



# Session Notes

## “Building a Strong & Effective PACD”

Strategic Planning Work Session

Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts

August 10 & 11, 2009

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### **The Best Thing We Will Accomplish as an Association in the Next Five Years:**

- PACD will have an understanding of the challenges facing districts and will respond with effective programs to meet this new direction
- Serve the local districts with supportive help and lobby for statewide programs and funding
- Will achieve adequate dedicated funding for conservation districts
- Will become a unified strong organization respected throughout PA
- Strengthen our position as a key stakeholder in PA as far as conservation
- Have all districts involved in PACD and NACD
- Be able to communication the purpose of conservation and how it can make the community better
- Knowledgeable leadership in conservation concepts and conservation districts and their needs for all counties in the Commonwealth
- Develop an ability to respond quickly and effectively to needs of districts
- Make citizens of PA aware of conservation districts role/relevance as conservation stewards in their county / region
- Support district priorities and help research and secure funding
- Single strong voice of districts
- Effectively adapt to environmental challenges – current and future within economic realities
- Positive partnering and aggressive communications with all districts
- All conservation districts will take ownership of PACD
- Greater name recognition within the community
- Increase training opportunities for directors and staff in cooperation with other members of the conservation partnership
- Dedicated funding for both PACD and districts to be equal partners with DEP, Commission, AG
- PACD will be a powerful and effective voice in PA legislatively, within state agencies and NGOs
- Establish a strong harmony with districts, SCC, PACD, and all agencies to become a strong organization
- Sustainability in dedicated funding

### **Effective Organizations:**

See PowerPoint Slides

### **Associations & Their Importance:**

See PowerPoint Slides

### **PACD Living Timeline: (1990 to Present)**

#### **1949**

PACD Formed

## **1988**

Farmland Preservation

## **1990 - 1995**

Lange – NACD Treasurer

Full Time Executive Director position

Legislative days started

Mini-grants program

NACD Leader in number of district dues paid and amount

News & Notes

ACT-6

1<sup>st</sup> female president

## **1995 – 2000**

Legislature increased CDFAP

Leadership development

1 Million to PDA for CDFA Agriculture technicians

Dirt and gravel program

Funding for watershed specialists

## **2000 – 2005**

Regional Directors added

Growing Greener Program & Engineering Assistance Program

Addition of TAG

Purchase of 25 N. Front Street property and building

Staff expansion – added a secretary

## **2005 – 2009**

Legislative liaison position

Revamped by-laws

Committee restructuring

CDFAP – non-lapse funding

PACD successfully lobbied for the conservation district fund

Revisions to Act 217

PACD becomes member of SCC – PACD President

Leadership change

Staffing evaluation

## **Slogan:**

Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future

## **PACD Mission** (revised 8.10.09)

The PACD is a non-profit organization that supports, enhances, and promotes Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts and their programs. Conservation Districts lead local conservation efforts to sustain, protect and restore the natural resources of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The PACD serves as the collective voice for Pennsylvania's 66 county Conservation Districts. PACD provides advocacy, education, technical assistance, training, program coordination and facilitation to Conservation Districts and their constituents. The PACD partners with organizations, business, industry, and federal and state agencies to fulfill needs of the conservation districts.

**Goals Grid** (by Fred Nickols)

<p><b>Achieve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unity</li> <li>▪ Conservation district funding</li> <li>▪ Meetings with substance</li> <li>▪ Effective advocacy of conservation districts in state, federal, local levels</li> <li>▪ High level of visibility and recognition throughout the state</li> <li>▪ Improved and clearly defined lines of communication between members, staff and executive council</li> <li>▪ 100% active membership and dues paying</li> <li>▪ Create opportunities for positive tension</li> <li>▪ Balance between association functions</li> <li>▪ Implementation of issue resolutions adopted by PACD Executive Council</li> <li>▪ Director and District participation (determine why we don't)</li> <li>▪ Greater role in forming statewide natural resource policies</li> <li>▪ Outreach to districts to improve internal interface</li> <li>▪ Defining and understanding chain of command and procedures</li> </ul>	<p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget cuts</li> <li>▪ Staff turnover</li> <li>▪ Non constructive criticism</li> <li>▪ Competition between PACD and districts</li> <li>▪ Apathy</li> <li>▪ Sending wrong messages</li> <li>▪ Pitting the haves with the have-nots</li> <li>▪ Local political involvement in local decision making</li> <li>▪ Lawsuits</li> <li>▪ Redundant efforts</li> <li>▪ Short term thinking at the expense of a long term strategy</li> <li>▪ Closed loop discussions</li> <li>▪ Running resources too thin</li> <li>▪ Holding the annual conference in the same location</li> <li>▪ 2 to 3 day meetings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preserve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional staff</li> <li>▪ Marketing conservation district effort</li> <li>▪ Leadership and leadership development</li> <li>▪ Information and technical resources</li> <li>▪ Regional directors</li> <li>▪ Lobbying efforts</li> <li>▪ Relationship with partners</li> <li>▪ Current capacity of districts and supporting entities</li> <li>▪ Priority for program funding for conservation districts</li> <li>▪ Communication between PACD and conservation districts</li> <li>▪ Current structure of PACD</li> <li>▪ Funding base</li> <li>▪ Website and e-newsletter</li> <li>▪ Non-profit status</li> <li>▪ National affiliation and standing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eliminate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication roadblocks</li> <li>▪ Apathy</li> <li>▪ Capitol days in present form</li> <li>▪ Us vs. them mentality</li> <li>▪ Competition between PACD &amp; Districts</li> <li>▪ Mortgage debt</li> <li>▪ Taking the good stuff we do for granted</li> <li>▪ Dues structure in current format</li> <li>▪ Identity issues</li> <li>▪ Fees for attending meetings</li> <li>▪ Tearing down staff</li> </ul>

**District Expectations of PACD:**

- See interview notes
- Relationships, revenue, representation, responsibilities

**Partner Expectations of PACD:**

- Need to know that the PACD is representing the views of the districts accurately
- Need for direction and identify with priorities and formulate into something we can use
- Clear, consistent communications
- A way to create synergy with the programs and reduce tension
- Compare mission and strategic areas

**Lines of Business of PACD:**

- district ownership, information exchange & association governance
- influence & district representation (legislative, government, other)
- training facilitation (governance, technical, administrative)
- public outreach (marketing & tools)
- engineering (TAG)
- program administration work (contracts)
- conservation awareness & education resources

**Measures of Success:**

Line of Business	Measurement of Success	Measurable Goal
District ownership, information exchange & association governance & operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ paid membership</li> <li>▪ number of active directors and staff participating</li> <li>▪ fiscal soundness and audit</li> <li>▪ staff retention</li> <li>▪ member satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated increase in paid membership, membership satisfaction, and the number of active, directors and staff participating in PACD</li> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated fiscal soundness and have successful annual audits with no findings</li> </ul>
Influence & district representation (legislative, government, other)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ successful budget results</li> <li>▪ demonstrated influence and involvement in policy development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have incremental increases in dedicated funding for districts and influence with policy development</li> </ul>
Training facilitation (governance, technical, administrative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ number of district directors and staff participating in training</li> <li>▪ knowledge level achieved</li> <li>▪ diversity and types of training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated increase of % of district directors and staff completing training (core functions)</li> <li>▪ By August 2014 have delivery of effective, diverse training to meet the needs of directors and staff</li> </ul>
Public outreach (marketing & tools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ recognition level by targeted audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated increase in the recognition of conservation districts, their programs, and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ web site hits</li> <li>▪ # of districts adopting marketing tools</li> </ul>	accomplishments by targeted audiences
Engineering (TAG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ number of projects and dollar value on a geographic distribution</li> <li>▪ number of districts utilizing the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated effectiveness through number of projects completed, dollar value, and districts with opportunity to utilize the program</li> </ul>
Program administration work (contracts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ adequate contracts to sustain goals of association</li> <li>▪ amount of work completed</li> <li>▪ return on invested time spent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated efficiency in program administration, work on contracts completed, with the work not presenting a financial burden, and all programs administered should be beneficial to the goals and objectives of PACD</li> </ul>
Conservation awareness & education resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education resources to meet district needs</li> <li>▪ number of people reached</li> <li>▪ indicators of change</li> <li>▪ partnerships created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By August 2014 have a demonstrated increase in conservation awareness and educational resources available, number of people reached, information available on meaningful change resulting from education activities and effective education conservation partnership relationship (this goal changed – Hannah has notes)</li> </ul>

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for District Ownership, Information Exchange & Association Governance & Operations**

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Letter to Membership	9/09	
PACD Executive Board and staff pledge to be responsive to district needs and concerns	9/09	Send letter to districts – August or September
Research forum method – develop guidelines and purpose statement	9/09	
Implement forum method	11/09	
Continue to provide concise, transparent financial information to membership		
Have successful annual audit with no findings	annually	
Survey/evaluate effectiveness of monthly report	6/10	
Sub-committee review plan annually	annually	
Evaluate effectiveness of forum – via forum	5/10	
Monthly report on activities to include in board material	By 12/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey what is to be included in report format 9/09</li> <li>▪ Establish format 11/09</li> <li>▪ Begin reporting 12/09</li> </ul>
100% paid membership & everyone is satisfied	By 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for  
Influence & District Representation (legislative, government, other)**

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Encourage more local legislative events & involvement	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information and suggested agenda for local events and encourage managers to have a legislative report at their CD board meeting</li> </ul>
Facilitate an information sharing session on district legislative activities at the regional PACD meetings (agenda items)	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcement of legislative agenda item at regional meeting and contract regional director to ensure agenda item placement</li> </ul>
Create compilation of annual reports (similar to WA State report)	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop template for report, sent to CDs, compile information and distribute to CD's and elected leaders and agencies</li> </ul>
Increase unrestricted funds to increase legislative activity at PACD	2011	

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for  
Director Training Line of Business  
Ideas:**

- Discussion of doing this work with the partner organizations
- Utilize the existing training group

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Actions</b>
By Fall 2009 meeting – leadership development website unveiled and core functions director training	By Fall 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partner training group on promoting the leadership development website and core functions director training</li> </ul>
25% of Directors / District conduct training Recognition of “trained” directors at winter meeting SCC recognition	By Jan 2010	
PACD convene / participate in a forum to establish a coordinated w partners conservation training catalogue with partners	By fall 2010	
Support PACD role – promote training		
Introduce plan for quarterly staff trainings by webinar	By 2010	
Initiates training Resources: ISP Manual / Centre County	Fall 2011	
100% all new and reappointed directors trained	Annual January from 2011 to 2014	
All directors trained & effectiveness of boards increased	By 2014	

## Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for Engineering

### Ideas:

- Looked at underserved districts in the NW area
- Need to look at including districts with engineers

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Do an analysis of workload state wide using workload advisory team	By end of 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self analysis of current workload by an advisory committee – looking at regional issues specifically</li> <li>▪ Contacting members sensitive to problems of districts</li> </ul>
Pull together meeting with PACD ED, NRCS to pursue a way of using statewide engineering pool to address regional issues	In Sept 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with NRCS to effectively use statewide engineering pool</li> </ul>
Evaluate the effectiveness of changes made based on the analysis done in 2009	In 2010	
Look at other approaches in structure for the TAG employees	In 2010	
Look at long term sustainability and funding for district engineering needs	By 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Show funders what has been accomplished and what could have been accomplished to show need for regional engineers</li> </ul>

## Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for Public Outreach

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Implement stage 2 of marketing plan Legislative tool box Representation at statewide events	2010 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brenda will work with the legislative and marketing committees to develop a toolbox and communicate current resources</li> <li>▪ Marketing subcommittee will issue a progress report on stage 2 of marketing plan</li> </ul>
Re-run market survey (CD) name recognition Logo – what does it mean to you?	2010 ongoing	
Localized legislative activities Templates for dealing with legislators (local, state & federal)	2010 ongoing	
Marketing program is so successful, 100% of districts are eager to buy in (logo and all)	by 2014	
“us vs. them” becomes “our”	By 2014	

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for Program Administration Work (contracts)**

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Establish criteria for any new programs we administer	2009 - 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create committee (sub-committee of ways &amp; means)</li> <li>▪ Establish criteria for selecting a programs we administer</li> </ul>
Involve membership in selecting new programs to administer – seek out new programs that meet criteria	By 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report &amp; educate members on PACD program involvement</li> </ul>
Establish sub-committee of district operations – set criteria for programs PACD will be willing to administer	By 2010	
Provide for annual review of program and how they meet criteria	By 2011	

**Benchmarks, Timeline, Actions for Conservation Awareness & Education**

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Education & outreach committee agenda Envirothon – take another look at statewide approach	August 21, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Laura Anderson – chair of education committee put discussion on education &amp; subcommittee outreach committee meeting agenda</li> </ul>
Attend regional meeting for educational session	August 21, 2009	
Education portion of website unveiling – initial sharing of resources	October 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hannah &amp; watershed specialist committee members at the watershed specialists meeting</li> </ul>
Expand grant information on website (archive info from Front Page) environmental digest	October 2009	
System in place for ongoing collection of resources (spreadsheet) to share	January 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Put system in place for ongoing district clearinghouse system setup</li> </ul>
Lobbying – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restoration of funding</li> <li>- Come equipped with information on what we are accomplishing</li> <li>- MWEE successes report</li> </ul>	2009 to 2011 and ongoing	
Increase member participation in education and outreach committee	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Committee as a whole will work on having one member of each region on committee</li> </ul>
Touch base on these relationships -MWEE /NOAA, EPA, PDA, DEP, FB, Extension office, FFA, Fish & Boat, Game Commission, Forestry, Sustainable Act, Niche Farming	By 2010 and 2011 gathering	

## Funding Strategies for PACD:

- 100% dues xxxx
- Develop a fee for service schedule (eg webinar, training library, engineering)
- Estate planning / legacy program
  
- Surcharge districts charge on fees above a threshold
- Rental income xx
- Continuation of current program administration
- Tax credit program for donations for conservation efforts
- Dedicated fee per site (surcharge) oil and gas
  
- Look at a way to reduce expenses to make the income go further
- Market the PACD to foundations for association work that they want done for fee that is related to PACD mission xx
- Start a reality show – conservation and the..
- Offer affiliate membership to individuals, business, organizations
- Endowment fund campaign
  
- Base plus dues on number of employees
- Nutrient carbon trading / brokerage xx
- Offer state-wide coordination of programs to agencies, business, organizations – eg priority watershed, flood hazard mitigation, open mining operation and maintenance of abandoned mines
  
- Piggy back with energy initiatives
- Find out federal programs and guidelines for conservation related funding sources
- Administrator / collector for grants
- Contract administration
- Sales of products
- Fund raisers
- Water related funding
- Energy businesses – fines recovered and used
- Corporate mini-grant concept

## Organizational Recommendations for PACD

Recommendation	Issue(s) Addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open and reciprocal communication               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least quarterly each district receives a call from executive director</li> <li>- Priority for contact should be districts that do not pay dues first, then those that don't attend events next, then everyone else</li> <li>- Communication should be responsive even if the answer is a referral or don't know</li> <li>- Be intentional about communicating return on investment (specific to district)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Information sharing Communication District ownership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contingency plan for restructure to balance budget</li> </ul>	Amount of funding coming in and going out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyze the previous strategic plan – successes, similarities, failures, etc</li> </ul>	Dealing with same strategic areas, adds to discussion of new plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PACD staff visits and staff strengths and using their skills and relying on district folks for skills PACD needs</li> </ul>	Workload and workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Front Page” or report should be available to all board members through electronic copy hard copy &amp; executive board meeting minutes supplied by district</li> </ul>	Bridging technology gap and communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with districts to “gather” directors together for remote meetings &amp; information events</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity – needing to be prepared for needs of new directors and staff</li> </ul>	District membership and ownership communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allowing time at regional meetings for “issues” listening discussion</li> </ul>	Listening session with owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revamp the new director orientation at PACD meeting – done by PACD</li> </ul>	Ownership and early buy-in, importance of PACD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clone Bob Robinson to go to each district board meeting – or consider pay for work, travel, etc by regional position</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional director mentoring</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Find a way to provide information to membership on what is an association and roles and responsibilities of players</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate the development of a crisis management assistance team that would be available for a district that needs emergency help</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dues recognition changed to 100% dues paying member of PACD for xx years</li> </ul>	