

Meeting Minutes
PACD
North East Region Meeting
9:00am – 1:50pm, October 19, 2007
DEP Northeast Regional Office, Wilkes Barre PA

Attendance: Susan Marquart, Irvil Kear, Susan Beecher, Linda Cioppa, Karen Ely, Mark Sincavage, Paul Lohin, Shane Kleiner, Richard Kemmann, Robert Muller, John Senio, Bob Herman, Jim Luce, Bob Robinson, Vic Cappucci, Charlotte Severcool, Jullee Chamberlain, Josh Longmore, Carl Urbanski, Tim Ference, Steve Urban, Jean Castrogiovanni, Kathy Shelly, Jim Garner, Tom Helmacy, Bill Ord, George Gardner, Abe Repine, Craig Derickson, Michele Ulmer, Karl Brown, and Lillian Theophanis.

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.

Voting Roll Call: Susan Marquart proceeded with the roll call of voting delegates. Carbon and Susquehanna Counties had no one present to vote. Bob Robinson handed out voting cards to the delegates present.

Mark Sincavage moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, April 20, 2007. Susan Beecher seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Election for Regionl Director: At this time, Bob Robinson turned the meeting over to Shane Kleiner for the election process. Shane opened the floor for nominations. Susan Beecher nominated Bob Robinson for Regional Director, seconded by Dr. Irvil Kear. John Senio moved to close the nomination process, seconded by Carl Urbanski. Bob Robinson was re-elected as Regional Director unanimously. All present thanked Bob for his continued work and dedication to PACD. Jim Garner thanked Bob for attending the Susquehanna County CD 60th Annual Banquet. Bob commented on how much he enjoyed the banquet, and their speakers.

PACD PAST PRESIDENT REMARKS: Vic Cappucci commented that he was pleased to be able to participate in the meeting as just a Conservation District Director. Vic reminded everyone to stay involved and participate with the growth within their counties.

Dr. Irvil Kear: Dr. Kear, Schuylkill Co. CD, 1st Vice President of PACD, advised that there is a Strategic Planning meeting scheduled for next month. Dr. Kear invites and appreciates all input and/or feedback for this meeting.

MaryAnne Warren: MaryAnne, Susquehanna County CD Commissioner Director, 2nd Vice President of PACD, was not present for the meeting as she had a scheduling conflict.

CD Information Exchange: There was much discussion on reimbursement amounts for E&S and how long it takes to get them. Mark Sincavage asked that PACD address the amount that E&S/NPDES technicians receive per county. Mark commented that there is no distinction between counties that process many permits, and counties that process only a limited number. The counties that are processing many permits need a more substantial amount of money to pay their technicians. Karl Brown commented that the CDFAP monies are distributed to manager first, then 1st technician, and finally to second technician, and only when CDFAP is increased will there be more money available to reimburse for 2nd technician. Many present commented that PACD should be more effective in assisting Districts to lobby for more money. Susan Marquart commented that all Districts should be in constant contact with their area legislators to keep the Districts in the forefront of the Legislators' minds for more funding. She commented that at the state level, money is very tight. Susan Beecher commented that she had recently read a newspaper article that was covering the continued difficulty with DEP enforcement. She commented that there appears to be little support for Conservation Districts as there is a back log and a lack of representatives. This appears to be a state-wide problem. Susan wanted to address this issue, not to disparage DEP, but to make it known that Districts can't continue to support it all.

Program 105 and Post Construction Storm water Management was also discussed at length. There was a strong sense that Conservation Districts are unwilling to accept these programs as there is no funding, and the Districts would not be able to afford to administer them, and that the Districts would also be unsupported by DEP if they were to accept them.

Josh Longmore wanted everyone to be aware that Reisa Andrews, past Director, had recently passed away, and that there is a memorial service scheduled for tomorrow, October 20, 2007.

Jim Garner asked if anyone else is seeing a problem with their Chief Clerk doing the nominating letters at the same time as the County Budget process? Several commented that there didn't seem to be a conflict specifically with the county's budget schedule – but that everyone does have some difficulty getting their Chief Clerk to process/send the letters.

Charlotte Severcool asked those present to discuss how much they are paying for their annual audit, and if those present were satisfied with their audits/auditing service.

White Paper “Working More Closely with your Municipal Governments” (Susan Beecher) Pike CD: Susan gave an informative powerpoint presentation on the White Paper for Conservation Districts. The presentation covered some of the nature and extent of conservation district involvement in local development and decision-making processes. This report, and all the work that continues to go into it – comments on the importance of improved conservation district coordination with local officials and potential advantages of stronger ties between the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), a land use planning resource agency for local governments, and conservation district programming. The PA Association of Township Supervisors commented in the report that they would like to see improved collaboration and function integration with conservation districts. Susan explained that this report makes a strong case for enhanced conservation district roles in water and land use planning and management at the local level. Susan gave several examples of how DCED was helping local governments and planning office: with mapping and GIS programming, free software and support to print and view maps, and continued instruction with updates and how to use the software. She also said that it calls for ordinance review and evaluation for all local governments, and recommends they update their comprehensive plans and language as many are severely outdated.

Karen Ely: Karen gave a powerpoint presentation on the Sunshine Act and the Right to Know Law. There were several examples of when meetings, such as D&GR QAB, should be advertised to comply with the Sunshine Law. There was discussion from many members on when/if they should advertise. Karen provided two handouts for Districts to refer to when in question.

Susan Marquart (PACD): Susan distributed handouts covering her PACD report. There were several points in her report covering the State Budget and Funding, Senate Bill 1020 – Act 217 Amendments (amendments to the Conservation District Law), Nutrient Trading, Committee Appointments, Awards, Winter Meeting scheduled for January 16 -18, 2008, and a New Format for July 2008 PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference. Susan also provided a handout – Dedicated Funding Fact Sheet. The topic of PACD pursuing a surcharge on all bought and sold fertilizer in PA to supplement the CDFAP, PACD wants this surcharge to be in addition to current state and county funding levels for conservation district activities, was discussed at length with many present stating their disagreement with this request. Many Districts explained that they do not, and will not, support this request. Susan asked that anyone that will not be supporting this request write to PACD expressing their decision, and with any possible other suggestions.

NRCS Update: Craig Derickson gave a short report covering; the start of the new fiscal year, with no federal budget in place, no formal action on the Farm Bill, new and old conservation practices. Craig thanked all Conservation Districts for their continued support. Craig also commented on comparisons of the budgets from 2005 to present stating that 2006 was a high mark budget with 2007 seeing an

approximate decrease of \$1 million and 2008 will probably see the same size decrease. Craig also explained that if there had been no flooding in 2006, that NRCS would have closed the year in a deficit. In closing, Craig addressed the cost share with Conservation Districts for the background/security checks. He said that starting in 2008, Conservation Districts will have to pay the cost of the security checks on their own as an operating expense for new hires.

Abe Repine: Abe gave a short informative report on the EWP sites throughout the region. Abe sited that about 1/3 of the projects are either completed or in the construction process. There will be a bid opening on November 18, 2007 for 18 more EWP projects. Almost all approved projects will be contracted and started by the end of the year. Some will have to wait for construction to begin after January 1, 2008 because of habitat concerns.

Karl Brown (SCC): Karl distributed handouts covering REAP and also did a powerpoint presentation on it. Some of the points covered were: That REAP is administered by PA State Conservation Commission, Credits granted by PA Department of Revenue, Tax credits of 25% to 75% available for SCC approved eligible projects, \$150,000 cap per eligible applicant, \$10 million in tax credits available in FY 2007-2008. Karl also addressed the new 5 year D&GR agreement. There will be a 6 month contract extension of the current agreement, and then the new one will be effected.

Bob Robinson (Regional Director): Bob, and those present, scheduled the next Northeast Regional meeting for April 11, 2008 to be held at DEP's NERO in Wilkes Barre.

Lillian Theophanus(Susquehanna Co. CD): Lillian gave a short report on RC&D and some of the many projects/programs that they administer.

Unfinished Business

Josh Longmore revisited the fertilizer surcharge issue. He wanted to know if a resolution from the meeting was needed to oppose it. After some discussion it was decided that a resolution was not necessary at this point, but any Districts opposing it were requested to let their position be known to PACD.

Paul Lohin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bob Herman. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50pm.