

December 14, 2006 SADC Meeting Highlights

Executive Director's Report

Proposed rules resulting from the process review committee's evaluation of the Farmland Preservation Program were published in the December 4th issue of the New Jersey Register. The proposal can be accessed on the SADC's website at www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rulesnotice.htm. The comment period closes February 2.

The second annual Farmland Preservation Summit will be held on Friday, March 2, at the Cook Campus Center in New Brunswick. In addition to updates on funding, right-to-farm and hot issues for the year, the summit will feature separate tracks for counties and municipalities focusing on the rules regarding county and municipal planning incentive grant programs and other topics. Brochures with registration forms will be mailed out in January.

The Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT) hosted a series of sessions on a federal bill signed into law that greatly expands federal tax incentives for conservation easement donations. The provision, however, applies only to closings that take place by the end of 2007 unless extended by Congress. The SADC is looking closely at the impact this bill will have on its transactions. More information on the bill is available on the GSPT's website at [www.state.nj.us/gsp/Federal Tax Deduction Seminars.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/gsp/Federal_Tax_Deduction_Seminars.htm).

Code of Ethics

The SADC directed its policy subcommittee to review proposed changes to its Supplemental Code of Ethics as part of a review required of all State agencies by the State Ethics Commission.

Guidelines for Developing County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plans

The SADC adopted guidelines for the development of County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plans, which will be the basis for future farmland preservation investments. The Committee also adopted a policy for awarding maximum \$30,000 grants to counties to assist in the preparation of the plans. The guidelines and policy will be distributed to counties, along with a grant agreement to be completed by counties interested in applying for grant funding. SADC staff will be working closely with individual counties in January and February to walk them through this planning process.

Burlington County

The SADC disapproved an application for a cost-sharing grant for the preservation of the Burlington County/Rancocas Valley Regional High School property in Lumberton through the 2007A county round. The County acquired the land in 2002, but did not submit the application for the sale of the development easement within three consecutive application rounds as required by SADC regulations.

Hunterdon County

The SADC authorized staff to proceed with appraisals on the Tucker Farm in Lebanon Township, which ranked as an Alternate farm under the direct easement purchase program. The farm is in the Highlands Preservation area.

Final approvals were granted to the Wiley farm and Timko farm in Delaware Township under the planning incentive grant program.

Final approval was granted to the Sekel Farm in Lebanon Township under the county easement purchase program, subject to a number of conditions, including the SADC requesting and obtaining approval to add the farm to the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program list for federal funding in the amount of \$800 per acre.

Final approval was granted for the preservation of the Holcombe farm in West Amwell Township under the fee simple program.

Monmouth County

The SADC granted final approval to the preservation of F&F Nursery farm in Holmdel and Smith Farm in Upper Freehold under the planning incentive grant program. The approval for F&F Nursery was conditioned on staff confirming there is sufficient capacity within the 25-foot-wide trail easement to buffer the farm from the trail.

Final approval was granted for the preservation of two Barclay/Colts Neck Township farms under the direct easement purchase program.

Salem County

The SADC granted final approval to preservation of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation/Caltabiano Farm in Pilesgrove Township, including a provision that Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program funds be used to the fullest extent possible.

Somerset County

Final approval was granted to the Harms farm in Bedminster Township under the planning incentive grant program, including a 5 percent impervious cover restriction requested by the landowner.

Final approval was granted for the preservation of the Griggstown Quail farm in Franklin Township under the direct easement purchase program. The approval is subject to exploring with the landowner the possibility of a nonseverable exception around an existing farm market.