



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

Executive Board Meeting Minutes
Crowne Plaza Syracuse, NY

February 19-20, 2015

Thursday, February 19, 2015

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
P.J. Emerick, Vice President
Kristin White, Treasurer

Absent Members

Velynda Parker, Secretary
Doug Kierst, Member At Large

Division Representatives Attending

Judy Bennett, Division I
Christine Watkins, Division III
Jordan Clements, Division IV
Lenny Croote, Division V
Ben Luskin, Division VI

Division Representatives Absent

Kelly Emerick, Division II
Kristen Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Partners Attending

Dan Farrand, NYACD President
Greg Kist, NRCS

Partners On The Phone

Brian Steinmuller, NYS SWCC

Guests

John Persch, Fulton County SWCD
Christie Bravos, Visit Syracuse
Mark Burger

- I. Meeting Began at 11:10 AM
- II. Correspondence – None
- III. Lunch Break at 12:15 PM / Reconvened at 12:51 PM
- IV. Reports
 - i. Division Reports – Appended to the Minutes
 - ii. Partnership Reports
 1. NRCS

Greg Kist went over the number of Districts that haven't signed the Cooperative Working Agreement; there are about 10 or 11 Districts that haven't signed it yet. Greg has offered his time in answering any questions these Districts may have and has encouraged them to sign. Greg stated that the question of "What happens if we don't sign?" has come up and his response was that it's a voluntary thing and he doesn't understand why a District wouldn't want to sign it. Greg stated that it is a good tool to use

towards the commitment of working together and working as a team to help farmers get conservation on the ground.

RCPP – Regional Conservation Partnership Program-this has turned into a huge opportunity. There is EQIP and Easement dollars and also some Stewardship Program dollars rolled into this program. There is \$200 Million per year available in this. An RFP went out nationwide to any partner organizations in the summer of 2014 and 625 applications; pre-proposals were submitted for a total of \$2.8 Billion nationwide. These were reviewed at national headquarters and invited 225 of those entities to come back with a full proposal on which 210 submitted and 115 projects were selected for funding across the country for \$372 Billion; \$372 Billion is the commitment from NRCS that's not the total amount for projects. The RCPP requires a 1:1 match. Four projects have been approved in New York; Greater Adirondack RC&D, Lake Champlain Watershed, Long Island Sound, and Delaware River Basin. There is \$200 Million available for 2016 projects. An RFP will go out to partners in the next month or two. After the pre-proposals come in the ones that are selected for full proposals will be evaluated and scored and selected. The announcement will come out after October 1st.

Greg discussed the budget.

EQIP – Rankings have been completed. As soon as we know what our allocations are for EQIP we can start pre-approving contracts. The middle of April is what they're shooting for to get these contracts obligated.

Nichelle asked Greg if the Cooperative Working Agreement was statewide and not just NYS. Greg stated that NY started it. Greg stated that Ag & Markets had attorneys look at it to get it updated. Greg also stated that several other partners signed the agreement at the NYACD annual meeting. Nichelle asked again about the penalties for not signing. Greg stated again that there are no penalties in place for not signing the agreement. If a District refuses to sign the agreement, this to him is a sign that the District isn't willing to work with NRCS. Greg stated that there is nothing in the statute that will allow NRCS to refuse EQIP funding to a District that hasn't signed the agreement.

Dan Farrand asked Greg if there was something the District could put in writing to change any part of the C.W.A. Greg replied that there is an opportunity for a "Supplemental" to be written. What Greg doesn't want to get into is a different document for each District.

Nichelle asked Greg what the procedure is for writing a supplemental. Greg responded by saying the District would write the supplemental and NRCS would review it and submit any comments for changes.

Conservation Compliances/1026's – Between October and November 2014 they got done 547 determinations. More have come in. One concern is that the 2014 Farm Bill has tied crop insurance into the compliance. The 1026 deadline is June 1st. In summary there is a backlog here in NY of compliances and there is ways to go before we get the backlog down. Greg's goal is to eliminate the backlog and to handle 1026's as they come in.

Meeting Suspended at 12:15 p.m. for lunch.

Meeting Reconvened at 12:51 p.m.

ii. Partnership Reports Continued

2. NYACD – Dan Farrand, President – Appended to the Minutes

3. NYS SWCC – Brian Steinmuller – Appended to the Minutes

V. Syracuse Convention Center and Visitors Bureau (Christie)

Christie went over Syracuse promotional items that will be available at the registration area. They will have a separate table with handouts. They are providing a basket for the silent auction with a Dinosaur BBQ theme. She offered to have someone help us at the registration table.

Mark Burger is working on getting sponsors.

VI. Committee Reports

- i. Conservation Skills Workshop – John Persch explained to Greg Kist the process to which we request \$1,500 from NRCS for this training. Kristin mentioned that we have to get this letter to NRCS before their fiscal year end (9/30). Greg suggested we get this request in sooner than September 1st due to structure reassignment within NRCS. John stated that this request will be going out as soon as possible.

John requested any training ideas be submitted to himself, Christine Watkins, Mark Burger, or Tom Eskildsen.

ii. Envirothon

Nichelle stated that she received the report for the Annual Report.

Kristin reported that funding is very tight.

Jordan made a suggestion to put back into our 2015 budget the \$1,875 we cut from the Envirothon Scholarship and use the money we didn't spend in 2014 on a new Ronny Raindrop® costume. Discussion took place and it was decided to table this request for Friday's meeting. **Tabled for Friday**

iii. Frank Bratt Scholarship, Judy Bennett

- Active Frank Bratt Scholarships:

Name	Award Date	Amount
Levi Rudd	January 2014	\$500
Brenden Wagner	June 2014	\$341
	Total	\$841

- Received eight applications for the January 2015 round of funding totaling \$3,299.90:
 1. Eric Renfer, Onondaga County SWCD Employee - \$150
 2. Ryan Richer, Chemung County SWCD Family - \$500
 3. Matthew Kalbfleish, Washington County SWCD Family - \$300
 4. Molly Stetz, Genesee County SWCD Employee - \$370
 5. Brian Reaser, Tioga County SWCD Employee - \$479.90
 6. Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD Employee - \$500
 7. Christopher Fry, Erie County SWCD Employee - \$500
 8. Angel Hinickle, Tompkins County SWCD Employee - \$500
- After ranking the following will be funded for the January 2015 round of funding totaling \$1,500:
 1. Eric Renfer - \$150
 2. Molly Stetz - \$350
 3. Christopher Fry - \$500
 4. Angel Hinickle - \$500

Christine made a motion, seconded by Jordan to accept the January 2015 round of funding totaling \$1,500 as written. Carried

iv. State Fair Committee, Kristin White

Kristin reported that the committee is working on the theme for this year. Kristin would like to shorten our hours from 10:00 am-10:00 pm to 10:00 am-8:00 pm. Kristin has been emailing the State Fair people asking if we could do this and asking if she could be at their winter meeting and no one has gotten back to her. As stated before there is other informational booths that close shop either at 6:00 pm or 8:00 pm. If we were to only be there until 8:00 pm we would only have to fill two 5-hour shifts (10am-3pm and 3pm-8pm). Discussion took place. The Board all agrees to change the shift hours for the booth to 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. Kristin will let everyone know that signed up early their new time slots.

This year's theme is going to be invasive species. Kristin needs to reach out to Polly for ideas. We'd like to have examples on display.

v. Other – None

VII. Treasurer's Report

Kristin stated that registrations for the WQS have been coming in. Kristin has taken some credit card payments for registrations. Kristin asked if she should put on the 2016 registration form the option to pay with credit card. The Board thinks this is a good idea.

Nichelle asked if Kristin received any questions from the State Committee regarding registration charges. The State Committee won't pay "registration" fees but will pay for accommodations and meals. The NYS CDEA only cover fees for instructors the day they are instructing. Discussion took place. Nichelle feels that it's not fair to the NYS CDEA that the SWCC doesn't pay registration fees. This takes money out of our budget.

Ben stated that we shouldn't have to order new boxes of fertilizer tablets.

P.J. made a motion, seconded by Jordan to approve the Year to Date Financial Report as written. Carried

Meeting Suspended at 5:15 PM

Friday, February 20, 2015

Meeting reconvened at 8:07 AM

Members Attending

Nichelle Billhardt, President
P.J. Emerick, Vice President
Kristin White, Treasurer
Doug Kierst, Member At Large

Absent Members

Velynda Parker, Secretary

Division Representatives Attending

Judy Bennett, Division I
Kelly Emerick, Division II
Christine Watkins, Division III
Jordan Clements, Division IV
Lenny Croote, Division V
Ben Luskin, Division VI

Division Representatives Absent

Kristen Brown, Division VII
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Guests

John Persch, Fulton County SWCD

- VIII. Tabled Item – Envirothon Scholarship
Discussion took place.

Jordan made a motion, seconded by Doug to put back the \$1,875 we took out of the Envirothon Scholarship line item in our 2015 Budget and take it out of the money not spent on a new Ronny Raindrop® costume in 2014. Not Carried

There were 1 Yay and 9 Nays

- IX. 2015 Proposed Budget – No changes were made. Motion made and carried at the December 2014 meeting to accept it as written.

- X. Reading and Approval of Minutes

Jordan made a motion, seconded by Ben to approve the Minutes from our December 2014 meeting as written. Carried

- XI. Old Business

- a. NACD Workshops – Nichelle – Nichelle and Jordan went over their experiences at the meeting. 2016 meeting will be in Reno, Nevada, January 30th-Feb 3rd, 2016
- b. Practice-Keeper Webinar – Nichelle – Nichelle is interested in putting together a webinar and asked if anyone was interested. There is some interest in this. Nichelle will set up a Doodle Poll to get a date that everyone is available. Nichelle would like to get ideas for our programs; see what Practice-Keeper can do.
- c. Technical Subcommittee Meeting – the meeting is scheduled for February 26th in Cortland County. P.J. would like to encourage District participation.

d. Water Quality Symposium – P.J.

Registrations – P.J. stated that several people are asking about what they have to pay for registrations. P.J. has been dealing with several questions that people have about registrations. P.J. thanked Kristin for the help she has done with registrations.

CPESC Course – There have been problems with Envirocert International, Inc.; they have taken a turn for the worst to quote P.J., “They are absolutely atrocious, Faye Blanton who is a mid-level manager is absolutely worthless to work with.” Phil Griswold called P.J. and told him that Faye had gotten ahold of him and told him that we might have to charge a ridiculous amount of money per person for the class. Phil tried to talk to her about it and he wasn’t getting anywhere. P.J. tried to call her but she never returned his phone calls. The one time P.J. caught her in the office she told him that she may have to pass this on to someone else and that we may be able to get a waiver. P.J. was adamant that he needed an answer A.S.A.P. and she never got back to him. Phil and P.J. decided to go ahead with the class as-is. P.J. would like to write a letter with his signature and Nichelle’s explaining how dissatisfied with this organization and with Faye we are. P.J. stated that he had several communications with Faye via email. Faye asked P.J. who the instructor was and a description of the class and once again for the second time he told her Phil Griswold and gave the description. Faye writes back and asked if he was a certified instructor. This was after the fact that she called Phil a couple days before and asked him to teach a class in Fishkill.

Certificates -Lauren Prezorski volunteered to create certificates for classes. The Board is in agreement to have her do these.

P.J. went over the meal choices. Breakfast and lunches are going to be in the Horizon’s Room in the hotel. The dinner Tuesday night and the annual meeting will be in the Conference Center.

Nichelle will send an email out letting everyone know about the height restriction for the parking garage (7’).

Aaron Ristow is requesting the NYS CDEA pay for his Thursday night meal and overnight stay and he asked if Tompkins County SWCD could get a discount for their registrations for when he was working on the Board and employed at the District. Nichelle gave the history of who on the CDEA Board gets their registration paid for by the CDEA. It dates back to when Les Travis was on the Board, the county the V.P. worked for would get up to \$1,000 off registration fees for the time spent working on the WQS. Discussion took place.

Nichelle made a motion, seconded by P.J. to cover the banquet and room cost for Aaron Ristow on Thursday night and no discounts will be given to Tompkins County SWCD for registrations. Carried/1 opposed

Discussion took place on whose registrations should be covered by the CDEA. There is no policy in place for this. Jordan feels that the expense of a full registration should be covered for whoever on the Board is working on the WQS. Kelly feels that a policy shouldn't be written for this but that it should be discussed on a yearly basis.

Kelly made a motion, seconded by Lenny for the CDEA to cover P.J. and Kristin's registrations for the work they have done for the WQS. Carried

e. Other – None

XII. New Business

- a. Administrative Manual Committee – Jennifer Clifford from SWCC has been appointed to work with the Administrative Committee in updating the Administrative Manual. A sub-committee will be established to work on the Administrative Manual. Kristin offered to be on the sub-committee to work on a section of the manual.
- b. Annual Meeting Resolutions – Nichelle asked about resolutions.
- c. Annual Report – Nichelle has some of the reports.
- d. Other

XIII. Next Meeting – To Be Determined

XIV. Meeting Adjourned at 11:24 AM

Submitted By:

Kristin White, Treasurer

PARTNER REPORTS

2. NYACD Report

NYS CDEA Meeting

February 19-20, 2015

- On March 2, NYACD Executive Board and CDEA President, Nichelle will be meeting with Senator Young office, Encon, Ag Committee and Office of Budget.
 - Legislation that is being worked on
 1. Creation of Lawn to Woodland Program
 2. Re-introducing the Waterfront Revitalization
 3. Modification to District Law under Reimbursement Expenses
 4. Noxious Invasive Species Endangering Human Health
- Lobby Days is coming up on March 3. To date, appointments have been made for 35-40 Legislators.
- Executive Directors interviews are schedule for Friday, February 20 at the Crowne Plaza with Nichelle Billhardt and PJ Emerick will be on interview panel. The following individuals have submitted their resumes: Ed Hoxsie, Brian Hall, Shannon Connors, and Danielle Cummins.
- 2015 Assessments have been sent out and payments are coming in.
- The new Executive Director will be working on updating the website which will include posting minutes, treasurer's report, legislation, SWCD website links and email addresses.

Secretary's Notes:

- Dan discussed the termination decision of Judy Littrell.
- Dan stated that the NYACD Treasurer at the time decided eight years ago to discontinue filing a 990 Form. Due to this decision the NYACD lost their 501(c)(3) status. The NYACD has been reinstated as a 501(c)(6) which allows them to lobby as of June 2011. They hired a certified public account to do this reinstatement at a reduced rate.
- Dan stated that he's been asked by Districts, "What do we get from our dues to NYACD?" Dan has been going to the last three NACD meeting and his District has paid for part of these expenses and NYACD paid for part. Dan stated that the NYACD takes in approximately \$62,000.00 in dues. They pay their Executive Director \$47,500.00, along with payroll taxes, workers' comp, website expense, and reimbursement dues for travel expenses.
- Dan stated the 990 is on the website. He tried to send it to the Districts but because their website is so outdated he got back a lot of the emails as "undeliverable. There are three attachments to his email; 1. Copy of 990, 2. Yearly Report and 3. Letter answering questions some Districts have in regards to the past Executive Director.
- Dan has reached out to Nichelle and P.J. to sit on the interviews for the new Executive Director.

- Dan would like to see monthly Minutes, Treasurer’s Reports, Annual 990, Legislation Board detail, and links to the Congress. He will ask the new Executive Director to do these tasks.
- Dan stated NACD is starting a Soil Ambassador program. They are looking to place three soil ambassadors in each state. As soon as Dan receives information on this he will send it out to the Districts.

3. SWCC Report to the CDEA – 2/19/15

2015 State Aid to Districts Report

Six Districts did not make the threshold to reach the max \$60k reimbursement based on 2014 expenditures. There is no prorating this year so Districts that had over \$120,000 in eligible expenditures will receive the full \$60,000. There will be a total of \$790,789 available for Performance Measures but it is yet to be determined what the amount to individual Districts will be. Below is the breakdown for the three parts of state aid.

EPF Total	\$ 4,725,000.00
Part A	\$ 3,562,210.42
Part B	\$ 372,000.00
Part C	\$ 790,789.58

Total estimation per District = \$79,634.30* if all Districts earned the max. for Part C (likely not to happen)

AgNPS – Round 21 is currently out through the NYS Grants Gateway. Applications are due on March 31st. See PDF for additional program status details.

AEM Adaption and Carbon Management Program \$500,000 in the proposed Executive Budget – potential steps

It’s in last Wednesday’s executive budget, so still needs to be approved and details need to be determined, e.g., uses, timeline, fate if not entirely used during timeline,

1. Convene a working group of partners.we’ll be seeking your input and ideas.
2. Identify tools and guidelines needed for adaptation and carbon management planning (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation)
3. Develop incentive mechanisms / programs

4. Identify training needs, instructors, and funding for trainings
5. Identify pilot projects and studies in near term

Invasive Species Regulation

A regulation was adopted in July 2014 that prohibits or regulates the possession, transport, importation, sale, purchase and introduction of select invasive species. The purpose of this regulation is to help control invasive species, a form of biological pollution, by reducing the introduction of new and spread of existing populations. This regulation becomes effective March 10, 2015. Two species, Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and Eurasian boars (*Sus scrofa*) have grace periods. See the frequently asked questions, below, for more details.

The SWCC will be updating its Policy Statement Related to the Sale of Tree and Shrubs by SWCDs to reflect the new regulations and to encourage SWCDs to not sell other species with invasive tendencies. The SWCC will be seeking support from the CDEA on this effort and will begin discussions at upcoming SWCC meetings on policy development.

DIVISION REPORTS

Division I Report

Judy Bennett, Orleans County

A Division meeting was held on December 19 at the Genesee County Park's Interpretive Center. Nineteen employees attended.

Currently, most of the counties in Division I have been busy with submitting their annual reports. Most of the counties are also busy writing proposals for Round 21 of the Ag NPS program.

Districts are receiving Tree & Shrub orders and are preparing for their local Envirothons. Orleans County hired a new technician, Megan McAnn. Technicians are busy working on getting permits from DEC and Army Corp of Engineers so that projects can begin once the construction season begins. They are also busy trying to get easements so that work can continue with their "Slashbuster" to clear debris from streams and ditches. Landowners are requesting Soil Group Worksheets be completed. Farmers are signing up to have Cornell Soil Health Tests completed on their farm fields through the Soil Health Mini Grant.

Erie County has some concerns to do with Quasar and the agricultural spreading of anaerobic digested waste water treatment sludge.

Genesee County has eliminated the position of Conservation Education Program Coordinator as of December 31, 2014. As a result Judy Spring is no longer employed by the District.
Submitted by: Judy Bennett, Division I Representative

Division II Report

Kelly Emerick, Monroe County – report was emailed

February, 2015

NRCS WCA: In Division II, of the Districts that I have heard from, Monroe & Onondaga have not signed the Working Co-operative Agreement (WCA) with NRCS.

- Onondaga is not going to sign and I have *attached the Memorandum* from October, 2014 from Onondaga County SWCD regarding the reasons for not signing the agreement.
- Monroe County SWCD submitted comments and questions to NRCS in May of 2014 and just received responses to those questions in February 2015 (*also attached for reference*). Additionally, Monroe County met with Ben Schmidt, Assistant State Conservationist for USDA NRCS at our January 2015 Board meeting to discuss the WCA. During the meeting, discussions with Ben deteriorated, and the Board members and the Executive Director felt that questions regarding the WCA could not adequately be answered. When the concern was raised that the agreement does not reflect the reality of the relationship that exists between NRCs and SWCD, the members and staff were told that the District was “making mountains out of mole hills”. The Board of Directors will vote at the March Board meeting as to whether the Monroe County SWCD will sign onto the agreement.

NYACD: From the Districts that I received updates from, Livingston and Monroe have received the invoice but have not voted to remit payment for the NYACD dues yet.

- At the January 2015 Board of Directors Meeting, Monroe SWCD discussed the invoice received by NYACD and the termination of Executive Director (ED), Judy Littrell. Concerns were raised on plan for moving the NYACD mission forward and the plan to replace the ED. Further discussion will take place at the March Board meeting for regarding NYACD.
- Onondaga received the invoice and have voted to NOT pay the NYACD dues until NYACD Board comes forward with a sound plan to represent the best interest of all 58 SWCDs. *The letter that was sent to President, Dan Farrand in January 2015 by Onondaga County SWCD is attached.*

Annual Report: Livingston County SWCD suggested that the NYS SWCC create an excel spreadsheet that can be populated on a daily basis for the key items that the SWCC is asking for in the Annual Report. The report has too many questions and those questions often apply to more than one widget. The NYS SWCC should provide guidance on the questions being asked to help clarify what they are looking for to help fill in the reports accurately. Bob, District Manager at Livingston County SWCD, thought that possibly an example of a populated report based on a “scenario” District would be helpful as well.

FEMA Mapping: Livingston County suggested that Ag & Mkts take a leadership role in FEMA mapping and re-mapping. Training should be provided to Districts on the updates to the program and mapping, such as FEMA determinations and how to properly interpret FEMA flood maps (old and new) so that Districts can better assist landowners. By receiving training, Districts could assist in training Code Enforcement Officer too on this subject matter. I suggested such training as a topic for the 2015 WQS, but am unaware of why it wasn’t selected. If it is a instructor issue, I have an instructor in mind that would be good for such a training.

Please call me anytime if you have any questions or concerns regarding this report at (585) 753-7380.

Submitted by,
Kelly Emerick
Executive Director
Monroe County SWCD

NYS CDEA Division II Representative

*Correspondence is attached

Division III Report

Christine Watkins, Jefferson County

NYS CDEA Division 3 Meeting

Boondocks Restaurant, Lyons Falls, NY

February 9, 2015

Madison: Carl Bartlett, Joann Burke, Steve Lorraine, and Troy Bishopp
Jefferson: Chris Watkins, Levi Rudd, Rhonda Redder, and Patrick Crast
St. Lawrence: Matt Brown
Lewis County: Bill Burke, Nichelle Billhardt, Carla Luther, Ashley Marolf, and Larry Dolhof
NRCS: Dave Komorowski, Watertown
SWCC: Bob Brower

Partner Reports

CDEA

Nichelle Billhardt reminded everyone to register for the WQS. Aaron Ristow has left, PJ Emerick is now Vice-President. PJ will run for President as Nichelle's term ends in March.

Nichelle attended NACD Conference in New Orleans. There will be a full report in the annual meeting's annual report. Discussion regarding 319 funds that are available to Districts throughout the USA, but not in NYS.

Bob explained that 319 funds come to NYS through DEC, and the funds are not released to SWCDs as they had been in the past.

Discussion regarding WQ monitoring.

The division reports for the annual report have been reduced. The annual report is quite lengthy, and they will be sent separately, instead of being distributed at the WQS.

Christine reported that parking will be a concern for some at the WQS. The hotel has a 7' height limit. It was in the registration packet. Troy recommended that an e-mail be sent out as a reminder to all before the WQS.

Next CDEA meeting is February 19 & 20.

NRCS

Dave Komorowski reviewed Bruce Hopkins report:

- NY NRCS has completed their organizational restructuring with multi-county field office teams now officially supervised by 17 DCs across the state. There are now three areas in the state: West, Northeast, and Southeast.
- At the state level, NRCS's administrative staff is undergoing reorganization as part of a national effort.

- Greg Kist, State Conservationist, has communicated several priorities for the field:
 1. Better contract management
 2. Improved conservation planning and follow up
 3. Increased technical training
 4. Servicing our food security act workload
 5. Soil health
 6. Strengthening partnerships
- NRCS is not seeking to collect more rent from NY's SWCDs
- NY NRCS has not yet received our FY 2015 full year allocations
- CSP is open for new participants this month (2/27 deadline).

Bob clarified question about Round 21 utilizing EQIP funds, and having to have 6 months of storage. NRCS ranking criteria makes any application proposing less than 6 months storage a lower priority. Trying to get it in writing.

NYACD

Clark Decker has stepped down as Division 3 representative; they'll need a replacement. Executive Director, Judy Littrell, was let go. **Nichelle** reported that some District boards are not paying dues until there are some answers and direction. The position is being advertised as full-time at \$40,000 per year. Dan from Steuben County is president now. CDEA doesn't currently receive minutes from NYACD meetings or other communication as a CDEA partner. **Christine** reported that Legislative Days are March 2 and 3. **Nichelle** reported that NYACD offered CDEA to take part in interviewing for executive director. There is no news on the fall Administrative Conference. Material and training time is a concern. There is no training budget, and NYACD receives all of the registration revenue. **Carla** reported the classes were directed by NYACD, not CDEA planning committee, and that the classes were limited to 1 or 1.5 hours. Jennifer Clifford has been appointed to assist in the update of the administrative manual after the WQS. **Steve** provided a brief history of the NYACD/Administrative Conference merge and recommended that we wait for new NYACD Executive Director.

SWCC

Bob reported that the meeting scheduled for tomorrow has been rescheduled due to inclement weather; it is now scheduled for 3/12 at WQS in the afternoon. An at-large member, urban/suburban is needed. Annual reports are due soon. Gateway training must be taken for Round 21, refer questions to Brian. Should pay close attention to the Plan of Work stage. Review team might not fully understand the intended concept. System approach, not BMPs, and the narrative should explain SW3. Applications may lose out because one section is weak. Reviewers go through the information 2 weeks before is the intent. There was discussion on invasive species at a recent meeting, particularly ground cover, being an option in SWCD tree sales. Items may not be on the invasive list, but they are a concern.

Resolutions

Troy questioned if a resolution should be drafted to address the 319 issue.

Bob mentioned that Cliff Frasier suggests districts utilize Part C funds for items they can't charge to AEM, for example landowner or municipality work.

Division Rep

Division 3 representative will be needed since Christine's term is ending. There will be another division meeting at the WQS. Responsibilities include: bucket raffle and silent auction (in conjunction with Division 4), assist with NYS Fair, vote on Frank Bratt scholarships. Scholarship requests have increased, which is nice to see.

Doug Kierst will run as an at large member. PJ Emerick is running for President, and Jordan Clements potentially for Vice-President. Kristin White will remain as Treasurer. Lenny Croote & Kristen Brown's terms as division reps are also up. Kelly Emerick, Division 2, will finish out PJ's term.

HEC-RAS

Joanne Humphries has brought up an issue with DEC requiring a hydrologic and hydraulic study for streambank projects, pushing engineering costs up. This was discussed at the municipal subcommittee meeting in December. There have been some conversations with DEC. Unsure if it is Albany or the regional interpretation. Should there be training at Cons Skills on HEC-RAS? **Steve** felt it is too high end, geared for engineer use. If all permits require this in the future, it could jeopardize streambank work.

Training Plans

Steve explained the history of obtaining the Ohio plan. In NY there is no engineering structure. OH is regimented, consistent, and set up like NRCS. Tim Clark doesn't like the program, and he has created his own training items based on surveys of the employees across the state. Lauren Prezorski has supported this program by helping to determine training for WQS and Cons Skills. Should it continue to be used?

County Reports

St. Lawrence: Working on Soil Health grant project for cover crops, baseline, and test. Finished EQIP rankings, contribution agreement, timber sales, management plans, 5-6 forestry plans

Jefferson: We were looking at developing forest management plans for NRCS signup. We tried to contract with Oswego due to co-location issues, but NRCS wouldn't allow it. Levi is doing NMP work. We're doing a lot of MS4 work for the coalition. Patrick is in the process of obtaining his CPESC. Working on streambanks, buffers, etc.

Madison: Working on watershed management plans and other regular work. Troy has a PDF on 2015 grazing charts that he'll send to PJ for the CDEA website and to Judy Snyder for distribution. Northeast Grazing Summit will be held on 3/29.

Lewis: A soil health workshop will be held on 3/18 with, CCE, Mike Hunter, FSA, USDA's Paul Salon and Amy Langner. They'll discuss wetland issues, USDA payments, cover crops, and outlining grants. Training Alexis on CNMP. Beginning plans for the Black River Watershed Conference.

Other

Christine reported that each county should bring an item from their county for a basket for the Silent Auction.

Round 21 feedback: Nichelle stated the SW forms are the same, but budget input is different for Round 21, consolidating info.

Bob suggested signing in with right title (Grantor or signatory).

Annual Reports feedback: There were some kinks in entering information on the Annual Reports. Sampling vs. monitoring needs clarification.

Bob: Jennifer Clifford will be the southeast regional rep, but will continue to work on reports.

Nichelle stated there will be a meeting on Tuesday at the WQS with Tammy, NRCS, regarding RCPP and the Greater Adirondack (501-3c).

Division IV Report

Jordan Clements, Otsego County

Otsego County:

- WQIP – working on projects.
- Received \$150,000 for our hydro-seeding program.
- Working on a grant to get an inner-seeder.
- Jordan attended the Annual NACD meeting. Jordan is interested in becoming one of the Soil Ambassadors.

Steuben:

- ✓ WQIP projects plan of work has been submitted and contracts are being received for signature
- ✓ Completed 53 projects under the Streambank Stabilization program (35 projects for 17 different municipalities & 18 landowners in 12 different municipalities)
- ✓ Held Emergency Stream Intervention program (3 day event) with 40+ attendee from DEC, DPW, SWCD's (Ontario/Steuben), and private landowner.
- ✓ Hosted and worked with FEMA on flooding disaster funding totaling \$2,000,000
- ✓ A local farmer received the Cooperator Year Award – Gerald Pervical
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- Within the next 5 years, we have planned and obligated 259 contracts totaling \$6, 931,733 paid out to Steuben County landowners – we have the highest workload in the state.

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Division V Report

Lenny Croote, Hamilton County

Clinton:

- Hired an new District Manager
- Working on the Annual Report

Essex:

- Working on the Annual Report
- Assisting with the Division V Silent Auction Item

Franklin:

- Completed 2 Silage Leachate Systems for Ag Non-point Grants, one for round 18 and one for round 19, have 2 more planned for next summer for each grant and we are working on a stream bank stabilization
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- Hosting our Local Working Group meeting for AEM February 18 at 1PM and are hoping to have our strategy complete soon
- Tree Sale orders are coming in slowly
- We have added Forestry onto our list of Services

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Warren:

- Warren County is finalizing repots, newsletters, APW's., etc. We anticipate an exceptionally busy year and look forward to hiring several interns to help out.
- We have projects for the following: stormwater, habitat (fish, osprey, turtles), invasive species, ag (yes ag), hazard mitigation, urban forestry.....
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- We have held (3) 4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control trainings already and it looks like 2 more coming up. Hopefully Dean and Nick will become CPESC certified soon and then go through the train the trainer.
- Nick is looking forward to his hair band duet(s) with Chris Watkins at the WQS. Bob will be the roadie.

Division VI Report

Ben Luskin, Washington County

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Essex:

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Division VI & VII Report

Kristen Brown, Orange County / Ann Marie Calabro, Suffolk County

NO REPORT GIVEN

PARTNER REPORTS

2. NYACD Report

NYS CDEA Meeting

February 19-20, 2015

- On March 2, NYACD Executive Board and CDEA President, Nichelle will be meeting with Senator Young office, Encon, Ag Committee and Office of Budget.
 - Legislation that is being worked on
 1. Creation of Lawn to Woodland Program
 2. Re-introducing the Waterfront Revitalization
 3. Modification to District Law under Reimbursement Expenses
 4. Noxious Invasive Species Endangering Human Health
- Lobby Days is coming up on March 3. To date, appointments have been made for 35-40 Legislators.
- Executive Directors interviews are schedule for Friday, February 20 at the Crowne Plaza with Nichelle Billhardt and PJ Emerick will be on interview panel. The following individuals have submitted their resumes: Ed Hoxsie, Brian Hall, Shannon Connors, and Danielle Cummins.
- 2015 Assessments have been sent out and payments are coming in.
- The new Executive Director will be working on updating the website which will include posting minutes, treasurer's report, legislation, SWCD website links and email addresses.

Secretary's Notes:

- Dan discussed the termination decision of Judy Littrell.
- Dan stated that the NYACD Treasurer at the time decided eight years ago to discontinue filing a 990 Form. Due to this decision the NYACD lost their 501(c)(3) status. The NYACD has been reinstated as a 501(c)(6) which allows them to lobby as of June 2011. They hired a certified public account to do this reinstatement at a reduced rate.
- Dan stated that he's been asked by Districts, "What do we get from our dues to NYACD?" Dan has been going to the last three NACD meeting and his District has paid for part of these expenses and NYACD paid for part. Dan stated that the NYACD takes in approximately \$62,000.00 in dues. They pay their Executive Director \$47,500.00, along with payroll taxes, workers' comp, website expense, and reimbursement dues for travel expenses.
- Dan stated the 990 is on the website. He tried to send it to the Districts but because their website is so outdated he got back a lot of the emails as "undeliverable. There are three attachments to his email; 1. Copy of 990, 2. Yearly Report and 3. Letter answering questions some Districts have in regards to the past Executive Director.
- Dan has reached out to Nichelle and P.J. to sit on the interviews for the new Executive Director.
- Dan would like to see monthly Minutes, Treasurer's Reports, Annual 990, Legislation Board detail, and links to the Congress. He will ask the new Executive Director to do these tasks.

- Dan stated NACD is starting a Soil Ambassador program. They are looking to place three soil ambassadors in each state. As soon as Dan receives information on this he will send it out to the Districts.

3. SWCC Report to the CDEA – 2/19/15

2015 State Aid to Districts Report

Six Districts did not make the threshold to reach the max \$60k reimbursement based on 2014 expenditures. There is no prorating this year so Districts that had over \$120,000 in eligible expenditures will receive the full \$60,000. There will be a total of \$790,789 available for Performance Measures but it is yet to be determined what the amount to individual Districts will be. Below is the breakdown for the three parts of state aid.

EPF Total	\$ 4,725,000.00
Part A	\$ 3,562,210.42
Part B	\$ 372,000.00
Part C	\$ 790,789.58

Total estimation per District = \$79,634.30* if all Districts earned the max. for Part C (likely not to happen)

AgNPS – Round 21 is currently out through the NYS Grants Gateway. Applications are due on March 31st. See PDF for additional program status details.

AEM Adaption and Carbon Management Program \$500,000 in the proposed Executive Budget – potential steps

It's in last Wednesday's executive budget, so still needs to be approved and details need to be determined, e.g., uses, timeline, fate if not entirely used during timeline,

1. Convene a working group of partners.....we'll be seeking your input and ideas.
2. Identify tools and guidelines needed for adaptation and carbon management planning (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation)
3. Develop incentive mechanisms / programs
4. Identify training needs, instructors, and funding for trainings
5. Identify pilot projects and studies in near term

Invasive Species Regulation

A regulation was adopted in July 2014 that prohibits or regulates the possession, transport, importation, sale, purchase and introduction of select invasive species. The purpose of this regulation is to help control invasive species, a form of biological pollution, by reducing the introduction of new and spread of existing populations. This regulation becomes effective March 10, 2015. Two species, Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and Eurasian boars (*Sus scrofa*) have grace periods. See the frequently asked questions, below, for more details.

The SWCC will be updating its Policy Statement Related to the Sale of Tree and Shrubs by SWCDs to reflect the new regulations and to encourage SWCDs to not sell other species with invasive tendencies. The SWCC will be seeking support from the CDEA on this effort and will begin discussions at upcoming SWCC meetings on policy development.

DIVISION REPORTS

Division I Report

Judy Bennett, Orleans County

A Division meeting was held on December 19 at the Genesee County Park's Interpretive Center. Nineteen employees attended.

Currently, most of the counties in Division I have been busy with submitting their annual reports. Most of the counties are also busy writing proposals for Round 21 of the Ag NPS program.

Districts are receiving Tree & Shrub orders and are preparing for their local Envirothons. Orleans County hired a new technician, Megan McAnn. Technicians are busy working on getting permits from DEC and Army Corp of Engineers so that projects can begin once the construction season begins. They are also busy trying to get easements so that work can continue with their "Slashbuster" to clear debris from streams and ditches. Landowners are requesting Soil Group Worksheets be completed. Farmers are signing up to have Cornell Soil Health Tests completed on their farm fields through the Soil Health Mini Grant.

Erie County has some concerns to do with Quasar and the agricultural spreading of anaerobic digested waste water treatment sludge.

Genesee County has eliminated the position of Conservation Education Program Coordinator as of December 31, 2014. As a result Judy Spring is no longer employed by the District.

Submitted by: Judy Bennett, Division I Representative

Division II Report

Kelly Emerick, Monroe County – report was emailed

February, 2015

NRCS WCA: In Division II, of the Districts that I have heard from, Monroe & Onondaga have not signed the Working Co-operative Agreement (WCA) with NRCS.

- Onondaga is not going to sign and I have *attached the Memorandum* from October, 2014 from Onondaga County SWCD regarding the reasons for not signing the agreement.
- Monroe County SWCD submitted comments and questions to NRCS in May of 2014 and just received responses to those questions in February 2015(*also attached for reference*). Additionally, Monroe County met with Ben Schmidt, Assistant State Conservationist for USDA NRCS at our January 2015 Board meeting to discuss the WCA. During the meeting, discussions with Ben deteriorated, and the Board members and the Executive Director felt that questions regarding the WCA could not adequately be answered. When the concern was raised that the agreement does not reflect the reality of the relationship that exists between NRCs and SWCD, the members and staff were told that the District was “making mountains out of mole hills”. The Board of Directors will vote at the March Board meeting as to whether the Monroe County SWCD will sign onto the agreement.

NYACD: From the Districts that I received updates from, Livingston and Monroe have received the invoice but have not voted to remit payment for the NYACD dues yet.

- At the January 2015 Board of Directors Meeting, Monroe SWCD discussed the invoice received by NYACD and the termination of Executive Director (ED), Judy Littrell. Concerns were raised on plan for moving the NYACD mission forward and the plan to replace the ED. Further discussion will take place at the March Board meeting for regarding NYACD.
- Onondaga received the invoice and have voted to NOT pay the NYACD dues until NYACD Board comes forward with a sound plan to represent the best interest of all 58 SWCDs. *The letter that was sent to President, Dan Farrand in January 2015 by Onondaga County SWCD is attached.*

Annual Report: Livingston County SWCD suggested that the NYS SWCC create an excel spreadsheet that can be populated on a daily basis for the key items that the SWCC is asking for in the Annual Report. The report has too many questions and those questions often apply to more than one widget. The NYS SWCC should provide guidance on the questions being asked to help clarify what they are looking for to help fill in the reports accurately. Bob, District Manager at Livingston County SWCD, thought that possibly an example of a populated report based on a “scenario” District would be helpful as well.

FEMA Mapping: Livingston County suggested that Ag & Mkts take a leadership role in FEMA mapping and re-mapping. Training should be provided to Districts on the updates to the program and mapping, such as FEMA determinations and how to properly interpret FEMA flood maps (old and new) so that Districts can better assist landowners. By receiving training, Districts could assist in training Code Enforcement Officer too on this subject matter. I suggested such training as a topic for the 2015 WQS, but am unaware of why it wasn’t selected. If it is a instructor issue, I have an instructor in mind that would be good for such a training.

Please call me anytime if you have any questions or concerns regarding this report at (585) 753-7380.

Submitted by,
 Kelly Emerick
 Executive Director
 Monroe County SWCD
 NYS CDEA Division II Representative

*Correspondence is attached

Division III Report

Christine Watkins, Jefferson County

NYS CDEA Division 3 Meeting Boondocks Restaurant, Lyons Falls, NY February 9, 2015

Madison: Carl Bartlett, Joann Burke, Steve Lorraine, and Troy Bishopp
Jefferson: Chris Watkins, Levi Rudd, Rhonda Redder, and Patrick Crast
St. Lawrence: Matt Brown
Lewis County: Bill Burke, Nichelle Billhardt, Carla Luther, Ashley Marolf, and Larry Dolhof
NRCS: Dave Komorowski, Watertown
SWCC: Bob Brower

Partner Reports

CDEA

Nichelle Billhardt reminded everyone to register for the WQS. Aaron Ristow has left, PJ Emerick is now Vice-President. PJ will run for President as Nichelle's term ends in March.

Nichelle attended NACD Conference in New Orleans. There will be a full report in the annual meeting's annual report. Discussion regarding 319 funds that are available to Districts throughout the USA, but not in NYS.

Bob explained that 319 funds come to NYS through DEC, and the funds are not released to SWCDs as they had been in the past.

Discussion regarding WQ monitoring.

The division reports for the annual report have been reduced. The annual report is quite lengthy, and they will be sent separately, instead of being distributed at the WQS.

Christine reported that parking will be a concern for some at the WQS. The hotel has a 7' height limit. It was in the registration packet. Troy recommended that an e-mail be sent out as a reminder to all before the WQS.

Next CDEA meeting is February 19 & 20.

NRCS

Dave Komorowski reviewed Bruce Hopkins report:

- NY NRCS has completed their organizational restructuring with multi-county field office teams now officially supervised by 17 DCs across the state. There are now three areas in the state: West, Northeast, and Southeast.
- At the state level, NRCS's administrative staff is undergoing reorganization as part of a national effort.
- Greg Kist, State Conservationist, has communicated several priorities for the field:
 1. Better contract management

2. Improved conservation planning and follow up
 3. Increased technical training
 4. Servicing our food security act workload
 5. Soil health
 6. Strengthening partnerships
- NRCS is not seeking to collect more rent from NY's SWCDs
 - NY NRCS has not yet received our FY 2015 full year allocations
 - CSP is open for new participants this month (2/27 deadline).

Bob clarified question about Round 21 utilizing EQIP funds, and having to have 6 months of storage. NRCS ranking criteria makes any application proposing less than 6 months storage a lower priority. Trying to get it in writing.

NYACD

Clark Decker has stepped down as Division 3 representative; they'll need a replacement. Executive Director, Judy Littrell, was let go. **Nichelle** reported that some District boards are not paying dues until there are some answers and direction. The position is being advertised as full-time at \$40,000 per year. Dan from Steuben County is president now. CDEA doesn't currently receive minutes from NYACD meetings or other communication as a CDEA partner. **Christine** reported that Legislative Days are March 2 and 3. **Nichelle** reported that NYACD offered CDEA to take part in interviewing for executive director. There is no news on the fall Administrative Conference. Material and training time is a concern. There is no training budget, and NYACD receives all of the registration revenue. **Carla** reported the classes were directed by NYACD, not CDEA planning committee, and that the classes were limited to 1 or 1.5 hours. Jennifer Clifford has been appointed to assist in the update of the administrative manual after the WQS. **Steve** provided a brief history of the NYACD/Administrative Conference merge and recommended that we wait for new NYACD Executive Director.

SWCC

Bob reported that the meeting scheduled for tomorrow has been rescheduled due to inclement weather; it is now scheduled for 3/12 at WQS in the afternoon. An at-large member, urban/suburban is needed. Annual reports are due soon. Gateway training must be taken for Round 21, refer questions to Brian. Should pay close attention to the Plan of Work stage. Review team might not fully understand the intended concept. System approach, not BMPs, and the narrative should explain SW3. Applications may lose out because one section is weak. Reviewers go through the information 2 weeks before is the intent. There was discussion on invasive species at a recent meeting, particularly ground cover, being an option in SWCD tree sales. Items may not be on the invasive list, but they are a concern.

Resolutions

Troy questioned if a resolution should be drafted to address the 319 issue.

Bob mentioned that Cliff Frasier suggests districts utilize Part C funds for items they can't charge to AEM, for example landowner or municipality work.

Division Rep

Division 3 representative will be needed since Christine's term is ending. There will be another division meeting at the WQS. Responsibilities include: bucket raffle and silent auction (in conjunction with Division 4), assist with NYS Fair, vote on Frank Bratt scholarships. Scholarship requests have increased, which is nice to see.

Doug Kierst will run as an at large member. PJ Emerick is running for President, and Jordan Clements potentially for Vice-President. Kristin White will remain as Treasurer. Lenny Croote & Kristen Brown's terms as division reps are also up. Kelly Emerick, Division 2, will finish out PJ's term.

HEC-RAS

Joanne Humphries has brought up an issue with DEC requiring a hydrologic and hydraulic study for streambank projects, pushing engineering costs up. This was discussed at the municipal subcommittee meeting in December. There have been some conversations with DEC. Unsure if it is Albany or the regional interpretation. Should there be training at Cons Skills on HEC-RAS? Steve felt it is too high end, geared for engineer use. If all permits require this in the future, it could jeopardize streambank work.

Training Plans

Steve explained the history of obtaining the Ohio plan. In NY there is no engineering structure. OH is regimented, consistent, and set up like NRCS. Tim Clark doesn't like the program, and he has created his own training items based on surveys of the employees across the state. Lauren Prezorski has supported this program by helping to determine training for WQS and Cons Skills. Should it continue to be used?

County Reports

St. Lawrence: Working on Soil Health grant project for cover crops, baseline, and test. Finished EQIP rankings, contribution agreement, timber sales, management plans, 5-6 forestry plans

Jefferson: We were looking at developing forest management plans for NRCS signup. We tried to contract with Oswego due to co-location issues, but NRCS wouldn't allow it. Levi is doing NMP work. We're doing a lot of MS4 work for the coalition. Patrick is in the process of obtaining his CPESC. Working on streambanks, buffers, etc.

Madison: Working on watershed management plans and other regular work. Troy has a PDF on 2015 grazing charts that he'll send to PJ for the CDEA website and to Judy Snyder for distribution. Northeast Grazing Summit will be held on 3/29.

Lewis: A soil health workshop will be held on 3/18 with, CCE, Mike Hunter, FSA, USDA's Paul Salon and Amy Langner. They'll discuss wetland issues, USDA payments, cover crops, and outlining grants. Training Alexis on CNMP. Beginning plans for the Black River Watershed Conference.

Other

Christine reported that each county should bring an item from their county for a basket for the Silent Auction.

Round 21 feedback: Nichelle stated the SW forms are the same, but budget input is different for Round 21, consolidating info.

Bob suggested signing in with right title (Grantor or signatory).

Annual Reports feedback: There were some kinks in entering information on the Annual Reports. Sampling vs. monitoring needs clarification.

Bob: Jennifer Clifford will be the southeast regional rep, but will continue to work on reports.

Nichelle stated there will be a meeting on Tuesday at the WQS with Tammy, NRCS, regarding RCPP and the Greater Adirondack (501-3c).

Division IV Report

Jordan Clements, Otsego County

Otsego County:

- WQIP – working on projects.
- Received \$150,000 for our hydro-seeding program.
- Working on a grant to get an inner-seeder.
- Jordan attended the Annual NACD meeting. Jordan is interested in becoming one of the Soil Ambassadors.

Steuben:

- ✓ WQIP projects plan of work has been submitted and contracts are being received for signature
- ✓ Completed 53 projects under the Streambank Stabilization program (35 projects for 17 different municipalities & 18 landowners in 12 different municipalities)
- ✓ Held Emergency Stream Intervention program (3 day event) with 40+ attendee from DEC, DPW, SWCD's (Ontario/Steuben), and private landowner.
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Division VI & VII Report

Kristen Brown, Orange County / Ann Marie Calabro, Suffolk County

NO REPORT GIVEN



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District

6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool, New York 13088
phone: 315-457-0325 · fax: 315-457-0410 · e-mail: info@ocswcd.org
website: www.ocswcd.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Directors and USDA NRCS
FROM: Mark Burger, Executive Director
RE: Comments on proposed Cooperative Working Agreement
DATE: October 25, 2014

Attached please find the Onondaga County SWCD (District) comments regarding the proposed Cooperative Working Agreement (CWA) with USDA. We believe that the biggest problem with the agreement is that it is not an accurate and realistic reflection of how the arrangement between the District and NRCS happens on a daily basis. To support this statement, we have highlighted in **yellow** the areas that the District feels the proposed CWA is not accurate and/or realistic.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE.

Historically the relationship with NRCS has been from the top down. We feel like it is “do this the NRCS way and on the timeline that as requested.” One example of this is assistance with EQIP. District staff feels like they are expected to drop everything that they are doing to service/support NRCS requests. A true “mutual pledge of cooperation” and “respect” might help. We propose asking for assistance and agreeing on the timeline to provide that assistance. The District receives no financial support for this role. The benefit is to the farmer, who may receive EQIP funding to cost-share a project.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

“by facilitating a local working group”. NRCS has led the local working group in Onondaga County for many years. We do not feel that this needs to change. This District has been working to push directly into historically unfunded watersheds in the County to address farmer needs and to ask the specific questions of the farmers as to “how we can help?” NRCS and CCE of Onondaga County have been invited and agreed to participate in the “North COUNTY Farmers Meeting” at the Clay Town Hall on November 18. (Oneida Lake and Seneca River watersheds are the most historically underfunded watersheds in Onondaga County, even when the District had Congressman Walsh funding. District staff is trying to change that and bring new financial resources and technical assistance to these folks who have never worked with “government”.

Also, District staff members have been very concerned that our recommendations/suggestions/perspectives have been diluted in the past due to the local working group and regionalization by NRCS. One example is the Young/Turner manure storage on Route 80 in Apulia. It has taken 3+ years to get that District-identified high priority for a manure storage ranked high enough to be funded by EQIP. (Thank you to NRCS for helping to address this concern in 2014; the project is now scheduled for funding).

IV. A. TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

1. The District does not expect to need much technical and administrative assistance for the delivery of the District's programs.

4. "The Service will provide technical training and support to Service, District, and Committee staffs." At the 2014 Conservation Skills Workshop (CSW) class "Ag BMP: Waterways and WASCOB's", CSW committee members desperately needed an NRCS employee to teach and/or co-teach the class as the class utilized the NRCS EFT software. Upon making the request of NRCS, a CSW committee member was informed that NRCS was "too busy". This matter has been discussed with USDA NRCS State Conservationist Greg Kist. We realize that a lot of the NRCS resources are still committed to the Hurricane Sandy and Irene efforts and that was the justification for the decision. But, it was the feeling of the CSW committee members that by supporting the training, District staff members from around NYS would have been trained to the point that the future workload to NRCS for similar types of requests could be reduced in the future.

IV. B. PERSONNEL

1. EMPLOYMENT/STAFFING SUPERVISION

- a. "The parties will work together to coordinate staffing plans." The Onondaga District does not see this as an accurate request as our funding mechanisms and workload priorities will not likely be the same as NRCS. The District is not doing just agriculture any more. The District provides many other diversified services such as: Emerald Ash Borer, Stormwater Management, Critical Area Revegetation, etc. It must be stated that the District is not opposed to assisting and supporting NRCS in agricultural matters given that the time and financial resources are available on the District side to do so.

1. INFORMATIONAL SHARING

- a. "The parties agree to work toward establishing and maintaining databases to further assist in the sharing of information pertaining to the purpose and scope of this agreement." The District is always willing to share said information/data. The problem has always been that USDA NRCS (and Farm Service Agency) require the District to sign a waiver (and to have farmers sign the waiver) to share said information/data. We understand that "Washington" makes the rules, but the rules are not conducive to "strengthening cooperation" or providing a "mutual pledge of cooperation". Therefore, the District recommends that NRCS address this with Washington and to the National Association of Conservation Districts to get these issues resolved. Currently, the District has a very efficient and effective mechanism to share information/ data with our partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, which has greatly strengthened our relationship with them.

- d. "To provide accountability, the parties will work together to publish a District annual report and distribute it to the public." The District already does an annual report, and has been authoring one for decades. The District is not looking upon this recommendation favorably as the District needs to maintain its autonomy and identity to the constituents that it serves and to the agencies and organizations that fund the District. For too long, when the District was co-located with

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NRCS, constituents (and Onondaga County Legislators) did not realize that District staff was not NRCS employees and how we were funded. One of the best parts of the District moving into County space is that the public and county leadership can now clearly see and understand the role of the District in the community that we serve. It is the recommendation of the Onondaga District that the NRCS author and publish their own annual report. The District would be willing to have that report as a downloadable link on our website. Or, it could be an insert into the quarterly District Newsletter. Any financial support from NRCS to help cover the cost of the website and/or newsletter report would be appreciated. A possible funding mechanism for such financial support could be a "Contribution Agreement".

IX. FACILITIES/RECORDS

1. WORKPLACE

- a. "The Service may provide office space within departmental and Service guidelines..." Thank you for the offer, but the District will decline it. History has shown that such a relationship did not work out well in 2011 while negotiating leases for office space for the next 10 years. It may be in the best interest of the NRCS to see how they could financially support mutually beneficial activities, such as the quarterly District newsletter, in which NRCS has a column. Or maybe NRCS could assist with the expenses of hosting and updating the District website with current and timely NRCS programmatic information.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that a copy of the 1996 "Mutual Agreement" has been appended to these District comments. The purpose is to demonstrate that these agreements have historically been just a piece of paper that sits in a file cabinet. From our perspective, the agreements have done nothing to strengthen the working relationship between the agencies and our farmer customers. The last sentence of the 1996 agreement states "Let's not make this only a piece of paper. Let's use this as an opportunity to build a conservation partnership second to none."

Also attached are meeting notes from the 4-Way Partnership Meeting of February 9, 2000 in Utica. These notes identify "Critical Issues Facing 4-way Partnership". As you will see, we still seem to have similar problems and issues to address 14 years later.

It is for these reasons that the Executive Director of the Onondaga District has not put much stock into the 2014 proposed Cooperative Working Agreement. Please let it be known that the Onondaga District has not let our position on this matter effect our working relationship with farmers in Onondaga County or the Skaneateles Lake Watershed. We strongly encourage the farmers to participate in USDA NRCS and FSA programs that serve their needs. The District does our best to advertise those program opportunities through the District newsletter and website. Please know that our staff and Board of Directors have been in continuous communication with our NRCS District Conservationist and her staff on a monthly basis.



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District

6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool, New York 13088
phone: 315-457-0325 · fax: 315-457-0410 · e-mail: info@ocswcd.org
website: www.ocswcd.org

January 13, 2015

Mr. Dan Farrand
President
NYS Association of Conservation Districts
6360 CR 21
Addison, NY 14801

RE: Status of NYS Association of Conservation Districts.

Dear Mr. Farrand:

The staff and Board of Director's of the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (District) are authoring this letter to express our concern over the future of the NYS Association of Conservation Districts (NYACD) representing the 58 Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across New York State. The Board understands and acknowledges the fact that the NYACD staff person has been terminated. We also understand the need to make independent business decisions, but we question 1) why the decision was made to remove a representative that was so effective with: NYS Farm Bureau, USDA, NYS Department of Agricultural & Markets, FL-LOWPA and the 58 SWCDs that NYACD represents; and 2) the timing of the decision. Below is a detailed list of our specific concerns.

- 1) Legislative Days for Districts happen in Albany in February, so that the SWCD voice can be clearly heard, that elected officials have time to research our requests and to contact us for additional information, and then to make informed voting decisions. Being that we are mid-way through January, we are very concerned about the opportunity to have our District voice heard at all in and with enough time for our elected officials to make decisions before it is too late.
- 2) Please note that we do not find it to be an acceptable alternative to have the Board of Director members from NYACD undertake the lobbying effort for Districts alone. As you know, each and every District is very different in their composition, makeup, and use of the County Appropriation funding. Without District face time with the elected officials, the opportunity to maintain those well-established relationships will be compromised.
- 3) We question the timing of the NYACD decision. Districts are painfully awaiting the Grants Gateway / Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) process to be finalized so that Districts can begin applying for EPF Round 21 funding. As it looks right now, Districts and the farmers that we serve face a potential cash-flow issue in 2015 because of the amount of time it takes to get a grant from the application process to the stage of contracts. In all reality, SWCDs will not be conducting any EPF Round 21 workload in 2015. We hope that it is obvious that Districts are expecting NYACD to have a strong and continued representation in this process, even during this transition phase.

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- 4) In past years that our District attended the NACD national meeting, we became concerned with the number of NYACD Board members in attendance at the national conference. Knowing first hand that conference attendance, with meals and travel, can approach \$3,000 per person. We recommend reconsidering how many NYACD members really need to attend the meeting in the future. We feel that if only one or two NYACD members attended the conference, our \$1,500 annual dues would be better spent on other critical activities and initiatives of NYACD.
- 5) When NYACD secures the next Executive Director, we feel that NYACD should consider offering a benefits package to the candidate. We feel that this offering will help to keep an effective Executive Director into the future, so that the best interests of the 58 SWCDs in NYS can be met. To help cover the cost, the savings generated by implementing item 3 above could make a strong contribution towards covering this new expense.
- 6) Our District strongly believes that our 4 Way Partners including the Employees Association President, director of Land and Water Conservation and NRCS need to be invited to the meetings of the NYACD. We also feel that NYACD should provide their 58 SWCDs membership with copies of the minutes from each meeting. In particular, we are very interested in knowing that NYACD is conducting business according to their bylaws.
- 7) Our District would be very interested in reviewing the results of audit conducted by the NYACD membership. We question the decision to conduct an in-house audit, by BOD members, when the NYS Comptroller has had a watchful eye on the activities of SWCDs around New York State for the past three years. It does not seem like NYACD is demonstrating "best practices" and providing a lead by example scenario to the 58 SWCDs across New York State.

Please know that until our District is fully satisfied that NYACD has a strong plan moving forward to provide advocacy and representation that is in the best interest of the 58 SWCDs that you represent at the state, regional and national levels, our District plans to withhold the payment of our annual dues. We look forward to the action and direction that is anticipated to be taken by NYACD in 2015. Thank you for your time on these matters.

Sincerely,

F. Spencer Givens, III
Chairman, Board of Directors

Mark E. Burger
Executive Director



To: Monroe SWCD

Feb. 05, 2015

Fr: Ben Schmidt – Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations

Re: Response to Cooperative Work Agreement questions

1) On Page 1 of the agreement, it states that the Cooperative Working Agreement (CWA) is a *supplement* to the Mutual Agreement signed in 1996. Why is this agreement a *supplement* and not a *replacement* for the 1996 agreement? It is the MCSWCD's understanding that the 1996 version of the agreement was significantly out of date and in need of revising and being replaced. The MCSWCD Board thinks that this should be a replacement, not a supplement.

A: The Cooperative Working Agreement technically supplements the Mutual Agreement that was signed by the Secretary of Agriculture, Governor of NY and SWCD Board Chairman. That is what the term "supplement" refers to in this paragraph. The Mutual Agreement was entered into around 1996 for most NY SWCDs. The last CWA that was entered into was in 1996 shortly after the Mutual Agreement was signed. The CWA further defines the working relationship between NRCS, SWCD and NY State Soil and Water Conservation Committee. The 2014 CWA being considered by the SWCD replaces and updates the 1996 CWA. These agreements should be refreshed from time to time. By policy these are to be reviewed annually.

2) On Page 2 of the agreement, under Section IV. Roles and Responsibilities, 1. the agreement reads that the District will identify and address resource needs and set priorities based on input from customers, community leaders, conservation partners and others by facilitating a Local Work Group. Please explain what this means and how the District is responsible for facilitating this. It is the MCSWCD's understanding that NRCS staff coordinate and facilitate the Local Work Group in a Regional capacity.

A: The DC can coordinate and facilitate the Local Work Group at the local level but local involvement is important.

3) On Page 3 of the agreement, under Section IV. Roles and Responsibilities, 4., the agreement states that all parties agree to participate in the SWCD/Field Office Team Quality Assurance Reviews and will work together to implement recommendations. Please explain why this is necessary for a District, such as Monroe County, to participate in such a review when our NRCS Field Office is not co-located with the SWCD. In fact, the Monroe County SWCD would have no involvement on how programs and files are implemented and recorded in the federal Field Office.

A: It is important for the entire conservation partnership. We may review practices for other partners to assess conservation standards are being met. It is also a time to learn more, to improve communication, and receive feedback.

4) On Page 3 of the agreement, under Section IV. Technical & Administrative Assistance, A4., the agreement states that NRCS will provide technical training and support to District staff. Please explain the extent and specifics of this training and support to be provided to the Monroe County SWCD Staff. For example, if District staff design an agricultural BMP that needs to be certified, will NRCS provide engineering sign-off for that project? Furthermore, if District staff needs assistance laying out an agricultural BMP, will NRCS provide staff to assist the technician with the project? Is this support provided regionally, or within the County itself?

A: 1. It depends. For example, an Area engineering training is being provided and District staff are invited to attend. NRCS staff may review and even sign-off on projects if they have the appropriate job approval authority. 2. It depends on workload, deadlines and available staff. Support would be provided locally or as close as possible.



5) On Page 3 of the agreement, under Section IV. Technical & Administrative Assistance, B1.a., the agreement states that the parties will work together to coordinate staffing plans. Why is this included in this agreement? SWCD and NRCS in Monroe County have not coordinated staffing plans in over 15 years.

A: This agreement is for the entire state. It is important to assess the local needs and hire staff accordingly.

6) On Page 5 of the agreement, under Section VI. Delivering Services, 3d, the agreement states that the parties will work together to publish a District annual report and distribute to the public. Why is this agreement mandating that District's publish an annual report? Will NRCS be compensating the District financially for the publishing of such report?

A: The agreement is not "mandating" a specific annual report. Creating an annual report is important to report conservation progress to local constituents. All DCs are encouraged to create some kind of annual report to communicate local conservation progress. NRCS would not compensate Districts financially. However, if you worked together some types of expenses may be shared.

7) On Page 8 of the agreement, under Section XIII. Agreement Modification/Termination, the agreement states that it can be modified at any time by mutual consent of all parties. Does this mean that the Monroe County SWCD can modify this agreement to fit the needs of the District at the local level and if the District disagrees with any of the language?

A: Reviewing and editing has already been completed for each District at the state level. It was created and must be used across the entire state so maintaining some consistency would be necessary.

Additional questions pertaining to the general nature of the CWA came up during our discussion. These questions include:

1) Does NRCS have a reason as to WHY this agreement is needed if SWCD and NRCS are not co-located? Is the reasoning behind this agreement so that NRCS can legally share landowner information with the District?

A: Please refer to the Soil Conservation and Domestic Act of 1936 enacted on Feb. 29, 1936. It is important to advance conservation and to maintain soil and water resources for current and future generations. The local, state and federal partnerships rely on agreements like these to allow for appropriate collaboration.

2) If the District does not sign onto this agreement, does this mean that the 1996 agreement is still valid unless terminated by the SWCD? What are the repercussions of the SWCD not signing this agreement?

A: Yes. NRCS, like many other federal, state and local agencies, is facing a strain on resources available to focus on mission related work. NRCS, like many other government agencies, is concentrating efforts with entities showing a willingness to partner.



New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting
Radisson Hotel
Utica, NY
July 8-9, 2015

Wednesday, July 8, 2015

Members Attending

PJ Emerick, President
Jordan Clements, Vice President
Velynda Parker, Secretary
Kristin White, Treasurer

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
Kelly Emerick, Division II
Steve Lorraine, Division III
Laura Benedict, Division V
Erin Sommerville, Division VII

Absent

Doug Kierst, Member at Large
Ben Luskin, Division VI
Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII
NYACD

Partners

Greg Kist, NRCS

Guest

Greg Albrecht, SWCC	Jim Malyj, Seneca SWCD	Amanda Barber, Cortland SWCD
Gabriella Spitzer, SWCC	Deb Kelly, Chautauqua SWCD	Lindsey Gerstenslager, Wayne SWCD
Brian Steinmuller, SWCC	Brian Reaser, Tioga SWCD	Nichelle Billhardt, Past President
Scott Fickbohm, SWCC	Troy Bishop, Madison SWCD	

- I. **Called to Order** – PJ called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM with introductions.
- II. **Discussion on Climate Resilient Farming RFP/Pilot Program** – Greg presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Climate Resilient Farming and a copy is appended to the minutes.
- III. **Lunch** – Meeting was suspended at 12:18 PM; meeting was reconvened at 1:14 PM
- IV. **Minutes** – Copies of the minutes were provided to the Board prior to the meeting.
 - **A motion was made by Jordan, seconded by Steve to approve the May minutes as presented. Carried.**
- V. **Correspondence** – the following items were received:
 - Letter from John DeHollender, Oswego SWCD regarding the difficulty of meeting the PM 1 for Board members attendance at meetings
 - Invoice form NACDE for membership assessment
 - **A motion was made by Kristin, seconded by Velynda to pay the NACDE invoice. Carried.**
 - Jim Brick, Wyoming County SWCD Board member is NYACD Division I Representative

VI. **Treasurer's Report** – Kristin sent copies of the Treasurers report via email to the Board for review prior to the meeting. She reviewed the reports with Board.

- **A motion was made by Steve, seconded by Jordan to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Carried.**

PJ stated Doug and himself conducted in-house audit for 2014. The internal check and balances are in place and were found to be in order.

- **A motion was made by Steve, seconded by Judy to accept the in-house audit report. Carried.**

VII. **Report**

i. **Division Reports**

- a. **Division I** – appended to the minutes.
- b. **Division II** - appended to the minutes.
- c. **Division III** – appended to the minutes.
- d. **Division IV** – Jordan informed the Board that Cal Lewis, District Technician for Steuben County has offered to become interim Division Rep. According to the By-Laws, the President can appoint a Division Rep if no one has been selected. PJ has appointed Cal as the interim Division Rep until elections can be held at the WQS.
- e. **Division V** – appended to the minutes.
- f. **Division VI** – no one present, no report.
- g. **Division VII** – appended to the minutes
- h. **Division VIII** – No one present, no report.

ii. **Partnership Reports**

- a. **NYSSWCC** – Scott Fickbohm mentioned the following:
 - ✓ AEM Year 10 close out & AEM Strategy for AEM Year 11 and the new requirements of MWBE.
 - ✓ Legislature passed a low interest revolving loan for tile drainage
 - ✓ AgNPS – Round 21 ranked list is anticipated to be released in August. The start date for the contracts will be generated by Gateway.
 - ✓ DEC has updated the 303d Lists
 - ✓ Soil Health – Cornell will be offering Train the Trainer session on August 5-7
 - ✓ Empire Farm Days – will be held August 11-13 and Soil Health workshop will be offered.
 - ✓ Water Quality Improvement – This being offered under Consolidated Funding Assistance (CFA) this year with a deadline at the end of July.
 - ✓ 2014 Annual Report has been completed and distributed to all Districts
- b. **NRCS** – Greg mentioned the following
 - ✓ Staffing – 23 positions are being filled across the state. Each team will receive a Program Specialist to help with computer workload. Bath will receive a Civil Engineer; six positions will be under contractual; and 11 positions will be full & part-time. The State Engineer position was advertised; however, the panel was not suitable and the position has been re-advertised. The Public Affairs position has been filled.
 - ✓ Food Security Act – the HEL/Wetland had a back log of 1500 is down to 450 with hopes to have all these completed by the end of calendar year.

- ✓ Soil Health – 1st week of September show case (Wyoming, Schoharie, Cayuga) with Ray Archulta
- c. **NYACD** – No one present, no report

VI. **Committee/Meeting Reports:**

- i. **Conservation Skill Workshop** – No items to report at this time.
- ii. **Envirothon** – Appended to the minutes. PJ stated he received the following names to be on the Envirothon Committee Kristin White, Bob & Pat VanLare, Blanche Hurlbutt, Joann Kurtis, Cal Lewis, MaryLynne Malone, Bob Shenk, Al Fagan, Betsy Ukeritis and Jennifer Clifford.
 - **A motion was made by Jordan, seconded by Velynda to approve the listed names stated above for the NYS Envirothon Committee. Carried.**
- iii. **NYS Fair & Empire Farm Days** – Appended to the minutes.
- iv. **Empire Farm Days** – Appended to the minutes.
- v. **Frank Bratt** – Appended to the minutes.
 - **A motion was made by Velynda, seconded by Kristin to approve Molly Stetz; Angel Hinckle and Coreyn Goddard for a total of \$1,500. Carried.**
- vi. **Operational Manual Committee** – PJ stated there is a good selection of individuals on the committee from district managers, clerks and state committee. The committee will meet on a monthly basis on the 2nd Wednesday of each month to move this process forward. Each section will be worked on one at a time jointly since each partner/person will have different areas of expertise.
- vii. **Other** – there were no other items at this time.

VIII. **Approval to Support 2015 Level 1 Technical Training** – PJ reviewed the Level 1 training program with the Board. CDEA is being asked to support this training for lunches, breaks and facilities. Lauren P. has offered to take the registration and payment then send the checks to Kristin after the registration has ended. The Board agreed this is a good technical training opportunity for District staff; however, discussion took place on where the funding will come from since it wasn't built into the budget. Kristin mentioned that the funding could come from the resource training account since this account was setup to help with training costs. It was also mentioned that copies of invoices be provided to the CDEA prior to any reimbursement payments being issued.

- **A motion was made by Judy, seconded by Kristin to sponsor the 2015 Level 1 Technical Training up to \$1,300 for lunches, breaks and facilities costs with funds coming from the Resource Training account. Carried.**

IX. **Approval of 2015-2016 CDEA Committee Assignments** – PJ reviewed the assignments with Board with the following additions: Cal Lewis added under the Fundraising with Division III and Kelly Emerick added under the Environmental Education Foundation as CDEA General Membership. PJ will make the corrections and send a new copy to the Board.

- **A motion was made by Steve, seconded by Jordan to accept the 2015-16 Committee Assignments with corrections noted. Carried.**

X. **Appointment of Corey Nellis to NRCS EQIP & Wetland Sub-Committee** – PJ discussed with Board to appoint Corey Nellis to NRCS EQIP & Wetland Sub-Committee.

- **A motion was made by Velynda, seconded by Judy to appoint Corey Nellis to NRCS EQIP & Wetland Sub-Committee. Carried.**

XI. Review/Discussion of Administrative Management Conference – PJ provided the survey summary from the data collected regarding Administrative Management Conference. The Board discussed the short time frame, presenters and location to hold the conference. Some of the Board members expressed their concerns on holding a conference just hold a conference along with funding associated with it since it was built into the budget.

- **A motion was made by Steve, seconded by Kristin to postpone the Administrative Management Conference for this year with concentration at the 2016 WQS and looking at budgeting for a 2016 fall session. Carried.**

Suspended the meeting at 5:20 PM

Reconvened the meeting at 8:03 AM

Thursday, July 9, 2015

Members Attending

PJ Emerick, President
 Jordan Clements, Vice President
 Velynda Parker, Secretary
 Kristin White, Treasurer
 Doug Kierst, Member at Large

Division Representatives

Judy Bennett, Division I
 Kelly Emerick, Division II
 Steve Lorraine, Division III
 Laura Benedict, Division V
 Erin Sommerville, Division VII
 Division IV – vacant

Absent

Ben Luskin, Division VI
 Ann Marie Calabro, Division VIII

Guest

Nichelle Billhardt, Past President

XII. Discussion on potential WQIP Round 12 Grant & CDEA support for EBM grants (ESI Training & Septic Inspection) – PJ forwarded a copy of a draft write-up “Coordinator of Coalitions” thru the WQIP which CDEA would hire an individual to oversee the coordination among existing coalitions and/or alliances. Some concerns and/or questions were raised such as what does this do to the 501(c) 3 status, what about the funding impacts to existing coalitions/alliances and implications of having an employee. PJ stated due to the concerns expressed by individuals, the CDEA has withdrawn the application. It was further stated that it was never the intent to take funds away from any existing coalitions/alliances. Nichelle also stated that the application was intended to assist watershed organization to develop EPA 9 Element Plans

PJ also stated that a grant for EBM funding administered by State Committee has been drafted for Septic Inspection training for District involvement in the unified procedure program. He explained that in Ontario County, there is local law that recognizes the District to provide this service and this can become an earned income program for Districts.

XIII. Old Business

- A. **Water Quality Symposium Update** – Jordan stated he is figuring out the issues and what changes would be needed. Some ideas come when meeting for CSW classes. Jordan will be stepping down as ag track chair and he will be reaching out to the previous track chair on their interest. He is anticipating on having a draft schedule of potential classes. PJ inquired if the timeline is on schedule. It was mentioned that its ahead of schedule due to the RFP not needing to be obtained. PJ further stated that he and Kristin were planning to work with hotel on the meal tickets. Kristin stated the meal tickets have been created.
- B. **Leadership Conference** – Amanda was in the discussion for the Leadership Conference and was going to look into location/price and what role CDEA would have. PJ was approached by Lauren P. inquiring the status and if she should be looking for a grant opportunity to support it. PJ will reach out to Amanda on the status and will update the Board at the next meeting.
- C. **Other Old Business** – no items at this time.

XIV. New Business

A. **Annual Meeting Resolutions** – PJ inquired if there are any resolutions for the annual meeting. One resolution Doug will draft a resolution regarding NYSDEC and Department of State to provide funding towards updating or developing 9 Element Plans for the Board to review at the September meeting and forward to Districts for their input before CDEA December meeting to make changes if necessary then put back out prior to annual meeting in March. Kelly discussed bringing back the Stormwater Inspection Reimbursement Program to Districts. She will develop a resolution regarding the Stormwater Inspection Reimbursement Program. Another issue that was discussed was the WQIP Round 12 being in the CFA and should it be there. It was the concence, that WQIP grants will either go in CFA or Grants Gateway.

B. **Annual Report** – Nothing to report at this time.

C. Other New Business

- i. CDEA Credit Card – Kristin discussed the possible of CDEA having two credit cards one for the President and one for the Treasurer. This would eliminate the President or Treasurer using their District credit card for purchases related to the Association.
- **A motion was made by Steve, seconded by Doug for the Treasurer to secure the credit cards with limit of \$5,000 for the Treasurer & President and to develop a credit card policy. Carried.**

XV. **Next meeting** – A doodle poll to be conducted to determine the next Executive Board meeting date and location to be determine in Niagara County.

XVI. **Adjournment** – 10:00 AM



Velynda Parker

Secretary

Division I Report
July 8, 2015

I sent an email out to all the Districts in my division.

Orleans County finished up with their 26th Regional Envirothon with Lyndonville High School winning for the 18th time in those 26 years. We had a station at 6th grade Conservation Field Days to discuss surface water runoff using the Enviroscope. Had a staff member assist at the State Envirothon. Held our annual Grass Carp stocking program and are in the process of taking orders for the annual fish stocking program. The District Manager is assisting with the planning of the booth at Empire Farm Days for Soil Health. The staff has been busy with the layout of tile drainage, pond site evaluations, grassed waterways, cover crops, and many other drainage issues.

Genesee County is having some staff changes. Molly Stetz who has been a part-time Technician is now full time, Elizabeth Bentley-Huber is retiring on July 24, and George Squires is retiring on August 14.

I did not hear back from any other county.

Submitted by: Judy Bennett, Division I Representative



Division II Report

July, 2015

Report from Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, Yates

For Division II, Districts **did not respond** to a request for reports for this month's CDEA Meeting.

I had asked Division II Districts to provide comments and thoughts on the EPA and US Army Corps of Engineers Final Clean Water Rule: Definition of Waters of the U.S. and how they think it will affect Districts. Additionally, asking for thoughts on additional training/updates from ACOE and NRCS on the rule and how it may affect our clients (farmers and municipalities). I hope that this will be for discussion at the CDEA meeting and that I can reflect on that discussion with Division II Districts.

For *Monroe County*, the District is busy implementing agricultural BMPs this month now that the rain has somewhat subsided. Additionally, several stormwater projects are being planned and designed for various municipalities under EPF grant funding that will be implemented this fall. The County of Monroe has asked the District to assist in developing projects and planning for a Round 12 WQIP grant that will focus on stream restoration and buffering. Monroe County SWCD has also been involved with a unique project in partner with the Nature Conservancy titled Flood Smart Communities. This project is focused on providing planning and guidance to 3 municipalities in Monroe County (near shore) to prepare, plan and become more resilient to flooding. The District's role has been to provide both agricultural input and stormwater management input on the Technical Advisory Committee.

Additionally, I have had a few suggestions for a CDEA Division II meeting and am working on selecting a topic and coordinating with my Division on what time of year everyone would like to have a Division Meeting that would meet their needs.

Please call me anytime if you have any questions or concerns regarding this report at (585) 753-7380.

Submitted by,

Kelly Emerick
Executive Director
Monroe County SWCD
NYS CDEA Division II Representative

Division VII Report
Submitted By Erin Sommerville

Dutchess County

- Applied for a soil health mini grant for pasture renovations for 3 farms.
- Worked on hydroseeding-sprayed 65,500 square feet covering just over 2.5 miles of roadside.
- Working on plans and permits for 3 Irrigation/wildlife ponds.
- Working on permits and designs for two Stream Stabilization Projects one of which is funded by a WQIP grant.
- Assisted a landowner and DEC with a mine reclamation plan.
- Working on a culvert inventory project in the Landsmans Kill Watershed. This project is being done with the Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell University Water Resource Institute and looks at Habitat Fragmentation Issues as well as Flood Resiliency.
- Working on Stormwater Outfall Mapping for the Town of Union Vale which is a newly designated MS4. This is being done as part of a WQIP grant.

Columbia County

Would like to be involved in any discussions regarding changing the Performance Measures.

Greene County, Sullivan County, Ulster County, Orange County-No Report

Frank Bratt Report
July 8, 2015

- Active Frank Bratt Scholarships:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Award Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Brenden Wagner	June 2014	\$ 341.00
Angel Hinickle	January 2015	250.00
Molly Stetz	January 2015	<u>350.00</u>
		\$ 941.00

- Angel Hinickle of Tompkins County submitted a request for payment of \$250 relative to her award under the January 2015 round of funding. This request was for one of her two classes. She is waiting to see if she can get into the second class at a later date. Approved by Judy Bennett and sent to Member @ Large.
- Christopher Fry of Erie County submitted a request for payment of \$500 relative to his award under the January 2015 round of funding. Approved by Judy Bennett and sent to Member @ Large.
- Received 11 applications for the June 2015 round of funding totaling \$4,062.50:
 1. Alan Masters, Onondaga County SWCD Employee - \$150.00
 2. Angel Hinickle, Tompkins County SWCD Employee - \$500.00
 3. Coreyn Goddard, Nassau County SWCD Employee - \$500.00
 4. Gwyn Olenych, Onondaga County SWCD Employee - \$87.50
 5. Lisa Miller, Cayuga County SWCD Employee - \$450.00
 6. Mark Burger, Onondaga County SWCD Employee - \$200.00
 7. Melanie Saunders, Erie County SWCD Employee - \$500.00
 8. Molly Stetz, Genesee County SWCD Employee - \$500.00
 9. Ryan Richer, Chemung County SWCD Family - \$500.00
 10. Tiara Saunders, Erie County SWCD Family - \$500.00
 11. Eva Szttechmiler, Onondaga County SWCD Employee - \$175.00
- After ranking the following will be funded for the June 2015 round of funding totaling \$1,500:
 1. Molly Stetz - \$500.00
 2. Angel Hinickle - \$500.00
 3. Coreyn Goddard - \$500.00

NYS CDEA Empire Farm Days/State Fair Booth Committee Report

Submitted By: Kristin White, Chairperson

NYS CDEA Board Meeting

July 8-9, 2015

Empire Farm Days – Received an email from Brian Steinmuller and it looks like Kaitlyn Wilson from Ag & Markets will be putting together the arrangements for the space. The committee will go over the display at our meeting on July 15th.

State Fair Booth – The committee is working on putting together displays for invasive species. Kelly Emerick is working with Hilary Mosher from PRISM on getting displays for the booth. Kristin has been in contact with Polly Weigand and she will be providing items we can use as well. Tad is working on putting together a Giant Hogweed display and Erica is working on displays, handouts, and has made the copies for all of our coloring handouts.

We will be having seed packets, pencils, magnetic clips, and bumper stickers as handouts this year. We will be giving away a fish poster as the guessing game prize. This poster seems to be a popular item.

Shifts – There are still a few shifts that haven't been filled yet; Sat 9/5 both shifts, Sun 9/6 10-3 shift, and Labor Day 9/7 10-3 (Lindsey from Wayne County might be able to fill this shift). If the 9/6 shift doesn't get filled I will work it.

I've received the signed contract and tickets.



2 0 1 5

Wednesday, May 27, 2015
&
Thursday, June 28, 2015
Hobart William & Smith
Colleges
Geneva, NY

Hosted by the
New York State
Envirothon Committee

A subcommittee of
the New York State
Conservation District
Employees Association

967 County Highway 33
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Blanche L. Hurlbutt
Chair

Vice-Chair

Kristin White
Secretary

Kristin White
Treasurer

June 30, 2015

To: Patrick Emerick, NYSCDEA Pres.

From: Blanche L. Hurlbutt
NYS Envirothon Chair

Re: NYS Envirothon June Updates

I'm happy to report at this time the overall committee follow-up meeting the 2015 event went off exceptionally well.

The committee worked hard and no matter the challenge they handled it all very well.

We received some very nice evaluations from the students and teachers. Overall they thought it was one of the best well organized event. It is always nice to have such kind things said about such a great program.

We had so many wonderful volunteers from Monday-Thursday. Without the support of NRCS, the Districts, and the committee members we could not have created such a great event.

The committee has discussed some changes for next year's event, which should make it even better.

The committee has fired me as the registration person, because they feel I have too much to do during the event to handle the registration & any issues or concerns that crop up during the event.



2 0 1 5

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I will say this for the scoring committee they did a wonderful job. It is the first time in a number of years that these folks were able to have some down time during the event. In the past they have worked both days right up to supper on the first evening & up to the closing event time. We put into place this year that there should be no less than 6 folks scoring each day along with the two lead folks. Our volunteer coordinator heard me and she worked hard to see that we had plenty of help along with some backup folks.

We are working at the present time with Hobart & William Smith Colleges to complete the final bill for 2015, provide us with 2016's contract, and the dates for 2016.

We are looking forward to your selection of the 2016 NYS Envirothon committee selection.

I would like to "THANK" all of you for your continued support and all your help before, during, and after the event.

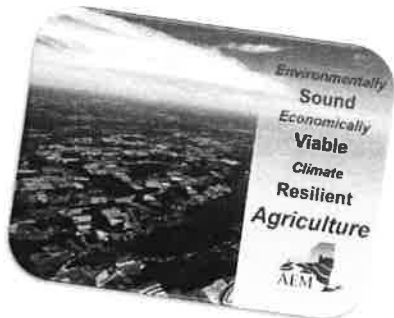


Agriculture & Markets

Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Climate Resilient Farming Program

...from the ground up.



CDEA Meeting – July 8, 2015

1



Climate Resilient Farming Program

2015-16 budget excerpt:

...including \$500,000 for the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Markets to develop a pilot agricultural climate adaptation program consistent with agriculture and markets law article 11-a, agricultural environmental management program (09SW15ER)

2



Resilience.....who? what?

Resilience (*n.*) – capacity to...

- 1) reasonably avoid shocks,
- 2) absorb the shocks that hit anyway, and
- 3) bounce back stronger for the future (the adaptation part).

Ties into everything on a farm

- soil, water, air, plants, animals, humans, climate, markets, etc.
- Almost any step to improve efficient use of resources improves resiliency.

3



Previous Experience: ACRF

Following Hurricanes Irene and Lee, the State Committee and Conservation Districts worked together to repair the damage:

- 67,400 feet fencing repaired
- 48,200 feet stream restoration
- 240 acres vegetation planted

Given our experience with disaster relief and recovery, where should we focus a resiliency program?

4



Can we expand from our base?

Solid S&W Conservation

- o Local AEM strategies & annual plans
- o AEM 5-Tier process and tools
 - Inventory, assess, plan, implement, and evaluate
- o Priority projects based on resource concerns
- o Plans and implementation based on BMP systems of NRCS practices
- o Training
- o Partnerships of all stripes
- o Cost-share & technical assistance \$
- o Planner certifications

Climate Change Resiliency and ↓GHGs?

What's needed?
In what timeframe?

5



Climate Resilient Farming Program

Building a Program—long term and short term

- Longview
 - essential to making a difference
- Midview
 - key to building on early victories
- Wicked' shortview
 - might not be a midview opp, if we don't show decent, early interest (fall/early winter 2015)
 - but, don't let it box in future phases of the program

6



Climate Resilient Farming Program

Long term vision:

- Consistent annual funding, either parallel to or combined with AgNPS
- Climate concerns incorporated into the AEM process, including:
 - Tier 1 questions,
 - Tier 2 worksheets,
 - Tier 3 planning processes,
 - Tier 4 – new or expanded practice systems, and
 - Tier 5 evaluations tools
- Training and skills expanded to GHG mgt and adaptation
- Creative, innovative approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation
 - Able to incorporate new systems, methods, and knowledge over time
- Built with partner expertise
- Reporting impact
- Other elements?

7



Climate Resilient Farming Program

How can we achieve the long term goals?.....adding pieces in the short term.

- Building the AEM tools (starting now, service contracts)
 - AEM Tier 2 greenhouse gas mitigation sheet
 - AEM Tier 2 background sheets
 - AEM Tier 3 planning for water management
 - GIS tool to assist with prioritization of water management practices — where to focus which practice systems
- **A pilot RFP - Demonstrated interest in the program now!**
 - **Supported by prior, sound reasons for this work.**
- Training and other tools.

8



Climate Resilient Farming Program

How short is the “short term”?

Approved Timeline

- May 19, 2015 – Approve timeline, direction of longer term vision
- June – Discussions at managers meetings; Stakeholders
- June – Develop and edit draft RFP
- July – Present RFP to SWCC for review and approval
- July / August – Revise RFP; present, review and approval, begin GG
- **September/October – Release RFP via GG, begin Q&A**
- October – Hold RFP training session and webinars on new program
- **November – Proposals Due**, review and rank
- December – Ranked list for approval and release of awards
- Jan 1, 2016 – Send out award letters and plan of work materials
- February – Receive and review plans of work and develop contracts
- March/April – Have fully executed contracts in place

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Climate Resilient Farming Program

Planning on an RFP

- **Goals: solid conservation practices on the ground, demonstrated interest in the program**
 - Easy to apply
 - Clarity in evaluation
 - “Pilot” mentality—stakeholder involvement and evaluation

Note: The next several slides are much more detailed regarding “straw plans” for reaction—they are all subject to change, including through this conversation!

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Climate Resilient Farming Program

RFP

- Expectation: plans already in place
- Three tracks for pilot round—chosen for high impact for climate mitigation and adaptation:
 1. Manure storage cover and flare systems
 2. On farm riparian, floodplain, and upland water management
 3. Soil health systems
- Applications will ranked within each track, and funding will be divided according to pre-set percentages of available funding
 - Caps or different cost-share rates per track?
- Funding: \$400,000 from the original budget (possibly more—no promises!!)

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Climate Resilient Farming Program

How to rank/prioritize applications?

Mitigation and adaptation

- **Mitigation against the CAUSES of climate change (ie, greenhouse gases)**
 - Projects that have the potential to prevent greenhouse gas emissions or recapture carbon in the soil or plants
- **Adaptation to the EFFECTS of climate change:**
 - In NY, more short term drought periods, more overall precipitation, and more intense flooding events
 - Projects that will limit the harmful effects of flood and/or drought

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Track 1: Waste Storage Cover and Flare

Practice systems (from Ag BMP Catalogue):

- Waste Storage and Transfer System
- Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System
- Nutrient Management System – Cultural

Evaluation	Good	Very good	Great	Excellent
Mitigation	Storage of solid manure under cover with a nutrient management plan for more efficient N utilization	Covered liquid manure storage system with flare and a nutrient management plan for more efficient N utilization. Projects ranked by methane destruction potential, based on waste volume proposed to be covered and the capacity of flare to combust methane when produced.		
Adaptation	Farm does not currently have enough storage and occasionally applies manure during adverse field conditions.		Farm does not currently have enough storage and often applies manure during adverse field conditions. Farm is located in a floodplain or other high risk area	

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Track 2: On farm riparian, floodplain, and upland water management

Practice systems (from Ag BMP Catalogue):

- Riparian Buffer System
- Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management System
- Erosion Control System – Structural
- Irrigation Water Management System
- Access Control System
- Prescribed Rotational Grazing System

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Track 2: On farm riparian, floodplain, and upland water management

Evaluation	Good	Very good	Great	Excellent
Mitigation	For purposes of greenhouse gas mitigation, projects shall be ranked by acres of annual cropland converted to perennial cropland, where woody perennials sequester more carbon than herbaceous perennials.			
Adaptation	Projects shall be ranked by acres of area treated, volume of water managed, documented history of resource concerns and unmet need, degree that multiple BMP systems are assembled across land uses (example, below), etc.			
	Water retained through water and sediment control practices to slow storm flows, trap sediment, and provide stable flows and outlets	Production swale on contour to slow down, spread out, and soak in surface flow	Production swale and pocket ponds that function as a system to absorb shock of a major storm event OR stream bank stabilization	Swale, pocket ponds, wetland creation, and RFB integrated into a production field system (cover crop no tilled annual crop system, long-term sod, and/or grazing system)



Track 3: Soil Health

Practice systems (from Ag BMP Catalogue):

- Soil Conservation System - Cultural
- Erosion Control System – Structural
- Prescribed Rotational Grazing System

“Cropland Conservation systems” include:

- Reduced tillage
- Crop rotations involving conserving higher residue crops
- Organic amendments
- Cover crops

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Track 3: Soil Health

Evaluation	Good	Very good	Great	Excellent
Mitigation: Expected increase in soil carbon through...	... cropland conservation systems	... cropland conservation systems that involve year round cover	... cropland systems that involve year round cover; efficient use of nitrogen via nutrient management planning; and reduced field equipment fuel usage.	... conversion of annual crops to perennials or pasture; efficient use of nitrogen via nutrient management planning; and reduced field equipment fuel usage.
Adaptation: Greater water holding capacity and runoff prevention through...	... cropland conservation systems	... cropland conservation systems that involve year round cover	... conversion of conventional row crops to perennial production or pasture (rotational grazing)	... conversion of conventional row crop to rotational pasture with RFB and stream corridor management

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Questions, Concerns, and Feedback!!

Back to the short term goals:

- Solid conservation practices on the ground
 - Any thoughts/responses re: the practice systems we chose?
- Demonstrated interest in the program
 - What would make it worthwhile for Districts to apply?
 - "easy application"—given the Grants Gateway, what would make the application easier?
 - "clear evaluation metrics"—were our metrics clear? Did they make sense? Thoughts?
 - WHAT ELSE?
 - What will make it worthwhile for farmers?
 - Cost-share rates?

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Questions? Comments?
 Concerns? Longer-term ideas?

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