

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING
June 12, 2025
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
Don Whetzel, District Operations Manager, WVCA
Cindy Shreve, Conservation Services Manager, WVCA
Jessica Otte, Conservation Specialist, WVCA
Bill Armstrong, Field Operations, WVCA
Anita May, Budget Analyst, WVCA via Teams
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD
Abby Clegg, Soil Tester, NPCD
Heather Duncan, Executive Director, WVACD via Teams
Josh Klapka, Crew Leader, NPCD
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Jackie Byars, Acting Area Conservationist, NRCS
Brent Lyons, Forester, WVDOP
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, June 12, 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 May 2025 board meeting minutes and the May 30, 2025, special meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Bob Straub reviewed the May 2025 NPCD funds.
- Chuck Glenn will review the May 2025 co-administered funds following the meeting.
Jim Anderson made a motion to file the May NPCD financials for audit. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.

Reports

- District Crew (NPCD) - Josh Klapka reported the following:
 - There are three Ventrac mowing decks, eight or nine extra rims and rims with bad tires. Josh is trying to organize the garage. Robert Luchetti, Jr., told Josh that it is his shop now and keep what parts he feels are salvageable.
 - Three tires on the Ventrac are filled with foam. Josh would like to replace them and would like to have spare tires for equipment on hand. He will check the cost of the tires and report it back to the board.
 - Josh was told by Harry Aston that the skid steer trailer brakes need adjusted. Josh was instructed to get it repaired.
 - Welding has been completed on the brush hog.
 - The Ventrac has been taken to Bridgeport Equipment for various repairs. It will be a week and a half before it will be looked at. It is unknown when the repairs will be completed. Josh asked what he should work on until the repairs are completed. Slopes can't be mowed with the skid steer. The spillways could be mowed with the brush hog. There was a discussion about finding somewhere to rent a Ventrac. Don Whetzel said the PVCD has a Ventrac for sale.
 - Josh asked if the district was going to sell the 16-foot trailer.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No Report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – Brent Lyons reviewed a written report
**West Virginia Division of Forestry Activities Brooke, Hancock,
Marshall and Ohio Counties
June 12, 2025
This Report Covers Activities from 02/13/25 - 06/09/25**

BROOKE COUNTY

Investigated 1&0 complaints. Investigated fires/prepared fire reports. Inspected logging Jobs.
Attended the County Fire Chief's Association meeting.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Investigated fires/prepared fire reports. Marked a CSP practice. Worked w/Oak Glen's Envirothon team. Maintenance on the Hillcrest RAWs. Issued burning permits. Inspected logging jobs.

MARSHALL COUNTY

Investigated fires/prepared fire reports. Issued burning permits. Inspected logging jobs.

OHIO COUNTY

Prepared a stewardship plan. Prepared a planting plan. Conducted EQIP visits. Cruised a tract of timber. Investigated fire/prepared fire reports. Issued a burning permit. Inspected logging Jobs.

OTHER

Attended annual SNRPO training In Farmington and ERAC and Dozer training at CRSF. Attended online stewardship training. Assisted w/BMP workshops In Farmington. Assisted w/Envirothon training In Wetzel County. Assisted w/WVU Forestry School Summer camp. Assisted w/Smokey Bear program in Wetzel County.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
 - Don Whetzel reviewed a written report.

June 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 25** 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 **June 16**.

Timelines:

- **July** - Area judging.
 Southern are week of July 7
 Northern area week of July 21
- **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.

SB 941

WVCA is waiting for correspondence from DEP regarding the bill. As we receive information it will be shared. In the meantime, CDs should continue regular operation and maintenance work.

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 July15

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.

- Bill Armstrong reported the following:
 - All mowing at Upper Grave Creek dams has been completed by the district work crew. The crew will work at Harmon Creek dams next. Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & 9 should be mowed two more times this season to keep them clear. Next mowing should happen in July. Bill will provide blank work orders for these sites for the district to negotiate a price for the work.
 - Contracts for each watershed for intensive work outside of the mowing are being discussed.
- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)
 - Heather Duncan reviewed a written report.

June 2025 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director

July Quarterly Meeting

The July Quarterly Meeting will be held July 16-17 at the Bridgeport Conference Center. The website has been updated and will continue to be updated with information. There will be an online RSVP form or registrations can be sent to Heather Duncan. Hotel reservations are on your own. There are hotels within walking and short driving distances. A separate hotel paper will be include with this month's board report in relationship to distance and cost.

I am pleased that we will have a session on grant writing and also hear from Future Generations University. There may be another sponsored speaker or two lined up.

Please do not forget about the submissions for contests that are due to the education committee. We will also plan to hand out the Century Farm signs at the meeting. Please arrange for someone from your district to pick these signs up before heading home!

They bylaws will also be up for vote at this quarterly meeting.

If anyone has ideas for the 2025-2026 quarterly meeting host sites, please contact me or Mark Myers (MCD) so that it can be discussed during the District Operations committee meeting.

Federal Funding Pause- UNPAUSED! =D =(

I am sorry to continue to report that our Community Outreach and Development grant funds are still on pause. This is due to a standing executive order that takes precedence over the release of IRA funds. I will continue to update with any changes. I do encourage those CDs and organizations who may still be doing work to continue to track funding, receipts, and activity in case funds are released.

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 - THIS GRANT IS CURRENTLY UNDER FEDERAL REVIEW

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) 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.

State Fair Signups

Please contact your AS to sign up for a timeslot at the WV State Fair. This is an important outreach opportunity for WVACD and to promote not only your CD, but other CDs across the state. Please contact committee chair, Clyde Bailey (CCD) with any questions/information.

Upcoming Dates

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, 2025: WV State Fair

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

June 2025

NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District

Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach

June 7th – Women in Ag Day, Sherrard Middle School

June 24th – JED Training – Forest Carbon Credit Program – Location TBD

Programs

EQIP/AMA

Preapprovals

11 EQIP

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.

Hancock County Office Hours – we still have people coming in to meet with us!

June 16th

July 17th

August 21st

- Jackie Byars reviewed Jon Bourdon's written report

West Virginia State Conservationist's Report

June 2025

Program Priorities

Our staff is currently working on obligating approved Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications. So far, we've obligated over \$1.6 million across both programs, with an additional \$7.8 million in preapproved or approved status. We hope to have all of our funding obligated late June and focus on practice implementation and conservation planning through September.

We're also wrapping up Local Work Group (LWG) meetings with Conservation Districts throughout the state. We appreciate your participation in those meetings that help target conservation funding where it's needed most. If you have proposals for Focused Conservation Approach (FCA) projects within your district, we encourage early and frequent conversations with your local NRCS field and area office staff. We will review all comments, suggestions, and proposals gathered at LWG meetings and present recommendations at the State Technical Committee meeting on July 22nd.

Drought Recovery

NRCS WV is continuing to assist 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. To date, NRCS has assisted with 485 applications with the majority of applications Monongahela, Potomac Valley, Greenbrier Valley, Little Kanawha, and Western Districts. Designs for these watering systems will be developed and delivered to FSA in the very near future.

Staffing Updates

The Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) was made available to NRCS employees in January and again in April as part of a national effort to reduce the federal workforce. Twenty-one NRCS WV employees elected to participate in this program. Affected offices include Franklin, Huntington, Keyser, Lewisburg, McMechen, Middlebourne, Princeton, Ripley, Union, Weston, and White Hall field offices, as well as both north and south area offices and the state office. Alderson Plant Materials Center was also impacted.

The hiring freeze was extended until July 15th, 2025. We do not anticipate any hiring actions in calendar year 2025.

Ahead of an anticipated agency restructuring announcement in late May, a judge in northern California extended the restraining order previously put in place that prohibits the administration from implementing reorganization efforts. The order requires the administration to pause implementation of any reductions in force or agency reorganization plans and to seek congressional oversight and approval of any large-scale reorganization effort. We are awaiting further guidance from the Department.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
 - Jim Anderson reported that the quarterly meeting will be held next month.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
 - Veronica Gibson reported the following:
 - The FY26 O&M agreements and invoices have been prepared and sent to all sponsors except for the sponsors for the PA dams.
 - The registration renewal reminder has been received from the DMV for the district truck. Victoria White will take care of it.
 - Veronica will be off next week.
- District Administrator (NPCD)
 - Victoria White reviewed a written report.

NPCD District Administrator May/June

Updates:

General Updates:

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

June 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

Northern Panhandle RC&D: NPCD award \$500

Educational materials (books, supplies, etc.)

Awaiting update from following grants/funding requests: FirstEnergy Foundation, Oak Foundation, Anderson-Rogers Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, Daniel K. Thorne Foundation, Chris Hess Foundation, Helen J Prince Foundation, & Ohio Valley Jaycees Charitable Fund

Events:

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

Attendees: 134 (168 pre-registered)

Vendors/Sponsors: 23

Youth Beekeeping Classes – Tues. June 24th @ NPCD Office

Youth Beekeeping Classes – Sun. July 20th @ NPCD Office

Youth Beekeeping Classes – Sun. Aug. 17th @ NPCD Office

Forestry Field Day – Sat. Sept. 27th

Grazing Field Day – Sat. Oct. 11th

- Soil Tester
 - Abby Clegg reviewed a written report.

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 Rybeck	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
Chad Lamp	Hancock	36	5/8/2025
James Tully	Ohio	4.5	5/14/2025
Rebecca Scott	Ohio	0.5	5/15/2025
Alvin Schafer	Ohio	1	5/19/2025
William Witherow	Hancock	30	5/20/2025
Suzan Smith	Ohio	58.1	5/23/2025
Bennie Parr	Hancock	28.9	5/29/2025
Lisa White	Ohio	17.15	6/2/2025
Mark Chambers	Marshall	5.3	6/2/2025
Rick Otte	Marshall	57.6	6/10/2025
Nick Frankovich	Hancock	96.85	6/11/2025
	Total Acres:	675.94	

- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
 - Equipment
 - The manure spreader is ready to rent.
 - The equipment rental report was reviewed.
 - High Tunnel

High tunnel Committee Report. 6/12/25

 - 1) High tunnel is completely planted and is close to having some tomatoes ready in a few days
 - a) Fertigation unit in operation
 - b) Tomatoes have been tied to the strings
 - 2) Outside irrigation supply line installed
 - a) Still needs back filled
 - b) Valves still need installed
 - c) Connections to beds need made
 - 3) Outside hydrant needs completely replaced
 - a) Top threads sheered off when Josh tried to replace.
 - b) Currently in a concrete slab
 - c) Will need to cut slab with concrete saw to be able to replace.
 - d) A solution to eliminate this issue in the future in listed below
 - i) 2 options available
 - (1) First PVC pipe is supplied by us \$236.00
 - (2) Telescopic pipe that adjusts to any depth \$319.00
 - (a) Shutoff valve kit \$195.00 Optional

David McCardle made a motion to purchase the \$319.00 hydrant kit. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed. The district crew will install the hydrant.
 - Safety
 - Training was held for the work crew.
 - Bee
 - The beekeepers association delivered additional bees today.
 - June 24 @ 5:00 pm is the next Youth Beekeeping Class.
 - July 20 the local news and the state apiarist will be here.

Old Business

- Wheeling Creek 25 O&M Agreement
 - No update.
- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
 - Bill Armstrong reported that there has been no ground movement at UGC #9. ACNR will make a second pass in August. The water level became a concern because of pumps that have failed. **Amy Wade made a motion to send a letter to ACNR expressing concerns of the water level and the functioning of the pumps. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
 - Veronica Gibson asked about the status of reimbursement of expenses from ACNR. All invoices have been submitted. Amy Wade will follow up with the district attorney.
 - Jim Anderson asked if a supervisor tour of the sites would be rescheduled.
- Tygarts Valley CD Lawsuit
 - No updates to report. Amy Wade will follow up with the district attorney.

New Business

- NPCD Photo Contest Judging
 - Photos will be judged following the meeting.
- WVCA USDA Service Center Lease
 - Anita May reported that the WVCA has spoken to the WV Real Estate Division. The real estate division will handle the negotiations. There are concerns about the size of space and allotted space to the Conservation Specialist. An email from Judith Lyons was presented to the district. The WVCA is requesting a private office. If that is not possible, the WVCA will seek to find another location for their Conservation Specialist. The district proposed to install a wall and door in the large office (shared space) where the forester is currently located and the WVCA employee is currently occupying. Don Whetzel contacted Judith during the meeting to let her know of the proposal. Judith said that would not be sufficient. **Amy Wade made a motion to move Victoria White to the shared space with the forester and allow the WVCA to rent the private office that Victoria is currently in. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed 5 in favor, 2 opposed.**
- Soil Tunnel Trailer
 - A memo was received from Judith Lyons informing the districts of the status of the Soil Tunnel Trailer. The agency signed an MOU with the WV Farmers Market Association to operate the Soil Trailer to promote all missions of the Districts, Agency and WVFMA/WVDA. The district should be able to have the Soil Trailer for Hands on Ag Day in September.
- SB941 Update
 - A memo was received from Judith Lyons regarding seeking clarification of SB941. At this present time, we need to carry on with our responsibility as sponsors for maintenance. We will do so until we are told otherwise and/or receive complete clarification of SB941.

- WVACD Annual Dues
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to pay the FY26 WVACD dues. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- USDA Service Center Property Survey
 - The district has property surveys from 2004 and 2014. Mark Fitzsimmons will contact the Marshall County Schools superintendent to compare their property survey with the district's property survey.
- Purchase Weed Eater for Service Center
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to spend up to \$300.00 to purchase a weed eater for the service center. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.**
- Purchase Email Service – Mail Chimp
 - The district uses Mail Chimp as an email service. They have reached the limit for the free service. **Chuck Glenn made a motion to purchase the basic monthly service at a cost of \$27.00 per month. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- Letters of Request
 - \$92.02 – WVDA Pasture Renovation #4 – Expense Allocation
 - \$20,000.00 – FY25 Q1, Q2, & Q3 District Employee Reimbursement
 - Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the letters of request listed above. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Conservation Agreements
 - Josh Brown/Marshall County/50.14 acres
 - Jeremy Bowen/Marshall County/118 acres
 - Bennie Parr/Hancock County/30 acres
 - David McCardle made a motion to approve J. Brown, J. Bowen, and B. Parr as new cooperators. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Ag Enhancement
 - Cancellations

Name	Practice	Cost Share	Reason
William G Witherow	Pasture Division Fence	\$2,000.00	Cooperator Requested
Lisa White	Exclusion Fence	\$2,000.00	Cooperator Requested
Steven Shook	Pasture Division Fence	\$2,000.00	Cooperator Requested
Michael White	Water System	\$2,000.00	Cooperator Requested
Jeremiah Trinone	Lime	\$687.00	Cooperator Requested
Tim Bledsoe	Pasture Division Fence	\$2,000.00	Cooperator Requested
Amanda Flynn	Urban & Community Ag	\$750.00	Unable to Contact Cooperator
Marilyn Thomas	Pasture Division Fence	\$2,000.00	Unable to Contact Cooperator
Audra Rae Conkle	Pollination	\$200.00	Not completed
	Total	\$13,637.00	

David McCardle made a motion to cancel the AgEP contracts for W.G. Witherow, L. White, S. Shook, M. White, J. Trinone, T. Bledsoe, A. Flynn, M. Thomas, and A. Conkle. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

○ Payments

Name	Practice	Amount	Cost Share
Mark Fitzsimmons *	Exclusion Fence	1,000 ft	\$2,000.00
Samuel Yoho	Pasture Division Fence	449 ft	\$1,122.50
William Childers *	Invasive Species	13.2 acres	\$600.00
Richard Gibson	Pasture Division Fence	800 ft	\$2,000.00
William A Witherow	Pasture Division Fence	480 ft	\$960.00
Amy VanHorn	Urban & Community Ag	Deer fence, landscape fabric	\$750.00
Barbara Stephens	Urban & Community Ag	Raised bed, soil, trellis	\$493.36
Eric Freeland *	Urban & Community Ag	Straw mulch	\$750.00
Lewis Hopkins	Exclusion Fence	1,000 ft	\$2,000.00
Kimberly Strum	Invasive Species	13.28 acres	\$600.00
Tammy Clark	Pasture Division Fence	800 ft	\$2,000.00
Dawn Gebhardt	Heavy Use Area	1,500 sq ft	\$1,980.00
John W. Miller	Exclusion Fence	800 ft	\$2,000.00
Jorden Frye	Exclusion Fence	800 ft	\$2,000.00
Dallas Lions Club	Pollination Planting	Up to ¼ acre	\$88.23
		Total	\$19,344.09

***Supervisor or Family Member**

Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to approve the payment for the completed and verified AgEP practices as presented for M. Fitzsimmons, S. Yoho, W. Childers, R. Gibson, W. A. Witherow, A. VanHorn, B. Stephens, E. Freeland, L. Hopkins, K. Strum, T. Clark, D. Gebhardt, J. W. Miller, J. Frye, and the Dallas Lions Club. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.

Correspondence

- Amy Wade, Secretary, reviewed the following correspondence: (1) A thank you from the WVU Soil Team for the district support and to update the district on how the team did. JosiLee Scott placed first in the national contest and the team placed 8th.

Supervisor Reports

- Jim Anderson encouraged the board to review the WVACD bylaws that are on the WVACD website and to express any concerns they may have.

NEXT MEETING

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman

Amy Wade, Secretary

Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson