

**PACD Front Page eNewsletter • March 4, 2010**



The following items are new or considered priority. To view previous items, click [here](#).

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## **PACD Information**

### **PACD Participates in EPA Chesapeake Bay Update**

PACD participated in a webinar hosted by EPA to provide an update on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. EPA continues to move forward with their plans to implement a Baywide TMDL. They reiterated their intent to allow states flexibility, but requiring 2 year milestone reports. They believe these two year updates will keep states on track reducing nutrients going into the Bay.

On a related note, NACD held a conference call with all six Bay State conservation district associations to discuss their respective state programs to clean up the Bay. NACD offered to assist any state in their endeavors. Most states agreed that adequate funding is the biggest challenge for conservation district technical assistance.

**Contact:** [Brenda Shambaugh](#)

### **Severance Tax Meeting**

PACD again hosted a meeting with a number of local government and environmental groups to coordinate a legislative effort toward passage of a severance tax including a designated amount of 3% going toward the conservation district fund. To see a copy of the PACD fact sheet on a severance tax, please follow the link below. Using the Governor's projected amounts, 3% will generate approximately \$5.358 million in the next fiscal year. By fiscal year 2014-1015, as the severance tax revenue grows, approximately \$14.3 million would be generated for the fund. The groups collectively agreed to work together on this issue.

**Link:** [Severance Tax Fact Sheet](#)

**Contact:** [Brenda Shambaugh](#)

### **Highlights of Conservation District Activities in 2009**

All 253 state Representatives and Senators have received the pertinent pages for their legislative district of the newly produced Highlights of Conservation District Activities in 2009. Each conservation district can make copies of their page from the PACD website and use it when meeting with their elected leaders. The document was produced as a tool to showcase conservation district activities and projects.

**Link:** [Highlights](#)

**Contact:** [Brenda Shambaugh](#)

### **PACD Capitol Day Resources Available Online**

PACD has developed a number of resources to assist conservation districts with their legislative activities. These resources include PACD's Appropriation Request for Conservation Districts, Severance Tax Fact Sheet, and Dirt and Gravel Road

Fact Sheet. Click [here](#) to view these and other legislative resources.

**Contact:** [Brenda Shambaugh](#)

### **PACD Announces Open Application Period for the 2010-11 Educational Mini-grant Program for Conservation Districts**

Grants up to \$2,000 are awarded for educational projects that address Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) Prevention strategies. This funding allows conservation districts to implement adult educational programs to increase local awareness of water quality issues, promote the theme "We All Live Downstream," and encourage citizen participation in activities to improve water quality in local watersheds. Funding for this program is made possible through a grant from the PA DEP under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the US EPA. **The deadline for applications is April 1, 2010.**

**Link:** [Online Application](#)

**Contact:** [Hannah Smith](#) (717) 238-7223

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Fly Camp I**

The PA Ag Ombudsman Program, Penn State Univ., Penn State Extension, and Cornell University are offering a Fly Camp on Thursday, April 22 from 8:30 - noon. This conference is for anyone who is interested in knowing more about fly ID, sources, how to minimize flies, and is willing to respond to fly complaints. Also, if you attended Fly Camp (Feb. '09), but would like a "refresher".

Follow the link below for additional details.

**Link:** [Fly Camp Info](#)

**Contact:** [Shelly Dehoff](#) or [Beth Futrick](#)

#### **PACD Capitol Day Quickly Approaching**

**MARCH 16, 2010** is the date conservation district representatives from across the Commonwealth will converge in the PA Capitol to meet with their state legislators. Conservation Districts are responsible for making their own appointments with legislators and staff. PACD will provide printed materials for distribution. Plan on joining us for this important legislative event! To RSVP for your conservation district, please contact [Brenda Shambaugh](#).

**Link:** [Agenda](#)

#### **PACD Region Meetings**

Please plan to attend your PACD Region Meeting. Click on the link for your region to view meeting details.

March 8	South Central	Walker Grange Hall, Mexico	<a href="#">Letter</a>   <a href="#">Agenda</a>
March 9 <b>(date change)</b>	North West	McKean Conservation District	<a href="#">Meeting Info</a>
March 19	South East	Family Heritage Restaurant, Franconia	<a href="#">Meeting Info</a>
March 25	North Central	DEP Williamsport	
April 6	South West	Westmoreland Conservation District	<a href="#">Meeting Info</a>
April 9	North East	DEP Wilkes-Barre	<a href="#">Meeting Info</a>

### **Legislative Update**

#### **Budget Hearings Continue**

The Senate Appropriations Committee held a hearing this week on the annual DEP budget. Secretary Hanger fielded questions concerning a variety of DEP issues, including questions about conservation district funding. As with the House DEP Appropriations hearing, the Secretary agreed with Senators praising conservation districts and the work districts

accomplish. Secretary Hanger again justified the decision to remove conservation district from the oil and gas erosion and sediment permit process, stating that conservation districts are already overburdened with too much work and too little funds. He said DEP employees are already going to the drill sites, and could review/inspect E & S plans. He went on to state the change is a cost-effective way to accomplish the same goals and relieve conservation districts of an overwhelming workload, saving them time and money.

## Environmental Programs Brief

### **NRCS Publishes Final Rules for TSPs and HFRP**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently published final rules on two programs of interest to conservation districts: the Technical Service Provider (TSP) Program and the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP).

The final TSP rule was issued in a February 12, 2010 Federal Register notice. Under this program, conservation district staff can be reimbursed for providing technical services directly to producers or to NRCS, assuming they meet the requirements for eligibility. This rule implements the language in the 2008 Farm Bill designed to make the TSP Program more widely available to the public and amends a rule first issued in 2004. If you have any problems participating in the TSP, please bring them to NACD's attention.

The final rule for the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) came into effect on February 10, 2010. The amended provisions of HFRP include changes to the duration, type and funding allocation of program agreements. Some of the substantive changes include:

- \* clarification that NRCS personnel or agency representatives have the right of access to the easement area;
- \* priority is given to projects with a wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered in a State Wildlife Action Plan;
- \* a new requirement that only native plants are planted for sequestering carbon;
- \* a return to baseline conditions at the end of the contract period was added for clarification.

The HFRP is designed to assist landowners on a voluntary basis in restoring, enhancing and protecting forestland resources on private lands through easements, contracts and agreements. Additional information is available [here](#).

## Other News

### **Counting Down to 2010 Stewardship Week**

Stewardship Week—slated for April 25 – May 2, 2010—is just around the corner. Now is the time to order your *Conservation Habitats = Healthy Habitats* education materials from the [NACD Marketplace](#).

NACD has many products available to help you celebrate Stewardship Week in your community. A litany, program blank and program inserts are available in the [Community Outreach](#) section of the Marketplace, and a church leaders' guide is available on [NACD's website](#). Public service announcements, news releases and more can be found [here](#). Finally, check out the habitat education information and the Educators' Guide, online materials samples and more by clicking [here](#).

Orders must be placed by April 5 to guarantee delivery in time for Stewardship Week. Products are now available in bulk quantities; click [here](#) to view bulk availability and discounts. NACD is eager to celebrate the 55th Anniversary of Stewardship Week with conservation districts across the nation.