda announced that the Governor's office has proposed a statewide PRISM Program that would provide funding on a regional level. PACD developed an Op/Ed to solicit support from the public. Piper encouraged everyone to speak with their legislators, as the Program will be heavily reliant on conservation districts. Piper thanked Brenda for her contributions and expressed appreciation for a very active Invasive Species Council. She noted that a "ground up" vs "top down" approach, will be taken, broken out by PACD



regions, and they will soon be looking for someone to take the lead. Further discussion will take place at the Fall region meeting

- *U.S. Department of Forestry Grant* – PACD has received a grant for a pilot program in northwest PA that is currently going through the budget process. Amount and date TBD
- *Ag Plan Reimbursement* – PACD was recently awarded a \$500,000 grant through DEP to create a mini-grant program with a 20% for the development of manure management, nutrient management, and Ag E&S plans
- *Clean Water Academy* – Brenda encouraged districts to contact her or Nick Yeagy to request other training opportunities. She announced the winners in the annual contest for most-viewed webinars were Lancaster County Conservation District (District) and Jacob Kennedy (Individual – formerly an intern, now a PACD TAG staff member)
- *Ag Boot Camp* – Basic and Level II trainings are scheduled for April 2022, and Intro to Conservation Planning will be held in Fall of 2022
- *Non-point Source Pollution Prevention* – Brenda announced that there are 60 projects underway, with a total of \$103,000 awarded through this mini-grant program
- *102-105 Technical Training* – Brenda announced that the virtual technical training will take place March 29-31, 2022, with an in-person field component taking place May 3-5, 2022
- *Section 319 Virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting* – Registration is open for the meeting, which will take place virtually May 18-19, 2022. To register, go to <https://conta.cc/35aMsgK>
- *Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series* – Brenda announced that registration will open in August for the webinar series taking place virtually October 5-7, 2022 at no cost to districts
- *Leadership Development* – The Hybrid Staff Conference was held in February with over 200 virtual and in-person attendees. The conference included the 2nd Annual Conservation District Video Awards. Director Training workshops were held in-person and virtually in March. Planning is underway for a Spring webinar series. For more information, contact Matt Miller or go to www.paleadership.org
- *Conservation Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach Program* – The application deadline for the 2022 CREP mini-grant program has been extended to April 8, 2022. Brenda advised that Water Words That Work is currently working on Phase Two of the CREP marketing campaign. The updated Landowner Guide to Buffer Success is available through Holly Miller or at creppa.org
- *Legislative* – Brenda expressed appreciation to all 66 conservation districts for preparing their 2021 Highlights Pages, which were distributed to PA House and Senate members, PACD partners and the Governor’s office. An Ad Hoc Committee was formed with the goal of developing a comprehensive and realistic plan for legislative outreach and education. Brenda encouraged districts to participate in the monthly PACD Legislative Program and personally meet with House and Senate members. Brenda is monitoring other legislation, as outlined in the report, and previously discussed
- *Three-Year PACD Dues Schedule* – Brenda opened the floor to discussion about the new Dues Schedule. She provided information to explain the rationale for the proposed increases and advised that the Executive Council will vote on the recommended dues schedule in July 2022. It was noted that dues increases are the same amount across all districts and are no longer based on population

- *PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference* – The Joint Annual Conference will be held July 20-21, 2022, in Harrisburg. This will be an in-person event with an option to attend the executive Council meeting virtually

Regional Information Sharing

Each district participating in the meeting shared information on their activities for the last 6 months along with their priorities moving forward.

- *Adams* – Working with Watershed Alliance of Adams County to distribute nearly 10,000 trees to residents. Hope to offer again in the Fall. Tire recycling event will be held in May. Currently updating municipal MOU to be more comprehensive. Adams County Commissioners recognized Adams County Conservation District’s 75-year anniversary. Other events commemorating the anniversary will be held throughout 2022.
- *Bedford* – The focus during Conservation Week and through the end of April will be on environmental education, followed by Envirothon. Gratitude was expressed to PACD for providing wildlife kits. Received applications for approximately \$2.7M, with \$500,000 received for implementation of three ag projects. Working closely with CAP, CEG, and NRCS. Bedford County CD has subcontracted a retired farmer to complete field inspections. The CD is currently fully staffed and the recycling center is now open.
- *Blair* – Having lost three of nine staff members, Blair County CD is currently under-staffed. This is the first season to have in-person programs at Nature Works Park; trail counters indicate that 12,000 people have been through in the past year. Donna reported that having a full-time educator has been tremendous. Four stream restoration projects are expected in June. Blair County CD will receive the first round of CAP funding \$166,000 this Fall.
- *Cumberland* – Carl reported that Cumberland County CD is accepting applications for two interns and one ag technician position. In the CEG Program, they have over \$1M on Ag BMPs, most of which will be completed in 2022: two manure facilities, four roofed heavy use pads, three farmers participating in multi-species cover crop over 300 acres. This year’s tree sale brought 426 customers, with 10,700 trees sold. Carl reported difficulties in finding seedlings locally, which resulted in shipping costs of \$1,000.
- *Franklin* – Spent over \$1M on Ag BMPs in 2021. This year’s estimate is \$1.6M in projects. BMP Verification Program subcontracted with RC&D. The 102 Workshop is currently underway, E&S is busy with large warehouse, residential subdivision & solar farm projects. QA/QC and Audit have been completed. Envirothon, tree sale and tree planting are coming up. On solar projects, 700 acres currently, with another 1,100 acres pending with DEP expected to begin this summer. An additional 1,000 acres are anticipated.
- *Juniata* – Chris reported that Juniata County CD is currently not fully staffed. The E&S Program has exploded, with the first pre-construction meeting for a 210-acre solar farm scheduled for next week. Another 400+ acre solar farm expected in May. Enviro Camp is upcoming in June and is already funded for 2023. April will mark the 10th year of offering electronic recycling, with tire recycling being offered again in September.
- *Lancaster* – Chris reported that staff retention has been an issue and that over the past 15 months one third of the staff (12 positions) have been replaced due to compensation. As a result, Lancaster County CD has begun evaluating programs. Despite being “a hit to our mission,” Chris stated that they had to drop the 105 Program in February due to funding. They currently have six open positions and will be dropping two bay tech or nutrient

management positions, seeking to find the best path forward. On a more positive note, two pilot projects are underway: first, a manure injection project with a goal of 11,000 acres annually and building another no-till planter. Second, development of a BMP Verification Program to offer farmers a discount on stormwater costs if plans have been implemented. Staff has met with legislators and the Lancaster Builders Association, with a positive response, great feedback and encouraging support.

- *Lebanon* – Invitations are going out to legislators for an Open House. Summer Ag Preservation Celebration to be held this summer. A well-attended rain barrel workshop was held and Beef Field Days, which includes a beef operation tour, is underway. Tire collection will be held next week and one of the largest tree sales was completed, with 130 orders and \$27,000 in sales. Free sticky bands and spotted lantern fly traps were distributed. A newly hired, part-time CAP technician is picking up BMPs to put into Practice Keeper. A low-volume road project is coming up for bank stabilization, and work is underway to develop a resolution to support more funding for farmland preservation.
- *York* – Jeff reported a successful tree sale with 666 orders, despite fulfillment and shipping issues. The Board approved the PCSM Delegation Agreement, and Jeff reported that E&S plan reviews have doubled in the past month. Currently there is a financial assistant position open. No formal legislative outreach is underway currently, but the Education Outreach Coordinator was invited to speak at the York County Federated Sportsman's Banquet, which had high attendance and good local legislative representation. A Clay Shoot will be held again this Fall.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report (Handout)

Karen Books provided the following highlights from her report:

- Technical Engineer and Watershed Specialist contracts will be out in the next couple of weeks
- Rounds will be open this spring for Growing Greener and 319 grants
- The Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Annual Stakeholder's Meeting will take place May 18-19, 2022, and Karen strongly encouraged anyone with a 319 grant to participate in training open to Watershed Specialists and Managers, accessible through the PACD website. More information will be available at the Meeting regarding additional responsibilities. Karen invited Districts to present questions and concerns to her so she can pass them on to DE
- EPA is doing Region Three Animal Agriculture Assessment
- Information has gone out to 105 districts; districts are encouraged to submit comments through the RA system
- Chapter 102 E-Permit system now includes amendments for earth disturbance
- KEYS Program now allows conservation districts to view 105 permits
- PAG-O1 went live March 1st, and training is available on the Clean Water Academy
- The eighth round of meetings on the State Water Plan have been completed, with the 9th round taking place in April
- Chesapeake Bay office is working with partners on BMP verification efforts
- Volunteers are needed for the state Envirothon. Volunteers should be able to get free State Police Criminal, Child Abuse and FBI clearances online
- Conservation district staff were encouraged to complete pre-requisite training prior to Basic Training in May. There will be a field component this year

- Interviews are underway for the SE Regional Office Compliance Specialist position

State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report (Handout)

Karl Brown provided the following highlights from his report:

- Financial interest statements are due May 1st
- Ninety-two percent of Director appointments are in
- On PRISM & state funding, Karl encouraged all to continue to educate on concept and funding
- Dirt and Gravel Roads – Stream crossing policy, standard and manual are being updated; third round of quality assurance visits are starting
- Conservation Excellence Grants - \$10M has been committed to Districts
- The application process for the REAP Tax Credit has closed, with 347 applications received and \$14M in tax credits requested
- Karl provided a fact sheet on the AgriLink Program for low-interest loans
- On nutrient management – they are reviewing the five-year agreement to bring before the Commission for approval in May and working through the E-Grants system to transition beginning in July
- Eighteen states have had positive tests for the high-pathogen Avian Influenza, and Karl encouraged diligence in biosecurity when visiting farms
- Penn State is conducting an Ag BMP survey
- Discussions continue regarding the formation of a conservation district in Philadelphia

Natural Resource Conservation Service

Dan highlighted the following from the NRCS written report:

- A Cover Crop Initiative was rolled out and piloted in 11 states. PA contracted for \$1M, with over \$500,000 contracted in the SC region alone. Bedford led the effort with \$376,000 and 8,600 acres, followed by Lancaster and Fulton, with 4,000 and 720 acres respectively
- A successful week of Boot Camp is wrapping up
- Boot Camp II will take place late April, and plans are being made for Introduction to Planning in November
- Staff is busy with rankings and writing plans to support potential projects
- USDA General rolled out an Urban Ag Initiative and payment rates are being adjusted for small-scale producers
- A virtual State Technical Committee meeting will be held on April 21, 2022, at 1:00 pm

Sam Worley encouraged everyone to carefully review candidates and vote in the upcoming primary election to support conservation programs.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Carl Goshorn and seconded by Randy Leisure. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.