

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
February 2, 2024
10:00 a.m.

Supervisors Present

Chuck Glenn, Hancock County – Treasurer
Jim Anderson, Hancock County – Vice-Chairman
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
Kim Fisher, District Operations Manager-West, WVCA
Don Whetzel, Watershed Manger-East, WVCA – via teleconference
Levi Cyphers, Engineer, WVCA
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Kevin Paul, NRCS – via teleconference
Brent Lyons, Forester, WVDOF
Danielle King, Ag Teacher/FFA Advisor, John Marshall High School
Ainsley Gray, Program Assistant, WVU Extension-Marshall County
Breanna Pekula, Program Assistant, WVU Extension-Marshall County

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, February 2, 2024, 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 January 2024 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Financial reports were not available.

Reports

- District Crew (NPCD)
 - Both PA dams have been mowed. Tree removal is still needed.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) - No Report

- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – Brent Lyons reviewed a written report.
West Virginia Division of Forestry Activities
Brooke, Hancock, Marshall and Ohio Counties
February 2, 2024

This Report Covers Activities from 12/13/23 - 01/30/24

BROOKE COUNTY

Negative.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Assisted w/field office. Inspected RAWS. Located tree-of-heaven for SLF training. Inspected a logging job.

MARSHALL COUNTY

Prepared a timber recon report. Reviewed job sheets for NRCS. School contact. Cub Scout troop contact.

OHIO COUNTY

Inspected a logging job.

OTHER

Attended stewardship training. Assisted w/timber cruise in Wetzel County.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA) - Kim Fisher reviewed a written report.
February 2024 WVCA Report

2024 Dates for WVACD Quarterly Meetings

April 8 MCD Morgantown

April 9 SCC Morgantown

July 15 & 16 EPCD Harpers Ferry

October 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 the District Operations Manager by June 15. The new Conservation Award Program has Traditional as well as Non-Traditional conservation farms.

Agricultural Enhancement Program (AgEP) 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.

Districts are asked to prepare your **CDO budget report** for the next FY. This report is due to Guthrie by March 1, 2024.

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.

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.

- Robert Luchetti, Jr. asked Kim about receiving call-in information to the SCC meetings. Kim thought the information is always sent to the district AS. It is not. Kim will request for the meeting information be sent to the district AS and the AS can forward it to their supervisors.
 - Amy Wade asked Kim if additional funds needed for supervisor travel & per diem will be requested by WVCA in their upcoming budget. Kim said it is not being requested. Amy asked if it will be requested in the future. Kim said she hopes it will be.
- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) – A written report was provided.

February 2024 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director District Travel Policy and Procedures

I HIGHLY encourage district boards to look at their current travel P&P manuals and make those solid. This is where it should be indicated what is and is not allowable for district expenses to be captured. This takes the added pressure from the treasurer/other board members on making personal decisions on what is an allowable or not allowable expense. Things to consider include: traveling outside of the county and district, visiting worksites where non-workers are not allowed, attending meetings that you would already attend, etc.

Be mindful of the GSA Rates. Mileage starting January 1, 2024 goes up to .67 cents/mile for personal vehicles. Below is the copy of current GSA rates from the website: https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-results?action=perdiems_report&fiscal_year=2024&state=WV&city=&zip= . Remember that Morgantown was dropped from the destination list and Charles Town (Jefferson Co) was added.

February Quarterly Meeting

The February Quarterly Meeting will be held on February 7th at WVSU (the same location as last year). Special thank you to Capitol CD who has arranged the facility and will be providing breakfast and lunch. The following day will be Ag & Conservation Day at the Capitol.

NACD Annual Meeting & Other NACD News

The Spring NACD Fly In will be held March 20, 2024. More information will be coming.

The Urban and Community Grant has been announced. Visit <https://www.nacdnet.org/about-nacd/what-we-do/urban-and-community/> for more information.

Other

I will be away February 10-17 and will be slow to respond to messages.

Do not forget about the www.wvacd.org website as it contains a lot of information and answers to commonly asked questions.

Upcoming Dates

- February 7, 2024: Quarterly Meeting @ WVSU
- February 8, 2024: Ag & Conservation Day at the Capitol
- April 2, 2024: Eastern Area Meeting
- March 22, 2024: Central Area Meeting (tentative)

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – Katie Fitzsimmons reviewed a written report.

February 2024

NRCS Report:

Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach

- **Hancock County Office Hours –**
 - **February 15th – 10am -4pm**
- **February 15, 2024 – there will be a Spotted Lantern Fly focused outreach event at the New Manchester Vol. Fire Dept. following office hours.**

Programs

- Finishing assessments and ranking that are due by COB on Friday, 2/2/24.
 - Applications – EQIP, AMA, CSP
 - Round 1– 39
 - Round 2 - 4
- FY2024 Sign Ups
 - Round 2 sign up ends March 15, 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.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
 - Jim Anderson reported that the WCWC did not have a quorum for their January meeting.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA) – Veronica Gibson
 - The FY23 AUP is scheduled for February 8.
 - The FY25 CDO budget is due to the WVCA no later than March 5.
 - A special meeting was scheduled for February 22 at 10:00 am. The FY25 CDO budget will be an agenda item.
- Visitors
 - Danielle King – John Marshall High School, Ag Teacher/FFA Advisor
 - Danielle will start vegetable seeds for the district high tunnel.
 - Ainsley Gray & Breanna Pekula – WVU Extension, Marshall County Program Assistants
 - Ainsley spoke about a Lyme on the Farm program that is coming up soon.
 - Breanna spoke about a safety day for Marshall County 4th grade students.
 - Mark Fitzsimmons asked if Ainsley and Breanna would like to participate in presenting a pollinator class with the district. They said they would.
- Committee Reports
 - Building
 - Jim Anderson said that more bids are needed for repairs to the red building.
 - High Tunnel
 - David Shipman reported that seeds have been ordered.
 - Grassland
 - Jim Anderson reported that there will be training for the upcoming competition.
 - Education
 - Mark Fitzsimmons – The WVACD education committee is working on a statewide education calendar.
 - Jennifer Kile – Women in Ag will be held on May 7.
 - Chuck Glenn – Went to three schools in Hancock County to deliver poster materials.
 - Jim Anderson - Talked to a couple of teachers regarding poster contest.
 - Personnel
 - Robert Luchetti, Jr. – Will review the district policy for changes.

Old Business

- District Administrator
- Work Crew

Mark Fitzsimmons appointed a committee to review the NPCD positions of District Administrator and work crew. The committee will be himself, Robert Luchetti, Jr., David McCardle, and Veronica Gibson

- Blue Bird Boxes
 - Scott Wade will construct blue bird boxes. The district will pay for the materials. He will start with 50 blue bird boxes.
- Bee Hotels
 - Bee hotels will be made at a future pollinator class.
- High Tunnel/Raised Beds
 - Raised beds will be built at the office on April 22.

New Business

- Participation in SMART Farms WV Grant
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to table the participation in the SMART Farms WV grant until more information is received. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Upper Grave Creek Mining

Amy Wade submitted ideas of a timeline for how to proceed moving forward and recommended forming a subcommittee for future discussions. **Amy Wade made a motion to form an UGC subcommittee. The committee members will be NPCD board members, NRCS, WVCA, NPCD attorney, NPCD engineer, WV DEP. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

 - Monitoring
 - Monetary Cost

Levi Cyphers reported that the WVCA received the cost of monitoring, \$376,986.26. The WVCA was not comfortable with the amount. **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to table the approval of monitoring and monetary cost pending receipt of data from the WVCA. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
 - Approval of D'Appolonia Invoice
 - An invoice was received from D'Appolonia for payment of \$8,982.40. **David McCardle made a motion to approve the invoice to D'Appolonia in the amount of \$8,892.40 for payment upon the approval of the WVCA. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- Updated Compost Bin
 - David Shipman presented the district with plans for an updated compost bin. David answered questions about the use and size of the bin. It could be used as a teaching tool for urban ag. **David McCardle made a motion to table updating the compost bin until the bucket on the skid steer is measured to determine the size needed for the compost bin. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- Wheeling Creek Annual Statement of Reviews
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to sign and submit the Wheeling Creek annual statement of reviews. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**

- SWCS Membership Renewal - \$230.00
 - Agenda item died – lack of motion.
- Conservation Farm Contest
 - District winners are due to WVCA by June 15. Mark Fitzsimmons asked each supervisor for names for farms by the February 22 special meeting. Each county can pick two winners – traditional and non-traditional farm.
- Conservation Agreement
 - John DeAngelo/Marshall County
Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the conservation agreement for J. DeAngelo. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.

- Ag EP

- Payment

Name	Practice	Amount	Cost Share
Eric Freeland	Urban agriculture		\$750.00

Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the completed AgEP practice for E. Freeland as presented. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.

- Cancellation

Name	Practice	Amount
Daniel Oyster	Nutrient Management	\$1,498.50

Jim Anderson made a motion to cancel the AgEP contract for D. Oyster. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

Correspondence – None

Supervisor Reports

- Jim Anderson – will attend the WVACD quarterly meeting. Requested to have a copy of the current employment ad for the District Administrator job emailed to him.
- Eric Freeland – Filed for upcoming election.
- Amy Wade – Filed for upcoming election.
- Chuck Glenn – Attended the Hancock County Commission meeting on January 25. He was well received.

Other Reports

- Kim Fisher – Contacted Heather Duncan regarding the SMART grant. Reported that it will be implemented like the AgEP as a three-year program.

NEXT MEETING – The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, **March 21, 2024**, at the USDA Service Center, McMechen at 10:00 a.m.

There being no further business, **Amy Wade made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.** The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman

Amy Wade, Secretary

Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson