

**STATE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 19, 2004-Utica**

**Present:** D. Hill, G. Proios, R. Aman, Voting Members; R. Kaplewicz, Executive Director; M. Latham, Assistant Director; B. Steinmuller, E. Svenson, SWCC Staff; L. Miller, Dutchess SWCD; R. Lewis, NYACD; D. Cordier, R. Christensen, NYSDAM; G. Chartier, NYSDEC; K. Lewis, NYSCDEA; R. Robbins, FSA.

**Call to Order**

D. Hill called the meeting to order at 10:10. Introductions were made.

**Discussion and Development of Annual Work Plan**, all

The Soil and Water Conservation Committee/Division of Soil and Water Work Plan was distributed. R. Kaplewicz told the Committee that the purpose of this discussion is to look realistically at the tasks and goals of the Committee for the present year. He noted that it is not only important to list the items that we do, but also what we would like to do if adequate resources were available. The Committee brainstormed a list of tasks and goals to be accomplished for the present year. R. Kaplewicz told the Committee that the list generated will be applied to the work plan.

The Committee listed the following tasks that it would like to accomplish for the present year:

- Develop an Administrative Manual
- Update the Strategic Plan
- Identify current expenditures
- Develop SWCC policy for interacting with other policy-making entities
- Develop an Annual Report of SWCC activities
- Define SWCC & SWCD involvement in forestry
- Develop a communication strategy
- Identify assistance needed from partners
- Establish full SWCC membership
- Make sure SWCC is represented on other committees
- Establish SWCD training curriculum
- Identify successful models to transfer across state
- Rewrite the AEM Guide
- Develop Ag NPS Policy Book

The Committee identified the following goals for the present year:

- Identify additional revenue sources
- Keep SWCD's and Partners abreast of emerging issues
- **Institutionalize CEM**
- Increase support for watershed efforts
- Simplify specific policies and procedures
- **Increase assistance to Districts and Directors**
- **Secure resources for additional staff, including field staff**
- Verifying that we are working on the correct issues and needs of Districts
- **Secure non-competitive funding for SWCDs**
- Support expansion of 4-Way Partnership
- **Seek funding for SWCC**
- Increase technical capacity (GIS)
- Enhance regional Partnerships
- Improve communication to Districts and partners
- Strengthen SWCC fiscal budget
- Broaden SWCC agenda to reflect all SWCD interests
- Enhanced Environmental Stewardship - O & M

\*The bolded bullets represent the goals identified as priorities by the State Committee

The Committee discussed ways to achieve the goals set forth. It was noted that there is more out there than what can be accomplished with the limited resources available. R. Kaplewicz advised the Committee that the lists generated at this meeting will be merged with the SWCC Work Plan and sent to the Committee electronically.

### **Review/Approve Minutes**

**G. Proios moved to approve the January meeting minutes as presented; seconded by R. Aman. Motion passed; carried.**

### **Correspondence**, R. Kaplewicz

R. Kaplewicz read an email that was sent from Francis Tucker, Genesee County SWCD, regarding the Ag NPS grant process. She conveyed her District's concerns regarding the need to make the grant process less competitive so that it could reach more farmers. A similar letter was also sent from Ken Bush, Chemung County SWCD Director, regarding the need to better clarify to the Districts what the priorities of the grant program are and allow for Districts to submit a preproposal to determine project fundability.

Discussion ensued relating to the challenges in spreading the limited funding available to most effectively deliver conservation programs across the state. G. Proios discussed the priorities of the grant program in addressing remediation vs. prevention. He gave some examples of how investing funds in the prevention of water quality degradation could cost the state less than funding abatement type projects. K. Lewis expressed the need to investigate a holistic approach to administering the grants program. However, he noted that the more immediate concern is how the program rules could address some of the local concerns. G. Chartier advised the Committee that all conservation programs across the country are being challenged to effectively deliver without adequate resources. R. Lewis expressed the need to look to County Water Quality Coordinating Committee's strategies and Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies to determine the local water quality needs. R. Kaplewicz advised K. Lewis that a Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be held on April 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss changes to the Round XI Request for Proposals. He encouraged Districts to coordinate comments through the NYSCDEA for that meeting.

### **Letters & Memos**

1. Letter from Frances Tucker to Tom Brace concerning recent EPF grants. Dated January 12, 2004.
2. Letter from Barbara Lifton, NYS Assembly, to Ron Kaplewicz, regarding Round X grant application for projects in Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District. Dated January 15, 2004.
3. Letter from Senator James L. Seward to Ronald Kaplewicz regarding Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program Round X Proposals. Dated January 14, 2003.
4. Letter to Senator James L. Seward from Jason Mulford, Otsego SWCC regarding the District's Ag Non-Point Source application to DEC for an Otsego County Hydro-Seeding Program. Dated January 27, 2004.
5. Memo to Stephen Hoerz and Corey Nellis from Jason Mulford, Otsego SWCC, regarding a proposal for a workshop for regional DEC staff. Dated February 2, 2004.
6. Letter from Elaine Dalrymple, Schuyler SWCC regarding EQIP ranking system. Dated February 6, 2004.

### **Reports & News Letters**

1. SLWAP Progress Report for period July 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003.
2. Partners - Conservation Technology Information Center, November/December 2003.
3. CDEA News, Monthly Newsletter, December 2003.
4. Rural Futures, The NYS Legislative commission on Rural Resources Newsletter, January/February 2004.
5. What's Cropping Up?, Newsletter for NY Field Crops & Soils, Volume 13, Number 6, November-December 2003.
6. Minutes of the NYS Conservation District Employees' Association Executive Board Meeting, December 10 & 11, 2003.
7. 2004 Agricultural Assessment Values Report.

8. Conservation News, Winter, 2004, Schoharie County SWCC.
9. Conservation Quarterly, Winter 2004, Volume 2, Issue 1, Onondaga County
  
10. NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes, Thursday, January 22, 2004.
11. Draft updates of New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control, January 2004.

Conferences & Seminars

1. New York Poultry Association, Inc. The November 2003 meeting has been rescheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2004 at the Geneva Ramada Inn on Route 5 & 20 next to Seneca Lake.
2. Empire State Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting on February 26, 2004, Holiday Inn, Syracuse, NY. Registration Form.
3. Waterworks, New York State Federation of Lake Associations, Inc., January 2004.
4. Cornell Local Roads Program, 2004 Workshop Schedule.
4. River Networks' National River Rally 2004, May 21 through May 25, Wintergreen, Virginia.

**Ag. Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program**, B. Steinmuller

**STATUS OF ROUNDS I-IX**

Of 315 projects, 130 are active, 4 are pending, and 181 are complete. All originally funded Round IX projects are active. An additional two projects are being funded through the Bond Act in Suffolk County, and five additional projects were awarded EPF funds. Contract development is continuing for these Round IX projects. There is one pending contract in Round VI and one in Round VII.

**ROUND X**

The ranked list was approved at the January meeting. The final allocation of funds for Round X has not yet been finalized. The State Committee staff is prepared to announce the awards as soon as the allocation is determined and the release of funds is permitted.

**Staff Approved Amendments**

1. Monroe SWCD – Multi-County Oatka Creek AEM Tier IIIB Planning Project – Round VIII – C700682  
*Request:* time extension from 12/31/03 to 09/30/04  
*Reason:* additional time needed to complete planning activities  
*Approved by T. Brace/E. Svenson 01/23/04*
  
2. Yates SWCD – Keuka Lake Watershed AEM Tier IV Implementation – Round VI – C700602  
*Request:* transfer funds from BMP line to engineering services  
*Reason:* money needed to pay private engineer for services rendered in design of barnyard water management system  
*Approved by T. Brace/E. Svenson 9/26/03*
  
3. Wyoming SWCD – East Koy – Wiscoy Ag. NPS Inventory – Round VII – C700698  
*Request:* time extension from 3/31/04 to 3/31/05  
*Reason:* additional time needed to complete planning activities  
*Approved by T. Brace/E. Svenson 2/5/04*
  
4. Suffolk SWCD – Wellhead Protection Demonstration Project – Round VII – C700655  
*Request:* time extension from 3/31/04 to 6/30/04  
*Reason:* additional time needed to complete BMPs due to weather related delays  
*Approved by L. Miller/E. Svenson 2/4/04*

5. Chenango SWCD – Susquehanna River Corridor Reach #1 Project – Round VIII – C700675  
*Request 1:* time extension from 12/31/03 to 12/31/05  
*Reason 1:* additional time needed to complete BMPs on participating farms due to financial constraints  
*Request 2:* change of landowners  
*Reason 2:* original farmer sold the farm and new farmer is interested and need was identified  
*Approved by J. Schumacher Request 1 - 12/17/03, Request 2 - 1/26/04*
6. Schuyler SWCD – CNMP in the Seneca Lake Watershed – Round VII – C700652  
*Request:* change of landowners  
*Reason:* original farmer cannot meet the financial obligations of the grant  
*Approved by T. Brace/B. Steinmuller 2/12/04*
7. Erie SWCD – CAFO/CNMP Project – Round VII – C700663  
*Request:* time extension from 3/31/04 to 12/31/04  
*Reason:* additional time needed to complete planning activities  
*Approved by T. Brace/B. Steinmuller 2/12/04 (approved to 9/30/04)*
8. Suffolk SWCD – Irrigation Wellhead Protection – Round IX – 48-1  
*Request:* change of landowners  
*Reason:* three original landowners received funding from another source  
*Approved by L. Miller/B. Steinmuller 2/17/04*

B. Steinmuller distributed the January Technical Advisory Committee minutes and a timeline for the development of the Round XI RFP.

**Program Updates**, Staff

**CREP, E. Svenson**

E. Svenson gave an update on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. She advised the Committee that CREP training sessions were held around the state in January. She also advised the Committee that the issue of reimbursement to Districts for CREP is still under development. R. Kaplewicz added that NRCS and the State Committee have not yet reached an agreement for the amount of time a CREP contract takes to implement. E. Svenson noted that most Districts will not be able to take on additional programs without reimbursement. E. Svenson told the Committee that the first meeting of the CREP Steering Committee will convene on March 3<sup>rd</sup> in Albany.

**CAFO, R. Kaplewicz**

R. Kaplewicz advised the Committee of a CAFO Work Group meeting to be held in Utica on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. He reminded the Committee that the revised CAFO rule is still being developed and it will be issued on July 1, 2004. The DEC plans to hold public meetings to solicit comments on the proposed rule. R. Kaplewicz also advised the Committee that AEM Livestock Odor Management Workshops were held around the state. The workshops were well received.

**Stormwater, L. Miller**

L. Miller distributed a stormwater subcommittee report. Highlights from that report include:

Stormwater Specialist Positions – Contracts were mailed to three of the five Districts for signatures earlier in the week. All candidates have been selected except in Suffolk County.

Stormwater Management Specialist – The contract is currently in Cortland County for signature. The District extended the application period since only one application was received. The extended period is now closed – 3 applications were received. Interviews will be scheduled soon.

District Participation Survey for 2004 – To date, 51 Districts have responded. Responses indicate that most Districts are familiar with the Phase II Program and are engaged in stormwater activities. Comments reflected a need for less expensive training opportunities and improvements to communication with DEC regional offices.

Water Quality Improvement Projects Update – G. Chartier reported that DEC expects to announce awarded projects this spring.

SWCC Stormwater Work Plan for 2004 – L. Miller and M. Latham put together a draft list of activities for the sub-committee to work on in 2004.

Mini-Grants – G. Chartier reported that DEC will work on outlining projects for the next round of mini-grants once the new stormwater positions are in place.

**Conservation Security Program Comments, D. Hill**

D. Hill told the Committee that NRCS did a good job of explaining the program, but the details are still vague. It was noted that the program was intended in the 2002 Farm Bill by Congress to be an uncapped entitlement program to eventually replace commodity payments. However, current funding available for the program does not allow for a nationwide program and thus USDA has written this rule to meet the current objectives of the program with all of the funding limitations. Discussion ensued regarding the funding limitations. It was suggested that the funding available through the CSP will never be adequate to cover the need for direct commodity subsidies. R. Robbins told the Committee that without subsidies New York State agriculture cannot compete. R. Kaplewicz advised the Committee that comments on the proposed rule are due on 3/2/04. Some themes of comments from the Committee include the need for the rule to be farm size neutral, the need to integrate AEM inventories and assessments, all BMPs should be considered eligible, and the rule should be regionally significant by being responsive to the state's needs. The Committee comments will include AEM Tier I and II worksheets as a basis for determining eligibility for CSP

**Approval of Annual Plans of Work, M. Latham**

**R. Aman moved to approve the following Annual Plans of Work, seconded by G. Proios. Motion passed; carried.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Albany</li><li>• Chautauqua</li><li>• Chemung</li><li>• Chenango</li><li>• Clinton</li><li>• Cortland</li><li>• Dutchess</li><li>• Steuben</li><li>• Sullivan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New York City</li><li>• Hamilton</li><li>• Herkimer</li><li>• Orleans</li><li>• Oswego</li><li>• Putnam</li><li>• Saratoga</li><li>• Seneca</li><li>• Wayne</li></ul>
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**Attendance at NACD Spring Board Meeting, March 15-17, Washington D.C.**

**Attendance at Water Quality Symposium, March 9-12, Saratoga, NY**

R. Kaplewicz advised the committee that the NACD Spring Board Meeting will be held on March 15-17<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C. He also advised the Committee that the Annual Water Quality Symposium will be held on March 9-12 in Saratoga, NY.

**Budget Update, M. Latham**

M. Latham presented an update on FY 2003 budget. He noted that although the budget is in draft form it offers a look at the scope of services for the NYSSWCC Cooperative Agreement. The grand total, which includes all activities and additional requests, is \$1,727,844. M. Latham also distributed a draft Memorandum of Understanding for FY 2003.

**R. Aman moved to endorse the draft MOU for FY 2003; seconded by G. Proios. Motion passed; carried.**

**Other Reports and Comments, All**

G. Chartier advised the Committee of water quality training opportunities to be held this spring.

L. Miller advised the Committee of an upcoming SWCD Managers meeting to be held in the Southeast Region on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

R. Lewis advised the Committee of the upcoming Legislative Days on March 29-30. Four priorities to be discussed are:

1. Removing the reimbursement cap
2. Seek funding for noncompetitive funding for planning projects
3. Establish statewide funding for Stormwater Management Specialist
4. Increase the Environmental Protection Funding

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 20<sup>th</sup> at the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, 10B Airline Drive, Albany, New York.