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**Greene County Conservation District**

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**MINUTES**

Regular Meeting

August 17, 2010

I. **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Trader at 10:05 a.m. at the Mezzanine Conference Room of the Fort Jackson Building, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Directors present were Archie Trader, Vice Chairman; Tom Headlee, Treasurer; Jim Cowell, Secretary; Pam Snyder, Newly Appointed Commissioner Representative; Jim Kenney, Director; Theresa Matscherz, Director; J. Robert Rice, Director Emeritus; Frank Blaker, Associate Director; Greg Hopkins, Associate Director; and Bill Wentzel, Associate Director. Guests and District staff in alphabetical order included Sherene Hess, RC&D Coordinator, Penn's Corner; Lindsay Kozlowski, Resource Specialist; Robbie Matesic, Executive Director, Economic Development; Julie Maxwell, Watershed Specialist; Suzy Petery, SDC, NRCS; Laurel Rush, Ag Technician; Becky Salosky, Fiscal Officer; and Lisa Snider, District Manager.

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**On a motion made by Tom Headlee, the minutes of the July 8<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved as mailed. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed with one abstention, Pam Snyder, since she was not a Director at that time).**

IV. **TREASURER'S REPORTS**

**A motion was made by Jim Kenney to approve the Treasurer's Reports with the following additions. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)**

General Fund

Ck 733 Scotty's Pizza – District Meeting Lunch - \$70.50

West Nile Virus

Ck 261 County of Greene – July Fuel - \$227.04

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

**A motion was made by Jim Cowell to enter in to Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. Tom Headlee seconded. (Motion Passed)**

VI. MEETING RECONVENED

**Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Tom Headlee to reconvene the meeting and Theresa Matscherz seconded. (Motion Passed)**

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

Lisa distributed the thank you letter from Jacob Cumpston who attended the Conservation Leadership School at Penn State. Jacob was awarded a scholarship funded by Alpha Natural Resources to attend this year's Conservation Leadership School.

VIII. REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

William and Cheryl Almasy – 15 acres – Greene Township

**After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Jim Kenney to accept this Request for Assistance. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)**

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Robbie stated that the discussion of the Natural Gas Tax Endorsement would need to be deferred until later. She did note that there is a proposal in which the County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) have both endorsed. It is a severance tax that would split local contributions

from a natural gas tax. She also said that H.B. 2443 was sponsored by House Finance Committee, Representative David Levdansky Democratic Chairman. Mr. Trader added that this proposal would provide a 50-50 split between Pennsylvania's General Fund and local governments. Robbie said that to the best of their knowledge, there are currently three proposals; including Representative DeWeese's Assessment Tax, the Governor's Full Severance Tax and Representative Levdansky's Severance Tax, which would provide more funds to the local municipalities. Commissioner Snyder added that there are several Bills and that the percentages vary. She commented that Conservation Districts, county governments, and municipalities are specifically mentioned in the Bill. Ms. Snyder also said that action is expected to be taken by the legislature on this matter in October.

- b. The meeting on the Shannopin/Dunkard project held on August 4<sup>th</sup> for local officials was briefly discussed. Robbie said that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has requested that they also host a public meeting on the subject. She noted that the Wastewater Regulations on the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) have progressed and will be subject to new permits effective January 1, 2011. It is hoped that this meeting will be held in September.
- c. Lisa reported that Intern Ty Basinger, West Nile Virus Program Technician, completed his last day of employment on Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup>. Consequently, Julie Maxwell and Lindsay Kozlowski will be completing the monitoring, working in the morning 2 days a week, which should not impact their main duties. She also said that the number of sites visited will be reduced to the "hot spots" and the traps will remain on-site until the monitoring season is over. Local waste water treatment plant operators have been informed that the traps will be in place until early fall. Lindsay added that no mosquitoes have been found to test positive for the virus in Greene County. It was noted that Allegheny County did have mosquitoes that tested positive for the virus.
- d. The next item of business discussed was the Annual Awards Banquet and, as discussed at previous meetings, serving locally grown foods. Mr. Hopkins agreed to work with Laurel on the event and speak to Dan Wagner at the Greene County Career and Technology Center to see if this could be done at their facility (possibly in conjunction of a regularly scheduled meeting, the third Tuesday of the month). Facility information

and costs will be obtained for the Board's approval. As last year, Jim Cowell, Jim Kenney, and Laurel will visit the farms of the nominees for the Outstanding Cooperator of the Year Award. Those involved will work on the event prior to the September meeting and report back at that time.

- e. The repayment of Conservation District Fund Allocation Program (CDFAP) funds for Manager and First Technician was discussed at the last meeting. Lisa reported that notification was received from Fred Fiscus, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Watershed Management, Conservation District Support Section that we owe \$6,160.89. This payment was approved for payment at the last meeting and has been submitted to PA Department of Environmental Protection.
- f. At this time, Greg Hopkins asked if we received a recent report the Monongahela River Monitoring Project being spearheaded by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission in which the District contributed \$15,000.00. Lisa said that they were scheduled to attend meetings in the past, but funding cutbacks and sampling prevented them from attending. Lisa will contact them and request that they attend the next meeting to give an update and include information with the meeting notice mailings.

#### X. NEW BUSINESS

- a. The first item of business discussed under New Business was the administration of the Farmland Preservation and Ag Easement Programs. Lisa informed the Board that all funding for the administration of the Ag Easement Program (\$9,000) has been reduced to zero due to budget constraints. She explained that \$3,000 of the funding was used for the administration of the program and \$6,000 for the salary of the Agricultural Technician. Since the matter was personnel related, it was discussed in Executive Session. **A motion was made by Tom Headlee to continue with the funding of the program, salaries and associated costs, and give the Farmland Preservation Board time to reimburse the District. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Also discussed in Executive Session, was the salary of the Agricultural Technician. **A motion was made by Jim Cowell to cover the Agricultural Technician's overages on salary of**

**approximately \$19,000 from the Conservation District's General Fund. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed)**

- b. Laurel presented the Nutrient Management Plan of The Hopkins Farm and recommended its approval. **A motion was made by Jim Kenney to approve the plan. Pam Snyder seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Laurel noted that the plan was funded through the "CleanEast Program", an EPA initiative to promote nutrient management planning on the East Coast.

- c. The next item up for discussion was the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program. Lisa reported that on June 11, 2010 the Quality Assurance Board (J. Robert Rice, Susan Funka-Petery, USDA-NRCS, Lisa Snyder and Mary Jane Kent) visited Hartley Hill Road T.R. 515 site submitted by Greene Township. It was requested by the QAB that Greene Township be approached to add pipes to their project so that the drainage problem would be better addressed. Since that time, Greene Township has revised their plan and would like to add a number of drainage pipes (originally there were four and now there will be a total of eight). This site was approved for funding by the QAB on its June 11<sup>th</sup> site inspection and ranking. Other sites located in Monongahela Twp. were visited and not approved for funding, the sites were not conducive to the program guidelines. **A motion was made by Tom Headlee to enter into a contract with Greene Township to complete work under the Dirt and Gravels Program on Hartley Hill Road for an estimated cost of \$8,257. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Lisa noted that Morris Township is currently working on their Dirt and Gravel Road project on Stringtown Road and that it may be finished by the next meeting and payment can be made after the QAB verifies work with a site inspection.

- d. **A motion was made by Pam Snyder to remit payment of \$1,553.00 to the Pennsylvania Association for**

**Conservation Districts (PACD) for dues. Theresa Matscherz seconded. (Motion Passed).**

It was noted that the dues did not increase from last year.

- e. Lisa announced that the Chapter 102, Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management Training to address the revisions of the program will be held on September 28<sup>th</sup> in Pittsburgh at the Waterfront Drive Office of PA DEP. **On a motion by Jim Kenney, approval was granted to Lisa and Lindsay to attend the training with a cost of mileage or fuel. Pam Snyder seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Also regarding the Erosion and Sedimentation Control (E&S) Program, and another personnel item discussed in Executive Session was the possibility of a Second Technician position. **A motion was made by Tom Headlee to recommend and work with the Commissioners and the Human Resources Department to explore hiring either a part- time or full-time person to assist with permitting and inspections as a Second Technician. Theresa Matscherz seconded. (Motion Passed).**

- f. Lisa announced that the annual training for the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program will be held September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> in Erie, Pennsylvania. Since the E&S training is at the same time, Lisa will not be able to attend and she requested that Julie Maxwell be permitted to attend. Julie will be receiving administrative training over the next few weeks and will be working with the program directly. The registration fee is \$220 and \$74 per night for a room (about \$368 for a two night's stay). **A motion was made by Jim Kenney to allow Julie to attend this conference. Pam Snyder seconded. (Motion Passed)**
- g. Robbie discussed the last item under New Business, the Agri-Tourism Project. She said that the Tourism Department and her office are working together through a grant to develop a web site and brochure to promote events, farming, and locally grown foods. She distributed a listing of businesses and asked everyone to review it and report back with any corrections, omissions, etc. She said that since the last distribution, at a

previous meeting, they have worked with Laurel and made 30 additions. Robbie also distributed bumper stickers from American Farmland Trust entitled "No Farms, No Food".

## XI. DISCUSSION OF STAFF REPORTS

- a. The staff reports were mailed with the meeting notices. Additionally, Laurel reported that work has been completed on the Jeanne Williams Mini Grant Project and she has received certification from Suzy that the project is technically complete. Since the project was previously approved by the board, a payment of \$1,000 will be made to Ms. Williams. Laurel distributed "proofs" for the Core 4 Conservation Calendar she has been involved with in conjunction with Penn's Corner RC&D. She asked for comments and suggestions and she said that a Committee Meeting will probably be held next week to finalize the calendar. Hopefully, it will be available in September. Laurel also distributed copies of the brochure for the 2011 Appalachian Grazing Conference. She noted that the Greene County Conservation District is included in the brochure as being part of the Planning Committee. She said that she attended the NRCS "Local Work Group" meeting. In closing, she noted that our Lime Spreader was on display at the Greene County Fair.
- b. Lindsay noted that since her last report, we received two additional ESCGP-1 applications, two general permits have been issued, and an E&S plan was received for the addition to the Dollar General Store in Carmichaels.
- c. Mr. Cowell inquired about the PACD meeting that Lisa was approved to attend in July. Lisa said that due to the receipt of a complaint and the work necessary to take care of it, she was unable to attend. She did say that she sent comments regarding funding issues that were to be discussed at the meeting.
- d. Robbie distributed copies of information regarding the Natural Gas Severance Tax.. She said that although she does not have the Bill that the County Commissioners Association endorsed, she does have House Bill 2443, which the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) endorsed. She also distributed copies of the testimony of Shirl Barnhart, Morgan Township Supervisor and a member of the PSATS Executive Board. She read a portion of the testimony. It

states that the Association supports a Severance Tax on natural gas provided that at least 25 percent of the tax comes back to local governments. Although PSATS feels that H.B. 2443, which calls for 20 percent of the tax to go to local governments, is a step in the right direction, they are asking that it be increased to 25 percent. Robbie also said that the Bill gives a breakdown of how the money will be distributed. It would impose a Severance Tax of \$.25 per thousand cubic feet on producing gas wells to be placed in a separate fund in the State Treasury. After administrative expenses are deducted, 45 percent of that would be deposited in to the State's General Fund and 20 percent in to a local Government Services Fund. The rest in to a number of special accounts. Robbie asked that the board review the information for a possible vote of endorsement at the next meeting. Ms. Snyder added that the County Commissioners Association supported a Bill that basically addresses the same, asking for a minimum of 25 percent to local governments.

## XII. REPORTS FROM COOPERATING AGENCIES AND GUESTS

- a. Suzy Petery, NRCS – Suzy reported that a lot of construction is being done on farms in the county under Farm Bill contracts (the Wildlife Program and EQIP). The second round of contracting and planning is now being done on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and must be completed by the end of the month. She said that two landowners have accepted offers under the program and they are moving forward on contracts with them. Suzy also reported that April VanDruff and Kevin Paul have been hired as part-time employees. She explained the purpose of the “Local Work Group” meeting held last week. She said that the Farm Bill requests that local Conservation Districts convene local work groups comprised of cooperating agencies, farmer organizations, etc. They discuss what our local resource concerns are and how they can be incorporated into the Farm Bill Programs. She said these concerns include local foods, agricultural resource concerns, water quality issues, etc. and they will be forwarded to their Harrisburg Office. Under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, which is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, a dam will be removed on Dunkard Creek near Brave, on the property of the Pressley's. A public announcement of this program is planned for September. Suzy will keep us informed of the details as they become available.

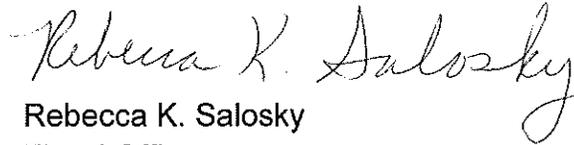
- b. Sherene Hess, Penn's Corner RC&D – Sherene reported that work on the Core 4 Calendar Planner is progressing and that it will be a nice publication. She said that it will be visually appealing, contains many practical tips for farmers, and will be a great tool for record keeping. She also said that one of the main goals of Penn's Corner, as well as all of the RC&D areas, is to help Pennsylvania Agriculture's Industry, a \$61 billion dollar business, thrive. She said that they are very privileged to be working with Laurel and other partners on the project. The No-Till Conference is scheduled to be held February 2, 2011 in Greensburg and that it will be a great training opportunity. Regarding the Grassland Evaluation Contest, Sherene said that many students are requesting their scholarships and are planning on studying agricultural related majors. Penn's Corner now has contracts with six Conservation Districts to promote the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). She said that it's a nice opportunity to get funding to supplement Conservation Districts' budgets; while assisting Pennsylvania farmers. Also, part of this program is the promotion of organics, which could be another opportunity to supplements budgets. She sees this program as a model for the future.
- c. Chuck Kubasik, Field Representative – Although Chuck was unable to make the meeting, he did submit a copy of his report and Lisa highlighted some of the items. Regarding the Conservation District Fund Allocation Program (CDFAP), the Agricultural Conservation Technician (ACT) funding was reduced to \$22,425, a 3 percent reduction. The allocation for the District Manager and the First Technician will remain the same. The Administrative Assistance fund was reduced from \$3,840 to \$1,610. Included in the report was that Growing Greener rounds have opened with applications due by September 17<sup>th</sup>. Beginning August 2<sup>nd</sup>, REAP program applications are being accepted. Laurel added that she anticipated 4 producers from Greene County to be accepted into the REAP program for this application period.

XIII. The next Regular Meeting will be September 21<sup>st</sup>

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Pam Snyder to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Tom Headlee seconded. (Motion Passed)**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca K. Salosky". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Rebecca K. Salosky  
Fiscal Officer