

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MINUTES
FSA OFFICE
HAMILTON, NEW JERSEY
SEPTEMBER 13, 2010**

The September meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairperson Douglas Fisher at 9:38 a.m. at the FSA State office in Hamilton, NJ

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, location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48 hours in advance this notice has been posted on the third floor bulletin board, Health and Agriculture Building in Trenton; mailed to The Star Ledger, the Courier Post and filed with the Office of Secretary of State.

Call of the Membership Roll indicated the following:

Members Present

Douglas Fisher
Barry Chalofsky (rep. Bob Martin)
Louise Davis
Dr. Stephanie Murphy (rep. R Goodman)
Tom Drewes, NRCS
Don Knezick
Barbara Rosko
Ken Marsh
John Kocubinski
Priscilla Hayes
Joe Lomax
Frank Minch, Administrative Analyst

Associate Members and Others

Brian McLendon, NJDEP
Cliff Lundin, Sussex SCD
Rich Belcher, SSSC
Ferdows Ali, SSSC
Tim Fekete, SSSC
John Showler, SSSC
Maria Collazo, USDA-NRCS
Marie Banisak, Farm Bureau
Paul Hlubik, USDA-FSA
Colleen Stemme- NJDA
Robert Dobbs, Camden SCD
Ines Grimm, Freehold SCD
Paul Berte, SEH
Elizabeth George-Cheniara, NJ Bldrs
Assn.

Minutes of July 12, 2010 Meeting

On motion by Mr. Chalofsky, second by Mr. Knezick-, the Minutes of July 12, 2010 were approved with the following correction; Mr. Lomax was in attendance.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Secretary Fisher reported that the streamlining of NJ State government continues. Many commissions and councils have been abolished as a cost saving measure.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

- **Steve Selody, Somerset/Union SCD** – The longtime district supervisor passed away on August 21st.
- **Annual Conservation Conference** – Ms. Stemme reported that as of today, sixty five (65) individuals have registered. Twenty four (24) of the registered are supervisors. So far, the Bergen, Gloucester, Hunterdon, and Mercer SCDs have not responded.
- **Animal Waste Procedures**– The “Plan Assistance and Approval Flow Chart” covering the roles and responsibilities of the landowner and various organizations, NRCS, SCD, etc. was reviewed. This will be reviewed in more depth at the conservation conference next week. To date, approximately one hundred sixty one (161) low density plans have been received. In addition, an NRCS Bulletin covering this same issue was distributed and reviewed.
- **Ag Water Report**- Dr. Ali reported that there is a statewide “drought watch” with the reservoirs in the northeast portion of the state being the most effected. Dr. Ali also reported on the Ag Water Certifications processed within the timeframe July 1, 2010 to August 31, 2010. Thirty (30) renewals were processed and approved from the following counties, Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Ocean and Salem.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

- **Permitrack**- after the presentation by Short, Elliot, Hendrickson (SEH) at the last SSCC meeting three (3) districts, Freehold, HEP and Ocean, have contracted with SEH on a pilot basis to evaluate this tracking program. These districts will report their findings to the SSCC at a later date.
- **Wantage Township, Sussex Co.**– The Sussex SCD requested assistance in completing the transfer of the SESC program from Wantage Township to the Sussex SCD. In 2007 Wantage Township voluntarily vacated its SESC Ordinance and terminated its status as an exempt municipality. Thirty two (32) applications submitted to the township prior to August 31, 2007 were to remain under township jurisdiction “until completion”. The district has repeatedly encountered difficulty in ascertaining the status of these projects. After numerous requests, a status of these projects was finally submitted to the district. This status did not correspond with information the district had regarding said projects. Also, it appears that several projects do not have proper certification nor have been properly inspected.

The Sussex SCD is requesting that the SSCC mandate any and all projects still under the jurisdiction of Wantage Township be immediately transferred to the district.

On motion by Mr. Chalofsky, second by Ms. Davis, the SSCC empowers staff to pursue this issue and assist with the orderly transfer of the remaining projects to the Sussex SCD.

- **Harding Township, Morris County, Erosion Control Ordinance –** This exempt municipality is amending language in their ordinance and is experiencing several codification problems. A discussion with township officials on Friday raised more issues than answered. This matter is being worked on.
- **Fertilizer Bill(s) (S1411; A2290) and Soil Restoration Bill (S1410)–** A special meeting of the Assembly and Senate sub committees was held and these bills were subsequently moved out of committee. The SSCC sub committee will meet after the annual conservation conference to discuss policy, current proposed legislation and future anticipated legislation.
- **Engineering Assistance –** Mr. Showler reviewed the engineering report overview submitted to the SSCC. Of particular interest was the number of solar panel projects proposed which impact detention basin floors. This generated much discussion regarding the impact of solar panels on the original intent of these basins. Mr. Lomax suggested the formation of a working group which would explore, on a policy based approach, the issue of solar panels and a framework and guidelines regarding operations. At a minimum, this committee will consist of Mr. Lomax, Mr. Marsh and a DEP representative. Other items reviewed by Mr. Showler are as follows: Chapter 251 application trends by district- 2000-2007 and Chapter 251 program summary statistics.
- **Contractor Training Program-** SSCC staff is still working with the Burlington SCD regarding this initiative.

STORMWATER DISCHARGE PROGRAM

- **4th Quarter Payment-** The FY '10 4th quarter RFA and 251 Surcharge Fee Report was reviewed by Mr. Showler. All 4th quarter disbursements to the SCDs have been generated. Two (2) SCDs, Burlington and HEP, have not collected, nor paid, the \$25 per application surcharge. Staff is working to ensure both SCDs come into compliance.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND COST SHARE PROGRAM (FPCSP)

Mr. Fekete reported on the following:

- **New Applications** - On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Ms. Davis, the following applications were approved, pending the funding approval of State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC)*.

PRIORITY I- PERMANENTLY DEED RESTRICTED

<u>County</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Requested</u>
Morris	Centenary College	An. Waste Storage Facility	\$17,872.50
Salem	W. & M. Allen	Irrigation	\$10,812.50

*All applications will be forwarded to the SADC with a recommendation for funding approval. Copies of all applications will be maintained as part of the minutes of this meeting and kept on file at the Office of the Executive Secretary.

- **Extension Requests** – A request from J. Giamerese of Middlesex County for \$5,600 twelve (12) month extension for an irrigation project was approved on motion by Ms. Davis, second by Mr. Lomax. Weather, time and coordination issues have conspired to work against Mr. Giamerese in his attempt to complete his cost share project.
- **Cost Share Payments Processed** – Since July four (4) payment requests were processed to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) totaling \$90,094.01 representing the state share for completed and functioning practices. These practices include four (4) irrigation projects. The total value of these conservation projects exceeds \$189,604.62.

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP) *

Mr. Fekete reported the following regarding the CREP program:

Conservation Practices	Contracts Approved		Payments Processed	
	This Period	Cumulative	This Period	Cumulative
Filter Strips (acres)	6.3	285.5	0	258.56
Grassed Waterway (acres)	1.8	108	6.1	75.42
Lined Waterway (feet)	2,610	51,476	0	3,311
Riparian Forest Buffer (acres)	1.9	220	11	176
Number of Contracts	5	162	5	111
Funds Obligated/Expended	\$5,341.95	\$313,755.20	\$13,217.79	\$195,889.79

*On February 3, 2004 at the N.J. Agricultural Convention the CREP Program Agreement was signed by the Governor and USDA Farm Services Agency Administrator to establish 30,000 acres of vegetative filter strips with 10-15 year contracts on ag land to protect water quality.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Mr. Belcher reported the following:

- **Envirothon Results-** The NJ team placed #16 out of 54 teams in the national competition. There was some controversy as the California team filed a grievance against the Pennsylvania team.
- **2011 NJ Envirothon-** This event will be held in Bergen County.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) REPORT

Mr. Drewes reported on the following:

- The Federal fiscal year (FY '10) ends September 30, 2010
- This past FY was a good funding year and FY'11 should be equally as good.
- There will probably be a continuing resolution in effect since, to date, a new budget has not been passed.
- NRCS has experienced an increase in EQIP and WHIP applications
- NRCS is working on activity plans.
- NRCS has entered into various cooperative agreements including the continuation of the CAP Agreement.
- Six (6) cooperative agreements are in place for employee sharing with other agencies.
- Discussions have been ongoing regarding the 2012 Farm Bill.
- Mr. Drewes announced his retirement effective January 1, 2011.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Mr. Hlubik reported on the following:

- **Bio Fuels Forum-** This jointly sponsored (FSA, NRCS & RD) meeting will be held September 30th, 9:30 AM at the Eco-Complex.
- Congress passed appropriations for \$75 million in direct conservation loans and \$75 million in guaranteed conservation loans. These loans will be expedited for borrowers with ample security and a credit score of 700 or above. Loans would have to close before September 30th.
- **Disaster Declaration-** FSA recommended the governor take action to announce a disaster declaration in 16 counties.
- **CREP-** application activity peaked in 2008. With continued outreach it is hoped there will be an increase in CREP applications.

- **SAFE-** Safe Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program- This is a joint program with USDA and other conservation groups. NJ has fifteen (15) contracts and nine (9) new offers. The program is limited to 1,000 acres in NJ.

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Ms. Davis reported on the following:

- **Legislative visits-** Mssrs. Lomax, Marsh, Cywinski and Ms. Davis travelled to Washington DC and met with NJ legislative staff, updating them on continuing conservation work in NJ and requesting support for conservation programs.
- **Soil Health Conference-** This conference, jointly hosted by the Morris and Somerset-Union SCDs, will be held on November 9, 2010 in Morristown, NJ. The cost for attendees is in the \$25- \$30 range.

NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Chalofsky reported the following:

- **Soil Restoration Meeting-** This fact finding meeting with soil scientists and stormwater experts went well and cleared up numerous critical issues regarding soil health and restoration which needed to be addressed.
- **Enforcement Meeting-** Staff from EPA, DEP and SCDs met in an effort to more effectively enhance communications and coordination. It was an extremely positive meeting.
- **Effluent Limitation Guidelines-** These guidelines have been challenged and as a result EPA has withdrawn the guidelines pending review.

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Dr. Murphy reported on the following:

- Fall 2010 semester began September 1.
- A new graduate program in microbial biology was initiated this semester.
- The annual summer science program for urban youth was held from July 12- 16th. Fifty (50) high school students explored science and research to gain a better understanding of opportunities available in science, engineering and technology.
- On July 26th numerous turf grass producers participated in the Turfgrass Producers International Tour of the Plant Research and Extension Farm located in Adelphia, NJ
- \$758,000 in agriculture funds for New Jersey was announced by Senators Lautenberg and Menendez. The funding includes \$522,000 for the Rutgers' Phillip E Marucci Center for blueberry and Cranberry research in Chatsworth and \$236,000 for the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts for conservation technical assistance. The bills now head to the full Senate for consideration.
- In a joint effort, an outreach program was initiated to educate the general public on how to reduce standing water habitats in which mosquitoes breed and about the serious public health risks of the Asian tiger mosquito.

- The Snyder Farm Great Tomato Tasting Festival was the winner of the 2010 PRIDE Award.
- Over 1,500 people attended the 20th annual Great Tomato Tasting event. Over 100 varieties of tomatoes and 70 varieties of peppers were showcased.
- To view upcoming events see the following web sites:
<http://events.rutgers.edu/njaes/>
<http://events.rutgers.edu/sebs/>

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS

Ms. Hayes reported on the work she is involved with at Rutgers including the conservation garden initiative. This includes a native plants garden and a rain garden.

Ms. George-Cheniara introduced herself to the committee as the Builders Association representative. She encouraged the committee to contact her if she could be of any assistance. She is a big proponent of education over enforcement.

On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Ms. Davis, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch
Administrative Analyst