

MINUTES
**CONSERVATION AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ADVISORY
COUNCIL (CNRAC)**
May 29, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gary Kribbs, Chairman
Clifford David, Member
Meredith Graham, Member
Stock Illoway, Member
Joanne Kilgour, Member
Bob Kirchner, Member
Rick Sayles, Member
Janet Sweeney, Member
David Trimpey, Member
Ephraim Zimmerman, Member

Cindy Dunn, DCNR Secretary
Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Adviser
Katie Woodbury, CNRAC Assistant

GUESTS PRESENT

Greg Czarnecki, DCNR
Nicki Kasi, DEP
Matt Keefer, DCNR
Don McClure, McClure Associates
Eric Nelson, DCNR
Brian Rider, Pennsylvania Forest Products Association
Teddi Stark, DCNR

WELCOME

Chairman Kribbs opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council unanimously approved the March 2019 minutes.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Dunn welcomed members and guests and highlighted some of her recent travels throughout the state. She mentioned Restore Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf's proposal for addressing critical infrastructure needs across Pennsylvania. Funding from Restore Pennsylvania could be used for park and forest infrastructure as well as green infrastructure and land conservation. One potential Restore project, rehabbing the Glen Onoko Falls Trail, would make the trail a safer attraction and draw many visitors to the Carbon County region. Secretary Dunn spoke broadly about how the case can be made for Restore Pennsylvania economically, but she said Restore is also important because it helps to improve the quality of life for

Pennsylvanians.

Secretary Dunn mentioned the release of Pennsylvania's Draft Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan. Public comments are accepted on the first iteration of this plan until June 7. DCNR's Matt Keefer led the Forestry Workgroup.

Finally, Secretary Dunn mentioned she will be spending time visiting the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps crews throughout the summer. She invited Council to join her at any of these events.

Stock Illoway said it was nice to see Secretary Dunn in Chester County.

Cliff David asked about the potential timeline for when Restore Pennsylvania might be passed by the legislature.

Secretary Dunn said probably not until the fall.

Stock Illoway and Dave Trimpey mentioned that the timber industry is not supportive of a severance tax on natural gas because of fears there may be a timber severance tax in the future.

Rick Sayles asked if any friends groups could help with the backlog of infrastructure projects.

Secretary Dunn said they do what they can, but there is not enough funding for most of the major infrastructure projects DCNR needs to complete.

Meredith Graham asked if additional funding for Restore Pennsylvania would be placed into programs that already exist.

Secretary Dunn said yes. The idea is to use funding mechanisms that already exist.

Joanne Kilgour said there was a recent announcement about an LWCF replacement project in Chester County. She asked if there will be more announcements about it.

Secretary Dunn said LWCF would be a good topic of discussion for future CNRAC meetings.

Rick Sayles commented on the economic impact of trails.

DCNR ADVISER REPORT

Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Adviser

Gretchen Leslie mentioned several staff changes at DCNR: Sara Nicholas, DCNR Policy Director, will retire as of June 7; Eric Nelson joined the Department as the new Legislative Director; and Emily Hendrickson, former William Penn Fellow, transitioned to her new role of DCNR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion coordinator.

Ms. Leslie said the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan survey is open to the

public. She asked Council to send it to colleagues, families and anyone else who might be interested in providing feedback. She said this might be a good topic of conversation for the Strategic Planning workgroup.

Ms. Leslie said Senators Stefano and Bartolotta have circulated a memo saying they will be introducing an alternative infrastructure plan that would rely on opening state forestland for drilling instead of instituting a severance tax.

Cliff David asked for an update on any potential new members joining Council.

Ms. Leslie said there is no update on new members, but Walt Peechatka has decided to resign from his post.

PRESENTATIONS

Matt Keefer, Bureau of Forestry, DCNR
Nicki Kasi, Chesapeake Bay Program Office, DEP
Draft PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan

Matt Keefer and Nicki Kasi gave members an overview of the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). Ms. Kasi encouraged Council to read through the plan and provide any public comments by June 7, 2019. DEP plans to make changes based on comments it receives and will submit the final version to EPA in August 2019.

Matt Keefer highlighted how the Plan intersects with DCNR's work. One of the Plan's goals calls for planting 83,000 acres of forest buffer, about 25% of the total number of riparian forest buffer acres in Pennsylvania. The Plan also intersects with DCNR's work by highlighting the importance of urban tree canopy and land conservation.

Mr. Keefer explained how each sector – Agriculture, Stormwater, Forestry, Funding and Wastewater – worked together throughout the WIP process to develop the recommendations that are in the draft report. If Pennsylvania does not meet its reduction goals, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a few options for next steps, including implementing more federal regulations for livestock operations or setting stream-by-stream water quality standards. The hope is that the final WIP will meet the appropriate standards and identify enough funding sources to satisfy EPA. Outreach and communication will be integral to success.

Gary Kribbs asked about types of best management practices Pennsylvania has used since 1985 to achieve nutrient reductions.

Nicki Kasi said the state used a combination of practices such as nutrient management, cover crops, forest buffers and upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities.

Rick Sayles asked for clarification on a few of the funding mechanisms identified in the report.

Meredith Graham asked for clarification on the Right-to-Know exemption proposal identified in the report.

Nicki Kasi said updating the Right-to-Know legislation to exempt farmers would be beneficial for reporting best management practice implementation to EPA. The only way Pennsylvania currently reports practices to EPA is through what can be found through cost share programs. DEP knows there are many farmers who are implementing practices on their own, yet they are reluctant to report because they do not want their information to be publicly available. Adding an exemption to the Right-to-Know law would allow DEP to capture those extra practices that are not currently reported.

Greg Czarnecki, Climate Change and Research Coordinator, DCNR DCNR's Climate Adaptation Plan Progress

Greg Czarnecki gave Council an update on DCNR's Climate Adaptation Plan implementation. DCNR is now a participating member of the Governor's GreenGov Council, a result of an executive order aimed at boosting green and sustainable practices in state government. DCNR plays a major role in leading by example and educating park visitors how to install sustainable infrastructure. The executive order, signed in January of 2019, establishes the first statewide goal to reduce carbon pollution.

DCNR will be working in the South Mountain Conservation Landscape area to begin testing climate adaptation techniques. The Climate Adaptation Plan lays out several action steps each bureau can take to mitigate the effects of climate change. The Department sees its role in climate as both a resource manager and an educator.

Ephraim Zimmerman asked what steps the administration is going to take to incentivize the public to make lifestyle changes.

Secretary Dunn said DCNR has been working with other agencies like the Department of General Services to revise policies to make them greener. DCNR also serves as an example to the visiting public and provides educational signage on green buildings and infrastructure. DCNR is working with the Department of General Services to do a Guaranteed Energy Savings Analysis.

Cliff David asked Mr. Czarnecki how CNRAC could help DCNR in its effort to combat climate change.

Secretary Dunn said members can support DCNR in its public outreach and advocate for funding.

WORKGROUP REPORTS

Bob Kirchner, Motorized Recreation Workgroup Chair

Bob Kirchner gave Council an update on his meeting with DCNR leadership concerning CNRAC's Motorized Recreation Report. DCNR will be hiring an individual in the Bureau of Forestry to focus on motorized recreation, something CNRAC recommended in its report to Secretary Dunn. Mr. Kirchner explained the cultural difference between many voices in the motorized recreation community and the conservation-minded professionals at DCNR. The hiring of this individual may be a good opportunity to bridge the gap between the two perspectives. CNRAC's next step would be to wait until the new individual is onboard and try to

identify “low-hanging fruit.”

Stock Illoway, Infrastructure Workgroup Chair

Stock Illoway gave Council an overview of the workgroup’s conference call. DCNR and the Governor’s Office have not worked out the details for Restore Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf’s infrastructure proposal being considered in the legislature. There is support for the concept, but the legislature is not keen on passing a severance tax on natural gas to fund the initiative. Mr. Illoway said the workgroup would like to discuss how best to contact legislators.

Secretary Dunn noted an alternative funding proposal circulating in the legislature that would open drilling on state lands. DCNR does not support this alternative.

Cliff David, Communications Workgroup Chair

Cliff David said the Communications Committee would like to discuss how to make CNRAC more relevant. The group discussed ways to make Council more visible, such as updating the CNRAC website and conducting legislative visits.

OTHER BUSINESS

Stock Illoway presented the final slate of candidates for officer elections: Ephraim Zimmerman, Chair; Janey Sweeney, Vice Chair; and Geralyn Singer, Secretary.

Council unanimously voted to elect all three candidates to their positions.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The chairman and council adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Notice of the May meeting was published in a newspaper of general circulation in Dauphin County and mailed to individuals and offices in compliance with the Sunshine Act (1986-84). These minutes constitute the official record of the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council; no official transcript is provided.