

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING
March 13, 2025
10:00 a.m.

Supervisors Present

Jim Anderson, Hancock County – Vice-Chairman
Chuck Glenn, Hancock County – Treasurer
Steve Paull, Brooke County via Teams
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 via Teams
Don Whetzel, District Operations Manager, WVCA via Teams
Devon Kokoska, Watershed Manager-East, WVCA
Belinda Withrow, Executive Assistant, WVCA via Teams
Chris Ellison, Systems Administrator, WVCA via Teams
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Heather Duncan, Executive Director, WVACD via Teams
Julie Simmons, Outreach & Communication Specialist, WVACD via Teams
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub
Karen Cox, Ohio County Agent, WVU Extension
John Billie, Agent, Paree Insurance
Clark Crumine, Tri-State Beekeeping Association President

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, March 13, 2025, 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 February 2025, board meeting minutes and the February 21, 2025, special meeting notes as presented. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Bob Straub reviewed the February 2025 NPCD funds.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the February 2025 co-administered funds.

Jim Anderson made a motion to file the February co-administered financials and the February NPCD funds for audit. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

Reports

- District Crew (NPCD) – No Report
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No Report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOT) – No Report
- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
 - Judith Lyons reported that due to budget concerns, the District Manager East position will not be filled. Don Whetzel will manage the NPCD. Amy Wade asked if the Conservation Specialist position has been put on hold. Judith said it has not. The agency is working on filling the position.
 - Devon Kokoska reported that Bill Armstrong will be on leave until May 1. Devon will be on leave from early to mid-July.
 - Don Whetzel reviewed a written report.

March 2025 WVCA Report

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 these reviews, please disregard this request.

District Personnel Plan

District Personnel Plans are due to the SCC in March. Failure to meet the deadline may cause a delay in approving the District's personnel plan and the release of state funds for those positions.

Conservation District Operation (CDO) Grant Funds

Districts are asked to prepare your CDO budget report. The budget is to be submitted to Fiscal Services and your Area Director by March 30, so it can be presented to SCC in April.

Conservation Farm Tour

It is time for districts to think about the conservation farm families to be awarded. CDs should have their district farm selection to their Area Directors by June 15.

O&M Agreements:

CD's are encouraged to continue to work with local sponsors for O&M funding. The WVCA will be allocating funds on a watershed basis to help with O&M costs.

AGEP Timeline:

March - State AgEP committee meeting to finalize the upcoming FY AgEP

April - 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)

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)
 - Julie Simmons told the board that she would be available for outreach assistance.
 - Heather Duncan reviewed a written report.
- March 2025 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director

Conservation and Ag Day at the Capital

THANK YOU to everyone who came out, braved the weather, and participated in the flood relief effort at Ag and Conservation Day on February 20th. Thank you to WVDA for handling supplies at the event. Several food boxes were also dropped off to Mountaineer Food Bank from a donation from EPCD. Please continue to keep SCD, GCD, GVCD, and CCD in your minds, especially McDowell Co in SCD.

We still need to keep in contact with legislators to ensure funding for AgEP and supervisor per diem and travel.

April Quarterly Meeting

The Spring Quarterly Meeting will be held at the main Assembly Hall at Cedar Lakes on Monday, April 14th beginning at 9:00 am. This is a one day meeting. I expect the meeting to run until 3:30-4:00 pm. Information will be coming soon on the WVACD website under quarterly meetings. If you would like to stay at Cedar Lakes, you may stay at the Holt Lodge for \$94/night. You can call the main office at (304) 372-7860 and mention WVACD. If you are staying for Envirothon, you may make your reservation for that as well so you can stay in the same room for the week. Hotel rooms are available from Sunday, April 13 – Friday, April 18th. Committees will meet in the morning.

Per Diem and Mileage Reminders

The WV SCC reduced the daily per diem rate to \$80 (the prior established rate) until a budget can be secured. This was effective on the date of their meeting, January 9th and a memo was distributed by WVCA on January 10th.

As of January 1, 2025 mileage has increased to .70 per mile. Lodging is maintained at \$110 and total meals is \$68. Charles Town and Charleston have different lodging and meal rates.

Federal Funding Pause

As you are aware, there is still a federal funding pause on agreements and our Community Outreach

and Development grants are affected by this. We hope to hear good news soon and will keep everyone updated as best we can.

We were made recently aware that a portion of my agreement funding is not related to IRA funds. With this, the WVACD executive committee met on February 27th and has agreed to continue funding my position through April 30th. While the funding is there, there is the current concern for timely reimbursement. This holds true on reimbursement for the TA positions as well. We must be appreciative of the conservative and conscious efforts of those before us to allow a reserve to be built to allow for situations just like this.

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

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 WVDOT. This is a great grant to reach out to someone who is not currently a cooperator with the district to help get their foot in the door. Please contact myself or Dylan Johnson, WVCA, for more information.

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)

This grant is housed by WVCA with funding coming from NRCS. This is to develop conservation district field days, create learning stations, and hold virtual pasture walk. \$3,000 is available to conservation districts to host a workshop on grazing and soil health topics. Conservation districts may combine funding and workshops to host a larger scale event. \$400 is available for a learning station at the conservation district office.

Grasslands Committee

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Grasslands Committee, please let Heather know. The committee would like to see 1-2 supervisor members from each conservation district represented. Currently, the committee meets quarterly at the WVACD office and a virtual option is available as well. Please contact Heather or committee chair, Jim Anderson for more information. Assistance from supervisors is desperately needed for the Grasslands Evaluation Contest which will be held on April 11 at the WV Beef Expo at Jackson's Mill. Setup for the contest is April 10th.

WVACD Communication and Outreach Employees

Please do not forget to contact Julie Simmons (wvacdoutreach2@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com) and Vanta

Coda (wvacdoutreach@wvacd.onmicrosoft.com) for your outreach needs. Rather it's developing printed or online materials, assisting with outreach events, or coming up with ideas to reach new producers or CSP outreach, they are here to help!

Membership and Educational Needs

If you would like to discuss your membership needs, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Also, please let me know what other continuing education and training you need to be a better supervisor and/or director. I especially want to hear what type of training, educational events, and the format you would like to see at quarterly meetings. We've had in depth and updates at various quarterly meetings, but I'm still hearing there are questions and confusion even with offering various topics of concern.

Upcoming Dates

Envirothon Committee: March 5, 2025 at WVACD Office/Teams

Eastern Area Meeting: March 3, 2025 at North Fork Ruritan Club

Western Area Meeting: March 17, 2025 at Upper Ohio CD/Teams

App. Grazing Conference Committee Meeting: March 20, 2025 at Mon CD/Teams

Central Area Meeting: April 3, 2025 at Elk CD

Grasslands Committee Meeting: April 4, 2025 at WVACD Office/Teams

WV SCC Meeting: April 8, 2025 at Cedar Lakes

WV Grasslands Evaluation Contest: April 10 set up and April 11, 2025 contest at Jackson's Mill

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

WV Envirothon Competition: April 16-17, 2025 at Cedar Lakes Conference

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

March 2025

NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District

Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach

February 10 – WVU Extension Dinner Meeting on Animal Health Protocols

March 12th – David attended Nutrient Management Training in Oakland, Maryland

Programs

EQUIP assessments due 3/19/25 and 4/30/25

CSP Round 2 Sign Up Deadline – 4/18/2025

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.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
 - Jim Anderson reported that everything is on hold due to government funding.

- Administrative Specialist (WVCA) – No Report
- District Administrator (NPCD)
 - Victoria White reviewed a written report

NPCD District Administrator March/April

Updates:

General Updates:

If you have items that need added to Facebook or website, please email with necessary information

March schedule is now available for all supervisors

Moundsville Middle submitted Samara Testing Scores

Oak Glen High School Envirothon Team registration and check has been mailed to WV Envirothon Committee and they are attending training on March 21st at Upper Ohio CD training

Grants:

Awaiting information regarding **WVACD Community Outreach Grant** and **WVACD Community Development Grant** funding

The Bee Cause Grant: NPCD award \$2,500 and check has been deposited

- Three sign ups of local students from Ohio and Brooke Counties
- Schedule: Third Sunday April through August 2025

Friends of NACD Grant: Did not receive grant

High Tunnel/Garden:

Ethan Bloomfield (WPHS Horticulture) and Peyton Berturm (JMHS Horticulture) to start plants and come to office to help with planting

Set April clean up date for high tunnel/garden with supervisors

Ongoing Projects:

Schoolhouse – working on cleaning out and getting funding for STEM classroom

Upcoming Events:

Cattlemen's Conference Sat. April 26th, 2025 @ Marshall County Fairgrounds – UOCD co-sponsoring with \$400 contribution for fairground rental. More information to come on event schedule, speakers, time, etc.

Info/Outreach Dinner Meeting Fri. May 16th in Brooke or Hancock County

Grazing Field Day Sat. May 17th @ Brooke or Hancock County Farm

Women in Ag Day Sat. June 7th @ Moundsville Center

- Rental fee paid and event advertised on Facebook

Pollinator Event Fri. June 13th @ District Office

- Visitors - None

- Committee Reports
 - Equipment – David McCardle reported that all equipment is ready to rent. Victoria White provided a current rental report. **David McCardle made a motion to have the no-till drill available for Hancock and Brooke County the months of April, May, and June and to be available for Ohio and Marshall County the months of July, August, and September. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed. David McCardle made a motion to seek prices for a manure spreader. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
 - O&M – Amy Wade reported that Steven Starcher is still working on a list of sponsors.
 - High Tunnel – David Shipman reviewed a written report. David presented a soil test option for micronutrients for cooperators. **Jim Anderson made a motion to pay a 50% cost share for macronutrient testing for soil tests for cooperators. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.** There was a discussion to purchase a tiller and updating the irrigation for the high tunnel. **Chuck Glenn made a motion use the Soil Survey fund to purchase a tiller and irrigation supplies and to pay for the cost share for the soil test for micronutrients. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
 - Grassland – Jim Anderson reported that the next Grassland meeting is April 4, and the competition is April 11.
 - Safety – Eric Freeland stated that a safety checklist will have to be reviewed with the crew.

Old Business

- Wheeling Creek 25 O&M Agreement
 - Robert Luchetti, Jr., reported that he needs to follow up with Sigrid Teets regarding the Wheeling Creek 25 O&M agreement.
- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
 - There was a discussion regarding an agreement between the coal mine and the district. Judith Lyons said the SCC is supportive of the district.
 - Judith asked if the district has received any reimbursements from the coal mine. Veronica Gibson has sent all invoices paid to the attorney to pass on to the coal mine for payment. No payments have been received.
 - Amy Wade asked if the engineer submits a report regarding monitoring of the dams. Gene Saurborn will check with Levi Cyphers for the reports. **Jim Anderson made a motion to send a letter to D'Appolonia Engineering to request updates for the monitoring. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
 - A site visit was scheduled for April 3 at 10:00 am at UGC #9.
- Insurance Policies
 - John Bille reviewed updates to the BRIM policy. The changes are effective March 1.

- WVDA Drought Assistance/Pasture Renovation
 - All checks were mailed.
- Schoolhouse Updates
 - No updates.
- NPCD Work Crew
 - One resume has been received. An interview will be held at the next meeting.
- Summer Soil Tester
 - One resume has been received.
- Grassland Meeting Attendance
 - Chuck Glenn will attend the next meeting with Jim Anderson.
- Grazing Field Day-Hancock/Brooke County, May 17 – Farm to Host
 - There was a discussion of a potential farm location in West Liberty/Ohio County.
- Inf/Outreach Dinner-Brooke/Hancock County, May 16 – Location
 - The location has not been determined.
- Conservation Farm Contest
 - Marshall County – Greg Knight (waiting for confirmation). Dan Lucey backup.
 - Hancock County – Jim Gibson
 - Brooke County – none
 - Ohio County – Bob Fowler (needs contacted)
- WVCA Recalling SPRP Funds
 - The WVCA has requested the SPRP funds for the Ohio County Edgewood Stream Restoration and the McElroy-Middle Grave Creek projects. Judith Lyons said the funds would be used to bring the SPRP program back throughout the state. Gene Saurborn provided the McElroy-Middle Grave Creek agreement. The agreements states that the district would return the funds. **Jim Anderson made a motion to write a letter to the WVCA to equally split the McElroy-Middle Grave Creek funds and to use the funds for the NPCD AgEP. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
 - Gene Saurborn suggested the Ohio County Edgewood Stream Restoration funds be left for a future project with Ohio County.
- Tygarts Valley CD Lawsuit
 - No updates.

New Business

- Approval of FY24 AUP Invoice – Lowe & Associates, PLLC
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve payment of the invoice from Lowe & Associates, PLLC in the amount of \$3,550.00 for FY24 AUP. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Wheeling Creek EAPs Renewal
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to approve the Wheeling Creek EAPs as presented. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- WVU Soils Team National Collegiate Soils Contest
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to support the WVU Soils team with a donation of \$500.00 for the national contest. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- Ohio County WVU Extension Cooperative Programs
 - Karen Cox spoke to the board about partnering in future programs.
- Tri-State Beekeeping Association Partnership
 - Clark Crumrine requested a partnership with the district. He would like to use the hive and facilities for programs. **Jim Anderson made a motion to partner with the Tr-State Beekeeping Association and allow them to use the district facilities. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
- Request Funding/Donation from WCWC for District Programs
 - There was a discussion to request funding from the WCWC for education programs. It was decided not to ask for funding.
- NPCD Office Signs Interior & Exterior
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$500.00 to replace the district sign outside and office signs inside the building. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- NPCD US Savings Bond
 - A savings bond was received from a past cooperator. The family would like to have the district receive the funds. One of the supervisors will take the savings bond to the bank to see if the district can cash it.

- Review/Update District Policy Manuals
 - CD Employee Manual
 - CD Plan of Work

David McCardle made a motion to table the review of the CD employee manual and the CD plan of work. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.
- Letter of Request
 - \$3,550.00 – FY24 Audit Reimbursement

David McCardle made a motion to sign and submit the LOR for \$3,550.00 for reimbursement for the FY24 audit reimbursement. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.
- Ag Enhancement
 - An AgEP meeting will be held on March 27 at 10:00 am.

Correspondence

- Amy Wade, Secretary, reviewed the following correspondence: (1) A thank you from the Milliken family. 2) A thank you from WVU Extension for donation. 3) Thank you from students of the ham, bacon and egg sale.

Supervisor Reports – No reports

NEXT MEETING

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman

Amy Wade, Secretary

Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson