

MEETING MINUTES

PACD North East Region Meeting

9:00am - 1:45pm, March 30, 2006

Wyoming County Conservation District, Tunkhannock PA
Carriage Inn Restaurant

Attendance: Josh Longmore, Carl Urbanski, Rick Mader, Ed Zygmunt, Pete Snyder, Maryann Warren, George Gardner, Tom Helmacy, Bill Ord, Jim Garner, Charlotte Severcool, Harold Grow, Ginny Miner, Jim Clauser, Mark Sincavage, Paul Lohin, Ron Williams, Karl Dymond, Pete Tarby, Susan Marquart, Joseph Filanowski, Andrew Zemba, John Heinz, Ernie Keller, and Karl Brown.

Welcome, Introductions and Approval of Minutes: Bob Robinson called the meeting to order with the Pledge to the flag at 9:05am. He then welcomed all present with several introductions. Pete Snyder moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, September 27, 2005. Maryann Warren seconded, motion carried.

PACD President Remarks: Vic Cappucci was not present, he was off on business, but Bob Robinson was kind enough to fill in for him. Ron Williams brought a laminated newsprint article in for Vic from the Lancaster Farmer of an article with Vic's picture. Bob will pass on to Vic.

Wyoming County Presentation: Wyoming County Conservation District Manager Charlotte Severcool presented an overview/history of Wyoming County. Charlotte gave a short history of the county, and then an overview of the District and all of its programs. She also highlighted some of the new ecologic/conservation projects in the county. Charlotte advised that the District is working with the USF&WS, for a stream restoration project for the Bowmans and Tunkhannock Creeks. These projects are being funded by several appropriations made by Congressman Don Sherwood. Farmland Preservation and West Nile Virus programs are also being administered by WCCD.

CD Information Exchange: There was a discussion on permitting, and how long the process takes. Susquehanna Co.'s Jim Garner advised that they have test plots for a pilot program funded by a National Fish & Wildlife Federation grant to implement No-Till purchasing another No-Till seeder. He also mentioned that the fall cover crop is their main strategy for their CBP Trib strategy. Wyoming Co.'s Bob Robinson advised that his county was in the process of receiving a Super Walmart and all the controversy that has surrounded that project. Paul Lohin, Schulykill Co. CD advised that his county had the similar situation and their CD brought the Fish & Boat Commission with them, and shut the project down for various violations. They encourage all of their engineers/contractors to deal with Districts right from the very beginning of any project. Also have E&S people contact the engineers/contractors for pre-planning meeting. He also advised that when outside, or out of state, contractors are used, they over-design. They should be encouraged to deal with CD's from the very beginning of their projects.

Leadership Development Topic: Interactive CD Tool: Rick Mader gave a wonderful presentation of a new tool provided by the Leadership Development team. The cd touches on all aspects of any District and should be given to any new Director, Manager, or staff. The CD has a glossary of acronyms, explains Act 217, has Policies & Procedures, Employment Law and the Director Handbook, to name just a few of the topics covered. This appears to be an excellent tool for any District. Hopefully this will be able to grow with the Districts, as they grow. The Leadership Development Team is also hoping to be able to put it on PACD's website.

Nutrient Trading: Andy Zemba/John Heinz (DEP) - John Heinz and Andy Zemba, from DEP's Water Planning office, discussed the Department's new strategy to reduce non-point source pollution in a more cost-effective manner through a new concept called nutrient trading. Any operation with a permit to discharge pollutants into a waterway could earn credits for emitting less pollution than their permit allows. These credits could then be sold to other operators who fail to meet their discharge requirements. Credits may also be purchased from agricultural producers who agree to implement approved best management practices that reduce nutrient pollution at less cost than upgrading factories or sewage treatment plants. A pilot program has begun in a few Conservation Districts where the Districts act as an intermediary between permit holders and ag producers to help arrange the buying and selling of nutrient credits.

Pete Tarby (DEP): Pete gave a short report updating the group on several subjects. One of them was a revolving loan fund to be established for BMP projects. Districts are to have the money and establish the projects. Pete further explained that credits generated from these practices will be put toward paying back the BMP funds. The program fundamentals are still being worked on. Any CD's will to come forward by April 21st to sign contracts to be the "guinea pig" would be appreciated.

Susan Marquart (PACD): Susan advised that the 2007 Annual Meeting will be the 60th, and is scheduled to be held in the Northeast Region. She requested that 1 person from each of the counties (in the Region) volunteer to make a committee to plan the conference. Susan handed out papers to explain what will be expected, what needs to be planned: where, when, how many, what kind of alternate activities, etc. It'll take about a year to plan.

PDA Region 3 Update-Ron Williams (Dept of Ag): Ron gave an extensive report on many of the Department of Agriculture's programs. Ron said that his department has been very busy as of late with the new initiatives under Secretary Wolff- ways to increase profits for farming and Agri Businesses. Ron also introduced several CD's that he has for children's programs and school programs. He also advised that he has plans for preschool through 4th grade available.

Karl Brown (SCC): Karl gave a short report on the what the SCC has been up to. Most had been touched on by previous speakers, so Karl was kind enough not to repeat.

NRCS Update- Joseph Filanowski (NRCS): Joe reported that Robin Heard has taken a position as the next Director of Easement Programs in Washington D.C. as of April 2, 2006. As of then, there's no State Conservationist- Gary Smith will be the acting one until one is chosen. Joe touched on many of NRCS's programs and gave a short update on all. Wetland Reserve and WHIP are still accepting applications.

Karl Dymond (SCC): Karl gave a speedy report on his job change, updating everyone with handouts on: New Odor Management Plan Requirements. Act 38 of 2005. Karl went over the handout for us, and provided a copy of Act 38 of 2005, which he also went over with us.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40.