

Chairperson Hess called the meeting of the Indiana County Conservation District to order Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 9:32 am at 435 Hamill Road in Indiana. Other Directors present were Commissioner Sherene Hess, Craig Andrie, Janis Long, Barbara Peace, Aaron Simpson and Gregg VanHorn. Directors absent: Richard Stumpf.

Also present: Douglas Beri Jr. – Executive Director, Tammie Robinson – Administrative Assistant, Benjamin Wenger – Watershed Specialist, Alexis Shank – Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) Coordinator, Monica Lee-District Educator, Doyle Freeman, Sarah King, Hunter Overdorff, Cindy Rogers, and John Somonick, -Associate Directors.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

Simpson moved to approve consent agenda items including accepting minutes of the previous meeting as presented, treasurer’s report to be filed subject to audit, correspondence, DEP delegated programs reports and staff reports, second by VanHorn, motion carried.

Simpson motioned to pay the bills as presented, second by VanHorn, motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE - none

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT  
Three erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, and three Chapter 102 site inspections were conducted.

STAFF/PROGRAM ACTIONS AND REQUESTS - none

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Somonick reported a recent Farm Bureau publication has information regarding changing safe drinking water standards, pesticides, manure management changes, and a conference on invasive species.

Overdorff reported State Representative Struzzi is hosting an ag. breakfast on May 12 and anyone who wishes to attend should RSVP to his office. West Wheatfield Township has been awarded a \$50,000 grant to revitalize their recreation center and he recommended the supervisors to contact the Conservation District if they need assistance with stream crossings.

King reported Friends of White’s Woods is hosting a webinar April 27 on the Natural Heritage Inventories and Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Old Growth Project. Scott Schuette, Western PA Conservancy, will discuss old growth characteristics and Indiana County in particular.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Suzanna Harris submitted a written report prior to the meeting.

COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Beri reported on the Friends of Indiana County Conservation District. They will be accepting the first ever round of grant applications for the Cambria – Indiana Farmer Assistance Fund through the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. Applications will be accepted for business plan development and sustainability.

Rogers reported the Indiana County members of the former group called Weed Wranglers, is now operating under Plant Patrol. The group is undertaking invasive plant control projects at Indiana

County parks and they are looking for volunteers to conduct plant removal. More information can be found at Plantpatrol.org.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long reported Hess has been appointed to the state agricultural land preservation board. Judge Bianco will administer the oath of office to Hess on Friday, April 21. Hess stated she is honored to have been appointed to the board.

### OLD BUSINESS - none

### NEW BUSINESS

No nutrient management plans are currently under review. No plans were presented for approval.

Simpson motioned to accept donations for the Envirothon Education Fund from Blacklick Creek Watershed Association \$100; Donald Bothell \$50; Ken Sink Chapter of Trout Unlimited \$100; Keller Engineers \$125; Elderton State Bank \$50; and Evergreen Conservancy \$100, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Simson moved to approve contracting with Total Asphalt Management Systems for concrete sealing of sidewalks in the amount of \$1,930, second by Peace, motion carried. Staff were instructed to make sure they pressure wash the sidewalks prior to applying the sealant.

Simpson moved to approve contracting with Total Asphalt Management Systems for parking lot and driveway directional signage, restriping parking spaces, and asphalt patch in the amount of \$1,256. second by Peace, motion carried.

Long moved to approve selection of Emily Himes for a 300-hour summer AmeriCorps Garden Coordinator position and Joshua Merichko for a 300-hour summer AmeriCorps Water Monitoring Specialist position, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Andrie moved to award the South Branch Plum Creek WIP 4 Harry Holt streambank stabilization project contract to MD Sleppy, the low bidder, in the amount of \$54,704.00, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve the Harry Holt South Branch Plum Creek (SBPC) WIP 4 Streambank Stabilization Project ACAP application for funding to cover the cost difference of \$60,000 in available SBPC WIP 4 grant funds, second by Long, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve PACD mini grant contracts for manure/nutrient management plans for Mahoning Creek Farm Nutrient Management Plan \$1,500; Dave and Melissa George Manure Management Plan \$400; Brad Overdorff Manure Management Plan \$400; Tyler Overdorff Manure Management Plan \$400; Leo Bernard Manure Management Plan and Ag E&S Plan \$800; and Ron Davis Nutrient Management Plan \$1500, all of which are associated with planned ACAP projects, second by Peace, motion carried.

### DISCUSSION

Beri reviewed the District's Strategic Action Plan progress to date and recommended several updates. Simpson motioned to approve the Strategic Plan updates as presented, second by Craig, motion carried.

Beri reported the Conservation District's Dirt/Gravel Roads Program truck has been experiencing some operational issues and recommended trading it in on a new truck. Recommendations included

having it assessed for the cost of the repairs first, and another recommended to replace it while the trade in value is high. Andrie will provide Beri with information on a dealership that has beaten Costars pricing.

Beri reported the president of the Illinois Association of Conservation Districts (IACD) saw his presentation at the National Association of Conservation Districts annual conference and as a result, the IACD president invited Beri to present at their July annual meeting in Springfield Illinois. IACD will pay Beri's airfare and hotel costs. Consensus was to authorize Beri to attend. VanHorn will provide an Indiana County license plate to present to IACD.

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Simpson moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:48 am, second by Peace, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson  
Administrative Assistant