

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MINUTES
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
JANUARY 13, 2020**

The January meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Douglas Fisher at 9:42 A.M. at Health and Agriculture Building in Trenton, New Jersey. 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 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.

The Flag Salute was recited.

Call of the Membership Roll indicated the following:

Members Present Associate Members and Others

Douglas Fisher

Joe Lomax

Matt Ward

Carrie Lindig

Brett Kosowski (rep. C. McCabe)

Ray Cywinski

Sylvia Kovacs

Tony DiLodovico

Mike Rigolizzo

Mike Haberland (rep. B. Schilling)

Cristin Mustillo, Deputy Attorney General

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary

John Showler, SSSC, NJDA

Tim Fekete, SSSC, NJDA

Joe Dunn, Morris SCD

Dave Reilly, C/A SCD

Dennis Dougherty, Camden SCD

Ines Zimmerman, Freehold SCD

Paul Schiariti, Mercer SCD

Gabi Grunstein, USDA, FSA

Nick Saumweber, USDA, NRCS

Grant Lucking. NJBA

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2019 MEETING

On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Mr. Cywinski, the minutes of the December 9, 2019 meeting were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

1. Secretary Fisher welcomed Sylvia Kovacs back following her extremely serious on-farm injury.
2. Secretary Fisher reported that, to date, NJ and two other states (Louisiana and Ohio) are the only states to have been approved for growing legal hemp. To obtain that distinction, NJDA worked closely with USDA for approval and now is looking to provide opportunities for processors. There are over 25,000 uses for the hemp plant and it can be grown anywhere in the state.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

1. **Sussex Update-** The State Committee approved the merger resolution at the last meeting. As required, both the Sussex and Warren SCDs forwarded the resolution to the NJ Secretary of State. Both districts are working with legal council regarding the merger which will be effective July 1, 2020. Mr. Ward emphasized the total make-up of the new board should have representation from both counties.
2. **SCD Audits-** A different auditor is reviewing the previous Sussex SCD audits in an effort to get a clear understanding of what went on at the district. This new auditor is having a difficult time substantiating figures from previous audits. A meeting is scheduled to review the auditors' findings.
The State Committee reviewed the FY 2019 summary audit table which shows a one-year financial snapshot of each district. Two FY 2019 audits are missing, Bergen and Sussex. Mr. Ward observed that service to the public is paramount and, due to financial issues, some districts may need to consolidate in the future. Mr. Minch indicated that he will be contacting the districts regarding web-site transparency. All district audits must be posted to their web-sites.
3. **Soil and Water Cost Share Tables-** Staff will provide cost tables to the districts and the State Committee once a hard copy of the NRCS Cost Table is available. Staff is in discussion with SADC regarding the issue of well prices.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT

1. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler provided a brief engineering report regarding his activities including assisting various districts with plan reviews, basin inspections (Somerset-Union SCD), NJDEP revised Stormwater Management Rules, district training and the Soil Restoration Effectiveness Survey. A lengthy discussion was held regarding this issue. No resolution was reached.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Mr. Minch provided the following update:

1. **2020 NJ Envirothon-** A planning meeting is scheduled for the end of January at the Freehold office. The 2020 NJ Envirothon is scheduled for May 2, 2020 at Camp Topanemus in Monmouth County. The Freehold SCD will be hosting the event. The theme is "Water Resource Management".

2. **2020 Poster Contest-** The brochure has been distributed to the districts. District winners are due in Trenton by April 1, 2020.

Mr. Lomax inquired if Mr. Belcher's position will be backfilled. Secretary Fisher indicated that, to date, ten positions in the Department are awaiting approval to fill.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ms. Lindig reported on the following:

1. The comment period for various programs in the 2018 Farm Bill is expiring soon.
2. Major software changes and upgrades are being done on the NRCS system. Training is being provided.
3. The agreement between NRCS and SADC to assist in implementing the Cost Share program is in the process of being up updated.
4. NJ-NRCS has a requirement that 10% of all funds they receive must go to "Source Water Protection".

NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. Dougherty reported on the activities of the NJACD including the following:

1. Three candidates have been identified to fill the Executive Secretary position. It is anticipated a decision will be made by the end of the month.
2. An individual has stepped forward and volunteered to be NJACD Treasurer. A discussion will be held, and a decision made, at the NJACD meeting today.
3. Regional supervisor meetings will be held on the following dates: March 25th (central), March 31st (south) and April 2nd (north)

NJ DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

No report

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Mr. Haberland reported on the following:

1. Two full time faculty searches are being conducted (Cape May County Agent and Salem County Agent).
2. A staff Associate position will be filled for the Burlington County office.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS

1. Mr. Grunstein spoke regarding CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program).
2. Mr. Cywinski suggested the districts track affordable housing units in their counties to see if total housing applications are increasing due to the Fair Share Housing settlement.

Secretary Fisher adjourned the meeting at 11:10 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2020. The location is the Health and Agriculture building in Trenton.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch
Executive Secretary, SSCC

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