

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
June 16, 2025**

The June meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Ed Wengryn at 9:32 A.M. Frank 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 Courier Post and Asbury Park Press and filed with the Secretary of State. This meeting was virtual only.

The Flag Salute was recited.

Call of the Membership Roll indicated the following:

Members Present

Ed Wengryn, Chairman
Frank Minch, Executive Secretary
Joe Lomax
Julie Hawkins, NRCS
Dr. Stephanie Murphy (rep. L. Lawson)
Louise Davis
Mike Rigolizzo
Sylvia Kovacs
John Kocubinski
Cormac Morrissey
Michael Haberland (rep. B. Schilling)

Others Present

Audrey Winzinger, Burlington SCD
Ben Jorritsma, UDCCD
Bob Amberg, Somerset Union SCD
Bob McEwan, Morris SCD
Christine Raabe, Ocean SCD
Craig McGee, Camden SCD
Daniel J. Caldwell, Burlington SCD

Others Present

John Matos, SSCC, NJDA
Sara Mellor, SSCC, NJDA
Diana Diaz, SSCC, NJDA
Daniel Pace, Mercer SCD
Ines Zimmerman, NJACD
Janet Rekesius, HEP SCD
Jennifer McCulloch, Morris SCD
Matthew D'Alessandro, Somerset Union SCD
Michael Kent, Cape-Atlantic SCD
Michael Bonham, Cumberland Salem SCD
Paul Schiariti, Mercer SCD
Robert Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD
Sandra Myers, Upper Delaware SCD
Tim Thomas, Freehold SCD
Paul Califano, Freehold SCD
Karol Blew, Cumberland Salem SCD
Lucia Huebner, Mercer SCD
Freehold SCD
609-585-5673
201-320-5032



MINUTES FROM APRIL 14, 2025 MEETING

A vote was called to accept the draft meeting minutes from the April 14, 2025, meeting. Sylvia Kovacs made a motion to approve the minutes. Stephanie Murphy seconded; all Committee members voted in the affirmative.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Secretary Wengryn provided brief remarks on his return to work.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Frank Minch reported the following:

1. Audits- Still waiting for Bergen's audit from the last fiscal year. This is an ongoing issue for Bergen. It holds up the SSCC from completing tasks and reflects badly on the state. Joe Lomax, Sylvia Kovacs, and Michael Rigolizzo feel staff or board do not understand their legal or fiduciary responsibility and a consequence should be placed on them. Kovacs requested an executive committee meeting to be had to discuss actions to take.
2. Supervisor appointment(s) – Reviewed all nominations and renominations, committee broke them into subcategories.
 - Category 1 Supervisor Re-nominations that met Supervisor Performance Standards for 3-year term ending June 30, 2028, Joe Lomax made a motion to accept all renominations, Lousie Davis seconded the motion. Kovacs recused for UDCCD. Chairman declared motion carries.
 - Category 2 Supervisor Re-nominations that did not meet Supervisor Performance Standards. The discussion determined supervisor performance measures need to be looked at. The Committee decided to table the renomination of those in category two; Carl Mecky (Bergen SCD) and Mike Vosalli (Gloucester). Joe Lomax made the motion and Michael Rigolizzo seconded.
 - Category 3
 - New Supervisor Appointments for a 1-year term ending June 30, 2026, Sylvia Kovacs motioned, and Louise Davis seconded, Cormac, Lomax and Rigolizzo recused since the vote is for DelAtlantic. Approved
 - New Supervisor Appointments for a 2-year term ending June 30, 2027, Sylvia Kovacs motioned, and Louise Davis seconded, Cormac, Lomax and Rigolizzo recused since the vote is for DelAtlantic. Approved
 - New Supervisor Appointments for a 3-year term ending June 30, 2028, Sylvia Kovacs motioned, and Louise Davis seconded, Cormac, Lomax and Rigolizzo recused since the vote is for DelAtlantic. Approved



- Category 4 Supervisors not seeking reappointment, Freehold - Donald Patterson and Morris - Robert Danowski. Both districts are forming their nominating committee and start to look at replacement candidates. Both districts have complete boards, therefore quorum will not be an issue in the short term. No action to take.
3. Mercer fee schedule- Mercer had come to the SSCC requesting to amend their erosion control fee schedule. They would like for plan review and inspection cost to rise to \$150. Based on analytical assessment it should be higher, yet the district board was not looking to go too high. This will help them close the gap in expenditures, yet it will not address all their fiduciary concerns. Ms. Kovacs asked about the diversification of revenues. District Manager Paul Schiariti explained they annually receive a grant from Mercer County. They diversified some investments seeking high yielding CDs. Majority of income is 251 related due to small staff, with only two employees. Last year was the first down fiscal year per Mr. Schiariti since he has been district manager. Vote was called to allow Mercer SCD to increase their fee schedule to \$150, John Kocubinski motioned Joe Lomax second. Motioned carried with unanimous ayes.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT

1. Report Frank Minch

- Bernards Township (Somerset County), which is an exempt municipality, has been working with Somerset Union SCD to relinquish their exempt status. Going through the procedure to amend their ordinance that will go through the Committee. Due to staffing and expenditures, the municipality feels it is time to turn control back over to the district and will see it in the next SSCC meeting.
- NJDOT has made staffing changes and region adjustments, updates have been made to the NJDOT Procedure for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Coordination, Problem Resolution and Guidelines for Jurisdiction on Road Construction Projects. This document was shared out with SCDs. This is for DOT issues.

2. Engineering Report John Matos

- On May 12 John Showler and John Matos presented at a District Employee Association training on stormwater management basins and sediment control basins as well as the latest technical bulletin posted.
- On June 12 Frank Minch and John Matos presented at the SADC Joint Training Session. Applicability of The Soil Restoration Act and stormwater management rules to Agriculture projects the session brought regulatory and agricultural partner entities together to network.
- Continued to work on revisions to the eighth edition of The Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control in New Jersey. Revisions to standards include an intro to one big standard, revamping the standard for off-site stability, minor changes to other standards, updating the cover, and removing outdated appendices.
- Continue to provide assistance to SCDs, general public, and consulting engineers.



NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Julie Hawkins reported the following

1. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding, financial assistance money for new producer contractors, those funds have been swept. Not authorized to do new conservation contracts with farmers or private forest owners with IRA.
2. Conservation technical assistance IRA funding swept that's the salary funds used to implement in partnership or pay staff
3. Changes to RCPP program for IRA there was a full review of the FY 2023 and 24, able to keep the FY 23 funding, yet FY 24 funding was rescinded. 2023 projects are getting farm bill funding, 10 projects modified and 54 awards were rescinded with the IRA funding.
4. Appeal is continuing with Administration regarding reorganization and reduction enforced plans for all departments, waiting on response for the appeal.
5. Did get clearance from the Office of General Council and USDA Privacy Office with the MOU NRCS is working on for SCDs, it was sent over to NJDA on May 29, 2025 for review.
6. Trainings Planned 2025-2026:

Fiscal Year	Department	Training /Workshop	Description	Status	Training Type	Target Audience	Timeframe
2025	Operations	Pasture Management	Training includes livestock watering, fencing, animal trails and walkways, stream crossings, and livestock shelter structures	Scheduled	State Training	Planners/CETs	FY 25 Q3 June 25-27, 2025
2025	Resources	CP2 Training	Conservation Planning Level 2	Scheduled	State Training	Planners/CET's	FY 25 Q4 September 8-12, 2025
2025	Resources	Conservation Practices Updates (Cover Crop ,High tunnel, etc.,)		Proposed	State Training	Planners	FY 25 Q4
2025	Soils	Basic Soils and Web Soils to Interpret Land Capabilities and Limitations	Help determine soil suitability for farming, construction, conservation, and irrigation by identifying factors such as erosion risks, drainage capacity, and nutrient availability	Scheduled	State Training	Planners/CET's	FY 25 Q4 August 18-22, 2025
2025	Resources	Pasture Condition Score Overview	Overview	Proposed	In Person	Planners	TBD
2025	Operations	Basic Survey Training for Grassed Waterway	Hands-on	Proposed	In Person	Planners	TBD



Fiscal Year	Department	Training /Workshop	Description	Status	Training Type	Target Audience	Timeframe
2026	Operations	Basic Designing Grazing Systems	How to develop designs/IR sheets for Watering Facilities, Irrigation Pipeline and HUAP	Proposed	Remote	Planners/CETs	FY26 Q1
2026	Resources	Soil health and Sustainability	The NRCS Soil Health & Sustainability Training is designed to equip field staff and conservationists with the knowledge to evaluate and improve soil health.	Proposed	State Training	Planners	FY26 Q1
2026	Operations	Planning 101	Overview of 9 steps planning process	Proposed	State Training	Planners	FY26 Q1
2026	Operations	Irrigation 101 planning	3 days for how to plan (most basic)	Proposed	State Training	Planners/CETs	FY26 Q2
2026	Resources	RUSLE2, Farm Equipment & WinPST	3 days to cover basic/common rotations & farm equipment	Proposed	State Training	Planners	FY26 Q2
2026	Resources	CSP Enhancement Planning	2 days to cover how to plan most common enhancements	Proposed	State Training	Planners	FY26 Q3
2026	Resources	Gully erosion control on cropland (agronomic only)	How to properly integrate engineering and agronomic practices to form solutions.	Proposed	In Person	Planners	TBD

Technical Tuesdays FY 25 - 26

Date	Subject
6/24/2025	Food Safety
7/22/2025	Preconstruction Meetings
8/26/2025	Ethics 101
9/30/2025	WHEG training and review of pollinator planning & planting
10/28/2025	SADC's new preserved farm valuation formula AND an ACEP certified entity and how it works with NRCS
11/25/2025	JAA - what is needed for the top 3 practices in the state
1/27/2026	Career Planner, Competency Assessment/Expectations, Promotion Guides
2/24/2026	SharePoint Demonstration
3/31/2026	Soil and Soil Hydrology
4/28/2026	Food Security Act and Costumer Compliance
5/26/2026	Soil Investigations

- Thank you to those who attended State Technical Committee Meeting in Califon to tour the new Mount Olive Service Center
- Looking forward to the Cape May Plant Material Center 60th Anniversary September 25, invitation will go out soon
- Conservation Planner Certification summary report planners are progressing



NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Ines Zimmerman reported on the activities

NJACD

1. Thank you to those who participated in the NJ Envirothon on May 17, 2025. MATES Team 1 from Ocean County won the competition and will be moving onto the international competition in Alberta, Canada. Second place was MATES Team 2 Third place was Metuchen HS Team 2, Princeton International School of Math and Science. Burlington SCD was the host and did a terrific job. Looking for a host for the 2026 NJ Envirothon.



2. Working on identifying a location for the NJACD Annual Partnership meeting
3. Poster competition winners have been notified the state winner was Yunshi Chen from the Mercer SCD who will go on to national competition.



Yunshi Chen Grades 7-9



DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Mr. D'Alessandro reported on activities

1. 5/12/2025 we had an in-person training at Freehold SCD, administrative and field worker training. Frank presented in the morning on administrative topics. John Ramos and John Showler presented in the afternoon on the basics of basin, sediment basins, and review the technical bulletin of offsite stability. Additionally, there was a celebration for John Showler for his years of engineer service provided to the SCDs in NJ. The presentations were posted on the NJACD website.
2. Upcoming meeting in July. We continue to meet every two months. Asking the employees throughout the state for training needs and for topics of interest at every Association meeting to request and coordinate those trainings and events.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1. Not present

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION (RCE)

Mr. Haberland reported on the following:

1. July 1st Dr. Hassan Warriach will start as the Warren County Extension agent in commercial livestock.
2. Burlington County there is a selected candidate uncertain of start date.
3. Atlantic County are in the recorded pre interview video stage
4. Bergen County is determining the type of position they are looking to fill
5. In the Specialist area there will be a new Agricultural Viability beginning August 1. All specialists are statewide.
6. Final stage of interviews are complete and in selection process is underway for specialists in Agronomy, Tree Fruit Pathologist and Aquaculture and Marine

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (SEBS)

Dr. Murphy reported on the following:

1. Rutgers graduated 680 students from SEBS in May, 28% of those graduates were first generation college graduates, 36% had minor. Top majors #1 Biological Sciences, #2 Animal Sciences, and #4 Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources.
2. The Soil Testing Laboratory received funding from the Ag Experiment Station and the Office of Research at SEBS to make some upgrades in equipment to be able to offer additional services that include plant tissue analysis to evaluate soil fertility and see what the plant is pulling up to diagnosis problems. Additionally, equipment to improve soil health add aggregate stability measure and soil biology.
3. Meeting with Edwin Muniz (NRCS) to continue planning the 2026 National Meeting of National Cooperative of Soil Survey which will be hosted in NJ. Due to Federal travel restrictions, it may need to be virtual and will do everything we can to make it as interactive as possible to show off



special features of NJ; problems and solutions. We would like someone from NJACD to be involved with it and will reach out to them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

A motion was made by Sylvia Kovacs to adjourn and was seconded by Louise Davis. The meeting ended at 10:22 AM unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch, Division Director

