

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE  
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
DRAFT MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024**

The September meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Joe Atchison 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**

Joe Atchison  
Ray Cywinski  
Sylvia Kovacs  
Louise Davis  
Michael Rigolizzo  
Mike Haberland (rep. B. Schilling)  
Dennis Contois (rep. S. LaTourette)  
John Kocubinski  
Joe Lomax  
Dr. Stephanie Murphy  
Cormac Morrissey  
Julie Hawkins  
Frank Minch, Division Director

John Showler, SSSC, NJDA  
J Matos-Ramos, SSSC, NJDA  
Sara Mellor, SSSC, NJDA  
Diana Diaz, SSSC, NJDA  
Ines Zimmerman, NJACD  
Rick Dovey, C/A SCD & NJACD  
Michael DePalma, Hunterdon SCD  
Paul Califano, Freehold SCD  
Janet Rekesius, HEP SCD  
Christine Raabe, Ocean SCD  
Jim Hill, Hunterdon SCD  
Mike Bonham, C/S SCD  
Tim Thomas, Freehold SCD  
Sandy Myers, UDCD  
Robert Reitmeyer, Burl. SCD  
Matt D'Alessandro, S/U SCD  
Michael Kent, C/A SCD  
Jennifer McCulloch, Morris SCD  
Andrea Farparan, Freehold SCD  
Arelys (Liz) Ortiz, NRCS  
Bob McEwan Morris 973-322-4420

## **MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2024 MEETING**

On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Ms. Davis, the minutes of the June 10, 2024 meeting were approved.

## **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Atchison reported the following:

1. Secretary Wengryn is on vacation.
2. The planning for the Ag. Convention is underway.

## **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

1. **Morris Supervisor Appointments-** In June Phillip Roehrich was appointed provisionally. Since then, Mr. Roehrich has corrected the deficiencies that led to the provisional appointment. On motion by Mr. Morrissey, second by Mr. Lomax, Mr. Roehrich was extended to a full term. Ms. Davis abstained.
2. **2:90 Rule amendment update**—An update was provided regarding the proposed changes to the regulations. Currently the proposed rule update is under legal review. The rule expiration deadline is quickly approaching. If legal review is not completed timely, a readoption with no amendments will be proposed to avoid the 2:90 rules sunseting. At a later date the amendments will then be proposed.
3. **Wildlife Fencing-** The Wildlife Fencing Program parameters were reviewed. Mr. Minch expressed his desire to include the Districts in promoting the program and inspecting installed fencing.
4. **Legislative Tours-** The State Committee will be advised of upcoming legislative tours. Committee members are invited and encouraged to attend these tours.

## **SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT**

1. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler introduced the new engineer on staff, John Matos-Ramos, who started with the department in July.  
Mr. Matos-Ramos provided a brief overview regarding some of the recent activities he and Mr. Showler have worked on over the last few months.
2. **Quarterly Report-** This report covers the period from 4/1/24 through 6/30/24. There were 1,589 applications, over 2,000 Reports of Compliance, over 12,000 SCD inspections and \$1.8 million in fees collected.
3. **Exempt Municipality Report-** All municipalities were graded satisfactorily except Newark which was rated Conditionally Satisfactory.

## **NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

Ms. Hawkins reported on the following:

1. NJ-NRCS has 550 producer contracts.
2. FY 2025 sign-up closes 10/18/24.
3. NJ-NRCS has approximately 75 employees. 46% of which have less than 2 years experience.
4. An engineering position and the Freehold D.C. position have both been advertised.
5. NJ-NRCS has an outreach partnership with NASS.
6. Four Urban grants were awarded.
7. NJ-NRCS is reviewing the new Conservation Planning Policy.
8. The NJ-NRCS training schedule was reviewed.

**NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (NJACD)**

Mr. Cywinski and Mr. Dovey reported on the following:

1. It is anticipated there will be a continuing resolution of the current Farm Bill.
2. NACD committees are meeting regularly.
3. The 2025 National Envirothon will be held in Alberta, Canada.
4. The theme for the 2025 Poster Contest is "Home is Where the Habitat is".
5. Any resolutions Districts wish to put forward on a national basis must be vetted through the state association.
6. The annual NACD meeting will be held in Salt Lake City in February.
7. Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Minch and Ms. Mellor are working on the agenda for the 11/25/24 conference at the Eco-Complex.
8. The North-East NACD meeting was held in Boston. Approximately 5 NJ-SCDs were represented at the meeting.
9. The 2025 NJ Envirothon will be held in Burlington County. Planning is underway.

**NJ SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

Mr. D'Alessandro reported on the following:

1. A meeting was held with DEP on 6/26 regarding implementation of 5G3 Stormwater Discharge.
2. On 8/20 a site investigation with partners was held in Union County.
3. On 8/22 Mr. D'Alessandro attended the NRCS training meeting.
4. The next quarterly training session will be held in October.
5. The next Employees Association meeting will be held on 9/12.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Mr. Contois reported on the following:

1. Various proposed changes in DEP regulations. (REAL rule proposal)
2. 6 engineers were hired.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Mr. Haberland reported on the following:

1. A new County Agent/Asst. Professor was hired in Essex County. Their focus will be on urban agriculture and community horticulture.
2. On 9/30 a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held regarding the Rutgers Agri-Voltaics program.

**SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Dr. Murphy reported on the following:

1. Of the 76,000 applicants to Rutgers University, approximately 14,400 freshman and transfers were welcomed this September.
2. SEBS enrollment this year is approximately 3,500.
3. The Soils and Society course has an enrollment of 45 students.
4. The National Climate Extension Initiative will be having a series of webinars this fall.
5. Rutgers has produced a report that details "The State of the Climate 2023"
6. There is a new fact sheet regarding soil health.

**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS**

Ms. Kovacs requested an update regarding the 2023 Bergen audit. Mr. Cywinski indicated the auditor is still working on completing the audit. A Bergen SCD meeting is scheduled this evening, Mr. Cywinski will request an update.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted. The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch, Division Director