

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

STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 23, 2011

Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation Committee Offices
Auburn, NY 13021

Present: G. Proios, D. Brass, D. Stein, J. Dickinson, C. Colby, Voting Members; M. Latham, Director; B. Steinmuller, C. Frasier, L. Travis, R. Brower, J. Ten Eyck, B. Silvestri, L. Prezorski, V. Weston, State Soil and Water Staff; J. Lieberum, NYSCDEA; L. Telega, Cornell U.; D. Tuxill, DEC; L. Gerstenslager, Wayne SWCD; K. Smith, DOS; E. Henry, NRCS; P.J. Emerick, R. Russell, Ontario SWCD; D. Fisher, Onondaga SWCD; T. Evanick, A. Barber, Cortland SWCD; Scott Fickbohm, Robert Banta, Otsego SWCD; E. Leadley, Genesee SWCD; J. DeHollander, Cal Dorn, Oswego SWCD; R. Podolak, R. Lockwood, Cayuga SWCD; J. Barter, Steuben SWCD; S. Lorraine, Madison SWCD; Judy Wright, American Farmland Trust; and Sam Leadley, Genesee County resident; B. Aman, Retired Voting Member.

Call to Order: G. Proios, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

George commended and thanked Les Travis, who is retiring, for the 27 years he has worked with the Committee. His last day on the payroll is July 6th. He will be missed by all his fellow workers and District employees alike.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Chuck Colby moved to approve the April minutes as presented; seconded by David Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Correspondence

M. Latham read a letter from Peter Black regarding the possible involvement of the State Committee with the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission in the hydrofracking issue for water quality purposes.

M. Latham also received a letter from P.J. Emerick, NYSCDEA Division II Representative, on behalf of the District employees, concerning the lack of structured training for new District employees. Mike noted that L. Prezorski is currently working on a curriculum with NRCS that would possibly include the local colleges' input (adding District skill sets in their course outlines). P.J. suggested the possibility of following the curriculum used for the Water Quality Symposium and the Conservation Skills Workshop to save costs. M. Latham said that the Committee will respond to P.J. Emerick's letter and L. Prezorski will provide a progress report to the Committee in September.

M. Latham noted that, faced with the reality of the budget, there will be fewer opportunities for individualized training; it may be necessary in some cases for Districts to travel for select centralized training.

Environmental Protection Fund and State Budget and Staff Updates – M. Latham

G. Proios spoke about his meeting with the Commissioner on Division staffing and other issues related to agriculture and Conservation Districts.

M. Latham talked about EPF and funding to augment staffing. D. Stein asked whether it was legal, although he supported exploring the concept.

**D. Stein made a motion to explore EFP funding to augment staffing; seconded by J. Dickinson
Motion carried.**

M. Latham added that EPF received a cash plan for SFY 2011-2012: \$14 million is allocated for our Division (which is a reduction of \$3 million from last year). We need to maintain priorities. As the June payments go out, we will let the Districts know. As planned, in mid-July another \$1 million will go out.

Mike expects the budget for non-personnel items to be tight; which will show up as reductions in allowable travel, training and other miscellaneous items. It appears that we will be status-quo in the staffing area. In order to reduce travel and meeting expenses, Committee meetings will be reduced to 8 a year (Latham suggested that the Committee not meet in March, October, August and January). M. Latham asked the group their thoughts on this reduction. Consensus was reached on reducing the number of meetings to 8 annually following Latham's recommendation.

M. Latham noted that he is planning to continue teleconference calls with staff and holding three manager's meetings a year. Jeff Ten Eyck will be the acting regional Associate Environmental Analyst in the western part of the State. B. Steinmuller will be the acting coordinator in the southeast region. . The staff will rely more on electronic and remote communication with Districts. Administratively the Division will have to ensure that email and contact lists are current and updated.

Agricultural NPS Abatement and Control Program – B. Steinmuller

STATUS OF ROUNDS 1-16

Of 573 contracts, 154 are active, 1 is pending and 399 are complete. 19 contracts have been cancelled during the life of the program. Since January 2011, 21 projects have closed out.

Amendment for State Committee Consideration

Delaware SWCD – controlled & Ltd. Livestock Access Using Riparian Forest Buffers in the Susquehanna Basin 2007 – Round 14 – C700898

Request: time extension from 12/31/11 to 12/31/12

Reason: There are 3 stream crossings to complete. If July and August have heavy rainfall again this year, they may not be completed.

Note: Cliff Frasier, Region 5 AEA, supports the time extension.

Previous amendments: none

D. Stein moved to approve the Round 14 amendment request for a time extension to 12/31/12; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Staff Approved Amendments

Delaware SWCD – Precision Feed Mgt. for Susquehanna Basin Dairy Farms Phase II – Round 14 – C700900

Request: change in budget

Reason: moving funds from contractual services and overhead expenses to BMPs

Note: Cliff Frasier, Region 5 AEA, approved the change in budget

Previous amendments: none

Wayne SWCD – Great Sodus Bay Ag Program Phase 3 – Round 16 – C700996

Request: change in BMP

Reason: change from a manure composting system to a buried manure transfer line injection System. This change will provide direct incorporation into the fields.

Note: Les Travis, Region 3 AEA, approved the change in BMPs

Previous amendments: none

Wyoming SWCD – Lake Erie Drainage Basin Ag BMP – Round 14 – C700880

Request: change in BMPs

Reason: changes in two farms. One farm is replacing a barnyard water management system with silage leachate management. On the other farm, the milkhouse waste transfer is now a deleted practice in their CNMP.

Note: Les Travis, Region 3 AEA, approved the changes in BMPs

Previous amendments: 2 changes in BMPs

Round 17 Update: B. Steinmuller told the Committee that the Round 17 grant awards have not yet been released. Steinmuller expressed to the Committee that the Round 18 RFP should not be released until the Round 17 awards are made. Steinmuller and Latham noted that they thought the awards would be authorized early in July.

Round 18 RFP and Proposal Rating Sheet Approval: *Before presenting the Round 18 RFP and Rating Sheet, Steinmuller asked for all District representatives, with the exception of the President of the CDEA, and all farmers in the room that plan to apply for Round 18 grants please recuse from the discussion and exit the meeting until discussion and decision is completed, pursuant to State Ethics Advisory Opinion 03-09. All District representatives and Voting Members that plan to apply left the meeting room.*

B. Steinmuller distributed copies of the draft RFP and Rating Sheet that was developed in consultation with the staff and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Discussion ensued regarding the summary of changes to the Round 18 RFP and Rating Sheet. Few changes were drafted into the Round 18 RFP. All changes and highlights will be provided to Districts upon release of the RFP.

D. Brass moved to approve the Round 18 RFP and Proposal Rating Sheet as presented with the caveat that it not be released prior to the pending Round 17 award announcement; seconded by J. Dickinson; Motion passed; carried.

AgNPS/AEM Base Funding Split Decision – J. Ten Eyck

J. Ten Eyck presented the Committee with an update of the AEM Base Program and a recommendation for the AgNPS/AEM Base Funding suballocation for Round 18 and Year 8. J. Ten Eyck explained how the program is working to build and maintain capacity for Conservation Districts to sustain agricultural programming in their counties. The AEM Base Program has also been instrumental to the increased and sustained level of implementation proposals received in each AgNPS round since the Base Program began. J. Ten Eyck developed a proposal for the suballocation of the EPF for AEM Base Year 8 with consultation from the staff, Director and TAC. J. Ten Eyck asked the Committee to consider suballocating \$2.5 million from the SFY 2011-2012 AgNPS EPF appropriation. This will leave \$10.5 million for competitive AgNPS implementation for Round 18.

C. Colby moved to approve the suballocation of \$2.5 million from the SFY 2011-2012 AgNPS EPF Appropriation for AEM Base Year 5 programming; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

This concluded the topics that required recusals. The participants who were asked to recuse themselves were invited back to the meeting.

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet Review and Approval – Lauren Prezorski, Jeff Ten Eyck

L. Prezorski gave an update on the EBM project focusing on incorporating EBM principles into AEM Tier 2 Worksheets. Many stakeholder meetings and collaborations with staff and the TAC culminated in the revision of the first five AEM Tier 2 Worksheets:

- Livestock Odor Management
- Waste Disposal
- Process Wash Water
- Silage Storage
- Livestock Heavy Use Areas (HUAs)

L. Prezorski reviewed the changes for each Worksheet and answered questions.

D. Stein moved to approve the revised AEM Tier 2 worksheets as presented; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

ADVISORY MEMBER/PARTNERSHIP REPORTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS – All

Jim Lieberum, NYCDEA President, announced that the next board meeting of CDEA is July 12th. He also mentioned that they will be hosting a golf outing on July 28th.

J. Lieberum also noted that President Obama declared the Lake Champlain Region as a national disaster area because of the massive flooding that impacted the area this spring. J. Lieberum and B. Brower provided a summary of the flood specifics and impacts.

Les Travis spoke about his 27 years with the Districts/Committee and the progress that has been made in that time. B. Steinmuller thanked him for his guidance over the years and said that he has been instrumental in advancing so many initiatives and projects on behalf of Conservation Districts in NYS.. It was noted that Districts are very eager to enlist Les's assistance and guidance before he retires.

Lee Telega provided an update on Cornell University and Extension matters. Telega noted that Cornell Cooperative Extension is celebrating its 100 year anniversary.

Ken Smith of the Department of State commented on the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts and the Watershed Management Planning Project between the Coalition and DOS.

K. Smith noted that the project is very comprehensive in scope and moving along quite nicely. He noted that the Coalition hired a consultant, Win McIntyre, to provide technical expertise to the project and recently hired a GIS consultant to assist in data collection analysis and mapping.

Bob Aman gave the Committee a brief update on the Marcellus Shale issues in the Southern Tier and that new technologies are being developed constantly to minimize impacts to the environment.

L. Prezorski added that she attended DEC's Water Management Advisory Committee meeting and Jeff Myers did an excellent presentation on stream water quality monitoring and management. Prezorski suggested that Jeff Myers should be asked to present to the Committee at a later meeting.

V. Green gave a NYS CREP Report. As of 6/20/11, 10,684.72 acres have been enrolled in the program. 801 total contracts have been approved at STO.

E. Henry, USDA, gave the results of the discrimination settlement and debt relief with Hispanic and women farmers. He also noted that NRCS awarded the Lake Champlain Great Outdoors Project \$1.6

million (\$1.1 million in EAP) for Lake Champlain, for grazing, pasture management control and special projects, including CNMPs.

M. Latham noted that the next Committee meeting will be held on July 19th-20th at the Chemung County SWCD offices in Horseheads, NY. The first day of the meeting will showcase the diversity of the Districts in the area with a tour of the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District facility and a bus tour

comprising Chemung, Seneca and Schuyler Counties. The Committee will reconvene on the 20th to wrap up official business. A separate event, hosted by the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is being planned for July 20th and includes a bus trip to take a constructive look at gas development as experienced in Bradford County, PA. There will be speakers on the bus giving their perspective on the results of the drilling that has taken place. There will be a fee for the bus ride.

NY Association of Conservation Districts – 2012 Farm Bill Listening Session

NYACD hosted a listening session, on the 2012 Farm Bill for the afternoon session of the meeting.. C. Colby, State Committee Voting Member representing NYACD opened the session and welcomed the facilitator Sallie Joe Crosier. The participants were broken-down into small groups to discuss specific provisions and elements of the Conservation Title. A summary of the discussion will be developed to provide partnership comments to the NYS Congressional Delegation with specific concerns and challenges facing today's farmer.

Next Meeting – is scheduled for *Tuesday*, July 19th and 20th, 2011 at the Chemung County Soil and Water District Offices at 851 Chemung Street, in Horseheads, NY at 9:30 am.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

To access the audio-cast for this meeting, please visit:

<http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/webcasting.html>