



Pike County Conservation District

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PIKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES Monday, July 21, 2025

The Board of Directors meeting was also held via Zoom Video Conference call.
Information regarding the conference call was posted on the District website.

ATTENDANCE:

Directors: Kelly Stagen, Jay Morrow, Ken Coutts, JoAnn Rose, John Milliken

Associate Directors: Paul Ranello

Staff: Tara Burnham, Lisa Dolci, Rachael Marques, Chris Meszler, Ellen Enslin, Allison McGee, Brandon Twomey

Cooperating Agency Representatives: Janet Creegan-DEP

Guests: Jeffrey DiFrancesco

Directors/Associate Directors Absent: Commissioner Ron Schmalzle, Scott Savini, Carole Linkiewicz

Kelly Stagen called the meeting to order at 9:03 am

PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS AGENDA ITEMS: None

ACTION ON MINUTES of June 16, 2025: Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the June 16, 2025, Board Meeting minutes. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The advance payment was sent for the Vanderbeek Farms ACAP project that was approved last year. The advertising fees for the Communications Coordinator and Resource Conservationist positions are included in the month's expenses, as well as the annual subscription for the project management tool. The staff performance bonuses were paid last month and are reflected in the misc. expense category. Report filed, subject to audit.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT: A letter from the solicitor approving the Bailment Agreement and Comp Time Policy. The solicitor suggested that the Comp Time Policy be reviewed by the County labor lawyer, and it was sent for their review. We received a thank you from Outdoor Nuture for the \$500 PCCD EE Grant they received this year for their project. An update from NACD on recent Congressional and Executive Actions is also included in the report.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT: Rachael has been working with the Pocono Source Water Protection Collaborative and speaking with members about the future of the collaborative. It has been a struggle to get participation and engagement from the members. She is working on new approaches to help bring more involvement from the members. Rachael has completed two grants: "A Study of Microplastics in Pike County Waters" that has been officially closed and the final report to close the mini grant "From Source to Sink" has been submitted. Rachael has been managing the District's social media accounts and newsletter while we have been short staffed and has been doing a great job!

Ellen has started the practice approval training series for ACAP. They are in the process of getting District staff trained on different practice approval systems so they have less restrictions and will not have to rely on NRCS for those approvals. The first training is on grazing. Ellen explained that with ACAP, for any practice it must go through design and structural

oversight, then be approved by NRCS or a third-party technical service provider. The final approval must go through an outside company; we do not currently have that authority. With each training, it would allow us to approve that specific aspect of the practice. So once Ellen completes the grazing training she will be able to do design, inspections, and approvals for grazing practices. The training is a long process, and there are several components. It could take up to a year to complete. Ellen has been working with Vanderbeek Farm to get their plan updated from NRCS, and the advance payment has been sent for the project. For the DGLVR Program, Ellen has been coordinating inspections and requirements for the Brooks Cabin Road project, also involving Wade Brown from the Center for DGR. She has also been working with three potential applicants for new projects. Ellen reviewed the Ag. Complaint SOP draft for the Ag. 102 Statewide Focus Group and met with the Forestry Management Committee Workgroup to discuss BMPs that may be included within ACAP. Ellen has been working on gathering documents and guidance for the October Lake Wallenpaupack 5-year drawdown workshop, assisted with Resource Conservationist interviews, and continued providing oversight for the technical programs. She also worked with the Scenic and Rural Character Board, Jessica Yoder at Planning, and Roger Spotts, on the Hikes in Pike: Summer Hike.

Allison developed and delivered a presentation, “Beyond the Lawn: Unveiling the Environmental Impact of HOAs” for the Hemlock Farms Conservancy Annual Brunch; she did a great job! The presentation was developed with the idea of using it in the future for other HOA associations. Brandon has been working on reviews and inspected 65% of his active NPDES permitted sites in June as well as 6 additional inspections for other sites! Chris has been busy working on reviews. Chris also welcomed his first child, Margaux Elizabeth, in June! Emily Granville has been hired as the new Communications Coordinator; her first day was June 30, 2025.

Lisa completed the “Professional Certificate in Office Administration Management.” She had maintenance completed for the truck and tire repair for the Subaru. Lisa coordinated the in-house financial audit on June 30, 2025, closed the credit card for Nick Kremp, and reviewed the ACAP and DGLVR quarterly reports. Lisa assisted me with the transition of the Edu/Outreach and Admin staff to the new project management tool. She has been working with Monroe Conservation to help plan the Engineer’s Workshop, planning the Municipal Lunch & Learn, and the Annual Dinner. Lisa has been taking on extra responsibilities due to the vacant Communications Coordinator position and doing a great job balancing her workload.

For my report, I attended the DGLVR “Advanced Admin” and “Finance” trainings. I worked with staff to begin the interview and hiring process for the Resource Conservationist position. We have an offer submitted to a candidate with a potential start date of July 28, 2025. We are waiting for final approval from the Commissioner’s office after their meeting. I purchased the project management tool and began transitioning the Edu/ Outreach staff to begin using it and began planning the transition of Tech staff to the project management tool. For our upcoming events we have CCC Day at Promised Land State Park on August 9, 2025. Emily and Paul will be tabling at the event. The Municipal Lunch & Learn is coming up September 12, 2025 and the Annual Dinner will take place on September 26, 2025. Please note the August board meeting is one week earlier this month and will take place on August 11, 2025.

OLD BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Comp Time Policy (vote)- Tara Burnham, District Manager. The County Chief Clerk sent comments from the County labor attorney to make updates to our policy. I included the suggested revisions for your review and have adopted them into our policy. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the updates to the Comp Time Policy. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Transfer from UGW Fund to Operating Account (vote)- Tara Burnham, District Manager. I am requesting a transfer of \$5,000 from the UGW Fund to the Operating Account for the staff performance bonuses that were paid to staff last month. Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the transfer. JoAnn Rose seconded. Motion carried.

Engagement Letter (vote)- Tara Burnham, District Manager. We have received the engagement letter from the auditor for our 2024 financial audit that needs to be approved by the board and signed. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve signing the Engagement letter. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried.

CDFAP ACT Application (vote)- Tara Burnham, District Manager. When submitting our annual budget last year, Jaci Kerstetter at DEP suggested we apply for the CDFAP ACT funding during the next application round. This funding would give us an additional \$20,000 a year to help to fund Ellen's position with ACAP and any work done with an agricultural component. The new funding round has been opened, and we received the application for submittal. Lisa and I have been working on putting together the numbers we need to fill out the application. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the submission for the application for CDFAP ACT funding. John Milliken seconded. Motion carried.

Wildlife Leadership Academy Request for Scholarship Funding (vote)- Tara Burnham, District Manager. Last year the Wildlife Leadership Academy reached out to us to request a donation of \$150 for the scholarship fund for a student from Pike County to attend the academy and the board approved the request. This student is returning to the Wildlife Leadership Academy as a Youth Mentor this year and is in need of scholarship assistance. They are requesting a \$600 donation but did not include any information about the cost or reason for the increase in support. The board would like to defer this vote to the next meeting so we can get more information to make a decision.

PCCD Conservation Achievement Awards (vote)- Emily Granville, Communications Coordinator. The ranking committee met to rank the nominations that were received for this year's Conservation Achievement Awards. We did not receive any nominations for the Youth Award but have nominations for the Conservation and Educator Awards. For the Educator Achievement Award, we have nominee Gregory Martel. Mr. Martel is a federally licensed master falconer and state-licensed falconer who conducts seminars and hands-on workshops that focus on raptor education and their contribution to the environment, conservation stewardship, and wildlife conservation. For the Conservation Achievement Award, we have a nomination for the Pocono Environmental Education Center. They have been nominated for their work in environmental education, stewardship, and sustainability. They recently discovered that their visitor activity center/dining hall had become a hazard for birds due to its large reflective windows. They launched a bird strike deterrent project with the help of a Philadelphia based artist to complete the project. They designed a pattern of bird silhouettes, and 2-inch bird tape spaced apart with white dots painted across the building's windows to help prevent the strikes from the birds. There were over 300 community members who helped paint the designs and learned about bird conservation at the Annual Earth Day festival this year. These 2 nominations are being recommended to the board for approval for the respective awards. The nominees will receive a sustainably made award and two tickets to our annual dinner, where they will be presented with their award. Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the recommended nominees. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

Cooperating Agency and Other Organization Reports:

PACD – Kelly Stagen- PACD presented a balanced budget. The dues increase was approved and will slowly increase over the next three years: a \$300 increase in 2026, a \$200 increase in 2027, and a final \$200 increase in 2028. They are working on restructuring staff to help with cost savings and have started engagement with a legislative consultant with more information to come. She will remain on the council for PACD as a representative for Pike County but has finished her term on their Board.

DEP – Janet Creegan would like to thank Rachael for including her at the PCCD table for the Zane Grey Festival. They were able to have a lot of good conversations and give out a lot of information to the public. Janet attended the Pike/Wayne Partnership Legislative Breakfast and said it was very professionally done. The PA Ag Conservation Stewardship Program is relaunching their program, and there will be a verifier training on July 29, 2025. The Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) will begin accepting applications for the 2025-26 REAP on August 1, 2025. If anyone is interested in applying, there is a YouTube video to explain the guidelines. The SPEED program will open on August 1, 2025. Penn State is holding a virtual Solar Law Symposium, August 21, 2025; there is a \$69 registration fee to attend.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: There was a brief Executive Session held to discuss an enforcement case at 9:38 am; no decisions were made. The meeting resumed at 9:55 am.

PUBLIC/PRESS QUESTIONS: None

ADJOURN: Jay Morrow made a motion to adjourn the Board of Directors Meeting. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Dolci, Board Secretary

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