

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 -- Telephone (518) 457-3738
State Committee Meeting
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY

April 19, 2016

Meeting at a Glance:

- John Dickinson is leaving the State Committee after 12 years of service. The State Committee thanks him and wishes him the best!
- The EPF budget has been raised to \$300 million, and includes increases to a number of SWCD programs!
- The State Committee is planning to add an AEM Outreach position to assist with digital and print outreach materials and training. The position will be funded through a contract with a District; RFP to host the position is forthcoming.
- 97 Round 22 AgNPS applications are being scored, totaling more than \$34 million. The ranked list will be available at the June State Committee meeting.
- The Climate Resilient Farming Program awards were announced April 18. Contracts will be forthcoming.
- Congratulations to Lauren Prezorski, who was honored with the CDEA President's Award.

Present:

D. Stein, Chair; C. Colby, D. Brass, J. Dickinson, State Committee Voting Members; M. Latham, Director; B. Steinmuller, Assistant Director; C. Frasier, B. Bzduch, G. Spitzer, T. Clark, L. Prezorski, B. Brower; M. Carriero, L. Lyons-Swift, SWCC; L. Townley, DEC; J. Rusnica, DAM; S. Wojtowicz, DOS; L. Williams, NY Farm Bureau; PJ Emerick, CDEA; A. Paice, NYACD.

Call to Order

D. Stein called the meeting to order.

Review/Approval of Minutes

C. Colby moved to approve the March 2016 minutes; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Budget Update, B. Steinmuller

The NYS 2016-2017 budget was approved, and all proposed additions to the Districts were passed. The Environmental Protection Fund was increased overall from \$177 million to \$300 million.

Increased appropriations that directly impact SWCC programs include:

- \$19 million for Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects, an increase of \$4.8 million
- \$2.5 million for the new Climate Resilient Farms Program
- \$9 million for Soil and Water Conservation Districts, an increase of \$3.725 million

The increased District Aid line item is particularly important, because it will increase Part C (Performance Measure funding). When all of these funds are distributed in accordance with the law and regulation, each District has the opportunity to earn approximately \$150,000, up roughly \$75,000 over last year's program level.

The May [June] meeting will include a conversation about amending the Part C guidelines so that Districts have the opportunity to clarify their submission forms.

Other appropriations of interest to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts include:

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- \$12 million for Invasive Species, an increase of \$6.15 million
- \$20 million for Farmland Protection, an increase of \$5 million
- \$15 million for Oceans and Great Lakes Initiative, an increase of \$8.95 million
- \$2.279 million for Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Protection Alliance
- \$1.5 million for Agricultural Waste Management
- \$20 million for Water Quality Improvement Program, an increase of \$12 million

Honoring John Dickinson, B. Steinmuller

John Dickinson is stepping off the State Committee after 12 years of service. The State Committee has grown in capacity and diversity during his time on the Committee, and is much stronger than it was when he joined.

He added comments that he has always been proud of the State Committee's capacity to get funding on the ground and to bring groups together to work through issues relevant to agriculture and communities across the state.

John Dickinson was presented with a plaque to celebrate his service.

A new member, Darin Hickling of Otsego County, will join the State Committee as the NY Farm Bureau representative next month.

Outreach Plan, B. Steinmuller

B. Steinmuller provided the State Committee with a plan to use AgNPS funds to support a contract position to create digital and hard copy outreach materials for Districts and the Committee to use. The position would revise the website, create brochures, and design educational materials and assist with training needs.

The position would be funded through the EPF, through AgNPS funds, and would cost roughly \$100,000 each year. The funding would be more than covered by monies returned at close outs. The Department of Ag and Markets is supportive of the plan, and the position will likely be based in Albany.

The contract for this position will be provided through a Conservation District. An RFP for the role of District sponsor will be forthcoming.

The State Committee supported the proposed outreach plan. The digital needs of the State Committee were emphasized, and the challenges of finding a suitable candidate who has a background in environmental science and/or agriculture, website design, and graphic design for brochures and other materials were discussed. PJ Emerick relayed that the Ontario SWCD uses brochures and other materials created by this position in the past. M. Latham suggested and D. Stein agreed that the proposed budget for "equipment and supplies" would be inadequate for printing enough materials, and B. Steinmuller said that it would be investigated and revised in the RFP.

D. Brass moved to approve the outreach plan concept and to move forward with the RFP for Districts to bid on hosting the position; seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Climate Resilient Farming, G. Spitzer

The Round 1/Pilot awards were announced yesterday, April 18, at the Annable Farm in Onondaga County. The project at the Annable Farm is a water storage project, to repair a dam to recreate Smith Hollow Pond and associated wetlands, which will filter water and collect sediment from erosion related to eight farms upslope of the pond. The event was a success. Commissioner Ball, Dale Stein, Mike Hoffman (of the Cornell Institute of Climate Change and Agriculture), Aaron Buchta (of Onondaga County SWCD), and

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Dan Annable (the farmer) all spoke about the project, the other awards, and the importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation practices.

Round 1 awards went to:

Track 1- Manure Storage Cover and Flare		
Cortland	\$268,350	Install a manure storage cover and flare system; impacts of the system will be studied by Cornell PRO-DAIRY researchers
Erie	\$141,500	Cover a 4.5 million gallon manure storage and burn collected methane to reduce GHG emissions and keep stormwater out of the storage
Genesee	\$176,839	Install a manure storage cover and flare system to reduce methane emissions and keep clean water out of the storage
Wayne	\$83,382	Install a manure storage cover and flare system to reduce methane and divert clean water to a managed wetlands complex
Wyoming	\$429,929	Install a manure storage cover and flare system to reduce methane and keep 3.5 million gallons clean water out of the storage each year
Track 2- On-farm Riparian, Floodplain, and Upland Water Management		
Albany	\$26,705	Build a stormwater retention pond that will double as an irrigation source during the growing season
Onondaga	\$46,324	Recreating a pond and enhancing associated wetlands
Orange	\$75,000	Creating a floodplain bench on a ¾ mile stretch of the Walkill River
Track 3- Soil Health		
Genesee	\$22,316	Soil conservation systems including 100 acres of cover crops
Onondaga	\$55,803	Soil conservation systems including 50 acres prescribed grazing and 100 acres cover crops
Wayne	\$73,778	Low-till, cover cropping, and crop rotation on 1,010 acres

The press release is [available](#), along with [blurbs](#) associated with each project.

The State Committee wants to thank the Annable Farm and Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District for hosting the event. Special thanks to Aaron Buchta, who arranged the event and managed the planning and back and forth with the farm and the Department of Agriculture, and who spoke about the project and the program at the podium. Thank you.

President’s Award, PJ Emerick

The NYS CDEA President’s award is given at the sole discretion of the NYS CDEA President. The intention of the award is to acknowledge an employee or conservation partner who has benefited the New York State Conservation District Employees Association in profound ways.

This year’s recipient fits this criterion most perfectly.

In 2015 Lauren Prezorski worked closely with members of her team on the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee to organize a Level 1 Training for new employees sometimes affectionately referred to as “Conservation Boot Camp”.

This 4 day event was created for new employees who have less than 1 year of experience with Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The event was held at SUNY Cobleskill and the training consisted of basic level courses on topics such as agricultural operations and management, water quality, erosion control and stream bank stabilization. The event provided students with both classroom lectures and in- field site visits to farms and project sites.

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As an alumnus of SUNY Cobleskill, Lauren knew exactly who to talk with at the College and where to go to make sure the students got the most out of this event.

Lauren organized her colleagues at the NYS SWCC who served as instructors and van drivers to make sure that course material was created and ready for the students. Lauren personally made sure that facility permits were in place, vehicle drivers were certified, food and beverages were arranged, snacks provided and restrooms were in place in the field. Even though Lauren now works part time for the SWCC, she devoted more than a full time's worth of work to make sure this event was successful. She gave PJ her personal cell phone number and email address and would frequently call PJ on her days off to discuss the course, the facility and materials she was organizing and printing on her own time.

At Lauren's request, PJ had the honor of delivering the closing remarks at the 2015 Boot Camp and had a chance to speak to each of participant. Every student expressed highly positive comments about the event and specifically about Lauren's professionalism and knowledge base. PJ couldn't agree more!

PJ formally recognized Lauren Prezorski for her outstanding efforts of advancing the knowledge and skills of new Conservation District employees through the Level 1 Technical Development Program – AKA Conservation Boot Camp.

Agricultural Non-Point Source Program, B. Bzduch

Round 22

100 Round 22 proposals have been received (97 are being reviewed, 2 were found incomplete and 1 was withdrawn), for more than \$34 million in funding. This represents 272 farms, of which 148 are new to AgNPS.

Bzduch reported on the preliminary analysis of the new set of questions regarding repeat farm participation and expansion related proposals. 24 applications indicated that they were for BMPs that had been previously completed on that farm, and those older system's lifespans had not expired on 19 of those. 10 applications indicated that they were for "expansion related practices," and 8 of those were waste storages. The issues surrounding expansion related practices will be discussed at the TAC meeting on May 5th.

The applications are currently being scored, and the ranked list will be approved at the June SWCC meeting.

Amendments for State Committee Consideration

Region 4

Lewis County SWCD – Nutrient Management in the Black River Watershed – Round 19 – C701127

Request: Change in BMPs

Reason: Since the project was originally planned, the barnyard/heavy use area has been eliminated and new engineering designs call for an additional waste storage and transfers. The SW 3 reflects these changes.

Note: Bob Brower, Region 4 AEA, approves this BMP Change

Previous Amendments: None

Lewis County SWCD – Silage Leachate Control in Black River Watershed Phase IV – Round 18 – C701072

Start Date: 7/24/2012 Current End Date: 5/25/2016

Request: Time Extension to 5/25/2017

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Reason: The Kennel Farm is the last farm to implement and the farm has to install their silage leachate control system. The farm was unable to implement this practice last year and the grant deadline is May 25, 2016. The farm has hired an engineer and the practices design in is progress. Implementation is scheduled to begin in June of 2016 if the extension is approved.

Note: Bob Brower, Region 4 AEA, supports this time extension, defers to the State Committee

Previous Amendments: None

D. Brass motioned to approve the amendment, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Region 5

Suffolk County SWCD – Sole Source Aquifer Protection Fuel Tank Replacement – Round 18 – C701090

Start Date: 7/24/2012 Current End Date: 5/25/2016

Request: Time Extension to 5/24/2018

Reason: A change to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services Sanitary Code was made that requires fuel tanks installed to be placed on a 2500 sq. ft. concrete pad. This requirement needs to be changed in order for the 2 remaining participants in the grant can move forward. The Department of Health Services will be working on making this change as quickly as possible.

Note: Jennifer Clifford, Region 5 AEA, supports this time extension.

Previous Amendments: None

D. Brass motioned to approve the amendment for a 1 year extension, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried. Discussion ensued prior to amendment approval regarding the length of the extension.

Orange County SWCD – Wallkill River Watershed Farm Runoff – Round 18 – C701082

Start Date: 7/24/2012 Current End Date: 5/25/2016

Request: Time Extension to 5/25/2017

Reason: Staff changes have left the District shorthanded for several months. An extra year is needed to close out the remaining projects and deliver meaningful conservation to several farms in Orange County.

Note: Jennifer Clifford, Region 5 AEA, supports this time extension.

Previous Amendments: None

D. Brass motioned to approve the amendment, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Orange County SWCD – Wallkill River Watershed Farm Runoff – Round 18 – C701082

Request: Change in BMPs

Reason: Requesting to change from Critical Area Planting to Cover Crop. The cover crop will benefit a larger area, although it is not as permanent as Critical Area Planting. The District estimates the water quality benefits will be a least equal, if not greater, from this change BMP's.

Note: Jennifer Clifford, Region 5 AEA, approves this BMP Change

Previous Amendments: None

New York State Certified, B. Steinmuller

The Department is committed to working with Districts and the State Committee on the environmental

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portion of the New York Certified program. To be part of the program, farmers must have completed AEM Tier 2 and have GAP certification. Currently, 50% of GAP farms have an up to date Tier 2.

The State Committee and the Department are working on some outreach materials for the NY Certified program. B. Steinmuller advised that he will be bringing regular status reports to the Committee's attention.

Partnership Updates

CDEA, PJ Emerick

Let me first start by saying thank you to everyone who attended the 2016 Water Quality Symposium. The SWCC staff and Board have been outstanding supporters and partners of this event for years and we really appreciate your willingness to allow your team members to attend, instruct courses and provide the necessary background support to make this event such a success. I was very happy to have the NYS SWCC meeting during our event and it was great to have members of the team join us for our banquet. THANK YOU!

The CDEA will begin re-establishing committees and will start the process of organizing the 2017 Water Quality Symposium in May. If anyone would like to help or serve on a Committee, please contact me or Jordan Clements ASAP.

As you know the NYS CDEA Inc. has been working closely with the SWCC and the Department to assist in the delivery of the NYS Certified Program. We are honored to have the opportunity and we look forward to continuing to assist with this program. We will be working closely with your team to start the process of assisting producers who wish to take part in this initiative.

The CDEA recently submitted a formal request to our partners at NYS DEC requesting the NYS CDEA be allowed to offer an online version of the NYS DEC Erosion & Sediment Control Course. We feel that because of the highly trained District staff available to provide the course and the ongoing CPESC training requirements that we must have as trainers, the NYS CDEA is best suited to provide the online version of the training. In addition, if our request is approved, the money generated from this online course would go directly back into providing water quality and erosion control training to our members and partners. The Municipal Subcommittee with Cliff Frasier's leadership has been very helpful in ensuring that Districts remain at the forefront of erosion and sediment control training in NYS.

In the first months of 2016, the CDEA worked with the USDA NRCS team to create a Training Agreement between our two organizations. This Training Agreement will allow the NRCS to financially support the CDEA's major events such as the Water Quality Symposium, Conservation Field Days, Enviro-thon and the new Leadership Training event. Final revisions have been made and the Agreement has been sent on to NRCS leaders for final signatures.

The CDEA has also started the process of working with NYACD to explore the possibility of having a combined NYACD Annual Meeting and Administrative Conference this year. The Admin Mgt Committee will be meeting very soon with NYACD to look at registration costs, event location and potential course subjects and instructors.

At the 2016 CDEA Annual meeting, the CDEA approved re-establishing the Civil Service Committee. This Committee will work closely with the SWCC and NYS Civil Service to update existing District position title exams in an effort to make them more modern and consistent with the work that Districts are doing today. At our upcoming May 10th CDEA meeting, we will request volunteers to serve on this Committee.

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If anyone is interested in assisting in this effort, please let me know.

The CDEA has also been recently working closely with Bob Brower and SUNY ESF to arrange the necessary insurance requirements to hold the upcoming Leadership Training at their facility. The event is scheduled to take place July 12-15th, 2016. More information on registration will be available very soon and will be posted on the NYS CDEA website.

The NYS CDEA has also been working closely with the NYS DEC and other partners and sub-contractors to explore the options of District driven CAFO permit training for farmers. This could alleviate some of the workload being put on NYS DEC and allow for local interaction with the District, DEC and the farms in individual counties or regions of NYS. The CDEA was approached in late March, so this is very new. We currently have a CDEA Board member working with NYS DEC on this and I will have more information in the following months.

Lastly, the next CDEA Board meeting will be on May 10th at the Cayuga County SWCD office. This will be a one day meeting; I would like to encourage each of our partners to attend.

Please contact me anytime if you have any questions or concerns.

State Committee, G. Spitzer

Vic DiGiacomo and G. Spitzer delivered a successful session on SharePoint and online resources/tools at the Water Quality Symposium. G. Spitzer showed off some of the resources available on the State Committee SharePoint. Districts are encouraged to use the resources! Feel free to ask if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

NYACD, A. Paice

A Paice has visited 10 Districts and went to DC for a fly-in lobby day. She is working on reviewing and updating the NYACD goals, mission, and vision.

DOS, S. Wojtowicz

The next round of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Grant applications will be announced soon (note: they were [announced](#) 5/2). Districts are not eligible to apply on their own, but they may join with municipalities to apply.

Farm Bureau, L. Williams

The Farm Bureau has also been working with the DEC on the CAFO permits, and may be providing comments.

State Committee, L. Lyons-Swift

L. Lyons-Swift is excited by the prospect of an outreach specialist who could work on updating digital materials, would be able to work with her on GIS applications to create both static and interactive maps, and the ability to use social media to reach more audiences.

DEC, L. Townley

The Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) Grants will be announced at the same time as the LWRP Grants through the consolidated funding application (note: the announcement is available [here](#)).

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Districts are eligible applicants, and they are encouraged to apply!

The RCPP has been finalized for Genesee, and that should be moving forward.

The CREP amendment with FSA is moving forward.

The comments on the CAFO permit are currently being reviewed.

State Committee, T. Clark

T. Clark is working on reviewing an agrichemical storage facility in Suffolk County. NRCS usually works on these, but they are not able to meet the demand across all regions of the state, so Tim is filling in.

State Committee, B. Steinmuller

State Committee staff have been encouraging Districts to plan for the major increase in Part C District Aid. There will be a full discussion of District Aid, including a mechanism for clarification of District responses on Part C applications, at an upcoming SWCD Managers' Meetings and State Committee meeting.

Monroe County SWCD, C. Colby

Monroe County SWCD will be hiring 3 new technicians in the upcoming weeks.

The District is concerned and discussing both how to meet the Part C metrics and how to spend the money the following year.

One board member brought up concerns about inequities between District Director training (required for Part C, and significant time commitment) and State Committee Voting Member training (no formal training required). Discussion ensued regarding the informal training voting members receive as they are briefed on various State Committee programs.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting – June 21st, 10:00 a.m. at the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Pride of NY Room.