

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
October 12, 2023
10:00 a.m.

Supervisors Present

Jim Anderson, Hancock County – Vice-Chairman
Chuck Glenn, Hancock County – Treasurer
Eric Freeland, Brooke County
Steve Paull, 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
Levi Cyphers, Engineer, WVCA
Bill Armstrong, Watershed Technician, WVCA
Cindy Shreve, Conservation Services Manager-North, WVCA – via teleconference
Andy Riffe, District Fiscal Services Manager, WVCA – via teleconference
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS
Rafael Mendez, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, NRCS
David Shipman, Soil Technician, NRCS
Kevin Paul, NRCS – via teleconference
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, October 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the USDA Service Center in McMechen, WV.

Pledge of Allegiance – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Minutes

- **David McCardle made a motion to approve the September 2023 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Bob Straub reviewed the September 2023 NPCD financials.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the August and September 2023 co-administered funds financials.
Jim Anderson made a motion to approve and file the September NPCD financials for audit. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.

Reports

- District Crew (NPCD)
 - Mark Fitzsimmons reported that the crew is unable to mow Upper Grave Creek #9. The landowner will not allow access.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) - No Report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – No Report
- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
 - A written report was provided.

October 2023 WVCA Report

Agreed Procedures Engagement (Audit)

Conservation Districts are asked to begin the Agreed Procedures Engagement (APE) (audit) soon after the close of the fiscal year on June 30th. It is important that each district read their audit, and then take steps to correct any findings noted by the auditors. If your APE (audit) appointment has not been made, please do so ASAP. If you have questions, ask Kim or Jeremy.

Request to Conservation Districts

The WVCA is encouraging Conservation Districts to review and update their District Policy Manuals. Districts are also encouraged to review their CD Employee Manual (if you have one).

October Quarterly Meeting – Awards Program

Presentation of Area and State awards will be held at the WVACD Awards and Recognition Luncheon on October 17. All County and District winners will be recognized at the local Conservation District annual banquets.

District Operations Manager

The WVCA will return to having three areas instead of the current two regarding district coverage. Devon Kokoska's official start date was 9-25-23.

WV State Conservation Committee Meeting

The WV State Conservation Committee meeting will begin at 9:30 AM Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at the WVDA lab in Moorefield. Call-in information will be provided for those who wish to call in.

Ag Enhancement Program Timeline FY24timeline may be adjusted***

October 31 - Deadline for CDs to submit additional program comments, including ranking criteria.

November - Comments reviewed and forms revised.

December - State AgEP committee meeting to finalize upcoming FY program.

January - 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)

Jim Anderson reported on the SCC meeting regarding supervisor per diem. The WVACD will decide the supervisor per diem rate at their quarterly meeting.

WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)

- A written report was provided.

October 2023 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive

Director Request to Conservation District Boards

In preparation for the upcoming quarterly meeting, I am asking district board members (and individual supervisors are welcome to respond with their own questions as well) to submit questions that they have always had on the position of treasurer and financials. The questions can range from the role of a treasurer to reading a financial statement to what is expected of the other board members to what should happen month to month regarding finances and anything and everything in between.

WVCA and WVACD want to ensure that a meaningful, engaging, and worthwhile training is made available to supervisors and we do not want to conduct a training that is not beneficial. That is why it is crucial to have input from all of you.

I am going to try to attend as many board meetings as I can this month (mostly virtually) and pose this question. Thank you to those who have already provided input. These questions can be submitted at your board meeting or emailed or called to me at a later time. Please have all questions to me by October 1 if possible.

October Quarterly Meeting

The October Quarterly Meeting is fast approaching. Do not forget to fill out your registration form for the awards luncheon on October 17 which follows the quarterly meeting. Registration forms are due to your AS **by September 25**. More information on the quarterly meeting will be coming out as we arrive closer to the date. Please reserve your rooms under the WVACD room block **by October 5** by calling (304) 765-5055. A king room base rate is \$109.99 and a double room base rate is \$101.99.

NACD Annual Meeting

The NACD Annual Meeting is fast approaching! It will be held in San Diego, CA February 10-14, 2024. More information can be found here: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/> Early bird registration ends December 22, 2023. This is a great way to network and to see what other districts are doing. I still believe that a supervisor should attend at least one annual and regional meeting with NACD. It's a great experience and opportunity!

Upcoming Dates

- October 3 – Eastern Area Meeting 10 am @ EPCD Office
- October 6 – Central Area Meeting 10 am @ GCD Office
- October 11 – State Conservation Committee Meeting in Moorefield
- October 16-17 – Fall Quarterly Meeting at Days Inn, Flatwoods
- October 17 – WVACD celebrates 60 years!

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – Katie Fitzsimmons
 - Katie introduced Rafael Mendez. Rafael reported the following:
 - Available funds for programs.
 - The Middlebourne office has a position available for a Forester.
 - There are plans to add a Soil Conservationist to the Middlebourne office.
 - All non-critical travel has been suspended due to the continuing resolution.
 - Plans to attend the WVACD quarterly meeting.
 - Katie reviewed a written report.

October 2023

NRCS Report:

Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach

- Staff will be attending water system training on October 24th in Ohio County.

Programs

- **Final Funding Numbers – Thank you to all the staff in the field offices for working so hard on contract obligations in FY2023!**
 - **MCD**
 - **Total Obligation - \$1,319,064.26**
 - **EQIP - \$745,386.26**
 - **AMA - \$66,861.00**
 - **CSP - \$506,817.00**
 - **NPCD**
 - **Total Obligation - \$816,573.00**
 - **EQIP - \$422,161.00**
 - **AMA - \$57,472.00**
 - **CSP - \$336,940.00**
- **FY2024 Sign Ups**
 - **PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD – SIGN UP FOR ROUND 1 OF EQIP, AMA, & CSP ENDS ON OCTOBER 20, 2023!!!!**
 - Please encourage folks in your counties to call our offices to inquire about programs and conservation planning.
 - We will have a 2nd round of signups ending in March 2024.

Field Visits/Conservation Planning

- Staff completed field visits for conservation planning, technical assistance, and practice certifications.
- Completed new producer visits which turned into new applications.

Education & Outreach/Other

- **NPCD**
 - Hands on Ag Day (Ohio Co.) – October 6th
 - Northern WV Cattleman’s Conference – October 20th & 21st
- **MCD**
 - Malori and the Kingwood FSA Staff set up a table at the Buckwheat Festival

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
 - Next meeting October 19.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA) – Veronica Gibson
 - The quarterly newsletter was mailed last week. Four requests to receive the newsletter digitally have been received.
 - The soil trailer will be picked up on October 13 by WVU Farms.
- Visitors
 - Levi Cyphers
 - Updated the status of the Upper Grave Creek mining investigation.
 - Requested a motion for bid acceptance for the low bid for the 2023-10-05 OMR NPCD Wheeling Crk debris & T-racks pending WVCA review that was opened prior to this meeting. A special meeting via teleconference was scheduled for Wednesday, October 18 at 9:00 am for this. David McCardle asked if there is any room in this contract for change orders. Levi said that there would be if needed and approved.
 - Bill Armstrong
 - Working on a work order for Upper Grave Creek #4 to remove a structure. He will submit the work order when it is complete.
- Committee Reports
 - Equipment Committee
 - An equipment rental report was provided.
 - David McCardle would like to have both Cricket spreaders at the USDA Service Center.
 - Repairs to the no-till drill have not been completed.
 - Building Committee
 - The contractor did not look at the red building and send an estimate for repairs.
 - High Tunnel
 - More than 1,200 pounds of vegetables have been donated this year.
 - Supervisors are asked to attend a high tunnel day on October 27 at 9:00 am. Weeds will be pulled, pea gravel will be laid, and carrots will be planted.
 - Grassland Committee
 - Steve Paull does not want to be on the grassland committee. Jim Anderson would like to be placed back on the committee.
 - Education Committee
 - It was noted that Judith Lyons spoke about the Marshall County Hands on Ag Day at the State Conservation Committee meeting.
 - Safety Committee
 - Robert Luchetti, Jr., and Eric Freeland are working on a safety field day to be held in the spring of 2024.
 - A safety committee meeting is needed.

Old Business

- Repairs to Red Building
 - Covered under building committee report.
- Upper Grave Creek Statements of Review
 - Not all dam monitors have been confirmed. **Jim Anderson made a motion to table the approval of the Upper Grave Creek statements of review until all monitors are confirmed. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- O&M Work Crew
 - Mark Fitzsimmons has spoken to someone that is interested in working as our work crew. Chuck Glenn would like to see additional people contacted regarding the job.

New Business

- NPCD District Administrator
 - An advertisement for a district administrator will include the following: \$16-\$18 per hour based on experience and a minimum of 24 hours per week.
 - The advertisement will be placed on Indeed through 10/20 with resumes due by 10/26.
- NPCD Banquet – Caterer/Guests/Budget
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to have Carrie’s Catering cater the banquet with a budget of up to \$3,000.00. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
 - The banquet will be held on November 15, beginning at 5:30 with dinner at 6:00, at the Highlands Event Center.
 - Guests to be invited was discussed.
- SWCS Silent Auction Donation
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to donate \$200.00 to the SWCS silent auction Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- WVACD Auction Donation
 - A \$1,000.00 donation has been previously made for the upcoming auction.
- J&R Excavating Snow Removal
 - **David McCardle made a motion to contract with J&R Excavating for snow removal with a request to remove snow by 6:00 am. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Parking Lot Curb Stops
 - **David McCardle made a motion to purchase and install parking lot curb stops. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- 2024 Calendars
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to purchase one hundred 2024 pocket calendars from 4Imprint as purchased in 2023. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**

- Large Projection Screen & Projector
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$700.00 to purchase a new projector screen and projector. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.** Katie Fitzsimmons will ask Terry Hudson if the WVACD grant funds can be used for this purchase.
- WVCA Employee District Credit Card Use
 - An email from Chris Casto was shared with the board prohibiting WVCA employees using district credit or debit cards.
- WVCA/NPCD Fiscal Review – Chris Casto/Andrew Riffe
 - Andrew Riffe joined the meeting by teams but left the meeting before this agenda item.
- WVCA – Davin White/Aimee Figgatt
 - 2023 Annual Report Information
 - District Banners
This item should be on the November agenda.
- PA Dam Bids
 - David McCardle sent a 2022 NRCS inspection to Howard Coffield. A meeting needs to occur with Howard and a written list of work to be completed on the PA dams is needed.
- O&M Inspections
 - A list of the dates for the O&M inspections was included in the meeting packets.
- FY24 O&M Agreements
 - Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission – Wheeling Creek
 - Marshall County Commission – Upper Grave Creek/Wheeling Creek
 - City of Cameron – Upper Grave Creek
 - City of Moundsville – Middle Grave Creek Channel
David McCardle made a motion to accept the agreement for FY24 O&M from Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission, Marshall County Commission, City of Cameron, and City of Moundsville. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.
- Harmon Creek EAPS
 - **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to accept the Harmon Creek emergency action plans. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- Letter of Request
 - \$11,458.08 – Final Allotment for Upper Grave Creek 1 Slip Repair
Amy Wade made a motion to approve the letter of request for final allotment for Upper Grave Creek 1 slip repair. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.

- Conservation Agreements
 - Ben Hazlett/Marshall County
 - Sham Gaffoor/Marshall County/13.3 acres
 - Elizabeth & Zachary Powell/Hancock County/88 acres

Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the conservation agreements for B. Hazlett, S. Gaffoor, and W. & Z. Powell. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

- Ag EP
 - Payment
 - William Parsons – Heavy Use Protection Area - \$1,980.00

David McCardle made a motion to approve the completed AgEP practice for W. Parsons as presented. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.

Correspondence – Secretary Amy Wade reviewed the following correspondence. 1) An email noting that the upcoming state Grazing Lands Steering committee meeting has been cancelled. 2) A thank you card from Judith Lyons for the Hands-on Ag Day invitation. 3) A thank you letter from Judith Lyons for the flood support in Kanawha County.

Supervisor Reports

Jim Anderson will not be at the December board meeting.

Eric Freeland will not be at the November board meeting. Invited all to his farm for the fall festivities.

Robert Luchetti, Jr. will attend the SWA conference on October 22 at Oglebay.

David McCardle will attend the SWA conference on October 22 at Oglebay.

Steve Paull saw two adult and four immature bald eagles on his farm.

Mark Fitzsimmons saw a bobcat on his property and received a slip to dispose of it.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman

Amy Wade, Secretary

Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson