

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

STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES
July 19 – July 20, 2011
Chemung County Soil & Water Conservation District Office
and County Fairgrounds
Horseheads, NY 13021

Present: Day 1

D. Brass, D. Stein, J. Dickinson, C. Colby, Voting Members; M. Latham, Director; B. Steinmuller, C. Frasier, State Soil and Water Staff; B. Silvestri, Schenectady SWCD; D. Grantham, Cornell U.; D. Tuxill, DEC; K. Smith, DOS; P. Hall, DOH; R. Rausch M. Brower, DAM; S. Daubert, NRCS; M. Watts, J. Verrigni, J.J Carl, D. Fiorentino, K. Bush; Chemung SWCD; A. Jackson, S. Graubard, Chemung County Legislator; J. Verrigni, E. Dalrymple, L Weatherbee, J. Hazlitt, Schuyler SWCD; P. Griswold, E. Peruzzini, Seneca SWCD, J. Skinner, JESS Engineering.

Present: Day 2

D. Brass, D. Stein, J. Dickinson, C. Colby, Voting Members; B. Steinmuller, J. Ten Eyck, C. Frasier, State Soil and Water Staff; B. Silvestri, Schenectady SWCD; R. Rausch, M. Brower, DAM; K. Smith, DOS; E. Paczkowski, NRCS; C. Ivison, V. Green, S. Ivanov, FSA; J. Stouffer, OSC.

Call to Order: D. Stein, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

D. Stein thanked the Chemung County SWCD for allowing the Committee to hold our two day meeting and Conservation Tour at the District office and the Chemung County Fair Grounds. M. Latham also thanked Mark Watts and others for their work in organizing the Conservation Tour.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

J. Dickinson moved to approve the June Minutes with the correction submitted by K. Smith; seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.

Correspondence:

M. Latham did not have any correspondence to read. However, M. Latham took the time to have the Committee consider the approval of Annual Plans of Work for Genesee, Schuyler, Orange, and Wayne SWCDs.

D. Brass moved to approve the Genesee, Schuyler, Orange, and Wayne SWCDs Annual Plans of Work; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Since time allowed, M. Latham took the opportunity to brief the Committee on a number of priority issues.

M. Latham advised the Committee that the MOU between the Committee, Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the Department of Transportation is in its final stages. The MOU will serve as the foundation to work with the NYS DOT on conservation efforts on and off of rights-of-way and other locations adjacent to DOT maintained roads and highways. The MOU's total potential value is \$400,000.

M. Latham noted that Jackie Moody-Czub has accepted a position with the administration as the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and Markets. To date, the position that she recently held at the Department, Deputy Commissioner, has not been back-filled. Currently, the Division of Soil and Water is working directly under the supervision from the 1st Deputy Commissioner, Bob Haggerty. Other changes in the Department include the addition of a new Director of Communication, Michael Moran.

M. Latham told the Committee that he is working with NRCS to develop a proposal that would extend Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) funding for engineering assistance for the state. More details on the proposal will be forthcoming.

M. Latham advised the Committee that the PEF layoffs have been rescinded due to a tentative agreement between the Governor and the union leaders. The contract will be considered by the PEF Executive Board on August 11, 2011 and presented to the members shortly after for potential ratification.

M. Latham noted that the Chesapeake Bay Model has undergone a recalibration that will potentially modify NYS's load allocation.

M. Latham asked B. Steinmuller to take a moment to brief the Committee on Round 17 of the AgNPS Grant Program. Steinmuller noted that progress has been made since the last State Committee meeting explaining that 43 projects received funding awards for a total of just over \$11 million. Steinmuller further explained that unexpended funds on completed projects allow the Committee to extend funding to an additional 9 projects on the list for a total of 52 and \$12 million. He reminded the Committee that a new resolution authorizing the additional funding was not necessary because the initial resolution allows for the funding in ranked order until funding is exhausted. Steinmuller noted that a motion would only be necessary if the Committee did not support the additional funding. The Committee expressed support for the funding of the additional projects.

Conservation District Annual Report – B. Silvestri

B. Silvestri gave a presentation highlighting District accomplishments as reported in the individual 2010 SWCD Annual Reports. It was explained that the reports have been analyzed to facilitate the development of a statewide Conservation District Annual Report that will be published alongside the AEM Report. The presentation highlighted the diverse nature of the District work across the state. The report will include additional details and will be written for multiple audiences to raise public awareness of Conservation Districts.

Chemung County SWCD Facility Tour

Before commencing the tour, M. Latham thanked the District for their time taken out of their busy schedules to showcase their many conservation achievements. Latham noted that many of the successful projects described in the District Annual Report can be found right there in Chemung and surrounding counties.

M. Watts thanked the Committee for the opportunity to begin the tour with an in-depth review of District highlights organized neatly in a portfolio of accomplishments. M. Watts credits the partnership with the county and surrounding municipalities for the demonstrated shared services to put conservation on the landscape. M. Watts learned early in his career from a veteran and leader of the Conservation movement in NYS, Jim Hotaling, retired District Manager of Cayuga SWCD, to “never say no.” This simple edict has served the Chemung and surrounding Conservation Districts well and the facility, projects, and partnerships highlighted today exemplify that success.

A Chemung County SWCD Facility Tour was provided followed by a bus tour of various conservation projects throughout a three-county area: Chemung, Seneca, and Schuyler. District staff members from all three counties, as well as project designers and farmers, were all on hand to describe the many facets of the projects.

Project tour stops and highlights:

Stream Stabilization Project

Old Ithaca Road Dike: This 3,000’ dike was constructed in the 1940’s to protect the railroad tracks and Holding Point WWII POW camp, which is now an industrial park. Earlier this year the District partnered with the Newtown Creek project and the County, Town and Village of Horseheads to stabilize a 330’ section of stream that was moving towards the dike. Innovative stream stabilization methods included longitudinal toe bank protection and bendway weirs. Nationally renowned stream expert, David Derrick, hosted a training session at the site and planning for future projects is underway.

Urban Stormwater Management Demonstration Sites

Schlumberger: This 80-year old company provides a multitude of services to the oil & gas companies. It is located on a 90-acre parcel in the Holding Point industrial park, which is protected by the Old Ithaca Road Dike. Their state-of-the-art stormwater system treats runoff from an impervious area of over 30-acres, which flows into a DEC-regulated wetland. Operating in over 80 countries with over 100,000 employees, the company was named one of the top 500 green companies in Newsweek magazine.

Dandymart: Located adjacent to a DEC-regulated wetland, this fuel station/convenience store is considered an environmental priority due to its potential for petroleum products to enter runoff. They have implemented a stormwater management system that utilizes an oil/water separator that discharges to a stormwater management basin.

Seneca Beverage Corporation: Located adjacent to the Old Chemung Canal, this company built their facility with less impervious surface than the original development. Their stormwater is managed with an infiltration basin and an additional treatment system was constructed for their fueling station area.

Education, Outreach, and Shared Services

Log Cabin at the County Fairground: Built through District and Municipal cooperation, the cabin was constructed from trees cut and milled by the District. The site is host to a wide array of educational activities and includes a stormwater demonstration area with a rain garden and bio-retention swale. The site includes many low impact and energy conservation designs such as solar tube lighting, and compostable toilets. District stormwater educators were on site to demonstrate the Enviroscape models that show the impact of hydrological functions related to various landuse developments.

Sustainable Vineyards – Pesticide Management, Cover Crops, Mulching and Maps

Wagner Vineyards in Seneca County worked in partnership with the Schuyler County Soil and Water District's Seneca Lake Watershed Management effort to install a state of the art pesticide mixing and storage facility. Part of a multi-county State AEM grant involving 10 vineyards, this project was funded mainly by the farm. This large, unique setup can accommodate two pesticide sprayers, and is designed to capture and prevent any potential spills from reaching Seneca Lake.

Leidenfrost Vineyards in Schuyler County has been involved in all levels of AEM from assessment and planning through to implementation and evaluation. Their AEM evaluation led to an enhanced conservation plan that focused on maintenance of conservation practices and evaluation of pesticide properties specific to soil types. The farm is also a part of the District's multi-county cover crop and mulching grant, involving 14 vineyards, which provides state reimbursement for these practices. In addition to reducing soil loss, and preventing pesticide runoff and leaching, these practices increase soil organic matter and augment water management. The farm will also utilize the District's new no-till seeder to establish the cover crop. The farm utilizes a large scale map of their vineyard blocks developed by the District to assist them with farm management. The District is sought after by farmers, landowners and municipalities for their exceptional GIS mapping skills.

Please note: The audiocast for this part of the meeting was unavailable.

D. Stein, Vice-Chair, adjourned the meeting for July 19th at 4:15 p.m. The meeting is to reconvene tomorrow morning, July 20th at 8:30 a.m. at the Chemung County Fair Grounds (Conservation District's Log Cabin).

July 20, 2011

D. Stein, Vice-Chair, called the meeting back to order at 8:30 a.m.

Tour Recap and Comments

D. Stein thanked everyone involved yesterday for the outstanding display of Conservation success. He noted many of the highlights for those who were unable to attend.

B. Steinmuller welcomed Ron Rausch back to the Committee, this time as Commissioner Aubertine's official representative. Ron commented on the many years working in the Soil and Water field and was grateful to the Commissioner and the Committee for the opportunity.

Agricultural Environmental Management: 5 Year Milestones – Jeff Ten Eyck

J. Ten Eyck made a presentation to the Committee describing the many achievements made in the AEM Program over the last 5 years. The presentation evaluated the many evolutions of the Program including updating of Tier 2 Worksheets, accreditation as the foundation for agricultural conservation efforts through federal programs, impetus for technical training advancement, and funding of technical assistance through the AEM Base Program. Finally, the presentation concluded with an evaluation of success based on EPA crediting AEM efforts with improving water quality throughout the state in watersheds such as the Steele Creek, Oneida Lake, Skaneateles Lake and the NYC Watershed.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Addendum Submission Approval – Jeff Ten Eyck, Virginia Green

J. Ten Eyck and Virginia Green, FSA, explained the CREP Addendum proposal that would ask USDA-FSA headquarters to expand CREP eligibility to all areas of NYS effectively adding 2,265,445 acres of eligible land. This proposal would support efforts to fully utilize CREP in TMDL watersheds such as the Upper Susquehanna River. The addendum proposal was previously approved by the Committee. The Committee is now being asked to approve the addendum submission for USDA-FSA consideration.

J. Dickinson moved to approve the submission of the CREP Addendum; seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Partnership Reports – All

M. Brower, Department of Agriculture and Markets, briefed the Committee that he is reviewing multiple gas pipeline, electric transmission, and wind energy projects that intersect with agricultural lands. He spoke about new siting requirements for wind energy projects and increasing the amount of sites to review.

K. Smith, Department of State, shared with the Committee highlights of work being done in the Waterfront Revitalization Grant Program, which funds watershed management planning.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Next Meeting: September 20, 2011 at the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Produce Room, 10B Airline Drive, Albany NY 12235.