**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

 **MINUTES**

**TELE-CONFERENCE**

**JUNE 14, 2021**

The June 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 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

Tony DiLodovico Louise Davis, Morris SCD

Brian Schilling Glen Van Olden, HEP SCD

Sylvia Kovacs Mike DePalma, Hunterdon SCD

John Kocubinski Sandy Myers, Upper Del. SCD

Vince Mazzei Joe Dunn, Morris SCD

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary Jeff Everett, SADC, NJDA

 Dave Clapp, SADC, NJDA

 Lily Mehl, NJACD

 N. Saumweber, NRCS, USDA

 Mike Haberland, RCE

 **MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2021 MEETING**

On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Dr. Murphy, the minutes of the March 8, 2021 meeting were approved.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Secretary Fisher reported that Mr. DiLodovico sold his house in Jackson, NJ and will be moving to Philadelphia to assist his disabled son, who has been accepted into Temple University. Secretary Fisher congratulated Mr. DiLodovico and thanked him for his hard work and dedication to the Ocean SCD, the SSCC and the conservation movement.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

1. **SADC Soil Protective Standards**- Mr. Minch introduced Jeff Everett and Dave Clapp of SADC. Mr. Everett provided an overview of the Soil Protective Standards which have been researched and are currently being written by SADC. These standards were necessary due to a court case against an agricultural producer who removed soil on his property down to bedrock. Although NJDA prevailed in the lawsuit, SADC was admonished for not having standards to guide the farming community on what they could or couldn’t do regarding soil protection and disturbances. The goal of these standards is to balance Farmland Preservation and strengthen the agricultural business industry. SADC is asking for feedback and informal comments on these Standards.
2. **Supervisor Appointment/reappointment-** Category 1- “Supervisor Re-nominations that meet Supervisor Performance Standards for 3-year term ending June 24, 2024”- On motion by Ms. Kovacs, second by Dr. Murphy the following Supervisors were re-appointed: Ray Cywinski and Kim Mitchell (Bergen), Dennis Dougherty (Camden), Richard Dovey and Cormac Morrissey (Cape-Atlantic), Maurice Sheets and Ralph Sickler (Cumberland-Salem), Charles Buscaglia (Freehold), John Furfari (Gloucester), Elizabeth Hite-Vollavanth and Geraldine Flach (HEP), William Engisch (Hunterdon), Ed DiPolvere and Scott Ellis (Mercer), Phillip Roehrich (Morris), William Pollock (Ocean), Ben Jorritsma (Upper Delaware). Mr. Cywinski recused himself from voting on his nomination.

Category 2- “Supervisor Re-nominations that did not meet Supervisor Performance Standards”

Burlington SCD- Dan Caldwell (did not attain 6 training points) and Thomas Budd (did not attain 6 training points and did not attend 2 NJACD Business meetings), Morris SCD- Robert McEwan (did not attain 6 training points), Somerset-Union SCD- Ed Dec (did not attain 6 training points and did not attend 2 NJACD Business meetings) and Matthew Loper (did not attain 6 training points and did not attend 2 NJACD Business meetings). Mr. Minch recommended that, due to the COVID limitations and restrictions of the past year, these Supervisors be approved for another full term. On motion by Ms. Kovacs, second by Mr. Kocubinski, the Supervisors in Category 2 were re-appointed for another full term (June 30, 2024). Mr. Cywinski recommended that District Managers emphasize to their Supervisors’ that attaining training credits are easier now that many meetings (including SSCC meetings) are held virtually.

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Mr. Minch reported that a resolution has been written honoring Mr. DiLodovico for his many years of dedication to the conservation movement. Mr. Minch also indicated he received a letter from the Ocean SCD requesting that Mr. DiLodovico be appointed “Supervisor Emeritus” to the Ocean SCD Board. On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Ms. Kovacs, Mr. DiLodovico was appointed Supervisor Emeritus to the Ocean SCD Board. Mr. Ward suggested that any emeritus position be reviewed on a yearly basis. Roll call vote: Mazzei- yes, Murphy- yes, Kovacs- yes, Haberland- yes, Cywinski- yes, Kocubinski- yes, Lomax- yes, Ward- yes (with the caveat of his review suggestion).

Mr. Minch reported that since Mr. DiLodovico has stepped down the Policy and Procedures Manual indicates the NJACD can appoint an interim Supervisor on the SSCC to replace Mr. DiLodovico until a permanent replacement is voted in at the next NJACD Business meeting. The temporary replacement will be discussed at the afternoon Association meeting.

1. **District Staff IDs**- Mr. Minch has been working with the Somerset Union SCD to locate a vendor to provide District employees with ID cards. A training session was held and, in the near future, all District employees will be provided with employee IDs.
2. **Farmland Assessment Mapping Tool-** Mr. Minch reported that the Soil Productivity Tables, maps and criteria are old and outdated. NRCS and Rowan University are working to update mapping for accuracy. Mr. Minch will have more information for the September meeting.
3. **NCPP-** The National Conservation Planning Partnership is a national initiative through NACD and NRCS working to encourage Districts to re-engage and become more involved in conservation planning and agricultural issues.

 **SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT**

1. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler provided a brief overview regarding some of his recent activities including district assistance, attending a webinar regarding runoff modeling methods and the impact of the new Green Infrastructure Rules.

**SOIL and WATER COST SHARE PROGRAM**

Mr. Fekete reported on the Conservation Cost Share Program activity for Fiscal Year 2021. 40 applications (totaling $1,124,483.35) were approved. Those approved and funded applications were for the following projects: underground drainage, land grading, animal waste storage, livestock watering facilities, permanent open drainage and irrigation. The vast majority of the money obligated funded irrigation projects (80%).

15 Soil and Water Cost Share payments were issued for completed projects in FY 2021 (totaling $252,751.75). These payments were for underground drainage, permanent open drainage, terrace systems and irrigation. Irrigation payments have made up 57% of the payments issued. These figures are a snapshot in time. There are still 2 weeks left in the fiscal year.

**NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Ms. Hawkins provided an update on NRCS programs and personnel including the following:

1. NRCS will be submitting comments on the Soil Protection Standards.
2. The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovation have several grant opportunities, Community Compost and Food Waste ($2 million) with a deadline of July 11, 2021 and Planning and Implementation ($5-6 million) with a deadline of July 30, 2021.

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**NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

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

1. All 14 Districts were represented (and 70 individuals attended) at the virtual regional meetings.
2. 8 teams participated in the 2021 NJ Envirothon. Much thanks to Holly Reynolds, Lily Mehl and the Freehold SCD for their hard work.
3. Judging of the Poster Contest will be discussed at the NJACD meeting.
4. Preliminarily, a scholarship winner has been chosen.
5. Virtual meetings were held w 3 congressional offices.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Mr. Mazzei provided a brief overview of his responsibilities at DEP. He also reported on the following:

1. All engineers and wetland scientists are together in one group. This will provide a watershed approach to land management.
2. There was discussion of re-instating a monthly meeting between Mr. Mazzei’s staff, SSCC staff and SCDs.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Dr. Schilling reported on the following:

1. In person programing resumed June 7, 2021. Masks are required for indoor programs.
2. Starting July 6th Rutgers University will be welcoming a limited amount of students on campus. The university will be transitioning to a full campus in September.
3. Over the past few years there has been an emphasis in investing in and updating experiment stations and research farms.
4. RCE would like to assist NJDA with outreach and promoting programs.

**SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Dr Murphy reported on the following:

1. There is a new Director of Rutgers Gardens.
2. The Center for Turfgrass Science Field Days will be held July 27th and 28th at the Hort Farm.
3. A Continuing Education Course, Green (?) Stormwater Management will be held remotely next week.
4. It is expected that Rutgers Campuses will be welcoming back students in the fall.
5. The Soil Testing Lab will reopen to the public July 6th.

**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS**

1. Mr. Cywinski reported on the N.A.C.D. activities including ongoing discussions regarding Wild and Scenic Rivers, wildfire legislation, the wild horse and burro program and the 30/30 Executive Order (conserve 30% of land and water by 2030). The NACD Summer Board Meeting will be held in person next month in Chicago.
2. A Soil Health Bill was introduced in the NJ Assembly last month. To date, there is no companion bill in the Senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary

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