



## State Conservation Committee

PO Box 2042 • Concord NH 03302-2042

[nh.gov/SCC](http://nh.gov/SCC)

May 18, 2021 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Hosted by Zoom Conference

Hepp stated at the beginning of the meeting that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor, as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's emergency order # 12, pursuant to the executive order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. There is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's emergency order. In accordance with the emergency order, the SCC is confirming that we are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video and other electronic means. The SCC is using Zoom for this electronic meeting and all members of the board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting, through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and if necessary participate in this meeting by calling 301-715-8592. The SCC will adjourn the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting - in the event the public is unable to access the meeting, it will be adjourned and rescheduled.

All votes taken during the meeting shall be done by roll call vote. During the roll call attendance, attendees responded they were alone in their locations.

### **Members/Designees/Advisors present with their respective locations:**

Jennifer Gornnert, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food, At her home

Donna Hepp, Belknap and Carroll CCDs, At her home

Ted Howard, University of NH Agricultural Experiment Station, At his home

Anton Bekkerman, University of NH Agricultural Experiment Station, In his office in Durham

Shawn Jasper, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food, In his office in Concord

Audra Klumb, Hillsborough and Merrimack CCDs, At her home

Dick Lutz, Rockingham and Strafford CCDs/ NH Association of Conservation Districts, At his home

Betsey McNaughten, NH Fish and Game Department, In her office in Concord

Barbara Richter, NH Association of Conservation Commissions, At her home

Sabrina Stanwood, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, At her home

Amanda Stone, UNH Cooperative Extension, At her home

Pete Throop, Cheshire and Sullivan CCDs, At his home

### **Attendees:**

Dea Brickner-Wood, Moose Plate Grant Coordinator

Pam Gilbert, Grafton CCD

Don Keirstead, USDANRCS

Kim McCracken, USDA NRCS

Amanda Littleton, CDEA-NH

Matt Thorne, Merrimack River Watershed

**Minutes Recorders:**

Stacy Luke, Merrimack CCD

Jessica Newnan, Merrimack CCD

**Members/Designees/Advisors absent:**

Scott Deblois, Coös and Grafton CCDs

Marilyn Milne, Farm Service Agency

Becky Ross, USDA NRCS State Conservationist

Lori Sommer, NH Department of Environmental Services

Hepp opened the meeting at 9:05 and welcomed the group.

## **Minutes of the February 18, 2021 Quarterly Meeting**

Jasper motioned to approve the minutes from February 18, 2021. Howard seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Howard- Aye

Jasper- Aye

Klumb- Aye

Lutz- Aye

McNaughten- Aye

Richter- Aye

Stanwood- Aye

Stone- Aye

Throop- Aye

Hepp- Aye

The motion carried.

## **Minutes of the March 8, 2021 Special Meeting**

Throop motioned to approve the minutes from March 8, 2021. Klumb seconded the motion.

Howard- Aye

Jasper- Aye

Klumb- Aye

Lutz- Aye

McNaughten- Abstain

Richter- Aye

Stanwood- Aye

Stone- Aye

Throop- Aye

Hepp- Aye

The motion carried.

## District/ Organization/ Agency Updates

Districts, agencies, and organizations discussed the highlights of items on the Consent Agenda and the following additions.

- Howard announced his retirement and introduced Anton Bekkerman, Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. Howard stated UNH will be opening in the Fall. There are 21 retirements this year. Anthony Davis is the new Dean. UNH has acknowledged a land acknowledgement statement regarding indigenous peoples that will be rolled out shortly. Hepp thanked Howard for his service on the Committee. Bekkerman stated he looked forward to working with the SCC. Bekkerman reported that they are easing off their Covid restrictions in their research projects. Currently there are soil, climate change, food systems, and other research undergoing.
- Hepp reported that Belknap CCD has finished their plant sale, which was very busy. Their volunteer coordinator helped recruit volunteers for this sale. They are transitioning to a new volunteer coordinator. Belknap CCD is working on a lot of grants, such as for food security programs. They are also working on in-stream wood placement projects. Carroll CCD has hired a new District Manager Catherine Dufault, who will be starting soon. Carroll CCD is working on promoting five different bird houses.
- Klumb reported that Hillsborough and Merrimack CCDs have worked jointly on a tree and shrub planting workshop over Zoom with UNH Cooperative Extension's Emma Erler and had over 30 attendees. The two Districts are also been working on their tree and shrub conservation sales, which has increased significantly this year. Merrimack CCD also does rain barrels, composters, and trout. Both counties have been working on starting their NH Gleans programs. Merrimack CCD has received a large donation to continue their Veterans farmers' market incentive programs.
- Lutz reported on Strafford CCD highlights including their equipment rental program, tree and shrub sale, which also has increased sales, cover crop bulk buys, their IPM demonstration program, and work on state-wide soil health projects. Rockingham CCD continues to work on invasive species control, monitoring conservation easements, welcomed two interns, is providing fee-for-service invasive species control, and implementing pollinator habitats. Rockingham CCD is also working on a joint IPM demonstration project with Strafford and Cheshire CCDs.
- Lutz reported on NHACD highlights including hiring a third conservation planner, planning the NACD Northeast Regional Meeting, planning a legislative tour in Carroll County, working on their Strategic Plan, working on a PowerPoint explaining what the Districts do, and creating a Supervisor Directory. NHACD is working on conservation easement monitoring and will be contracting with UNH to assist with forestry. NHACD is writing position papers that will be reviewed at the annual meeting. Hepp reported on Envirothon this year, which is virtual this year. Lutz also announced a Zoom in on Conservation about the Right to Know Law and asked the SCC to co-sponsor this training. Richter expressed her interest in co-sponsoring as well.
- Throop reported that Cheshire CCD's equipment rental program is busy, taking applications to retrofit corn planters, and working on the IPM for agriculture program, that offers financial assistance. Cheshire CCD has also been working on their grant programs including the Farm Future Fund and a program for small tracts of land to improve wildlife habitat. Cheshire CCD has also been working on their community supported solar. Sullivan CCD has been working on educational programs and assisting with Envirothon. They have also been active in the Connecticut River Joint Commission and the Connecticut River Valley Resource Commission. Sullivan CCD has been collaborating with Sullivan also just completed their busiest plant sale, too.
- Stone reported on Covid restrictions and that Cooperative Extension individuals are working from home. Brendan Prusik, Jeff Schloss, Cheryl Smith, and George Hamilton are retiring along with others.

- Richter reported that NHACC has completed their conservation commission handbooks, which is going to print. They are planning a NHACC Annual Meeting on-line and an in-person 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration outdoors tentatively on September 11<sup>th</sup>. NHACC is continuing the Lunch and Learn in the Fall focusing on fundamentals. NHACC is working with Amanda Stone with Taking Action for Wildlife.
- Stanwood reported that they have a new director, Patrick Hackley. Amy Lamb is now the data manager and Jessica Bouchard is the new environmental reviewer. The Forest Action Plan's final document is now final.
- McNaughten reported that NH Fish and Game is now back in their offices. The chief of the wildlife division is retiring. Our Executive Director Scott Mason will be on The Exchange today. There are a couple of large projects they are working on including Gray Mist Farm in Northumberland.
- Littleton reported that the Conservation District Employees' Association- NH Chapter is working on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legacy Awards. Littleton thanked Jasper, Hepp, and Lutz on their work with the Governor's Proclamation for the anniversary. Littleton discussed the Flashback Fridays. Littleton also discussed district manager continuing education.
- McCracken reported that NRCS field offices are open at 50% with very limited public access (appointments only). NRCS field staff have been in the field working on contracts. McCracken reported on a new program: EQIP- CIC. NRCS is working on filling engineering vacancies. NRCS has hired five with strong forestry backgrounds. NRCS and the conservation districts are working on completing the Local Work Group meetings that will happen in June and July.

## **Conservation "Moose Plate" Grant Coordinator's Update**

Brickner-Wood discussed the recent stakeholder meeting, that was well attended virtually. There are many April closings. There are some grant amendments that went through due to Covid restricting field work. Brickner-Wood stated that the last grant round was the largest ever and that all but two of the grant agreements have gone through Governor and Council.

Brickner-Wood went over the Grant Subcommittee's process going over the grant application, size of grants, amount of grants the committee should award, and eligible projects. Brickner-Wood went over proposed changes to the grant application as discussed in her memorandum. Klumb provided edits to the application. Brickner-Wood asked for others to provide any other edits.

Stanwood motioned to approve the 2022 Mooseplate Grant application with edits. Throop seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Howard- Aye  
 Jasper- Aye  
 Klumb- Aye  
 Lutz- Aye  
 McNaughten- Aye  
 Richter- Aye  
 Stanwood- Aye  
 Stone- Aye  
 Throop- Aye  
 Hepp- Aye

The motion carried.

Brickner-Wood stated that the new application will be posted on the website June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Executive Director Search Review & Selection**

Hepp announced that the SCC advertised the part-time Executive Director position through the NH DAMF. A panel of Jasper, Hepp, Stanwood, Lutz, Littleton, and Lutz interviewed four candidates. The panel unanimously puts forward Ian Hanley to fill the Executive Director position.

Lutz moved to approve the panel's recommendation of Ian Hanley to fill the Executive Director position. Jasper seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Howard- Aye  
Jasper- Aye  
Klumb- Aye  
Lutz- Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter- Aye  
Stanwood- Aye  
Stone- Aye  
Throop- Aye  
Hepp- Aye

The motion carried.

Hepp asked for volunteers to help transition Mr. Hanley into the position of Executive Director. Hepp, Jasper, Richter, Lutz, Littleton, and Luke volunteered.

## **Ability and or Restrictions to Districts Investing Funds to Maintaining Easements, Scholarships or Other Long-Term Projects**

Hepp reported on the Zoom meeting Hepp, Gilbert, and Luke had with the Attorney General's office regarding conservation district money management. The SCC is awaiting additional information and/ or questions from the Attorney General's office.

## **Future Format of SCC Meetings**

Hepp asked the SCC how the future meetings should be such as hybrid or completely in person. Throop stated that a hybrid option would be helpful with those who are distant. Richter agreed with this position. Consensus was to have a hybrid option.

## **Regional Conservation Partnership Program**

Don Keirstead from USDA NRCS and Matt Thorne of the Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC) presented on the newly awarded Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) whose goals are to:

- Protect high priority source water areas for drinking water;
- Restore habitat for threatened fish and wildlife species;
- Enhance weather resilience related to flooding and drought.

Hepp welcomed collaboration between the SCC and this RCPP Project. Thorne stated he would keep the SCC updated as MRWC works on identifying projects throughout the State of NH.

## **Elections**

Lutz motioned to approve the following slate of officers:

Chair- Donna Hepp  
Vice Chair- Peter Throop  
Treasurer- Shawn Jasper

Klumb seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Howard- Aye  
Jasper- Aye  
Klumb- Aye  
Lutz- Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter- Aye  
Stanwood- Aye  
Throop- Aye  
Hepp- Aye

The motion carried.

## **Supervisor Appointments and Re-appointments**

None submitted for review.

## **Disposition of State Lands**

Hepp reviewed the newest CORD review: 2021 SLR 03 in Laconia.

Throop motioned to concur with 2021 SLR 03 in Laconia. Hepp seconded the motion.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Howard- Aye  
Jasper- Abstain  
Klumb- Aye  
Lutz- Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter- Aye  
Stanwood- Aye  
Throop- Aye  
Hepp- Aye

The motion carried.

## **Other Business**

Throop and Hepp announced their interest in continuing on the SCC for another five-year term. Klumb announced she will not be renewing her appointment. The Hillsborough and Merrimack CCDs will be

looking for a new appointee in the near future. Klumb will continue to attend meetings until a replacement is in place.

### **Adjournment**

Howard motioned to adjourn the meeting. Jasper seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Hepp closed the meeting at 11:53 a.m.