

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes for Monthly Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 7:00 PM (In-Person & Virtual)

Joel Geiger, Chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 7:04 PM with the following Board Members, staff, and guests in attendance:

Joel Geiger, Chairman	Brian Fulmer, Director	Rich Budihas, Director*
Rich DiFebo, Director	Jason Boulette, County Council	Jamie Brozman, Director
Nathan Pritchard, Manager	Austin Drager, NRCS*	Carrie Cevicelow, Staff

*Virtual

Introduction of Guests

Kim Tassinario Mertz, Saucon Valley High School Teacher & Envirothon Team Advisor

Additions to Agenda

None

Invitation for Public Comment

Kim Tassinario Mertz, Saucon Valley High School teacher and Envirothon Team Advisor, was introduced and recognized for Saucon Valley High School's first-place finish at the 2026 Northampton County Envirothon. Ms. Tassinario Mertz provided an update on the team's preparation for the upcoming State Envirothon competition and discussed the team's continued success at the state level, including a sixth-place finish in 2025.

Discussion ensued regarding student participation in Envirothon, the educational value of the program, and opportunities for future student workshops and educational outreach. Ms. Tassinario Mertz complimented the organization of the Northampton County Envirothon and thanked the District for its continued support of the program.

The Board wished the Saucon Valley team best of luck at the upcoming State Envirothon competition.

Acceptance of Minutes

Jason Boulette made a motion to accept the April 21, 2026 Minutes as presented, 2nd Jamie Brozman. Motion carried. 6/0

Treasurer's Report

The Board reviewed the March 2026 Treasurer's Report. Discussion ensued.

Brian Fulmer made a motion to accept the April 2026 Treasurer's Report as presented, 2nd

Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 6/0

Payment of Bills

The Board reviewed the Transaction Report. Discussion ensued. Brian Fulmer made a motion to approve payment of the bills. 2nd Jason Boulette. Motion carried 6/0.

Correspondence

None

Reports From Cooperating Agencies – (NRCS)

Austin Drager, NRCS provided an update on current NRCS program activity. He reported that three Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications and four Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications were selected for funding, totaling approximately \$1.2 million in conservation projects. Funded projects include nutrient management, no-till practices, prescribed grazing, cover crops, livestock waste storage, pollinator planting, and forestry improvement projects.

Austin also noted that several grazing practice installations were recently certified and that NRCS staff continue working with applicants to move selected projects into contract development. Discussion ensued.

State Conservation Commission Report – (DEP)

The State Conservation Commission report was distributed to the Board via email prior to the meeting. Board members were advised to contact the representative directly with any questions.

Old Business

A. NCCD Office Construction Updates - Nate Pritchard along with Rich Budihas provided an update on the exterior design project, noting that preliminary exterior improvement design concepts were received from Hanover Engineering for the office accessibility and parking improvements project.

Following board discussion, it was agreed to proceed with advancing the ramp concept into the formal design phase with Hanover Engineering.

B. 2024 Draft Audit – Nate Pritchard reported that a second draft of the 2024 audit had been distributed to the Board via email prior to the meeting. He noted that the primary revision involved updated pension fund information received from Northampton County, which was incorporated by Paul Mack of Campbell Rappold & Yurasits LLP. Discussion ensued.

Rich Budihas made a motion to approve the 2024 Draft Audit as provided to the Board. 2nd. Jamie Brozman. Motion carried 6/0.

C. 2026 Envirothon Final Recap – Carrie Cevicelow, NCCD Envirothon Coordinator, provided a final recap of the 2026 Envirothon event, which was held on April 16, 2026, at Louise W. Moore Park. Seven schools participated with a total of twelve teams competing. Final placements were Saucon Valley in first place, Bangor Maroon in second place, and Bangor White in third place. Carrie reported that twelve sponsors contributed \$6,350 toward the event, helping fund awards, meals, t-shirts, and event materials. Total event expenses were \$5,096.57, allowing the program to remain under budget.

Carrie also reported that planning for 2027 is underway, including efforts to increase sponsorships and school participation. She stated that she, Paige Strasko, and Jim Lawrence would be visiting potential alternate Envirothon locations this month and that a formal site evaluation report is being prepared for the June Board meeting.

Nate acknowledged the amount of work involved in researching alternate locations and noted that the Board had previously requested the review. Additional discussion occurred regarding the importance of having a suitable rain-or-shine location with adequate pavilion space and park support services. Board members complimented the success of the event and the assistance provided by the Northampton County Parks staff.

D. PACD Delegate Appointment - Nate Pritchard reported that the PACD Delegate appointment remains an open item, as the District still needs to fill the primary delegate position. He noted that there are currently no upcoming voting matters until the Joint Annual Conference later this year. Nate Pritchard and Joel Geiger currently remain the alternate delegates.

New Business

A. 2026 NCCD Scholarship Award - Nate Pritchard reported that the District received two complete applications for the 2026 NCCD Scholarship Program and that the District had budgeted \$2,000 for two \$1,000 scholarships. Due to the rescheduled Board meeting and no formal advertisement of an Education Committee meeting, the scholarship recommendations were brought directly before the Board for consideration. Nate stated that both applicants met the scholarship criteria and had strong academic and environmental science backgrounds.

Jason Boulette made a motion to award the 2026 NCCD Scholarships to Luca Albanese of Pen Argyl Area High School and Samantha Cheevers of Bangor Area High School. 2nd. Rich Budihas. Motion carried 6/0.

B. FY 26-27 Nutrient Management Funding Allocation - Nate reported that the District's annual Nutrient Management Program funding allocation request is due by the end of the month. He stated that the District would again request the full state allocation, which would be used toward salary and benefits for the Agricultural Specialist position. Nate noted that the allocation amount remains unchanged from the previous year.

C. County MOU

a. Progress Update – Nate Pritchard provided an update regarding ongoing discussions with Northampton County concerning a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) following the independence process. He reported that draft language continues to be exchanged and discussed between the District and County administrations. Nate explained that current discussions include the District potentially assuming MS4 reporting responsibilities for the County, along with additional coordination related to outreach, grant assistance, permitting support, agricultural plan coordination, and educational programming. Discussion ensued.

b. Preliminary Annual Subsidy Request - Nate Pritchard explained that as part of the proposed MOU process, the District would submit an annual subsidy request to Northampton County. Discussion occurred regarding the County budget timeline, and a proposed preliminary subsidy request amount of \$150,000 for the initial three-year period.

Rich Budihas made a motion to submit a preliminary annual subsidy request to Northampton County in the amount of \$150,000. 2nd. Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/0, with 1 abstention by Jason Boulette.

Activity and Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee – Joel Geiger reported that the Executive Committee did not meet. The next meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2026.

B. Finance Committee – Nate Pritchard reported that the Finance Committee did not meet. The next meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2026.

C. Education / Outreach Committee – None

D. Resource/Facilities Committee – None

E. DG&LVR QAB – Rich Budihas reported that the QAB met on May 5, 2026. Discussion included a pre-construction meeting for the Hyden Road project with Upper Mount Bethel Township, outreach efforts with Lower Mount Bethel Township regarding participation in the Low Volume Road Program, and review of a new Upper Mount Bethel Township application for the Boulder Road project. Rich stated that the QAB reviewed and scored the Boulder Road application and unanimously recommended the project for approval.

F. Karst Geology Advisory Council – Nate Pritchard reported that the Karst Geology Advisory Council has not formally met; however, there has been increased activity and discussion among local stakeholders regarding karst-related issues within the Bushkill Creek watershed. Additional discussion occurred regarding stakeholder participation and updates to local organizational representation.

Conservation District Staff Reports

Staff reports were emailed to the Board prior to the meeting, and no questions were raised. Nate Pritchard provided several additional updates, including near completion of annual staff performance reviews, progress on the Little Bushkill Growing Greener project, and notification that PACD awarded an additional lawn conversion grant application submitted by Paige Strasko. Nate also reported that Kara completed review work associated with the Bucks County nutrient management MOU and has begun work on additional nutrient management plans.

Announcements

May 16, 2026 – Northampton County Festival
May 19, 2026 – State Conservation Commission Meeting
May 20, 2026 – 43rd State Envirothon at Camp Luther
June 18, 2026 – State Conservation Commission Conference Call

Set time, date, and place of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2026, 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

Brian Fulmer made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd Jason Boulette. Motion carried 6/0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM

Submitted by Carrie Cevicelow, Recording Secretary to the Board.

