

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
**March 9, 2023**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Supervisors Present**

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

**Supervisor Absent**

Eric Freeland – Brooke County

**Others Present**

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA  
Jennifer Kile, Conservation Specialist, WVCA  
Kim Fisher, District Operations Manager, West  
Gene Saurborn, Director of Watershed Projects, WVCA  
Abby Geho, District Administrator, NPCD  
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS  
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
Bob Straub, CPA

Vice - Chairman Jim Anderson called the meeting to order on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the USDA Service Center in McMechen, WV.

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

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

**Minutes**

- **Steve Paull made a motion to approve the February 2023 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**

**Financial Report**

- Bob Straub reviewed the NPCD financials for February 2023.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the February 2023 co-administered funds financials.  
**Amy Wade 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 provided a written report but was unable to attend the meeting.

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

This Report Covers Activities from 02/09/2023 - 03/06/2023

**BROOKE**

Contacted the 911 Center.

**HANCOCK COUNTY**

Suppressed and investigated fires. Contacted the 911 Center. Contacted the NRPO. Inspected logging jobs.

**MARSHALL COUNTY**

Investigated a fire. Conducted a timber recon. Issued a burning permit. Contacted the 911 Center. Contacted the NRPO. Attended Women in Ag meeting. Attended the Firefighters Association Meeting. Assisted w/fire training @Roberts Ridge VFD. Attended VFD meetings. School contact re: Smokey Bear program. Provided the Extension Office w/contact info.

**OHIO**

Contacted the 911 Center. Conducted a timber recon and a tree planting recon.

**REGION**

Attended SNRPO and Narcan training. Attended training on new eFire 20.0 program. Assisted w/Hunting and Fishing Show in Morgantown.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
  - Kim Fisher reviewed her written report.

**March 2023  
WVCA Report**

**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 these reviews, please disregard this request.

**District Personnel Plan**

District Personnel Plans are due to the SCC in March. Failure to meet the deadline may cause a delay in approving the District’s personnel plan and the release of state funds for those positions.

**Conservation District Operation (CDO) Grant Funds**

Districts are asked to prepare your CDO budget report. The budget is to be submitted to Fiscal Services and your Area Director by March 30, so it can be presented to SCC in April.

**Engineering Expression of Interest**

Review your current contract and if needed, prepare to advertise and go through interview/selection process if needed.

The WVCA is interested in working with the district to ensure they retain a firm that has strong civil engineering and is familiar with dams.

Because of questions raised about these agreements, it’s important to make sure that the scope of work is clearly defined and an agreement between the district and engineering firm is signed.

Also, the district may want to consider whether it wants an engineering firm that also can perform environmental assessments.

### **Conservation Farm Tour**

It is time for districts to be thinking about the conservation farm families to be awarded. CDs should have their district farm selection to their Area Directors by May 31.

#### **Timelines:**

- **May 31** - County and District judging.
- **July** - Area judging.
- **August** - Statewide judging.
- **October** – Presentation of Area and State awards at WV Conservation Partnership Annual Conference. County and District winners at local Conservation District annual banquets.

**O&M Agreements:** CD's 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.

#### **AGEP Timeline:**

- **March** - State AgEP committee meeting to finalize upcoming FY AgEP
- **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)

#### **State AgEP Committee Meeting**

The State AgEP Committee Meeting will be held at 9:30am on **March 27<sup>th</sup>** at the [Elk Conservation District office in Sutton WV](#), or online VIA Teams for the State AgEP Committee Meeting. An Agenda will be available prior to the meeting date.

Call in 1 304-935-0697

Phone Conference ID: 628 757 036#

#### **WV State Fair Sign Ups**

The schedule for state fair volunteers is now available under the WVCA admin webpage. If you would like to schedule a time frame to work at the fair, please contact your Administrative Specialist.

#### **FY 24 Budget Update**

WVCA's proposed budget is \$11.4 million. In addition, the requested \$21 million in matching funds for dam rehabilitation is in both the Executive Budget and SB 150 in the surplus section. This information is subject to change. 2023 Legislative Session ends March 11.

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)
  - Heather Duncan provided a monthly report. She was unable to attend the meeting.  
**March 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, around March 13, including *hopefully*, an online registration and payment link.

#### **Area Meetings**

Please do not forget about the area meetings that meet quarterly prior to the WVACD quarterly meetings. These meetings are designed to gather districts in similar regions to discuss important information prior to the quarterly meetings.

For information regarding your area meeting, please feel free to contact myself or your area meeting coordinator (information located in the WVACD quarterly newsletter).

#### **NACD News**

The NACD Annual Meeting was held February 11-15 in New Orleans. Here are the [notes that I took from the meeting](#). Congratulations to CCD for being awarded a Friends of NACD grant! Only EIGHT are awarded per year! WV also received recognition (and a plaque!) for 100% district membership. This will be displayed at the WVACD office. Please see this PR on the new officer team for NACD: <https://www.nacdnet.org/newsroom/49058/>. The 2024 conference will be held in San Diego, CA February 10-14.

The Washington DC Spring Fly Inn will be March 22-23. Training videos will be available on March 14 and 16 to prepare for the event. These videos would also be a good reference for our Conservation Day as well. For more information on the NACD website at: [Spring Fly-In - NACD \(nacdnet.org\)](http://nacdnet.org). **I think it would be VERY important for supervisors to attend this event if at all possible.**

#### **Per Diem Update**

The SCC met on February 22 and motioned to revise and shorten the letter that is to be sent to the AG's Office. Any new per diem rates will continue to not go into effect until July 1, 2023 or unless otherwise stated.

#### **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. They are lumped in with A LOT of other rules. The \$1.6 million does not look promising.

However, the \$21 million (\$55 million requested) has moved up to 3<sup>rd</sup> on the surplus list.

#### **Grant Opportunities**

Several grant opportunities are available for conservation districts.

[National Fish and Wildlife](#) (NFWF) has 2 programs including: Small Watershed Grants and Chesapeake WILD. These pertain to Chesapeake Bay districts and proposal are due April 20.

The NACD Urban and Community grants are open until March 13, 2023. There are 2 tracts to these grants and I have outlined those in my notes from NACD. More information can be

found here: <https://www.nacdnet.org/about-nacd/what-we-do/urban-and-community/>  
These are great for districts that are looking to start a program or for a district that has a program in mind and needs help, *especially with staffing*.

NASDA Foundation- EPA HU Farmers Grant Program. More information is coming out March 1<sup>st</sup>. More information can be found here: <https://www.nasda.org/nasda-foundation/projects/epa/> . These are for non-Chesapeake Bay districts.

USDA -NRCS is expanding their Equity in Conservation Cooperative Agreements and will be seeking a new round of applications. Applications are due April 27 and more information can be found here: [USDA Seeking Applications to Expand Conservation Assistance to Underserved Producers | Natural Resources Conservation Service](#). Applications should range from \$100,000-\$1,000,000.

### **HEALING THE PLANET GRANT 2023**

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is pleased to announce a third year of Healing the Planet grants in partnership with The GIANT Company. This year, \$300,000 will be awarded to projects that address food waste prevention, reduction, and recovery across The GIANT Company's operating area in the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia. Grant application opens March 1 and closes April 13 at 4PM. All grant guidelines, information, and the application can be found here: <https://www.keppabeautiful.org/grants-awards/grants/healing-the-planet-grant/healing-the-planet-2023/>.

Also be sure to check with your local community foundations.

### **Emails 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. If you have not received anything during the month of February, that means you are not receiving my emails.

### **Long Range Plans and Local Work Group Meetings**

Districts should have their LWG and LRP meetings set at this point. A template for the LRP has already been sent out along with the presentation from the January quarterly meeting. I am more than willing to come to meetings to help with the process or to answer questions as they come up. Remember that this is a guidance document and while may seem daunting and difficult at first, should prove to be very valuable in planning the future of your district. Don't forget that the annual plan (one year plan) is due in June 2024 and should be a more detailed version of your LRP.

### **New Website**

WVACD has a new website and can be found at [www.wvacd.org](http://www.wvacd.org). It is still very much a work in progress. If you have ideas for information or any photographs to be included, please let me know.

### **Upcoming Dates**

March 30 – Western Area

Meeting at LKCD 10 am March 31

– Central Area Meeting at ECD

10 am

April 4 – Eastern Area Meeting at the North Fork Ruritan (Cabins

area of PVCD) 10 am 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:

**March 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 for staff

**Application Deadlines**

- EQIP/AMA Round 1 Ranking Deadline – 3/17
- EQIP Round 2 Sign up – 4/14
- CSP Sign up – 4/14

**Programs**

- **Program Applications – Eligible to Assess**
  - Working on completing final assessments, rankings, and cost estimates
- **Tyler County Partners Meeting** – Lauren Hobbs

**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**

- **Women in Ag Day – May 23<sup>rd</sup>**
- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC) – No Report
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
  - Veronica Gibson reported that information for the Samara test and the poster contest has been distributed. Results from one school have been received for the Samara test. The submission deadline date is April 14. Posters have been received from one school. The submission deadline date is April 10.
- 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. She has received an article from Eric Freeland and Amy Wade and Chuck Glenn suggested ticks.

- Visitors
  - Gene Saurborn informed the board that American Consolidated Natural Resources (ACNR) wants to undermine Upper Grave Creek sites 7, 8, and 9. These dams are all high hazard dams. ACNR will not release any information to the district regarding their plans until a confidentiality agreement is signed. A special meeting has been set for March 15 at 2:00 pm to further discuss this issue.
- Committee Reports
  - Building Committee
    - Mark Fitzsimmons said he spoke to Will Groves regarding caulking the windows.
  - O&M Committee
    - Veronica Gibson reported that the O&M work orders have been received and need to be reviewed.
  - High Tunnel Committee
    - Katie submitted a planting plan:

**Garden Committee Report**

High tunnel will be planted in

Tomato's  
 Green peppers  
 Sweet banana and lunch box peppers  
 Green beans  
 Onions

Outside Garden

Cabbage, Kale, Lettuce  
 Cucumber Arch  
 Zucchini  
 Squash  
 Potatoes  
 Garlic  
 Onions

Nicole Shipman is picking up on 3/8 so she is trying to get some of the plants for the high tunnel and garden.

**Garden cleanup day will be Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**

- Education Committee
  - Katie reviewed upcoming 2023 educational events that will be funded through the WVACD grant:

**Northern Panhandle Conservation District  
 2023 Educational Series**

**NPCD South Public Meeting-Local Workgroup Meeting**

Valley Grove Community Building  
 Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

**NPCD North Public Meeting – Local Workgroup Meeting**

New Manchester Fire Hall  
 Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

**Underserved Meeting**

McMechen USDA Service Center  
Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

**Invasive Species Dinner Meeting**

Valley Grove Community Building  
Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

**Invasive Species Field Day**

LaBelle Farm, Bethany, WV  
Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> @ 8:30am

**Women in Ag Day**

Moundsville Center inside the walls of the former WV  
Penitentiary  
Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 8:30am

**Farm Tax Workshop**

Limestone Community Building  
Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> @ 6:30pm

**Ag Merit Badge Day**

McMechen USDA Service Center  
August TBD

**Hands on Ag Day – Marshall County**

Marshall County Fairgrounds  
September 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>

**Hands on Ag Day – Ohio County**

Site 1 – Oglebay Park  
October 6<sup>th</sup>

**Beef Quality Assurance Class**

Valley Grove Community Building  
Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

**Northern WV Regional Cattle Conference**

The Event Center @ The Highlands  
Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup> @ 9:00am

- Safety Committee
  - Eric Freeland needs to be added to the committee.
  - David McCardle will contact the vendor to get the new fire extinguishers installed.
- Personnel Committee
  - A special meeting will be held on March 24 at 10:00 am. The District Policy manual will be reviewed for updates.



## Old Business

- Harmon Creek O&M – Bid Out/NPCD Crew
  - There was a discussion to hire additional crew for the season. A decision was not made regarding whether to have the mowing done at Harmon Creek by the NPCD crew or to bid the work out.
- Conservation Farm
  - At this time, farms have not been selected for the Conservation Farm tour. A winning district farm needs to be submitted to the WVCA by May 31.

## New Business

- FY24 CDO Budget
  - A special meeting will be held on March 24 at 10:00 am. The FY24 CDO budget will be created at the meeting.
- Additional Rug Needed for Rural Development
  - **David McCardle made a motion to rent an additional rug from Wheeling Linen that will be used in the Rural Development office. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- HVAC System in USDA Service Center
  - A letter was received from Johnson Boiler Works regarding recommended upgrades to the current system. After a discussion, it was decided that the first priority would be to cool the ADP room then look into the cost to update each unit, one zone at a time. **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to get proposals/estimates for the cost of ductless AC for the ADP room and then disconnect the ADP room from the zone it is connected to. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- NACTA 2023 Soil Judging Contest
  - A letter was received from the WVU Soils Team for sponsorship to the NACTA 2023 Soil Judging Contest. **Amy Wade made a motion to sponsor the WVU Soils team \$1,000. Chuck Glenn amended the motion to \$2,000. Chuck Glenn made a motion to sponsor \$2,000 to the WVU Soils team for the NACTA 2023 Soil Judging Contest. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.** The sponsorship will be paid from the Soil Survey funds.
- Local Work Group Meetings
  - Two Local Work Group meetings will be held – April 26 at the Valley Grove Community Center and April 27 at the New Manchester Fire Hall. **Jim Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$2,000 per meeting. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- NPCD Underserved Dinner
  - The NPCD Underserved dinner will be held at the USDA Service Center on May 4. **Jim Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$2,000 for the NPCD Underserved dinner. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

- Soil Tester
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to hire a soil tester with an hourly rate of pay of \$15 per hour and mileage reimbursement. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.** The position will be advertised on Facebook and will be in the district quarterly newsletter.
- Personnel Issues
  - Personnel issues were moved to the end of the agenda.
  - At 12:55 pm David McCardle made a motion to enter an executive session to discuss personnel issues. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.
  - At 1:12 pm the board resumed the regular meeting.
  - **David McCardle made a motion to increase Abby Geho's salary to \$20.00 per hour effective April 5. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Letter of Request
  - \$3,550.00 – FY22 AUP Audit Reimbursement  
**David McCardle made a motion to approve and submit the LOR for \$3,550.00 for FY22 AUP Audit Reimbursement. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- New Conservation Agreements
  - Deborah Leech/Ohio County/12 acres
  - David Soloninka/Ohio County/5 acres
  - Bobbi Hager/Marshall County/4 acres
  - Brent Flowers/Marshall County/89 acres
  - Mike Conners/Marshall County/1 acre  
**Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the conservation agreements for D. Leech, D. Soloninka, B. Hager, B. Flowers, and M. Conners. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

**Correspondence** – None

**Supervisor Reports**

Robert Luchetti, Jr. – Attended Ohio County SWA meeting. There is a new siting plan for a landfill and litter control plan.

Amy Wade – At the last meeting, Eric Freeland mentioned that he had a two-row planter for sale and wanted to know if the district was interested in purchasing it for their equipment rental program. This will appear on the April agenda.

**Other Reports**

Katie Fitzsimmons – The Brooke County United Methodist Church approved the district to hold up to 4 meetings a year in their fellowship hall.

**NEXT MEETING** –The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at the USDA Service Center, McMechen at 10:00 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

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**Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman**

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**Amy Wade, Secretary**

**Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson**