

**Meeting Minutes**  
**South West PACD Regional Meeting**  
**October 27, 2005**

**Meeting was called to order at 9:00am.**

Attendance sheet was circulated.

**In attendance:** Bill Slosky Washington County; Tolif Hunt, Western PA Conservancy; Gary Stokum, Washington County; Bob DeVenny, Allegheny County; John Hewitt, Washington County; Ed Feigel, Allegheny County; Dave Collura, Allegheny County; Karl Brown, PA SCC; Jim Resh, Indiana County; Robert Lockhart, Indiana County; Ronald Rohall, Westmoreland County; Tom Matticks, NRCS; Dan Griffith, Westmoreland County; Anita Foriska, Westmoreland County; Greg Phillips, Westmoreland County; Roy Houston, Westmoreland County; William Kotsenas, Westmoreland County; Chuck Kubasic, DEP Representative; Laura Hawkins, Conemaugh Valley Conservancy.

Introductions were made. Copies of the PACD Update were passed around by Bill Slosky.

Susan Marquart was not present. The agenda was changed to represent this.

**Election of PACD Regional Director:** This section of the meeting was chaired by Ron Rohall. Nominations were opened. Bill Slosky was nominated. Nominations were closed. **Bill Slosky was elected as Regional Director by majority vote.**

**State Conservation Commission Update:** Karl Brown: Karl handed out notes on the various programs and discussion items that he would cover.

- There will be an annual NMA meeting in February. Districts need to be sure that their NMA Specialist attend this meeting.
- The ACRE Initiative was discussed. There was lengthy discussion on the Agricultural Compliance Initiative Special Project Grant. Jim Resh asked what they are looking for with these grants. Karl stated that this could include education, outreach and compliance/enforcement. There is a meeting on the grants on November 10th. These Grants do not include Best Management Practice installation.
- Gary Stokum discussed DEP Regional office not having expertise with farming situations and what is best to fix problems on farms.
- Tom Matticks stated that NRCS is always willing to help farmers to voluntarily implement a Conservation Plan.
- Jim Resh discussed looking at this Grant on a regional basis.
- Karl stated that this is a pilot program to try to find what is best and an overall approach for a statewide program. Mark Dugan and Cedric Karper are in charge of the November 10th meeting to try to help Districts with proposals on this grant.

- There was a question as to whether anything had been heard on the County Growing Greener II money. Nothing known at this time.

Bill thanked Indiana County for joining the regional group.

Bill passed out a list of PACD Committees with explanations. Everyone was asked to look over these and decide which committees they could serve on.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service Update:** Tom Matticks:

- No-Till planting and the savings in the cost of fuel for the farmer by using this method. NRCS is looking at trying to sell No-Till to more of the producers they work with in the upcoming year.
- NRCS has been putting in Manure Storage systems for years but have not been pushing the manure management aspect of these. NRCS will be pushing this more in the upcoming year.
- USDA Programs were discussed. Tom discussed the problems getting contracts on the CREP program done with FSA.
- There have been 10 million dollars allocated in the EQIP program.
- There have been 21 million dollars in contracts with farmers in PA in all the USDA programs for this year. This is about the same as last year and the year before.
- Janet Mallot has been appointed State Resource Conservationist.

Conservation Boot Camp is scheduled for April 17th - 21st for Level 1, and May 8th - 12th for Level 2.

- The web soil survey site is up and running. It however, is still being worked on.

**PA Department of Agriculture Update:** John Scott: John was not present.

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in the South West PACD Region:**

Tolif Hunt:

- Tolif passed out material on the CREP program. He discussed the fact that CREP expires on December 31, 2007 with the current farm bill. We should look at this program as ending and try to get as much of the funding contracted now as possible.
- Discussed the Ohio River CREP signup as of September 2005. Tolif passed out handouts for this section of the report.
- Passed out a CREP practice and funding guide and asked for feedback on this from the Technical Staff. Discussed the funding changes made with CREP. The handout is meant to make these changes less confusing.
- Discussed the general process a landowner goes through from signup to contracting for CREP. Discussed the bog down with the contracting process for CREP.
- Discussed Western PA Conservancy's outreach efforts for CREP including brochures, 1-800 hotline, billboards, displays, workshops etc.... A lot of this outreach work is in the initial stages. Looking at trying to get more full time farmers enrolled in the program.

**Group Discussion:** There is a lot of animosity with this program within the farming community. It was pointed out the Glenn Ryder is the point of contact at DEP to raise concerns with the CREP Program.

**Bill Slosky:** We'll now go over the list of committees. PACD is looking at wanting these members to be permanent members.

**The following nominations were made:**

Operations Committee:

- David Collura, Allegheny County

Conservation Committee:

- Ed Feigel, Allegheny County
- Bill Slosky, Washington County
- Tony Quadro, Westmoreland County
- Jim Resh, Indiana County

Education and Outreach Committee:

- Mark Jackson, Westmoreland County
- Karen Jurkovic, Westmoreland County

Legislative Committee:

- Ronald Rohall, Westmoreland County

District Employees Committee:

- Greg Phillips, Westmoreland County
- Gary Stokum, Washington County

Ways and Means Committee:

- {NONE}

Since Susan Marquart was not present, Bill Slosky went over the PACD Update that was handed out at the beginning of the meeting. Comments and or questions were asked for.

**Comment on Growing Greener II:** Don't count on the County Commissioners coming to the Districts on the county funding. Approach them on this.

**Discussion on Fund Raising:** The idea of a PACD magazine was discussed. None of the Counties represented at the meeting were in favor of the concept of a PACD magazine.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

**Ron Rohall** handed out material on "Learning Today Leading Tomorrow" from the Leadership Development Committee. Asking for more signups for the classes.

**Gary Stokum** asked if anyone has been dealing with coal bed methane problems.

GROUP: Discussed different ways that various counties are dealing with the problem both in education and E&S Staff. Discussed that the methane is being associated with coal instead of with gas. Oil & Gas in DEP has oversight of this.

**Chuck Kubasik** suggested that this be placed on the next DEP Roundtable agenda.

**Bill Slosky** thanked everyone for coming and Westmoreland Conservation District for providing the meeting room.

**Meeting Adjourned 11:55 am.**