

MINUTES

**CONSERVATION AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ADVISORY
COUNCIL (CNRAC)**

July 26, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT

Gary Kribbs, Chairman
Erick Coolidge, Member
Cliff David, Member
Cindy Dunn, Secretary
Bill Engle, Member
Bill Forrey, Member
Stock Illoway, Member
Joanne Kilgour, Member
Bob Kirchner, Member
Sue Landes, Member
Rick Sayles, Member
Janet Sweeney, Member
Dave Trimpey, Member

Gretchen Leslie, CNRAC Adviser
Katie Woodbury, CNRAC Assistant

GUESTS PRESENT

Jeff Schmidt, Sierra Club
Cooper Leslie, DCNR
Sara Nicholas, DCNR
Michael Chapaloney, DCED
Seth Cassell, DCNR

WELCOME

Chairman-elect Gary Kribbs called the meeting to order and opened the floor for council and audience member introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council unanimously approved the May 2017 minutes.

APPROVAL OF OFFICERS

Council unanimously voted to approve new officers for the 2017-2019 term: Gary Kribbs, Chairman; Ephraim Zimmerman, Vice-chairman; Janet Sweeney, Secretary.

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Erick Coolidge announced he will be resigning from his position on council as of July 26, 2017. He noted it was a great honor to serve on CNRAC, and he has much respect for its members.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary

Secretary Dunn thanked Erick Coolidge for his service on council and emphasized the value his perspective brings to discussions. She welcomed new council member Joanne Kilgour, Executive Director of the Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter. Ms. Dunn also mentioned the recent passing of council member Paul Lyskava and remarked that he brought a great level of professionalism and enthusiasm to his work.

Secretary Dunn gave a brief budget update and thanked members for their outreach to legislators and stakeholders. The spending package signed by Governor Wolf includes sufficient funding for operations, and the Staff at DCNR continue to monitor special funds as the legislature continues discussions on the revenue package. Language in the Administrative Code requires DCNR to do a feasibility study in Wyoming County to determine if there is potential for a new state park. She encouraged members to continue talking with legislators and stakeholders until they reach a full agreement.

Janet Sweeney asked if the feasibility study required by the Administrative Code will identify alternatives to state parks such as local parks and trails.

Secretary Dunn said that would be a good idea; it would have to be added to the scope of work in the Request for Proposal.

Secretary Dunn provided members with legislative updates: SB 624 became law without Governor Wolf's signature, though it does not affect DCNR's current Ryerson agreement with CONSOL; Governor Wolf signed HB 1494, which authorizes DCNR to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Allegheny National Forest; and Representative Heffley introduced HB 1453, which would allow DCNR to impose parking fees for state parks.

Bill Forrey asked if DCNR has any clarity on the recent Pennsylvania Environmental Defense Fund Pennsylvania State Supreme Court decision.

Secretary Dunn said the DCNR Office of Chief Counsel is working with the Governor's Office of General Counsel to determine the impact of that decision.

Bill Engle said DCNR should better advertise the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps. He also asked for clarification on how DCNR funds the crews.

Secretary Dunn said the funding is through the Reemployment Fund at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

Chairman Gary Kribbs asked members if they want to send a letter to the legislature regarding the budget and revenue package.

Members unanimously agreed.

PRESENTATIONS

Seth Cassell, Division Chief, Forest Resource Planning and Information Conserving Penn's Woods (State Forests Strategic Plan)

Seth Cassell presented on DCNR's upcoming Bureau of Forestry Strategic Plan. He explained that the purpose of the plan is to update the organization's strategy and direction when making decisions that affect forest resources in the state. Strategic planning is a generational effort; the last plan, *Penn's Woods*, is from 25 years ago. Some accomplishments for the Bureau over those years include a shift to ecosystem management, the creation of the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index, the use ecological classifications, and the development of private land partnerships.

Mr. Cassell outlined the timeline for the new planning process. The planning section will write the draft in 2018 and release the final document in fall of 2019.

Sue Landes asked why the plan has not been updated for 25 years.

Mr. Cassell responded saying organizational change takes time. It will be important to differentiate between long-term movement and short-term adjustments. The Bureau completes Forest Action Plans every 5-10 years, and State Forest Management Plans every 5-7 years.

Secretary Dunn agreed with Ms. Landes and said DCNR could think more about the timelines for strategic planning.

Bill Engle asked Mr. Cassell to clarify the definition of native plants.

Mr. Cassell said the Bureau considers native plants to be those that existed in Pennsylvania pre-European contact.

Stock Illoway said he would be interested to see interpretations related to climate change in the plan.

Ed Raptosh, Chief, Civil Engineering & Design DCNR's Dams- Status and Challenges

Ed Raptosh of the DCNR Bureau of Facility Design and Construction gave a brief overview of DCNR's dams. DCNR has 46 high hazard dams, 7 significant hazard dams, and 74 low hazard dams. Mr. Raptosh explained the differences between each classification.

All high hazard dams are inspected annually by a civil engineer. The Bureau of Facility Design and Construction also inspects significant hazard dams and low hazard dams on an annual basis. Inspectors look for issues like cracks in the concrete, leaks, structural movement, etc. Each report contains a list of items that need to be repaired; the Bureau prioritizes these recommendations based on critical importance.

Mr. Raptosh gave an overview of the major funding sources for DCNR's dams; sources include the DGS Capital Budget, American Rivers, nature conservancies, and Key '93. The Bureau would like to have a dedicated annual fund for dam maintenance, which is separate from major rehabilitation projects.

Janet Sweeney asked if the most expensive rehabilitation projects are for high hazard dams.

Mr. Raptosh said that most of the expensive projects are for high hazard dams.

Bill Forrey asked if the Adam T. Bower Memorial Dam in Sunbury is still considered the longest inflatable dam.

Mr. Raptosh said he is not sure.

Stock Illoway asked if any of DCNR's dams are in critical condition.

Mr. Raptosh said Dam Safety has a current list of unsafe dams; they are classified as "unsafe" because they do not meet a certain design flow.

Cliff David asked about the policy for dam removal.

Mr. Raptosh said the Bureau of State Parks and Bureau of Forestry make the calls for removal.

Bill Engle asked if all dams need to be inspected.

Mr. Raptosh said all public and private dams are inspected.

Michael Chapaloney, Executive Director of Tourism, DCED Pursue your Happiness

Michael Chapaloney gave an overview of the branding effort for the new state brand "Pursue your Happiness". Multiple agencies, including DCNR, provided input throughout the process. The brand focuses on the outdoors, history and culture, and urban centers.

Mr. Chapaloney highlighted the work of the new PA Tourism Office and its effort to revamp visitpa.com. DCED contracted with a social media firm to do proactive and reactive media relations. The results thus far are successful; The Washington Post, National Geographic, and Recreation News all featured Pennsylvania in stories. Other forms of outreach include *Happy Traveler*, the state travel guide; and *Happy Thoughts*, the e-newsletter. DCED plans to partner with BuzzFeed and Tripadvisor in the future. Primary targets for advertising include New York, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

Cliff David asked if DCED sees a direct financial impact on the industry as a result of the new advertising efforts.

Mr. Chapaloney said *Arrivalist*, a tracking software, shows that the targeted advertisements do have an impact. He explained the mechanics behind the software. 75% of people coming into the state do so within 30 days of seeing the advertisements.

Mr. Chapaloney highlighted future initiatives, including a fall 2017 video on fall foliage and a winter video highlighting the Pocono Mountains. DCED will also be launching a mercantile webpage on visitpa.com.

Bill Forrey said interagency work is crucial to success, and he commends DCNR and DCED for working together on this initiative.

Janet Sweeney asked Mr. Chapaloney to clarify how DCED uses targeted advertising based on location.

Mr. Chapaloney said the technology takes into account the location of the mobile device based on its IP address. Advertisers can target individuals within a certain geographical boundary.

Bill Engle said he thinks DCED should highlight the bicycling opportunities in Pennsylvania.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No external attendees provided any comments.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The Chairman and Council adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.