SWCS Call 3/28/14

Call in information: 1-800-582-3014

Participant code: 317658942#

**Role Call:**

*Board:* Lara, Andy, Michelle, Chris, Noel G,Larry, Erika

*Chapter:* Janet Perry-NRCS, Tom S., Lara Christianson-Conservation Fund, Katie Flahive-EPA

Neil Conklin, Farm Foundation- Soil Initiative

* Presentation Overview:

Farm Foundation has been working over the past 6 months to build a major effort in soil health. Efforts started about 3 years ago as project to bring agriculture together and to move us closer to common vision for the future of agriculture.

* Farm Foundation and the Noble Foundation are together developing this movement to broadly advance soil health. “Soil Renaissance” info can be found on website. <http://www.farmfoundation.org/webcontent/Soil-Health-Initiative-1873.aspx>
* Project has 4 key objectives:
	+ Education – communication to general public
	+ Research- Noble in the lead as a research institute, focusing on building a center of excellence for soil research and collaborations
		- Working with NRCS/ARS for a major review of literature on soil health
	+ Economics- better understanding of risks and returns associated with soil health
	+ Measurement- more standard approaches to measure soil health and getting these tools in hands of producers.
* Will be reaching out to SWCS to scout out folks interested in advancing soil health.
* Email Neil with questions, Neil@farmfoundation.org
* If interested in blogging, contact Mary Thompson about opportunities

Clean Water Act Proposed Rule- Katie Flahive- Nonpoint Source Control Branch, EPA

* Joint EPA and Army Corps proposed rule reduces the confusion and complexity about where the Clean Water Act applies and where it does not and clarifies which types of waters are and are not covered under the Clean Water Act.
* Any agriculture activity that does not result in the discharge of a pollutant to waters of the U.S. still does not require a permit. All exemptions and exclusions for agriculture from Clean Water Act permit requirements are retained.
* EPA and the Army Corps have coordinated with USDA to develop an interpretive rule to ensure that 50+ conservation practices that protect/improve water quality will not be subject to Section 404 dredged or fill permitting requirements.
* The agencies have also agreed to work together to implement these new exemptions and to periodically identify, review, and update NRCS conservation practice standards/activities that would qualify under the exemption.
* Katie can set up separate briefing for the group, coordinating with Erika and/or Lara.

Farm Bill and what it means to SWCS:

* Andy will send around update that John Peterson provided related to Farm Bill and other activities around it in DC.

**Chapter Business:**

Officers:

* Lara will run for President-elect and Chris agreed to step into VP position.
* Next steps arrange elections- Andy will coordinate with Bill Boyer.
* Michelle filling in as council member
* Officer candidates, but some may be too busy (Leonard and possibly Bruce)
	+ - Doug Lawrence
		- Skip Hyberg
		- Bruce Knight
		- Mark Waldridge
		- Leonard Jordan
		- Lisa Durant
* Need to update the Board Office list with Lara (President-elect) and Chris (VP). Andy will coordinate with Bill Boyer and send out information to the group.
* Andy is working on Chapter Report- chapter annually submits report with regard to activities and expenditures for the year. Andy will send to Michelle and Lara to confirm activities.

Treasures Report:

Checking: $1,212.23 Savings: $10,999.23

Total: $12,211.36

Taxes: We report tax year from April 1-March 31 of each year.

Spring Event:

* Andy suggests we shoot for a spring/summer even in July, along with the National Press Club. It will be best to set a date a month in advance and try to book as soon as possible Also need to increase crowd we are doing outreach to- provide a poster etc to announce the event and the society. Potential dates include July 9 or 16?
* Summer event topic: Conowingo Dam and management of agriculture upland of Dam to maintain use of dam for sediment and nutrient capture to protect Chesapeake Bay. Also trading opportunities.
* Another topic: Monarch Butterfly and restoring habitat for Monarchs, educational issue for society. Who will volunteer to make this an educational issue? Andy will send out list of roles/tasks of board members and who is taking on what.

Updates

* Event last month in Chinatown went well. Picture is up on website. Updated all minutes on website.
* Erika and Lara will both act as webmaster. Will need to add personal contact information on website either for Andy or Lara. Need to get new officer list on website. Lara/Andy will talk to Bill to see how quickly we can make this happen
* Lara will send CWA and Farm Foundation information to all members.