



## State Conservation Committee

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

February 16, 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**

Dea Brickner-Wood, Moose Plate Grant  
Coordinator  
Amy Gaudreau, UNH Cooperative Extension  
Ian Hanley, SCC Executive Director  
Donna Hepp, Belknap and Carroll CCDs  
David Rousseau, 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  
Becky Ross, USDA NRCS State Conservationist  
Maddie Severance, NH Department of Natural  
and Cultural Resources  
Emily Nichols, NH Department of  
Environmental Services

### **Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff Attending via Zoom**

Scott Deblois, Coos and Grafton CCDs  
Benée Hershon, CDEA-NH  
Sabrina Stanwood, NH Department of Natural  
and Cultural Resources  
Pete Throop, Cheshire and Sullivan CCDs

### **Members/Designees/Advisors/Staff absent:**

Anton Bekkerman, NH Agricultural Experiment  
Station  
Jeff Holmes, USDA Farm Service Agency State  
Executive Director

### **Guests via Zoom:**

Catherine Dufault, Carroll CCD  
Pam Gilbert, Grafton CCD  
Whitney Lewis, Coos CCD  
Steven Moran, University of Massachusetts

### **Minutes Recorders:**

Stacy Luke, Merrimack CCD  
Steve Cook, Merrimack CCD

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

### **Minutes of the November 17, 2022 Quarterly Meeting**

Hepp entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2022 meeting.

Richter moved to approve the minutes from November 17, 2022. Larocque seconded the motion.

**Role Call Vote**

Gaudreau -Aye  
Hepp-Aye  
Larocque- Aye  
Lutz-Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter-Aye  
Severance-Aye  
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

Richter moved to approve the non-public minutes from November 17, 2022. Larocque seconded the motion.

**Role Call Vote**

Gaudreau -Aye  
Hepp-Aye  
Larocque- Aye  
Lutz-Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter-Aye  
Severance-Aye  
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

**Supervisor Appointments and Re-appointments**

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

John Plumer, Belknap CCD, new term to expire 7/31/2025

Larocque seconded the motion.

**Role Call Vote**

Gaudreau -Aye  
Hepp-Aye  
Larocque- Aye  
Lutz-Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter-Aye  
Rousseau- Aye  
Severance-Aye  
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

## **SCC Conservation Moose Plate Grant Program Quarterly Report**

Brickner-Wood reported that this year is the Moose Plate Grant's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Sales are up 7-8%. This year there will be one closing date: April 1<sup>st</sup> using the grant agreement form. The entire batch will go to Governor and Council, which will be a better use of staff resources.

Richter asked who the appropriate signer would be for a town. Brickner-Wood stated that this typically occurs during a selectboard or council meeting and they could sign it or appoint another, such as the conservation commission, to sign the grant agreement. This would be represented in the meeting minutes.

## **Grant Program Administrator's Performance Review and Contract Renewal**

The SCC discussed Brickner-Wood's contract, which is up in June. A \$5/ hour funding supports this raise. Expenses are capped at approximately \$2,000/ year.

Throop moved to approve the renewal of Brickner-Wood's contract as the SCC Conservation Moose Plate Grant Administrator as presented. Severance seconded the motion.

### **Role Call Vote**

Deblois- Aye  
Gaudreau -Aye  
Hepp-Aye  
Larocque- Aye  
Lutz-Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter-Aye  
Rousseau- Aye  
Severance-Aye  
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

## **Guest Speaker: Rick Van de Poll, Land and Lakes Conservation Coalition**

Dr. Van de Poll, Director of Research at Tin Mountain Conservation Center, presented a new initiative to create a group to promote environmental initiatives, initially funded by the Samuel P. Pardoe Foundation. Van de Poll stated that this initiative is similar to one started in Maine, the Maine Conservation Alliance. This group has a lobbying arm named the Environmental Priorities Coalition set out to create a balance between the politic and the science. Van de Poll and partners seek to present this model as a concept for the acceleration of environmental priorities in the state.

There will be a roll out of the initiative at 1:30PM on May 11<sup>th</sup> at Prescott Farm in Laconia. Richter stated that this group seems to fit with the SCC's strategic plan and stated that this may be a place to move forward. Lutz, Hepp, McNaughten, Richter, and Throop stated they may be interested in attending.

## **CORD Surplus Land Review**

Hanley discussed creating a CORD Surplus Land Review procedure manual and create a subcommittee with a pre-authorization to act on the reviews between meetings. Throop agreed to this suggestion and stated Hanley should research the rules, guidelines, and statutes apply to CORD reviews and make sure that the SCC understands them. Throop stated he would be part of this committee.

The SCC reviewed the recent CORD reviews that have a public comment period until March 1, 2023. In response to State Owned Surplus Land Review, York Dam, Concord, NH 2023 SLR 003, there was no comment from the SCC.

In response to State Owned Surplus Land Review, Allen Forest, Concord, NH 2023 SLR 004, the SCC discussed the wetlands and important agricultural soils on the property and whether those resources will be protected in a sale.

Richter moved to make a recommendation to CORD to place a deed restriction on the Allen Forest land before it is sold to conserve the wetlands and important agricultural soils. Lutz seconded the motion.

### **Role Call Vote**

Deblois- Nay  
Gaudreau -Aye  
Hepp-Aye  
Larocque- Aye  
Lutz-Aye  
McNaughten- Abstain  
Richter-Aye  
Rousseau- Aye  
Severance-Aye  
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

## **Discussion of District Financial Reporting**

Hanley discussed the process and meetings he undertook in order to review the district financial reporting. Hanley stated that he has had many conversations with the Attorney General's office about the SCC's oversight of conservation district finances. The AG's office has stated that the SCC can require reports but cannot mandate fiscal and financial policy to the districts. For example, the SCC can ask whether a conservation district has funds for conservation easements but cannot mandate that they have money for stewardship for those conservation easements.

Hanley presented the new District Financial Reporting Form to the SCC.

Throop moved to approve the new District Financial Reporting Form and retire the previous form. Richter seconded the motion.

### **Role Call Vote**

Deblois- Aye

Gaudreau -Aye  
Hepp-Aye  
Larocque- Aye  
Lutz-Aye  
McNaughten- Aye  
Richter-Aye  
Rousseau- Aye  
Severance-Aye  
Throop- Aye

The motion carries.

### **Discussion of District Investment Guidance**

Hanley reported on his discussions with the Attorney General's office regarding guidance to conservation districts regarding investing their funds. Low risk insured options with FDIC institutions are acceptable and may include CDs and Treasury Bonds. In terms of grant money, the conservation district needs to work with the grantor in terms use of those funds.

Hanley is working on a guide for conservation districts but wants the Attorney General's office to review it before dissemination.

### **Congressional Directed Spending Applications FY-2024**

Hanley reported that he is working on an application for a Congressional Directed Spending Allocation for FY 2024. These funds could be for the conservation district rental equipment program or an online supervisor training program. A 20% match is required.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Hanley reviewed his Executive Director's report. Hanley reported that the Climate Resiliency Grant is in the review phase. Hanley also reported on needed legislative changes for the Agland Preservation Program, HB221.

Hanley plans to present the Annual Plan of Work at the May meeting, which is the one before the beginning of the new fiscal year.

### **District/ Organization/ Agency Updates**

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

- Gaudreau reported on ***UNH Cooperative Extension***, including Sarah Allen has been hired as the new dairy specialist, that the NH Coverts Program is coming up with approximately 25 students, the Nature in Your Backyard Program series is ongoing focused on small acreage landowners, and the Old Growth Forest Conference will be on September 21-23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Gilbert reported that the ***Grafton CCD*** has completely moved into the Grafton County Complex, Dick Walling is their new chair, and they are currently reviewing the climate resilience applications.

- Hepp reported that **Carroll CCD** is hosting an apple grafting workshop. **Belknap CCD** is holding their annual tree sale, hosting an Open House on March 27<sup>th</sup>, and NRCS is providing free watershed planning assistance to Sanbornton based on stream restoration and studies by BCCD. Hepp also reported that the **New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts** will host the Envirothon competition on May 16<sup>th</sup>, have hired a third conservation planner, and had a meeting with Sen. Shaheen's office.
- Herschon reported that the **Conservation District Employees' Association- NH Chapter** is working on the Climate Resiliency Grant in which the second round began in December, that they will be conducting a NOFA workshop on the program, and that there will be an equipment roundtable on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Herschon will be leaving on April 4<sup>th</sup> and Cheshire CCD is taking applications for her position.
- Larocque reported that the **Hillsborough CCD** and **Merrimack CCD** provided a erosion control conference at the Nackey Loeb Center in Manchester in December, finished up their 2022 gleaning program, and working on the Climate Resiliency Grant program. Merrimack CCD also hosted a Hands-On Websoil Survey workshop in December.
- Lutz reported that the **Rockingham CCD** is conducting their annual trout sale and **Strafford CCD** district manager Alena Warren is on maternity leave.
- McNaughten reported on **NH Fish & Game** activities including a citizen science program on butterfly monitoring that has been piloted by the Harris Conservation Center. McNaughten also stated that box turtles are coming back, Kim Tuttle is retiring at the end of the month, BOW's winter program will be on February 25<sup>th</sup> at Owl Brook, and they are actively tracking legislation.
- Richter reported on the **NH Association of Conservation Commissions** including following legislation including HB592 regarding wetland buffer local ordinances, which was voted Inexpedient to Legislate. They are conducting a wetland training program from January through June with several sessions including field work sessions.
- Ross reported for the **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**. There are additional funds from the Inflation Reduction Act for regular programs and easements. There is just over \$1MM for technical assistance related to climate smart strategies. There are upcoming grants from the Office of Urban Agriculture for urban agricultural innovation and food waste reduction programs. Ross reported that she will be on a detail to Washington, DC for 120-365 days.
- Rousseau reported that the **NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food** has a full-time food safety employee. He thanked Brickner-Wood on her excellent work with the Governor and Council. Rosseau also commented on mentoring and internships and how important they are in creating their next generation of conservationists.
- Nichols reported that the **NH Department of Environmental Services' ARM** program is updating its tools and priorities with an emphasis on restoration. They are about to announce the 2023 round.
- Stanwood reported that **NH Department of Natural & Cultural Resources** is fully staffed and updating its NHB database and doing well. Stanwood also stated that there is work on salt marsh hay and this could be a possible future presentation to the SCC.

**Other Business**

Catherine Dufault inquired on an update on the funding for increased and improved meat processing facilities. Rousseau stated that he would relay the question to Shawn Jasper for follow-up.

**Adjournment**

Hepp closed the meeting at 12:05 pm.