

STATE COMMITTEE MEETING
November 15, 2004--Ithaca

Present: D. Hill, B. Aman, J. Dickinson, G. Proios—Voting Members; R. Kaplewicz—Executive Director; M. Latham—Assistant Director; J. Ten Eyck, M. Moore, B. Steinmuller, L. Travis—SWCC Staff; D. Cordier—NYS DAM; G. Chartier—NYS DEC; P. Kaczmarczyk —NYS DOH; J. Tauzel—NYFB; B. Hopkins—NRCS;
A. Barber Cortland Co. SWCD/NYSCDEA; K. Lewis—Oneida Co. SWCD/NYSCDEA; Rick Zimmerman-NYSDAM.

Call to Order/Introductions:

D. Hill called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

Review and Approve Minutes:

B. Aman moved to approve the minutes of the October meeting; seconded by G. Proios. Motion passed; carried.

Correspondence:

Letters & Memos

1. Memo to Ron Kaplewicz from John Rusnica, NYSDAM; **RE: Federal Register – Natural Resource Conservation Service – Soil Surveys – Final Rule. Dated 10/21/04.**
2. Letter from Erin M. Crotty, DEC. **RE: DEC's report, "Thirty Year Trends in Water Quality of Rivers and Streams in New York State Based on Macroinvertebrate Data, 1972-2002".**

Reports & News Letters

1. **The Upper Delaware.** The quarterly newsletter about the environment and people of the Upper Delaware River. Vol. 17, Num. 3, Fall 2004.
2. **Fall Issue: Finger Lakes Institute.** Hobart and William Smith Colleges.
3. **Erosion Control,** November/December 2004.
4. **Taking Root,** A Newsletter for the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council, Summer 2004, Number 13.
5. **Buffer Notes,** October 2004.
6. **News Release from Alan G. Hevesi, State Comptroller. RE: Audits of Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation, Village of Wappingers Falls.**
7. **A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed.** September 2004.
8. **Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program 2004 Final Report.**
9. **The Cultivator. New York State Agricultural Society.** Fall 2004.
10. **Westchester gov.com.** October 2004.
11. **Agricultural News: New York Agricultural Statistics Service.** Reports on: September Milk Production Down Nearly 3 Percent; New York Egg Production up 10 Percent in September; End of Season Surveys To Begin; Dairy Sheep and Goat Survey.
12. **Nuggets & Nibbles, From the Cornell Local Roads Program,** Summer 2004.

Conferences & Seminars

1. **River Short Courses 2005.** Presented by Dave Rosgen, PhD., Wildland Hydrology.
www.wildlandhydrology.com
2. **The 6th National Environmental Performance Summit.** November 30—December 2, 2004. Wyndam City Center, Washington, D.C. Presented by EPI.
www.PerformanceWeb.org
3. **Rising Salt Concentrations in Tributaries of the Hudson River Estuary.** Monday, December 6, 2004, Holiday Inn, Kingston, NY www.hres.org
4. **Notice of Public Hearing:** Vaporization of contamination from soil and groundwater into indoor air. Monday, Nov. 15, 2004, Endicott Visitor Center, Community Meeting Hall, 300 Lincoln Ave., Endicott, N.Y. Phone: (518) 455-4363; E-Mail: odonej@assembly.state.ny.us
5. **Notice of Public Hearing:** Natural gas and oil development in New York State. Elmira College, Hamilton Hall, Corner of College and Washington Sts., Elmira, NY Phone: (518) 455-4363; E-Mail: odonej@assembly.state.ny.us

6. **Convention South:** October 2004, Vol. 21, Number 3.

R. Kaplewicz noted that the News Release from the State Comptroller regarding the audit of the Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation District was a routine audit and is not an indication of any problems within the District.

In reference to the Notice of Public Hearing regarding natural gas and oil development in NYS, G. Proios requested that a presentation on Drilling for Natural Gas be provided at a future meeting.

Federal Farm Bill Summary:

B. Hopkins reported that there have been no agricultural appropriations passed for FY '05. The initial allocations for programs were distributed and he hopes that the final will be available soon. The following items were noted:

- Program policy will basically remain the same, with some possible adjustments to 2005 EQIP incentive payments
- 2006 may see some major changes with some national criteria that is being drafted for EQIP
- 2005 GRP will only include rental contracts, no easements
- No substantive changes to WHIP, WRP, FRP, or AMA
- Ranking cut-off dates will be earlier this year to allow conservation work to start this coming spring/summer

B. Hopkins discussed the new philosophy behind the Conservation Security Program (CSP) as an entitlement program. The following details were noted:

- 2005 is the First National Implementation Year of the program
- 5 New York Watersheds have been nominated for 2005
- Certain criteria such as, digitized soil survey maps for the entire watershed must be met in order to participate in CSP. Only a few Watersheds in NY currently fit this criteria.
- Tiered payment levels are dependent upon the level of environmental performance using self-evaluation and subsequent assessments.

R. Kaplewicz noted that although currently there is no direct relationship between AEM and CSP, Regional Assistant Chief R. Coombe is investigating ways to integrate the two programs. NRCS is developing a white paper comparing New York's AEM with the self-assessment CSP workbook for landowners.

AEM Report:

AEM STRATEGIC PLAN TRAINING

M. Latham reported that there are approximately 180 participants registered for the AEM Statewide Training. The session is set to begin tomorrow Tuesday, November 16, 2004 at noon and will run through 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 17, 2004. The staff has assembled 200 training manuals, which describes each of the eligible tiers for the base funding and provides the process and deliverables for each tier. A sample Five Year County AEM Strategic Plan was also included in the manual.

The Department was able to make an arrangement to have potential five year contracts that may be amended for year three and beyond. The concept behind the strategy and payments was thoroughly explained. Districts will be eligible to receive \$2,000 for the completion of the AEM Strategic Plan. The first year funding level will be \$20,000 per District and projects will be completed in \$10,000 increments. The funding levels for the eligible tiers for the first year are as follows: Tier 1 = \$100; Tier 2 = \$400; Tier 3A = \$1000; Tier 5 = \$250; and Tier 5 alternative = \$125. The Tier 5 alternative is being offered as way to redo older Tier 1's and 2's in order to keep them within a 3 year time frame as will be required for the Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Grant Program as well as the Federal EQIP Program.

G. Proios pointed out that completing Tier 1 and 2 across the State may assist in the lobbying effort to pass new bond act funding by identifying what the implementation needs and costs may be over the next 5 to 10 years. G. Proios also suggested that Districts should go beyond the three year time frame and update a farm's Tier 1 and 2 if there were any significant changes throughout each year. At the end of each year the District's information would be current and they would know what their priorities should be for the coming year.

R. Kaplewicz noted that some of the more progressive counties may be prepared to operate that way, but for now the goal is to get everyone at the same level. In the future it may be re-examined and new

standards may be implemented. However, the goal of the strategic plan is for each District to be able to look at each farm within the county and within the watershed and know what the priorities are.

G. Chartier asked if the State Committee Staff had worked with D. Geisinger and J. Denno from the Environmental Facilities Corp on the 2004 Clean Water Needs Survey. B. Steinmuller replied that both he and M. Moore had worked with D. Geisinger and had provided information from Rounds IX and X of the Ag. NPS grant program and a CAFO implementation needs survey. G. Chartier went on to say that the survey results will also be a good way to assess the future needs of agriculture and encouraged the Committee to work further with EFC on the survey.

M. Latham let the Committee members know that the AEM Training Manuals will be made available for the advisory members at the December State Committee Meeting. Comments and suggestions will be welcome at the AEM Steering Committee Meeting scheduled for January.

R. Kaplewicz noted that the Committee will need to make at least a \$600,000 commitment to AEM for this year, and will need to reexamine priorities for next year.

OTHER AEM REPORTS

Status of Rounds 1-X

Of 348 projects, 129 are active, 21 are pending, and 198 are complete.

Staff Approved Amendments

1. Madison SWCD – Oneida Lake Watershed Ag NPS Reduction Project – Round IX – C700712
Request: time extension from 12/31/04 to 12/31/05
Reason: additional time needed to complete BMP construction due to poor weather conditions and a previous need to change two landowners
Approved by L. Travis 10/28/04
2. Tompkins SWCD – Owasco Lake Inlet Watershed Protection Project – Round IX – C700730
Request: time extension from 12/31/04 to 12/31/05
Reason: additional time needed to complete design work for BMP implementation
Approved by J. Schumacher 11/4/04
3. Columbia SWCD – BMP Implementation on 4 CAFOs – Round IX – C700708
Request: time extension from 12/31/04 to 12/31/05
Reason: additional time needed to complete BMP construction
Approved by L. Miller/B. Steinmuller 11/10/04
4. Clinton SWCD – Ridgeview Farm Agricultural Waste Management – Round VIII – C700061
Request: time extension from 12/31/04 to 12/31/05
Reason: additional time needed to complete BMP due to financial constraints
Approved by S. Lanthier 11/5/04

Round XI

Please note: B. Aman recused himself from the meeting.

B. Steinmuller reported that a total of 51 proposals were received by October 25, 2004. Out of those 51, three were deemed ineligible because they were determined to be incomplete. Two proposals did not attach the most recent Priority Waterbodies List (PWL) segment sheets and one proposal did not attach the most recent PWL segment sheets and did not include all of the topographic maps of each project site. Out of the eligible proposals a total of \$8,193,156.43 of state funds was requested for a total project cost of \$13,963,328.15.

R. Kaplewicz asked how the number of proposals received compared to last year. B. Steinmuller replied that the number received was down by almost half compared with last year. M. Latham noted that there are a number of factors which have led to the decline in proposals this year. From what has been passed on from the Districts to the State Committee Staff, many Districts are busy providing additional services to NRCS, Districts are planning to put more emphasis on base funding for this year, there are now other sources of funding for planning available to farmers, and many Districts simply need to “catch up” from previous Rounds.

G. Proios asked how important it is to adhere to the time limit policy that the Committee has set as the program continues from year to year. Time extensions, he noted, could become quite burdensome for the Districts and the State Committee to manage. B. Steinmuller replied that the Office of the State

Comptroller has requested additional justification to extend a contract beyond five years. G. Proios suggested that within the next couple years the Committee should review the time frames allotted for the completion of these projects and possibly even call for past projects to be completed before offering funds through subsequent rounds. B. Steinmuller replied that the Field Staff have been attempting to make that more apparent to the Districts. A. Barber pointed out that it is now easier to complete projects within the time frame because two full construction seasons have been factored in. J. Dickinson added that the Committee should establish guidelines so that Districts and farmers know in advance when the latest date is that their projects will need to be completed by. He noted that there have been many justifiable reasons for allowing time extensions in the past, but suggested that in the future more stringent policies may need to be developed. B. Steinmuller suggested that this issue be taken up with the TAC, which will then bring recommendations back to the Committee for review and approval.

CREP Update:

M. Latham reported that the Committee continues to receive monthly reports from FSA on acres enrolled in CREP. As of October 31, 2004, there were 1,650 acres enrolled, an increase of about 550 acres from September. There has been an interest expressed in 3,000 acres across the state. K. Lewis asked about the acreage cap. R. Kaplewicz answered that acreages can be rolled over into the following year.

R. Kaplewicz announced that there will be a training session in January regarding CREP planning. E. Svenson is currently working with Delaware County on developing the materials for that training. They will continue to coordinate activities with NRCS and FSA.

R. Kaplewicz also made note to have E. Svenson send out the monthly CREP summary to the State Committee Members and the NRCS Area Conservationists.

G. Proios mentioned his dismay over the rental rate remaining the same over the 10 year contract period. He recommends that the CREP Steering Committee work on a proposal that can be submitted to FSA to endorse a mechanism that will calculate a payment increase relative to increasing land value. He noted that farmers may be reluctant to lock themselves in for a 10 year time frame when land appraisals are increasing at a rapid rate.

R. Kaplewicz also informed the Committee that E. Svenson will be working to engage Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in CREP, as done in other states across the nation. G. Chartier asked how other states engage NGOs. M. Latham answered that some provide cost share assistance with practices, some buy trees, and others provide technical assistance among other activities.

Briefing on meeting with Dean Henry & Director Dillard:

R. Kaplewicz discussed, with the Committee, the upcoming meeting with Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean, Susan Henry and Cornell Cooperative Extension's Director, Helene Dillard, emphasizing that this is an initial meeting between the State Committee, Cornell and Extension.

Meeting with Dean Susan Henry (Cornell University College of Ag & Life Sciences) and Director Helene Dillard (Cornell Cooperative Extension):

The following were in attendance during this meeting:

Dean Susan Henry, Dan Decker, Larry Goerhring, Quirine Ketterings, Larry Chase—Cornell; Director Helene Dillard, Deb Grantham—CCE; Dennis Hill, George Proios, John Dickinson, Bob Aman—State Committee Voting Members; Ron Kaplewicz—Executive Director SWCC; Mike Latham—Assistant Director SWCC; Michele Moore, Brian Steinmuller, Jeff Ten Eyck, Les Travis—State Committee Staff; K. Lewis—Oneida Co. SWCD/NYCDEA; Daniel Cordier—NYS DAM; Gerry Chartier—NYS DEC; Paul Kazmarczyk—NYS DOH; John Tauzel—NYFB; Bruce Hopkins—NRCS;

R. Kaplewicz welcomed Dean Henry, Director Dillard and their representatives to the meeting and gave an overview of the interests shared between Cornell University (CU), Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), and the Soil & Water Conservation Committee (SWCC). R. Kaplewicz briefly discussed the history of the relationship between Districts, CU & CCE. R. Kaplewicz distributed a copy of the Soil & Water Conservation Committee *November 2004 State Committee Meeting Report* and highlighted the activities of the Committee.

Dean Henry also welcomed the opportunity to talk about the mutual missions of CU, CCE, and the SWCC. She shared that the University, as a whole, is focused on environmental issues, especially regarding the matter of sustainability. Dean Henry conveyed the message that she is very much aware of and strongly supports the work of not only the Committee, but also the AEM program. She offered information regarding

the number of faculty that are devoted to the efforts of the Committee and the importance of our soil and water resources in New York State.

Discussion ensued regarding maximizing people and available resources in order to make strategic decisions. G. Proios remarked that CU faculty may not be focusing their research efforts on issues that need the most attention or areas that are underserved. Dean Henry replied, that due to increasing budget constraints, faculty members are compelled to apply where funding is available. She suggested a collaborative lobby effort to increase funding for certain areas of collective interest. D. Decker mentioned that if a collaborative effort can be used to create pools of funding resources, the CU faculty is extremely competitive in being able to bring those resources into New York State. D. Decker also shared the information he and his staff had gathered regarding current research projects related to soil and water concerns.

Director Dillard gave a brief overview of the Cornell Cooperative Extension efforts. New York State is one of the few states that have a Cooperative Extension presence in every county. Cooperative Extension programming involves areas from the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Human Ecology, Industrial and Labor Relations, and Veterinary Medicine. Cooperative Extension has a tripartite funding strategy that comes from the county, state, and federal governments. One of the challenges they have encountered is keeping the funding from each of these sources consistent. If one source diminishes, the others will suffer as well. Director Dillard mentioned the five environmental and natural resources programming areas and noted that one of their missions is to promote greater harmony between agriculture and the environment. However, one of the greatest challenges will be to ensure that funding for these programs continues. This is where collaboration between CU and its field stations, CCE, and the Soil & Water Conservation Committee is critical.

Discussion continued regarding funding mechanisms employed by the State Committee, CU, and CCE. Each has its varying methods of obtaining funding, however it was pointed out that further collaboration may be needed to see that funding is secured for areas with the greatest concerns.

The meeting continued with staff from CU, CCE, and the State Committee giving presentations regarding current activities and research opportunities relating to soil and water. J. Ten Eyck gave an overview of the current AEM program in NYS and where the future of AEM is heading. L. Georhring made mention that a long range plan was developed between CU and the SWCC more than 20 years ago. Q. Ketterings shared research activities that are looking at ways to protect air and water quality from the effects of excess nutrients. Dr. L.E. Chase showed how the department of Animal Science interfaces with the AEM program through their involvement in developing assessment worksheets and other activities. More information regarding discussion topics can be found at the following websites:

- www.inmpwt.cce.cornell.edu
- www.bee.cornell.edu/swlab/vsa/index.htm
- www.bee.cornell.edu/swlab/pfweb/index.htm
- www.manuremanagment.cornell.edu

Discussion also touched upon the potential for researchers to work with Districts and/or the State Committee during their sabbatical to further enhance the partnership between the State Committee, CU and CCE.

Dialogue also touched on how the College makes use of profound research studies from outside the state and how information regarding emerging issues is further developed. The need to coordinate research information and disseminate this throughout the entire agricultural system was identified as a critical need. D. Grantham suggested that a subcommittee be formed with representatives from Cornell and non-Cornell staff in order to gather some of the emerging technological information.

R. Kaplewicz ended the meeting by thanking the CU and CCE representatives for their commitment to the soil and water cause and suggested getting a group of people together to identify options and strategies to move these discussions forward.

D. Hill adjourned the meeting until 8:30 a.m. Tuesday morning.

The meeting was called back to order at 8:38 AM. In addition to those present from yesterday's meeting, the Committee welcomed President Neil Murphy and Dr. Peter Black from SUNY ESF.

Water Quality Symposium:

K. Lewis reported that this year's March Water Quality Symposium is breaking from tradition. The event, to be held March 21—24, 2004 in Rochester, NY, is later than past years and will run Monday through Thursday rather than Tuesday through Friday due to hotel and holiday restrictions.

Other Business and Reports:

NACD ANNUAL MEETING

R. Kaplewicz informed the group that the NACD Meeting will be held in Atlanta, Georgia this year. Following discussion, **G. Proios moved that any voting member and up to two staff members should attend the meeting; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed; carried.**

R. Kaplewicz will file the travel requests with the Department.

NYACD ANNUAL MEETING

G. Proios reported that the NYACD Annual Meeting held in Lake Placid, NY was well attended. The conference had many interesting speakers including Dr. Ross Whaley from the Adirondack Park Agency and NACD President-Elect Bill Wilson of Oklahoma. The group had very thorough discussion about all of the resolutions and almost all of them passed. The event provided a platform for an enlightening exchange of information. More information can be found in the NYACD news letter, which should be provided shortly.

G. Proios also announced the hiring of a NYACD Executive Director Greg Bell. Greg has been active with several non-profit organizations, which will serve him well as executive director of NYACD.

Future Needs of AEM in New York; A Wrap Up:

Everyone complemented the preceding night's efforts to enhance a dialogue with Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension. R. Kaplewicz discussed the possibility of forming a work group to brainstorm and build from the discussions. *Consensus of the group was to proceed with the development of a work group.* G. Proios volunteered to participate in the work group.

G. Proios noted that he was supportive of the Dean Henry's work on enhancements that deal with communications.

R. Zimmerman suggested that the Committee consider enhancing its relationship with the Department of Biological Engineering at Cornell.

B. Aman commented that he was very impressed with the Dean Henry's insight into the interaction between Cornell and the State Committee.

J. Dickinson stated that the Committee needs to be more proactive in promoting and acknowledging the tremendous contributions that the University provides to our programs.

P. Kaczmarczk expressed similar thoughts to B. Aman and suggested that a "Thank You" letter to the Dean capture the true sentiments of the Committee as it relates to strengthening our partnership with Cornell and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Discussion continued on the use of Federal Earmarks, funding, and better coordination with Cornell's Program Work Groups. *It was the consensus of the Committee to investigate greater involvement with appropriate Cornell Program Work Groups.*

G. Proios suggested that having a center for agriculture structured like Keith Porters, Center for the Environment would be ideal. R. Zimmerman commented on the recently established Farmland Viability Institute. *R. Kaplewicz will add a presentation on this topic to a future agenda.*

Review of State Committee Annual Work Plan:

R. Kaplewicz distributed a status report on the State Committee Annual Work Plan.

J. Dickinson moved that the Work Plan be reviewed by the committee over the next few weeks and that questions, concerns and new tasks be discussed at the next Committee Meeting; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed; carried.

Other Reports:

D. Hill stated that DEC Division of Water toured a 1200' stream bank stabilization project on the Dave Post Farm. The project used aspects of the Rosgen Method and has remained intact after two consecutive flood events. The project combined aspects of CREP as well.

P. Black announced that the NYS AWRA Annual Meeting will be held on December 6th in Kingston, NY.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

The next meeting date has been scheduled for Monday, December 20, 2004 at the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Albany.