



State Conservation Committee

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

May 18, 2023 – 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

Anton Bekkerman, NH Agricultural Experiment
Station

Amy Gaudreau, UNH Cooperative Extension

Ian Hanley, SCC Executive Director

Donna Hepp, Belknap and Carroll CCDs/ NH
Association of Conservation Districts

Jeff Holmes, USDA Farm Service Agency State
Executive Director

Rob Larocque, Merrimack and Hillsborough
CCDs

Betsey McNaughten, NH Department of Fish
and Game

Emily Nichols, NH Department of
Environmental Services

Sabrina Stanwood, NH Department of Natural
and Cultural Resources

Allen Wyman, NH Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food

Scott Deblois, Coos and Grafton CCDs
Rebekah Lauster, USDA NRCS Acting State
Conservationist

Dick Lutz, Rockingham and Strafford CCDs
Barbara Richter, NH Association of
Conservation Commissions

Pete Throop, Cheshire and Sullivan CCDs

Guests Present at Department of Natural & Cultural Resources:

Sydney Wilson, NH Farm Bureau

Guests via Zoom:

Pam Gilbert, Grafton CCD

Whitney Lewis, Coos CCD

Amanda Littleton, Cheshire CCD

Lisa Morin, Belknap CCD

Kerry Rickrode, Hillsborough CCD

Minutes Recorders:

Stacy Luke, Merrimack CCD

Steve Cook, Merrimack CCD

Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff Attending via Zoom

Dea Brickner-Wood, Moose Plate Grant
Coordinator

Chair Hepp opened the meeting at 9:08 am and welcomed the group.

Minutes of the February 16, 2023 Quarterly Meeting

Gaudreau made corrections to the spelling of her name in the Roll Call Votes. Also, the Eastern Old Growth Conference is September 21-23, 2023.

Stanwood moved to approve the minutes, as amended, from February 16, 2023. Larocque seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman- Abstain

Deblois- Aye

Gaudreau -Aye

Hepp-Aye

Larocque- Aye

Lutz-Aye

McNaughten- Aye

Richter-Aye

Stanwood-Aye

Throop- Aye

Wyman-Abstain

The motion carries.

Supervisor Appointments and Re-appointments

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

Donna Bascom, Sullivan CCD, new term to expire 7/31/2025

David Grobe, Sullivan CCD, new term to expire 7/31/2025

John Luther, Sullivan CCD, new term to expire 7/31/2026

Throop seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman- Aye

Deblois- Aye

Gaudreau -Aye

Hepp-Aye

Larocque- Aye

Lutz-Aye

McNaughten- Aye

Richter-Aye

Stanwood-Aye

Throop- Aye

Wyman-Aye

The motion carries.

SCC Conservation Moose Plate Grant Program Quarterly Report

Brickner-Wood reported that the grants have gone through the Governor and Council process and that her contract has been approved for the next two years.

Brickner-Wood reported that the Mooseplate Grant Subcommittee has met and went through the application for any necessary revisions. Brickner-Wood referred to the policy memo. Brickner-Wood reported that the application is working well but there is some fine-tuning. One of these

fine-tuning issues includes shoreland and lake assessment projects and their eligibility. These could be conservation planning projects tied into a watershed context. Other fine-tune issues include clarification in describing measurable outcomes, maintenance and monitoring of funded projects, and to include what the zoning is for stewardship projects. The instructions will reflect eth changes but the application has stayed the same. The application will be posted by June 30th and application due on September 15th.

Throop motioned to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Mooseplate Grant application to be posted by June 30, 2023 and due September 15, 2023. Stanwood seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman- Aye
Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau -Aye
Hepp-Aye
Larocque- Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Throop- Aye
Wyman-Aye

The motion carries.

FY2023-2024 Annual Plan

Hanley introduced the 2023-2024 Annual Plan, which is now based on the SCC's Fiscal Year versus the calendar year. The basis of the Annual Plan is from the Strategic Plan.

Stanwood thanked Hanley for putting the plan together. She suggested that the goals be numbered and the actions be bulleted or such similar formatting so each action could be referred back. Lutz inquired about Hanley working on the Climate Resiliency Grant Program and also discussed developing MOUs that could clarify roles of each party with this program and other state-wide initiatives. Hanley suggested creating a document explaining his roles and responsibilities regarding the Climate Resiliency Grant program to share with the SCC for clarification purposes.

Lutz motioned to approve the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Plan as proposed. Larocque seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman- Aye
Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau -Aye
Hepp-Aye
Larocque- Aye

Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Throop- Aye
Wyman-Aye

The motion carries.

Elections

Deblois motioned to elect Pete Throop as chair of the SCC. McNaughten seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman- Aye
Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau -Aye
Hepp-Aye
Larocque- Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Throop- Abstain
Wyman-Aye

The motion carries.

Larocque motioned to elect Donna Hepp as vice chair of the SCC. Stanwood seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Deblois-Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Abstain
Larocque-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten-Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Throop-Abstain
Wyman-Aye

The motion carries.

Shawn Jasper remains Secretary/ Treasurer as the DAMF Commissioner has historically held this role.

CORD Surplus Land Review Procedure

Hanley discussed the draft CORD Surplus Land Review Procedure document as distributed to the SCC. Throop suggested adding point #5: If an SCC member wants an emergency meeting of the full committee due to concerns related to a CORD review, a special meeting of the full State Conservation Committee can be called with approval of the Chair and Vice Chair with the Executive Director posting and organizing the meeting.

Throop motioned to approve the CORD Surplus Land Review Procedure with the addition of the fifth point related to the call of a full-committee meeting. Larocque seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Deblois-Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Abstain
Larocque-Aye
McNaughten-Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Throop-Abstain
Wyman-Aye

The motion carries.

Partnerships in Conservation Spotlight: Sydney Wilson, Young Farmer Coordinator, NH Farm Bureau

Wilson introduced the advocacy and programs of the NH Farm Bureau and the Young Farmer Program. Wilson encouraged the members of the SCC and the county conservation districts to reach out for future collaboration and partnerships. She can be reached at nhfb3@nhfarmbureau.org.

Executive Director's Report

Hanley reviewed his Executive Director's report including grant application writing and funding requests. He discussed his Congressional funding request to Rep. Kuster's office to enhance the conservation district equipment rental programs. Another application went to the NRCS Equity in Conservation Outreach Grant Program to assist with funding for the Climate Resiliency Grant program.

Hanley also reported on updates related to the previous meeting's presentation by Rick Van de Poll. A strategic meeting occurred the previous week in Laconia. Hanley also discussed supervisor recruitment.

District/ Organization/ Agency Updates

Districts, agencies, and organizations discussed their particular program highlights.

- Bekkerman reported the **NH Agricultural Experiment Station** has a new organic dairy manager, is conducting pilot projects in conjunction with NRCS with biochar, and has an agroforestry research project related to farm timber and food together. Other research includes the use of duckweed as a nitrogen sink, especially near dairy farms. Other research includes riparian zones, agricultural lands, and the measurement of nutrients.
- Gaudreau reported on **UNH Cooperative Extension**. Gaudreau reported that they are doing many workshops, found on their website. They have an upcoming NH Bat Counts Trainings with NH Fish and Game, and they are in the middle of the NH Coverts Project Annual Training. This year there are 24 volunteers from 20 different NH communities that will be learning about wildlife, habitats, and more. They are doing a lot with our Women in the Woods program right now as they are in the first year of our USDA Forest Service Landscape Scale Restoration Grant. Women in the Woods is a partnership between UNH Extension, the Forest Society, and NHTOA, and Ashely Newell from NRCS in Coos County. Wendy Ward from NRCS is leading a Bird Walk for us on May 24th. They are in the process of developing a scholarship program and application to help fund forest stewardship management plans on women-owned woodlots. Last year as part of my Gaudreau's research, a needs assessment was conducted and a summary document of the results which will be available soon. UNH Cooperative Extension is also in the process of developing resources and organizing events for professionals and landowners. Amanda Stone has retired and Gaudreau will be on maternity leave for the upcoming meetings.
- Hepp reported that **Carroll CCD** is hosting working on their stream restoration project and supervisor recruitment. **Belknap CCD** is also working on their stream restoration projects, completing their plant sale, working on their community garden and equipment rental programs. Belknap CCD lost their gleanng coordinator and analyzing their next steps. Hepp also reported that NHACD's conservation planners are working diligently throughout the state. NHACD is looking for projects for their demonstration agreement. Envirothon was earlier this week and was an inspirational event with Timberlane High School winning this year's competition.
- Holmes reported on the **Farm Service Agency's** Inflation Reduction Act funding. FSA is currently fully staffed though looking for some temporary employees. IRA has assistance for distressed borrowers. The Emergency Conservation Program is working with Coos County due to flash flooding, Grafton County related to the Christmas storm and Sullivan/ Cheshire Counties with 2021 flooding. FSA is looking for more signups for the CRP program with priority zones in Coos and Rockingham Counties.
- Lausker reported for the **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**. NRCS is currently at an all-employees meeting; the first in four years. NRCS is currently undergoing a hiring push in order to fill current gaps in knowledge and needs to move forward and be successful with all of the opportunities available to them. Currently, there are RFPs for partner agreements to seek partners to help assist NRCS in successfully implementing programs, such as those funded under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). By 2026, there will be over \$1.5MM in CSP and \$4MM in EQIP. This is a fairly large increase in NH funding. NH NRCS is creating a plan in order to manage these funds effectively and efficiently. There is a State Technical Committee meeting on May 23rd in order to discuss IRA and what 2024 will look like. Local Work Groups will be convened earlier than typical.

- Lewis submitted a written report for the **Coos CCD** which included: the spring plant sale has wrapped up; four projects were funded via the Climate Resiliency Grant program; implemented a Seedlings to Schools program with all Coos County elementary schools receiving seedlings to plant with a conservation professional in their class about planting; planning an erosion control workshop this year; conducting a conservation field day at CJEJ Farm in Columbia with a great lineup of conservation based professionals speaking at the workshop and North Woods Law CO's will show up at lunch time; three new podcasts will be premiering on our website within the month, we just released an awesome episode with Joe Homer, former NRCS employee speaking on the importance of soil science found at www.cooscountyconservation.org/podcast/nccs-e4/ ; exploring partnering with NHFG, CISMA, Conservation Commissions, VT Fish & Wildlife Service on invasive species work this summer; planning a forestry workshop at an unmanaged woodlot for foresters and land owners. Coos CCD are mourning the loss of long-time supervisor John Scarinza who was very active with the District, a wealth of knowledge and wisdom, and they miss him greatly; and filling his shoes will be a challenge.
- Littleton reported that the **Cheshire CCD** is busy with their equipment rental program and recently conducted a training on the BCS Tractor. They are working on the Climate Resiliency Grant program, the Farm Futures Grant program, and the Urban Agriculture project with ten workshops and 1:1 technical assistance. They are also working on creating a gear library to help people get outside and youth scholarships. They are also working on their food access programming.
- Luke reported that **Merrimack CCD** has been very busy with education programs such as attending Discover Wild NH with the soil tent, School to Farm at Carter Hill Orchard, mason bee house building program at Hopkinton High School, and the planting workshop in conjunction with Hillsborough CCD. Merrimack CCD is also busy with their food insecurity programs such as the NH Gleans program and Granite State Market Match. Granite State Market Match has expanded to the Canterbury Community Farmers' Market and in providing free CSA shares to food insecure families throughout the county.
- McNaughten reported on **NH Fish & Game** activities including a bat survey, the moose lottery with 33 permits this year, for people to take down there bird feeders due to bear conflicts, and that there have been many hiker rescues this year so far.
- Nichols reported that the **NH Department of Environmental Services' ARM** program is on-boarding their summer interns and that they are currently offering a candidate the ARM Program Specialist position. The pre-proposal deadline is coming up. There is \$4.8MM available. Nichols discussed the ARM program's focus on wetland restoration and the search for agricultural lands that may be too wet to farm and wetland functions could be restored along with preservation easements. They are also undergoing a GIS project with a landscape approach.
- Richter reported on the **NH Association of Conservation Commissions** including their spring wetland training series, which is a seven-part series. There will also be a Fall lunch and learn program series. NHACC is hosting a photo contest to get people outside.
- Rickrode reported that **Hillsborough CCD** has awarded two climate resiliency grants, has conducted additional outreach for their gleaning program with mailings and attending local events, the wood ash spreader has been delivered, and recruiting for new board

members. They are currently undergoing their budget season and have finished their plant sale and planting workshop, which UNH Cooperative Extension assisted.

- Throop reported that ***Sullivan CCD*** is quite busy and encouraged people to watch their video. They are also conducting a street tree project and have a planting project in May.
- Wyman reported on **NH DAMF** including they are most likely moving to One Granite Way by the Fall, 2023, an upgrade on IT services in which registrations and payments will be accepted on-line, the success of the recent Farm & Forest event, and information on meat processing plants.

Other Business

None at this time.

Adjournment

Hepp closed the meeting at 11:59 am.