

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

STATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 13, 2009

**NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Produce Room
Albany, NY**

Present: B. Aman, D. Stein, G. Proios, Voting Members; M. Latham, Director; J. TenEyck, N. Lawler, L. Travis, B. Steinmuller, R. Lewis, C. Frasier, L. Prezorski, B. Silvestri, B. Brower, SWCC Staff; P. Webb, NRCS; L. Telega, Cornell; F. Zagorski, K. Roberts, DEC; E. Thomas, K. Smith, DOS; P. Kaczmarczyk, DOH; J. Carmichael, NYSCDEA; P. Giltner, J. Rusnica, J. Moody-Czub, Ag & Markets; J. Tausel, NYFB; P. Black, SUNYESF; J. Littrell, NYACD; V. Green, USDA-FSA

Call to Order:

G. Proios, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

G. Proios introduced and welcomed the new Executive Director of NYACD, Judith Littrell.

Introductions made.

Review and Approval of Minutes

D. Stein moved to approve the December minutes as presented; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed; carried.

Correspondence

Letters & Memos

Letter dated December 23, 2008 to Bradley Rogers, NYACD from Jim Dean, Chairman of the Rockland County SWCD District Board regarding NYS Conservation District Employees Association Technical Training Proposal.

M. Latham read, in part, the letter to Brad Rogers from Rockland County SWCD regarding the training proposal. Rockland County requested training/engineering assistance be mindful of diverse work that needs to be done by various Soil & Water Conservation Districts throughout the State, specifically the suburban/urban challenges in the southeast.

An additional letter was received from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. The letter is addressed to Dennis Hill and is a legal inquiry into the capacity of Districts to contract or receive resources directly from other state agencies and what provisions might be necessary for that to occur if, in fact, it isn't already allowed. M. Latham will follow up with an attorney assignment request thru the Department before we respond officially.

Reports & Newsletters

Otsego County SWCD Winter Newsletter
Seneca County SWCD District News
Cayuga County SWCD Conservation Highlights, Winter 2008
Albany County SWCD District News, fall 2008
Jefferson County SWCD December 2008 newsletter
Hudson Mohawk RC&D 2008 Annual Report
Bay Journal, December 2008
Schuyler County SWCD 2008 Annual Report
Oklahoma Conservation Conversation, November/December 2008

Rural Futures, News of Interest about Rural New York, Winter Issue 2008/2009
Nuggets & Nibbles, Fall 2008
Herkimer County SWCD Conservation News, winter 2009
Genesee County SWCD Soil and Water Update (Oct/Nov 2008)
CDEA News – January 2009
Waterworks – December 2008
ERS Report Summary (December 2008)
Erosion Control (Jan/Feb 2009)
The Resource (National Association of Conservation Districts) winter 2008

Conferences & Seminars

Trees & Utilities National Conference – 16th Annual Conference - April 6 – 8, 2009, Dallas, Texas

J. Moody-Czub stated the Commissioner's Report on the State of Agriculture was delivered at the recently held Ag Society meeting and reviewed some of the highlights. Additional details can be found at <http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AD/release.asp?ReleaseID=1780>.

NYS Budget and Personnel Adjustments

M. Latham officially welcomed Bob Brower to the State Committee as a State employee. He thanked the Department and administration in assisting with the transition of 319 employees to alternative positions. Additional positions funded through 319 for agricultural related services will be addressed through contract extensions.

SWCC Strategic Plan

R. Lewis distributed a packet of information regarding the NYSSWCC Strategic Plan update. Within the packet was a proposed updated mission statement. The Committee reviewed the mission statement and added three words.

D. Stein moved to approve the mission statement as follows; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed carried.

Updated Mission Statement:

The mission of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee is to promote a comprehensive natural resource program for New York State by supporting local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to develop and implement projects and programs that will preserve, protect and enhance the wise use of the State's soil, water and related resources.

In the packet is a draft list of core value and vision statements. R. Lewis asked the Committee to review the list and email their comments to him. He will incorporate changes and comments and distribute a revised list at the next meeting.

J. Carmichael distributed a brochure outlining some programs/services available through county Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He stated that the draft mission statement was brought to the Employees' Association a couple months ago. Someone recognized right away that the mission statement promotes a comprehensive natural resource program for New York State; not just agriculture or non-agriculture but natural resource in general. He indicated each District is unique in determining needs for their counties. The Districts determine which partnerships can help provide assistance in getting conservation on the ground. J. Carmichael stated Manager's Meetings are a great opportunity for Districts to share and for field staff to help lead the discussion and push ideas through.

G. Proios stated a re-evaluation of core programs should be conducted to determine if better efficiencies can be made and to avoid overlapping of programs.

L. Travis reviewed the purpose of the SWOT analysis. The members participated in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting the State Committee's ability to carry out their mission. Many ideas and thoughts were exchanged and recorded. Preliminary identification of strategic questions from SWOT analysis and strategic goals and desired results based on the analysis will be discussed at the February SWCC meeting.

The next Strategic Planning meeting will take place February 9, 2009.

Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Grant Program January 13, 2009 State Committee Meeting

STATUS OF ROUNDS 1-14

Of 514 contracts, 172 are active, 8 are pending and 319 are complete. 15 contracts have been cancelled during the life of the program.

Round 14

Funds have become available due to balances returned on uncompleted projects. Additional awards to six projects were made during the month of December 2008. Award letters and plan of work memos have been sent for the following Round 14 projects: Delaware 12-2, Jefferson 22-1, Madison 25-6, Albany 1-1, Suffolk 48-3, and Steuben 47-2.

Round 15

Pursuant to the Round 15 RFP, 88 proposals were submitted requesting a total of \$24,855,378. The proposals will be forwarded to the Technical Advisory Proposal Review Committee after the pre-review meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 15th. Proposal scores will be due on February 6th and the post-review meeting is scheduled for February 11th.

Staff Approved Amendments

1. Yates SWCD – Vineyard Erosion in the Central Finger Lakes Watershed Round 12 – C700834

Request: time extension from 12/31/08 to 3/31/10

Reason: additional time needed to complete projects due to economic conditions

Approved by Jeff Ten Eyck 1/6/09

2. Steuben SWCD – Chemung River Basin Prescribed Grazing Phase 5 – Round 12 – C700826

Request 1: change of landowner

Reason 1: original landowner voluntarily withdrew, new landowner identified as a priority

Approved by Jeff Ten Eyck 1/13/09

AEM Base Program and Allocation Year 5

J. TenEyck gave a report on the AEM program. J. TenEyck suggested going forward with AEM Year 5, more money may be given to those Districts who can earn it. Some Districts are participating in inter-District cooperation under the AEM program sharing staff and expertise.

B. Steinmuller stated there were no Planning Grant RFPs for Round 15. M. Latham stated that the AEM program should be viewed as one tool for delivering and implementing a local agricultural program. J. Ten Eyck stated EPF funding is scheduled to be \$13 million. He

indicated the AEM program for Year 5 would require the same allocation as last year, \$2.5 million. If the EPF funding is reduced, AEM Year 5 would need \$2 million minimum to sustain program.

D. Stein moved to approve \$2.5 million dollars of the \$13 million EPF State Fiscal Year '08-09 Funds be allocated to AEM Year 5; and further should the \$13 million funding be reduced, AEM Year 5 would be reduced to \$2 million and all unencumbered EPF funds from returned projects be allocated to implementation of the Round 15 Ag Nonpoint Source Grant Program; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed and carried.

AEM Outreach Report

B. Silvestri gave an update on the media training program and PowerPoint presentation in which she presented multiple photo slides of AEM Agriculture in the News Awards which were presented by Commissioner Hooker at the NYACD Award Dinner in October 2008. The top Gold Award was given to Clinton County. Additional recipients of Gold Awards went to Cayuga and Wyoming Counties. Silver Awards were presented to Jefferson, Onondaga and Warren Counties. Bronze Awards were given to Allegany, Cortland, Fulton, Herkimer, Schuyler and Steuben Counties. Madison County received platinum recognition as a District that has achieved outstanding success for the third year in a row. B. Silvestri received two awards, a Commendation Award and Soil & Water Conservation Society Media Award. Keith Kobland was honored by the Conservation District Employees' Association and presented an award by President, Jeff Carmichael. D. Hill and B. Aman also received awards.

Webcasting Annual Report

M. Latham provided an Annual Report on the webcasting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee's meetings. The State Committee was required to webcast its public meetings effective July 1, 2007 pursuant to Executive Order #3.

The summary of the study indicates that considering the high costs associated with webcasting, the lack of substantial utility and the present fiscal climate, the Committee is recommending that an exemption from Executive Order #3 be requested.

Emergency Management Resources

K. Nilsson, the Emergency Management Coordinator for the Department of Agriculture and Markets, spoke to the Committee regarding different emergency task forces and committees in which she is involved in representing the Department. She is available to answer questions regarding emergency and disaster preparedness.

2008 State Aid to Districts – Part B Projects

M. Latham distributed a summary of projects submitted for Part B, \$6,000 Conservation District Project Assistance for 2008. He indicated the project money should be out soon.

Annual Plans of Work

M. Latham announced three Annual Plans of Work for approval. They were submitted for the following counties; Oswego, Schuyler and Wayne.

D. Stein moved to approve the work plans; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed and carried.

Other Reports

M. Latham announced the foundation is in place for the Technical Development Training Program. Utilizing AEM Earmark funding, the Ohio Technical Development Program curriculum was purchased to build upon for a NY program. Additionally, Ohio will be sending staff to conduct a math refresher course at the Water Quality Symposium in March. M. Latham stated that one of the next steps will be to develop a Natural Resource Engineering Series for introduction to State Civil Service.

P. Kaczmarczyk indicated the Health Department has identified a contaminated (sediment/phosphorus) water supply in a 300-residential sub-division in the City of Newburgh in Orange County. He also indicated SUNY Morrisville in Madison County was out of compliance on their CAFO permit due to records not being kept.

K. Smith announced he was replacing Mark Streb as the Committee representative for the Department of State. He stated the Oceans/Great Lakes EBM project may have a reduction of 60% in EPF funding.

G. Green announced that the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program under the Farm Bill was rolled out on December 22, 2008. FSA is awaiting the appointment of a new State Director. The New York State CREP Report indicates 9,600 acres enrolled in CREP. A biomass crop program authorized in the Farm Bill is to begin fiscal year 2010. Before that, it will be a proposal-type program. She is hopeful with the willow biomass work that has been completed, New York will be a part of that program.

L. Telega stated the NYS Wine Industry and DEC are working on a Farm Winery Wastewater Permit.

P. Webb stated he was filling in for Don Pettit. He announced Astor Boozer would be starting as New State Conservationist on January 22, 2009. EQIP rule has been released as interim final rule in the Federal Register and the public will have opportunity to respond. Congress authorized five to seven year annual increment payments for Chesapeake Bay watershed. New York State will get a share funding for FY-2009.

J. Carmichael announced the Water Quality Symposium will be held in Auburn, NY on March 10-13, 2009. He indicated staff from Ohio will teach a math class on Thursday and discuss the Technical Development Training Program on Friday at the Managers' Forum.

G. Proios announced Lobby Day for NYACD is January 27, 2009.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, February 17, 2009, Utica, New York

D. Stein moved to break into Executive Session to discuss the Assistant Director to SWCC; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed and carried.

D. Stein moved to call the SWCC back to order; seconded by B. Aman. Motion passed and carried.

Mike Latham reported no action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

This web cast may be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.webcasting.com/soil-water/01.13.2009soil.html> .