

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

STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 8, 2010
Holiday Inn Express
160 Holiday Way, Route 30A
Schoharie, NY 12157

Present: G. Proios, D. Stein, C. Colby, J. Dickinson, Voting Members; M. Latham, Director; B. Steinmuller, N. Lawler, C. Frasier, SWCC Staff; A. Boozer, USDA-NRCS; P. Giltner, J. Rusnica, M. Brower, Ag & Markets; J. Littrell, NYACD; B. Silvestri, Schenectady Co. SWCD; P. Nichols, L. Kuehnle, S. Hoerz, B. Weaver, Schoharie Co. SWCD; J. Barber, FSA; C. Mural, NYFB; D. Grantham, CALS.

Call to Order:

G. Proios, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.
Introductions made.

G. Proios thanked the employees from Schoharie Co. SWCD for the tour and local foods luncheon on September 7th.

Review and Approval of Minutes

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

Correspondence

M. Latham stated the listing of correspondence will no longer be available. All newsletters, District newsletters and miscellaneous correspondence will continue to be on display at the monthly meetings. If you would like copies of any of the materials, you can contact the State Committee office and they will be mailed.

Schoharie County SWCD Presentation

Steve Hoerz, District Manager, delivered a PowerPoint presentation in which he outlined the diversity of the Schoharie County SWCD. Brenda Weaver, Peter Nichols and Lisa Kuehnle also discussed their duties as employees of Schoharie County. The County received level funding in 2009 and 2010.

- Schoharie County is approximately 625 square miles
- The county population is about 34,000
- Schoharie Co. SWCD has a staff of four and a five-member board.
- There are 76 dairies
- Karst topography (limestone) with most agriculture in the northern part of the county
- Three major watersheds, Hudson-Mohawk, Susquehanna, Catskill
- Four reservoirs, with great water quality
- Conservation Field Day
- Envirothon – 20 teams from 4 counties
- Tree sales - 400 orders
- Ag assessments
- Fish stocking program

Brenda Weaver has been the office manager for Schoharie Co. SWCD for 18 years. She spoke about the tour and how partnerships helped immensely with the planning and success of the day. A highlight of the event was the presentation of the District's AEM Sign Award honoring the Prokop family of Crossbrook Farm, Middleburgh, New York. She is involved in all aspects of conservation education for the District and assisting in many areas.

Lisa Kuehnle, Certified Planner, has been the Nutrient Management Specialist with the District for nine years. She works with the AEM Program. 177 farms in the county participate in AEM. About 30 farms have 3B plans completed, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 177 farms have completed Tier 2's. She has developed the GPS program system to map AEM participating farms in the District. There are six CAFO's in the county that are assisted by Ms. Kuehnle.

Peter Nichols has been with the District for 2 years. He is the Stream Program Manager. He works throughout the District on many projects. He conducted a stream walk through the Manor Kill (8 miles). This enables the District to develop a stream management plan by conducting a stream feature inventory identifying possible denigration factors. He works on stabilizing streams with aggressive Riparian planting projects, Trees for Tribs program with DEC. They have a hydroseeding road ditch program and recently applied for a \$60,000 grant with DEC. The District is involved in many outreach programs including the Cobleskill Fair. He conducts pond evaluations for county residents. Each pond evaluation receives a 4-page report, water chemistry analysis, identifies reasons for fish kills, water discoloration and other issues.

M. Latham asked how the District was able to secure a Stream Program Manager and Nutrient Management Specialist. The District has a strong Board that has identified the need for these positions and together with the staff work very hard to secure the necessary resources. In addition they have established solid relationships with the Planning Department, Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, Emergency Management and others.

NRCS – 75 Years of Conservation

A. Boozer reported on the 75th anniversary celebration of NRCS at the New York State Fair. He stated USDA NRCS will continue to strengthen and improve partnering efforts. While the media coverage mistakenly stated it was DEC's anniversary, coverage of the event brought attention and recognition to conservation in New York State. He stressed the importance of everyone knowing the technical sources, resources and programs that are available such as the Conservation Loan Program which is beneficial to landowners. Energy issues will become more prevalent in the near future.

SWCC Outreach and Education

B. Silvestri congratulated Schoharie County SWCD on a job well done showcasing their 70th anniversary celebration on September 7th. She also thanked NRCS for their continued strong partnership with Districts and for providing funding for the vital components of the conservation tour. She mentioned eight other Districts will be celebrating their 70th anniversary between now and December. NYACD annual meeting will conduct a Tour Success Program. New York Association of Counties meeting will be held September 16, 2010 in Buffalo. Agriculture will be the focus at the meeting. NYSAC has a Blue Ribbon Task Force. They have created a proposed document they plan to vote on outlining NYSAC's position on agriculture looking to support farmers. G. Proios asked if NYSAC directories had County Soil and Water District names and phone numbers. The Annual AEM Report is completed and will be mailed to Districts and legislators.

SC Staff and Contractual Services Update

M. Latham stated three employees received the retirement incentive; J. Schumacher, S. Lanthier and L. Hoeffner resulting in a 30% reduction to the Soil and Water staff. He is fairly confident we will be able to hire a replacement for Lauren's position. He stated a staff meeting will be held September 24, 2010. He will provide an update at the October meeting. The contract with Dutchess County is moving along. He said we will need to be creative to complete tasks with the limited staff we now have.

Ag Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control

B. Steinmuller distributed the draft RFP and Rating Sheet for Round 17. He also distributed the minutes from the TAC meeting which was held August 19, 2010. He mentioned D. Brass was in attendance at the TAC meeting. B. Steinmuller stated he hoped to have the Round 17 RFP reviewed and released by the beginning of October. He plans to conduct educational meetings throughout the State regarding the NPS program policies, procedures and other issues.

B. Steinmuller discussed each policy recommendation from the TAC. Discussion ensued regarding each recommendation.

D. Stein moved to approve increasing the cost-share of select agronomic practices (cover cropping and mulching) from one to three years; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

B. Steinmuller discussed the TAC meeting topic of capping of EPF funding. The consensus reached at the TAC meeting was recommending that the SWCC not institute a funding cap under AgNPS grant program. Much discussion ensued.

D. Stein moved to have the staff determine what is involved for the State Comptroller to consider allowing a funding cap for future AgNPS rounds, and to changing the Ranking Sheet to reflect a cap; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

The RFP for Round 17 and Rating Sheet were discussed. It was recommended that rankers be provided the following information on a cover sheet for each Soil & Water District with the Round 17 RFPs:

- How many contracts are active in each SWCD?
- How many time extensions have they had?
- Whether they are up-to-date with Interim Reports.

D. Stein moved to approve the Round 17 RFP and Proposal Rating Sheet; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

B. Steinmuller distributed an AEM Base Program Report prepared by Jeff TenEyck outlining an analysis of the AEM program from AEM Year 1 through Year 6 and recommending funding allocation for Year 7.

D. Stein moved to approve \$2.3 million for AEM Year 7; seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Chesapeake Bay TMDL Update

M. Latham reported Jim Curatolo has been very active in running various scenarios through the latest Bay Model with the State and concludes that the nitrogen budget for NYS is not reachable without true source reductions (loss of Dairy inputs and Crops). The draft Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), a 70-page summary, has been developed by the state outlining what was reasonable to accomplish by 2025. The public review period will begin the end of September. The WIP sets targets

for nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment reduction. The WIP contains information on atmospheric deposition and how New York doesn't have an excess of nitrogen as other states do. Many states are involved, with many diverse situations and conditions. There is a heavy burden on agriculture. An interim deadline is in 2017 with 60% of target load reduction following an evaluation system consisting of 2-year milestones. If the TMDL is not met, EPA could cut back funding, void or deny Clean Water Act permits, and expand regulations to Animal Feeding Operations.

Partnership Advisory Reports

J. Littrell stated the NACD annual meeting will be held October 17 – 19, 2010 at the Radisson in Utica. The Employees' Association Managers Meeting and Administrative Conference will be held in conjunction with the NYACD meeting.

D. Grantham announced Cornell Cooperative Extension will be celebrating their 100 year anniversary next year. The celebration will kick off in December with a "Friends of Extension" Award. Cooperative Extension is working on enhanced statewide programming in agriculture and climate change. Research is being conducted on agriculture, climate and energy biomass. She indicated Cornell Cooperative Extension would be available to speak at an upcoming SWCC meeting if requested.

Cathy Mural replaces John Tauzel representing the New York State Farm Bureau. G. Proios welcomed her to the Committee.

B. Silvestri stated the "District in the News Awards" email will be sent this week. Nominations must be postmarked by October 1, 2010.

J. Barber mentioned USDA/FSA is rolling out a new Conservation Loan Program. Districts are encouraged to participate. FSA is planning an outreach bio-fuel transportation fuel conference for sometime this fall.

D. Stein stated it was policy development time at the New York State Farm Bureau.

A. Boozer mentioned the Farm Bureau listening sessions have begun. NRCS is working on keeping the New England cottontail from being listed on the endangered species list.

M. Latham and Pat Hooker met with Astor Boozer, Tom Vilsak, Secretary of USDA, Judith Enk, Regional Director of EPA and Ed Hoxsie, Dutchess County SWCD Executive Director at an American Great Outdoors listening session in Dutchess County. He attended the Northeast NACD meeting in Maine in August. Emphasis was on developing and strengthening partnerships. He stated the NACD National Meeting will be held in Nashville, Tennessee. The Northeast meeting of NACD will be held in Massachusetts in 2011 and in New York in 2012. He will discuss recommendations for performance measures for 2011 at the October meeting.

Next Meeting – 12 noon, Tuesday, October 19, 2010, Radisson Hotel, Utica, New York

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.