

Vice Chairperson Barbara Peace called the meeting of the Indiana County Conservation District to order on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 9:33 am at 435 Hamill Road in Indiana. Other Directors present were Janis Long, Aaron Simpson and Gregg VanHorn. Directors absent: Commissioner Sherene Hess, Craig Andrie, and Cindy Rogers

Also present: Douglas Beri Jr. – Executive Director, Tammie Robinson – Office Administrator, Brooke Russick – Conservation Program Manager (Dirt/Gravel Low Volume Roads), Benjamin Wenger – Conservation Program Specialist (Watersheds), Marisa Matlin – Conservation Program Specialist (102/NMP), Blake Mauthe – Conservation Program Specialist (Educator), Tiffany Wirick – Office Administrator, Rebecca Caldwell - AmeriCorps, Tom Beresnyak and Nathan McNutt, - Associate Directors, Stephen Campbell – Penn State Extension, Ariel Coleman – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kyle Wirick and Frank Mihalko – PA Fish and Boat Commission, Linda Santos representing Concerned Residents of Western PA (CROW), and Carolyn Trimarchi representing CROW, Friends of Whites Woods, and the Aultman Watershed Association for Restoring the Environment (AWARE)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carolyn Trimarchi reported Friends of Whites Woods is planning a barberry pull event on April 18. AWARE is planning a trash cleanup in Aultman on March 28 and tree planting will take place May 2. Volunteers are welcome to assist with both events.

Santos reported a CROW community event is planned for March 31 at The Coney in downtown Indiana to discuss the Homer City Redevelopment Authority power plant and AI data center project.

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 Long, motion carried.

Vanhorn moved to pay the bills as presented, second by Long, motion carried with Simpson abstaining.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT

Three erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, and three Chapter 102 site inspections were conducted.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS

McNutt reported the United High School drone club assembled a drone he purchased for his farming operation as a class project and proceeded to use it to seed the school's football field.

Beresnyak reported forester Mike Wolf came to his farm as part of his PA Woodland Resilience Enhancement Network project.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT - none

COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Beresnyak reported on available Penn State Extension on-line webinars.

Campbell reported that the Indiana County Farm Bureau (ICFB) is hosting a haylage and baleage workshop on April 18, 2026, at the Brush Valley Firehall. ICFB will sponsor 15 participants to the workshop.

Wirick reported that trout stocking is underway and volunteers are welcome to assist. In addition to his Indiana County territory, Wirick is also covering Cambria County during the absence of staff due to military deployment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - none

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

The Trexler Farm nutrient management plan is currently under review. No plans were presented for approval.

Simpson moved to accept the following donations for the Envirothon Education Grant fund from Indiana Garden Club - \$100; Stiffler, McGraw & Associates - \$100; Indiana Moose Lodge 174 - \$200; BPO Elks Lodge 931 - \$200; Ken Sink Chapter of Trout Unlimited - \$100; Keller Engineers, Inc. - \$125; The Markosky Engineering Group - \$200; and Blacklick Creek Watershed Association - \$150, second by Vanhorn, motion carried.

Vanhorn moved to approve the updated FY25 Dirt/Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program budget as presented to utilize the full training and education allocation for District expenses, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve a change to Low Volume Roads contract LV2503 with Rayne Township for the Honey Hollow Road project from \$82,286 to \$104,231 to include contracted labor and equipment costs, second by Long, motion carried.

Long moved to approve a 50% cash advance for the Rayne Township, Honey Hollow Road LV2503 project in the amount of \$52,115.50, second by Vanhorn, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve the Phase 2 Food Systems contract for Rural Support Partners for business planning and implementation strategies in the amount of \$20,000, second by Long, motion carried.

Vanhorn moved to accept lowest responsible bidder, Stewart Fencing and Excavation, for the Canopy Trail and Walkway Project Contract 1 for an amount not to exceed \$199,865, second by Simpson, motion carried. Two bids were received Contract 1 for trail excavation, grubbing, and placing piers in the ground. No bids were received for Contract 2 for construction of the wood walkway. Before formal contracting with Stewart Fencing and Excavation, Russick will reach out to the grant advisors to receive guidance on whether to move forward with Contract 1 without a firm commitment at this time to complete Contract 2.

Long moved to ratify the personnel committee's decision to hire Adelaide Aberle as Conservation Program Specialist (DGLVR Focused) at CPS03 Level, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve the Board Governance Committee recommended director and associate director per-diem policy of \$50 per day for in-county activities, and \$150 per day for out of county activities, second by Long, motion carried.

Simpson moved to accept Benjamin Wenger's letter of resignation, second by Vanhorn, motion carried.

Five proposals were received for lawn mowing/weed eating and snow removal services. Vanhorn moved to approve Total Asphalt Services, who submitted the lowest priced proposal for both services, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve a contract with TCBuckles Productions LLC to produce a 40th Envirothon competition video and video shorts in the amount of \$3,335, second by Long, motion carried.

Staff Project/Program Presentation – none

Long moved to enter executive session at 10:09 am to discuss personnel matters, second by Vanhorn, motion carried.

Vanhorn moved to resume the regular meeting at 10:34 am, second by Simpson, motion carried.

DISCUSSION - none

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Vanhorn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson
Administrative Assistant