

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

**Supervisors Present**

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

**Others Present**

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA  
Judith Lyons, Executive Director, WVCA – via Teams  
Gene Saurborn, Director of Field Operations, WVCA  
Jennifer Skaggs, Assistant Director of Field Operations, WVCA – via Teams  
Devon Kokoska, Watershed Manager-East, WVCA  
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS  
Kevin Paul, NRCS – via Teams  
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD  
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub  
Jason Pockl, Attorney, Bailey & Wyant  
Brad Price, Title & Acquisition, ACNR  
James Powell, Title & Acquisition, ACNR

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the USDA Service Center, McMechen.

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

**Minutes**

- **David McCardle made a motion to approve the September 12, 2024, board meeting minutes, and the October 1, 2024, special meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**

**Financial Report**

- Bob Straub reviewed the September 2024 NPCD funds.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the September 2024 co-administered funds.  
**Jim Anderson made a motion to file the September financials for audit. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

## Reports

- District Crew (NPCD)
  - Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 have been mowed a second time.
  - Mowing will continue at Wheeling Creek #3 on Wednesday.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No Report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – No Report
- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA) – A written report was provided.
  - Judith Lyons told the board that Kim Fisher is on annual leave. Judith apologized for being unable to attend the public hearing that was held in Cameron.
  - Devon Kokoska reported on the O&M annual inspections. Wheeling Creek was held on October 9, Upper Grave Creek will be held on October 11, and Harmon Creek will be held on October 15.

### **October 2024 WVCA Report**

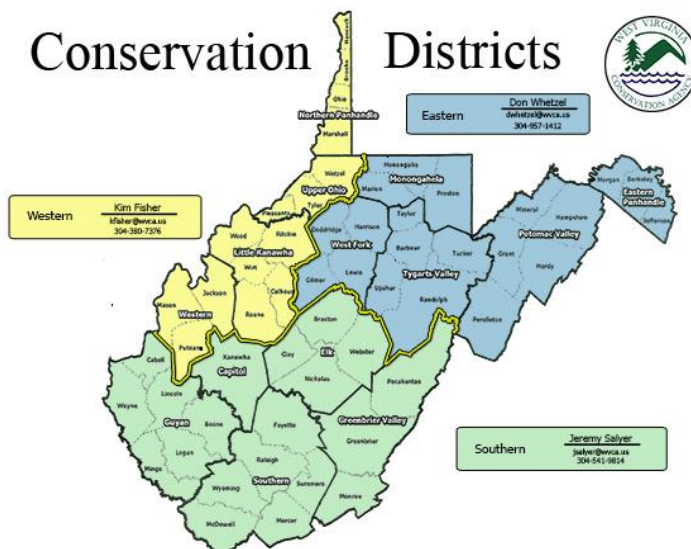
#### **Agreed Procedures Engagement (Audit)**

Conservation Districts are asked to begin the Agreed Procedures Engagement (APE) (audit) soon after the close of the fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>. It is important that each district read their audit, and then take steps to correct any findings noted by the auditors. If you have questions, ask Kim, Don, or Jeremy.

#### **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.

**October Quarterly Meeting** – October 21&22 in Flatwoods



### **FY 26 AgEP Timeline**

*\*timeline may be adjusted*

❖ **July 1, 2025** - Start of Program Year

❖ **July 15, 2025** - Deadline for DMs to close out database for previous FY

❖ **July 31, 2025** - AgEP Newsletter (Annual Progress Report)

❖ **July**- State AgEP Committee Introductory meeting

❖ **August 18, 2025** - Deadline for CDs to submit allocation formula proposals and new practices for upcoming FY program

❖ **September 2025**- State AgEP committee mid-year meeting to review proposals, new practices, and form subcommittee(s) if needed.

❖ **October 31, 2025** - Deadline for CDs to submit additional program comments, including ranking criteria

❖ **November 2025** - Comments reviewed and forms revised

❖ **December 2025** - State AgEP committee meeting to finalize upcoming FY program.

❖ **January 2026** - Presentation of upcoming FY AgEP to SCC

❖ **May/June/July 2026** - CDs to finalize upcoming FY program, update AgEP agreement addendums, take action to approve LORs

❖ **June 15, 2026** - Deadline for CDs submit final practice list to WVCA (CDs can submit final list any time after SCC approval of practice)

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) – A written report was provided.

### **October 2024 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director October Quarterly Meeting**

I apologize for the delay in the agenda for this quarterly meeting. I understand that it can make planning difficult. However, that also tells me that more are appreciating the information getting out early. 🟡 We wanted to make sure that the area meetings did not have anything formal to bring forth to the agenda prior to getting it out. I have also updated the WVACD website with meeting information: <https://www.wvacd.org/quarterly-meetings/october-2024-meeting>

### **WVACD Communication and Outreach Employees**

Please do not forget to contact Julie Simmons ([wvacdoutreach2@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:wvacdoutreach2@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com)) and Vanta Coda ([wvacdoutreach@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:wvacdoutreach@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com)) for your outreach needs. Rather it's developing printed or online materials, creating diversity plans, or coming up with ideas to reach new producers or CSP outreach, they are here to help!

If you haven't heard the news, Julie Simmons is on maternity leave, but will come back full swing soon. We are all very excited for her in this new chapter of her life. Myself and Vanta are picking up her projects so do not hesitate to reach out with any new ideas or assistance that your district may need.

### **New Emails!**

Heather Duncan and Kelley Wayne have new email addresses. Kelley can now be reached at [kwayne@wvacd.us](mailto:kwayne@wvacd.us) and Heather can be reached at [hduncan@wvacd.us](mailto:hduncan@wvacd.us) If you use the 'old' email addresses ([wvacd@wvca.us](mailto:wvacd@wvca.us)/ [hduncan@wvca.us](mailto:hduncan@wvca.us)) they will still be forwarded for a short time to the new address. However, please be sure to update your address book.

### **NEW GSA RATES!**

The new government fiscal year brought new GSA rates. Please utilize the following information: Lodging: \$110 for general WV travel (\$115 for Charleston and \$122 for Charles TOWN), meals:

\$68 in all destinations and .67 mileage. More information can be found here: [https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-results?action=perdiems\\_report&fiscal\\_year=2025&state=WV&city=&zip=](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-results?action=perdiems_report&fiscal_year=2025&state=WV&city=&zip=)

### **Upcoming Dates**

WV SCC Meeting: October 8, 2024

Fall Quarterly Meeting: October 20-22, 2024

Central Area Meeting: December 3, 2024 at Guyan CD

Western Area Meeting: December 9, 2024 at Little Kanawha CD

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

#### **October 2024**

#### **NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District**

#### **Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach**

- NRCS set up a booth at the Ohio County Country Fair Oct 5-6

#### **Programs**

- Assessing our existing CSP applications, deadline 11/13/24
- EQIP assessments due 2/12/25

#### **Field Visits/Conservation Planning**

- Staff completed field visits for conservation planning, technical assistance, and practice certifications.
- Staff are reviewing contracts to ensure designs are completed.

#### **Staffing**

- McMechen/Middlebourne Forester position to be readvertised

- **West Virginia State Conservationist Bimonthly Report October 2024**

#### **Program Priorities**

NRCS WV had a very successful program year. We were able to complete all fiscal year 2024 financial assistance obligations in late July, ahead of the rest of the nation. In total, our field staff obligated 688 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts for \$21.7 million, 46 Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) contracts for nearly \$1.1 million, and 296 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts for over \$8 million. Forty-five (45) percent of those contracts were awarded to Historically Underserved Customers (Limited Resource Producers, Socially Disadvantaged, and/or Beginning Farmers) and 32% were awarded to first time customers.

Work has already begun for fiscal year 2025- application batching dates were set in August for CSP and September for EQIP and AMA to get an early jump on obligating program dollars before the end of the calendar year. Our field staff is currently processing those applications, meeting with customers, and developing conservation plans.

#### **Drought Recovery**

NRCS WV is assisting the Farm Service Agency with the implementation of their Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). ECP provides emergency water for livestock and existing orchard

and vineyard irrigation systems. NRCS will be assisting FSA with determining the need for watering systems, as well as designing those systems. Producers in all 55 counties are eligible to apply. Sign up for ECP ends November 15, 2024.

### **Watershed Operations**

NRCS WV continues to work with our local sponsors for our Watershed Program, helping communities realize flood prevention, watershed protection, and recreational opportunities. NRCS WV is supporting two county commissions in the southern portion of the state with voluntary floodplain buyouts to get residents out of the regulatory floodway. Through our Watershed Operations Program, NRCS WV is beginning Watershed Planning for six projects at the request of local communities. These plans take 18 months to complete, and input from other agencies and the public will be crucial in developing alternatives to address identified watershed concerns including flooding, loss of aquatic habitat, and impaired water quality. Our engineering staff are currently working with local sponsors on many rehabilitation efforts across the state. Watershed rehab dollars go towards planning, design, and construction to bring NRCS-assisted dams up to current standards after they have reached their service life (typically 50 years). Using federal rehabilitation dollars (with the state and local sponsors contributing the 35% local match) these NRCS-assisted dams will continue to provide the estimated \$68.4 billion in annual benefits to West Virginia. NRCS staff is actively working on 14 rehabilitation projects across the state, two of which are in the construction phase. Finally, NRCS WV secured over \$600,000 in funding through our Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) for the West Virginia Conservation Agency (local sponsor) to address debris removal and streambank stabilization that resulted from the April 2024 storm event that affected 26 counties.

### **Staffing Updates**

NRCS WV is continuing to add staff with current staffing at 147 full time employees and an additional 50 partner and contract employees assisting in various roles. We plan on filling several more positions over the next two years to fully support the conservation needs of the state.

### **Expanding and Continuing Partnerships**

In fiscal year 2024, NRCS WV entered into several collaborative agreements with other agencies to strengthen partnerships, provide education and outreach, provide better assistance to our shared customers, and expand services:

West Virginia Conservation Agency- NRCS WV partnered with WVCA to hire a shared GIS Specialist, an additional Watershed Coordinator, and an Engineer. These positions will help support both conservation and watershed efforts throughout the state.

West Virginia Department of Agriculture- WVDA will establish five Nutrient Management Planners to provide nutrient management planning and implementation assistance to customers over the next five years. These planners will work within NRCS field offices to support ongoing efforts to improve water quality in the Ohio River Basin.

WV Department of Environmental Protection- Working with DEP's Watershed Improvement Branch and the WV Watershed Network, we aim to increase our audience and conservation efforts throughout the state.

West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts- NRCS WV added funding to and extended existing agreements with WVACD to support the WV Envirothon and the Appalachian Grazing Conference. We also added funding to support their Executive Director position and the Community & Climate Smart Ag Outreach grant program that provides funding to conservation districts for outreach, special projects, field days, etc.

Future Generations University- FGU is an integral partner for maple syrup production in the state. NRCS WV partnered with FGU to support energy audits and equipment implementation to assist the states' maple industry in becoming more energy efficient.

Pheasants Forever- Through a national level agreement, NRCS WV will host three Pheasants Forever Wildlife Biologists. These biologists will provide wildlife habitat management plans and promote the Conservation Reserve Program in Martinsburg, Lewisburg, and Point Pleasant field offices.

Conference Sponsorships- NRCS WV committed funds to support Capitol Conservation District's inaugural Homesteading(ish) Conference as well as continued support for West Virginia University's Women in Agriculture Conference, WV Cattlemen's College, WV Beef Expo, and more.

Trout Unlimited- TU has been a long-time partner in natural stream restoration in trout waters in eastern West Virginia. This year, NRCS WV expanded our partnership with TU to add capacity and provide conservation planning, design services, and outreach throughout the state.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
  - The next WCWC meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24 at the Highlands Event Center at 10:00 am.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
  - Veronica Gibson reported she is taking annual leave immediately following the board meeting and will return to work on October 15.
- District Coordinator (NPCD) – Victoria White reviewed a written report.

September/October Updates:

General:

Facebook posts/website updates. **If there are items that need added to Facebook or website please email District Administrator the information.**

NPCD took the WVCA Soil Tunnel Trailer to Brooke County Fair, HOA Day, Allison Elementary School, and New Manchester Elementary School. The district had **over 150 third and fourth graders** go through the trailer between Allison and New Manchester Elementary. A detailed schedule for October was sent to all NPCD supervisors and made available for district employees. The District Administrator October schedule also is available for all supervisors and district employees.

District Crew Member (Robby) and District Administrator took old documents from the garage to the Better Business Bureau's Free Paper Shredding Event on Saturday, September 28th. They will continue organizing the garage and move stored items from the red building to the garage over fall months.

NPCD Fall Newsletter will be sent out by mid to late October. **If there are items that need added to the newsletter please email District Administrator the information.**

Grants:

WVACD Community Outreach Grant was turned in for funding for the district to host Community Outreach and Education Events, as well as supplement the Community Garden Project Programming.

Attended the Volunteer WV Grant Writing Training on September 25-26 in Flatwoods, WV. Thank you all for the opportunity, it was very informative.

The Bee Cause Grant Part 1 will be submitted by October 15th for funding for a potential Youth Beekeeping Program.

High Tunnel/Garden:

Over 850 pounds of produce have been harvested from raised beds and high tunnels and donated to local soup kitchens (Simpson Methodist/Wheeling Soup Kitchen).

Applying Sevin Insect Killer Dust to the high tunnel before fall planting.

Ongoing Projects:

Nail City Painting is completed. They will be back to finish RD when they receive their new furniture.

Coordinating with WVFMA to get printer in the district office for shared use in the coming weeks.

The schoolhouse building is going to be cleaned and organized over the fall months.

Upcoming Events:

NPCD Banquet scheduled for Wednesday, October 30th at 5:30 pm.

- Visitors
  - Brad Price, Title & Acquisition, ACNR
  - James Powell, Title & Acquisition, ACNR
  
- Committee Reports
  - Equipment – Victoria White provided an equipment rental report.  
**Jim Anderson made a motion to take the skid steer to Knight's Farm Supply to have any necessary repairs made and have it inspected. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**  
**Chuck Glenn made a motion to take the no-till drill to Knight's Farm Supply to get a repair estimate and to research the price of a new no-till drill. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**  
The policy not to rent equipment to cooperators outside of the district was reviewed.
  - Building – Jim Anderson reported that the repairs to the red building have been delayed due to medical issues in the contractor's family.
  - O&M – Amy Wade thanked Eric Freeland and Robert Luchetti, Jr. for the news article with the Wheeling Intelligencer regarding UGC.
  - High Tunnel – Fall crops will be planted next week.
  - Education – Victoria White requested a meeting to plan for events for the WVACD grant that was received.
  - AgEP – Mark Fitzsimmons attended the State AgEP Committee meeting.
  - Safety – Eric Freeland would like to expand on the safety procedures for the work crew.

**Old Business**

- Wheeling Creek 25 O&M Agreement
  - The latest copy of the agreement was emailed to each supervisor and is included in the meeting packet. Gene Sauborn would like to get DNR more involved. Robert Luchetti, Jr., continues to work on the agreement. Robert requested that if anyone sees any needed changes to let him know.

- Upper Grave Creek Emergency Action Plans (EAP) #1, 3, 4, & 5
  - Amy Wade sent all corrections to Kim Neal.
- WVCA Cooperative Agreement for Employee
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to table the WVCA Cooperative Agreement for an employee. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
  - An updated agreement was presented by Jason Pockl. Jason reviewed the changes. **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion based on input from Gene Saurborn and Jason Pockl, that the NPCD accept the current version of the agreement with ACNR. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.**
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to give authority to Mark Fitzsimmons to sign the cooperative agreement with ACNR. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
  - **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to have Mark Fitzsimmons sign the Certificate of Approval from WV DEP when available. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.**
  - There was a discussion regarding the emergency action plans.
  - Amy Wade proposed a letter of support be written to residents for their efforts.

### **New Business**

- Insurance Policies
  - Amy Wade continues to work on insurance policies for NPCD and NPCD Foundation with BRIM and property.
- Letter to WVCA Regarding PA Dam Funds
  - The NPCD would like to retain the funds that are currently in a co-administered funds account. Judith Lyons will contact Chris Casto for guidance.
  - There was a discussion regarding the current funds and how they have been received.
- PA Dams Mowing
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to have the PA dams mowed again when the equipment needed is repaired. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Skid Steer Repairs
  - Discussed during committee reports.
- SWCS Silent Auction
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to donate \$250.00 to the SWCS to support their silent auction. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.**



- Snow Removal Contract Renewal
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to renew the snow removal contract with J&R Excavating. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- 2024-10-16 OMR NPCD Wheeling Crk. debris removal
  - The schedule for the job showing and bid opening were reviewed. **Robert Luchetti, Jr., made a motion to sign the Notice to Proceed after the bid evaluation is completed by the WVCA. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- FY25 GSA Per Diem Rate Change
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to accept all changes to the FY25 GSA per diem rates. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Conservation Agreements
  - Ralph E. Church II/Marshall County/140 acres
  - Graham H. Longworth, Jr./Marshall County
  - Lewis Rodgers/Ohio County/125 acres
  - Rex M Strawn/Ohio County/170 acres
  - Carry Byrum/Ohio County/90 acres
  - Ethan Bloomfield/Ohio County/8 acres
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the conservation agreements for R. Church, G. Longworth, L. Rodgers, R. Strawn, C. Byrum, and E. Bloomfield as a new cooperator. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Ag Enhancement Program
  - Agriculture Enhancement Payments
    - Susan Smith - Heavy Use Area Protection – \$1,615.68
    - Matt Amaismeier- 40.92 Tons Lime - \$850.00
    - **David McCardle made a motion to pay the completed AgEP practices for S. Smith and M. Amaismeier as presented. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
  - AgEP Exigency Application Approval
    - Zach Sberna – Water Hauling – 50% up to \$500.00
    - Clem Frohnapfel – Water Hauling – 50% up to \$500.00
    - Mark Otte- Water Hauling – 50% up to \$500.00
    - John Riggs Jr. – Water Hauling – 50% up to \$500.00
    - **David McCardle made a motion to approve applications for the AgEP Exigency program as presented for Z. Sberna, C. Frohnapfel, M. Otte, and J. Riggs. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
  - AgEP Exigency Payment Approvals
    - Zach Sberna - Water Trough – \$42.50
    - Clem Frohnapfel – 2 Rubbermaid Tanks and Antisiphon- \$224.49
    - Mark Otte – 100-gal poly tank and pipeline - \$177.98
    - John Riggs Jr. – 150-gal poly tank and portable water hose - \$479.97

**David McCardle made a motion to pay the completed AgEP Exigency program practices for A. Sberna, C. Frohnapfel, M. Otte, and J. Riggs as presented. Motion passed.**

**Correspondence**

- Amy Wade, Secretary, read the following correspondence: (1) An invitation to the MCD Legislative & Awards Banquet.

**Supervisor Reports** - None

**NEXT MEETING**

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, 10:00 a.m., at the USDA Service Center in McMechen.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

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**Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman**

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**Amy Wade, Secretary**

**Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson**