

Erie County Conservation District
Erie County Conservation District and Teleconference
April 17, 2025, 10:00 a.m. – Meeting Minutes

Directors: IN-OFFICE: Francis Surovick, Deb Phillips, Bob Buhl, John Hallenburg, Julie Leonard, Dean Curtis

Agencies: IN-OFFICE: District: Tom Clure, Renee Start
TELECONFERENCE: Erie County Council: Charlie Bayle

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Francis Surovick, Chairman.

Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Deb Phillips and seconded by Dean Curtis to accept the March 20, 2025, minutes as presented. A vote was taken, the motion was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Buhl presented the March 2025 Treasurer's Report. A motion was made by Julie Leonard and seconded by Dean Curtis to approve the March report as presented. A vote was taken, the motion was passed unanimously.

March Financial Overview:

Balance February 28, 2025:	\$37,206.22
Income:	<u>\$ 6,096.66</u>
Total:	\$43,302.88
Expenses:	<u>\$40,243.70</u>
Balance: March 31, 2025:	\$ 3,059.18

Payment of Bills: None

District Manager's Report:

The monthly staff meeting was held for April, and Monday Check-ins has been very informative for the entire staff. Staff Update: Bethany is preparing for the seedling sale next week, working on an active manure complaint and attended the ACAP Conference in Harrisburg. Kristen is preparing for Envirothon (May 1st & May 6th) and Explore Camp (June 16-20) and wrapped up the annual report. She recently participated in a NW Intermediate Unit Education Program, and held Storytime at the McCord Library. Joseph is working on complaints and investigations, working on Chapter 105 permits, assisted Kristen with some education programs. Ryan is working on project planning and coordination for spring, coordinating with Crawford County CD for Spotted Lantern Fly workshops. Held a project tour with DEP staff to visit projects completed with the Growing Greener program. Tom R. is working on plan reviews, terminating old permits with final site inspections, and attending preconstruction meetings. Renee has been busy with Administration support for all and is working with Tom R to enter permits into a federal database. Tom M. has been busy with staff and project coordination, coordinated a meet and greet with the staff and new DEP employees. Attended several meetings, PACD, Erie County Department of Planning, and Great Lakes Commission Committee and been busy with seedling sale preparation.

The staff engaged with the public at our booth at the Home & Garden Expo with the display of the watershed map of Erie County. Summer Interns have accepted Abigail Nguyen – Education Intern (May 12), Tyler Stickle – Conservation Intern (May 12) and Megan Wolff – Volunteer Intern (May 19). Heberlein & Falk, PC, now have all the required paperwork to finish our annual audit, they will be back in May to complete our federal single audit. For Lot 11, we are working on a certification of title that is required for the grant we received.

Request for Assistance: None

Old Business:

ACAP Update:

Contractors are beginning to mobilize, continuing work on projects started in the fall. To date all the funds for this year are all already allocated. The Erie County Department of Planning recommended the District spend the ARPA grant in a timely manner.

Seedling Sale:

Next week is the big week, the staff will be in Waterford, Monday – Wednesday and then the pickup day is next Friday. There are currently 377 orders with a gross income of \$41,000.00. The staff had a pre-meeting about the details of next week. Steve Laskowski with DCNR Forestry and Bonita Herman with Master Gardeners will be there to answer any questions the public may have. There will be seedlings for sale on the day of and everyone is welcome.

Envirothon Update:

The high school Envirothon is May 1st with 17 high school teams participating. The current issue is Forestry Resiliency. This year, administrators and teachers from non-participating schools have been invited to observe what Envirothon is, to encourage more participation next year. The middle school Envirothon is May 6th.

PACD Update:

Today is the PACD NW Regional meeting in Armstrong County, today's meeting will not have any voting issues. PACD Executive Board plans on re-organizing, not hiring a new Executive Director and employing a professional lobbyist following Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh's retirement. The acting Director is Amy Brown. The first part of reorganizing would be a survey that they are asking all managers and directors to fill out. PACD will be going through a Strategic Planning process and is asking all managers and directors to complete a survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VDZMYLQ> Tom was invited to participate in the PACD Strategic Planning Committee, but has other conflicts that would limit his full participation. A motion was made by Dean Curtis and seconded by Deb Phillips that Tom McClure decline participation on the Strategic Planning Committee. A vote was taken, discussion occurred, and the motion passed.

Board Development Video Series:

The April installment of our Board Development Video Series focuses on quarterly Reimbursement Submissions. Our District has eleven quarterly reports due every quarter at this time. Quarterly reports inform the funding agencies of the District's deliverables.

Hidden Creeks Project Update:

This is an informational update, Kristen and Tom have been meeting with the grant administrator. Although the grant has been awarded, funds have not yet been released by the EPA and the project is on hold. The District is still looking at different funding avenues just in case.

DGLVR Update – Concord Township:

The 2025 projects & preconstruction meetings are happening now.

Concord Township sent ECCD a contract cancellation request letter for the County Line Road project. Concord Township received funding from the County of Erie, which will allow the Township to complete the project without utilizing the DGLVR Program Stream Crossing Standards. Concord Township returned their advance payment in the amount of \$100,000. A motion was made by Julie Leonard and seconded by Dean Curtis to accept the Concord Township cancellation of the contract and return of funds. A vote was taken, discussion occurred, and the motion passed unanimously. The returned funds will be used for the Middleton Road projects.

EHB 2025-005-W Update:

The District acknowledged a General Permit 4 to Millcreek Township School District. The appellants have requested a stay to stop the entire project (writ of supersedeas). A hearing on the stay could be as soon as the end of the month. Through our Chapter 105 delegation agreement with the Department, DEP is providing legal counsel on this matter.

New Business:

Annual Report:

Kristen used the Canva program to create the annual report this year. A motion was made by Deb Phillips and seconded by John Hallenburg to approve the annual report pending the change in the seedling sale from Profit to Gross Income. A vote was taken, discussion occurred, and the motion passed unanimously.

PA SeaGrant Letter:

Pennsylvania Sea Grant is asking their partners to send letters of support to Congress for next year's federal budget. A motion was made by Deb Phillips and seconded by Dean Curtis that Tom McClure send a letter from ECCD to Congress to send a strong support message. A vote was taken, discussion occurred, and the motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports: Distributed

Agencies:

Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners had a great turnout at the Home and Garden Expo. 192 people attended the PSU MG talks. They gave away a Rain Barrel and a composter. The Master Gardeners will be having their plant sale on May 10th.

Erie County Council

Charlie reported he was glad the County could help with services and projects, especially with the Lot 11 project. He was pleased that ECCD could now help with other Dirt & Gravel projects in the county.

HEADWATERS NRC TRUST

Tom presented the March financial report with a donation from S.O.N.S. for the Envirothon. Tom has an appointment on April 29 with Key Bank to talk about different bank account options.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room at the Erie County Conservation District office and via tele-conference.