



State Conservation Committee

PO Box 2042 • Concord NH 03302-2042
nh.gov/SCC

August 18, 2022 – 9:00am to 12:00pm
Hosted by Department of Natural & Cultural Resources
Concord, NH

Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff present at Department of Natural & Cultural Resources

Dea Brickner-Wood, Moose Plate Grant
Coordinator
Ian Hanley, SCC Executive Director
Donna Hepp, Belknap and Carroll CCDs
Shawn Jasper, NH Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food
Rob Larocque, Merrimack and Hillsborough
CCDs
Dick Lutz, Rockingham and Strafford CCDs/NH
Association of Conservation Districts
Betsey McNaughten, NH Department of Fish
and Game
Barbara Richter, NH Association of
Conservation Commissions
Sabrina Stanwood, NH Department of Natural
and Cultural Resources

Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff Attending via Zoom

Anton Bekkerman, NH Agricultural Experiment
Station

Scott Deblois, Coos and Grafton CCDs
Jeff Holmes, USDA Farm Service Agency State
Executive Director
Kim McCracken, USDA NRCS State
Conservationist
Lori Sommer, NH Department of Environmental
Services
Amanda Stone, UNH Cooperative Extension

Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff absent:

Amanda Littleton, CDEA-NH
Pete Throop, Cheshire and Sullivan CCDs

Guests via Zoom:

Whitney Lewis, Coos CCD

Minutes Recorders:

Stacy Luke, Merrimack CCD
Steve Cook, Merrimack CCD

Hepp opened the meeting at 9:06 am and welcomed the group.

Minutes of the May 19, 2022 Quarterly Meeting

Hepp entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the May 19, 2022 meeting.

Jasper motioned to approve the minutes from May 19, 2022. Sommer seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Hepp-Aye

Jasper-Aye
Larocque-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Abstained
Stone-Aye
Tilton-Abstained

The motion carries.

Supervisor Appointments and Re-appointments

Stanwood motioned to approve the below listed supervisor appointment nominations received in the past quarter.

Peter Renzelman, Cheshire CCD, new term to expire 8/1/2025
John Scarinza, Coos CCD, new term to expire 8/1/2025
Ezra Bartlett Mann, Grafton CCD, new term to expire 8/1/2025
Peter Blakeman, Merrimack CCD, new term expires 8/1/2025

Jasper seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Jasper-Aye
Larocque-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Sommer- Aye
Stanwood- Aye
Stone-Aye

The motion carries.

Strategic Plan Review

Hanley described the work of the Strategic Plan Subcommittee and the background of this Strategic Plan that should lead the SCC until 2025. The SCC gave feedback.

Stanwood asked about the actions listed and inquired more specifically how actions will be accomplished and who will complete the actions. Richter stated that the actions listed were written more as headlines, but a possible edit is to make these more of an action sentence. Hanley suggested some edits and the committee discussed edits in order to clarify the plan.

Stone commented on the statewide event on Page 15. Stone stated that there are two state-wide conferences already conducted and this statewide event should be complementary to the existing events. Stone also asked how conservation is being defined and how the SCC fits in to the existing work. McNaughten expressed the idea and asked what does conservation mean to the SCC and how does it relate to what the land trusts and other organizations are doing? McNaughten also asked about listing the SCC's stakeholders. Stone suggested to differentiate between stakeholders and partners with a definition as to what each means.

Hepp requested additional comments and invited anyone to join them in the final edits. Hanley suggested that one more strategic planning session should complete the process and a final draft could be available for approval at the November 2022 quarterly meeting.

Executive Director's Performance Review Update

Hepp reported that all feedback has been positive. McNaughten stated she appreciates Hanley reaching out to her and communicating and thanked him for this.

Jasper discussed moves to make Hanley's position full-time. Governor asked for a 'Maintenance' budget. Hanley's position being full-time will be a high priority for that budget. Feedback from the Governor's office has been positive. DAMF is also asking for an Assistant Commissioner. Jasper stated that the conservation district letters in support of Hanley's full-time position should be sent to him. Jasper recommends that the two organizations, NH State Conservation Committee and NH Association of Conservation Districts, should also send a letter.

Lutz moved that the SCC write a letter of support for the Executive Director's full-time position. McNaughten seconded the motion.

Bekkerman-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Jasper-Aye
Larocque-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Stanwood-Abstain
Richter-Aye
Stone-Aye

The motion carries.

Conservation "Moose Plate" Grant Coordinator's Update

Brickner-Wood reported that she has been talking to potential grant applicants and answering their questions. September grants are due. October grant reading. November 10th grant meeting. Committee proposes grant slate at November meeting. There have been a number of grant close-outs. There have been several grant extensions, mostly Covid related. Moose Plate marketing is going well. Grafton CCD bridge replacement project did not go through; that money will be returned.

Executive Director's Update

Hanley gave his update stating the biggest effort is supervisor recruitment for conservation districts needing to fill their board as well as attracting associate supervisors. Larocque stated that at Merrimack CCD they look at who is not represented on the board and then reach out to their community partners, such as NH Farm Bureau, to recruit individuals that can represent those conservation interests. Hanley stated this may be a model to provide to other districts.

Hanley has also been working with the conservation districts with the Climate Change Resiliency Program, which is in their pilot year. Hanley has also been working on improving communications with and among the districts. Hanley also plans on sending a monthly written report to the conservation districts so there is more detail provided for their board meetings.

District/ Organization/ Agency Updates

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

- Holmes reported on the *USDA Farm Service Agency* and highlighted its Dairy Margin Coverage program. He reported on the drought monitor and counties that have been listed as a D3 disaster area due to drought, which opens them up to FSA programs. Holmes stated next year is a Farm Bill reauthorization year and all await possible new programs.
- Jasper reported that the *NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food* received \$150,000 for invasive plant management and is working on getting a staff member funded to work on this important issue. NH DAMF is ramping up the Agricultural Lands Preservation Program; additional funding may be available through the Federal government and the LCHIP Executive Director will be on the committee. Jasper discussed an on-going grant issue related to an in-stream Moose Plate grant as well as an on-going lawsuit regarding solar panels on conserved agricultural land. NH Farm & Forest will be moved to the Deerfield Fairground in the spring in order to have a bigger footprint and better weather. Jasper discussed his work with the Governor and how ARPA funds may help with farm infrastructure, such as mobile poultry processing units. Jasper also reported that Grafton County has reduced their herd to make it more manageable and Yeaton Dairy Farm in Epsom has ended their dairy operation.
- Lewis reported that *Coos CCD* held a Forest Field Day, is working on their fall bulb sale, podcast that is focusing on forestry in this edition, and will hold an equipment field day the end of September.
- Stanwood reported on the *NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources* including their upland forest integrity project as well as the strengthening of their database identifying unique areas. There is an Environmental Reviewer vacancy at NHB.
- Bekkerman reported on *UNH Agricultural Experiment Station* including a new grant funded to monitor moose populations using wildlife monitoring cameras. There is a new visiting professor, Ranjit Bawa, for the next several years whose specialty is forest economics. There is also a post-doc coming on that focuses on bird populations. Another visiting professor is coming on focusing on animal acoustics. Bekkerman highlighted the next two issues of their magazine Inspired; the first one focused on dairy

research then horticulture and the next one's focus is on forestry. This year's research has been impeded by lack of precipitation.

- Richter reported on the **NH Association of Conservation Commissions** including working on their website, conducting Lunch & Learn programs this fall, and planning for their annual meeting on November 5th, which will be held in Pembroke with Susie Spikol from the Harris Center for Conservation Education as the main speaker. Richter also reported on a NHCF grant that will provide a comprehensive wetland training program in partnership with NH DES, Rick VanDePol, and Sandy Crystal; this program is slated for Spring 2023.
- Lutz reported that the **Rockingham CCD** is involved in coastal planning, wetland restoration for oyster habitat in Great Bay, pollinator conservation demonstration projects, turtle demonstration projects, and IPM projects on municipal land. Lutz also reported on the **NH Association of Conservation District** programs such as their Fishercats game in which NHACD sold 140 tickets and had 10 vendors for their conservation night. NHACD will also hold their Annual Meeting in November with Rockingham and Strafford CCD co-hosting with tours occurring at Odiorne Point and Goss Farm. The Zoom in on Conservation program continues with about 6-10 attendees per event and approximately 30 views of the recorded video. NHACD is hiring a person to redo their website and has hired Zoe Eisenpress as their new conservation planner to replace Jessica Wright.
- Larocque reported that that **Hillsborough CCD** had a successful legislative tour, is busy with their 2022 gleaned season, and is seeking two new supervisors for their board. **Merrimack CCD** recently had their Local Work Group meeting at Beech Hill Farm, has been busy with pollinator and riparian plantings in conjunction with NRCS, is working on their culvert replacement project on Rocky Pond, and has released its 2022 Merrimack County Local Food Guide. Copies were distributed.
- McNaughten reported on **NH Fish & Game** activities including watching Congress for the passage of RAWA, which funds the states for proactive endangered and threatened species work. NH Fish & Game is still looking for a surveyor, will be at the Hopkinton State Fair, and dedicated two boat ramps lately. The WMA in Fitzwilliam/ Rindge is now close to 800 acres.
- Stone reported on **UNH Cooperative Extension**, including new hires including Kyle Quigley, Jessica Wright, and Kendall Kunelius. They are in the process of planning Saving Special Places, which will occur virtually all month in April 2023 with an in-person ½ day at the end of the month in person. Stone is also working on the NH Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan. Outreach will be rolled out first week of October. Brickner-Wood will be reaching out to Rockingham CCD and Strafford CCD. They are developing a website. Brickner-Wood added that this plan may also be cycled into the grant program for the implementation piece.
- McCracken reported for the **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**. NRCS and the conservation districts have wrapped up Local Work Group meetings around the state. One thing that will be changed is that we have local questions based on local input. Additional funds are available through the Inflation Reduction Act. There is a new agreement with NHACD and conservation districts to expand capacity across the state. For financial assistance programs in FY 2023, November 30th is target date for applications. Karen Dudley has retired; new hire starting in September. Deb Manarch,

Jameson Long, and Nels Liljedahl have also left NRCS. McCracken also discussed their work with partners in conservation planning, such as the American Farmland Trust (in conjunction with Massachusetts); Xerces in the Ct River Valley, and the NHACD planners state-wide. McCracken discussed the State Technical Committee meetings.

- Hepp reported that the *Carroll CCD* has been working on their stream restoration projects and has a Leave No Trace training in mid-September. *Belknap CCD* will host a legislative tour on 9/22/22 followed by a social. They are also working on their stream restoration work, currently on Reservoir Brook. They are conducting outreach at local fairs.
- Hanley reported that the *Sullivan CCD* and *Cheshire CCD* have been working on their summer programming and they have a whole calendar of events for the Fall. Both counties are planning activities on farm business education courses.
- Sommer reported that the *NH Department of Environmental Services* has received ARPA funds for a new culvert replacement grant program with the hopes of additional funding. The ARM fund will have a \$4MM grant round with an expectation of approximately 20 projects. Cheryl Bondi is leaving the ARM program for the Drinking Water Trust Fund program. The NH DES commissioner and water director have been re-appointed. There are lots of job openings. Their general permit agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers will be reauthorized shortly that will be good for another five-years. Changes include mitigation required at a new threshold of 5,000 sq ft instead of 10,000 sq ft. There is a movement to look more closely at vernal pool losses.

Adjournment

Lutz motioned to adjourn the meeting. Richter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Hepp closed the meeting at 11:59am.