

NYACD Resolutions 2010-2011
Adopted October 18, 2010

Chesapeake Bay TMDL

WHEREAS the Soil and Water Conservation Districts that comprise the Upper Susquehanna Coalition have worked diligently with the many state and federal partners to cohesively integrate both agricultural and nonagricultural best management practices throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed of New York State and

WHEREAS the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and all of its partners look forward to continuing and enhancing its implementation throughout this watershed and

WHEREAS the farms located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed of New York State have voluntarily made a strong commitment to water quality by the commitment of both time and monies through the New York State Agriculture and Markets, Agricultural Environmental Management Program, and

WHEREAS the waters of New York that contribute to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed are of the highest water quality in entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed and

WHEREAS the proposed nutrient and sediment allocations for New York State have been determined by New York State's conservation professionals to not only be unobtainable as proposed but would also have a catastrophically negative impact on the agricultural community of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed of New York and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the New York State Association of Conservation Districts call upon the New York State Farm Bureau, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee and NRCS to pursue talks with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, along with State and Federally elected officials to ensure reasonable and obtainable nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment allocations in New York State for the impending Chesapeake Bay Watershed TMDL.

Upper Susquehanna Line Item Within the EPF

Whereas the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) intends on imposing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement for the Upper Susquehanna and Chemung River watersheds by the end of 2010; and

Whereas any progress towards meeting New York's goals will depend heavily on the ability of the landowners within the watershed to plan and implement best management practices; and

Whereas a voluntary incentive based approach to non-point sources of pollution, as traditionally provided by the States Soil & Water Conservation Districts, is preferable to the regulatory approach taken by the EPA; and

Whereas the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) does provide line item funding focused on specific watersheds to address non-point source pollution issues; and

Whereas the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC), as a coalition of Conservation Districts in the Upper Susquehanna watershed, has had its own EPF line in the past,

Therefore be it resolved, that the New York State Association of Conservation Districts work with the New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee, New York Ag & Markets, New York State Department of Conservation and the New York State Legislature to establish a line within the State's EPF for the USC for the purpose of funding nonpoint source reduction projects within the Susquehanna watershed and assist the State in meeting its TMDL requirement.

Natural Gas Development for Soil and Water Districts Statewide

WHEREAS, Natural Gas development is becoming more important to Madison County and New York State; and

WHEREAS, residents of Madison County have expressed concerns about the impacts of this activity on the environment and landscape; and

WHEREAS, the district has the technical capabilities to assist both landowners and gas companies;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Madison County Board of Directors request that New York State Association of Conservation Districts and NACD work with New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee, New York State Ag & Markets, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to develop outside funding sources from drilling fees, that would reimburse districts for activities outlined in the Natural Gas drilling white paper approved by New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee in April 2010

Stronger Action to Prevent Asian Carp Infestation of the Great Lakes Waterways

WHEREAS, the economy of New York State is heavily reliant upon Lake Ontario, Lake Erie and the Niagara River waterway, and

WHEREAS, the economic impact of sport fishing on those counties bordering Lake Ontario and Lake Erie could be severely altered, due to the fact that the Asian carp have the potential to disrupt the native food chain which supports many species of fish in the Great Lakes, and

WHEREAS, due to their large size and rapid rate of reproduction could severely alter the ecosystem of the Great Lakes, and

WHEREAS, Asian carp DNA has already been detected in the Great Lakes ecosystem as of January 19, 2010, due to species migration from the Mississippi River, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District request that the New York State Association of Conservation Districts strongly urge the Governor and his administration to take comprehensive action, initiating all necessary precautions to protect the Great Lakes from further invasion of the Asian Carp.

Block Grants to States for Technical Assistance: Proposal for Inclusion Within the Conservation Segment of the 2012 Farm Bill

The New York Association of Conservation Districts and the NACD Great Lakes Committee propose that the National Association of Conservation Districts advocate to develop a block grant program in the conservation section for the forthcoming 2012 Farm Bill, similar to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Explanation

One of the biggest challenges facing state and local district resource managers is the lack of technical assistance (TA) resources available to help implement conservation programs under the 2008 Farm Bill. The current cost-share is often cost-prohibitive to the states because it requires a 50% non-federal match.

The inability of states to come up with the non-federal match for cost-share for TA also negatively impacts SWCDs because districts are often the TA providers when states execute TA agreements with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

One way to create a more favorable arrangement for TA providers would be to create a state block program under the Conservation Title of the next Farm Bill. The same agencies responsible for agriculture in their states would be eligible for technical assistance block grants to implement Farm Bill conservation treatment programs.

States would be required to submit an application detailing the purpose of the grant, the benefits of additional TA toward achieving Farm Bill goals within the state, the on-the ground benefits of additional TA and the partnership arrangements to execute the TA (e.g. districts that have the capacity and interest to participate in the program).

An example of how the Conservation Grant Program might work is as follows. These block grants would be funded through an annual appropriation (e.g. an amount to spread across all 50 states doled out competitively) or as a percentage of financial assistance dollars provided to each state. For example, let's say a state agency were eligible to apply for up to 10% of the amount of FA dollars received by the NRCS state office for conservation treatment under the Farm Bill. Under such a scenario, a block grant to New York State for additional TA dollars in an amount up to \$1,334,600 would be provided. (New York State, in 2009, received \$13,346,000 in EQIP dollars. 10% would be \$1,334,600. This amount, divided by 58, SWCDs, is approximately \$23,000 per district.)

Technical Assistant dollars will strengthen districts financially, providing for the use and management of our nation's soil and water resources.

Funding Options

The Board of Directors of the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (OCSWCD), are asking New York Association of Conservation Districts (NYACD) to investigate on behalf of Districts, the possibility of creating non profit foundations. Such an opportunity would enable Soil and Water Conservation Districts across New York State to take full advantage of available community and foundation funding to support conservation projects and programs within their County. NYACD will report back to delegates at 2011 Annual Meeting on the findings.

AEM Database

Whereas Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) has expanded significantly since its inception and now includes a non-competitive technical assistance program, and a competitive BMP implementation grant program that have separate and incompatible reporting procedures; and

Whereas the AEM Base and NYS Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Programs are mutually data dependent on each other and there is potential for data developed in each program to work together and build upon each other; and

Whereas the current AEM reporting requirements utilize individual forms with no digital capability of data compilation for interim reports, closeout reports, or data sharing between programs thus leading to cumbersome and time consuming data compilation and consolidation; and

Therefore, be it resolved that the NYCDEA and NYACD support the funding for development of a data management system to improve administrative efficiencies and easily translate individual farm data to and between the AEM Base and the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program.

Coordination of NYACD and NYS Grange Annual Mtgs

WHEREAS, the NYACD and NYS Grange conduct annual meetings to promote policies and legislation that enhance the environmental and economic well-being of New York State's agricultural, rural, suburban and urban communities, and

WHEREAS, NYS Soil Conservation District Law, (Book 52-B) clearly states that the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee and each Soil and Water Conservation District shall have one member of its governing Board appointed from a list provided by the New York State Grange, and

WHEREAS, attendance at the NYACD Annual Meeting is an approved Performance Standard for SWCD Board Members, and

WHEREAS, attendance at the NYS Grange Annual Meeting has been recently included as an approved Performance Standard for SWCD Board Members, and

WHEREAS, the Annual Meetings of both organizations periodically conflict with one another, and

WHEREAS, Annual Meetings that do not conflict with one another are likely to have improved attendance at both Annual Meetings, and

WHEREAS, a coordinated coalition of Conservation Partners is in the best interests of both organizations,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NYACD and NYS Grange Executive Committees work in close coordination and communication to insure the Annual Meetings of both organizations do not coincide.