

PACD Executive Council Meeting
Ramada Conference Center, State College, PA
January 23, 2009

Call to Order

PACD President Larry Kehl called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Roll Call

PACD Secretary Drew Gilchrist called the roll. There were 39 districts present, which constituted a quorum.

Reading of the Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

PACD Secretary Drew Gilchrist presented the minutes of the previous meeting.

Ken Meck, PACD Treasurer and Chairman of the PACD Ways and Means Committee provided a correction. Under the *PACD Ways and Means Committee Report*, and *Motions and Resolutions from the PACD Ways and Means Committee*, the PACD Capital Fund goal should be \$35,000, not \$30,000.

It was moved by Drew Gilchrist (Montgomery) and seconded by Bob Robinson (Wyoming) to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2008 meeting as amended. Motion carried.

President's Report

PACD President Larry Kehl provided the following report:

- Larry Kehl and Pat Sueck will be representing Pennsylvania at the NACD meeting in New Orleans, February 1-4, 2009.
- Larry commented that the financial crisis that is facing many conservation districts is of primary concern to PACD and the districts.
- Larry reported that he attended the Chesapeake Bay Cover Crop Enhancement Conference held December 18-19, 2008. We are still trying to determine exactly what is causing the pollution in the bay. The money that Congress has spent on the bay is not creating the change that was hoped for. Leachate may be a bigger problem than we once thought. There is concern that because of the lack of progress, Congress will be less likely to continue to invest in assisting the bay.
- The Patriot News in **Harrisburg ran an editorial referring to districts as the 'soil conservation service' and misrepresenting** the role of districts in the permitting process. Larry reported that he worked with Brenda Shambaugh to draft a response to that letter, and that the paper did publish the response letter.

Executive Director's Report

PACD Executive Director Susan Marquart provided a written report on the activities of the PACD Harrisburg staff over the last six months.

Susan then provided a report on the benefits of association staff. She reported that, in November, the North Carolina Association of Conservation Districts invited Susan, along with Executive Directors from Tennessee and Georgia, to speak about what staff can do for an association.

Susan highlighted many of the benefits that association staff provide in Pennsylvania, including: government relations, including working with officials, cabinet secretaries, **and the Governor's** office; providing funding proposals and other materials and information for conservation

districts to use in working with their legislators; working with the conservation partnership, and other associations, groups, and coalitions that are working toward common goals; developing partnerships and relationships to help further the goals of the conservation districts; keeping districts informed about what is happening in Harrisburg; representing conservation districts on various committees, etc.; working to ensure that we have leadership development opportunities for conservation districts; working with region directors to keep conservation districts informed; creating draft policies, press releases, and public relations materials; providing the PACD website and Front Page; and much more.

NACD Director's Report

NACD Director Pat Sueck was unavailable to present her report. NACD Alternate Director Larry Kehl reported that the NACD headquarters building renovation project is going well. NACD staff are already working to build relationships with the new administration. Larry also reported that the NACD Annual Meeting will be held in New Orleans February 1-4, 2009.

Treasurer's Report

PACD Treasurer Ken Meck **presented the Treasurer's Report for approval.**

It was moved by Blaine Smith (Blair) and seconded by Jack Tressler (Somerset) to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Auditor's Report

John Muir, PACD Auditor from Sager, Swisher and Company, **presented the Auditor's Report.**

John noted that, during the audit, the auditors found no problems and were able to offer what is called a 'clean opinion.' He then reviewed the entire report in detail.

It was move by Cheryl Brobst (Columbia) and seconded by Jacquelyn Rouse (Sullivan) to approve the auditor's report. Motion carried.

NRCS Report

Craig Derickson, State Conservationist for Pennsylvania, provided the following report:

- Craig thanked us for the opportunity to speak to attendees, and thanked the districts for their hard work. He said that he is proud of the relationship between the members of the conservation partnership.
- Regarding computer network issues, Craig reported that NRCS has much more clarity on what is happening with the switch-over. Craig will be working with districts on the network to reach a cost-sharing agreement that will work for both parties.
- Regarding audit activities, Craig reported that they have cancelled contracts where producers were off-schedule.
- Craig asked the districts to help encourage farmers to implement their conservation plans and to participate in NRCS programs.
- Craig reported that RC&D Councils are continuing to work on energy and biofuels, and cited the **Pocono RC&D's** work with the Fuel in Schools initiative. He noted that PA has special opportunities in these areas due to warm season grass and forested lands.
- Craig reminded everyone that soil surveys for PA are available in electronic format on the web at www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov. He stated that it is a credit to PA that we have 100% of the soil surveys available online, which many states do not.
- Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill money is available for funding contracts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Conservation Innovation Grants Program has been announced at the

national level, and NRCS will be considering statewide grant opportunities for the program. Proposals would need to demonstrate innovative conservation technology.

- Craig noted that NRCS will be working with the Bureau of Forestry on forest lands through the EQIP program.

Reports of PACD Committees

PACD Education and Outreach Committee Report

Interim Committee Chairman Ken Meck presented the following report:

- The committee received a report on the Environmental Educators Conference, which took place on November 19, 2008.
- The committee is going to examine what districts are charging for educational programs, and what fee schedules are.
- The committee was provided with an update on the Marketing Conservation Districts project.
- MWEE grants will be available to conservation districts through PACD.

PACD Legislative Committee Report

Committee Chairman Ron Rohall presented the following report:

- The committee met, and had a quorum, on January 22, 2009.
- The committee received a state legislative update. There are thirty-five new legislators and directors need to make an effort to get to know their new legislators.
- The committee received a federal legislative update. An NACD Action Alert regarding the economic stimulus package went out to the districts.
- The committee approved a severance tax policy, which will be presented for approval later in the meeting.
- PACD Capitol Day will take place on March 16, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza in Harrisburg.
- The committee discussed putting together a budget subcommittee, but did not feel that they could improve on the work that is being done by Brenda and Susan.
- Ron would like to work with PACD to put together a database that includes at least one district representative to represent each state legislator. This would complement the current database of sixty-six PACD state legislative contacts.
- Ron noted that the new administration is going to bring changes in DC. In President **Obama's inauguration address, he said that we need to look at what we are doing and ask "Is it working?"** If it is working, then we should keep it. If it is not, then we need to change it, or eliminate it. Ron said that we need to demonstrate to the state and federal legislators that conservation district programs are working, and show them how and why they are working.

PACD Conservation Committee Report

Committee Chairman Bob Ritchey reported that the committee approved policy on three issues: carbon trading; global climate change; and E&S and NPDES permitting. These will be brought forward for approval by the Council later in the meeting.

PACD Ways and Means Committee Report

Committee Chairman Kenneth Meck provided the following report:

- There was a correction made to the minutes of the previous meeting to reflect the correct Capital Fund goal.

- A tenant has been secured for the back office on the second floor at PACD headquarters. The new realtor is trying a new approach to renting out space in the building.
- The committee discussed PACD dues. PACD staff will be drafting three different scenarios reflecting a 0-3% increase in dues for the 2009/2010 fiscal year. These scenarios will be reviewed by the committee, so that they can make a recommendation for the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.
- The committee wants to reexamine the dues structure, which is currently determined by county classification.
- The committee will be providing a written response to concerns from districts about PACDs efforts to raise unrestricted revenue.

PACD District Employees Committee Report

Committee Chairwoman Sandy Thompson presented the following report:

- **Committee members are still working on developing an "E&S 101" session and handbook, but the project is moving slowly, so the session will not be presented during this year's Joint Annual Conference.** Instead a CPESC review course will be offered, with the option of taking the test the next day.
- The National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) is requesting help in putting together an electronic list of conservation district employees. PACD will be contacting districts via e-mail to request this information. PACD staff will compile this information and submit it.
- The committee discussed the uncertainty of Watershed Specialist funding after 2010. The committee is working on a strategy to promote Watershed Specialists and obtain additional funding. We will be looking to put together a fact sheet highlighting accomplishments thus far, which districts can use as a tool to obtain funding.
- The committee discussed non-monetary incentives to help retain district employees.
- The committee discussed the importance of conservation district directors making personal contact with legislators regarding the importance of district programs, and funding for district programs and staff.
- PACD looked into obtaining Microsoft charity license for districts, but recipients must be 501c3 organizations.

PACD Operations Committee Report

Committee Chairwoman Irvil Kear presented the following report:

- The committee reviewed a severance tax policy from the PACD Legislative Committee.
- The committee reviewed policies on carbon trading, global climate change, and E&S and NPDES permitting from the PACD Conservation Committee.
- The PACD Bylaws Review Subcommittee provided a report, and presented proposed bylaws changes, which were reviewed by the committee.
- The committee received an update on the 2009 PACD/SCC Joint Annual Conference planning.
- The PACD Long Range Planning Subcommittee has met a number of times to look at the long-term viability of conservation districts and PACD. The members of the subcommittee are Mike Lovegreen with Bradford CD, Bob Ritchey with Cambria CD, Glenn Seidel with Berks CD, and Michele Ulmer with Pike CD.

Report from PACD Auxiliary

PACD Auxiliary President Sharon Sweitzer provided the following report:

- The PACD Auxiliary met on January 22, 2009, for a luncheon meeting.
- They discussed the college scholarship fundraiser, and will be doing something a bit different this year by raffling off a Toshiba flat screen TV.
- Raffle tickets will be on sale during PACD Capitol Day in March, and during the Joint Annual Conference in July.
- The Auxiliary will once again be asking districts to send a \$30 donation to the Auxiliary to help offset the cost of the TV.
- Sharon reminded attendees that information on the Auxiliary scholarship is on the PACD website.
- She thanked districts for support of the raffle.
- Four members of the PACD Auxiliary are planning to attend the NACD Annual Meeting in New Orleans to work with the National Auxiliary.
- The **theme of this year's National Auxiliary quilt is soils.** The PA patch is displayed on the PACD website.
- Sharon thanked the conservation districts for their support of the Auxiliary.

Old and Unfinished Business

No old or unfinished business was presented.

Resolutions from the PACD Education and Outreach Committee

No resolutions were presented.

Resolutions from the PACD Legislative Committee

PACD Legislative Committee Chairman Ron Rohall presented one policy:

It was moved by Ron Rohall (Westmoreland) and seconded by Sandy Thompson (McKean) to approve the following policy:

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) supports the adoption of a severance tax in Pennsylvania that includes a percentage of the proceeds dedicated toward natural resource protection activities and dedicated funding for conservation districts.

It was moved by Bruce Chase and seconded by Ron Rohall to add "and that some portion of that percentage be dedicated to the conservation district in the county in which it originated." Motion carried with 19 in favor and 15 opposed.

The original motion as amended was put to the vote. Motion carried.

Resolutions from the PACD Conservation Committee

PACD Conservation Committee Chairman Bob Ritchey presented three policies:

1. Carbon Trading Policy

It was moved by Bob Ritchey (Cambria) and seconded by Don Koontz (Mercer) to approve the following policy:

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) supports programs to reduce carbon emissions, slow global warming, and consequently help the environment. PACD supports carbon trading to reduce total carbon emissions into the atmosphere. PACD supports conservation districts' efforts to become involved in local efforts to sequester carbon and provide technical assistance to help generate carbon credits.

PACD supports conservation district activities to become further involved in the carbon trading market that fits with their local priorities. PACD will also pursue options available as an aggregator of carbon credits and provider of other services to assist and support conservation districts in carbon trading.

Motion carried.

2. Global Climate Change Policy

It was moved by Bob Ritchey (Cambria) and seconded by Don Bashore (Juniata) to approve the following policy:

To protect and restore ecosystems impacted by global climate change and to avoid potentially high costs later to restore or replace them, PACD supports climate change legislation and policy that encourages greenhouse gas emission reductions. PACD also recommends investing the necessary funds to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and market-based payments for emissions offsets. Specifically, PACD supports:

- *Reduction of energy inputs required to produce and transport agricultural products.*
- ***Strong and immediate action to reduce emissions. This includes a verifiable "cap and trade system" that will begin to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 3 percent per year over the next decade, with a goal of an 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.***
- *Policies that encourage conservation through increased fuel economy standards, investment in public transportation, implementation of smart growth strategies that reduce sprawl, establish a national renewable electricity standard, and transition to clean coal and renewable energy technologies, green building technology and energy efficiency.*

It was moved by Lynn Sandieson (Crawford) and seconded by Deb Wilson (Jefferson) to remove reference to clean coal. Motion failed 14 in favor and 17 opposed.

*It was moved by Ron Rohall (Westmoreland) and seconded by Jack Tressler (Somerset) to **amend the motion to make the policy read and "... , technologies that promote cleaner burning coal, and transition to renewable energy technologies, green building..."** Motion carried.*

3. E&S and NPDES Permitting Policy

It was moved by Bob Ritchey (Cambria) and seconded by Don Koontz (Mercer) to approve the following policy:

Any Erosion and Sedimentation or NPDES permit must include technical plan review(s) by the conservation district, where delegated, prior to permit issuance.

Motion carried.

Resolutions from the PACD Ways and Means Committee

No resolutions were presented.

Resolutions from the PACD District Employees Committee

No resolutions were presented.

First Consideration of Changes to PACD Bylaws

PACD Bylaws Review Subcommittee Chairwoman Irvil Kear provided a written report on behalf of the subcommittee. She reported that the subcommittee met on December 11, 2008, and January 8, 2009, in response to the following resolution made during PACD Executive Council Annual Meeting on July 30, 2008:

“To recommend that the Council reform the Bylaws Committee in order to consider changing the bylaws to return to the committees being a committee as a whole with any member present being entitled to vote.”

Irvil reported that the subcommittee considered this and other potential changes to the PACD bylaws and came up with six recommended bylaws changes.

1. The definition of Executive Board should be changed from seven to six, to reflect the reduction in the number of PACD Region Directors. This was missed when the regions were changed in the previous revisions of the Bylaws.
2. The reference to Article V should be changed to Article VI to reflect the previous revision to the Bylaws. This was missed when the previous revisions were made to the Bylaws.
3. A new item should be added to the Bylaws to address the audit committee. At present, the audit committee is a temporary committee appointed on an annual basis by the Executive Board.
4. The section on Committee Membership should not be changed to eliminate the provision for committee membership with no restriction as to who can vote at a committee meeting. The Subcommittee felt that the problem with obtaining a quorum was not a problem with the Bylaws, but a problem with interest in and commitment to committee participation. In that regard, the following recommendations are made to help increase participation in PACD Committees and ensure that a committee has a quorum for each meeting:
 - a. The Committee Chairperson should utilize the PACD committee listserves or other methods of communication to encourage members to attend the meeting.
 - b. The Committee Chairperson should engage the committee members in the development of the agenda for the committee meeting to help ensure that there is interest in the topics to be discussed.
 - c. Committee members are encouraged to dialogue with each other to help invigorate interaction and discussion, and to increase interest among committee members.
 - d. Committee members are encouraged to take responsibility to network with other PACD
 - e. members to help identify and recruit potential committee members.
 - f. Committees should periodically review their responsibilities as outlined in the PACD Bylaws and make recommendations to the Operations Committee if they feel that these responsibilities should be updated or amended.
5. The section on Committee Membership should be changed to reduce the maximum number of staff committee members, and director/associate director committee members, from seven to six. This reflects the number of PACD regions, which was previously reduced from seven to six.
6. The section on Committee Membership should be changed to reduce the number of missed meetings required to for potential committee member removal to two, since that is the number of meetings required per year and that we have recently been holding.

7. A new section should be added to the Bylaws to clearly specify to members and others that the PACD, as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, will not engage in political intervention.
8. A new section should be added to the Bylaws that provides a Statement of Core Values.

It was moved by Irvil Kear (Schuykill) and seconded by Bob Robinson (Wyoming) to approve the proposed changes to the PACD bylaws. Motion carried.

Susan noted that these changes will be distributed to members for review at least sixty days prior to the PACD Executive Council Annual Meeting in July of 2009. The changes will be up for final approval at that meeting.

Marketing Conservation Districts Project

It was reported that the Marketing Conservation Districts project is moving forward, and that a survey is being distributed so that PACD members and members of the conservation community can vote on the new logo and slogan. In response to a request from the floor, Susan Marquart reported that the deadline for completing the survey will be extended until the end of February, to give districts time to review the options at their board meetings.

Adjournment

It was moved by Bob Robinson (Wyoming) and seconded by LeeRoy Vatter (Indiana) that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 am.