

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MINUTES
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
SEPTEMBER 23, 2019**

The September meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Douglas Fisher at 9:57 A.M. at 200 Riverview 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

John Kocubinski

Michael Rigolizzo

Ray Cywinski

Carrie Lindig

Tony DiLodovico

Sylvia Kovacs

Mike Haberland

Cristin Mustillo, Deputy Attorney General

Frank Minch, Executive Secretary

Rich Belcher, SSSC, NJDA

Tim Fekete, SSSC, NJDA

Nick Saumweber, NRCS

Dave Reilly, C/A SCD

Dennis Dougherty, Camden SCD

Christine Raabe, Ocean SCD

Matt D'Alessandro, HEP SCD

Christina LaBianca, Freehold SCD

Ines Zimmerman, Freehold SCD

Jim Hill, Hunterdon SCD

Robert Carter, Camden SCD

Grant Lucking, NJBA

Joe Dunn, Morris SCD

Glen Van Olden, HEP SCD

MINUTES OF MARCH 11, 2019 MEETING

On motion by Mr. Rigolizzo, second by Mr. Ward, the minutes of the June 10, 2019 meeting were approved with the following corrections: Clarify that vote was taken on motion prior to executive session.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Secretary Fisher reported on the following:

1. He extended his heartfelt condolences to Mr. DiLodovico on the passing of his wife.
2. Rich Belcher is retiring effective January 1, 2020.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

1. **John Showler-** Mr. Showler had quadruple bypass surgery last week. He is home recuperating and will be out of work several months.
2. **Sussex Update-** The Sussex SCD office has closed and relocated to Hackettstown. There are several issues that need to be addressed primary being there has not been a quorum since April. This impacts the ability of the Sussex SCD to operate.
3. The NJDA move has been delayed due to the temporary relocation of the Department of Health into our new office space. DOH was flooded out of one of their office locations.
4. The December SSCC meeting will be held at 200 Riverview, Trenton.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT

1. **Soil Restoration-** The Morris SCD submitted a resolution for State Committee consideration regarding a review of soil compaction testing. The Morris SCD has found that the required compaction testing has severely impacted their limited resources in addition to finding a 100% passing rate. The Morris SCD would like to know if other districts are finding similar testing results. A lengthy discussion ensued. A survey will be conducted of the other districts regarding this issue.
2. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Minch provided a brief engineering report. Due to the intensity and regularity of recent storms, Mr. Minch would like to re-asses the Erosion Control Standards. A discussion was held regarding reconvening the Standards Sub-Committee.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Mr. Belcher provided the following update:

1. **2019 National Envirothon-** The National Envirothon was held in North Carolina. The NJ team placed 15th (Out of 56 teams). The 2020 National Envirothon will take place in Lincoln, Nebraska.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Ms. Lindig reported on the following:

1. Nick Saumweber was introduced as the new Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations. Mr. Saumweber is responsible for supervising the District Conservationists and partnership relations.
2. NRCS is wrapping up a very successful fiscal year. Ms. Lindig should have specifics regarding the amount of money obligated by the next meeting.

3. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is being renewed with more money and more opportunities next fiscal year.
4. NRCS and SADC will be renegotiating a new contract regarding the NRCS role in implementing the State Cost Share Program.
5. NRCS is receiving numerous whistleblower complaints, mostly in Sussex and Warren Counties, regarding erosion issues.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Training-** Ms. LaBianca reported on the work of the training subcommittee. This subcommittee has met several times over the past few months to discuss the training needs of statewide district staff and supervisors. It would be beneficial for the district supervisors to have a training/refresher overview of their responsibilities. The subcommittee also feels that a uniform construction site safety training would be beneficial for the technical/field staff. Ms. LaBianca spoke about several organizations, both state and private, that may provide training for district staff and supervisors.

SUSSEX SCD

Merger discussions took place by both the Sussex and Warren Boards. Both districts voted to approve a merger of the Sussex and Warren SCD. Although both districts are collocated in Hackettstown, the merger has yet to take place. To date, the Sussex SCD Board has not officially met since May 2019 due to quorum issues. The vital work of the district has not been done and the public is not being served. A motion was made by Mr. Lomax, second by Mr. Rigolizzo to convene a special session to discuss the issues pertaining to the Sussex SCD. A roll call vote was taken (Ward-yes, Rigolizzo-yes, Cywinski-Yes, DiLodovico-yes, Kocubinski-yes, Kovacs-recuse, Haberland-recuse). Ms. Kovacs made a motion to go into executive session to discuss supervisor performance. Secretary Fisher denied said motion citing the need for additional information and the lack of a rice notice.

NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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

1. The annual Conservation Conference will be held Monday, December 2, 2019 at the EcoComplex In Columbus.
2. The North East Regional NACD Meeting was held in Connecticut.
3. Mr. Dougherty thanked Mr. Belcher for all his hard work and dedication.

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Mr. Haberland reported that there are numerous vacancies throughout Rutgers Cooperative Extension. There has been ongoing recruitment to fill these vacancies.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS

1. Mr. Dunn made the State Committee aware of an initiative started by Louise Davis, Morris SCD Chair. Ms. Davis is a member of the Lake George Watershed Association. There are 50,000 water quality monitors on Lake George. Ms. Davis is working on a technology transfer from Lake George to Lake Hopatcong.
2. Mr. Cywinski spoke about the importance of having a DEP representative on the Committee. In addition, he spoke regarding leadership training and how it was emphasized at the National Conference in Santa Fe.

3. Mr. Ward felt it would be prudent to compile an assessment report regarding the financial health of each district.
4. Mr. Lomax reported on various activities of the National Association of Conservation Districts and requested that an update be included on the meeting agenda.

Secretary Fisher adjourned the meeting at 11:17 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2019. The location is TBD.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch
Executive Secretary, SSCC