**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**MINUTES**

**TELE-CONFERENCE**

**MARCH 8, 2021**

The March meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Douglas Fisher at 9:?? 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 M. Kent, Cape Atlantic SCD

Julie Hawkins, NRCS R. Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD

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

Ray Cywinski Dennis Dougherty, Camden SCD

Michael Rigolizzo Louise Davis, Morris SCD

Sal Mangiafico (rep. B. Schilling) Jim Hill, Hunterdon SCD

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary

**MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2021 MEETING**

On motion by ?, second by ?, the minutes of the January 11, 2021 meeting were approved.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Secretary Fisher reported on the following:

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

1. **Supervisor Performance Standards**- ?
2. **Hunterdon SCD Supervisor Appointment-** ?
3. **USDA Urban Ag. Committee**- The Farm Bill has allocated money to fund a 12-person advisory committee to provide guidance and outreach for urban agriculture throughout the nation. There are several hundred potential nominees for these 12 slots.

NJ has nominated Myra Lawson(?) for this advisory committee. Mr. Cywinski reported that NACD will be officially nominating a Supervisor from Iowa for the committee.

1. **Cost Share Tables-** To ensure uniformity, NJDA has adopted the latest NRCS Cost Table for the State Cost Share Program. This Cost Table will be sent to the Districts for approval at their next District meeting.

**SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT**

1. Cape-Atlantic Fee Schedule- Mr. Minch reported that the Cape-Atlantic SCD prepared and submitted a revised fee schedule for consideration. The current fee schedule was approved in 2012 at an operating rate of $90/hour. The proposed rate is $105/hour for plan review and inspection. The District has demonstrated a reasonable relationship between the proposed fees and the cost for providing services. Staff recommends that the revised fee schedule for the Cape-Atlantic SCD be adopted as presented.

On motion by ?, second by Mr. Cywinski, the revised Cape-Atlantic fee schedule was approved. The roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Lomax and Mr. Mangiafico abstained.

1. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler provided a brief engineering report regarding some of his recent activities including district assistance (especially to the Bergen, Freehold, Hunterdon, Ocean and Upper Delaware SCDs), 2021 Dam Safety Conference and Offsite Stability Standards Review Team.

**NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Ms. Hawkins provided an update on NRCS programs and, also, reported on the following:

1. Tom Vilsack was sworn in as the 32nd U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.
2. The State Conservationist from Ohio is the Acting NRCS Chief.
3. NRCS Covid-19 protocols are as follows:

* Only 25% of staff in the office at a given time.
* No customers allowed in office.
* Maximum tela-commuting advised for staff.

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**NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

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

1. A District outreach newsletter will be produced on a regular basis.
2. Ms. Davis and Lily Mehl are committed to visiting all Districts and attending at least one Board meeting in each District.
3. Regional meetings have been delayed until late April. It’s hoped that these meetings may be held in person.
4. The virtual “fly in” meeting will be held later this month.
5. Ms. Davis and Lily Mehl are working on a 6-year Leadership Development Plan.
6. Meredith Taylor (an Urban Ag Committee nominee) and Ms. Davis are meeting monthly.
7. N.J.A.C.D. presented a short video highlighting New Jersey at the annual N.A.C.D. Conference.
8. Bob Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD Manager, gave a presentation at the Annual N.A.C.D. Conference.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

No report

**SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Dr Murphy reported on the following:

1. Rutgers Sustainable Raritan River Initiative is partnering with the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Estuary Program (HEP) to undertake an “Aquatic Connectivity Through Climate-Ready Infrastructure” project on the Lower Raritan River watershed. The project seeks to improve road-stream crossings at bridges and culverts so that they are better able to pass fish and other aquatic life and address hydraulic capacity issues that lead to roadside flooding and erosion.
2. Scientific research has proven that the annual global temperature today is the warmest of the past 10,000 years.
3. James Murphy, extension specialist in turfgrass management, and Stacy Bonos, professor of turfgrass breeding, have been named Director and Associate Director respectively of the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science, effective January 1, 2021.
4. Rutgers University Board of Governors appointed Extension Specialist James Murphy, who is widely recognized as one of the nation’s top scientists in turfgrass management, to the Ralph Geiger Chair in Turfgrass Science. His term began July 1, 2020.
5. Late June, the SEBS and NJAES Executive Leadership Team posted a statement in support of racial justice in our community and our work.
6. Today and tomorrow, many Rutgers faculty/staff will be participating in a Soil Health Innovation Conference sponsored by the National Center for Appropriate Technology.
7. Soil testing is ramping up w snow melt and warmer temperatures.

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**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS**

1. Mr. Cywinski reported on the N.A.C.D. Annual Conference which was held virtually from February 1 to February 10th.

* Many individuals registered for the conference. Discussions were held regarding the format of this conference moving forward.
* The entire N.A.C.D. Annual Conference was held virtually.
* Mr. Cywinski provided an update regarding N.A.C.D. activities.
* Mr. Cywinski requested a Moment of Silence for Senator Gerald Cardinale who recently passed-away.

1. Mr. Ward indicated that the H.E.P. SCD will be submitting comments regarding the potential changes to the Supervisor Performance Standards.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch

Executive Secretary, SSCC

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