

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

STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 20, 2010

**NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Pride of New York Room
Albany, NY**

Present: G. Proios, D. Stein, D. Brass, J. Dickinson, Voting Members; M. Latham, Director; B. Steinmuller, N. Lawler, C. Frasier, J. TenEyck, W. Peng, SWCC Staff; D. DeWeese, NRCS; A. Eaton, DEC; K. Smith, DOS; P. Kaczmarczyk, DOH; J. Moody-Czub, J. Rusnica, M. Brower, Ag & Markets; J. Littrell, NYACD; B. Wohnsiedler, Jefferson Co. SWCD; J. Slezak, S. Lewis, Albany Co. SWCD; L. Telega, Cornell

Call to Order:

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

Review and Approval of Minutes

D. Brass moved to approve the June minutes as presented; seconded by D. Stein. Motion passed; carried.

Correspondence

Letters & Memos

Letter to the Committee from Gary Overmier, Great Lakes Commission, RE: Congratulations on her watershed project being selected to submit a final proposal/work plan by 7/21/10

Letter to Dean Kathryn Boor, College of Ag & Life Sciences, from George Proios, RE: congratulating her on her recent appointment and brief her on the mission of the NYS SWCC

Letter to George Proios from Kathryn Boor, RE: Thank you for the congratulations letter & expressing her appreciation for the work of the NYS SWCC

Letter from Robert Davies, DEC, RE: State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee & importance – M. Latham indicated they are seeking a long-term appointment to this committee; either a District or field employee

Letter from Robert Klein & Michael Carr, The Nature Conservancy, RE: publication & a copy of Climate Change in the Champlain Basin: What Natural Resource Managers Can Expect and Do.

Reports & Newsletters

County SWCD Newsletters from Broome, Cayuga, Columbia, Erie, Nassau, Herkimer and a history of Chenango County SWCD

Oklahoma Conservation – June 2010

CDEA May Minutes

ERS Report for June

NY Sea Grant

Bay Journal - June 2010

Biomass Conference Review

EPA News – June 2010

NYS Budget, State Committee Staff and Contractual Services Update

M. Latham reported that the Division is undergoing an approximate 40% reduction in non-personal services to date. He thanked the partners, such as NRCS who have been very helpful in providing resources and opportunities for shared training events. Latham explained that the Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) discussions downtown have subsided for the moment. He stated

on July 19, the Department submitted a plan for approval to the Department of Budget relative to targeted employees eligible for Part A and Part B retirement incentives. Contracts for Dutchess and Schenectady Counties have been approved as one-year contracts subject to four renewals.

Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Grant Program July 20, 2010 State Committee Meeting

STATUS OF ROUNDS 1-15

Of 542 contracts, 157 are active, 7 are pending and 363 are complete. 15 contracts have been cancelled during the life of the program.

Staff Approved Amendments

1. Cortland SWCD – Tioughnioga Implementation – Round 12 – C700808

Request: Change in BMP

Reason: replacement landowner developed his own conservation plan and determined that installing a silage leachate collection and treatment system is a priority over the manure storage system planned by previous owner.

*Note: John Schumacher, Region 2 AEA, supports the change in BMP
Previous amendments: two landowner changes, one time extension*

B. Steinmuller stated Round 16 Plan of Work forms and information were sent to Districts receiving funding for this Round in mid-July. The Plans of Work are due to the regional staff by August 27, 2010. Funding for Round 16 totaled \$9.6 million and 37 proposals received funding. B. Steinmuller spoke about the NPS amendment policies and in particular, landowner changes. As was approved at the June SWCC meeting, allowing landowner changes up until the time that a plan of work is submitted to the Albany office is in effect. He distributed the Proposed Timeline for the Development and Release of the Round 17 RFP.

D. Stein moved to approve the Timeline for Development and Release of Round 17 RFP; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed and carried.

B. Steinmuller stated a TAC meeting will be held in August. Changes and/or suggestions for the RFP and its process will be discussed. Topics will include agronomic field level practices, multi-year cover cropping, grazing projects, and funding caps. P. Kaczmarczk stated in the last few Rounds, the BMPs were more varied. He stated more projects were focused on field level practices as opposed to farmsteads.

Albany County SWCD Presentation

Joe Slezak, Field Manager, and Susan Lewis, Administrative Manager and Technical Assistant from the Albany County SWCD, delivered a PowerPoint presentation in which they outlined the diversity of the District.

Highlights include:

- Albany County's population is approximately 300,000. The county has two State Parks located at Thompson's Lake and Thatcher Park. Albany Co. SWCD has a staff of three and a five-member board.
- Battery Recycling Program, which is being phased out as it is costly and limited funding is not making it possible to continue.

- Albany Co. SWCD teamed with six agencies on an advertising campaign explaining the public value of environmentally sustainable farms throughout the county.
- Advocated for and participant in the stormwater coalition in Albany County.
- Established five rain gardens in coordination with Master Gardeners and the Stormwater Coalition throughout the county including urban and suburban parks in the Capital District.
- Involved in conservation education. Partnered with Rensselaer, Schoharie, and Schenectady counties for Capital Region Envirothon with about eighteen teams per year participating.
- Albany Co. SWCD worked with the New England Rain Barrel Company. The District sold 135 rain barrels the first year of the program. This is a very popular program that helps reduce runoff and builds public recognition of the District.
- Received funding for several grants through nonpoint source program.
- Held two successful tire recycling programs in partnership with the Department of Public Works.
- Has a robust annual tree and shrub sale. Provided trees to Tawasentha Park in Guilderland.
- County appropriation for 2010 - received 20% (approximately \$20,000) less than 2009 - they should expect the same for 2011.

AEM Base Program Data Management Project

Wanjun Peng, a graduate student from SUNY ESF, worked as an intern for the Soil & Water Division through a mini-grant that the Committee secured in cooperation with EPA/EFC and Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center. As part of our annual action plan, a target strategy under agricultural conservation is to develop an AEM database to prioritize, by watershed, State and Federal program needs. Wanjun developed a data management system which catalogs AEM base data from AEM Year 1 through the current AEM Year 5 and is capable of managing data for future funding years. She demonstrated the Access program running through every form field and generated reports.

Chesapeake Bay TMDL Discussion

M. Latham stated NYS received the final load allocations from the EPA. The nitrogen allocation is of major concern. Agriculture land use is 40%+ of the load, forest cover is 33%. 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). This means that NYS will not likely achieve the nitrogen cap with conservation practices. Realistically the broadest BMP systems on all farms will only yield a 10% reduction in nitrogen. Latham stated that each State has already received a "consequences" letter from EPA outlining aggressive actions if they do not comply with the TMDL. Angus Eaton stated that the TMDL is being developed by EPA Region 3, (Washington, DC, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware). The Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that will be developed by each state will set targets for nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment reduction. EPA could cut back funding, void or deny Clean Water Act permits, and expand regulations to Animal Feeding Operations if the TMDL is not met.

2010-2011 Annual Action Plan (AAP)

D. Stein moved to approve the Annual Action Plan; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed and carried.

G. Proios stated we should be making the best of cooperation and coordination with partners and avoiding duplication of efforts to maximize limited resources.

D. Stein stated at a winter meeting we could discuss better coordination with partners.

J. Dickinson stated the SWCC should assist Districts better through consistent regional coordinator presence.

Partnership Advisory Reports

D. DeWeese stated NRCS is entering the fourth quarter. They are closing out programs, working on Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative and other initiatives, technical assistance, quality assurance, review of processes and program deliveries.

C. Frasier stated there was a Stormwater Committee meeting held June 17, 2009. They have held 222 training events and 8,300 contractors have been trained. Only Districts can hold these training events. Their next meeting will discuss the Districts role regarding Marcellus Shale exploration. DEC is currently reviewing over 1,400 comments on the Marcellus Shale whitepaper.

J. Littrell stated Jeff Eisenberg; new CEO of NACD supports Districts efforts on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL process. He is working with all six states on strategies for SWCDs. The Legislative Conference is being held in Washington, DC the week of July 20, 2010. Brad Rogers is attending. The NACD annual meeting will be held October 17 – 19, 2010 in Utica. She stated resolutions need to be submitted to NACD by August 15, 2010. Awards nominations are also due on that date. Employee Association Managers Meeting Administrative Conference will be held in conjunction with the NYACD meeting. On September 7th a celebration will be held at Schoharie County SWCD commemorating the 70th anniversary of their district. This will be celebrated in coordination with NRCS's 75th Anniversary.

L. Telega announced Kathryn Boor, new Deane of the CALS, would be in Albany on August 25, 2010. The county budgets for next year indicate that cooperative extension offices may be challenged to maintain programs and personnel.

M. Latham reported on Part B of the State Aid to Districts program. In 2006, 57 counties had completed 80 projects; 2007, 56 counties had completed 67 projects; 2008, 58 counties had completed 68 projects and in 2009, 58 counties had completed 64 projects. Most projects involved streams, wetlands and storm water management.

K. Smith reported EPA is conducting a meeting on Marcellus Shale in Binghamton on August 12, 2010. (Note: Moved to Syracuse) Deadline for comment period of 45 days has expired for the Water Pollution Control Linked Deposit Program. EFC needs to move forward by reaching out to lending institutions on low interest loans to farms for repairs or replacement of septic systems.

P. Kaczmarczyk stated his Bureau at Department of Health has had their staffing reduced by 15-20%, which is presenting some interesting challenges.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 8, 2010, Holiday Inn Express, Schoharie, New York

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.