

**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB)**

**July 18, 2022
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

Meeting Minutes

12th Floor Conference Room
Rachel Carson State Office Building

Welcome & Introductions – Jennifer Reed-Harry, Chairperson

Jay Braund conducted a roll call of members.

Members present:

Lynn Dietrich

Tim Peters

Grant Gulibon

Jennifer Reed-Harry

Greg Hostetter

Destiny Zeiders

There were not enough board members present for a quorum, therefore, the minutes from the March 24, 2022 meeting could not be approved.

Legislative Update – Destiny Zeiders

Destiny mentioned SB251 (Act 83), Senator Yaw's Fertilizer Bill passed. The provisions for the new licensing and certification requirements were removed and there is nothing in the bill for any new licensing or certifications.

Other Agency Updates – Deputy Greg Hostetter and Tim Peters

Tim Peters from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) did not have any updates.

Deputy Hostetter stated he is pleased with the \$154 million that was included in the budget for the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) as well as the \$25 million included in the Avian Influenza (AI) Recovery Package.

Chapter 105: Dam Safety and Waterway Management – Andrew Klinger, Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands

Andrew stated that this presentation is being delayed until the next board meeting in order to complete consultation with PennDOT before presenting to advisory boards.

Guidance on Notification Requirements for Unauthorized Discharges to Waters of the Commonwealth under Pennsylvania’s Clean Streams Law – Andrew Hall, Bureau of Clean Water

Andrew provided a follow-up to the presentation from the March 24 meeting including the changes from the second draft of the Technical Guidance Document (TGD) to the final draft. Changes include other notification requirements and guidance and clarifies how water quality standards for surface waters and maximum contaminant levels for groundwater relate to notification requirements. The TGD is anticipated to be published as final in late summer or early fall.

PA Chesapeake Bay Program Update: Data Management, BMP Submission and County Achievements and Timelines – Jill Whitcomb, Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Jill discussed the PracticeKeeper geodatabase, the centralized database where conservation districts report their quarterly activities. The database has streamlined the program in that information is reported once and tied to the programs that utilize it. PracticeKeeper serves as a central location where the various programs can acquire information.

Verification protocols were established in 2014 as a way to ensure that Best Management Practices (BMPs) continue and are maintained. Multiple programs are in place for long-term inspection and verification. Funding was provided in December 2021 to expand the existing verification program. The funds can be used toward wages for student interns, salaries and benefits for current staff and contracting with consultants to further assist with on-site verification of BMPs.

The DEP Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) details reporting programs’ data compilation and verification procedures. Its purpose is to relay to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other stakeholders where the data is coming from, which programs the data comes from as well as program contacts, data flow and how duplicate checking is handled.

Jill discussed submitted agriculture BMPs versus credited. A submitted BMP is the information that is transmitted from DEP to EPA. A credited BMP is what EPA credits and can be discounted from what is submitted due to available land space or domain for that specific practice.

Jill summarized county achievements which include on-the-ground efforts and PracticeKeeper and FieldDoc reporting.

Jennifer Reed-Harry asked if there is anything else besides remote sensing that has emerged to provide good data and also what non-government groups can do to assist the Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO) in their efforts.

Jill responded that, in the last few years, the DEP CBPO has expanded their reach with different agencies including PennDOT and the Turnpike Commission. The most beneficial assistance from other groups is to open the doors to conservation districts and emphasized the importance of the data collection that comes from the inspections the districts perform.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Jennifer Reed-Harry stated the next meeting is scheduled for August 18 and is a joint meeting with the Nutrient Management Advisory Board (NMAB).