

**CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

The Chesapeake Bay Commission held its third quarterly meeting of 2017 on Thursday and Friday, November 9 – 10, 2017 in Harrisburg, PA.

Commission members in attendance:

- Senator Richard Alloway (Only Nov. 10th)
- Secretary Mark Belton (Only Nov. 10th)
- Delegate David Bulova
- PA Citizen Member, Warren Elliott (Only Nov. 10th)
- Representative Garth Everett
- Delegate Barbara Frush
- Delegate Tawanna Gaines
- Representative Keith Gillespie
- Senator Guy Guzzone
- Senator Emmett Hanger
- Secretary Patrick McDonnell
- Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton
- Representative Michael Sturla
- Senator Frank Wagner
- Secretary Molly Ward
- Senator Gene Yaw (Only Nov. 9th)

Members not in attendance:

- MD Citizen Member, Bernie Fowler
- Delegate Scott Lingamfelter
- Delegate Maggie McIntosh
- Delegate Margaret Ransone
- Rear Admiral Jack Scorby
- VA Citizen Member, Dennis Treacy

Staff: Ann Swanson
Jen Donnelly
Ann Jennings
Marel King
Mark Hoffman

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

Call to Order

The meeting at the Pennsylvania Capitol Complex in Harrisburg, PA was called to order by Chairman Everett at 1:10 PM. Chairman asked CBC Executive Director, Ann Swanson to take roll. The Commission approved minutes from the September meeting and the agenda for the November meeting.

After a brief welcome, the members summarized and discussed the recent election results, especially the General Election in Virginia.

Boots on the Ground: Improving Technical Assistance for Chesapeake Farms

Representative Everett thanked staff and the Commission members who served on the review committee for the new report on agricultural technical assistance, which was released at the meeting. Entitled “Boots on the Ground: Improving Technical Assistance for Farmers,” it was released after two-years of staff analysis and consultation with outside technical experts.

Ann Swanson provided a summary of the report, which describes: 1) who provides technical assistance; 2) how they are funded; and 3) recommendations to improve delivery of this important service to farmers. She emphasized the collaborative nature of the report, and the extent to which staff worked with conservation agencies, non-governmental organization, the agricultural community, and others, to develop the report and its recommendations.

Key recommendations were: 1) create a robust network of private sector and non-profit providers of technical assistance; 2) enhance the job climate for governmental conservation professionals providing technical assistance; and 3) provide more consistent, stable and predictable levels of funding for technical assistance, including funds independent of cost-share programs.

Technical Assistance: From the Field

Dean James of Danville, PA, and Raymond King of Narvon, PA described their experience with technical assistance providers on their farms. Both farmers emphasized the importance of trust with technical service providers, and information about how conservation practices benefit the farm are especially persuasive.

Some practices on both farms were implemented with cost-share money, some without, but all were implemented with technical assistance. Both conservation professionals, and peer-to-peer outreach, are helpful.

It was brought to our attention we should view the Hugh Hammond Bennett Story; whose soil conservation leadership was the creation of the Soil Conservation Service/NRCS.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G78ihulTx1k>

The Technical Assistance Providers

A panel of experts described the different roles that they play in providing technical assistance. Lamonte Garber, representing Stroud Water Research Center, emphasized the importance of stream science and learning how streams work. Peter Hughes of Red Barn Ag stated that private providers can be nimble in the services they provide and their ability to respond to market demand, but that each new employee requires \$32,000 in training in the first two years. Lindsay

Thompson of the Maryland Association of Conservation Districts reported a 30% turnover rate among District staff due to uncertain annual grant funding that supports many positions. She also reported that \$10 million available through USDA-NRCS in financial assistance for practices went unspent due to a lack of technical assistance.

Representative Sturla asked how many additional people would be needed. Lamonte estimated that five providers per county would be needed just for buffers, and Lindsay estimated that 30 additional people in Maryland alone would be needed.

Reauthorization of the Farm Bill

Marel King described legislation to amend the Farm Bill to be introduced by Senator Van Hollen (MD). It would revise provisions of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to make it more beneficial for the Chesapeake region. Five governors plus the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission have signed a letter of support.

The CBC chairman ADJOURNED the formal meeting at 4:08 PM and Commission members and staff participated on a tour of the Pennsylvania Capitol Complex.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2017

Call to Order

Chairman Everett called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM. Chairman asked CBC Executive Director, Ann Swanson to take roll.

Chairman's Updates

Bay Journal

Chairman Everett reminded the members about the letter he signed with Del. Gaines and Del. Lingamfelter and sent to EPA in support of continued funding for the Bay Journal. He noted that we received no response.

Boat Wakes

Chairman Everett also reported that, as requested at the last meeting, a letter was sent to the Bay Program requesting action on the recommendations in the recent STAC report.

Pennsylvania Crab Feast

Members were briefed on the recent crab feast hosted by the PA Delegation for members of the PA General Assembly. Over 100 legislators and staff attended. Each member was provided with a CBC glass stating, "Support Clean Water" that was the giveaway at the event.

SouthWings

In light of the successful tour of the Susquehanna by air the day prior, Senator Middleton recommended that members view the “Chesapeake By Air” documentary on Maryland Public Television.

The TMDL: Decisions Made and Yet to Come

Ann Swanson and Marel King briefed the members on the status of Mid-Point Assessment decisions within the Chesapeake Bay Program. Due to delays in compiling the data and model results necessary, the Principals’ Staff Committee meeting for decision-making was postponed from the end of October to December 19-20.

The major decisions are those involving how to address changes in loads from Conowingo Dam, Climate Change, and Growth. A special CBC meeting will be held on December 14 in Annapolis to discuss Conowingo.

Senator Middleton requested that an update of what each jurisdiction is doing related to climate change be included on a future agenda of the Commission.

What is Pennsylvania Doing?

Key leaders in Pennsylvania’s TMDL implementation provided an overview of actions underway to meet water quality goals.

Part I: Government

Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding said Pennsylvania understands what needs to be done in the agriculture sector, and they are building the human-capital infrastructure and have momentum. He said they have a lot of work to do, but the right people are at the table, and there is a strong partnership between his Department and DEP.

DEP Secretary of Environmental Protection Patrick McDonnell reported on \$1.5 million now available to reimburse farmers for plan-writing, which should pay for approximately 800 plans. He also summarized the recent Penn State survey and NRCS remote sensing projects that counted non-cost-shared practices on farms.

Chairman Everett then described several bills in the state legislature that would assist in implementation, including his own HBs 913-916 that would allow all municipal governments to assess a stormwater fee.

Part II: Penn State

Matt Royer, Director of the Penn State Agriculture & Environment Center, described the “PA in the Balance Initiative,” which is bringing stakeholders together around a vision for a viable agriculture that meets water quality goals. The four major goals moving forward are to: 1) increase technical capacity; 2) develop a culture of stewardship; 3) develop new incentives to encourage conservation beyond compliance; and 4) accelerate conservation in priority watersheds.

Part III: Lancaster County

Christopher Thompson, Manager of the Lancaster County Conservation District, described the new “Lancaster County Clean Water Partners” initiative, which is a cross-sector collaboration to coordinate efforts to improve local water quality, track implementation and measure results. As a “hot spot” for loads to the Chesapeake Bay, these local efforts will drive improvement in the Bay as well.

Panel Q&A and CBC Discussion

Members suggested that NFWF be asked to consider a set-aside of approximately \$1 million for projects related to technical assistance and soil health.

New Business

Ann Swanson briefed the Commission on a proposed directive to be considered by the Bay Program Executive Council related to environmental education. There was consensus that any Commission position on such a proposal could be addressed by the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 p.m.