

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING  
**May 8, 2025**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**Supervisors Present**

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

**Supervisor Absent**

Eric Freeland, Brooke County

**Others Present**

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA  
Don Whetzel, District Operations Manager, WVCA via Teams  
Devon Kokoska, Watershed Manager-East, WVCA  
Bill Armstrong, Field Operations, WVCA  
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD  
Jon Bourdon, State Conservationist, NRCS  
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS  
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
Kevin Paul, ACES, NRCS  
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 1:00 p.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 April 2025 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.**

**Financial Report**

- Bob Straub reviewed the April 2025 NPCD funds.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the April 2025 co-administered funds.  
**Chuck Glenn made a motion to file the April co-administered financials and the April NPCD financials for audit. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

**Reports**

- District Crew (NPCD) – No Report
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No Report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOP) - No Report

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
  - Devon Kokoska gave an update on UGC which is reported under old business. Bill Armstrong has returned to work and Devon will be on leave beginning May 13. A new Conservation Specialist will start on June 2.
  - Don Whetzel reviewed a written report.

## **May 2025 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.

### **WVCA Budget update**

The Agency received a \$600,000 cut but also received \$550,000 allotment for AgEP. This is now a line item in the WVCA budget. The overall AgEP budget for FY26 will still be the same as FY25.

### **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 16.

### **Timelines:**

- **June 16** - 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)

### **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.

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) – A written report was reviewed.  
**May 2025 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director**

#### **April Quarterly Meeting**

Thank you to everyone who attended the April Quarterly Meeting at Cedar Lakes on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Cedar Lakes provided a wonderful venue and a special thank you to Western CD for sponsoring a wonderful lunch.

#### **Federal Funding Pause- UNPAUSED! =D**

I am overly excited to say that the IRA funds are now available to use. This means that current Community Outreach and the Community Development grants can resume/begin. I will be contacting awardees for the next steps. We are working on getting a one year extension, but as of now, those funds expire on September 30, 2025.

The funding for my position is also released which that agreement ends June 30, 2026.

#### **Local Work Group (LWG) Meetings**

LWG meeting season is upon us. PLEASE utilize these meetings to think of ways to reach cooperators that you may have not reached before. Maybe it's changing the time and location. Maybe it's offering an online option. Maybe it's having an open house and inviting your area partners to attend, too. Maybe send out a survey to your cooperators and also post it on social media. There's a long list of "maybes" that you can do. Reach out to Julie, Vanta, and/or me if you would like to discuss ways to expand your LWG meeting. This is the time that your constituents have an open invitation to come to you and tell YOU what THEY need. Maybe think of it as a town hall where you can lay out what is offered and your constituents can provide feedback. Use these meetings to not only plan for NRCS programming, but for your CD as well.

#### **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) - *THIS GRANT IS CURRENTLY UNDER FEDERAL REVIEW*

#### **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 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.

### **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, 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**

May 7, 2025: Envirothon Meeting – WVACD Office, 10 am  
May 12, 2025: State Fair Committee Meeting – online, 10 am  
June 23, 2025: Western Area Meeting – West Fork CD Office, 10 am  
June 26, 2025: Central Area Meeting – Southern CD Office, 10 am  
July 7, 2025: Eastern Area Meeting – Monongahela CD Office, 10 am  
July 16-17, 2025: Summer Quarterly Meeting – Bridgeport Conference Center  
August 7-16: WV State Fair

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

### **May 2025**

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

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

- CD/EE Pilot Testing Training – David and Katie are part of a pilot user program for our environmental evaluation program.
- Local Work Group Meetings
  - Thursday, May 8th at 6pm – McMechen Service Center
  - Thursday, May 15th at 6pm – New Manchester Vol. Fire Dept.
- May 29th – JED Training, Bird Habitat – Eglon, WV
- June 7th – Women in Ag Day, Sherrard Middle School
- June 24th – JED Training – Forest Carbon Credit Program – Location TBD

##### **Programs**

- EQUIP/AMA
  - Assessed 31 applications
  - Ranked in 113 fund pools
  - Awaiting preapproval list
- CSP Round 2 Sign Up Deadline – 5/16/2025

##### **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.

##### **Misc.**

- May 17th Grazing Field Day rescheduled for October 10th and 11th
- Hancock County Office Hours – we still have people coming in to meet with us!

- May 15<sup>th</sup> – Followed by Local Work Group Meeting
    - June 16<sup>th</sup>
    - July 17<sup>th</sup>
    - August 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Jon Bourdon discussed NRCS staffing, grants, and agreements.
  - Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
    - Jim Anderson reported that all funding is on hold and the shack at Wheeling Creek #7 will be removed.
  - Administrative Specialist (WVCA) – No Report
  - District Administrator (NPCD)
    - Victoria White reviewed a written report
- NPCD District Administrator April  
Updates:

### General Updates:

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

May schedule is now available for all supervisors

### Grants:

**WVACD Community Outreach Grant** – still paused

**WVACD Community Development Grant** – not awarded

**The Bee Cause Grant:** NPCD award \$2,500

- Programming continues Sunday, May 18th at 3 pm

### Upcoming Events:

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

- Soil Tester

Farmer	County	Acres	Date Sampled
Mike White	Hancock	29.5	4/24/2025
Brett Lemley	Hancock	27.1	4/24/2025
Richard Gibson	Hancock	19.1	4/24/2025
Lewis Hopkins	Ohio	193.5	4/23/2025 & 4/28/2025
Blanche Rvbeck	Ohio	25.14	4/29/2025
Kenneth Fowler	Ohio	1.5	4/29/2025
Dave Henderson	Ohio	21.6	5/5/2025
Eric Blend	Ohio	4	5/5/2025
Mike Crow	Marshall	18.1	5/6/2025
Sham Gaffor	Marshall	0.5	5/6/2025
Suzan Smith	Ohio	<b>81.8</b>	5/11/2025
	<b>Total Acres:</b>	<b>421.84</b>	

- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
  - Building – The NPCD sign at the entrance needs to be securely installed. There was a discussion regarding the condition of the split rail fence.
  - High Tunnel
    - Planted peppers, tomatoes and cabbage in high tunnel
    - Two sperate varieties
    - Big Dena tomatoes purchased from Bob Fowler
    - One row still open for planting
    - Plants picked up from JM and Wheeling Park
    - Day needs set for trencher rental for installation of irrigation pipeline
    - Top Cover repairs still need completed
    - Estimated replacement cost will be about \$1,300.00
    - Side wall rope on the river side needs replacement.
    - Shade cloth will need installed early June
    - Cabbage and onions planted outside
    - Green beans are in new beds outside. Have sprouted and growing well
  - Grassland – Jim Anderson reported on the competition at Jackson’s Mill.
  - Education – Mark Fitzsimmons reported that the NPCD Envirothon team did well.
  - Bee – Victoria White reported that the swarm catching class went well.

### **Old Business**

- Wheeling Creek 25 O&M Agreement
  - No update.
- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
  - Devon Kokoska provided a monthly report from Alliance. NPCD is responsible for mowing. The dams should be mowed 2 to 3 times.
- NPCD Work Crew
  - Two employees were hired for the work crew.
- Conservation Farm Contest
  - The district conservation farm judging will be held on May 15.
- Tygarts Valley CD Lawsuit
  - No update.
- Manure Spreader
  - An invoice for payment was received. There was a discussion regarding the rental cost to cooperators.
- Review Language Concerning Dam Coverage
  - No update.

## **New Business**

- WV State Conservation Camp Scholarship
  - **Chuck Glenn made a motion to support two scholarships for the WV State Conservation Camp totaling \$550.00. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- 2026 RC&D MOU
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the 2026 RC&D MOU as presented. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Ohio County Country Fair Participation
  - **David McCardle made a motion to participate in the Ohio County Country Fair in October. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Appointment of Nominating Committee for NPCD Election of Officers
  - Mark Fitzsimmons appointed Steve Paull, David McCardle, and Robert Luchetti, Jr. to the nominating committee for the election of NPCD officers at the June board meeting.
- Letters of Request
  - \$1,908.09 – FY25 AgEP Exigency Rebalance Allotment
  - \$37,775.00 – FY26 Q1 District Support Allotment
  - \$20,045.00 – FY26 Q2 District Support Allotment
  - \$20,044.00 – FY26 Q3 District Support Allotment
  - \$14,680.00 – FY26 Q4 District Support Allotment
  - **David McCardle made a motion to approve the letters of request listed above. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Conservation Agreements
  - Mike and Kristina Bing/Marshall County/44 acres
  - Bradford and Angelina Robertson/Marshall County/20 acres
  - **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve M. & K. Bing and B. and A. Robertson as new cooperators. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Ag Enhancement
  - Veronica Gibson reported that there are 19 unfinished contracts. Letters have been sent, and supervisors have contacted each cooperator.
  - Cancellation
    - Melissa Schwing/Pasture Division Fence/\$2,000.00
    - **David McCardle made a motion to cancel the AgEP contract for M. Schwing as requested by M. Schwing. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.**
  - Payments
    - Logan Toler/Heavy Use Protection Area/\$607.20
    - Ronald Mason/Exclusion Fence/\$2,000.00
    - **Chuck Glenn made a motion to approve the payment for the completed AgEP practices for L. Toler and R. Mason. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**

- Modification
  - Jordan Frye would like to use both barb wire and high tensile for his approved fence practice. The cost share amount will not change. **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to modify the AgEP contract for J. Frye to allow him to install barb wire and high tensile fence. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

#### **Correspondence**

- Amy Wade, Secretary, reviewed the following correspondence: (1) A thank you card from the WVU soils team for the sponsorship.

#### **Supervisor Reports** – No reports

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next board meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 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.

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**Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman**

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**Amy Wade, Secretary**

**Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson**