

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes for Monthly Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday, June 10, 2025, 11:00 AM (In-Person & Virtual)

Joel Geiger, Chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 11:00 AM with the following Board Members, staff, and guests in attendance:

Joel Geiger, Chairman	Nate Pritchard, DM	Paige Strasko, Staff
Brian Fulmer, Vice Chairman	Shannon Davis, DEP Field Rep*	Jim Lawrence, Staff
Will Carpenter, Treasurer	Austin Drager, NRCS	Alexis Krukovsky, Staff*
Rich DiFebo, Director	Carrie Cevicelow, Staff	
Jeffrey Warren – County Council	Jon Fox, Staff	*Virtual

Introduction of Guests

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and all in attendance introduced themselves.

Additions to Agenda

None

Invitation for Public Comment

None

Acknowledgement of Scholarship Awardees

The Board recognized the 2025 NCCD Scholarship recipients: Emma Haas of Liberty High School and Logan Berger of Northampton High School. Each student was presented with a certificate of achievement and a \$1,000 monetary award. Both recipients and their families were in attendance for the recognition.

Acceptance of Minutes

Will Carpenter made a motion to accept the 5/13/25 minutes as presented, 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried. 4/0

Note: At 11:15 am Board Member Brian Fulmer joined the meeting, from that point forward, five Board members were present and eligible to vote. The earlier motion to approve the minutes was passed prior to his arrival with 4/0 Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Will Carpenter provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report for May 2025. Discussion ensued. Jeffrey Warren made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for May 2025 as presented; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried. 5/0

Payment of Bills

The District Manager provided a summary of the bills for approval. Jeffrey Warren made a motion to approve the payment of the bills as presented; 2nd Will Carpenter. Motion carried 5/0

Note: Due to Jeffrey Warren needing to leave the meeting early, the Board proceeded to Item C under Old Business.

Old Business

C. Board meeting time - The Board discussed adjusting the meeting time from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM to better accommodate members' schedules. Rich DiFebo made a motion to move the start time of the 2025 NCCD Board of Directors regular monthly board meetings to 7:00 PM for the July, September, October, and November meetings. The August 12, 2025 meeting will remain an evening event due to the Annual Dinner. December and subsequent winter meetings will continue at 11:00 AM. 2nd Jeffrey Warren. Motion carried 5/0 An updated legal notice will be published to reflect the change.

Note: Due to Jeffrey Warren needing to leave the meeting early, the Board proceeded to Items A and B under New Business.

New Business

- A. 2023 Audit Updates – Nate Pritchard stated, there are no significant updates to report. The audit process is progressing through email exchanges with the county, and the auditors will be requesting items for testing as part of their review.
- B. County MOU Updates – Nate Pritchard reported that a follow-up meeting with the County is scheduled for June 18, 2025. The Executive Committee discussed revising the draft MOU to clarify that District services may be limited or reprioritized if annual county funding is not provided. While formal feedback from the County is still pending, the Board reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a cooperative relationship. The Board is considering a future presentation to the County Council to more clearly communicate the District's value and services to the County.

Note: At 11:37 a.m., Board Member Jeffrey Warren departed the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. From that point forward, four Board members remained present and eligible to vote. The Board proceeded to Item No. 5 Correspondence and continued to follow the remainder of the agenda.

Correspondence

Nate Pritchard provided two items of correspondence. The first was a carryover from the previous Board meeting regarding a sponsorship request from the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley for their upcoming conference which was held for further discussion later in the Agenda. The second was a letter from the Governor's Office providing a general update on the status of federal funding. While it noted uncertainties in some federally funded programs, there are no significant impacts to the District, as most programs are state-funded. The letter encouraged strong record-keeping and the use of electronic payment systems, practices the District already follows.

Reports From Cooperating

Austin Drager, NRCS – Austin provided a May update on NRCS activities. NRCS reported a slight slowdown in activity compared to April. New staff member, Kara received her computer and is progressing toward conservation planner certification. Staff completed a variety of projects, including conservation and forestry plans, spot checks, certifications, and surveys in several townships. Although no Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications from Northampton County were funded this year due to competitive scoring, NRCS will revisit these applications in the next funding cycle. A final site visit was completed for a forestry project in Upper Mount Bethel.

State Conservation Commission Report

Shannon Davis (DEP) provided the State Conservation Commission report. DEP received bids from 41 firms for the 102 SPEED Program and reviewed 138 individuals, of which 107 were approved as Qualified Professionals (QPs). Contracts are being executed, and a QP training plan and SOP are now available via the Clean Water Academy. Use of version 1.1 of the MRC spreadsheet became mandatory as of June 8 for all new submissions. PCSM Module 2 has been revised to include additional infiltration and thermal impact data, with mandatory use beginning August 1. A new Clean Water Academy course is also available for Qualified Visual Site Inspector classroom training.

Old Business-

- D. Fee Schedule Revision – The Board reviewed the proposed updates and Resolution 2025-3 to the District’s Service Fee Schedule, prompted in part by DEP guidance related to the SPEED program. The Board discussed how these changes align with both fairness to applicants and adequate cost recovery for the District. It was noted that even under the SPEED program, the District retains responsibilities such as E&S inspections and permit issuance, justifying continued collection of service fees. Will Carpenter made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-3 Revised District Service Fee Resolution, effective July 1, 2025; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 4/0
- E. Growing Greener grant application – Paige Strasko presented the proposed Growing Greener grant application for a streambank stabilization project in Stockertown Borough, which includes the Rod and Gun Club, and Newhart Park. The project will address severe bank erosion through engineered in-stream structures designed in partnership with the Fish and Boat Commission. The Borough, landowner, and District staff will contribute in-kind services and support, satisfying the grant’s 5% match requirement. The initial grant request will focus on design and permitting, with a construction funding application anticipated in 2026–2027. Brian Fulmer made a motion to approve the Growing Greener grant application; 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 4/0
- F. Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference Sponsorship – Nate Pritchard presented a sponsorship request from the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley for the 10th Annual Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference. The District, already a member of the conference planning committee, has historically sponsored the event at the \$500 level, which includes a display table, complimentary registration, and program recognition. Will Carpenter made a motion to support the \$500 sponsorship of the 2025 Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 4/0
- G. Envirothon Final Update – Carrie Cevicelow reported to the board a final update on the 2025 Northampton County Envirothon. Saucon Valley High School, this year’s winning team, advanced to the PA State Envirothon and placed 6th out of 64 participating counties, marking the highest-ever placement for Northampton County. The District provided travel support and hotel reimbursement, as previously approved. Sponsorship donations exceeded last year’s donations. Looking ahead to 2026, the District plans to expand outreach and attract additional school participation. The Education Committee is exploring strategies to raise awareness and offer more pre-competition training.

New Business

- A. NCCD Interior Office Construction - Nate Pritchard provided an update on the interior office construction project. The project was publicly bid via PennBid. Only one bid was received, and it came in at more than triple the estimated project budget. Following review by the Resource & Facilities Committee, it was determined that the bid was unreasonably high. The Committee recommended rejecting the bid and re-advertising the project with additional clarifications to help bring costs in line with the budget and potentially breaking the project into core and optional components. Rich DiFebo made a motion to reject the bid received due to exceeding the budget; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 4/0.
Rich DiFebo made a motion to re-advertise the project for a new bid; 2nd Will Carpenter. Motion carried 4/0. A new bid process is expected to open on June 19, 2025, with award consideration at the July 2025 Board meeting.
- B. Budget Adjustment – IT Support & CDWS Equipment Purchase - Nate Pritchard presented two budget adjustment requests. The first related to IT support services, due to outstanding invoices from late 2024 that were paid in 2025 and not reflected in the current budget. To cover those expenses and anticipated IT support needs for the remainder of the year, including potential VPN setup to support remote access during office construction, an \$8,000 increase is requested to the IT support budget line item. Will Carpenter made a motion to increase the IT support budget by \$8,000 for the 2025 fiscal year; 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 4/0.
The second adjustment request was for the purchase of additional office technology through the Watershed Specialist grant. The request covers the cost of a new laptop to replace a Microsoft Surface currently in use. Brian Fulmer made a motion to increase the office technology and computers budget by \$1,200; 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 4/0.
- C. PACD Lawn Conversion Grant Application – Paige Strasko reported that she has been working with a private landowner in Moore Township to develop a riparian buffer project along a tributary to the Bushkill Creek. The project will be submitted under the PACD Lawn Conversion Program, which requires Conservation Districts to apply on behalf of landowners. All match contributions, including labor and materials, will be provided by the landowner. District staff time will be reimbursable through the grant. Brian Fulmer made a motion to authorize NCCD to apply for the Lawn Conversion Grant on behalf of the landowner; 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 4/0.
- D. CDWS Annual Renewal Acknowledgement – Nate Pritchard reported that the District submitted the annual Watershed Specialist Grant renewal request, including a mini-grant application to support outreach activities focused on non-point source pollution. The application includes costs for a stream assessment workshop, equipment, and printed materials. Brian Fulmer made a motion to acknowledge the Annual Renewal; 2nd Will Carpenter. Motion carried 4/0.
- E. LVR Project – Heiden Road – Jim Lawrence provided a presentation on a proposed Low Volume Road (LVR) project for Heiden Road in Upper Mount Bethel Township. The proposed improvements include replacing the existing pipe, adding overflow cross pipes, and installing a French mattress to improve drainage and reduce road saturation. The total project cost is \$67,446,

with an in-kind contribution of \$10,637 from the township. Brian Fulmer made a motion to approve the Heiden Road project contingent upon the District receiving its full amount of State funding allocation; 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 4/0

Activity and Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee – Joel Geiger reported that the committee met to discuss several ongoing matters, including the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and upcoming insurance considerations. The Board formally directed the District Manager to send a follow-up correspondence to both the County Administration and County Council requesting a status update on the nomination process for the vacant board position.

B. Finance Committee – Will Carpenter reported that the next meeting scheduled for July. The committee will review current financial standings and begin preliminary discussions for the upcoming fiscal year's budget.

C. Education/Outreach Committee - Paige Strasko reported that the committee met last week to discuss several key items. A summer newsletter is planned for distribution by the end of the month. Planning is underway for an October teacher workshop on the topic of backyard conservation, with potential partnerships with local organizations. Next meeting is scheduled for July.

D. Resource/Facilities Committee – Rich DiFebo reported the committee did not hold a formal meeting this month but was involved in the interior office construction bid review process. Another bid review is anticipated before the next board meeting, with the goal of moving the project forward.

E. DG & LVR QAB – Jim Lawrence provided an update, noting that the committee met in May to discuss the Heiden Road project and review the final QA/QC report issued by the SCC and the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies at Penn State. The report showed the program exceeded expectations in two categories and met expectations in the third, marking the highest score the District has received to date.

F. Karst Geology Advisory Council – Nate Pritchard reported that the technical bulletin on stormwater management best practices in karst topography is finalized and ready for public distribution. Plans are underway to engage the County Council's Environment and Land Use Committee, as well as the Advisory Council, to coordinate outreach efforts. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Geological Survey will present their karst hazard mapping results for Northampton County, a project specific to the region.

Conservation District Staff Reports

Staff reports were distributed by email prior to the meeting; no significant issues were raised during discussion. Nate Pritchard provided several staff updates: Mira continues to make strong progress toward her PCSM certification. Nick and Paige recently attended VAC meetings to support MS4 outreach and stormwater discussions. Additionally, Mira and Alexis completed 102 basic training, with Jim also attending to assist in delivering portions of the training.

Announcements

A. Joint PACD/SCC Conference – July 15-17th, Seven Springs, PA

B. Plainfield Township Farmer's Fair – July 22 - 26th

Set time, date, and place of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 7/8/25, 7:00 pm, Lower Nazareth Township Building, Suite 110, Conference Room, 623 Municipal Dr, Nazareth, PA (In-Person & Virtual (check website agenda for Zoom Link)).

Adjournment

Rich DiFebo made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried. 4/0
The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 PM.

Submitted by Carrie Cevicelow, Recording Secretary to the Board

