

PACD District Employees Committee
Ramada Conference Center, State College, PA
July 20, 2009

Welcome

Chairwoman Sandy Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 3:25 pm. It was determined that a quorum was present.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Sandy Thompson, McKean
Larry Kehl, Berks
Lynn Sandieson, Crawford
Deb Wilson, Jefferson
Wayne Sweitzer, York
Gary Stokum, Washington
Bob Sweitzer, Centre
Rich Kadwill, Montgomery

Others in Attendance

Brenda Shambaugh, PACD
Govt. Relations/Policy
Specialist
Hannah Smith, PACD
Education Specialist
Molly Burns, PACD
Administrative Assistant
(Recorder)
Laura Anderson, Wyoming

Maryruth Wagner, Columbia
Chris Snyder, Juniata
Ernie Tarner, Franklin
Mark Davidson, Lycoming
Seleen Shives, Fulton
Chuck Wertz, Lebanon
Bob Robinson, Wyoming
Linda Mackey, PA DEP
Shane Kleiner, DEP

Minutes of Previous Meeting – January 21, 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting of January 21, 2009, were provided to committee members for review.

It was moved by Deb Wilson and seconded by Lynn Sandieson to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2009, meeting. Motion carried.

Erosion and Sedimentation Training Project Update

It was reported that Barb Bashore with DEP had planned a training session in August, but this has been postponed due to the lack of a state budget. Committee members suggested that this issue be included in the agenda for the upcoming meeting with John Hines with DEP.

It was noted that Oil and Gas training does not apply to every district, so if it is going to be included in the training, perhaps it could be placed at the end, so that individuals who do not need that particular training can choose to leave.

Funding for Watershed Specialists

Sandy Thompson reported that Bruce Golden with WPCAMR surveyed conservation district watershed specialists and received responses from 38 conservation districts. Hannah Smith, PACD Education Specialist, would like to work with an advisory committee of watershed specialists (one from each PACD region) to help develop the fact sheet. Hannah provided a sample of a nutrient management brochure that was developed with DEP, and asked that any districts who have examples of a particularly successful project to please send her some information on the project.

It was suggested that the fact sheet should include the big numbers (number of projects completed, organizations provided with assistance, value of projects completed). Hannah responded that she would like to highlight a few successful projects, and then include statewide data to show the overall success of their efforts.

Request from NCDEA for Information for a National District Employee Database

At the request of NACD, PACD staff received employee contact information from 35 conservation districts to submit to NACD at their request. Sandy thanked everyone who submitted their information.

Meeting with John Hines, Deputy Secretary of Water Management, DEP

PACD and conservation district representatives recently met with John Hines with DEP. John made it clear that he is very interested in strengthening communication between the districts and DEP. He would like to put together regular meetings with conservation district representatives so that districts can communicate concerns, suggestions, and ideas to the Department.

The first of these meetings has been scheduled on August 12, 2009 at the RCSOB in Harrisburg, PA. participating in the meeting will be John Hines, the SCC Conservation District Managers Advisory Committee, and the PACD region directors. John also said that he plans to visit as many of the conservation districts as he can in the coming months.

During the original meeting, districts did discuss the permit by rule issue, as well as marcellus shale. John indicated that he will share the input from conservation districts with others in the Department.

In addition, DEP plans to meet with conservation districts to go over the new Chapter 102 regulations in detail, and hear comments from the districts, prior to the formal comment period.

The committee recommends that the following items be included on the agenda:

- 1) Working with DEP to develop E&S training specifically geared toward conservation district employees.
- 2) Providing written guidelines to address inconsistency within DEP (between different regions, between staff members within a particular region, between region offices and the state office). It is important that everyone understand and follow the letter of the regulation, and not what they would like it to be.

Representative to the National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA)

The current representative to the NCDEA, Jim Garner, is not interested in continuing. Pennsylvania needs a representative and an alternate to represent Pennsylvania. There are four meetings per year.

Canon Envirothon

The Canon Envirothon will be returning to Pennsylvania in 2012. District managers and board members are encouraged to allow their employees to participate.

Budget Update

Brenda Shambaugh thanked conservation district staff and board members who have met with their elected officials over the last month. Even though no increases are expected in this year's budget, the amount that conservation districts will be cut in this budget will be significantly less than it would have been had these meetings and calls not taken place.

Berks Conservation District Update

Larry Kehl reported that the Berks County Commissioners have cut all funding for the conservation district, and will likely be letting go all of the staff. However, the Berks Conservation District board is planning to move forward, hire or rehire staff, and continue the district's work as an independent entity.

Adjournment

It was moved by Deb Wilson and seconded by Lynn Sandieson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:18 pm.