**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**TELE-CONFERENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2021**

The September meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Douglas Fisher at 9:33 A.M. Mr. Minch stated that the Open Public Meetings Act requirements have been met. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting was provided by giving the time, date, and location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48 hours in advance this notice has been posted on the front door of the 200 Riverview Building in Trenton; mailed to The Star Ledger, the Courier Post and filed with the Office of Secretary of State.

The Flag Salute was recited.

Call of the Membership Roll indicated the following:

**Members Present**

Secretary Douglas Fisher John Showler, SSCC, NJDA

Joe Lomax Tim Fekete, SSCC, NJDA

Matt Ward Sandy Howland, SSCC, NJDA

Julie Hawkins, NRCS R. Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD

Dr. Stephanie Murphy (rep L. Lawson) Christine Raabe, Ocean SCD

Ray Cywinski M. Kent, Cape-Atlantic SCD

John Rigolizzo Louise Davis, Morris SCD

Mike Haberland Mike Bonham, Cumb.-Salem SCD

Sylvia Kovacs M. D’Alessandro-Som.UnionSCD

John Kocubinski Lily Mehl, NJACD

Vince Mazzei Tony DiLodovico

Dennis Dougherty

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary

**MINUTES OF JUNE 14, 2021 MEETING**

On motion by Mr. Kocubinski, second by Dr. Murphy, the minutes of the June 14, 2021 meeting were approved. Mr. Dougherty abstained.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

1. Secretary Fisher emphasized the importance of the District Supervisor role in this era of climate change.
2. Flooding throughout the state has caused devastation. Assistant Secretary Purcell had severe damage to her house caused by flooding.
3. A tornado devastated a dairy farm in Gloucester County. The agricultural community from near and far came together to assist in the rebuilding effort.
4. Assistant Secretary Purcell is retiring at the end of October after 25 years of service to the agricultural community in New Jersey.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT**

1. **Farmland Assessment Mapping Tool-** Ms. Howland provided a brief overview and demonstration of the Farmland Assessment Mapping Tool. Due to outdated Soil Productivity Tables, maps and criteria, NJDA worked with USDA/NRCS to review original reference data. NJDA then contracted with Rowan University to develop and deploy a user-friendly mapping website which incorporated updated soil maps, tables and criteria.

**SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT**

1. **Application** Addendum- Mr. Minch explained the change and the reason for the modification to the *Soil Conservation District Addendum to Application by Corporation, Partnership, or Organization, Ownership, Disclosure Affidavit form.* Not in all cases is the applicant the owner of the property. The form has been revised from name and address of applicant to name and address of landowner.
2. **Federal Fee Schedule-** Mr. Minch reported that the letterhead for *Federal Facilities 251 Fee* *Schedule* form was updated to reflect a change in personnel. This change will be made and sent to the districts.
3. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler reported on the damage and destructive nature of Hurricane Ida. In addition, Mr. Showler provided a brief overview regarding some of his recent activities including plan reviews, district assistance and district field visits.

**SOIL and WATER COST SHARE PROGRAM**

**Well Cost Share Table Rates**- Mr. Minch reported that SSCC and SADC staff recognized that, over time, actual costs for well drilling were not reflected in the Cost Share Tables. Dave Clapp of SADC spoke with numerous well drillers and reviewed data on hand and proposed adjustments to the cost share rates.

The State Committee has the authority to adjustment to cost share rates- (NJAC 2:90-2.25(b)).

On motion by Mr. Cywinski, second by Mr. Lomax, new well drilling cost share rates were approved retroactive to January 1, 2021. A roll call vote was taken. Voting yes were the following individuals:

Cywinski, Dougherty, Haberland, Kocubinski, Kovacs, Lomax, Mazzei, Murphy, Rigolizzo and Ward.

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**NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE**

1. **NCPP (National Conservation Partnership Planning**)- Mr. Minch reported that he would like to emphasize more agricultural technical assistance by Soil Conservation Districts. A plan developed jointly with NRCS was submitted to Washington D.C. in July and will be reviewed with the districts at the Annual Conservation Conference.
2. **NRCS MOU**- Mr. Minch reported that the cooperative agreement is under review at the Department of L & P.S.
3. Ms. Hawkins reported on a news release for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

Public and Private entities are eligible for this program which is aimed as a recovery effort from Hurricane Ida. Eligible projects include clearing clogged waterways, debris removal and streambank restoration. Applicants must have a sponsor.

**NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

Mr. Cywinski and Ms. Davis reported on the activities of the NJACD including the following:

1. The North East Regional meeting is scheduled from October 31st to November 3rd . To date, the meeting is in person and will take place in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
2. The new North East Region Representative to NACD is Anna McGuirk. Ms. McGuirk is from Maine.
3. The annual NACD meeting is scheduled for February in Orlando, Florida.
4. Urban and ag. Grant applications are due in February.
5. Applications for the Next Generation Leadership Initiative are due in approximately 2 weeks.
6. The MATES Team (Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Sciences) placed 13th of 43 teams in the National Envirothon.
7. The NJACD Scholarship winner is a Rutgers University student.
8. The Annual Poster Contest winners were from the Bergen SCD (2) and the HEP SCD (2). Their entries will be competing in the National Poster Contest.
9. The Annual Conservation Conference will be held on November 10th at the Freehold SCD.
10. The NJACD, in conjunction with the Morris SCD, has applied for a $200,000 USDA Planning Grant.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Mr. Mazzei reported on the following:

1. DEP is working on a proposed draft of the NJ-PACT for flood hazard and wetland rules.

Mr. Mazzei will be looking for input from NJDA and the SCDs.

10:52AM- Secretary Fisher left the meeting due to another commitment.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Mr. Haberland reported on the following:

1. The fall session will be held in person. All students and faculty are required to be fully vaccinated and masked.
2. On September 29th there will be a joint in-service program (Rutgers and NRCS) at Hort. Farm 3 centering on soil health.

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**SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Dr Murphy reported on the following:

1. Dr. Murphy’s introductory Soils Course, Soils and Society, has its largest enrollment, approximately 37 students. Dr. Murphy also teaches a more intensive soils course which includes a lab. This course has approximately 15 students enrolled.
2. Dr. Bruce Hamilton, Director of Rutgers Gardens, passed away at the end of August.

Dr. Hamilton taught Plant Materials and Landscape Design.

1. Dean Polk is the interim Director at the Cream Ridge Extension Center until June 30, 2022.

**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS**

1. Mr. DiLodovico emphasized he is willing to help and assist wherever needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

Annual Conservation Partnership Conference is scheduled for November 10th in Freehold.

The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary

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