

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DRAFT MINUTES
March 11, 2024**

The March meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Asst. Secretary Joe Atchison at 9:39 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 the Secretary of State.

The Flag Salute was recited.

Call of the Membership Roll indicated the following:

Members Present

Joe Atchison III, Chairman
Frank Minch, Executive Secretary
Joe Lomax
Erika Boyland, NRCS
Dr. Stephanie Murphy (rep. L. Lawson)
Ray Cywinski
Louise Davis
Mike Haberland (rep. B. Schilling)
Dennis Contois, NJDEP
John Kocubinski
Sylvia Kovacs
Mike Rigolizzo
Cormac Morrissey

Others Present

John Showler, SSCC, NJDA
Sara Mellor, SSCC, NJDA
Diana Diaz, SSCC, NJDA
Matt D'Alessandro, Somerset Union SCD
Janet Rekesius, HEP SCD
Mike Kent, Cape-Atlantic SCD
Matt Ward, HEP SCD
Karol Blew, Gloucester SCD
Rick Dovey, Cape-Atlantic SCD
Jim Hill, Hunterdon SCD
Theodora Wang, Mercer SCD
Paul Schiariti, Mercer SCD
Lucia Huebner, Mercer SCD
Mike Bonham, Cumberland_ Salem SCD
Jean Baluski, Ocean SCD
Robert Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD
Sandra Myers, Upper Delaware SCD
Daniel Pace, Mercer SCD
Tim Thomas, Freehold SCD
Ines Zimmerman, NJACD

MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2024 MEETING

A vote was called to accept the draft meeting minutes to all, all responded with an aye, the minutes of the January 8, 2024 meeting were approved.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Mr. Atchison reported on the recently held NJ Ag. Convention in Atlantic City. 47 resolutions were introduced and acted upon. A survey of convention goers revealed that farm liability remains the main issue with agricultural producers.

The search for a Secretary of Agriculture is ongoing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paula Danchuck of Lake Rogerene Civic Association in Roxbury Township, Morris County spoke about the malfunction of drainage basins that have led to erosion, runoff and silting of the lake. Ryan Homes is in the process of building approximately 165 in close proximity to the lake. Ms. Danchuk fears that once the houses are built pesticide and fertilizer runoff will cause additional issues for the lake.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. **District Self-Assessment-** All District self-Assessment forms have been submitted and State Committee members reviewed a comprehensive spreadsheet of the self-assessment form.
2. **District Audits-** Although audits were due at the end of the calendar year, not all SCD audits have been submitted to the State for review. Several Districts have requested extensions. SSCC staff is in the process of reviewing the audits and awaits the remaining submissions.
3. **2:90 Rules-** The regulations sunset in November. Draft amendments with changes, updates and clarifications were distributed for review before discussion and action is taken at the April SSCC meeting.

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT

1. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler provided a brief overview regarding some of his recent activities including attending a conference on dam safety and work on the new Solar Array Standard and an update on the Off-Site Stability Standard.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ms. Boyland reported on the following:

1. A CSP educational webinar will be held Wednesday.
2. Closing date for CSP applications is March 29th.
3. NJ-NRCS has requested additional EQIP funding.
4. NJ-NRCS will be hosting Terry Cosby, NRCS Chief, April 10th and 11th.
5. Kasey Taylor has been named Northeast Regional Conservationist.

NJ ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mr. Dovey and Mr. Cywinski reported on the activities of the NJACD and NACD including the following:

1. Regional meetings (North, Central, South) have been scheduled for April.
2. A meeting/training session is scheduled this week for the individuals participating in the upcoming Washington DC “Fly-In” meeting.
3. NJACD will adopt a budget at today’s meeting.
4. At the NJACD meeting, Ines Zimmerman will sign a contract to be the part time NJACD Executive Director.
5. Training sessions are being planned for the upcoming NJ Envirothon.
6. Mr. Cywinski forwarded potential grant opportunities to Ms. Zimmerman and all District Managers.
7. Planning and Capacity Grant applications are due March 15th.
8. Fiscal Year ’24 Urban and Community Grant proposals are due April 1st.
9. NJACD was well represented at the NACD Annual Conference in San Diego.
10. The Northeast Regional NACD meeting is scheduled for August in Boston.

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

Mr. D’Alessandro reported on the following:

1. The recent training in Freehold was well attended (64 attendees). 11 of the 14 Districts were represented. Feedback from the training session has been positive.
2. On March 14th there will be a virtual meeting for the general membership.
3. Quarterly virtual training sessions have been proposed.
4. Every other month virtual meetings have been proposed.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Contois reported on the following:

1. Flood Hazard rules emphasize minimizing environmental disturbances.
2. No news on proposed height requirements in the Flood Hazard Regulations.
3. Few applicants have applied for DEP job openings, especially engineering positions.

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Mr. Haberland reported on the following:

1. The Warren County Extension Agent position is vacant.
2. The newly hired statewide IPM Agent started work March 1st.
3. The Somerset County Extension Agent started work March 1st.

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Dr. Murphy reported on the following:

1. Rutgers/Ag Field Day will be held April 27th.
2. March is Soil Fertility Awareness Month.
3. Jeff Everett is leaving Rutgers and has accepted the position of Executive Director of NJ’s Garden State Trust.
4. There have been several faculty/extension appointments.
5. Dr. Murphy is serving as an educator with the Northeast Regional Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Fellowship Program.
6. The Soil Testing Lab is extremely busy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Mr. Ward expressed his gratitude to Ms. Boyland for her support of urban agriculture.
2. Mr. Atchison mentioned SADC will hold a special meeting on April 15th regarding Farm Protection Standards.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.
The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Minch, Division Director

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