

**NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee**  
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 – Telephone (518) 457-3738

**STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**October 20, 2009**

**Fort William Henry – Lake George**

**Albany Room**

**48 Canada Street**

**Lake George, NY 12845**

**Present:** D. Stein, D. Brass, J. Dickinson, G. Proios, Voting Members; M. Latham, Director, B. Steinmuller, Assistant Director; N. Lawler, C. Frasier, R. Lewis, SWCC Staff; A. Boozer, D. Pettit, NRCS; L. Telega, Cornell; F. Zagorski, DEC; P. Kaczmarczyk, DOH; K. Smith, DOS; J. Moody-Czub, Ag & Markets; S. Lorraine, President CDEA; D. Mosher, B. Silvestri, Schenectady Co. SWCD; D. Wick, Warren Co. SWCD; S. Mahoney, Clinton Co. SWCD.

**Call to Order:**

G. Proios, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m.

Introductions made.

G. Proios announced awards were presented at the dinner the previous evening to Bob Aman and Dennis Hill for their work with the State Committee.

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

**J. Dickinson moved to approve the September minutes as presented; seconded by D. Stein. Motion passed; carried.**

**Correspondence**

**Letters & Memos**

Letter dated September 15, 2009 to Governor David Paterson from Craig R. Schutt, Tompkins County SWCD District Manager regarding the funding for Contract C303550.

M. Latham mentioned a copy of a letter to the Governor from Tompkins County regarding their contract to be processed with DEC. We have officially replied to the District, and DEC has processed the contract. This matter has been resolved.

**Reports & Newsletters**

The District Digest – Columbia County SWCD's Fall 2009 newsletter

Conservation News – Herkimer County SWCD's Fall 2009 newsletter

Jefferson County SWCD's Fall 2009 newsletter

Lewis County SWCD's Summer/Fall 2009 newsletter

The Northeast SARE Farmer Grant application available on line at [www.nesare.org](http://www.nesare.org)

From Watershed to Well – RCAP Solutions Fall 2009 newsletter

Oklahoma Conservation Conversation – August/September 2009

Soil & Mulch Producer News – September/October 2009

Partnership Press, Summer 2009 – Maryland Conservation newsletter

ERS Report Summary – September 2009

Garrison Institute – Fall 2009 newsletter

The Manager's Intelligence Report – October 2009

Public Works Magazine – September 2009

**Conferences & Seminars**

National Association of Conservation Districts 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting; January 31 –

February 3, 2010, Orlando, Florida – Agenda and Registration forms  
Environmental History of the Hudson River – presented by the Hudson River Environmental Society – November 5 and 6, 2009, Holiday Inn, Fishkill, NY

G. Proios mentioned four farmers participating in Round 14 projects through the Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District involving replacement of underground storage systems. Two of these farmers paid a contractor up front and the contractor has left the area and is in Florida. G. Proios stated a letter has been drafted to the Attorney General asking for his assistance and perhaps he can contact his counterpart in Florida and help resolve this issue.

### **2008 Farm Bill Update - NRCS**

Astor Boozer, NRCS New York State Conservationist, reported on New York State NRCS 2009 accomplishments. He distributed information outlining funding and programs for fiscal year 2009. He indicated there is no official budget on hand for 2010. He is optimistic about 2010 monies for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative. He is confident there will be a substantial increase in funding in 2010. D. Pettit stated last year's budget allocated \$22.4 million for Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay and WRP. He is hopeful this year's budget will allocate \$30 million for these three programs. A. Boozer indicated New York State is second in the Great Lakes Basin in receiving funding behind Michigan based on the number of watersheds. He stated the NRCS business plan will allow filling some vacant positions and NRCS will not be closing any offices, but looking at efficiencies through partnerships. G. Proios reminded everyone that NRCS has links for all States on their website where funding for programs and other important information may be found.

### **Warren County SWCD Presentation**

Dave Wick, District Manager from the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District gave a PowerPoint presentation on Warren County SWCD history, background, programs and services they provide.

Highlights include:

- West Brook Conservation Initiative - a large project where the former Gaslight Village was located. This project will be a stormwater wetland complex, featuring a festival staging area, fitness trails, playground, and environmental park. They expect to break ground next summer.
- The District is involved with delta dredging, reservoir and sediment ponds, stream culverts and fish passage.
- Warren County SWCD has established a partnership with the highway department and works on many programs and projects with them. The District does a huge amount of hydro seeding in coordination with highway departments.
- Watershed assessments are done on all possible projects, and then projects are prioritized and grants applied for based on these studies. Some projects they have worked on are the Prospect Mountain Brook Project, Loon Lake on-site septic improvement program, Village of Lake George stormwater improvement program, wetland improvement and invasive species management, stream restoration, lakeshore septic pump out programs and the Lake George Park Commission stream buffer project.
- Through grants, they have two salt storage sheds, one in the Town of Bolton and one in the Town of Hague.

- Dave Wick is President of the Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of NY (CWICNY). They received \$900,000 from EPA last year and have been utilizing that money among the five counties in the Champlain Watershed.
- He indicated that programs and projects are being completed by the Warren County Soil and Water District due to their highly-technically qualified staff and the coordination and cooperation of the town supervisors and town highway department.
- Dave ended his presentation by asking what the State Committee can do to help Districts? He stated the State Committee should know how and what the Districts are doing. Information and funding opportunities should be relayed to the Districts through the Regional AEA.

### **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition MOU**

Dave Mosher, Programs Coordinator for Schenectady County and Chair of the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition, gave a report on the newly formed coalition. He stated 14 counties are involved in the coalition. He thanked the Committee for the assistance he received from Cliff Frasier and Lauren Prezorski in establishing the partnership. The coalition is modeled after the Lower Hudson Watershed Coalition. They have applied for a grant in the amount of \$786,000 through the Department of State to develop a comprehensive watershed management plan. The coalition is working on strategies with DEC regarding watershed management. They have had two meetings with DEC discussing the action agenda for the Mohawk River Watershed. The coalition is meeting again with DEC on Friday, October 23, 2009. The Memorandum of Understanding for the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition was distributed.

**D. Stein moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding establishing the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition as presented; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.**

### **Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Grant Program October 20, 2009 State Committee Meeting**

#### **STATUS OF ROUNDS 1-14**

Of 515 contracts, 165 are active and 335 are complete. 15 contracts have been cancelled during the life of the program.

#### **Staff Approved Amendments**

1. Erie SWCD – Tonawanda Creek WS Ag Implementation Project – Round 13 – C700843  
Request: time extension from 12/31/09 to 11/15/11  
Reason: low milk prices and delay in receiving state funds  
Approved by L. Travis 9/8/09
2. Madison SWCD – Oneida Lake WS Ag NPS Reduction Project – Round 13 – C700849  
Request: time extension from 2/10/10 to 11/15/11  
Reason: extension due to terrible dairy economy  
Approved by C. Frasier 10/5/09
3. Monroe SWCD – Genesee River Basin CNMP Implementation Grant – Round 11 – C700782

Request: change in BMP

Reason: BMP change reflects to higher pollution need and will allow landowner to be in compliance with CAFO permit

Approved by L. Travis 9/25/09

**Commissioner Hooker announced Round 15 awards for 26 projects October 19, 2009.**

B. Steinmuller reported Commissioner Hooker had announced the Round 15 awards at the NYACD Banquet October 19, 2009. He distributed the Round 15 project award list. The list approved in March 2009 by the State Committee was also distributed. He stated a letter to Districts, who have received Round 15 awards, concerning developing the Plan of Work would be sent soon. Due to the time which has elapsed from the initial RFP review and awards, he also asked the field staff to be diligent in reviewing these Plans of Work and work closely with Districts to ascertain that the farmer commitments are still viable. The voting members inquired on the availability of EPF funds. B. Steinmuller also announced the TAC would be meeting on October 28, 2009 and would be discussing Round 16 RFP development and timeline and also AEM Year 6. Due to the EPF situation, D. Stein is skeptical and has concerns on setting up Round 16.

**D. Stein moved to go forward with Round 15 project awards; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.**

**District Promotion and Marketing**

B. Silvestri gave an update on training and workshops that she is developing and a part of regarding District promotion and marketing. She reported on the New York Association of Counties Meeting where many District employees attended along with about 25 county executives and legislators. Four District Managers sat on a panel and gave presentations on the benefits of Districts in their respective counties.

She distributed a handout on the Local Economic Impacts of Soil & Water Conservation Districts which outlined as an example Orleans County and their 2008 local economic impact. She announced the New York Association of Towns Meeting will be held on February 14–17, 2010 at the New York City Hilton. K. Smith indicated the Department of State attends this meeting. She reported on the Administrative Conference held in Waterloo, New York. She also distributed the "2009 Districts in the News Awards" recipient breakdown. She distributed a fact/tip sheet to help Districts garner support from legislators. She also mentioned upcoming Regional Communications Workshops; Ontario County on November 12 in Canandaigua and Albany County on December 17. She mentioned there are four Director training modules available on the State Committee's website. She has revitalized the Down to Earth Briefs to disseminate information to Districts, Silvestri also noted that the Small Farms Quarterly fall issue is out. Silvestri is also responsible for updating the State Committee's website and commented that the State Committee Strategy has been posted.

**Advisory Member / Partnership Reports**

- M. Latham announced the NACD Annual meeting will be held in Orlando, Florida. G. Proios is interested in attending. G. Proios mentioned the search is on for a new Executive Director for NACD. D. Stein recommended two staff people should attend. M. Latham stated he felt attendance at the NACD annual meeting would be very valuable. M. Latham mentioned he attended the NASCA meeting in West Virginia. He learned our fiscal troubles in agricultural areas are not as serious as some other States in the

country. There were 26 highlighted projects from across the country where conservation districts are taking the lead and sharing these ideas and projects is something everyone in attendance could learn from. He was asked to represent the Northeast Division of NASCA and will be looking into this further. He learned Congress has ordered NRCS to take comments on the Research Conservation Act. He spoke with Chief White regarding his TSP program which excluded Conservation Districts this past year. M. Latham mentioned the State Aid to Districts Conservation Project Financial Assistance "Part B" Program. A District marketing tool was developed which lists 20 success stories from Part B Projects. He stated it was an excellent marketing piece and thanked Lauren Prezorski and the Conservation Districts for their dedication in compiling and publishing this report.

- L. Telega announced that a national search is on for the new dean at CALS to replace Susan Henry. A committee of 13-15 members is compiling criteria to be used in the search, and a position description should be available by the end of October. Craig Yunker is on the committee representing farmers. G. Proios asked if there was representation from NYS government on the committee. L. Telega said there was none. L. Telega mentioned the Dairy Power Initiative. He learned 10% of New York State fluid milk is sold at Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart is researching the carbon footprint of a gallon of milk. New York State Dairy Industry is kicking off this project for Wal-Mart tracing the steps from the farm to the store. Pro Dairy is researching how to decrease the amount of methane at the dairy farm and increasing the capacity to implement anaerobic digesters on the landscape.
- J. Moody-Czub stated the Department is preparing its legislative agenda and budget items for next year. She spoke of the value of the Soil and Water Division and Committee to the Department.
- D. Wick thanked Brian for the opportunity to speak to the Committee on Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District programs. He thanked Barb for all her work in educating and helping Districts with marketing and media. He thanked Mike for his work in helping to expedite contracts and projects with DEC.
- B. Steinmuller announced Claire Johnson, Keyboard Specialist, with the Division of Soil and Water, was retiring effective October 28, 2009. G. Proios mentioned his thanks to Claire for all her work with the Committee over the years.
- C. Frasier congratulated Dave Mosher and the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition. He stated the counties have stepped up and is confident they will work well together.
- F. Zagorski stated the Water Quality Improvement Projects Round 10 RFP was due postmarked last Friday. CAFO permit Notice of Intentions are coming in.
- K. Smith stated the Department of State was pleased with the response to the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program through Title 11 of the EPF. They have received 108 applications from across the state. They are going through the review process. He hopes to get the reviews completed in the next month or two.
- P. Kaczmarczyk spoke on the New York Times articles relating to drinking water. He stated they were poorly written and rather broad. EPA officials have responded to the articles.

- D. Stein mentioned we should continue working on web cast exemption. He stated there will be an on farm training session for planners and DEC inspectors next Tuesday at his farm on manure transfer systems. He had to limit the number to 30 attendees. Digesters and net metering law issues were discussed.
- G. Proios stated a resolution was passed by NYACD urging the State Legislature to have the State Committee added to the Oceans and Great Lakes Ecosystem Council as a voting member. Also a resolution was passed urging the State Legislature to add Districts as eligible applicants to the NYS Department of State's Waterfront Revitalization Program.
- D. Stein suggested as a way to save money, having State Committee meetings staggered to every six weeks rather than monthly.
- M. Latham stated at the next meeting, two new AEM tools on vegetative treatment areas and waste transfer systems should be available for approval by the Committee. He also stated if anyone had any topics they would like discussed at future State Committee meetings, to let him know.

**Next Meeting** – Tuesday, November 24, 2009, Utica, New York at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

This web cast may be viewed in its entirety at:

<http://www.webcasting.com/soil-water/10.20.2009soil-board.html>