



State Conservation Committee

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

November 17, 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

Anton Bekkerman, NH Agricultural Experiment
Station
Dea Brickner-Wood, Moose Plate Grant
Coordinator
Amy Gaudreau, UNH Cooperative Extension
Ian Hanley, SCC Executive Director
Jeff Holmes, USDA Farm Service Agency State
Executive Director
Shawn Jasper, NH Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food
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
Becky Ross, USDA NRCS State Conservationist
Lori Sommer, NH Department of Environmental
Services
Sabrina Stanwood, NH Department of Natural
and Cultural Resources

Pete Throop, Cheshire and Sullivan CCDs

Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff Attending via Zoom

Scott Deblois, Coos and Grafton CCDs
Donna Hepp, Belknap and Carroll CCDs

Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff absent:

Rob Larocque, Merrimack and Hillsborough
CCDs

Guests via Zoom:

Catherine Dufault, Carroll CCD
Pam Gilbert, Grafton CCD
Benee Hershon, CDEA-NH, Cheshire CCD
Lisa Morin, Belknap CCD

Minutes Recorders:

Stacy Luke, Merrimack CCD
Steve Cook, Merrimack CCD

Vice Chair Throop opened the meeting at 9:06 am and welcomed the group.

Minutes of the August 18, 2022 Quarterly Meeting

Throop entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2022 meeting.

Stanwood motioned to approve the minutes from August 18, 2022. Sommer seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Supervisor Appointments and Re-appointments

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

Sara Powell, Cheshire CCD, new term to expire 8/1/2025
Don Whittum, Strafford CCD, new term to expire 8/1/2025

Sommer seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Policy Update in Non-Public Session

Throop made a motion to go into Non-public Session regarding consideration of legal advice 91A:3 II(l). Stanwood seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye

Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

The SCC entered non-public session at 9:20 am.

Other persons present during nonpublic session: Ian P. Hanley, Executive Director, and Dea Brickner-Wood, Grant Administrator.

Motion to leave nonpublic session and return to public session by Stanwood, seconded by McNaughten.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Jasper- Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Public session reconvened at 9:47 am.

Public Discussion of Policy Update and Vote

Lutz moved to adopt the following policy regarding **Applications: Public and Non-Public Documents**.

Submitted applications are not public documents prior to the NH State Conservation Committee Board's public meeting and vote to award grant funding.

Following the SCC Board action, funded applications may be made available upon request.

Applications denied funding shall not be made public, as per RSA 21-G:37, VII:

"Requests for grant applications or proposals shall not be subject to the requirements set forth in paragraphs I-V. Notwithstanding RSA 91-A:4, information relating to grant applications or proposals shall remain confidential until the grant contract is approved by the governor and executive council, or, if the grant contract does not require approval from the governor and executive council, until the effective date of the grant contract as determined by the issuing agency."

A formal request may be made to the applicant to receive permission to share the application. Exceptions to making a non-funded application public will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Jasper seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye

Deblois- Aye

Gaudreau-Aye

Hepp-Aye

Jasper- Aye

Lutz-Aye

McNaughten- Aye

Richter-Aye

Stanwood-Aye

Sommer-Aye

Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Lutz moved to adopt the following policy regarding **Applications: Extraneous Information**.

Extraneous information may include information and/ or communications separate from the submitted application and received from the applicant and/ or other parties either in support or not in support of the application.

Process

The process for handling extraneous information for grant applications is as follows:

- *The Grant Administrator will advise the Grant Committee of extraneous information has been received on a certain application, the name of the party who submitted the extraneous information, and the state that the extraneous information will be presented at the SCC Board meeting, a publicly noticed meeting.*
- *The nature or content of the extraneous information will not be provided to the grant Committee at the time of the application review. The Grant Committee will complete the application review process and funding recommendations based on the submitted application.*
- *The extraneous information will be made available to the State Conservation Committee at the publicly noticed meeting, at the time public comment is received. The information may be documented in writing and handled consistent with all other information received during a public meeting, at which time all parties have equal opportunity to present information.*

Stanwood seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye

Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Jasper- Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Presentation of Subcommittee's Moose Plate Funding Recommendation

Brickner-Wood stated that there were twenty-five (25) applications submitted this year, totaling \$588,485 in requests. The grant reviewed committee reviewed applications on November 10th and recommended twenty (20) of those grants for funding. Brickner-Wood stated that there was a good variety of projects representing the six (6) funding categories except for soil conservation.

Public Comment on Subcommittee's Moose Plate Recommendations

Throop opened discussion for public comment. Throop relayed public comment received in regards to an application from the Town of Milford and corresponding extraneous information in the form of emails and attachments.

Sommer commented that this was a great round of applications and projects related to the natural resources.

Vote on Subcommittee's Funding Recommendations

McNaughten motioned to accept the Grant Committee's FY2023 Grant Funding Recommendation and that the NH State Conservation Committee obligate a total of \$487,600 in NH State Conservation Committee Conservation License Plate Grant funds to the twenty (20) applications listed below. Stanwood seconded the motion.

- 1. Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, *Swiftwater Farm*, \$17,000, Town of Haverhill, Grafton County**
- 2. Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust, *Bradford Bog Headwaters*, \$24,000, Town of Bradford, Merrimack County**
- 3. Bear-Paw Regional Greenways, *Coveland Farm*, \$25,000, Town of Strafford, Strafford County**
- 4. Bear-Paw Regional Greenways, *Hume Conservation Easement*, \$10,505, Town of Nottingham, Rockingham County**
- 5. Belknap County Conservation District, *Wood Ash / Lime Spreader Equipment for Belknap County*, \$30,000, Belknap County**
- 6. Carroll County Conservation District, *Carroll County Stream Restoration Project*, \$23,500, Town Jackson, Carroll County**

7. **Town of Fremont**, *Glen Oaks Forest Expansion*, \$30,000, Town of Fremont, Rockingham County
8. **Lakes Region Conservation Trust**, *Land Conservation on Berry Bay, Ossipee Lake*, \$30,000, Town of Freedom, Carroll County
9. **Merrimack County Conservation District**, *Morrill Farm Dairy Fencing Project*, \$22,750, Town of Penacook, Merrimack County
10. **Moose Mountains Regional Greenways**, *Keating Conservation Easement*, \$21,000, Town of Milton, Strafford County
11. **Moose Mountain Regional Greenways**, *Steer Conservation Easement*, \$20,000, Town of Milton, Strafford County
12. **National Wildlife Turkey Federation**, *White Mountain Forest, Forest Opening Restoration Project*, \$29,845, Town of Campton, Grafton County
13. **Piscataquog Land Conservancy**, *Clarkridge Farm Conservation Easement*, \$24,000, Town of Goffstown, Merrimack County
14. **City of Portsmouth**, *Wetland Delineation Update for Portsmouth, NH*, \$20,000, City of Portsmouth, Rockingham County
15. **Society for the Protection of NH Forests**, *Coskie Conservation Easement*, \$25,000, Town of Middleton, Strafford County
16. **Society for the Protection of NH Forests**, *Deepwood Forest Conservation Easement*, \$25,000, Towns of Canterbury and Northfield, Merrimack County
17. **Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire**, *Landry – Nippo Lake*, \$20,000, Town of Barrington, Strafford County
18. **Squam Lakes Association**, *Squam Watershed Variable Milfoil Management*, \$30,000, Grafton, Carroll and Belknap Counties
19. **Town of Stoddard Conservation Commission**, *Little Big Forest*, \$30,000, Town of Stoddard, Cheshire County
20. **Strafford County Conservation District**, *Sam Plumber Culvert Replacement*, \$30,000, Town of Milton, Strafford County

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Jasper- Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Strategic Plan Review and Vote

Hanley discussed the reconvening of the Strategic Plan Subcommittee following feedback from the last SCC quarterly meeting. Edits made included clarifying information about the role of the SCC in conservation with a focus on not-duplicating efforts and writing more specific medium and long-term goals. Hanley thanked Lutz, Hepp, and Richter with their help on the strategic plan. Stanwood stated that she was happy with this final product.

Jasper moved to approve the State Conservation Committee Strategic Plan as submitted. Sommer seconded the motion.

Role Call Vote

Bekkerman-Aye
Deblois- Aye
Gaudreau-Aye
Hepp-Aye
Jasper- Aye
Lutz-Aye
McNaughten- Aye
Richter-Aye
Stanwood-Aye
Sommer-Aye
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Discussion on Review of District Financial Reporting

Hanley discussed in the following quarter he would like to look into the process related to District Financial Reporting and is looking for subcommittee members. Stanwood reminded that having financial reporting submitted to the SCC is part of the RSA.

Lutz brought up his concern as to whether conservation districts that hold easement have enough stewardship funds. Throop discussed the need for policies regarding the management of stewardship funds.

Richter discussed a review of financials will assist in identifying and assisting struggling conservation districts.

Morin discussed the form is difficult to fill out as district finances are very different and individual districts do their financials differently. Gilbert stated that the form is difficult for those who are county employees. Gilbert stated that the form could be helpful if there was information that could be helpful in understanding the differences in funding formulas and, if the form provided helpful information, more conservation districts would fill them out. Throop suggested an inventory of conservation district financial recordkeeping systems. Jasper suggested that this reporting be as simple as possible while being compliant with the law.

Hanley will reach out to conservation districts and convene a meeting regarding financial reporting and convene a subcommittee meeting with the assistance of SCC members. Hanley aims to come to the February 2023 SCC meeting with recommendations.

Executive Director's Performance Review Update

Hepp and Jasper discussed Ian Hanley's performance. Jasper reported that he has filled out the evaluation form and all feedback has been positive. Richter asked whether Hanley's position will be upgraded to full-time. Jasper reported that he has made a request that the position become full-time as of July 1, 2023.

Hanley stated that goals for the upcoming year includes putting himself out there as a resource for the conservation districts and creating more of an on-line presence.

Executive Director's Update

Hanley gave an update of his activities this quarter. Hanley reported that the new Supervisor Handbook is complete and they have been delivered to most conservation districts and the remaining ones will be mailed. Hanley will start working on a larger Conservation District Handbook. Hanley has been working on creating an outreach calendar of conservation district events. He created a list of available rentable equipment that is on the SCC website. The SCC website will transition to a resource center including minutes, guidelines, equipment inventories, and other resources for conservation districts with the hope to build this out more in future years. Hanley stated that other states' conservation committees have been helpful in providing models from their states.

District/ Organization/ Agency Updates

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

- Bekkerman reported that the *UNH Agricultural Experiment Station* has had difficulties in hiring people for the farm. They have also launched a new pilot program in which COLSA faculty work with people at other colleges. They have also had four project funded including projects involving soil sensors replacing the need for soil sampling, forest management perception within tourism and recreation, intersection with PFAS in agricultural soils and waterways, and a sensor program in Great Bay.
- Deblois reported that *Coos CCD* held a Forest Field Day with schools, have wrapped up their Climate Resiliency grant for this year, and held their fall bulb sale.
- Gaudreau reported on *UNH Cooperative Extension*, including an upcoming Northeast Old Growth Conference in September 2023, the Women in the Woods program, and the welcoming of the new Coos County Forester Ray Berthiaume.
- Hepp reported that she is proud of the stream restoration work managed by *Carroll CCD* and *Belknap CCD*. *Belknap CCD* has continued with their promotion of volunteerism through their Volunteer Coordinator.
- Herschon reported that the *Conservation District Employees' Association- NH Chapter* is working on the Climate Resiliency Grant in which the second round will begin in December. Herschon invited the SCC members to their meetings and invited them to

send along any requests and information to her that can be covered at the CDEA-NH meetings.

- Holmes reported on the *Farm Service Agency*. In regards to NH's drought conditions; Rockingham, Hillsborough, and Cheshire hit D3 drought and the State Emergency Board was convened to request ECP implementation there. All three counties have looked at potential well projects to deal with water shortages. Holmes also reported on the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) – a \$10B program to address losses affecting insured producers caused by qualifying disaster events in 2020-2021. Phase 1 has distributed about \$7B. ERP Phase 2 and the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) are revenue – based programs coming in the next month or two and will consider additional losses in 2020 and 2021 caused by pandemic or other disasters. Employee training and signup to occur in December. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is having an effect on many of our Farm Loan borrowers. The original ARPA law was going to retire the debt of all borrowers who were part of all “Historically Underserved” populations. That part of ARPA was challenged in the courts and Congress pivoted to assist “distressed borrowers”. There is currently over \$3B set aside to help those who are behind on payments, been foreclosed, or had installments delayed to the end of the loan. More guidance to come on what exactly “distressed” means. NH FSA had its 5- member State Committee named in September. They are all farmers and appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture and help oversee all programs and county operations in NH. Members are; Josh Jennings – Brentwood, Judy Merrill – Stratham, Todd Larocque – Concord, Jennifer Wilhelm – Madbury and Rob Taylor – Meriden. FSA is still trying to fill a vacancy in Walpole for a permanent program technician. The Dairy Margin Coverage program is open for sign up through December 9, 2022. Payments have been triggered for the last two months and based on current projections are expected to continue through the entirety of 2023. FSA will be hearing shortly what the signup dates are for General and Grasslands CRP in 2023.
- Jasper reported that the *NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food* has recommended \$1MM in GOFERR funds for meat processing infrastructure, which will go towards a certificate program with UNH and money to modernize and expand existing facilities. They are also working on managing \$900,000 funding NH foodbanks to buy local foods. Jasper is applying for funds for agricultural resiliency to the NASDA Foundation for the Northeast states. Jasper reported on the Farm Stress Grant program, UNH Cooperative Extension's Seth Wilner is managing this program. They are also working on their Agricultural Lands Preservation program and look towards changing the statute so Federal funds can be accepted and that NH DAMF does not have to hold the easement. Ag in the Classroom will now be a full-time position with additional funding from UNH; the position will remain at the NH Farm Bureau. They have approval to hire a full-time person for the administration of the FSMA program. Farm and Forest is moving to Deerfield. Jasper has been re-nominated by the Governor as commissioner with a vote pending.
- Lutz reported that the *Rockingham CCD* and *Strafford CCD* was involved in the recent NHACD Annual Meeting, which had an attendance of 35 people. Lutz also reported on *NH Association of Conservation District*. Donna Hepp is the new president. Over the

year, 40 supervisors have participated in NHACD activities. The December 7th Zoom in on Conservation will cover the Right to Know law. NHACD has passed six position papers and hosted four legislative tours. Lutz stated he would like the SCC to have their meeting at the NHACD Annual Meeting to co-mingle with the supervisors.

- McNaughten reported on *NH Fish & Game* activities including 30 harvested moose from 40 granted permits, a request that duck hunters not take Common Eider due to the species' reduced population due to bird flu, a prescribed burn in Farmington, the launch of the Schoolyard Garden Grant that assists educators with their garden projects, and that the NHFG 2023 calendar is available for \$12. Deer season is in full swing. Conservation projects are moving along in Fitzwilliam and Rindge with an addition to the Perley Lakes WMA. A new WMA is in Springfield- the Guile Forest. The Glover Farm project in Dummer is moving forward. Additional conservation land will be added to Garland Pond WMA in Ossipee. NHFG is still looking for a land surveyor.
- Richter reported on the *NH Association of Conservation Commissions* including their Lunch & Learn programming, hybrid Annual Meeting, and a wetland training program in which there will be four on-line and two in the field.
- Ross reported for the *USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*. NRCS will see \$20B as part of the Inflation Reduction Act though they are still waiting for information on what those funds will go towards. In terms of NRCS practices, there are 30 practices on the list but some climate smart strategies are probably missing and NRCS is working on adding these. Ross is seeking input as to what practices should be added.
- Sommer reported that the *NH Department of Environmental Services* is working on filling vacancies. DES is currently working on syncing their program and policies with the Army Corps of Engineers with a reissued authorization in September with some changes such as more scrutiny regarding vernal pools, mitigation requirements at 5,000 sq ft, and minor changes to wetland classifications. DES received an EPA grant for wetland crossings specifically for turtles; a retrofit design will be created in conjunction with UNH Cooperative Extension. ARM had 14 applications with 13 recommended for funding including three dam removals and land conservation. The Drinking Water Trust Fund has money available for infrastructure and land preservation. Sommer also reported she is retiring after 32 years. DES has not named a replacement representative to the SCC yet.
- Stanwood reported that *NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources* is fully staffed and that there will soon be a way to pay for NHB reviews on-line.
- Throop reported on *Cheshire CCD's* equipment rental program, reviewing their strategic plan versus outcomes, putting together their 2023 Plan of Work, overseeing a portfolio of grant programs, and working on outreach events including Birding on the Farm, Radically Rural, a river clean-up, and a wildlife habitat workshop.

Other Business

Throop wanted to give thanks and acknowledgments during the meeting. First, Throop acknowledged Dea Brickner-Wood for her outstanding work on the Moose Plate grants. Throop also wanted to acknowledge and thank Lori Sommer for all of her hard work and commitment to the State Conservation Committee as this is Sommer's last meeting before she retires from NH DES. Throop also reported that Amanda Stone has left the Committee, with Amy Gaudreau

replacing her. Amanda Littleton is being replaced by Benee Hershon as the President of the Conservation District Employees' Association- NH Chapter.

Adjournment

Stanwood motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sommer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Hepp closed the meeting at 11:55am.