

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
**February 9, 2023**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Supervisors Present**

Jim Anderson, Hancock County – Vice-Chairman  
Chuck Glenn, Hancock County – Treasurer  
Steve Paull, Brooke County  
Eric Freeland – Brooke County  
Amy Wade, Ohio County - Secretary  
Robert Luchetti, Jr., Ohio County  
David McCardle, Marshall County  
Mark Fitzsimmons, Marshall County, Chairman

**Others Present**

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA  
Jennifer Kile, Conservation Specialist, WVCA  
Don Whetzel, Watershed Manager, WVCA – via teleconference  
Levi Cyphers, Engineer, WVCA – via teleconference  
Abby Geho, District Administrator, NPCD  
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS  
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
Kevin Paull, NRCS  
Brent Lyons, Forester, WVDOF  
Bob Straub, CPA

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at the USDA Service Center in McMechen, WV.

**Pledge of Allegiance** – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

**Minutes**

- **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the January 2023 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

**Financial Report**

- Bob Straub reviewed the NPCD financials for January 2023.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the January 2023 co-administered funds financials.  
**Chuck Glenn made a motion to approve and file the financials as presented. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

**Reports**

- District Crew (NPCD) – No Report
  
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) - No Report

- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF)
  - Brent Lyons reviewed his written report:
 

West Virginia Division of Forestry Activities  
Brooke, Hancock, Marshall and Ohio Counties  
February 9, 2023

This Report Covers Activities from 12/06/2022 – 02/08/2023

**BROOKE COUNTY**

Conducted a timber recon. Distributed applications to VFDs for VFA Grants. Inspected logging jobs.

**HANCOCK COUNTY**

Conducted a timber recon. Assisted loggers w/stream crossing and log landing locations. Met w/OES/911 Director and Dispatchers re: Forest Fire Season. Distributed applications to VFDs for VFA Grant. Checked the weather station - needed upgrades. Inspected logging jobs.

**MARSHALL COUNTY**

Attended online stewardship training. Met w/Dispatchers re: Forest Fire Season. Distributed applications to VFDs for VFA Grant. Attended VFD meetings. Inspected logging jobs.

**OHIO COUNTY**

Distributed applications to VFDs for VFA Grant. Inspected logging jobs.

**REGION**

Assisted with BMP/Recertification Training.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
  - Don Whetzel explained the 7-1-3U agreements and reported that Mike Scherpenberg’s last day is tomorrow.
  - The WVCA monthly report was reviewed:
 

**February 2023 WVCA Report**

**7-1-3U Agreements**

Please review your current 7-1-3U agreements to see if they need to be renewed. If so, please make arrangements to do so. WVCA staff is available to assist in this process.

**2023 Dates for WVACD Quarterly Meetings**

April 10 & 11 Mt. Hope Bechtel Reserve  
July 17 & 18 Canaan  
October 16-17 Days Inn, Flatwoods

**Conservation Farm Contest**

It is time for the districts to be thinking about the conservation farm families to be awarded this year. District winners are due to Kim and Jeremy by May 31.

**Agricultural Enhancement Program (AgEP) Administrative Review**

To comply with the requirements from the program documentation, including the Legislative Rule, the traditional AgEP spot check procedure has been reevaluated and is now referred to as the Administrative Review.

Each District’s Administrative Specialist will conduct a review of 10% or a minimum of 3 files with applications that fiscal year and submit the Administrative Review Form to their District Operations Manager by January 31st. By completing this review halfway through a fiscal year, staff will have time to find possible procedural errors and take steps to prevent them from happening in the future.

The Administrative Review process will allow WVCA to ensure that all proper documentation is physically accessible in the district cooperator file, and that the districts' online database records system is in agreement with WVCA financial records system.

### **Request to Conservation Districts**

The WVCA is encouraging Conservation Districts to review and update your **District Policy Manuals**. In addition to your policy manual, you are encouraged to review your CD Employee Manual (if you have one) and your CD Plan of Work. If you are already doing the reviews, please disregard this request. However, please let us know with a written response that you are already reviewing or will be reviewing the documents.

The **district personnel plan is due to SCC in March**, so please add to your February agenda for review and approval.

Conservation Districts are asked to begin the **Agreed Procedures Engagement (APE) audit** if you haven't already. Please check your current agreement to make sure it is valid.

**Plans of work** information will be forthcoming to allow CDs to meet the policy associated with SB264

**O&M agreements:** CDs are encouraged to continue to work with local sponsors for O&M funding. The change will be that these agreements will not be matched dollar for dollar as they were in the past. The WVCA will be allocating funds on a watershed basis moving forward to help with O&M costs.

**SPRP and EWP funding:** Conversations are still being had to determine how funding will be reallocated to CDs once recalled. More information will be presented when it becomes available.

### **Conservation Budget Proposal for FY24**

The WVCA has submitted a budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2024 that seeks \$1.6 million in new funding. This dollar amount comes from the information provided by the districts relating to unmet needs and new initiatives.

The WVCA has also asked for an additional \$55 million in this year's budget to provide the non-federal match for dam rehabilitation projects that would be funded under the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This amount was changed by the Governor's proposed budget to be \$21 million which would be phase one of this funding.

### **FY 23 AgEP Timeline**

- February - Comments reviewed and forms revised
- March - State AgEP committee meeting to finalize upcoming FY program
- April - Presentation of upcoming FY AgEP to SCC
- May/June/July – CDs to finalize upcoming FY program, update AgEP agreement addendums, take action to approve LORs
- June 15 – Deadline for CDs submit final practice list to WVCA (CDs can submit final list any time after SCC approval of practice list)

### **Supervisor Travel and per diem**

State Committee held a special meeting on January 31 to ask for an AG opinion regarding supervisor travel and per diem. Until this decision is given, the SCC also moved that the effective date for the increase to \$150 not go into effect until July 1.

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)
  - A monthly report was reviewed:

## **February 2023 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director**

### **April Quarterly Meeting**

The April quarterly meeting will be held at Summit Bechtel Reserve on April 10. Committees will have a chance to meet in the morning and we will break for lunch. We will then have our quarterly meeting and that will be followed by an AgEP round table discussion. The State Conservation Committee will meet on Tuesday at SBR and will be followed by a tour of the facilities. The cost of the tour will be \$10. **Pre-registration WILL BE REQUIRED for both meetings!** More information will be coming very shortly.

### **NACD News**

The NACD Annual Meeting will be held February 11-15 in New Orleans.

### **Per Diem Update**

The SCC met on Tuesday, January 31 to discuss sending a letter to the Attorney General to ask for a clarification of the following: a definition of per diem, if SCC or state legislature should establish a rate of 'per diem,' and if as stated in state code is per diem considered a salary and if it can be paid in increments. SCC voted to change the

\$150 effective rate to July 1, 2023 due to being in mid-fiscal year. WVCA and I will keep you as updated as we possibly can.

### **Reminders and Updates**

Continue to make conversations with your legislators and be mindful of where they are located when sending letters and messages. While they are in session, use their session addresses and when they are home, use their home addresses to ensure that they are receiving your mail. Continue to update them on your district events and progress.

HB2708 (SB 377) and HB2709 (SB 378) were introduced on January 20<sup>th</sup> and are in the Judiciary Committees of their respective chambers.

### **Emails from Me**

Please let me know if you are not receiving e-mails from me. I am having some trouble getting through to some Gmail accounts and I'm unsure of who is receiving emails vs who is not.

### **Upcoming Dates**

April 10 – Spring Quarterly Meeting at Summit Bechtel Reserve

April 11 – State Conservation Committee Meeting at Summit Bechtel Reserve  
July 17-18 – Summer Quarterly Meeting at Canaan Valley Resort

October 16-17 – Fall Quarterly Meeting at Days Inn, Flatwoods

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
  - Katie Fitzsimmons reviewed a written report:  
*February 2023*

*NRCS Work Unit Report:*

**Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach**

- NRCS will be holding trainings the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month, April – November

**Application Deadlines**

- EQIP/AMA Ranking Deadline – 3/17
- CSP Applications – signup ongoing – sign up should in March

**Programs**

- **Program Applications – Eligible to Assess**
  - EQIP – 28 NPCD, 14 UOCD
  - AMA – 4 NPCD, 1 UOCD

**Field Visits/Conservation Planning**

- Staff completed field visits for conservation planning, technical assistance, and practice certifications
- Follow ups with current contract holders for contract reviews

**Other**

- **Small Farms Conference** – February 23-25
- **March Dinner Meeting** – March 6<sup>th</sup>, Sleep Inn- Moundsville, Topic – Bale Grazing
- **Women in Ag Day** – May 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC) – No Report
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
  - Veronica Gibson has the new signature cards that need signed for the NPCD checking accounts to add Eric Freeland and Robert Luchetti, Jr. and to remove Britney Hervey-Farris and Robert Luchetti, Sr.
- District Administrator (NPCD)
  - Abby Geho requested that anything that the supervisors would like to include in the upcoming newsletter needs to be submitted no later than March 20. Eric Freeland would like to write an article again for the upcoming newsletter and for each newsletter in the future. It was decided to get Abby training or software needed to improve the presentation of the newsletter.
- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
  - Education Committee
    - Katie reviewed upcoming 2023 educational events that will be funded through the WVACD grant:

### **2023 NPCD Educational Series**

**May 19<sup>th</sup>** – Invasive Species Dinner Meeting, Valley Grove

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** – Invasive Species Field Day, LaBelle Farm, Bethany, WV

**\*May 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Women in Ag Day, Moundsville Center

**September 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>** – Marshall County Hands on Ag Day

**October 6<sup>th</sup>** – Ohio County Hands on Ag Day

Tax Workshop – TBD – Spring/ May / Evening

Underserved Dinner - TBD

Ag Merit Badge Day – TBD – Summer / August / Friday

Cattleman's Day – TBD – Fall / October / Saturday

Importance of Animal Health – TBD

School Gardens

*\*Not part of your series but educational*

- Equipment Committee
  - David McCardle Asked Harry Aston to clean the aerator that was returned without being cleaned.
- Building Committee
  - Mark Fitzsimmons would like to have Will Groves check the caulking around all the windows to be sure they are sealed.
  - Abby Geho reported that all contractors that looked at the front door felt that the issues with the door are caused by rock salt and debris stuck in the bottom of the door.
  - Mark Fitzsimmons wants Johnson Boiler Works to look at the heating vents and returns. It was suggested by Johnson Boiler Works to make some changes to the vents to increase heat and air conditioner control in the building.
- High Tunnel Committee
  - The hydrant in the high tunnel was leaking and the water has been turned off. Will Groves will be asked to look at it for repairs.
- Personnel Committee
  - Robert Luchetti, Jr. presented a draft supervisor travel & per diem policy. There was much discussion. The policy needs to be reviewed and approved before July 1, 2023.

## Old Business

- Wheeling Creek #3 – Updates
  - The work at Wheeling Creek #3 has been completed and the contractor has been paid. There are no new updates regarding the lawsuit.
- Quotes for New Metal Doors & Installation
  - Last month a quote for doors was received. Two additional quotes were received and reviewed today. **Jim Anderson made a motion to accept the quote from DMD Door to include the cost of having the doors painted. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

## New Business

- Draft Letter to WVCA Regarding PA O&M
    - There was a discussion regarding the fact that the WVCA no longer inspects or completes work orders for the PA O&M. **David McCardle made a motion to send a letter to the WVCA requesting the funds that are held by the WVCA for the PA O&M. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
  - FY24 District Personnel Plan
    - **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to approve the FY24 District Personnel Plan as presented and to submit it to the State Conservation Committee. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
  - 2023 WV Envirothon 5<sup>th</sup> Place Team Sponsorship
    - **David McCardle made a motion to sponsor the 5<sup>th</sup> place WV Envirothon team in the amount of \$1,500. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
  - NPCD Long Range Plan & District Plan of Work
    - A meeting will be held on Monday, February 28, at 1:00 pm for the NPCD Long Range Plan and District Plan of Work.
  - FY22 DRAFT AUP Report
    - **David McCardle made a motion to approve the FY22 AUP report as presented and to pay the invoice in the amount of \$3,550. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
  - Harmon Creek O&M – Bid Out/NPCD Crew
    - After a discussion regarding bidding out or having the NPCD crew remove the debris at Harmon Creek **David McCardle made a motion to table the topic until it can be discussed with the NPCD crew. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
  - WVACD Grant Acceptance
    - **David McCardle made a motion to accept the WVACD education grant. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
  - NPCD Supervisor Per Diem & Travel Policy
    - Robert Luchetti, Jr. presented a draft supervisor per diem and travel policy for review. There was a discussion for changes. The new supervisor per diem goes into effect 07/01/2023.
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- Potesta Proposal for Additional Construction Administration Services – UGC #1
  - Levi Cyphers reviewed a modification proposal from Potesta for additional costs for repairs to a seep that was found at Upper Grave Creek #1. **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the modification from Postesta for Upper Graver Creek #1 cost for new repairs. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
  
- Women in Ag Sponsorship
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to sponsor Women in Ag in the amount of \$2,000. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
  - **David McCardle made a motion to purchase 1,000 butterfly seed packets. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
  
- Conservation Farm
  - Conservation farms are due to the WVCA by May 31.
  
- Letter of Request
  - \$6,481.64 – NPCD Employee Reimbursement – 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr FY23  
**Chuck Glenn made a motion to approve and submit the letter of request for \$6,481.64 for the FY23 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter NPCD employee reimbursement. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.**

**Correspondence** – Secretary Amy Wade read the following correspondence – 1) A letter received from NRCS that they have received funding to prepare a preliminary feasibility report (PIFR) for the Buffalo Creek Watershed.

**Supervisor Reports**

Chuck Glenn – Spoke to Allison Elementary regarding the available education grant.

Robert Luchetti, Jr. – Attended Legislative Day, the WVACD quarterly meeting, and the WVU Extension dinner.

Eric Freeland – Has a two row three point hitch seeder that could be rented to cooperators if the district is interesting in purchasing.

**NEXT MEETING** –The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at the USDA Service Center, McMechen at 10:00 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

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**Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman**

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**Amy Wade, Secretary**

**Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson**