



Zoom Meeting  
Wednesday, September 27, 2023  
7:00 P.M.

**Attendance:**

Sam Casella, President  
Scott Ryan, 2<sup>nd</sup> V. President  
Rollin Pickering, Div. II  
Blanche Hurlbutt, Ex. Dr.

Rob Carpenter, 1<sup>st</sup> V. President  
Bruce Dolph, Member @ Lg  
Ernie Swift, Treas.

**Absent:**

Dan Farrand, Past Pres.  
Jim Brick, Div. I  
Jim Cunningham, Div. III  
Frank Thomas, Div. V

**Guests/Partners:**

**Guests Present:** None present.

**Partners Present:** Caitlin Stewart, NYSCDEA' President., Blake Glover, NRCS State Conservation, Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Ex. Dir. **Absent:** None

**I. Call to Order:** Sam Casella, President Called the meeting to order 7:08 p.m.

**II. Roll Call:** Blanche Hurlbutt, Ex. Dr. gave roll call.

**III. Secretary's Report/Approval of Minutes:**

- A motion by Bruce Dolph second by Ernie Swift to approve August minutes as written. Carried. **#9/27/2023 = A**

**IV. Treasurer's Report:**

- A motion by Bruce Dolph, seconded by Rollin Pickering to approve the August Treasurer's report as provided with the three (3) line-item changes. Carried. **#9/27/2023 = B**
- A motion by Bruce Dolph, seconded by Scott Ryan to approve the August Bills to be Paid. Carried. **#9/27/2023 = C**

Ernie Swift provided the Board with an update of financial reports for August along with the balances in the accounts.

**V. Partners Reports:**

**NYSCDEA' Report:** Caitlin Stewart, NYCDEA President reported on the Conservation Skills Workshop was an incredible success. Over 151 people attended 14 classes. Information gathered from the evaluation form will help guide next year's event.

The Administrative Conference will be held November 6 – 7, 2023, at the Double Tree Hotel, East Syracuse. Chairperson Dustin Lewis emailed the registration packet state-wide, and the registration link follows < <https://forms.gle/kKG6zcg1tizaRFSY8>> Director attendance meets performance measures that make Districts eligible to receive state aid funding.

Our next CDEA meeting will be held November 27 – 28 in Division VII. Agenda and meeting location to follow. Director attendance meets performance measures that make Districts eligible to receive state aid funding.

The 2024 Water Quality Symposium will be held March 12 – 15 at the Double Tree Hotel, East Syracuse. Chairperson Jessica McLaughlin held a planning meeting, and track chairs are organizing courses. Director attendance meets performance measures that make Districts eligible to receive state aid funding.

CDEA Secretary Joann Burk organized the 1st annual CDEA 5-Stand Tournament to benefit CDEA Programs. Registration is \$100, due October 6. The tournament will be held October 12 at Vernon National Shooting Preserve, Vernon. Registration included ammo, 50 clay targets and lunch. Gun rentals are available. See the flyer for all the details, form a team, and please join us for some fun!

That she, Blanche, and Blake have signed the 4-Way Partnership MOA. That she is waiting for Bethany to sign it for completion.

The CDEA News deadline for our October edition is October 6. Please email me your NYACD news to include.

Recruitment and Retention – District staff registered to attend a job fair at SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry. At the Invasive Species Expo, I spoke with a professor from Siena Environmental Studies and Sciences, and she mentioned that District job postings, including internships, seasonal, and full-time, are difficult for her students to find. I am working on a new CDEA website that will host a job board containing links to vacancy announcements. Blanche reached out to me requesting information about college contact information. I will work on this with the CDEA Division Representatives.

At the September CDEA meeting, we discussed solar and wind project development on prime farmland. District feedback is included as a separate PDF file.

Caitlin expressed her concerns and issues she had regarding the letter she received on August 25, by email from NYACD President Sam Casella. Sam addressed this issue with Caitlin during the meeting and asked Blanche to comment. Blanche responded and clarified some details as well as Bethany.

**NRCS Report:** Blake Glover, NRCS State Conservation reported that government may go into a shut down on Saturday evening at midnight if the budget isn't finalized. Blake wanted folks to be aware of how this would affect co-located soil and water districts with NRCS. Also, if these districts are on the NRCS server and phone system, they will not have access to either. Blake stated there will be a statewide NRCS meeting on Thursday, September 28, 2023, to discuss protocols. Blake will keep everyone informed.

**State Committee Report:** Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Executive Director reported on the up-and-coming programs through Ag & Mkts. Bethany shared that the Round 29 – Non-Point grants have been awarded with thirty-three (33) projects costing \$13.8 mil.

Bethany reported that they expect to approve the next Round 7 Climate Resiliency grants at the next SWCC meeting.

Round AEM year 18 is opened for the districts that choose to, to provide their annual action plan by November 1, 2023.

Bethany reminded the board that the state aid annual plan of works is due as well by November 1, 2023.

### **Board Report:**

**President:** Sam Casella reported that he traveled to the NE NACD meeting in Portland, Maine and this was another good training session.

Sam reported that Kim LaFluer and Annika with NACD will not be able to attend the NYACD annual event, but they will be sending representatives in their place.

**Executive Director:** Blanche expressed her thanks to the Board for letting me attend the NE NACD meeting in Portland, Maine.

Blanche shared the following information regarding the sessions she attended while at the NE NACD meeting.

**Partner meeting**, this meeting the partners shared information regarding upcoming meetings, Conservation SWCD's are the unsung heroes, soil health, Maine's Climate Action plans and their four (4) goal.

NE NACD Board meeting, the voted on a new slate of officers:

President Mike Kent, Vice President Velynda Parker (NY), Molly (RI), Treasurer Tim Thomas

They discussed things they can do to raise funds. The NE 2024 meeting will be held along with the annual NACD Summer meeting in Boston, Mass.

They are working on their strategic plan, possible training sessions, and Tim Riley, NACD representative, Executive Director National Association spoke on by-laws, their next meeting date, NCPP National Conservation planning.

**Reaching Non-Traditional Customers**, Maine folks spoke on different ways to reach out to folks regarding soil health and how to create a healthy lawn. In the city of Portland, they selected 100 homes for their 100 Resilient Yards program. This program funding came from a combined of four (4) grants, eight (8) partners and master gardeners. They had 430 folks apply for this program. They provided technical assistance and volunteers to educate and help folks to educate and help them maintain and the best practices for their lawns to protect the streams.

**Terrestrial Invasive Plant Management**, this session was on what are invasive species and how best to handle them. How not to bring invasive species into your property etc.

**Addressing DEI through Conservation Programs**, this meeting was about bringing back the buffalo and the Indigenous People sponsored by Tanka Fund. This was very interesting discussion on how they are bringing back the buffalo and the dairy farm that is now a buffalo farm. The guest speaker also spoke on the importance of working with the Indigenous People and how to encourage them to work with you on all types of conservation programs.

**Managing PFAS Contamination**, this meeting was on Per & Poly Fluoroalkyl substances which is a large, complex synthetic chemical. These chemicals are used in cleaning products, water-resistant fabrics, and cause health issues such as/ alter immune and thyroid functions, liver and kidney disease, insulin dysregulation, lipid, adverse reproductive and developmental outcomes, and cancer.

They spoke about how PFAS is found in dairy milk and how they are working with two Maine farmers to reduce PFAS in their milk. They have discovered that PFAS can be found in our soil. Grass/hay seems to have a higher count of PFAS in it and corn does not absorb PFAS into it.

The two farmers they are working with have started growing more corn and provided it to the dairy, which has shown a great deal of reduction of PFAS in their milk.

**Tours**, I took the Ag tour and that was interesting. It was raining outside, so we were unable to tour the Wildlife resort, but did learn about the history of the land, campground, dairy farm and all the things they are doing to improve the environment and the land they own.

**2024 NYACD Annual meeting**, I have been busy printing items for the annual meeting packets, receiving and recording the registrations. We presently have seventy-one (71) registered which does not include all the instructors and guest speakers. I'm still receiving registrations.

Scott and I reviewed the nominations for the annual awards and selected the winners. I will be working on the write-ups for the Board members that will be presenting the awards at the banquet.

I've been busy working on the annual booklet and preparing it for proofing and printing. This should be completed in a week or two. We have a few sponsors and are waiting to hear from a couple more.

**2025 NE NACD Annual meeting** will be held in New York, so once our annual meeting is over, I will start working on an RFP and potential locations to host this event. I will also reach out to folks in Maine who have hosted this event and NE NACD folks to get an idea of the number of folks attending and additional information.

#### **Director & Representatives –**

- a. **Division I:** Jim Brick was unable to attend. No report provided.
- b. **Division II:** Rollin Pickering reported that he attended the NE NACD meeting as well and attended the forestry session and learned about they are working on a program to reduce synthetic pesticides. They shared how they have worked with an area that has used not pesticides for the past ten (10) years and how well it was established and looked.

Rollin asked what share if any would NYACD be paying for him to attend the NYACD annual meeting. Blanche explained that it would only be the cost of his mileage travel to and from the event.

Rollin also stated he didn't realize he had not signed up for the Yates tour and would like to attend. Blanche stated she would mark him down for the tour.

- c. **Division III:** Jim Cunningham was unable to attend. No report provided.
- d. **Division IV:** No representative, no report.
- e. **Division V:** Frank Thomas was unable to attend. No report provided.
- f. **Division VI:** No representative, no report.
- g. **Division VII:** No representative, no report.
- h. **Division VIII:** No representative, no report.

## Committee Reports:

**2023 NYS Envirothon:** Ernie reported that the next Envirothon meeting would be a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, October 10th. Ernie reported that the committee is working with SUNY Cortland and preparing for the event in May.

**2024 NCF Envirothon New York:** Ernie reported that the committee is moving forward with this event and working on what is necessary at this time.

Ernie asks if Blanche had anything to add and she said nothing more to be added.

Rollin inquired about how many districts had provided funding. Blanche stated at this point that only twenty-four (24) districts have sent funds. Blanche also reported that NRCS has signed a contract in support of \$350,000 for this event, but that there is still another \$200,000 needed. Blanche stated that EEF is working with the committee trying to gather funding from other sources through sponsorship. Also, if all the districts paid their portion it would minimize the funds needed to provide a great event.

### Old Business:

**Hand-out Items:** Blanche reported the glasses, hats, and visors were purchased and arrived.

- VI. New Business:** Bruce discussed a way that we could encourage folks to stay or attend Thursday of our NYACD annual meeting. We discussed possibly giving a discount for next year's event. Blanche explained that one of the issues is people sign up but end up leaving early. The Board will discuss this further to come up with an incentive to encourage folks to attend and stay for the sessions on Thursday.

### VII. Adjournment:

- A motion by Ernie Swift, seconded by Bruce Dolph to adjourn the meeting. Carried.  
**#9/27/2023 = D**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Next meeting date is **Tuesday, October 24, 2023, Yates SWCD, Penn Yan, NY at 6:00 p.m.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03p.m.

Respectfully submitted by *Blanche L. Hurlbutt*, NYACD Executive Director September 28, 2023

**September Motions Meeting: #9/27/2023 = A Approval August Minutes**

**#9/27/2023 = B Approval August Finances, #9/27/2023 = C Approval of August Bills to Pay**

**#9/27/2023 = D Approval to Adjourn**