

State Conservation Commission Meeting

May 14, 2024

Hybrid/Virtual Meeting

Agenda

Briefing Session - 10:00 a.m.

- Overview of meeting materials
- Pennsylvania's 2023 Chesapeake Bay Progress Update – Jill Whitcomb, DEP

Executive Session – 11:30 a.m.

Business Session – 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

A. Opportunity for Public Comment

B. Business and Information Items

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. March 12, 2024 Public Meeting (A)
 - b. April 9, 2024 Conference Call (A)
2. Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program - Additional ACAP Funds of the Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training Initiatives – Justin Challenger, SCC (A)
3. Nutrient and Odor Management Program
 - a. Nutrient Management Fund Budget – Brady Seeley, SCC (A)
 - b. Ag Plan Reimbursement for PACD – Justin Challenger, SCC and Brenda Shambaugh, PACD (A)
4. Proposed Changes for the FY 2024 REAP Program – Joel Semke, SCC (A)
5. Indiana County Conservation District Bridge Loan – Doug Beri, Indiana County Conservation District Manager (A)

C. Written Reports

1. Program Reports
 - a. Nutrient and Odor Management Program Measurables Report
 - b. May 2024 Status Report on Facility Odor Management Plan Reviews
 - c. NMP Actions
2. Monroe Conservation District Donation Approval
3. Ombudsman Program Reports – Southern Allegheny Region (Blair County Conservation District) and Lancaster County Conservation District

D. Cooperating Agency Reports

E. Adjournment

Next Public Meetings/Conference Calls:

June 11, 2024 - Conference Call

July 18, 2024 – In-Person Meeting – Joint Annual Conference, Penn Stater Hotel

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING

PA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

In-Person and Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, March 12, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.

Draft Minutes

Members Present: Secretary Russell Redding, PDA; Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Ramez Ziadeh for Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley, DEP; Mike Flinchbaugh; Daryl Miller (virtual); Ron Rohall; Ron Kopp; Don Koontz; Denise Coleman, NRCS (virtual); Drew Gilchrist, DCNR (virtual); Tree Zuzzio, DCED (virtual); and Brenda Shambaugh, PACD.

A. **Public Comment** – None.

B. **Business and Information Items**

Doug Wolfgang, Executive Secretary, noted that an Executive Session was held to address DGLVR compliance and other program legal issues.

1. Approval of Minutes –January 23, 2024 - Public Meeting and February 20, 2024 – Conference Call.

Ron Kopp moved to approve the January 23, 2024, public meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Don Koontz. Motion carried. Mike Flinchbaugh moved to approve the February 20, 2024 conference call minutes. Motion seconded by Ron Rohall. Motion carried.

2. Nutrient and Odor Management Program

a. Odor Management Plan (OMP) – Nelson H. Auker – Auker Farm – Amend B - Karl Dymond, SCC. Karl reported that the Commission is required to approve Level II Odor Management Plans when new or existing Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs) or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are planning to construct new or expand existing manure storage or animal housing facilities. Karl presented details regarding the Nelson H. Auker, Auker Farm, Amend B, Berks County, plan for approval.

Mike Flinchbaugh made a motion to approve the Nelson H. Auker, Auker Farm, Amend B, Odor Management Plan. Motion seconded by Ron Rohall. Motion carried.

b. Nutrient Management Fund Budget, Brady Seeley, SCC. Brady reported that staff is seeking partial approval of the FY 24-25 nutrient management budget, including an update on proposed uses of Federal funds, and approval of funds to be transferred to DEP to fund technicians under nutrient management/manure management delegation agreements. Brady explained each scenario (State and Federal funding) in detail.

Don Koontz made a motion to approve Line Item 1 from the proposed Governor's budget for State Nutrient Management and Manure Management delegation agreement funding levels for FY 24-25 for \$2,712,600. Motion seconded by Ron Rohall. Motion carried. This approval will be contingent upon availability of State funds in the FY 24-25 budget. Ron Kopp made a motion to approve the Federal funding, received under the Clean Streams Fund, for research grant programs. Motion seconded by Daryl Miller. Motion carried.

- c. FY 24-25 Nutrient Management/Manure Management Delegation Amounts – Brady Seeley, SCC. Brady reported that staff is seeking Grant approval of funding levels for participating conservation districts for Fiscal Year 2024-25 (FY 2024-25) for the Act 38 Nutrient Management / Chapter 91.36 Manure Management delegation agreement. This approval is consistent with the proposed FY 2024-25 General Fund budget proposed by Governor Shapiro, and commitment of funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Don Koontz made a motion to approve Grant approval of funding levels for participating conservation districts for FY 24-25 for the Act 38 Nutrient Management/Chapter 91.36 Manure Management delegation agreement. Motion seconded by Ron Rohall. Motion carried.

- 3. Protocol for Addressing Manure Treatment Technologies – Doug Wolfgang, SCC. Doug reported that Energy Works BioPower LLC is seeking the Commission's endorsement for their proposal on crediting nutrient reductions from manure treatment technologies in the Chesapeake Bay Program model. The facility, which operates in Adams County, is a direct-monitored animal waste treatment system that uses waste from Hillandale Farms to generate energy and produce a product that is used for feed and fertilizer. The facility has been non-operational since late 2017, due in part to issues around nutrient load quantifications in the Bay Program. Energy Works Biopower LLC believes that under the nutrient accounting and modeling methods in their proposed protocol, the system would reduce Pennsylvania's nitrogen-equivalent nutrient loading to the Chesapeake Bay by 5.8 million pounds annually, a 60% decrease in PA's Phase 3 WIP TMDL goal shortfall. Under current practice, Hillandale, which is one of the largest CAFOs in the Bay watershed, does not exist in the Bay model.

Ron Kopp made a motion to approve the request for endorsement to advance manure treatment technologies for further consideration in the Chesapeake Bay Model. Motion seconded by Ron Rohall. Motion carried.

- 4. Logger Training and Outreach to Provide Implementation of BMPs in Pennsylvania's Forests – Chuck Coup, Sustainable Forestry Initiative; and Justin Challenger, SCC. Chuck and Justin presented a proposal to support the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Implementation Committee (SIC) with funding for training and education related to forestry best management practices (BMPs) that reduce significant sediment pollution associated with timber harvested.

Ron Kopp made a motion to approve the proposal to support the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Implementation Committee (SIC) with funding for training and education related to forestry BMPs. Motion seconded by Don Koontz. Motion carried.

5. ACAP Update – Justin Challenger, SCC. Justin provided an update on the ACAP program, including the latest number of signed contracts statewide, plans for an administrative manual, and an update on the first annual ACAP conference to be held in State College on June 4-6, 2024, in collaboration with the new Center.

Action: No action required.

6. Proposed Changes for the FY 2024 REAP Program – Joel Semke, SCC. Joel reported that every year, the State Conservation Commission reviews the REAP Program and welcomes input from partners on how to improve the program. The changes range from minor revisions that are meant to improve the administration of the program to major changes that address what is eligible for REAP tax credits. Staff invites suggestions and comments regarding potential changes to the FY 2024 REAP program. The proposals listed reflect suggestions from SCC staff and partners based on experiences over the course of the past year. Please note: Each proposal is subject to legal review prior to being incorporated into the FY 2024 REAP Guidelines and Application packet. It is the intent of Commission staff to present a further final list of proposed changes at the April meeting of the Commission; and it is the intent of Commission staff to present final versions of the proposed FY 2024 REAP Guidelines and Application at the May 2024 meeting of the State Conservation Commission. The FY 2024 Guidelines and Application will include the proposed changes. Staff welcomes further comments and suggestions regarding the following proposals: BMP maintenance lifespans; older equipment; cover crops; REAP caps; silvopasture; fraud guidelines; and alternative fertilizer technologies. Commission and stakeholder groups will have the opportunity to provide input prior to Commission approval at a future meeting.

Action: No action required.

7. Sustainable Ag Board Update – Mike Roth, SCC. Mike reported that the Sustainable Agriculture Act provides the framework for the Sustainable Agriculture Board. The board has now been appointed and an inaugural meeting is forthcoming. The board will operate under the direction of Mike Roth, Director of Conservation and Innovation, for PDA/SCC. The related program provided under the Act will allow for the board to award grants for sustainable agriculture practices. The list of practices will be determined by the board but will likely include practices that improve soil health and build climate adaption/mitigation/resiliency, such as cover-crops and no-till, agroforestry, silvopasture, precision feeding, on-farm energy systems, manure storage covers and flares, and rotational grazing systems. Staff provided a brief overview of the program and update on next steps. The seed money for the grants is being provided by EPA through the Most Effective Basin (MEB) award.

Action: No action required.

C. Written Reports – Self Explanatory

1. Program Reports
 - a. Nutrient and Odor Management Program Measurables Report
 - b. March 2024 Status Report on Facility Odor Management Plan Reviews
 - c. NMP Actions
2. Ombudsman Program Reports – Southern Allegheny Region (Blair County Conservation District) and Lancaster County Conservation District

D. Cooperating Agency Reports – PACD, NRCS, Penn State, DEP, DCNR, DCED, PDA

1. **PACD** – Brenda Shambaugh thanked the Commission for working with PACD to plan the Joint Annual Conference, which will take place in July 2024. Brenda then reported on the Ag Plan Reimbursement Program. There was a total between the Growing Greener Grant and the SCC to provide \$600,000 into the program. The program was instituted 1.5 years ago, and funds were already utilized. PACD is currently waiting for paperwork to go through for \$100,000, which was already approved by the SCC. So far, almost 70,000 acres now have plans as a result of this program. More than 520 plans have been developed. All of this information goes into PracticeKeeper. There is a waiting list for the funds from the \$100,000 that is growing on a weekly basis. Applications are approved within a few days, and then the plan has to be developed within 90 days. After the 90-day period, plans can be approved within three weeks. PACD is working with the SCC to continue funding.
2. **NRCS** – Denise Coleman thanked the SCC for the ACAP numbers. NRCS recently received \$875,000 in funds for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program...there was flooding in July 2023. Thank you to DEP for 25% of these monies. NRCS is in the height of contracting season, and efforts are focused on Act Now cover crop contracts. Twenty-four million dollars are already obligated in contracts to producers. NRCS will be starting Boot Camp on March 19 and 26, 2024. In-person Boot Camp will be held at Fort Indiantown Gap from April 8-12, 2024. There will be two Boot Camp 2's this year due to the high demand, with most participants being in the agronomy track. These will take place at the end of April through the beginning of May. NRCS will be releasing Conservation Innovation Grants and will allow up to \$75,000 per project for demonstrating research on farms.
3. **PSU** – No report.
4. **DEP** – Acting Executive Deputy Secretary Ramez Ziadeh reported that permitting was a big topic in the DEP budget hearings. Representative Ecker (Adams/Cumberland) and Senator Martin (Lancaster/Berks) both asked questions about the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and our Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan. The DEP Bureau of Clean Water has updated the PAG-02 Authorization Letter template to prepare new permittees this year of the upcoming need to submit renewal Notice of Intent (NOIs) by December 7, 2024. All permittees with PAG-02 coverage prior to December 7, 2024, will need to submit the renewal NOI, even if they've only had coverage for a short while. The revised PAG-02 Authorization Letter can be found in the Chapter 102 Resource Center of Clean Water Academy. The Bureau of Clean Water asks everyone to download the latest template ([Letter Templates](#)) (Number 28) for immediate use. The Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands (BWEW) and the Regional Permit Coordination Office (RPCO)

published the final technical guidance: *Trenchless Technology Guidance* in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* on February 24, 2024. This document is available in DEP’s eLibrary at: <https://greenport.pa.gov/elibrary/GetFolder.aspx?FolderID=1039254>. **Please note that the effective date is February 24, 2024.** This has been a collaborative effort with many stakeholders, internal and external, providing valuable feedback over several years. The Program wants to thank everyone who was involved at some level in the development of this guidance. The following individuals contributed significantly to the completion of this project and would like to be recognized by the Program: Domenic Rocco, Cristine Vinciguerra and Drew Foley with RPCO, Andy McDonald with BWEW’s Division of Wetlands Encroachment & Training, and High Garst with the DEP Policy Office. This technical guidance is what DEP is *recommending* to operators who use or intend to use a trenchless technology construction method. Requirements in technical guidance are only communicated in those instances where the guidance references statutes or regulations. Technical deficiency letters and correction notices should only cite statutes and regulations, not technical guidance. You can *recommend* that operators consider points of interest from this guidance in the development of their permits and authorizations materials, including their PPC plans during preapplication meetings. DEP’s recent withdrawal of the technical guidance document (TGD), *Water Management for Agricultural High Tunnels* (383-4200-001) did not alter in any way the provisions of the Commonwealth’s Storm Water Management Act (Act 167 of 1978) as amended by Act 15 of 2018. As indicated in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* notice about the TGD withdrawal (see [54 Pa.B. 473](#)), DEP withdrew the guidance because it largely mirrored language in Act 15 of 2018 without providing much guidance beyond the statutory language. Part of DEP’s reason for publishing that guidance in the first place was to make clear that, although Act 15 of 2018 exempted certain high tunnels from the provisions of the Storm Water Management Act, that DEP regulations under other statutes (like the Clean Streams Law, the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act, the regulations at 25 Pa. Code Chapter 102 and 25 Pa. Code Chapter 105, for example) can still apply to high tunnels in certain situations. However, nothing in Act 15 of 2018 exempted high tunnels from the provisions of those other statutes and their implementing regulations, so a DEP guidance document saying as much was not really necessary. The 2024 Growing Greener Plus and FY2025 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management grant rounds are expected to open in Spring 2024. We recommend anyone interested in applying to begin planning projects. The DEP Bureau of Watershed Restoration Nonpoint Source Management (BWRNSM) is currently planning the virtual “Conservation District and Agriculture Agencies – Ag meeting” for mid to late July. This meeting was previously called the “All Ag Meeting” and held in March-April. Districts will be notified once a date is selected and an agenda is drafted. The Directors of Bureau of Clean Water (Manyi Liu), BWRNSM (Jill Whitcomb) and Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands (Andy Klinger), among others from DEP, PDA, and the Office of Transformation and Opportunity (OTO), have met with the agricultural industry, with conservation district representation, to have informal discussions and an open dialogue with the ag industry regarding challenges and solutions to permitting concerns. The DEP Bureau of Waste Management and Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Nonpoint Source Management have been meeting with a group of stakeholders, including ag industry, conservation districts, and legislators, to discuss opportunities to deal with FPR land application. BWRNSM was brought into the conversation based on our programs with districts, and implementing a similar program through the Manure Management Technical Guidance Document. Staff from BWRNSM serves on one of the sub-committees for FPR Management Implementation – to share lessons learned from our Manure Management Manual, and the development of training and E&O materials, etc.

2023 Chesapeake Bay Progress – A presentation will be provided to the State Conservation Commission at the May 14 meeting. Jill Whitcomb, Director of BWRNSM, advocated to EPA to re-direct the NFWF Ag Most Effective Basin (MEB) funds back to DEP so that we can expedite the funds delivery to the conservation districts and reduce the administrative burden on applying for funds. This also allowed EPA to direct IJA funds to support DCNR’s buffer programs. **Due to positive EPA Monitoring Reviews, which reviews status of DEP spend-down of EPA dollars and how effective we are managing our funds, EPA will be providing an increase of more than \$795,000 to DEP to further support CAP implementation efforts.** The total received from EPA will be more than \$14.4 million, which includes the Chesapeake Bay Regulatory Accountability Program (CBRAP), Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG), Local Government Implementation (LGI) Grant, Most Effective Basin (MEB) Annual Appropriation, and MEB IJA Grant. Kate Bresaw, the BWRNSM Agriculture Compliance Section Chief has been serving on the year-long EPA-USDA Federal Crediting Task Force to identify ways to ensure that all agriculture BMPs are accounted for in the states’ Chesapeake Bay progress. The culmination of this Task Force will be reported out during the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals’ Staff Committee (PSC) meeting in March.

- Coordinating across jurisdictions, EPA, and USDA stakeholders to identify solutions to the persistent issues of the annual USDA data set. Specifically, PA’s highest priorities have been, 1) addressing the under accounting of USDA/NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) BMPs, 2) reverification of USDA BMPs, and 3) identification workflow efficiencies.
 - PA representation on the task force is specifically interested in workflows that release the CCDs from the some (if not all) of momentous task of locating all USDA practices implemented through time in their counties so that they may be reverified at the end of their credit durations.
 - PA DEP believes the current work-around is an inefficient use of resources when the location data is known (through protected by the Farm Bill), so they have been advocating for solutions that are both compliant with the PII protections outlined in the Farm Bill and utilizing all known location data.
DEP is hopeful that there will be a feasible and implementable path forward to ensure that all historically and newly implemented BMPs with NRCS funding is credited toward Pennsylvania’s progress.
5. **DCNR** - DCNR, through the Urban and Community Forestry program with strong support from the Conservation District Community, offers a broad range of services to support sustainable urban and community forestry programs across Pennsylvania. In addition to programs offered across PA including, Tree Vitalize and the Lawn Conversion Program, DCNR understands that underserved communities face special difficulties. To this end, thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, PA is receiving \$9.75 million in support of the U.S. Forest Service to support communities with equitable access to trees and the benefits they provide. DCNR is using \$4 million of this fund for grants to underserved areas through the Community Conservation Partnership Program. Funds can be used for Community Tree Plantings, educational programs, Tree Tender Training and work force development. In addition, Governor Shapiro is proposing expansion of the PA Outdoor Corps to assist in getting trees in the ground. The PA Youth Corps has a six-week summer program for 15-18 year olds and a nine month, young adult program for those aged 18-25 years. While the majority of the project work will be performed on state park and forest lands, the corps will be available on a cost-share basis to local land managers such as municipal and county parks and recreation departments during 2024.

Nine Month Crews will be found in Altoona, Dubois, Harrisburg, Meadville, Norristown, Pittsburgh, Somerset, Wilkes-Barre, and Williamsport. Learn more about the young adult corps at <https://www.thesca.org/program/young-adult/corps/pennsylvania-outdoor-corps/> and the DCNR website. In 2021, DCNR added its first Tree Equity Specialist to apply the principles of equity and environmental justice in urban and community forestry work across the Commonwealth.

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn visited Reading to highlight grants available to plant trees in underserved cities and towns across the Commonwealth. The grants add to a budget commitment to maintain and improve Pennsylvania's natural places. Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 budget proposal includes another strong investment in the stewardship of Pennsylvania's natural resources, with new funding to build trails and expand the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps program. "Planting trees helps the planet -- and helps people. Trees keep neighborhoods cool during heat waves, prevent flooding during storms, and clean the air that kids breathe," Secretary Dunn said during a visit to Schlegel Park. "These grants, funded with federal dollars, will deliver benefits to communities that have been overlooked and underserved, since they don't require a match." The urban and community forestry grants will award up to \$4 million for projects as a part of this year's [Community Conservation Partnerships Program](#). Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, Pennsylvania is receiving \$9.75 million from the U.S. Forest Service to support communities with equitable access to trees and the benefits they provide. "We are proud to support DCNR and its mission of planting trees here in the city," Reading Mayor Eddie Morán said. "Trees are a vital part of Reading streets, parks, and landscapes. A heartfelt thank you to DCNR for championing community health and wellness with us!" DCNR staff are available to assist with answering questions, visiting potential project sites, and developing competitive grant applications. To get started, [contact the department's urban and community forestry experts Opens In A New Window](#) at 717-787-2703. "This direct support for the conservation efforts of local governments and nonprofit groups is needed and welcome in Berks County and throughout the Commonwealth," state Senator Judy Schwank said. "By planting trees and creating green spaces, we not only enhance the beauty of our surroundings but also improve air quality, provide recreational opportunities and support biodiversity. The trees celebrated today help create a brighter, more sustainable future for all residents of Berks County and beyond!" "We are excited to be here today to celebrate trees and to highlight grant opportunities that can help communities like ours," state Representative Manuel Guzman said. "Expanding access to green spaces is more important than ever. Trees are essential to improve the quality of life. What we create and protect now will be crucial for the wellbeing of generations to come. Thank you to DCNR and Governor Josh Shapiro for supporting eco-healthy initiatives in Reading."

DCNR grants have supported projects in Reading and Berks County including: \$25,000 for Schlegel Park for a pool feasibility study; \$250,000 to the city for the Third and Spruce Recreation Center for accessible play equipment, safe surfacing, and lighting. Grant applications must be submitted by 4:00 P.M. on April 3 through [DCNR's Grants Customer Service Portal](#). In 2021, DCNR added its first Tree Equity Specialist to apply the principles of equity and environmental justice in urban and community forestry work across the Commonwealth. If underserved communities aren't able to apply for grants, either due to lack of capacity or for not meeting the minimum \$50,000 project size, the department is prepared to work with them to implement community forestry projects. Trees and forests are critical in our efforts to address climate change, as they pull in and store carbon (a process that also helps with clean air). Other benefits are: reducing energy costs; slowing runoff after storms; increasing property values; mental and physical health benefits; reducing noise; and attracting birds and wildlife.

The Shapiro Administration has ambitious goals around trees and forests, including: reducing current rates of forest loss by 5,000 acres per year; restoring 5,000 acres of non-forest to forest by planting trees; and permanently conserving 15,000 acres of forest land vulnerable to development.

Dunn noted that interested Pennsylvanians can help support efforts to plant urban trees by donating to the Keystone Tree Fund voluntary \$3 check-off box on driver's license and vehicle registration online applications. Find more information about [trees in communities](#) on the DCNR website.

6. **DCED** – No report.
7. **PDA** – Secretary Redding thanked the DEP team for all of the good work being done on permitting. The Food Processing Residual (FPR) manual needs to be updated. Substances on fields are causing local issues. Currently, we have a higher standard for manure than we do for FPRs. We need to look at this and come up with a resolution. The budget hearings are complete, and it's a good budget for Agriculture. Things that Agriculture is required to do are covered, and all core work is funded. Another part of the budget is the Economic Development Strategy. Agriculture is in this strategic plan, along with life sciences, robotics, manufacturing, and energy. Another part of the budget is attracting major dairy processing to Pennsylvania. In order to accomplish this, there needs to be money for dairy processing. The problem in Pennsylvania is the site, itself. The budget is also committed to having an animal health lab in Western Pennsylvania. The Agriculture census came out two weeks ago. Pennsylvania lost 4,000 farms. This is an issue that needs to be analyzed.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Next Public Meetings: April 9, 2024 – Conference Call
May 14, 2024 -- Public Meeting, In-Person, Harrisburg, PA and
Microsoft Teams

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONFERENCE CALL

Microsoft Teams Conference Call

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 @ 8:30 am

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Secretary Russell Redding; Bevin Buchheister for Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley, DEP; Ron Rohall; Don Koontz; Daryl Miller; Drew Gilchrist, DCNR; Denise Coleman, NRCS; Dennis Beck, PACD; Tree Zuzzio, DCED; and Chris Houser, Penn State.

A. Public Input: None.

B. Agency/Organization Updates

1. DCNR – Drew Gilchrist

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn and State Fire Commissioner Thomas Cook are urging Pennsylvanians be mindful of high woodland fire danger as seasonal wildfire risk increases. The greatest danger of wildfires in Pennsylvania occurs during the spring months of March, April, and May, and the autumn months of October and November. In Pennsylvania, 99 percent of all wildfires are caused by people. Certain conditions are necessary for a wildfire to occur:

- An available fuel source, such as dried grass or leaves
- Dry conditions, including low relative humidity
- An ignition source -- some way for the fire to start
- Windy weather can cause wildfires to spread out of control more rapidly

Last year, Pennsylvania saw more than 1,900 wildfires that burned 9,186 acres and caused 15 injuries and three deaths. Debris burning, equipment use, power lines, and campfires, are some of the most common causes of wildfires in Pennsylvania. Light rainfall in many areas, lack of green foliage in the spring, low humidity and sunny, windy days all combine to increase chances of forest and brush fires spreading. Finally, officials recommend checking DCNR's website to see if there is an [elevated fire risk](#) and [information on wildfire safety](#). In addition, wildfire prevention is a message brought to people across the country by the well-known figure, Smokey Bear. (not Smokey the Bear) Detailed information about wildfire prevention as well as materials for kids and educators is on the [Smokey Bear websiteOpens In A New Window](#).

2. DEP – Deputy Secretary Bevin Buchheister

Jill Whitcomb reported the following: **Opening April 22 - 2024 Growing Greener Plus and FY2025 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grants** – To coincide again this year with Earth Day, the 2024 Growing Greener Plus and FY2025 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Programs will open on April 22. The PA Bulletin Notice for both programs will be published on April 20. The deadline for application will be June 21. Keep an eye out for the Grant Guidance Documents and associated materials to be published.

Chapter 102 Individual NPDES Permit (IP) Pilot Program - The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is introducing a Pilot program to evaluate new procedures for streamlining the review of Chapter 102 Individual NPDES Permit applications and improving the quality of applications received. Ten districts have signed the delegation agreement amendment. Six of the ten have been fully executed. The other four amendments are being routed internally for signature.

The Program will hold a training on the IP Pilot Program SOP later in April for all the districts that have agreed to participate in the Pilot. Official launch of the Pilot Program to the public will occur once all of the delegation agreements are fully executed.

Chapter 105 Program Moves to Online Form for 105 Quarterly Permit Data Submission Reports – For years, CDs have submitted permit data reports to the 105 Program on Excel Spreadsheets. This method is not something that DEP can sustain any longer. All of the forms will be available via a new Page on Clean Water Academy, which will maintain the links, and have completion instructions. The 105 Program held a kick-off webinar on March 25 for all delegated districts. There will be another webinar on April 8 from 8:30 – 9:30 for those that missed the first webinar. The Program plans to create short videos that explain how to complete the form and post them on CWA in the near future.

Land Application Technical Guidance Document Revisions – The revisions of the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) *Land Application of Manure: A Supplement to Manure Management for Environmental Protection* will be published on April 27. The published document will be available on DEP’s eLibrary for download. Printed copies will be available in the fall. Tools and resources to support the revised document including Clean Water Academy trainings, printed and downloadable handouts, and the PAOneStop Manure Management Plan Module will be available this summer and fall. The revisions bring the first changes to *Land Application of Manure* in over a decade. The revisions to the document are applicable to all agricultural operations that land apply manure or agricultural process wastewater that are not CAFOs or CAOs. DEP’s *Land Application of Manure* sets the standards for the land application of manure and agricultural process wastewater in the

Commonwealth. It also sets the standards for the development of Manure Management Plans.

Larson Design Group, Inc. (LDG) Retained as Engineering and Technical Assistance Service Provider for IIJA-MEB Technical Assistance Contracts (North and South)

- The Countywide Action Plans Technical Assistance Program has been established by DEP to address the increased need for technical assistance. The need for increased resources is paramount to initiating projects to help meet CAP implementation goals throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This program will provide engineering and technical services to a North and South region of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed that have historically lacked resources to implement needed projects. Counties that have access to the Technical Assistance Program include:

- North Region: Berks, Cameron, Clearfield, Columbia, Elk, Indiana, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, and Potter
- South Region: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Fulton, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Snyder, Somerset, and Union

Larson Design Group, Inc. has been retained by DEP to provide technical assistance services to increase project implementation capacity within the North and South regions and will be accepting project proposals for funding technical assistance needs. Examples of services that can be provided through this program include site survey, inventory and evaluation, project design, construction inspection, and project coordination. Projects must be in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

3. NRCS – Denise Coleman

NRCS is in the height of contracting season. Field staff is working hard to get EQIP and CSP funding obligated. NRCS is in the second day of in person Boot Camp. Thanks to all of the partners who have been able to participate.

4. Penn State University – Chris Houser

Penn State is in the midst of its search for a new Dean. There is a great set of candidates, and the new Dean is expected to be in place by July 1, 2024. The new Extension Director, Jeff Hyde, will start working on April 25, 2024. Penn State is proud of the work of the Center with the SCC and collaborations with NRCS. Kudos to Jennifer Fetter and Justin Challenger for their work.

5. PACD – Dennis Beck

Thank you to the SCC for its consideration at the May SCC meeting on funding of the Ag Reimbursement Program. PACD is excited about the Joint Annual Conference on July 17-18, 2024 at the Penn Stater Hotel. Conservation District week will be from April 28 through May 4, 2024. Many

activities in Pennsylvania will take place to celebrate the districts. PACD appreciates the attendance of Carl Deluca and Karen Books at the PACD Region Meetings.

6. DCED – Tree Zuzzio

DCED continues to implement the Economic Development Strategy and incorporate these goals into all activities while supporting the Agricultural industry. The State Planning Board is working on its 2025 State Land Use and Growth Management Report, and information will soon be requested on Agricultural Land and Preservation.

7. PDA – Secretary Russell Redding

PDA reminds to be vigilant when it comes to biosecurity. High Path AI (HPAI) flares are occurring. In recent weeks, HPAI has appeared in dairy in the Western US. Six states are currently positive (12 herds are positive). There are no positive cases in Pennsylvania, but there has been a quarantine issued on dairy animals coming into Pennsylvania. The Spotted Lanternfly quarantine list has added Greene County. Fifty-two counties are now under Spotted Lanternfly quarantine in Pennsylvania. Two weeks ago, there was a bull testing program sale at Penn State at the Livestock Evaluation Center. The Maryland/Virginia milk producers have purchased the HP Hood Dairy Processing Plant in Northeast Philadelphia. This is good for the strength of the dairy industry and the economy as a whole.

C. Information and Discussion Items

1. ACAP – Conservation Practice Certification Approval System (Justin Challenger) (NA)–

The SCC presented the first step towards developing a Conservation Practice Certification Approval System, in consultation with USDA-NRCS. The overall plan for this system is to provide a path for conservation professionals to design, review, and approve conservation practices that do not require certification by a registered professional engineer under the applicable laws or regulations of this Commonwealth. The SCC, Penn State Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training (CACAT), and selected Contract Engineer (HRG) have developed the initial framework for a pasture management certification. The group will present the idea to the SCC for review and comment to incorporate as we build out the first step in the Certification Approval System.

2. Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) proposed changes for FY 24/25 program year – (Joel Semke) (NA)

Each year the Commission reviews the REAP program guidelines and seeks input from partners on how to improve the program. Commission staff continued the update provided at the March meeting on several suggested changes for the upcoming program

year, including best management practice maintenance lifespans, limiting the age of equipment eligible for credits to 20 years or newer, distinguishing drones for use in planting cover crops from those used for spraying, clarifying eligibility of cover crop spreaders, and a potential cap on annual funding to stretch REAP credits to more farmers.

3. **Sustainable Ag Board (SAB) – Mike Roth– (NA)** – Mike provided an update on the SAB, including an overview of the inaugural meeting held on April 5, 2024. The SAB will use funding from EPA’s Most Effective Basin (MEB) program to award grants for sustainable agriculture projects and to create a statewide soil health program. The administration has included creation of a soil health program as priority under the Conservation Title of the upcoming federal Farm Bill. The Chesapeake Bay WIP 3 also identifies soil health as a priority for achieving water quality targets. In addition, soil health measures align with climate change adaptation, resiliency, and mitigation goals for agriculture.
4. **Pittsburgh Agriculture-Tech and Robotics Summit – Mike Roth (NA)** – Mike provided an overview of the ag-tech summit being held in Pittsburgh on April 16-18, 2024, and how it will potentially showcase opportunities for conservation.
5. **General Updates – (Doug Wolfgang) (NA)** – Doug provided general updates, including:
 - a. A recent meeting with EPA, DEP, NRCS, and PSU related to proposed protocols for manure treatment technologies in the Chesapeake Bay program.
 - b. A recent action team meeting with other states and EPA to explore a Chesapeake Bay program ag advisory team.
 - c. SCC’s ongoing involvement in co-chairing a workgroup related to land application of food processing residuals (FPRs).
 - d. SCC’s participation in a public meeting in Chester County related to hydrogen sulfide in the mushroom industry and next steps.
 - e. Potential USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) proposals.
 - f. A recent meeting related to the formation of a conservation district in Philadelphia.
6. **Next Meeting – May 14, 2024 – Hybrid/In-Person, PDA Building Room 309**
7. **Adjournment at 9:32 a.m.**



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

April 26th, 2024

To: Members

State Conservation Commission

From: Justin Challenger

Director, Financial & Technical Assistance Programs

RE: PSU Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training Initiatives

Background

Farm lanes, when not properly managed or maintained, can have environmental impacts on nearby streams and waterways. This is often due to “entrenched roadway” situations where rainfall is concentrated within the roadway itself leading to erosion and subsequent sediment deposits to streams. Farm lanes can also accumulate organic matter, when rainwater washes over these surfaces, it can pick up nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, carrying them to stream.

The Penn State Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training (CACAT), in partnership with the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies (CDGRS), aim to prepare conservation professionals and farm operators with the education needed to correct the environmental impacts from farm lanes. This partnership also plans to research the variations between public roadways and farm lanes, as well as implement demonstration projects to highlight new and innovative practices.

Additionally, the CACAT seeks to add additional funding for increasing engineering capacity for the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) through the contract with HRG, Inc. Technical assistance needs are at an all-time high for agriculture conservation projects across the state. Adding additional funds will allow for more engineering support for drawing plans, performing construction oversight, and completing post-construction inspections as well as more capacity for reviewing plans created by non-engineers working under their authority working towards certification.

Lastly, the CACAT plans to provide additional funding support for Workforce Development and Conservation Practice Research. This funding will go towards supporting interns’ wages and support. Interns will learn ag literacy through on farm experiences and gain conservation practice skills. This funding will also help the Center with tools and materials for the research technical to explore water quality benefits of new or modified practices that could be used as ACAP practices.

The commission seeks to add an additional \$706,000 to the existing PSU Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training contract through from 7/1/2024 through 10/31/2026 to complete these initiatives.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Farm Lane Project

Provide Training and Education Programs

- Create and implement a new certification program for conservation professionals, using the existing dirt and gravel roads program and design standards as a launching point. The program will include a multi-day training that results in competence in designing farm access lanes and crossings up to the point where professional engineering is required by law.
- Modified versions of this training will also be offered to farm operators/ag landowners (shorter version without administrative content) and NGOs, and private consultants who may also want to receive BMP certifications.
- Create educational fact sheets, news articles, and videos to provide resources for on-demand learning and technical assistance.
- Create and provide relevant training manuals, publications, and training tools to participants.

Provide Ag Conservation and Ag Outreach Technical Assistance

- Provide field operations and technical assistance for farm lanes through virtual (email, phone) and in-person site visits. Staff will suggest project improvement recommendations, on-the-job training for new conservation professionals (2-3 years or less of experience), funding clarifications, review of policy-matching and compliance, and more. All center staff will be trained in the Dirt and Gravel Roads Center Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance course.
- Provide engineering support services such as drawing plans, performing construction oversight, and completing post-construction inspections under the authority of the contracted engineer.
- Miscellaneous
 - Develop and implement demonstration farm lane and crossing projects identified by the center (and future conservation district applications). The focus will be on new and untraditional projects.
 - Provide research support to address essential questions about the variation between farm lanes and public dirt, gravel, and low-volume roads. Use research to make changes to design standards.

Increased ACAP Engineering Capacity

Provide Ag Conservation and Ag Outreach Technical Assistance

- Provide increased engineering support services such as drawing plans, performing construction oversight, and completing post-construction inspections under the authority of the contracted engineer.
- Add capacity for reviewing plans created by non-engineers who are working under emergency authority or working towards certification for official authority.
- Add capacity for final certification of ACAP funded BMPs.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Workforce Development and Conservation Practice Research

- Funding for wages and support for CACAT interns.
- Interns will focus on learning vital skills necessary to enter conservation workforce.
- Focus on the farm experiences and conservation practice learning.
- Provide funding for tools and materials for the CACAT research technician for exploring water quality benefits from new or modified BMPs.

Budget – \$706,000

Personnel- \$115,210

- Portions of 4 staff members including benefits
- Funding for CACAT interns

Operating - \$105,574

- Demonstration projects
- Promotional materials
- Equipment and materials for farm lane project
- Research technician materials and equipment

Travel - \$27,735

- Milage, Lodging, Meals, Etc.

Professional Services - \$354,900

- Professional engineer's staff time, speaker fees, education video

Administrative Fees - \$102,581

- Federal funds are subject to PSU off campus rate for sponsored activities.

Scope of Work Amendments (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)

Submitted To:

Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission (SCC)

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Performing Organization:

Center for Agricultural Conservation Assistance Training at Penn State Extension (the Center)

The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State)

Principal Investigator: Jennifer R. Fetter, jrf21@psu.edu

FY 2024-25 represents year two of a proposed 3.3-year contract (July 2023 – October 2026) between the Center and the SCC. The Scope of Work below primarily represents additions to the existing scope for FY 2024-25.

Before each successive fiscal year begins, an updated Scope of work will be revised and presented to the SCC for approval, along with a budget.

The Center provides education, outreach, and technical assistance to Conservation Professionals working at Conservation Districts, State and Federal Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations, and Private Businesses throughout Pennsylvania as part of the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program and in coordination with other ag conservation cost-share programs and partners.

1. Farm Lanes Program

a. Provide Training and Education Programs

- i. Create and implement a new certification program for conservation professionals, using the existing dirt and gravel roads program and design standards as a launching point. The program will include a multi-day training that results in competence in designing farm access lanes and crossings up to the point where professional engineering is required by law.
- ii. Modified versions of this training will also be offered to farm operators/ag landowners (shorter version without administrative content) and NGOs, and private consultants who may also want to receive BMP certifications.
- iii. Create educational fact sheets, news articles, and videos to provide resources for on-demand learning and technical assistance.
- iv. Create and provide relevant training manuals, publications, and training tools to participants.

b. Provide Ag Conservation and Ag Outreach Technical Assistance

- i. Provide field operations and technical assistance for farm lanes through virtual (email, phone) and in-person site visits. Staff will suggest project improvement recommendations, on-the-job training for new conservation professionals (2-3 years or less of experience), funding clarifications, review of policy-matching and compliance, and more. All center staff will be trained in the Dirt and Gravel Roads Center Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance course.

- ii. Provide engineering support services such as drawing plans, performing construction oversight, and completing post-construction inspections under the authority of the contracted engineer.
 - c. **Miscellaneous**
 - i. Develop and implement demonstration farm lane and crossing projects identified by the center (and future conservation district applications). The focus will be on new and untraditional projects.
 - ii. Provide research support to address essential questions about the variation between farm lanes and public dirt, gravel, and low-volume roads. Use research to make changes to design standards.
- 2. Increased ACAP Engineering Capacity
 - a. **Provide Ag Conservation and Ag Outreach Technical Assistance**
 - i. Provide increased engineering support services such as drawing plans, performing construction oversight, and completing post-construction inspections under the authority of the contracted engineer.
 - ii. Add capacity for reviewing plans created by non-engineers who are working under emergency authority or working towards certification for official authority.
 - iii. Add capacity for final certification of ACAP-funded BMPs
- 3. Workforce Development
 - a. **Provide Ag Conservation and Ag Outreach Technical Assistance**
 - i. Supporting interns with wages and travel support during summer as well as spring and fall semesters.
 - ii. Interns will learn ag literacy through on-farm experiences and gain conservation practice skills by helping identify resource concerns and potential practices for targeted watersheds as identified by county ACAP delegates.
- 4. Conservation Practice Research Support
 - a. **Miscellaneous**
 - i. Tools and materials for CACAT research technician to explore water quality benefits of new or modified practices that could be adopted as approved ACAP practices.

Budget Justification

Principal Investigators: Jennier Fetter

Project Dates: 7/1/2024-10/31/2026

Project Title: Development of Agriculture Technical Assistance Center

Inflation Factor

In estimating costs for future years, all budget categories except tuition are inflated at the University approved rate of 4.0% per year each July 1. Graduate student tuition is inflated 4.0% per year each August 15. Please note that the rates reflected in this proposal are subject to revision in the event this proposal is funded in forward fiscal years.

Personnel(Includes Fringe) \$116,199

The principal investigator is budgeted at the percentage of time shown using his/her actual salary in the calculation. The principal investigator's time includes both technical and project management functions. Any other individuals/positions shown are technical staff with the percentage of time shown and actual salaries used. For project time occurring after July 1 of any given year, the salaries have been adjusted at the University approved rate of 4%.

- Fetter, Jennifer (Principal Investigator) - \$ 2,994, 1% effort
- Rhea, Danielle (Key Personnel) \$37,765, 15% effort
- Groh, Tyler (Key Personnel) \$41,149, 15% effort
- Ingram, Terra (Event Support) \$20,802, 10% effort
- Interns \$13,489

Fringe benefits are computed using the provisional rates of 35.9% applicable to Category I Salaries, 14.6% applicable to Category II Graduate Assistants, 7.9% applicable to Category III Wages, 0.2% applicable to Category IV Student Wages, and 24.3% for Category V, Postdoctoral Scholars and Fellows, for fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025). If this proposal is funded, the rates quoted above shall, at the time of funding, be subject to adjustment for any period subsequent to June 30, 2025, if superseding Government approved rates have been established. Fringe benefit rates are negotiated and approved by the Office of Naval Research, Penn State's cognizant federal agency.

Operating \$105,620

- Demonstration Projects (\$68,074) – annual installation of a demonstration of agricultural best management practices on farm lanes, including design, necessary materials (concrete, aggregate, seed, etc.), construction, and maintenance.
- Demonstration Tools (\$33,046) - survey lasers and related tools for educators to use during technical assistance visits and educational training.
- Other Promotional Materials (\$1,000) - branded educational incentives to engage with educational and promotional displays wherever they are used.
- Photography equipment (\$1,500) - time-lapse photography equipment and related accessories necessary to document the construction of demonstration projects and other key best management practices that can serve as teaching tools for future audiences.

- Printing Fees (\$1,000) - handouts, training manuals, certificates, and other educational materials to be distributed at workshops, field days, via mail, trade shows, and other educational events.
- Promotional Displays (\$1,000) - free-standing exhibit, pull-up banners, publication racks, and flags for promoting the center and providing educational content at trade-shows, expos, fairs, and similar events.

Travel \$26,700

- Mileage – various trips within Pennsylvania for all center staff to travel to workshop, conference, and technical assistance sites in their personal vehicles or in Penn State University fleet vehicles (Estimated based on the current federal mileage rate of 67cents/mi)
- Lodging – when necessary to instruct at or participate in multi-day workshops and conferences that are more than 50 miles from home office locations. (Estimated based on the current per diem lodging rate for Harrisburg, PA of \$117/night)
- Meals – when eligible for staff to claim meals during overnight or long-distance trips to instruct at or participate in workshops, conferences, or technical assistance visits. (Estimated based on the current per diem meal rate for Harrisburg, PA of \$64/day)
- Fees – when necessary, to gain entry into events for professional development or delivery of educational or promotional content.

Equipment NA

Subcontracts/Contractual NA

Professional Services \$354,900

- Engineer (\$350,000) - A professional engineer's services will be used to review and approve ag conservation practice plans, inspections, and QA/QC as well as provide oversight for a program of demonstrated confidence that allows certified conservation professionals to perform similar work under the engineer's oversight. Additional engineering services to ensure high-quality of demonstration projects being implemented by the Center.
- Speaker Fees (\$900) - skilled professionals will be hired to teach workshops and other educational sessions where center staff are not adequately trained or proficient in a needed topic.
- Educational Video Develop (\$4,000) - professional videographers will be hired to record and produce educational videos to use in webinars, online courses, and other educational events.

Administration Fees \$102,581

F&A – Off Campus Other Sponsored Activities

F&A rates are negotiated and approved by the Office of Naval Research, Penn State's cognizant federal agency. Penn State's current fixed off-campus rate for other sponsored activities is 17.0% of MTDC from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. New awards and new competitive segments with an effective date of July 1, 2024, or later shall be subject to adjustment when superseding Government approved rates are established. Per 2 CFR 200 (Appendix III, Section C.7), the actual F&A rates used will be fixed at the time of the initial award for the duration of the competitive segment.



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

DATE: April 29, 2024

TO: Members
State Conservation Commission

FROM: Brady Seeley, Director
Nutrient and Odor Management Programs

Justin Challenger, Director
Financial and Technical Assistance Programs

RE: Nutrient Management Program Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget Proposal

Action Requested

Grant approval for the Nutrient Management Program budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY 2024-25).

Background

The proposed FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget provides an appropriation to the Nutrient Management Fund of \$6,200,000.

Federal funding was added to the Nutrient Management Fund during FY22-23 in the amount of \$22,000,000 (COVID funds). Just as in ACAP, these federal funds need to be committed by December 31, 2024 and fully expended by December 31, 2026.

The attached proposed budget is based on the annual ‘appropriation’ to the fund and ‘spending authorization’ of \$6,761,000 under the Governors proposed state budget and an additional \$22,000,000 in ‘COVID funds.’

Program staff proposed a NMF budget that provides funding for the following program elements:

- a. Prioritizes funding to conservation districts recognizing their key role in carrying out the mandates of the Nutrient and Odor Management Act, known as Act 38. The proposed allocation represents a contribution from the Nutrient Management Fund (NMF) towards a delegation agreement outlining combined Nutrient Management Program and Manure Management Program activities. Manure Management Program activities will be funded by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Pa DEP) under the Nutrient Management and Manure Management Program delegation agreement between conservation districts, the State Conservation Commission and the Pa DEP. Delegation

Agreement funding amounts will be approved under separate correspondence. This line item was already passed at the March 12, 2024 SCC meeting.

- b. Provides funding to farmers for implementation of financial assistance programs, such as, Agri-Link and Conservation Excellence Grants (CEG).
- c. Provides funding for educational and technical support, provided by the Pennsylvania State University (PSU) program partners, Dr. Charlie White, Dr. Robert Mikesell, Dr, Jennifer Weld, Dr Robb Meinen and program staff from the College of Agricultural Sciences. The proposed FY 2023-24 budget provides funding for the 2nd year of a 3-year contract agreement.
- d. Maintains Commission's personnel and operating budgets for the year.
- e. Provides \$1,000,000 in funding to PACD to continue its Ag Plan Reimbursement Program. A scope of work and budget is attached to this memo.
- f. Provides \$1,500,000 in funding for Agricultural Conservation Research Grants. This was passed at the March 12, 2024 SCC meeting.

A special note: USDA-NRCS staff should be recognized for their continued commitment to support the Nutrient Management Program training and certification courses and field engineering support, without the need for a state contract for their assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of this budget proposal.

Attachment

STATE FY 24 Nutrient Management Budget				
	2022-23 Budget	2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Budget	
<i>Authorized Spending Authority</i>	\$6,761	\$6,761	\$6,761	
Revenue				
<i>Nutrient Management Fund Transfer</i>	\$6,200	\$6,200	\$6,200	
<i>ACAP Tehnical (Covid)</i>	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	
<i>Other (penalties, fees, reimbursements)</i>	\$67	\$67	\$67	
Total Revenue	\$28,267	\$6,267	\$ 6,267	
Expenditures				
<i>Conservation District Funding (DEP)</i>	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,713	¹
<i>DEP COVID</i>		\$445	\$0	
<i>DEP COVID</i>	\$245	\$375	\$0	
<i>Conservation Excellence Grants</i>	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	⁴
<i>Agri-Link</i>	\$500	\$500	\$500	
<i>PSU Education & Technical Support</i>				
<i>Nutrient Management</i>	\$232	\$352	\$0	²
<i>Odor Management</i>	\$153	\$58	\$0	²
<i>Pa OneStop / Manure Hauler Contract</i>	\$125	\$325	\$0	²
<i>Personnel</i>	\$819	\$867	\$867	
<i>Operational</i>	\$554	\$596	\$596	³
Total Expenditures	\$6,728	\$7,618	\$4,676	
¹ Fiscal year spending threshold authorized by the Governor's Office of Budget. (DEP EA and PDA EA Combined)				
² Contract Year 1 - Certification, Technical and Training Support (this is being paid with Federal ARPA funds)				
³ Projected spending authority for operating expenditures including Department Admin billing				
⁴ CEG funds will come from Federal ARPA funds				

Federal ARPA FY24 Nutrient Management Fund Budget			
Budget			\$18,720,000
Actual Expenses			
	SFY 22/23		\$3,100,835
	SFY 23/24		\$76,416
			\$3,177,252
Actual Commitments			\$3,426,042
	CEG (2.2M/year over 3.5 years)		
	SWRC PA Soil Health Coalition		
	PACD Plan Reimbursement Program		
Future Year Payroll Est			
	SFY 23/24		\$28,000
	SFY 24/25		\$120,000
	SFY 25/26		\$125,000
	SFY 26/27 - 12/31/26		\$65,000
			\$338,000
Future Year Operating Est			
	SFY 23/24		\$1,000
	SFY 24/25		\$5,000
	SFY 25/26		\$5,000
	SFY 26/27 - 12/31/26		\$3,000
			\$14,000
Federal Indirects			
	SFY 23/24		\$20,595
	SFY 24/25		\$22,500
	SFY 25/26		\$23,400
	SFY 26/27 - 12/31/26		\$12,240
			\$78,735
Projected Balance			\$11,685,971
Proposed Projects			
	CEG		\$5,500,000
	NM online tool and record keeping		\$1,868,971
	Ag Plan Reimbursment Program		\$1,000,000
	CD & SCC Equipment		\$150,000
	Aviation Fuel PSU Research Project		\$50,000
	Conservation Research		\$1,500,000
	Penn State Contracts		\$1,617,000
	Subtotal		\$11,685,971
Total Remaining			\$0

PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program for PA Conservation Districts

Project Description

This project will provide PA conservation districts with a statewide Ag Plan Reimbursement Program to help landowners obtain up to date agricultural plans for their operations.

Summary:

From 2017-2020, the PA Department of Environmental Protection and partners offered an Ag Plan Reimbursement Program to provide financial assistance to farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to develop agricultural plans. Over that time \$1.5 million was distributed to farmers for ag plan development. PACD and county conservation districts continued the ag plan reimbursement program statewide into 2024 utilizing a \$500,000 Growing Greener grant from DEP. Although meant to be a three-year program, PACD dedicated all the funding within a year and a half.

At the November 2023 SCC meeting, the SCC approved adding \$100,000 to the ag plan reimbursement program in the short-term. PACD continues to accept applications to be placed on a waitlist until funds are received. Over \$100,000 worth of plans are on the waitlist.

The program has been successful and the need for financial assistance continues. PACD proposes to use SCC funds to continue to offer a statewide Ag Plan Reimbursement Program to Pennsylvania county conservation districts. This program will encourage landowners/operators to work with their local conservation districts to pursue cost share funding for development of agricultural plans. Conservation districts work closely with their local agricultural communities already and this project would encourage additional relationships that could lead to other environmental programs and projects. We propose a statewide approach to offering funding opportunities to landowners/operators to encourage nutrient reduction through agricultural planning and implementation across the entire state.

As the association for the state's conservation districts, we have a very unique connection to each of the districts. We currently administer the following successful sub-grant programs: NPS mini-grant program, multifunctional & conventional riparian forest buffer program, lawn conversion program, NW Pennsylvania Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) program, and a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) mini-grant program, through eight staff dedicated to supporting the office's daily activities. If this project is funded, the current staff will maintain and extend the delivery of products and services that support activities related to improving water quality by developing agricultural plans.

Utilizing \$1,000,000 over a 2.5-year grant term, we estimate funding approximately 700 plans based on averages from the previous PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement program. \$900,000 would be used for ag plan and district operations reimbursements and \$100,000 for PACD admin and staff salaries & benefits. (Budget included on last page)

Proposed Scope of Work:

The overall goal of this project is to efficiently increase the number of agricultural plans statewide by providing a reimbursement program to landowner/operators who participate.

Landowner/operators will work with their county conservation districts to ensure the necessary agricultural plans are completed and reported for reimbursement. Awarded funding will be distributed after verified and approved plans are entered into Practice Keeper.

Deliverable #1: Promotion of the Ag Plan Reimbursement Program. PACD will advertise the program in our weekly e-newsletter Front Page, on our website, and through our email listserves that go directly to conservation district staff. Notifications and updates will be provided to conservation district staff.

Deliverable #2: Reimbursement of Ag Plan development costs. PACD will reimburse approximately 700 ag plans based on the average plan cost from PACD's previous program. PACD will administer the program on a first-come, first-served basis.

PACD will prioritize preserved farms for plan development/update reimbursements.

Ag plan verification and approval data will be entered into the PracticeKeeper database. PracticeKeeper data should be entered into the following modules according to the applicable trainings on the DEP Clean Water Academy and Data Management Standard Operating Procedures. All BMPs within the plan(s) should be related to the plans within the planning modules of PracticeKeeper. All plans entered through the partner submission modules and approved by the conservation district should have all BMPs within the plans related to the plan in Practice Keeper. The appropriate program funding information should be entered in PracticeKeeper's funding tab.

Practice Keeper Modules:

- Partner Plan Submission Module
- Conservation Plan Module
- Nutrient Management Plan Module

PACD will compile a final report for the SCC at the end of the grant term that includes all required reporting data and highlights the grant project from beginning to end.

Eligibility:

- Agricultural landowners/operators may qualify for reimbursement for more than one agricultural plan up to a maximum amount of \$6,000 per landowner/operator. The maximum reimbursement per plan is \$1,500 or 80% of the cost of the plan, whichever is lower

Plans Eligible for Reimbursement:

- New or updated Manure Management Plans and Agricultural Erosion and Sediment Control Plans (Ag E&S Plans)
- New or updated Act 38 Nutrient Management Plans (required if the operation meets certain animal density and/or animal number thresholds) or NRCS 590 plans
- New or updated Conservation Plans that are used in place of Ag E&S Plans (only if the Conservation Plans also meet the state requirements outlined in Chapter 102)

Deliverable #3: Reimbursement of other eligible costs including education & outreach, data entry, office supplies, and reporting will be distributed to conservation districts at a percentage of up to 20% of the total plan reimbursement request. Payments will be issued from PACD to the conservation districts. It is the conservation districts' responsibility to distribute reimbursement to the landowner/operator or another district for review and approval of a plan.

PACD has developed a Guidelines document for conservation districts that outlines the entire reimbursement program including eligibility, required documents, and payment structure. Conservation Districts will sign and submit this document when applying. The application form that will be used for the PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Program has fields for landowner/Operator Information, Farm Information, and Plans to be developed. The conservation district and landowner/operator will sign the application to show commitment to developing the listed plans. When an application is submitted, PACD staff will determine eligibility and funds will be reserved for approved applications. The program will be offered on a first come first serve basis until funding is used. A checklist will be provided for conservation districts to help through the application and reimbursement process.

The landowner/operator will be required to provide a 20% match. County conservation districts will be responsible for any necessary landowner agreements.

Once a plan is verified and approved, the conservation district will enter reporting data into Practice Keeper.

Conservation districts will work with landowner/operators to help them through the application process and to find a planner to develop agricultural plans. Conservation districts may write plans in house. Conservation districts can provide a list of planners to landowners to help them find a consultant but cannot suggest using a specific planner.

Payment and Timeframe:

Payment: After the invoice and final reimbursement request are submitted with certification of Practice Keeper data entry, PACD will distribute the reimbursement amount to the conservation district who will forward payment to the appropriate party.

Timeframe:

- Applications are reviewed and approved within a few days
- Once approved, a sub-grant agreement is signed with the conservation district
- Plans should be developed within 90 days of the agreement
- Final reports and invoices are reviewed within a few days and payment is released
- Turnaround time from submission of final report paperwork to payment reaching the conservation district is approximately 2-3 weeks.

PACD will keep records of the reimbursements and submit quarterly reports and a final comprehensive report to the SCC.

Match:

A 20% match for this project will come from the landowners/operators.

Budget:

Deliverable 1: Promotion

Staff Salary & Benefits	\$4,000
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Deliverable 2: Plan Reimbursement

Admin & Staff Salary/Benefits	\$48,000
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Ag Plan Reimbursements	\$720,000
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Deliverable 3: District Operations Reimbursement

Admin & Staff Salary/Benefits	\$48,000
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Conservation District Operations Reimbursements	\$180,000
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TOTAL	\$1,000,000
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DATE: April 29, 2024
TO: State Conservation Commission
FROM: Joel Semke – REAP Coordinator
SUBJECT: Proposed changes for the FY 2024 REAP Program

Every year, the State Conservation Commission reviews the REAP Program and welcomes input from partners on how to improve the program. The changes range from minor revisions that are meant to improve the administration of the program to major changes that address what is eligible for REAP tax credits. Each proposed change is listed below.

The proposals listed below reflect suggestions from staff and partners regarding potential changes to the REAP program that were first introduced to the Commission in February 2024. Approved changes will be incorporated into the 2024-25 REAP Application and Guidelines. The Commission is scheduled to begin accepting applications for the 2024-25 REAP program on August 1, 2024.

1. BMP maintenance lifespans

Proposal: Revise the REAP lifespans for all BMPs to 7 years. BMPS that currently have a 3-year (or annual) lifespan will stay at their current respective REAP lifespan. The change will be found in Attachment 1 of the REAP Guidelines (pp6-14) and will be noted in the application approval letters that are sent to REAP applicants. Here is an example of the change in the REAP Guidelines:

Stream Crossing

<i>NRCS Practice Code:</i>	578
<i>REAP Lifespan:</i>	7 years
<i>Tax Credit Rate:</i>	50%; 90% - in conjunction with Prescribed Grazing and with animal exclusion from streams in an ag-impaired TMDL watershed

REAP Conditions: Animal and agricultural equipment crossings are eligible. Culvert crossings are not eligible. REAP tax credits not authorized for any portion exceeding 12 feet in width.

Certification Requirements: Must meet the standards and specifications of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide; certified by an individual with appropriate NRCS Job Approval Authority or Registered Professional Engineer.

The intent of the proposal is to simplify the maintenance requirements for REAP projects. The change will eliminate confusion about some constructed BMPs. Staff feels that the move to a 7-year REAP lifespan represents a more enforceable rule. Commission staff is prepared to recoup funds for BMPs that are not maintained for their full REAP lifespan.

2. Older Equipment

Proposal: Add a sunset provision for no-till equipment of 20 years; and a “sunset” provision for precision nutrient application equipment of 10 years.

The following will be added to Attachment 3 of the 2024 REAP Guidelines and to p8 & 9 of the REAP application (respective dealer certification forms):

The Commission will not approve applications for no-till planting equipment manufactured more than 20 years prior to the submission of the application – unless the equipment has been refurbished and upgraded by a qualified farm equipment dealership. The Commission will not approve applications for precision nutrient application equipment manufactured more than 10 years prior to the submission of the application – unless the equipment has been refurbished and upgraded by a qualified farm equipment dealership.

The intent of the proposal is to limit REAP eligibility to equipment that is newer and (presumably) more capable of planting in no-till conditions, and more capable of precision placement of nutrients. Equipment that is upgraded and refurbished by a qualified dealership (Pequea Planters, Cumberland Planter, etc) is exempt from the policy.

3. ANNUAL REAP APPLICATION CAP

Proposal: Set a limit on how many REAP-eligible projects an ag operation may submit during a given round of the program.

The following sentence will be added to p1 of the 2024 REAP Guidelines and to p1 & p5 of the 2024 REAP Application:

Ag operations are limited to one REAP-eligible project (individual or sponsored) per FY round of the program.

The intent of the proposal is to stretch REAP funding to as many farmers as possible in a given round of REAP. Staff often receives multiple applications from the same farm for several BMPs (e.g., cover crops, no-till equipment, manure facilities, etc). Staff feels that, due to funding constraints, a limit on the number of eligible projects from a single ag operation will allow the program to serve a greater number of farmers in PA.

4. COVER CROPS

Proposal: Clarify rules regarding drones by specifying that they must be used for cover crops. The following will be added to the 2024 REAP Guidelines and Application:

1. The Cover Crop Equipment section of Attachment 2 of the REAP Guidelines will be amended to state that applicants must include a dealer certification form (modeled on the no-till equipment certification form) for cover crop drones.
2. The Cover Crop Drone certification form in the 2024 REAP application will include the following:
 - a. Information on the cost of the cover crop attachments purchased by the applicant.
 - b. Certification by the applicant that the drone will be used to plant cover crops each year (verified by SCC staff site visit).
 - c. Acceptable planting cost for cover crops established via drone are \$35/ac plus seed cost.

The intent of the proposal is to incentivize the establishment of cover crops as early as possible – into standing crops if possible. Early establishment of cover crops improves soil health and

reduces pollution runoff. Commission staff recognize the increased costs associated with planting cover crops via drone in standing crops.

5. SILVOPASTURE

Proposal: Adopt the silvopasture standard currently under development by Commission staff.

Here is an example of the change in the REAP Guidelines:

Silvopasture

REAP Lifespan:

7 years

Tax Credit Rate:

50%

Additional Information:

refer to: **tbd**; More details should be available at the July meeting.

REAP Conditions:

Practice applies to non-riparian areas only, in conjunction with rotational grazing systems (528). Establishment of new trees and other costs associated with the establishment of the silvopasture system are eligible. No part of the silvopasture project may involve removal of existing trees.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed changes to the REAP Program ‘Fiscal Year 2024 Guidelines’ and ‘Application’ as presented pending final review by department legal counsel. Upon legal review, program staff will finalize all pertinent documents, webpage content and correspondence to reflect the changes adopted by the Commission.



Douglas Wolfgang
Executive Secretary
State Conservation Commission
2301 North Cameron Street, Rm. 303
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

RE: SCC Approval for Bridge Loan Request of \$1,500,000

Dear Mr. Wolfgang,

The Indiana County Conservation District is writing to request approval from the State Conservation Commission to enter into a contract with First Commonwealth Bank for a bridge loan in the amount of \$1,500,000. This request is to provide the District with the necessary working capital to complete the "Tide Trail" project.

The District has been successful in receiving a grant award from the Department of Environmental Protection's AMD/AML grant program in the amount of \$3,736,154 to construct a rail trail in Center Township, Indiana County. The grant program is a reimbursement only grant program, therefore requiring that the District make upfront payments to engineers and contractors for work completed. Reimbursements are completed on a quarterly basis. Therefore, for the District to be able to incur a quarter's worth of costs and wait for a reimbursement, we have to have other financing in place. We do not have the necessary capital in-hand to absorb these costs, necessitating that the financing be obtained through a local banking institution.

This is an extremely important project for the Homer City and Center Township communities. With the closure of the Homer City Generating Station and associated job loss and other economic impacts, their desire to shift towards recreation as a means for generating economic opportunity is commendable. Because of our District's proven track record of financial and project management and relationships with key partners and stakeholders, we were selected as the appropriate entity to manage this project.

Our board of directors has already adopted Indiana County Conservation District Resolution # 2024-04-10 "Resolution of the Indiana County Conservation District of Directors to Proceed with a Bridge Loan with First Commonwealth Bank". This authorizes the District to proceed with the bridge loan financing and names account signers and other account designees.

Given the tight three-year completion time frame required through the grant, we hope that the Commission will act swiftly and favorably on this request. Should you need any additional information, please reach out to me directly.

Sincere Regards,

Douglas M. Beri Jr.
Executive Director
d.beri@iccdpa.org





March 15, 2024

Douglas M. Beri Jr.
Indiana County Conservation District
435 Hamill Road
Indiana, PA 15701

Re: Application ID: 202301137149
Tide (Hoodlebug Trail Ext.) (GA)
OSM32(2404)105.1

Dear Mr. Beri:

Congratulations! With great pleasure I inform you of your approved Abandoned Mine Land and Acid Mine Drainage (AML/AMD) Grant Program application submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection. You will receive an AML/AMD Grant Program grant in the amount of **\$3,736,154.00**.

Indiana County Conservation District is required to meet with the assigned Grant Manager to discuss the AML/AMD Grant Program requirements and any scope of work or budget related issues relevant to the project. The Grant Manager will contact you to schedule this meeting. This notice of award initiates an e-mail to you from DEP's Grants Center to provide necessary grant information and further instruction.

Please be advised that any construction work proposed to be completed through this grant cannot be started until all applicable local, state, and federal permits, clearances, and approvals are obtained.

We appreciate your interest in the AML/AMD Grant Program and look forward to working with you on this project. If you have any questions or if we can assist you further, please contact your Grant Manager or DEP's Grants Center by e-mail at RA-GrantsCenter@pa.gov or by telephone at 717.705.5400.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica L. Shirley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jessica Shirley
Interim Acting Secretary

Secretary



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

DATE: April 26, 2024

TO: State Conservation Commission Members

FROM: Brady Seeley, Director
Nutrient and Odor Management Programs

THROUGH: Douglas M. Wolfgang
Executive Secretary

RE: Nutrient and Odor Management Programs Report

The Nutrient and Odor Management Program Staff of the State Conservation Commission offer the following report of measurable results for the time-period of March / April 2024.

For the months of March and April 2024, staff and delegated conservation districts have:

1. Odor Management Plans:
 - a. 8 OMPs in the review process
 - b. 11 OMPs Approved
2. Reviewed and approved 39 Nutrient Management (NM) Plans in the 4th quarter of 2023.
 - a. Those approved NM plans covered 5,305 acres.
 - b. Those approved NM plans included 6,853 Animal Equivalent Units (AEUs), generating 79,984 tons of manure.
3. Managing eleven (11) ACTIVE enforcement or compliance actions, currently in various stages of the compliance or enforcement process. Monitoring an additional one (2) other cases of enforcement / compliance / interest.
4. Continue to daily answer questions for NMP and OMP writers, NMP reviewers, delegated Conservation Districts, and others.
5. Assisted DEP with various functions and as workgroup members in Federal and State settings for the Chesapeake Bay Program.
6. NM/OM Certification/CEC:
 - a. Approved 16.5 hours of NM and OM continuing education.
 - b. Facilitated the following trainings:
 - i. Introduction to Livestock Systems
 - ii. Nutrient Management Orientation

- iii. Managing Manure Nutrients
 - iv. Stormwater and Soil Loss Training (this was conducted twice)
 - v. Phosphorus Index Training (this was conducted twice)
 - vi. Plan Writing Workshop
 - c. Reviewed 8 Public Review Specialists NMP reviews as part of the certification training.
7. Commercial Manure Hauler / Brokers
- a. Approved 6.5 hours of MH/B continuing education.
 - b. 13 Act 49 inspection letters sent (includes in-office, onsite and affidavit letters).
 - c. Facilitated the following trainings:
 - i. Manure Hauler and Broker Orientation (this was conducted twice)
 - ii. Broker 2 Training
8. Issued 3 new (total of 63) Ag 101 seat licenses to CD and DEP staff. 48 persons have already completed and sent in their course completion certificate.



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

DATE: February 28, 2024
TO: Members, State Conservation Commission
FROM: Karl J. Dymond
 State Conservation Commission *K Dymond*
SUBJECT: May 2024 Status Report on Facility Odor Management Plan Reviews

Detailed Report of Recent Odor Management Plan Actions

In accordance with Commission policy, attached is the Odor Management Plans (OMPs) actions report for your review. No formal action is needed on this report unless the Commission would choose to revise any of the plan actions shown on this list at this time. This recent plan actions report details the OMPs that have been acted on by the Commission and the Commission’s Executive Secretary since the last program status report provided to the Commission at the March 2024 Commission meeting.

Program Statistics

Below are the overall program statistics relating to the Commission’s Odor Management Program, representing the activities of the program from its inception in March of 2009, to April 18, 2024

The table below summarizes approved plans grouped by the Nutrient Management Program Coordinator areas.

	Central	NE/NC	SE/SC	West	Totals
2009	7	6	28	1	42
2010	5	7	25	2	39
2011	10	12	15	2	39
2012	9	17	16	2	44
2013	10	11	38	3	62
2014	13	16	44	2	75
2015	15	15	61	2	93
2016	19	16	59	5	99
2017	25	24	44	3	96
2018	14	13	40	1	68
2019	12	11	14		37
2020	9	11	42	1	63
2021	15	15	30	1	61
2022	16	11	19	2	48
2023	24	12	42	3	81
2024	3	4	13		20
Total	206	201	530	30	
Grand Total					967

As of April 18, 2024, there are nine hundred and sixty-seven **approved** plans and/or amendments, nine plans have been **denied**, sixteen plans/ amendments have been **withdrawn** without action taken, one hundred and eight plans/ amendments were **rescinded**, and eleven plans/ amendments are going through the **plan review process**.

OMP Actions Status Report

Action	OMP Name	County	Municipality	Species	AEUs	OSI Score	Status
2/28/2024	Leid, Vernon – Swine Site 1	Schuylkill	Washington Twp	Swine	74.79	61.8	Appro
3/6/2024	Kreider, Noah W & Sons, LLP – Milton Grove Farm	Lancaster	Mount Joy Twp	Layers	5526.40	59.5	Appro
3/6/2024	McIntire, Jared & Jenna – Home Farm	Franklin	Letterkenny Twp	Turkey	134.65	36.0	Appro
3/12/2024	Auker, Nelson H – Auker Farm	Berks	Tulpehocken Twp	Broilers	34.42	131.0	Appro
4/1/2024	ENJ Farms LLC – Douts Hill Farm	Lancaster	Martic Twp	Layers	412.20	25.7	Appro
4/1/2024	JT Poultry LLC – Layer Farm	Dauphin	Mifflin Twp	Layers	254.34	36.8	Appro
4/1/2024	Kreider, Noah W & Sons, LLP – Grantville Farm	Lebanon	E Hanover Twp	Layers	9106.00	53.7	Appro
4/15/2024	Cedar Pine Farms LLC – Dairy Farm	Fulton	Todd Twp	Cattle	591.60	27.7	Appro
4/15/2024	Frank, Dale R. – Home Farm	Lancaster	W Donegal Twp	Cattle	0.00	6.7	Appro
4/15/2024	M. W. Smith Farms LLC – Dairy Farm	Perry	Buffalo Twp	Cattle	200.00	56.3	Appro
4/15/2024	Martin, Robert S – Ridge Valley Farm III	Snyder	Spring Twp	Turkey	453.43	42.5	Appro

As of April 18, 2024



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

DATE: April 29, 2024

TO: Members
State Conservation Commission

FROM: Brady Seeley, Director
Nutrient and Odor Management Programs

THROUGH: Douglas M. Wolfgang, Executive Secretary
State Conservation Commission

SUBJECT: Nutrient Management Plan Actions

The State Conservation Commission (Commission) approved the Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) Action Policy on May 9, 2023 that allows the Executive Secretary of the Commission to perform actions on Nutrient Management Plans. These NMPs are located in counties whose local conservation district does not have administrative authority under Act 38.

<u>Agricultural Operation (Name and Address)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Animal Equivalent Units (AEUs)</u>	<u>Operation Type (CAO, CAFO, VAO)</u>	<u>Animal Type</u>	<u>Approval or Disapproval</u>	<u>Date Approved</u>
Magic Rose Farm- Wendy Staub-810 Dicks Dam Rd, New Oxford, PA 17350	Adams	9.4	18.90	CAO	Equine	Approved	3/12/2024
Vernon Leid 21 Dad Burnham's Rd Pine Grove, PA 17963	Schuylkill	68.8	74.79	CAO	Swine	Approved	3/12/2024



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

April 29th, 2024

To: Members

State Conservation Commission

From: Doug Wolfgang, Executive Secretary

RE: Monroe Conservation District Donation Approval

Background

SCC comprehensive policy includes a detailed section regarding donations given to a conservation district. The policy specifically requires donations of certain amount thresholds be approved by either the Executive Secretary or the State Conservation Commission Board.

SCC comprehensive policy Item 14(b) states “Acceptance by a district of an individual contribution valued at more than \$10,000 requires approval of the Commission. The Executive Secretary of the Commission is authorized to approve individual donations of up to \$50,000 and shall report such action at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. Individual donations exceeding \$50,000 shall be considered by the full Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting”.

Monroe Conservation District Donation

As detailed in the attached letter, on April 22, 2024, Monroe CD requested approval of a donation to the district valued at \$12,486.38 for their High School and Jr. high Envirothon’s, Conservation Camp, Bug Fest, and Kayaking materials.

This requested was approved by the Executive Secretary on April 29th, 2024.



January 18, 2024

April 22, 2024 2nd Request

State Conservation Commission
c/o Mr. Doug Wolfgang
2301 North Cameron Street, Room 310
Harrisburg, PA 17110

RE: Monroe County Conservation District 2023 Donation Approval

Dear Mr. Wolfgang:

The Board of Directors of the Monroe County Conservation District requests that as Executive Secretary you consider and approve the donations to the Monroe County Conservation District by the Kettle Creek Environmental Fund as follows:

High School & Jr High Envirothons	\$1,782.06
Conservation Camp	\$4,622.00
Bug Fest	\$327.71
*O'Connor Grant – Kayaks, Paddles, Trailer, Shed	\$5,754.61
	\$12486.38

*KCEF received a Grant for this, the money was donated to us for the purchases so we included it in our approval request.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

For the Board of Directors,

Kristina Heaney
District Manager

KH/bb
cc: File (1)



BUILDING BRIDGES

Farmers* Municipalities* Citizens
Conservation Districts* Agribusiness

To: Members April 30, 2024
State Conservation Commission
From: Beth Futrick
Agriculture/Public Liaison
Through: Douglas Wolfgang, Executive Secretary
State Conservation Commission
Re: Ombudsman Program Update – Southern Alleghenies Region

Activities: March – April

- Administering NFWF-INSR Grant
 - Preparing for construction to stabilize farm lanes at three sites.
 - Organizing 2024 regional farmer events to promote grass-based farms, soil health, and regenerative agricultural practices.
 - Partnering with Project Grass and NRCS for a May 2024 pasture walk in Cambria Co.
- Hosted a second ACRE workshop for the Blair County area.
- Administering PADEP Growing Greener Grant
 - Prepare quarterly reports and manage invoice information.
- Southern Alleghenies Conservancy (SAC)– Chair activities
 - SAC property

Conflict Issues/Municipal Assistance

-----Butler County – Fly and manure complaint – on going
-----Westmoreland County – assistance with potential composting operation for equine.
-----Lycoming County – fly complaint
-----Venango County – new fly complaint

Meetings/Trainings/Outreach

--March 6 ACRE 101 workshop – Blair County – March 6
--Central PA Farmers' Market Meeting – March 10
--Pasturewalk prep meeting with grazing mentors – March 13
--Farm lane restoration projects site showing – March 14
--BCCD Board Meeting – March 18
--Small Business Development Center – Ag Expo – Clarion – March 20
--Southern Alleghenies Conservancy Board meeting – March 28
--BCCD Board Meeting – April 15
--Butler Co fly complaint farm visit – April 25
--Lycoming Co fly complaint farm visits – April 26

Reports & Grant Applications

Submitted and awarded a PACD CREP grant to fund multifunctional riparian buffer workshops in 2024.
Application for USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (UAIP) Competitive Grants Program
For urban ag work in Blair County
Preparing Growing Greener grant application for manure storage construction in Blair Co.



BUILDING BRIDGES

Farmers * Municipalities * Citizens
Conservation Districts * Agribusiness

To: Members
State Conservation Commission

May 14, 2024

From: Shelly Dehoff
Agriculture/Public Liaison

Re: Agricultural Ombudsman Program Update

Activities: Since mid-March 2024, I have taken part or assisted in a number of events, including the following:

- Coordinating manure injection educational and promotion effort for farmers in Lancaster County, and handling incentive program applications and invoice payment processing
- Events as South Central Task Force (SCTF) Agriculture Subcommittee Planning Specialist:
 - Participated in assorted TE&E meetings
 - Attended regional Homeland Security Conference; including hosting 2 breakout sessions related to ag
 - Lining up farm in Dauphin Co to host a grain bin rescue kit training for Harrisburg fire dept in June
 - Hoping to be more connected to Amish Safety Committee in future; requesting to attend upcoming meeting
 - Asked by Dauphin Co HazMat coordinator to help create ag-related HazMat and general ag rescue scenarios for future table top exercises
- Participated and recorded minutes for March and April Lancaster Co. Agriculture Council meeting
- Assisted with planning LCCD banquet and scholarship benefit auction
- Presented at, and moderated a breakout session at PSATS convention titled ACRE 101. with ACRE staff
- Co-coordinated Conservation Foundation of Lanc Co meetings, and Exec Comm meetings
- Attended multiple PA FPR group meetings as work group efforts are wrapping up
- Participated in LCCD annual Scholarship candidate interviews and decision of award winners
- Working on publication for statewide distribution related to manure spill response for farmers at request of Franklin Co CD
- Participated in PA's Workforce Development Board meetings
- Participated in Grow PA Ag Careers/workforce meetings

Local Government Interaction: I have been asked to provide educational input regarding agriculture:

- **None currently**

Moderation or Liaison Activities: I have been asked to provide moderation or liaison assistance with a particular situation:

- **Berks Co**—farmer wanted to irrigate vegetables, and required guidance about permitting, municipal requirements and coordination with his CD.

Research and Education Activities:

- **Cumberland Co**—request from small horse farm wanting to start a riding stable, and questions about ordinance; read ordinance, provided her my input. Will communicate with the township if she would like me to
- **Lancaster Co**—assisting farmer with newly labeled CAFO operation to navigate township requirements; comparing written ordinance to what she is being told verbally
- **Snyder Co**—received call from person wanting to establish a wildflower field; seeking group prep tips, seed recommendations for wet soils, and any other helpful hints; I asked a co-worker for help researching these things for her since he is more experienced with those issues
- **Lancaster Co**—received request for assistance with compilation of numbers and watershed information in anticipation of upcoming meeting for farmer

Fly Complaint Response Coordination: I have taken complaints or am coordinating fly-related issues in:

- **Bucks Co**—first complaint of the season
- **Union Co**—new complaint

- **York Co**—received 10 complaints from same area; ultimately PDA was helpful with PEQAP visit and communication with farmer
- **Lebanon Co**—asking for Dr. Martin to reach out at beginning of season in anticipation of repeat of previous years of flies
- **York Co**—resident in neighborhood with flies, but I don't think they were agriculturally related; believe they were blow flies and gave her some guidance
- **York Co**—another fly complaint from different area in the county