

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
**December 12, 2024**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Supervisors Present**

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

**Supervisor Absent**

Steve Paull, Brooke County

**Others Present**

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA  
Devon Kokoska, Watershed Manager-East, WVCA  
Chris Casto, Fiscal & HR Administrator, WVCA – via Teams  
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS  
Kevin Paul, ACES, NRCS – via Teams  
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD  
Avery Berdine, Program Technician, FSA  
Heather Duncan, Executive Director, WVACD – via Teams  
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 10:00 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 November 14, 2024, board meeting minutes and the December 5, 2024, special meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.**

**Financial Report**

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

**Reports**

- District Crew (NPCD) – No Report

- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – Avery Berdine
  - Avery reported that applications for LFP, ECP, and ELAP will be accepted through January 30, 2025.
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOP) – No Report
- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
  - A written monthly report was not available.
  - Devon Kokoska gave an update on Wheeling Creek dams debris removal. Wheeling Creek #7, #23, and #25 will be done by the end of this week. Wheeling Creek will be completed next week and burning will begin when a burn permit is received.

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) – Heather Duncan reviewed written report.

December 2024 Board Report

**Winter Quarterly Meeting – IMPORTANT UPDATE!!!!**

Our next quarterly meeting will be VIRTUAL ONLY! This is due to helping to reduce travel budgets and avoiding potential bad weather. Please send agenda items to [hduncan@wvacd.us](mailto:hduncan@wvacd.us) ASAP. The meeting information will be sent within the next few weeks. Please help spread the word.

**Conservation and Ag Day at the Capital**

February 20<sup>th</sup> is our Conservation Day at the Capital. Please plan on bringing display items to have at your table for the day. Also, please plan ahead your appointments with your legislators. I will be polling districts at the upcoming area meetings, but feel free to reach out sooner with your *opinion on the following*: Would you prefer [an evening meeting on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> to review materials](#) or would you prefer a Teams meeting a week or two prior to review materials in preparation for [Conservation Day or BOTH?](#) Please reach out to Heather ASAP ([hduncan@wvacd.us](mailto:hduncan@wvacd.us) / (304) 433-6280)

**Community Development Grants**

A new grant opportunity was announced at the Quarterly Meeting. The goal is to award 5 \$10,000 grants to conservation districts and conservation district partners. The deadline to apply is December 31<sup>st</sup> and will be announced at the January 6<sup>th</sup> quarterly meeting. More information can be found here: <https://www.wvacd.org/supervisor-information>. Please reach out to Julie and Vanta for assistance! Outside organizations are eligible to apply with a LOS from your CD.

**WVDA Pasture Renovation Partnership**

The \$10 million WVDA secured for drought assistance is progressing as you are aware. Please refer to your area manager for more information.

**Grazing for Appalachian Sustainability Grant (GRASS Grant)**

The goal of this grant is to improve knowledge and management practices for Appalachian beef producers. An online form is available for interested applicants to sign up. WVU staff has recently been attending board meetings re-introducing everyone to the grant and explaining the LOR and application process. This is a great way to get good management practices onto

farms and incentives to do so. The interest form can be found here:

[https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3mfJaZPTU1b709g](https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3mfJaZPTU1b709g)

**Sustainable Management in Agriculture using Regenerative Techniques Grant (SMART Farms WV Grant)**

This grant is through NASDA and is available to non-Chesapeake Bay draining counties to establish native warm season grasses into pastures and log landing sites focusing on Historically Underserved producers. This grant is a partnership with WVCA, WVACD, and WVDOF. This is a great grant to reach out to someone who is not currently a cooperators with the district to help get their foot in the door. Please contact myself or Dylan Johnson, WVCA, for more information.

**New Emails and Updated Website!**

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.

Please be sure to check the website for updated information and for forms that may be needed.

[www.wvacd.org](http://www.wvacd.org)

**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 than 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!

**WVACD Community Outreach Grant Reporting**

For those districts with a current WVACD Community Outreach Grant, funding and quarterly narrative reports are due to Kelley Wayne and Heather Duncan on January 5<sup>th</sup>. Even if your grant has not had any activity or expended any funds, reports are still MANDATORY. A delay in reimbursements could occur if reports are late. Reports are on the WVACD website if needed.

**Upcoming Dates**

Eastern Area Meeting: December 2, 2024 at Tygarts Valley CD

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

Central Area Meeting: January 3, 2025 at Guyan CD

Winter Quarterly Meeting: January 6, 2025 VIRTUAL ONLY

WV SCC Meeting: January 7, 2025

Ag & Conservation Day at the Capitol: February 20, 2025, potential evening/afternoon meeting February 19, 2025

Spring Quarterly Meeting: April 14, 2025 at Cedar Lakes Conference Center

As you know, this year has shown the strength and resiliency of West Virginia's farmers. From a wet spring to a historically dry summer and fall, not only has the farmer been pushed to his or her limits, but the crops, especially perennial crops, have as well. However, let us also use this time to think about where we have done well and where we could do better. This could be from management to financial planning to thinking about diversification.

One area that could use your assistance is with our hay producers. I think we have all seen firsthand this year the importance of being a “grass farmer” before being a “livestock farmer.” We have also seen the importance of maintaining hay fields and keeping them in peak performance. Another area that I’m thrilled to be a part of is being on the leadership team with our fellow partner agencies including: WVCA, NRCS, FSA, WVDA, NASS, and WVU Extension. At a recent meeting, this partnership stressed the importance of working together and creating a resiliency plan to better prepare everyone for what may, and probably will come. I hope that you know our key partners are working together, now maybe more than ever, to ensure the success and stability for our cooperators.

Prior to the January 6<sup>th</sup> virtual quarterly meeting, please send me your ideas for improving our hay production and quality in West Virginia. Also, if you have any ideas for improvement, such as program needs or limitations to the Agriculture Enhancement Program (AgEP) practices that involve hay, please send me those comments as well. I would like to receive comments back prior to January 3, 2025 if possible. Comments can come from your constituents, your conservation district board, you as an individual/supervisor, from your crop advisors, etc.

**Again, by January 3, 2025 please respond back to me with the following information:**

- **How can we improve hay production and quality in West Virginia?**
- **What can be improved with the hay practices in AgEP?**

You may e-mail your response to [hduncan@wvacd.us](mailto:hduncan@wvacd.us) or call/text my cell phone at (304) 433-6280. There will be time set aside at the virtual January 6<sup>th</sup> quarterly meeting to discuss the responses and I’m sure more follow-up information is to come after the meeting. Information on the quarterly meeting will be sent within the next two weeks.

Thank you, and as always, never hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – Katie Fitzsimmons reviewed a written report.  
**NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach Programs**
  - EQIP assessments due 2/12/25
  - Completed ranking of 5 of 6 CSP Classic Applications – awaiting preapproval list
- **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
  - Katie will be on leave December 19<sup>th</sup> - January 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - David will be on leave December 23<sup>rd</sup> – December 27<sup>th</sup>

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC) – No Report
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA) – No Report
- District Administrator (NPCD) – Victoria White reviewed a written report.  
November/December:

**General Updates:**

If you have items that need added to Facebook or website, please email the District Administrator with necessary information  
December schedule is now available for all supervisors  
No-Till Drill is going to Knights for an estimate on repair costs in the coming weeks

**Grants:**

**WVACD Community Outreach Grant:** NPCD has been awarded \$8,166  
**WVACD Community Development Grant:** \$10,000 grant application is due on December 31st and will be submitted soon  
**The Bee Cause Grant:** Awaiting approval for \$2,500  
**Friends of NACD Grant:** Awaiting approval for \$2,500

**High Tunnel/Garden:**

Planning is underway for the 2025 community garden and high tunnel

**Ongoing Projects:**

Schoolhouse Repairs have been completed, and we will begin utilizing the space for programming and events soon  
New furniture for RD is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday, December 17th and Nail City crew is coming to complete painting

**Upcoming Events:**

Planning for 2025 Events

- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
  - Victoria White secured a grant for the district for a bee program. As part of the grant, a committee needs to be formed. Committee members will be Victoria, David Shipman, Amy Wade, and Mark Fitzsimmons.
  - Building – Mark Fitzsimmons reported that the outlet in the conference room has been replaced, a hard-wired outlet in RD needs to be replaced, and the commode in the ladies restroom is running. The contractor that repaired the outlet in the conference room will repair the outlet in RD and the commode in the ladies restroom.

**Old Business**

- Wheeling Creek 25 O&M Agreement
  - Robert Luchetti, Jr. reported that the Wheeling Creek 25 O&M agreement is in the hands of DNR for approval. Robert hopes to have it approved and returned by next week.

- WVCA Cooperative Agreement for Employee
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to request that the WVCA hire a conservation specialist for the NPCD. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
  - Devon Kokoska reported that there has not been enough movement at UGC #9 to take action.
  - Mark Fitzsimmons reported that it has dropped 6 inches and there has been some ground shaking but no major movement.
  - Devon Kokoska receives a weekly report for the dam monitoring. He will forward that report to Veronica Gibson, and she will forward it to the NPCD supervisors.
- Insurance Policies
  - Amy Wade continues to work on the NPCD insurance policies. There is no update currently.
- Letter To WVCA Regarding PA Dam Funds
  - Chris Casto reported that the WVCA fiscal operations is researching the PA dam funds account to determine what funds were provided by the WVCA. The WVCA is determining what funds can be transferred to the NPCD. Jim Anderson stated the district would like to use the interest from the funds deposited to the NPCD for other district expenses. Chris Casto advised the board that the agreement with the sponsors would have to state such and agreed upon by the sponsors.
- Electrical Outlet in Conference Room Repair
  - The outlet has been repaired.

### **New Business**

- WVDA Drought Assistance/Pasture Renovation
  - Applications for the program have been received. The program will continue through January 30, 2025. It was noted that Hancock County is not eligible for the program because that county was never listed as a D3 drought status.
- Schoolhouse Updates
  - Victoria White provided a plan to update the schoolhouse to STEM standards. The cost would be less than \$4,000.00 and grants could be applied for. **Amy Wade made a motion to give Victoria White the authority to look for mini grants, sell the unneeded materials that are in the schoolhouse, and to pursue the NPCD Foundation for funding for updates. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**

- NPCD Work Crew
  - Mark Fitzsimmons spoke to Harry Aston regarding dam maintenance for 2025. Harry may be interested in mowing some of the dams. Mark will contact the Strope family that showed interest in the past in the work.
  
- 2025 Event Schedule
  - Victoria White asked if the board would like to see if UOCD would like to partner with the NPCD for the Cattleman’s Conference in 2025. Amy Wade said yes.
  - Jim Anderson asked if there would be another Tree ID workshop. Victoria said that it would be part of the Forestry Field Day.
  - Victoria presented the following to the board:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Sat. April 26th	2nd Annual Northern WV Cattlemen’s Conference	TBD	Marshall County Fairgrounds
Tues. May 6th	13th Annual Women in Ag Day	TBD	Moundsville Center ?
Fri. May 16th	Outreach/Underserved Dinner Meeting (Hancock or Brooke Co.)	TBD	TBD
Sat. May 17th	Grazing Field Day (Hancock or Brooke Co.)	TBD	TBD
Fri. June 6th	Pollinator Event	TBD	District Office
Thurs. September 18th + Fri. September 19th	15th Annual HOA Day	TBD	Marshall County Fairgrounds
Fri. September 26th	Outreach/Underserved Dinner Meeting (Marshall or Ohio Co.)	TBD	District Office ?
Sat. September 27th	Forestry Field Day (Marshall or Ohio Co.)	TBD	TBD

2nd Annual Northern WV Cattlemen’s Conference – April, 26th 2025

- Presenter: Jerry Yates
- BQA Certification
- Nutrient Management
- Hands-on BCS demo with local farms cattle

Grazing Field Day – May 17th, 2025 (Backup: May 10th)

- Soil Health
- Forage Stand Improvement/Identification

- Rotational Grazing
- Water Systems
- Held at Hancock or Brooke Co. Farm

Forestry Field Day – September 27th, 2025 (Backup: September 13th)

- Forest Management
  - Brush Management
  - Invasive Species Management
- Chainsaw Safety

Pollinator Event – June 6th, 2025

- Live Hive Demo – Shanda King
- Hive Management
- Intro to Beekeeping/Pollinator Education
- Bee Hotel Craft
- Master Gardner
  - **Amy Wade made a motion to pay for registration for the Master Gardner program for Victoria White. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- WVACD Scholarship Donation
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to donate \$1,000.00 to the WVACD scholarship fund. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- WVU Extension Program Sponsorship
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to donate \$400.00 to the WVU Extension’s 2025 educational programs. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Conservation Agreements
  - Nick Frankovitch/Hancock County
  - Mark Chambers/Marshall County
  - All in favor to approve N. Frankovitch and M. Chambers as new cooperators.**
- Ag Enhancement Program
  - Agriculture Enhancement Payments
    - John Bierce, Jr. – Nutrient Management - \$1,110.00
    - Eric Butler – Lime - \$1,010.67
    - Frank Heller – Pasture Division Fence - \$2,000.00
    - David McCardle made a motion to pay J. Bierce, Jr., E. Butler, and F. Heller for their completed AgEP contracts as presented. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**



**Correspondence**

- o Amy Wade, Secretary, reviewed the following correspondence: (1) Christmas cards from Elk CD and Guyan CD. (2) Elk CD Christmas luncheon invitation. (3) Guyan CD awards dinner invitation.

**Supervisor Reports**

- Mark Fitzsimmons attended the Western Area meeting. WVACD by-laws regarding NACD membership was discussed. Currently, each supervisor is listed as a member. The WVCAD wants to know what each district would like to do. The NPCD decided to have the district listed as a member.
- Jim Anderson reported on the National Grazing conference he attended.
- Amy Wade wrote a thank you card to Judith Lyons, Gene Saurborn, and the SCC for their support with the UGC dams.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, January 9, 2025, 10:00 a.m., at the USDA Service Center in McMechen.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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**Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman**

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**Amy Wade, Secretary**

**Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson**