



## CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting – September 19, 2019 deKoven House in Middletown, CT**

**Call to order: 10:09 a.m. by Denise Savageau, Chair.**

**Attendance:** Members Denise Savageau (SWCD), Walter Smith (CT River Coastal CD), Eric Bedan (CT DEEP), Michael Dietz (UCONN), Cynthia Rabinowitz (NWCD), and Jennifer Kaufman (Appointee of Governor). Ex-officio members: Abigail Maynard (CT Ag. Exp. Station), Joyce Purcell (NRCS). Staff and guests: Lilian Ruiz, (CT Council), Jane Brawerman (CRCCD), Cheryl Cappaili (SWCD Board), Chris Sullivan (SWCD).

#### **I. WELCOME**

Savageau opened the meeting with introductions and welcomed Chris Sullivan as the new Executive Director for the Southwest CT Conservation District.

#### **II. REGULAR BUSINESS**

##### **A. Minutes**

Minutes of 07/11/19 were reviewed. Motion to approve with correction on report from RC&D by J. Kaufman. W. Smith, second. Approved as corrected.

##### **B. Chairman's Report**

Savageau gave an overview of the CT Conservation Partnership and the role of the Council in bringing together state agencies and federal agencies to work with the Conservation Districts and the RC&D.

##### **C. Treasurer's Report**

Savageau requested that a committee be formed to analyze how Grant Admin Fees (15% of grants) will be allocated among the Council overhead and the staff billable time. She asked J. Kaufman to chair the committee and will ask Jeff Folger to assist.

Savageau proposed a motion to donate \$626.87 to CACD for the NACD NE Regional Conference.

Motion by J. Kaufman, 2nd by W. Smith. Unanimously approved.

Treasurer's report for the 09/19/2019 meeting and adopted budget were reviewed. Motion to accept the financial report with itemization of "other" expenses and place it on file with comments by J. Kaufman, 2nd by W. Smith. Unanimously approved.

#### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Website Communications**

Website is being updated by the Executive Director with Quarterly Meeting materials posted ahead of time. J. Kaufman will help develop content for website, particularly an "elevator speech" to market the Council mission attractively. Kaufman expressed interest in creating a committee to promote outreach through the website and create interaction with the Districts' pages. Anyone interested should contact

Savageau and Kaufman. Savageau reported that the Council has a new Facebook page.

**B. Long Island Watershed multi-state tour: Fall 2020.**

Savageau requested that a committee will be formed by our December meeting to coordinate the tour. Cheryl Cappaili was charged with creating the committee.

**C. NASCA (National Association of State Conservation Agencies)**

The Council ED will be attending the NASCA Annual Meeting in Kentucky from September 30-Oct 2 and received a \$1,000.00 scholarship. It is the first time in many years that CT will participate.

**IV. Old Business**

**A. Budget and Plan of Work**

The Council reviewed the adopted budget for 2020 and the adopted POW for 2020. Savageau requested everyone to review the POW and submit additions to the plan by the March meeting. One particular topic to be included may be to have the CD's handle MS4 and Inland Wetland training, in lieu of municipalities, since the latter used to be handled by the Council and the CDs in the past.

**B. NRCS Cooperative Agreement**

The Council was awarded a grant in the amount of \$275k (\$205k federal/75k nonfederal) for source water protection. There are two pieces to the grant. The SWP piece shall be kicked off with a meeting with the DPH and Source Water Collaborative group to start the planning. CDs will be involved at a following meeting which will discuss the mapping of source water protection areas in the state using UConn mapping and identifying gaps in information. D. Savageau will get a meeting on the agenda, and invited Council members to get involved.

The part of the grant dedicated to the Farm River Watershed can follow two paths: a. the Council will launch an RFP for development of a Watershed Conservation Plan or b. the SWCD will manage the RFP. Now with a new ED (Chris Sullivan) the SWCD can handle the contract, which should include a plan that is NWQI and 319-compliant. Joyce P. communicated that one of the first steps on the NWQI project should be a readiness plan to assess how ready are the constituents in the watershed- and the agricultural inventory will help with determining the land use, type of producers and resource concerns will have to be addressed.

**C. Soil Health Committee (SHC)**

Ruiz communicated the formation of the Committee to the new attendees and invited all to participate. Abigail Maynard and Cheryl Cappaili accepted. At the request of the CTRC&D, the Council voted to have Amanda Johnson as a member of the committee, since the CT RC&D is a non-voting member of the CSWC. Motion by C. Rabinowitz, J. Kaufman second. Approved unanimously.

The first charge of the committee is to submit language for Soil Health Legislation with collaboration from state agencies and non-profits that have a stake on soil health and that must be onboard. The second charge is to produce a strategic soil health plan for the state to include not only agricultural soils but also urban and forests, with an emphasis on the role of soil on climate change and water quality/quantity.

A Soil Health Stakeholders meeting hosted by the SHC will be held on September 24, 2019 at 10 am at the deKoven House in Middletown. Attendance has been confirmed by the DoAg, Farm Bureau, NOFA, American Farmland Trust, Working Lands Alliance, CT Farmland Trust, Citizens Campaign and UConn. L. Ruiz requested members to propose dates for the for the declaration of Soil Health Week /Soil Health Day event.

**D. Legislative Updates**

- a. Updates on Soil Health Legislation: discussed in item C.
- b. Other: Cynthia R. raised the subject of the Legislation that created the CDs and the Council, and whether this part of the legislation would also be discussed within the SHC Stakeholders group. Savageau said that the discussion on the legislation addressing the CDs and Council.

**E. conference for growers on BMPs on water conservation**

Savageau asked for suggested leaders to spearhead the workshop. Mike Dietz suggested the Council contact Rosa Raudales (UConn) and Diane Blais (NRCS).

**F. LISW-RCPP Update**

Lilian Ruiz updated the Council on the status of the contracts within the RCPP: the request for a one-year extension was granted. Council launched RFP for land surveyors. HFRP Forest Committee launched RFP for proposals on easements using ACEP-ALE funds transferred over from the RCPP, which facilitates certain states performing the process. There are now 4 HFRP properties applying land protection easements at various stages of due diligence and the first close should happen still in 2019.

**G. Executive Report**

**P2P Funding**

The ED has requested the CDs to issue their invoices for the first payment for the 2020 fiscal year.

**V. AGENCY REPORTS**

- A. CAES: Attachment A.
- B. DEEP: Eric Bedan reported that the DEEP is working on the Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan. One of the milestones on the plan is the review of the NPS Manual in collaboration with the Council, per our POW.
- C. UCONN: Dietz reported that Katherine Van der Woude has been signing up farmers for conservation plans and that the RCPP project is moving forward.
- D. CACD: Denise Savageau thanked the Council and the Districts for supporting the Northeast Regional Meeting and congratulated the districts' speakers (Jean Pillo, Cyhthia Rabinowitz, Judy Rondeau, Dan Mullins). The meeting was as success, with attendance from multiple states' NRCS staff, the NACD President. The Coastal Tour provided an opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of aquaculture in the Farm Bill. There was also an opportunity to advocate about being able to use Farm Bill dollars in "nonfederal land", as opposed to "nonpublic land", so the NACD will lobby for changing that language on the next Farm Bill. The CACD is preparing to host its Annual Meeting.
- E. NRCS: Joyce Purcell reported. Thomas Morgart congratulates the Council on the NE Regional Meeting for the quality of the speakers and topics. The Big E starts this week. There are two vacancies: Forester and District Conservationist for Litchefield. The State Technical Committee will be held at the TAC in Vernon on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The Farm Bill passed on December 2018- the NRCS is working on interim rules, the new policy and regs are being worked on and should be posted in October with a 60-day window for comments. The NRCS announced a non-competitive renewal period for existing RCPP projects, with a deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup> with 15MM available. Joyce confirmed that the LISW-RCPP non cost extension request was approved. The RCPP for 2019 (\$300MM) has been rolled out with an application deadline of December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

F. FSA: absent.

G. DoAG: absent.

H. Storrs Ag Exp. Station: absent.

I. NWCD:

J. CRCCD: Jane Brawerman thanked the Council and the ECCD for their significant work for the NE Regional Conference. She communicated that the districts are organizing a meeting for the CD Employees.

K. CTRC&D: absent.

## **VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

## **VII. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 PM.

## **Attachment A**

### **Report to Council on Soil and Water Conservation from Abigail Maynard , CAES September 19, 2019**

Plant Science Day 2019 was a successful event. Attendance was tallied at 973 people, up from 937 in 2018

A search has begun for an Assistant Scientist II with expertise in Urban Tree Ecophysiology in the Department of Forestry and Horticulture. Dr. Ward has sent out announcements to professional forestry societies, universities, and interested parties.

Two pending retirements were announced. Dr. Frank Ferrandino and Ms. Rose Hiskes will both retire on December 1, 2019. Efforts will be put forth to replace Ms. Hiskes. Dr. Ferrandino's role on the Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council will be assumed by Dr. da Silva. The weather stations will be upgraded and maintained by Dr. DeWei Li at the Valley Laboratory.

Thinking about staff replacements. The area of urban agriculture is a likely area to fill with a scientist. Currently, the Station has four unfilled scientist positions, which will be five after Dr. Ferrandino retires, along with seven unfilled technician positions.

An update on building and infrastructure projects:

1. The design for the renovations and addition to the Valley Laboratory has been completed by TLB Architecture, but cost estimates by DAS Construction Services exceeded the original allocation of \$11.5 million by approximately \$6 million.
2. The current design for renovation of the Jenkins-Waggoner greenhouses has gone out to bid.

CAES Seminar Series. Wednesdays at noon (2 or 3 a month). Schedule on website. Pizza is provided. First one is October 2nd with Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner of Agriculture