

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

June 13, 2024
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
Robert Luchetti, Jr., Ohio County – via Teams
Amy Wade, Ohio County – Secretary
Mark Fitzsimmons, Marshall County – Chairman

Supervisor Absent

David McCardle, Marshall County

Others Present

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA
Jennifer Kile, Conservation Specialist, WVCA
Grant Swift, WVCA Summer Intern
Bill Armstrong, Watershed Technician, WVCA
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD
Hannah Moore, Soil Tester, NPCD
Brent Lyons, Forester, WVDOP
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub
Heather Duncan, Executive Director, WVACD – via Teams

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 10:10 a.m. at the USDA Service Center, McMechen.

Pledge of Allegiance – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Minutes

- **Amy Wade made a motion to approve the May board meeting minutes and the May 16, 2024, special meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Bob Straub reviewed the May 2024 NPCD funds.
 - There was a discussion regarding payroll funds and supervisor travel and per diem.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the April and May 2024 co-administered funds.
Amy Wade made a motion to file the financials for audit. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

Reports

- District Crew (NPCD) – No report.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No report.
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – Brent Lyons reported the following.
 - This is the 80th year for Smokey Bear. He has been making a lot of appearances.
 - Attended JED training.
 - Worked with NRCS for EQIP and CSP.
 - There are 52 fires in the region.
 - Issued permits for logging jobs.
 - There may not be a summer camp due to budget cuts.
- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA) – A written report was reviewed.

June 2024 WVCA Report

Request to Conservation Districts

The WVCA is encouraging Conservation Districts to review and update their 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.

Annual Work Plan

Reminder - District **annual** work plans are due **June 30** to Guthrie. A new template from NACD has been prepared and provided.

CDO Budget

CDO budget closeout needs submitted to Guthrie by August 1

Conservation Farm Tour

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

O&M Agreements:

CDs are encouraged to continue to work with local sponsors for O&M funding. This process started last year 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.

Ag Enhancement Program Timeline

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)

AgEP data base needs closed out by July 15

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.

- WVCA – Watershed, Bill Armstrong
 - Requested that the O&M work orders be submitted for review as soon as possible.
 - WVCA is working on contracts for debris removal on the dams.
- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) – A written report was provided.

June 2024 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director

July Quarterly Meeting

Please send speaker and topic ideas to hduncan@wvca.us as you think of them.

The dates for the July quarterly meeting are July 14-16 at the Clarion Harpers Ferry (Jefferson County). There will be meetings Sunday evening, meetings on Monday with a tour of Devil's Due Distillery and dinner sponsored by Eastern Panhandle CD, and a projected half day of meetings on Tuesday.

The room rate is \$107 per night plus any applicable taxes and fees with check in available Sunday, July 14-checkout Tuesday, July 16. To receive the discounted room rate, reservations should be made by June 14, 2024. Here is a link to the online booking: <https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/JE79M9>. Phone reservations can be made by calling: (681) 540-0202.

NACD Annual Meeting & Other NACD News

The NE regional meeting and NACD summer meeting will be held August 10-14 in Boston, MA. There will be a capacity building workshop on August 14 just for NE region states that will be a separate ticketed event and sounds like a fantastic opportunity to bring ideas back to WV. More information can be found at: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/summer-meeting/>

From the latest NACD eResource (5.28.2024): “The next NACD Conservation Coffee is just around the corner! Join NACD leadership, including our President Kim LaFleur, CEO Jeremy Peters, and staff for a mid-year membership update on June 13, 2024, at 3 p.m. ET.

Learn about the latest NACD and partner activities, current advocacy efforts, and reminders of how to take advantage of your NACD benefits. This is a great opportunity for existing district board and staff members to learn more about the organization, but also a chance for individuals new to the organization to learn more about how NACD serves our membership.

[Registration is free and available online](#). Feel free to reach out to [Dr. Ariel Rivers](#) at any time with any questions about your membership or to present on a future Conservation Coffee! All past sessions are recorded and available on [NACD's YouTube](#), along with multiple other learning resources!”

WVACD Directors

The July quarterly meeting will start the new year and a new year for officers and directors. After your new supervisors are elected in the primary, please select and send in your new directors prior to the July quarterly meeting. These should be decided in the May-June board meetings. Also please think of representatives to serve on the various committees on the state-wide level: Grasslands Steering Committee, Appalachian Grazing Conference, and WV Envirothon Committee.

Grasslands Steering Committee

The Grasslands Steering Committee assists with the Grasslands Evaluation Contest and other grassland and grazing initiatives. The next meeting will be held on July 26 at 10 am in the Elk CD office. The meeting will be held via Teams as well. Please select one representative from your district to attend this meeting and be a part of this committee. Officer elections will also be held at this meeting. Contact Randy Plaughter, WFCD, for more information on this committee.

WVACD Communication and Outreach Employees

WVACD is very happy to announce that Julie Simmons and Vanta Coda III have been hired for a one-year position with the NACD Technical Assistance and Outreach grant. Julie will cover the western half of the state and Vanta will cover the eastern half of the state. They will assist districts with outreach, promotion, and CSP. They will also assist WVACD with similar projects. Contact Heather if you need their assistance with a project (hduncan@wvca.us). They will be joining your district board meetings virtually over the next few months to introduce themselves.

WVCA Annual Report Template

The WVCA Annual Report templates have been distributed to your AS. Julie Simmons and Vanta Coda, WVACD's outreach and communications specialists, are available to assist your district with the template and inputting the information. The reports are due to WVCA on June 30th.

Other

State Fair signups are available. Please check with your AS for available time slots. You can also check with Clyde Bailey for more information.

Please send any district events and announcements to me (hduncan@wvca.us) so that I can place them in our online calendar and also include on the Facebook page and other outreach avenues.

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

Be sure to submit your oath of office and any other follow up election requirements.

Upcoming Dates

NACD Conservation Coffee: June 13, 2024, 3 pm – register online

Eastern Area Meeting: July 2, 2024 in PVCD, 10am

Central Area Meeting: June 28, 2024 at ECD Office, 10 am

Western Area Meeting: July 11, 2024 at LKCD Office, 10 am

July Quarterly Meeting: Afternoon of July 14-afternoon of July 16, 2024 at Clarion Inn,
Harpers Ferry (Jefferson Co)

Grasslands Steering Committee Meeting: July 26,2024 at ECD Office, 10 am

WV State Fair: August 8-17, 2024

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

June 2024

NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation Districts

Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach

- June Jed training held at McMechen Service Center on June 11th – Small Scale Agriculture was the topic.
- June 21st – Bee Program at McMechen Service Center
- July Jed training will be held in Wardensville in July 23rd on Biosecurity

Programs

- Obligations as of 6/7/2024 – Set to obligate over \$1,050,000
 - Northern Panhandle CD
 - Obligated - \$731,173.00
 - Awaiting obligation - \$315,157
 - Pending Late Preapproval - \$23,000.00

Field Visits/Conservation Planning

- Staff completed field visits for conservation planning, technical assistance, and practice certifications.
- Field staff has been reaching out to participants for completion of contract reviews.
- Staff are reviewing contracts to ensure designs are completed.
- Staff completed Damage Survey Report visits on 6/6/24 to 4 stream blockages on Middle Grave Creek that were apart of reports from the flooding back in April. NRCS and WVCA staff attended these visits.

Staffing

- Forester position was posted to be housed in either McMechen or Middlebourne – position closed June 11th

Bi-Monthly West Virginia State Conservationist Report

June 2024

Program Priorities

Our staff is currently working on obligating approved Conservation Stewardship Program

(CSP) Classic, Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA), and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications. So far, we've obligated over 600 contracts across all programs for \$19.2 million, with more than 300 preapproved applications remaining. We hope to have all of our funding obligated early June and focus on practice implementation and conservation planning through September.

We're also wrapping up Local Work Group meetings with Conservation Districts throughout the state. We appreciate your participation in those meetings that help target conservation funding where its needed most. We will review all comments and suggestions gathered at those meetings and present recommendations at the State Technical Committee meeting on July 23rd.

Staffing Updates

NRCS WV is continuing to add staff to the field. Over the last two months we added Soil Conservationists in Huntington and Ranson, a Natural Resource Specialist in Weston, and Soil Conservation Technicians in Princeton and Huntington. We've also made a selection for a Soil Conservationist in Lewisburg. We are currently accepting applications for a Forester in McMechen/Middlebourne through June 4th. We anticipate announcing openings for the following positions soon: Forester (Noth Area), Civil Engineer (North Area), Soil Conservationists, Natural Resource Specialists, and Soil Conservation Technicians.

We're also working on several agreements to add staff to the field through partnerships. We've partnered with West Virginia Department of Agriculture, West Virginia Conservation Agency, Pheasants Forever, American Bird Conservancy, and Fish & Wildlife Service to add Biologists, Foresters, Nutrient Management Planners and a GIS Specialist.

Our Pathways Interns have returned for the summer to assist Field Offices and to gain knowledge to help them in their future careers with NRCS. We have converted one soil scientist Pathways student who will be working out of the Morgantown State Office. We're also bringing on an 1890's Scholar this summer and made selections for two more to come onboard next summer from West Virginia State University.

We've onboarded a total of 6 administrative assistants in several Field Offices throughout the state. These positions are helping our staff administer programs and provide clerical assistance. We've also added State Office staff in our Soils and Watershed Operations divisions- we've made selections for a Cartographer and a Biologist that will be starting later this summer. Unfortunately, our selection for the Archeologist position declined the final job offer- we are awaiting a list of other eligible applicants and hope to make an alternate selection soon.

Staffing Changes

Kristopher Ellis started on May 20th as our new Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy. Kris comes to us from Bureau of Land Management in California and has a background in the oil & gas industry and environmental law.

Christopher Toothman was selected as District Conservationist for the Monongahela Conservation District. Chris previously worked for WV NRCS as a Soil Conservationist in the West Fork District. Chris started his new role May 6th 2024.

Kelby Fetter was selected as the District Conservationist for the West Fork District. Kelby

comes to us from Ohio NRCS where he served as a Soil Conservationist. Kelby will join us in West Virginia on July 15th 2024.

Soil Science Priorities

The soil sampling and monitoring project is 20% completed for field work. Monitoring sensors for soil water tables, moisture and temperature have been placed in the following counties: Monongalia, Marion, Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan Hancock, Harrison, Greenbrier, and Jackson. An additional forty sites are planned across the state in all Districts as a first step in establishing a statewide soil moisture monitoring network.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
 - Next meeting is July 18, 10 am at the Highlands Event Center.

- Administrative Specialist (WVCA) – No report.

- District Coordinator (NPCD) – Victoria White reviewed a written report.
 - The District Administrator position has been filled by Victoria for eight weeks (60 days) as of Monday, June 10th.
 - Victoria has taken on the responsibility of running the Facebook page and created a website to house information and updates about the district.
 - She has planned an event all about bees and pollinators that will be hosted at the district office on Friday, June 21st where the schoolhouse, gazebo, garden, grounds and garage will be utilized. She also plans on coordinating more events at the district office to utilize the schoolhouse building for future educational events with local 4-H clubs, boy scout clubs, and other clubs and youth organizations.
 - She has assisted the NRCS District Conservationist on field visits as an Earth Team volunteer and has started an apiary with the NRCS Soil Conservationist to provide education about pollinators.
 - She is aiding a district supervisor to plan a farm field day to educate farmers and landowners in the Northern Panhandle about small-scale farming.
 - The District Administrator is currently writing a proposal for an RCPP project where NRCS and partners co-invest in impactful and innovative solutions to on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. The district, if awarded, will use the funding to address nutrient management concerns for our cooperators by offering a cost share program for lime and fertilizer.
 - The Education Binder for District of the Year is almost complete to be submitted at the July WVACD meeting.

- Visitors – None

- Committee Reports
 - Education – Mark Fitzsimmons reviewed a written report.
 - **NPCD Education Programs**
 - June 11th - NRCS and WVCA staff hosted a Joint Educational Development training at the McMechen USDA Service Center. They utilized the NPCD outdoor

classroom to provide a hands on training for irrigation, high tunnels, low tunnels, pollinators, and tree identification.

- June 21st_ What's the Buzz: All About Bees & Pollinators event hosted by NPCD
- July 14th-16th-WVACD Quarterly Meeting-State Photo and Poster Contest Judging, Education District of the Year, New Supervisor Training
- July 1st -Small Scale Farm Field Day@ Eric Freeland Farm
- September 18th- 20th- Hands on Ag Day in Marshall County
- Equipment – Victoria White provided an equipment rental report.
- High Tunnel – David Shipman provided a written report.

High Tunnel Committee Report

- All beds have been planted with, Celery, tomatoes, eggplant, cabbage, and green peppers.
- Cabbage is being attacked by insects. A treatment has been ordered to help with this issue.
- Tomatoes have all been tied up.
- Fertigation unit is having issues. The internal parts all have been replaced recently and still will not operate correctly. Unit most likely needs replaced.
- Poly end of tunnel along bottom edge is tore and needs either repaired or that end needs replaced. This is the end with the man door.
- Shade cloth will be installed next week.

Old Business

- Updated Compost Bin
 - Topic died for lack of a motion.
 - Bid for Red Building
 - It was requested to have Groves Construction update their bid with current amounts. A written bid is needed from Marty Weaver. The building committee will present a recommendation at the next meeting.
 - Parking Lot/Driveway Asphalt Repair
 - Robert Luchetti, Jr. will contact another contractor. The original one did not submit an estimate.
 - FAC Request for Building – Painting
 - Four estimates were received for painting
 - Nail City Painting - \$15,326.71
 - Hall's Painting LLC - \$23,500.00 (Did not include moving furniture)
 - C.S. Loy Construction LLC - \$25,875.00
 - Karras Painting LLC - \$11,925.00 (Did not include moving furniture)
- Jim Anderson made a motion to accept the estimate from Nail City Painting for \$15,326.71. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

- O&M Work Trailer
 - One estimate was received. Jim Anderson will get another estimate and present it at the next meeting.
- Wheeling Creek 25 O&M Agreement
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to table the topic of the Wheeling Creek 25 O&M agreement. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

New Business

- NPCD Photo Contest Judging
 - Photos will be judged by two guest judges. They will report their decisions to the board.
- ACNR Cooperation Agreement
 - The latest agreement was emailed to all supervisors for their review from the NPCD attorney. It will need to be reviewed by other entities involved. After approval, it will be sent to ACNR. There was a discussion, and some supervisors did not want to approve the agreement as presented. **Jim Anderson made a motion to move forward with the process. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Ohio County Country Fair
 - **Eric Freeland made a motion to participate in the Ohio County Country Fair the same as last year. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- FY25 O&M Agreements
 - City of Weirton – Harmon Creek
 - City of Cameron – Upper Grave Creek
 - Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the FY25 O&M agreements from the City of Weirton and the City of Cameron as presented. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Ravenswood FFA Mid-Atlantic Grasslands Contest Sponsorship
 - Topic died for lack of a motion.
- WVU Extension Women in Agriculture Conference Sponsorship
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to sponsor the WVU Extension Women in Agriculture Conference with 2 scholarships. Seconded by Amy Wade. Vote – all opposed. Motion did not pass.**
- Fertigation Unit for High Tunnel
 - **Steve Paull made a motion to purchase a fertigation unit for the high tunnel at a cost of \$326.15. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**

- Building Landscape Update
 - The front of the building needs fabric and rock. The side of the building needs the shrubs trimmed. **Jim Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$1,000.00 to update the landscape at the building. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- FY25 Annual Plan of Work
 - The FY25 annual plan of work has been completed.
- FY23 AUP Draft Report
 - The FY23 AUP draft report was not received.
- FY25 WVACD Annual Dues
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to pay the FY25 WVACD annual dues in July. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Field Day at Freeland Farm
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to sponsor a field day at the Freeland Farm. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.** The date will be July 17. A variety of tents will be set up and a walking tour of small-scale farming will be held every hour.
- District Coordinator Schedule
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to allow the District Coordinator to work up to 32 hours per week. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.**
- Use of Schoolhouse/NPCD Grounds for Educational Programs
 - Victoria White said the Ohio County 4-H potentially wants to use the schoolhouse and the NPCD property for educational programs. The board unanimously said yes.
- Review District Education Binder
 - Victoria White has the district education binder 90% finished. It is available for review.
- Letter of Request
 - \$431,168.18 – Upper Grave 7, 8, 9 Monitoring Equipment & Installation
Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the letter of request for Upper Grave Creek 7, 8, 9 monitoring equipment & installation. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.
- Election of NPCD Officers
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to elect the officers as currently the same for one more year. Seconded by Amy Wade. No other nominations. Motion passed.**

- Conservation Agreements
 - Amanda Flynn/Hancock County
 - Shari Buffington & Marylou Fonner/Brooke County/43 acres
 - Sam & Melanie Donini/Brooke County/60 acres
 - Barbara Stephans/Brooke County
 - Amy VanHorn/Brooke County/9 acres
 - Lisa White/Ohio County/104 acres
 - Matthew Dille/Ohio County/114 acres
 - Abigail Mauck/Ohio County/1 acre
 - Eric Butler/Marshall County/256 acres
 - Timothy B. Bledsoe/Marshall County/27.7 acres
 - Dallas Lions Club/Marshall County

Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the conservation agreements for A. Flynn, S. Buffington & M. Fonner, S. & M. Donini, B. Stephans, A. VanHorn, L. White, M. Dille, A. Mauck, E. Butler, T. Bledsoe, and the Dallas Lions Club. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

- Ag EP
 - Payments

Name	Practice	Amount	Cost Share
Jeffery Cumpston	Exclusion Fence	1286 Feet	\$2,000.00
Eric Blend	Water System	823 Feet	\$1,720.07
Richard Gibson	Pasture Division Fence	1653 Feet	\$2,000.00
Kimberly Strum	Ag Lime	20.69 Tons	\$465.53
Logan Toler	Pasture Division Fence	704 Feet	\$1,750.00
Samuel Yoho	Pasture Division Fence	651 Feet	\$1,302.00
Colleen Lucey	Exclusion Fence	1080 Feet	\$2,000.00
Chad Lamp	Nutrient management	25 ac	\$1,800.00
Richard Otte	Heavy Use Area Protection	672 sq ft	\$887.04
John Tominack	Pasture Division Fence	2800 Feet	\$2,000.00
Tracy Gilbert	Heavy Use Area Protection	2560 Sq. ft	\$1,980.00
Jordan Frye	Exclusion Fence	1027 Feet	\$2,000.00
Anthony Geho	Pasture Division Fence	507 Feet	\$1,014.00
Erica Cumpston	Pollination Planting	20 sq ft	\$12.01
Tammy Clark	Pasture Division Fence	800 ft	\$2,000.00
		Total	\$22,930.65

Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the completed AgEP practices for J. Cumpston, E. Blend, R. Gibson, K. Strum, L. Toler, S. Yoho, C. Lucey, C. Lamp, R. Otte, J. Tominack, T. Gilbert, J. Frye, A. Geho, E. Cumpston, and T. Clark as presented. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.

○ Cancellations

Name	Practice	Cost Share
Harry Crawford	Pasture Division Fence	\$2,000.00
Donald Bradon	Pasture Division Fence	\$2,000.00
	Total	\$4,000.00

Amy Wade made a motion to cancel the AgEP contracts for H. Crawford and D. Bradon. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

Correspondence – Secretary, Amy Wade, reviewed the following correspondence:

- 1) A thank you from the Marshall County WVU Extension office for our sponsorship of their safety field day.

Supervisor Reports - None

NEXT MEETING – The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, July 11, 2024, 10:00 a.m., at the USDA Service Center in McMechen.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman
Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson

Amy Wade, Secretary