



**CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting – June 17, 2020
ZOOM MEETING <https://zoom.us/j/802902256>
Meeting ID: 802 902 256 +1 929 205 6099

Call to order: 1:06 p.m. by Denise Savageau, Chair.

Attendance: Members Denise Savageau (CRCCD Board), Phil Trowbridge (CT DEEP), Jennifer Kaufman (Appointee of Governor), Michael O’Neill (UConn), Cheryl Cappialli (SWCD Board), and Cynthia Rabinowitz (NWCD). Ex-officio members: Tom Morgart (NRCS). Staff and guests: Lilian Ruiz, (CT Council), Mike Dietz (UConn IWR), Dan Mullins (ECCD), Amanda Johnson (CTRCD), Jane Brawerman (CRCCD), Chris Sullivan (SWCD), Joanna Shapiro (NCCD), Eric Bedan and Kathleen Knight (DEEP).

I. WELCOME

Savageau opened the meeting with confirming quorum.

II. REGULAR BUSINESS

a. Minutes

Minutes of 03/19/20 were reviewed. Motion to approve by J. Kaufman, P. Trowbridge second. Unanimously approved with no objection.

b. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer’s report for the 06/17/2020 meeting and projected budget were reviewed. Expenses are below budget. Motion to accept the financial report as presented and place on file by P. Trowbridge, J. Kaufman second. Unanimously approved.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of Annual Operations Plan and Budget

Savageau presented the proposed Operations Plan for 2020-21 and reviewed the new Goal III that is focused on the the nexus between energy, water quality and soil health. Discussion ensued on new goal. Trowbridge wanted to ensure that it did not impact DEEP program responsibilities. Savageau explained it the intent was for the Council to help facilitate coordination between the topic areas. If new language is needed, that can be considered at the September meeting.

Trowbridge reported that with funding from the LISS, DEEP will be hiring a contractor to update the Erosion and Sediment Control Guidance Manual and the Stormwater Manual. Funding in the amount of \$130K. A workgroup will be formed to lead the update of the two manuals, so this part of the Operation Plan has funds to move forward. Dan Mullins reviewed the ECCD effort to do education/outreach required as part of local MS4 permits.

Council's Operations Plan provides for support to replicate on other CDs. The Little River watershed will be added to the Source Water Protection Project. After other minor discussion Trowbridge made a motion to adopt the OP as a draft and finalize any changes for final approval in September. Motion by Trowbridge, seconded by Cappiali. Unanimously approved.

2020-21 Budget was presented. The Envirothon had a budget surplus that will be saved to be carried to next year. Therefore, next years' allocation is smaller. Council is managing the Source Water Protection Project and charging and admin fee. State funds are stable at the moment. Trowbridge moved to approve the budget, seconded by Cappiali. The budget was unanimously approved.

IV. **OLD BUSINESS**

a. **Envirothon**

The Envirothon was conducted online due to Covid-19 restrictions. The excess budget this year will be carried over to next year, so there is a lower allocation in the budget for next year. Chris Sullivan reported that the Google Classroom program was used for the virtual event.

b. **Update of the E&S Control Guidelines**

Trowbridge will convene a meeting for the work group that will oversee the work and will check which contractors already on retainer could take this contract. CHA (former CME) did the LI Manual and Fuss & O'Neill I also a possibility. Suggestions: 1. include in the work a FIELD SIZE manual, 2. emphasize LID, 3. emphasize erosion and sediment control DURING construction. Also, we need to make sure that the two manuals complement (and not contradict) each other.

c. **Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)**

i. **GC3 Working and Natural Lands: Wetlands Subgroup**

Savageau serves on this committee. She reported that Deb Surabian, CT Soil Scientist gave a presentation to the subgroup on subaqueous soils and wetland soils including carbon storage/sequestration. This info is being incorporated into the GC3 report.

ii. **GC3 Working and Natural Lands: Ag/Soils Subgroup**

Chaired by the Commissioner of Ag and had one meeting. Ruiz is serving on the committee along with Tom Morgart, Abby Maynard, and Amanda Johnson- Council is well represented in the committee. The Council Soil Health Committee met to discuss recommendations and actions to be suggested to the subgroup (many people serve on both). The GC3 subgroup came up with a core group to work with Kayleigh Royston (DoAg) on an outline and recommendations. Three meetings were scheduled. Draft report is due July 8th.

iii. Mike Dietz reported on the work of the Rivers subgroup.

d. **Soil Health Committee**

Ruiz reported that the Council Soil Health Committee met to discuss recommendations and actions to be suggested to the subgroup (many people serve on both). The work on

legislation was finalized for this session, and for the next session the work will be tied to the GC3.

e. **DEEP 20by20 Initiative**

i. **Stormwater Construction Permit**

Savageau reported. CACD asked DEEP not to limit the role of the districts to only the erosion and sediment control *inspections* for the storm water construction permit, but also with reviewing the plans before the permit is issued- in case DEEP is short staffed. Eric Bedan provided additional input on the permitting process.

ii. **Inland Wetland Training**

Covered under the annual plan discussion. J. Kaufman reported that training will be online, but it's not up yet. Discussion on need for training and the role of conservation districts. Savageau will follow-up with DEEP and districts.

f. **Grants Update**

i. **LISW-RCPP**

Ruiz reported. All contracts were extended for a year. Deployed 680k in the last year. New RFPs brought three new properties that will almost exhaust the funds available if the three come to a close.

ii. **Source Water Protection Cooperative Agreement**

Ruiz reported. Delays in GIS part of the work as a result of health issues and Covid. Finalizing contract with UConn CLEAR. Increased funds were approved, bringing the total contract to 315k. The Little River was added to the project. Farm River: Chris Sullivan reported he (SWCD) contracted with Fuss & O'Neill and defined scope of work to write the watershed management plan.

V. **EXECUTIVE REPORT** - Covered in other sections.

VI. **AGENCY REPORTS**

a. **DEEP: Phil Trowbridge reported**

All working remotely during Covid- few people in the office
Monitoring programs shut down for 2 months
Recently started hypoxia cruises.
Integrated water quality report released in May.
Released on a virtual public meeting and very well attended, comment period still open.
Two important LIS projects under way: 1. Monitoring and modeling HUB-12 watersheds for HSPF-nutrient load on LIS from watersheds for nitrogen, phosphorus and suspended sediments; and 2. Priority Embayment restoration sites, with input from the watershed load model.

Eric Bedan reported:

Budget is approved and available to work on the Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Manual.

NWQI Program: Chris Malik is working on the Farm River project.

Several 319 Projects going active, expecting to get more from the districts.

b. **CAES: Abigail Maynard reported.**

During Covid 80% of personnel worked at home and came into office when needed.

All services (tick tests, soil tests) continued to be offered without interruption
Field work (tick survey, mosquito surveillance) started on June 1st
New Director, Dr. Jason White, Head of Analytical Chemistry and vice-director under Ted started on April 1st.
Plant Science Day will not be held in person in August. It will be held as a virtual event on August 5th and the resources will remain online for schools, institutions and the public to use.

c. **CACD/NACD: Denise Savageau reported.**

NACD letter to Congress to address increase \$ for COVID response and the stimulus package
Suggested that stimulus money should be used to increase 319 funds without requiring local match or PL 566 (watershed operations plan) without requiring match.
Funds can be used for dam construction and safety, stormwater retrofits to preserve shellfish beds and to build fish passages- projects that contribute to water quality and quantity.
A group that includes Save the Sound, CT Audubon, Nature Conservancy, etc. is looking into requesting a stimulus package for Connecticut to be coming through existing programs and geared towards infrastructure projects. Denise urged all organizations related to the Council to look for projects that are necessary and couldn't be funded with current programs and bring these projects to light so that they can substantiate the request.

d. **NRCS: Tom Morgart reported.**

Completed Draft Soil Health Plan for the State, which will be presented in the next STAC meeting.
Offices are open but only one person allowed at a time- most of the work is being conducted remotely. Expected to reopen in the near future.
Good number of applications for EQIP and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)- applications still open.
Around 10% of the allocation for easements will be returned because there are not enough applications.
Budget to supplement the SWP Cooperative grant was approved, so the bigger scope of the GIS work can be accomplished, and the Little River Watershed can be included.

e. **CTRC&D: Amanda Johnson reported.**

All are working remotely, Amanda going to the office as needed.
Jillian Shea is the new staff for the youth education program, working with 4 students.
Finished a round of Renewable Energy Assistance grants that allow farmers to work on farm energy projects.
This is the last year of the No-Till Cover Crop Equipment Hub
Creating an educational video to replace Farm Field Day, which will not be held live this year.
New project in Lebanon on affordable housing in conjunction with FARMS.
Compost Conference planning meetings are under way for a series of online webinars. stakeholders attending.
Tour des Farms will not be held in person, so 8 routes were created on 75+ farms where people can ride and roll.

f. **NWCD: Cynthia R. reported.**

Working remotely, except Karen who spends some time in the office.
Kudos to Kelsey for her work with the Envirothon
Field inspections for restoration projects are being conducted, in particular Watertown- Army Corps of Engineers permit for a dam removal a year ago. CD contracted to do the inspection of the restoration and mitigation area.

Mini plant sale at Cynthia's property with pre-orders.
Grants for 2 rain gardens school grounds- Woodbury and Roxbury- preliminary work under way. educational portion might have to wait.
Waiting on NACD grant for Technical Assistance which will bring in a new employee to work on conservation agriculture with the NRCS
Permaculture Volunteer Group meets monthly working on 2 agri forestry demonstration projects-with nature centers in Litchfield and Woodbury
Presented to the Roxbury Land Trust on best management practices to protect water quality.

g. CRCCD: Jane Brawerman reported.

Working remotely- except Sandy going to the office
Plant sale postponed hopefully to September.
New venue for plant sale: a farm has offered to host the sale
Water Quality Improvement work ongoing
Two ongoing projects with farms: Deerfield Farm in Durham and Lyman Orchard in Middlefield
Restarting Water Monitoring Program on July 8th, as the DPH lab is accepting samples.
Ongoing restoration planning with farms- Kelly mostly working on that.
Waiting on NACD grant to hire new staff to work on conservation.
Lead efforts for application for the NACD grant for all districts.

h. ECCD: Dan Mullins reported.

Moving along with the Little River Watershed Management Plan- now funded by the Cooperative Agreement with the Council.
Other watershed plans will be completed by the end of September
Working on a few 319 projects and waiting on approval of other contracts from DEEP.

i. SWCD: Chris Sullivan reported.

Moving along with the Farm River Watershed Management Plan
Working on Tour des Farms with the RC&D- adding farms to the route, vetting routes.
Completed Envirothon
Presentation to MetroCOG as part of an effort in outreaching to Municipalities- getting the SWCD re-established.
Early stages of a 319 project with the town of North Haven to do a rain garden at one of their elementary schools.

j. NCCD: Joanna Shapiro reported.

Hired Mindy Gossling
Held Plant Sales as a curbside pickup service, which was facilitated by flexible locations available.
Wrapping up three 319 projects
Working on first broad brook implementation project and proposing a larger one to DEEP for next year.

VII. VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – no comments

VIII. VII. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 PM.