

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
581 State Fair Blvd., Syracuse, NY 13209
55 Hanson Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217

July 18, 2017

Meeting at a Glance:

- **Round 23 Ranked List:** An error was discovered in the Round 23 evaluator scoring after the SWCC had approved the ranked list at their June meeting. One reviewer awarded more than maximum available points in the Cost Effectiveness category. Corrections were made to the ranked list and it was presented to the SWCC for their approval. There were no substantial changes to the ranked list, as approved.
- **Part C Vehicle Purchases:** The SWCC has voted to approve the use of Part C funds to support the purchase of motor vehicles which are necessary to assist in the delivery of a project or program funded by Part C. SWCDs who have interest in purchasing a motor vehicle utilizing Part C funds will first need to seek approval from their Board of Directors and then from the SWCC Voting Board. A Part C Vehicle Purchase Request form will need to be submitted to the SWCC for their review and consideration. Any questions can be directed to your Regional AEA or Jennifer Clifford.
- **NYS ESC Certification Program:** The Municipal Subcommittee has been discussing the possibility of developing a NY Erosion and Sediment Control Certification Program as an alternative to the CPESC program offered by Envirocert. The partners that will make up the governing committee for the certification program have decided to move forward with the inception of the program. Currently, the Committee members and Don Lake are creating a Policy & Procedures Manual to help guide the program. The goal of the committee is to announce the NYS ESC Certification by November. More info regarding specifics will be distributed once they are available.

Present:

State Committee Voting Members: D. Stein, State Committee Chair (Syracuse); D. Brass (Syracuse), E. Goodman (Brooklyn), R. Montesi (Albany), D. Hickling (Albany).

Albany location: B. Steinmuller, Assistant Director; B. Bzduch, J. Clifford, S. Fickbohm, T. Clark, C. Nellis, Montgomery County SWCD; L. Williams, NYFB, Paul Kaczmarczyk, DOH.

Syracuse location: P.J. Emerick, R. Bush, G. Albrecht, V. DiGiacomo, SWCC; D. DeWeese, USDA-NRCS; Mark Burger, representing CDEA.

Call to Order

D. Stein called the meeting to order.

Review/Approval of Minutes

Dave Brass moved to approve the June 20, 2017 minutes; seconded by Ron Montesi. Motion passed; carried.

SWCC Staffing, B. Steinmuller

Brian gave a staff update which includes adding Judy Littrell to State Committee Staff as a Cortland County SWCD employee as the Conservation Education Outreach Coordinator. Judy will work out of the SWCC office in Albany. Brian reported that Bob Brower will retire from State Committee Staff as of July 26, 2017, and Bob has been a longtime employee, and the State Committee wishes him well after a successful career with Conservation Districts and the SWCC.

Steinmuller reported that the waiver to backfill the Climate Resilient Farming Program Manager position is still pending and will be a challenge to fill it since it is a new position. A request to fill Lauren Lyons-Swift's position has also been submitted along with a request to fill Bob Brower's AEA position.

Correspondence, B. Steinmuller

The usual mailings and periodicals were made available at the Albany location.

Steinmuller presented 2 letters from individual Districts to the Committee. The first was from the Schoharie Co SWCD Board Chair, who raises concerns about grant awards in AgNPS. The letter addressed concern regarding the District's inability for their proposals to rank high enough to receive AgNPS grants, especially with the new CAFO permit in place. Dale followed up that he has spoken with Committee Chair and a member of their Board, in response to the letter. A follow up letter to the District and Board was also sent from the State Committee to address the concerns. The District will work more closely with their AEA on the grant process during the development of the application. Dale also urged all Districts to work closely with their AEA's on a more regular basis, especially for farms that are not in priority watersheds.

The second letter was from Saratoga County SWCD which Steinmuller read to the Committee. The District is requesting to use Part C funding to purchase a truck to tow their hydroseeder. Currently, the District is relying on towns for support, and feel they could improve efficiency and increase utilization of the program by having a truck for towing and hauling materials. This request prompted the development of a Part C Vehicle Purchase Request Form.

After discussion, **R. Montesi made a motion to approve Saratoga SWCDs purchase of a 1 ton rack truck for the purposes of towing their hydro-seeder; seconded by D. Hickling. Motion passed; carried.**

Jennifer Clifford distributed a draft proposal for a Part C Vehicle Reimbursement form for Districts to use. The Committee discussed protocols that need to be put in place. The Committee agreed that they must consider a request for a vehicle purchase using Part C funds, as long as it was first approved by the local SWCD Board of Directors. District Boards are urged to put vehicle purchase protocols in place.

D. Hickling moved to approve the Part C Vehicle Request Form; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program, B. Bzduch

B. Bzduch provided a program status dashboard (attached). It was reported that 9 contracts since June have been closed out. Round 17 closeouts finishing up. There are currently not many outstanding or long overdue close-outs, nor are there many scheduled in the upcoming months.

Before Round 23 discussion B. Steinmuller asked all Districts present with the exception of the CDEA Representative to recuse by leaving the meeting room at all locations. All District officials recused themselves at this time.

Bzduch discussed the error in the Round 23 scoring that was discovered after the June State Committee meeting. The award list was initially approved by the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee on June 20, 2017. After this approval an issue was discovered resulting in the need to revise the Round 23 AGNPS Scores. One reviewer awarded more than maximum available points in the Cost Effectiveness category. The maximum available points is eight (8) points. It has been documented that the reviewer had a misunderstanding regarding the maximum available points in the Cost Effectiveness category. The reviewer believed the maximum points to be 10 points rather than 8 points. A formula was developed to mathematically adjust the scores. The following formula was used:

Cost Effectiveness Score/10 = % Score

% Score x 8 = Revised Score

Using the formula: Scores of 9 = 7, Scores of 10 = 8

This was used on all 27 scores that were given greater than 8 points.

Bzduch presented resolution 17-03:

MOTION:

That subject to the availability of funds, the Committee shall award funding, pursuant to Round 23 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grant Program, for projects 1-125 in order ranked and in the amounts recommended by the advisory members of the Committee until funds available for this purpose are exhausted or the scoring threshold is reached, consistent with the Soil and Water Conservation District Law, the RFP, and any other law applicable to funding of such projects. Consistent with the RFP, the Committee authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Markets to negotiate the terms of the contract with the project sponsors and to make minor adjustments to the project description and budget as necessary to achieve project goals, conform to applicable laws and regulations, and to serve the best interests of the State.

D. Brass moved to approve Resolution 17-03; seconded by D. Hickling. Motion passed; carried.

The District officials re-entered the meeting room at this time.

Municipal Conservation Subcommittee Report: Jennifer Clifford and Tim Clark reported on the following:

The Municipal Subcommittee has been discussing the possibility of developing a NY Erosion and Sediment Control Certification Program as an alternative to the CPESC program offered by Envirocert. The partners that will make up the governing committee for the certification program have decided to move forward with the inception of the program. Currently, the Committee members and Don Lake are creating a Policy & Procedures Manual to help guide the program. The goal of the committee is to announce the NYS ESC Certification by November. More info regarding specifics will be distributed once they are available.

Partnership Reports / Advisory Member Reports / Additional Public Comments:

Paul Kaczmarczyk, DOH: Paul told the Committee that public comment period will be opening soon regarding the NYC Watershed Filtration Avoidance Determination.

Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Staff: A TAC meeting is being planned for August 15th to start discussion on Round 24 and Climate Resilient Farming program along with making recommendation for AEM Base split.

Lauren Williams, NYFB: L. Williams advised the Committee that the NYFB is starting policy development process. Williams noted they are planning a Commodity Summit on July 19th.

Greg Albrecht, SWCC Staff: Greg reported on the Soil Health demonstration and the farm equipment walk at Empire Farm Days, two activities that are well supported by our partners at annual event. Greg also reported that Jackie Lendrum of DEC, will be moving to the Bureau of Water Assessment and Management within DEC and will be working with the Finger Lakes Watershed Hub among other initiatives.

P.J. Emerick, AEA: PJ reported that he is adapting to his new role as an AEA, and has closed out his first grant. Emerick is very busy working with Scott, Vic and others within western and central NY.

Dennis DeWeese, NRCS: DeWeese gave an update on the status of USDA-NRCS, including that the hiring freeze might be thawing. NRCS-NY is working on hiring 3 entry level positions to start chipping away at the 30 vacancies. The Department is working on a hiring strategy for forward facing customer service positions.

Mark Burger, CDEA: Mark reported on the upcoming Conservation Skills Workshop to be held in Cortland in late September. Details of the program were presented including that "boot camp" training will be offered once again this year.

Dale Stein, SWCC: Dale reported that the Genesee River Watershed Coalition hired Stephanie Castle to be the new Program Director. Dale also questioned the number of farms with consent orders and fines enacted by DEC.

Next Meeting – September 19, 2017.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:37. Please contact Brian Steinmuller, Assistant Director of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee if you have questions or would like to propose agenda items for the Committee to address.

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518-457-0562

Audiocast available at <https://www.agriculture.ny.gov/webcasting.html>