**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

 **DRAFT MINUTES**

**MARCH 13, 2023**

The March meeting of the State Soil Conservation Committee was called to order by Chairman Douglas Fisher at 9:35 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** John Showler, SSCC, NJDA Douglas Fisher Tim Fekete, SSCC, NJDA

Joe Lomax Sara Mellor, SSCC, NJDA

Sylvia Kovacs Janet Rekesius, HEP SCD

Louise Davis Ines Zimmerman, Freehold SCD

Mike Haberland (rep. B. Schilling) Rick Dovey, C/A SCD

Dennis Contios (rep. S. LaTourette) Kara Hasko, Morris SCD

Ray Cywinski A. Ortiz, NRCS

Dr. Brian Schilling Christine Raabe, Ocean SCD

Dr. Stephanie Murphy Jim Hill, Hunterdon SCD

Michael Rigolizzo Mike Bonham, C/S SCD

Evan Madlinger - NRCS J Baluski, Ocean SCD

Frank Minch, Division Director R. DeFlumeri, NJDA

 Bill Pollock, Ocean SCD

 R. Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD

 Mike Kent C/A

 M. D’Alessandro, S/U SCD

 D. O’Connell, Burlington SCD

 **MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2022 MEETING**

On motion by Ms. Davis, second by Mr. Lomax, the minutes of the December 12, 2022 meeting were approved with the correction of Ms. Kovacs name spelled correctly.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Secretary Fisher encouraged the Board to read and become familiar with the SADC Soil Protection Standards that went into effect February 23, 2023. There is some controversy regarding this standard. Many individuals enrolled in Farmland Protection think they’re exempt from this rule because it wasn’t in place when they enrolled in the program.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Mr. Minch reported on the following:

1. **Daniel’s Law-** This law applies to all State, County and municipal agencies and local governments, including the Soil Conservation Districts. Information on-line (Name, phone numbers and address) of judges and law enforcement individuals must be redacted. A bulletin with advice will be forthcoming to SCDs.

 **SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL ACT**

1. **Fee Schedule updates- Freehold, HEP**-

**Freehold-** The last Fee Schedule update was approximately 9 years ago. The current operating rate for the District is $110/hour. The proposal is to increase the rate to $125/hour.

On motion by Ms**.** Davis, second by Mr. Lomax, the Freehold SCD Fee Schedule was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

**HEP-** The last Fee Scheduleupdatewas approximately 12 years ago.The analysis of the District workload indicated insufficient fees being collected for inspections on Category A & B residential, and, in addition, it is proposed that the bifurcation of review & inspection be reallocated. On motion by Ms. Davis, second by Mr. Lomax, the HEP SCD Fee Schedule was approved by roll call vote. Mr. Haberland abstained.

1. **District Websites***-* A review of District websites indicates that some are deficient and not in compliance with the Website Transparency Law. On motion by Mr. Lomax, second by Ms. Davis, a reminder memo from the SSCC will be sent to the Districts giving them 90 days to be in compliance.
2. **Engineering Report-** Mr. Showler provided a brief overview regarding some of his recent activities including his attendance at the 30th annual Dam Safety Conference, participation in the NJ Association of Flood Plain Managers Stormwater Subcommittee and assistance provided to the Districts.

**NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

Mr. Madlinger reported that all of the scheduled Local Workgroup Meetings have been held. Currently data and feedback from those meetings is being compiled and the results will be discussed at the State Technical Meeting in June.

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

**-** Mr. Cywinski reported on the following:

1. The annual NACD was held in New Orleans Feb. 11-15th. The proposed amendment to the NACD bylaws to reduce the five committees down to three committees (legislative, natural resources and District and partner relations) was approved.
2. NACD is lending support to the creation of the Urban Conservation Program in the 2023 Farm Bill.
3. The Washington “Fly In” training will be held tomorrow and Thursday. The “Fly In” will be held March 22 & 23rd.

**NJ SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

Mr. Kent reported that there will be a training at the Freehold SCD on March 24th titled “Introduction to tools to my New Jersey Soils Data”. The training will be given by Edwin Muniz of NRCS.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Mr. Contois reported that will be attending a regional dam safety training in May in Portland, Maine.

DEP has hired 6 Environmental Specialists but hasn’t had any luck in hiring engineers. There are 4 or 5 vacant engineer positions.

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Dr. Schilling reported on the following:

1. There has been a great deal of turnover in the extension workforce.
2. Rutgers Extension is looking to hire positions in climate resilience and agronomy.
3. Rutgers Extension is making a heavy investment in new farm technology.

**SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

Dr. Murphy reported on the following:

1. Rutgers undergraduate students are on spring break.
2. Soil testing sample load is increasing as spring approaches.
3. The proposed Rutgers Soil Health Conference tentatively scheduled for March 14th has been cancelled.
4. Rutgers Day/Ag Field Day is April 29th.
5. Rutgers “Soils of NJ” Bulletin is being updated.
6. Dr. Murphy made recommendations to the revision of NJ-DOT’s SESCS.
7. Extractable sulfur analysis is being added to soil test reports by Rutgers Soil Testing Lab.
8. The NJ Climate Change Research Symposium is scheduled for June 2nd.
9. “Fields of Devotion” is an award-winning film highlighting efforts to protect Basil.
10. The Turf Grass Symposium will be held this Thursday.

**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS**

N/A

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The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 AM. All actions were by unanimous vote unless otherwise noted.

The next SSCC meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Minch, Division Director

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