

**PACD South Central Region Meeting Minutes
Cumberland County Conservation District, Carlisle, PA
October 5, 2022**

Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call

Interim South Central Region Director Sonia Wasco called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. with a quorum present.

Virtual and in-person participants: Adam McClain, Adams; John Akers, Bedford; Jennifer Kovacs, Bedford; Donna Fisher, Blair; Carl Goshorn, Cumberland; Jaci Kerstetter, DEP; Eric Naguski, Dauphin; David Stoner, Franklin; Chris Snyder, Juniata; Sonia Wasco, Lancaster; Chris Thompson, Lancaster; Katie Doster, Lebanon; Randall Leisure, Lebanon; Trevor Weaver, Mifflin; Jeff Hill, York; Charlie Hanner, NRCS; Jeff Sholly, PACD; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Karl Brown, SCC; Kelly Stagen, PACD President.

Region Director Election

There were no volunteers to fill the role of SC region director. Sonia Wasco will continue to serve as interim region director until a permanent replacement can be found.

Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on March 21, 2023, at the Cumberland County Conservation District.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided for review

It was moved by Donna Fisher and seconded by Sally Tengeres to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2022 meeting. Motion carried.

PACD Business and Report:

Executive Director, Brenda Shambaugh provided highlights from her written report:

- *Cambria County Conservation District Motion* – Brenda discussed the Cambria County Conservation District motion for PACD to hire a consultant to do a salary comparison study. The completion of the study would provide valuable data to present to legislators on why the increased funding is needed going forward.

Chris Thompson made a motion to approve the motion made by the Cambria County Conservation District as currently written. Adam McClain seconded the motion. Motion carried.



- Statewide PACD Meetings – The PACD Executive Board has decided to hold the 2023 Winter Meeting virtually. She mentioned the PACD Executive Council meeting is tentatively set to take place on January 26, 2023 with committees to take place virtually between January 1, and January 20, 2023. The PACD Executive Board has asked all regions to discuss the 2023 Joint Annual Conference format & location.
- Education & Outreach – In June 2021, PACD developed a shared messaging program that districts can use to supplement their social media posts (Facebook & Instagram) and have a shared message across the state.
- Ag Boot Camp – Basic Boot Camp was held April 4-8 2022 with 32 attendees, and Level II Boot Camp was held April 25-29 2022 with 27 attendees at the Keystone Conference Center at Fort Indiantown Gap in Annville, PA. Intro to Conservation Planning will be held November 1-3 2022.
- Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Mini-Grant Program – The 2021-2022 Nonpoint Source Pollution Mini-grant round concluded in May 2022. There were eighty-six projects completed by 49 conservation districts reaching over 13,530 adults. The mini-grants totaled \$146,863. The 2022-2023 mini-grant round opened in January and thirty-three projects from twenty-five districts were funded for \$60,000.
- Clean Water Academy – The Clean Water Academy has had approx. 26,000 course completions with conservation districts accounting for roughly half of this figure with around 14,000 completions collectively. Conservation districts also have 410 training program completions. PACD continues to work with DEP to develop eLearning courses for the Clean Water Academy focusing on Chapter 102 and 105 topics.
- PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program – PACD was awarded a \$500,000 Growing Greener grant from DEP to offer an Ag Plan Reimbursement Program to conservation districts from 2022-2024. A 20% match will be required from the landowner/operator or the conservation district. Eligible plans include Manure Management (Ch. 91), Nutrient Management (Ch. 83), and Ag E&S (Ch. 102).
- Riparian Buffer Sub-grants – PACD has two Riparian buffer programs available. The Multi-functional Riparian Buffer Sub-grant for Conservation Districts program still has approximately \$40,000 available with no match requirement. A total of 40 grants implementing over 126 acres of buffers have been funded through this program since 2018. PACD also offers the Riparian Buffer Sub-grant for Conservation Districts program, funded by a C2P2 grant from DCNR. Multi-functional buffers are preferred, but conventional buffers are also eligible. This program has \$95,000 available and a 50/50 match is required.
- Lawn Conversion Grant – Brenda announced PACD will be receiving a \$100,000 C2P2 grant from DCNR to offer a Lawn Conversion Sub-grant Program for Conservation Districts. The goal of the program is to offer lawn conversion training to conservation districts and distribute funding to lawn conversion projects across PA.
- Invasive Species – An iMapInvasives training was offered to conservation district staff on June 28 2022. There is a recording of the training available. Please contact Holly Miller if interested. PACD was also awarded a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant from the USDA Forest Service to offer a PRISM pilot program in northwestern PA.

- 102/105 Technical Training – Chapter 102/105 Basic Technical Training will take place in-person with a field component May 23-26 2023 at the Red Lion Harrisburg-Hershey in Harrisburg, PA.
- Section 319 Virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting – The Section 319 virtual Watershed Planning and Implementation Meeting took place via zoom May 18-19, 2022. Details for the 2023 session are in development.
- Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series – The Conservation District Watershed Specialist Webinar Series is underway October 5-7, 2022, at no cost to districts.
- Leadership Development – The 2022 Management Summit was held September 13-15 at the Wyndham State College with over 50 management staff from across the state in attendance. A Fall Leadership Webinar Series is scheduled for late October and early November and Letters of Intent for the 2022-2023 Strategic Planning Grants program are being accepted through December 2, 2022.
- Legislative Activity – In addition to the salary survey findings for the next state budget request, PACD is planning a change to the format for the highlights page. This year's highlights will focus on thanking legislators and sharing what districts have been able to accomplish with the additional state budget funding. PACD will also be developing and distributing a white paper explaining the conservation district history and mission, the programs administered by districts, and the need to partner with related agencies.
- PACD Engineering Assistance/TAG Program – Brenda asked if there is interest in expanding the TAG program. The general consensus from the district representatives attending the meeting was that there would be a benefit to expanding the TAG program.

Regional Information Sharing

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

- *Adams* Held their 75th Anniversary picnic in July. Reviewing their annual reports back to 1947 was a worthwhile activity. The Board is reviewing taking on the ACAP delegation. They are concerned about having the staff capacity to deliver the program, and the public perception if the district is unable to spend all of the funds.
- *Bedford* Successful completion of four projects partnering with WPC and Trout Unlimited, and second stream restoration design completed by PFBC. Have completed 2 HUAs using NRCS engineering and CAP funds. Also, working with their CAP Coordinator, Land Studies, on BMP Verification.
- *Blair* Offered Cover Crop Incentive Program based on Cumberland's template. Enrolled 5,700 acres from 15 selected applicants due to funding limitations. Working on three streambank projects with multiple funding sources. Will share a time lapse video from one project when available. Offering additional programs at Nature Works Park and seeing an increase in attendance over 2021 as a result.
- *Cumberland* Bill Chain planted a three acre experimental cover crop before corn and soybeans were harvested to demonstrate using a six foot drone to broadcast the seed. Bill

plans to offer this service full time for a fee in 2023, after retiring from the CBF. Using \$1.2 million in CEG funds on a roofed heavy use area, stacking pads and three larger projects set to be completed by June of 2023.

- *Dauphin* Partnering with municipality and using CAP funds to complete a large three phase floodplain restoration project with a cost of \$1.5 million. Setting up county wide municipal MS4 agreements to encourage municipalities to buy into water resource enhancement projects which will assist municipalities in meeting their MS4 reduction requirement goals and enable projects to be completed at a lower cost by using CAP funds. Also, training new staff and working on a countywide buffer initiative.
- *Franklin* The Chapter 102 program has been busy with warehouse, solar panel and residential construction projects. Hired a new Watershed Specialist in May and have a new Ag Technician starting soon. Currently working to spend \$1 Million in CEG and \$1 Million in CAP funds, with an additional \$6 Million in ACAP being offered. Hired two part time staff to verify BMPs on previous Bay projects. CAP Coordinator and RC&D received a \$500,000 NFWF grant to hire technicians to complete BMP Verification work in Adams, Cumberland and Franklin counties.
- *Juniata* Down two technicians and has received no applications. Working on keeping up with program requirements. Partnering with neighboring counties as needed for Chapter 102. Reviewing ACAP requirements and considering delivery options with limited staff.
- *Lancaster* Business Manger of 40 years retiring. Increasing staff salaries in an effort to increase staff retention and fill vacancies. Adding 2 Ag Engineers, Grants Specialist, and a fiscal position, a challenge to build capacity fast enough to spend the CAP and ACAP funding. Need long term planning. Used County ARPA funds to purchase 8 more Sonds stream monitors bringing the total to 16. Proposing to contract with municipalities to verify required landowner plans, qualifying them to pay a reduced stormwater fee.
- *Lebanon* Celebrated 20,000 acres preserved in 30 years under their Farmland Preservation Program. There were 100 attendees and various dignitaries, including Doug Wolfgang and the county commissioners. Training newer ag technicians. Have completed or are working on 6 manure storages, walkway, heavy use area, and three stream projects using CAP funding.
- *Mifflin* Working on 4 stream restoration projects. Used 319 funding to complete a heavy use area and have been monitoring for 9 years and hoping for a tenth. Their BMP Verification intern logged numerous BMPs over the summer. Will need additional staff to accomplish workload but is excited about the opportunity.
- *Perry* Used CAP funds to complete a waterway project, purchase an Esch 5612 no till drill, and offer a cover crop incentive program (based on Cumberland's) with 3218 acres enrolled on 22 applications. Working with NRCS to design and have 5 projects shovel ready by 2023. BMP Verification intern entered 396 acres of riparian buffers identified and verified in three watersheds. Will need additional staff to deliver larger CAP projects and take on the ACAP delegation. Held annual stream clean up, Tire War (430 tires) and planning FLP 10,000 acre celebration.
- *York* The annual Envirothon fundraiser, Sporting Clays Event, had 190 participants. Planning for their 75th anniversary in 2023. EPA was in county for a watershed walk and for a stream

sampling demonstration. USGS offered information on analyzing data sets and how to utilize information.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Report

Jaci Kerstetter provided the following notes on her written report:

- The new Chapter 102 inspection report is out, and districts are expected to begin using it by October 3, 2022.
- The NPDES PG 13 draft permit goes out October 1, 2022, and districts are asked to comment.
- The new field representative for the DEP Southeast region will be on board in a few weeks. Jaci explained some ways field representatives can be of help to conservation districts.
- The Chesapeake Bay office has been re-organized and is now the Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Non-point Source Management.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Report (Handout)

Charlie Hanner provided the following report:

- They had a successful and well attended Ag Progress Days for 2022.
- USDA is investing nearly 18 million dollars in partner-driven, locally-led conservation in PA. The 17.8 million dollars was awarded through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).
- He reviewed how some of the FY 2022 Farm Bill money is broken down.
- He gave an update on some of the EWP/Watershed programs and projects going on.
- He reviewed some of the upcoming trainings and localized workshop meetings.
- There will be an annual Soil Survey refresh on September 30, 2022. There was a request to review soil classes not designated as prime farmland.

State Conservation Commission (SCC) Report (Handout)

Karl Brown provided the following notes on his written report:

- New director appointments are currently underway.
- Karl reviewed some changes in SCC personnel and noted he will retire at the end of this year.
- Eric Cromer is currently working on the ACAP funding paperwork and how best to administer it. ACAP is part of the Clean Streams Fund and all ACAP money must be committed by December 31, 2024, and that all money must be spent by December 31, 2026. ACAP money will be handled similar to that for DGLVR projects. The comment end date will be October 21, 2022.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m.