

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING  
**January 8, 2026**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Supervisors Present**

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

**Supervisor Absent**

Jim Anderson, Hancock County – Vice-Chairman

**Others Present**

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA  
Don Whetzel, District Operations Manager, WVCA  
Jessica Otte, Watershed Technician, WVCA  
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS  
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
Heather Duncan, Executive Director, WVACD via Teams  
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD via Teams  
Abby Clegg, Soil Tester/Administrator, NPCD  
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the USDA Service Center in McMechen.

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

**Minutes**

- **Amy Wade made a motion to accept the December 2025 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**

**Financial Report**

- Bob Straub reviewed the December 2025 NPCD funds. Rent payments from GSA have been received that were late due to the government shutdown.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the December 2025 Co-Administered funds.  
**Robert Luchetti, Jr., made a motion to file the December NPCD and Co-Administered funds for audit. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

**Reports**

- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – No report.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA) – Don Whetzel reviewed a written report.
  - Don informed the board that FY27 CDO Budget and the District Personnel Plan are due March 1. They should be agenda items for the February board meeting. He reminded the board of the upcoming filing dates for the district supervisor position. The term for Steve Paull, Jim Anderson, Robert Luchetti, Jr., and Mark Fitzsimmons will end June 30, 2026.

### January 2026 WVCA Report

#### Request to Conservation Districts

The WVCA is encouraging Conservation Districts to review and update their District Policy Manuals. Districts are also encouraged to review their CD Employee Manual (if you have one).

#### Agricultural Enhancement Program (AgEP) Administrative Review

Each District's Administrative Specialist will conduct a review of 10% or a minimum of 3 files with applications that fiscal year and submit the Administrative Review Form to their District Operations Manager by January 31st. By completing this review halfway through a fiscal year, staff will have time to find possible procedural errors and take steps to prevent them from happening in the future.

The Administrative Review process will allow WVCA to ensure that all proper documentation is physically accessible in the district cooperator file, and that the districts' online database records system is in agreeance with WVCA financial records system.

#### West Virginia Legislature's 2026 regular session

**First Day:** January 14, 2026 (Includes Governor's State of the State Address).

**House Bill Deadline:** February 17, 2026 (Last day to introduce bills in the House).

**Senate Bill Deadline:** February 23, 2026 (Last day to introduce bills in the Senate).

**Adjournment:** March 14, 2026 (Midnight).

#### Ag Enhancement Program Timeline

January - 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)

The **district personnel plan and CDO Budget is due to SCC in March**, so please add to your February agenda for review and approval.

#### Ag Day/Legislative Meet and Greet

February 18<sup>th</sup> – Shuttle service will be provided from the parking lot to the Capitol building by WVCA staff.

#### Filing period for Supervisor elections is January 12-31

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD) – Heather Duncan reviewed a written report.
  - Heather said supervisors can bring their district banner to display at Ag Day in Charleston. She reviewed WVACD memberships. A legislative committee meeting will be held on January 22. More information will come regarding Ag Day at the capitol.

## **January 2026 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD**

### **Executive Director February Quarterly Meeting and Ag & Conservation Day**

The one-day meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at the WVACD office. An agenda will be coming in late January. Committee meetings will meet prior to the quarterly meeting. Please contact committee chairs for meeting information.

The following day will be Ag & Conservation Day at the Capitol. More information will be coming soon, including a schedule and other information. Please remember to order any handouts and to bring one pop up banner to represent your CD. Please also remember to schedule meetings with your legislators. There will be a legislative committee meeting in January with a date TBD.

### **Century Farm Applications Due**

A reminder that the Century Farm applications are due February 1<sup>st</sup> (suggested date) to conservation districts. ALL completed applications are due to Ken Brown by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications can be found on the WVCA and WVACD websites.

### **Farm of the Year Contest**

Please think ahead about the farm of the year contest and who would be eligible. It's never too early to begin planning!

### **Primary Season is Upon Us!**

If you are a supervisor or know of someone who would be interested in running on the upcoming primary ticket (Primary Day is May 12), please be aware of the following dates:

January 12-31, 2026: Filing period for conservation district supervisor

### **Magnets Available!**

WVACD has wooden magnets for sale! They are made right here in St. Albans! They are available for \$5 each. The proceeds will go to further our mission and goals. A picture has been sent to AS' and also included in the quarterly newsletter. They are housed at the WVACD office and can be purchased there.

### **NACD Spring Fly In**

The NACD Spring Fly In will be held on March 25<sup>th</sup>. More information will be coming about this event. It's a great way to see the federal government in action and also a great way to meet fellow conservation district supervisors from across the nation. I think it is a very worthwhile event to attend at least once. Last year it was a special treat to be in town when the cherry blossoms were blooming!

### **NACD Annual Meeting**

The NACD annual meeting will be held February 15-19, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas. Registration is still open. Please contact Wayne McKeever or Heather Duncan for more information if you are interested in attending.

### **Appalachian Grazing Conference**

If you have not heard, AGC will be a three day, three site format this year. April 30 at the Wardensville WVU farm, May 1 at the WV State Fairgrounds, and May 2 at the WV State Farm. More information will be coming soon. Registration and vendor forms are available now. Contact Allen Rush or myself for more information. <http://www.wvagc.com>

### **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 cooperater 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.

### **WV State Fair Signups**

The WV State Fair will be held August 13-22, 2026. Heather Duncan will handle all signups this year. Please email her with the times and dates you are available to assist in covering the booth. The signup sheet can be found on the WVACD website for availability.

### **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**

Monday, January 5, 2026: Eastern Area Meeting at TVCD Office, 10 am

Monday, January 12, 2026: Western Area Meeting, VIRTUAL, 10 am

Tuesday, January 13, 2026: WV SCC Meeting, Guthrie

Thursday, January 22, 2026: WV Conservation Awards Council Meeting, Guthrie, 10 am

Friday, January 30, 2026: Central Area Meeting, ECD Office, 10 am

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

## January 2026

### NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District

#### Trainings/Upcoming Events/Outreach

- January 12 – WVU Extension Dinner Meeting on Landowner Rights
- February 9 – WVU Extension Dinner Meeting on Farming Outside the Box

#### Programs

- FY 2026 EQIP/AMA/CSP
  - Sign Up Ends January 15, 2026

#### 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.

#### Hancock County Office Hours

- Office hours will be held as weather dependent. If it looks clear, we will go up, if it looks like inclement weather, we will hold off.
  - January 15
  - February 19
  - March 19

#### Miscellaneous

- David and Katie have been working on getting speakers and locations for upcoming field days.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC) – No report.
  - Robert Luchetti Jr. was assigned as a proxy for Jim Anderson for the upcoming WCWC meeting.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
  - Veronica Gibson reviewed past due invoices.
- District Administrator (NPCD) – Victoria White reviewed a written report.

NPCD District Administrator

January 2026 Updates:

#### General Updates:

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

Promotion for Envirothon, Samara, Photo Contest, Century Farm, NPCD Foundation Scholarship and Poster Contest has begun (all available on website and Facebook)

Winter 2026 Newsletter to be sent out this week

#### Equipment:

Contacted Chuck from American Tire about the '13 Cricket Spreader. Sent him pictures of the tires. He will be reaching out soon to schedule service.

No updates on 2026 rentals/purchases

**Grants:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Northern Panhandle RC&D (Educational Material)	\$500	Awarded Used towards Pumpkin Experiment <u>\$275 remaining</u>
GLCI Pasture Walk (Grazing Field Day)	\$3,000	Reimbursement from WVCA for rescheduled Grazing Field Day
Helen J. Prince Foundation	\$20,000	Awarded
NACD Technical Assistance Grant	\$100,000	Applying through WVACD
WV Beekeepers Association Grant	\$1,000	In Review
Center for Behavior and Climate (CBC)	\$7,200	In Review

Working on applying for several grants, will provide more information at the February board meeting.

- Soil Tester (NPCD) – Abby Clegg reviewed a written report.  
January 8th, 2026  
Board Meeting Report  
**TA Grant**
  - Application due: January 8th
  - Submitted all necessary documents to Heather
  - Continuing correspondence as necessary to ensure all needed information from NPCD is accessible

**General Updates & Tasks**

-Daily Office Tasks; phones, equipment, anything Victoria/Veronica need, etc.

**Soil/Forage Sampling**

- Took inventory of all maps and data sheets for all samples collected in 2025
- ALL documents relating to last year’s sampling are up to date and properly stored
- Ensured everyone has access to these records

**Equipment Rentals/Sales**

- Prepared Compost/Rain Barrels for pick up as purchased
- Cut and prepared fabric for pick-up as purchased

**NPCD Newsletter**

- Scheduling events to outline in newsletter
- Preparing newsletter for printing with Victoria
- Printing and adding postage to newsletter for mailing

**Education/Outreach**

- Keeping Facebook up to date with current events and information
- Beginning to create graphics and update website with upcoming events for 2026
- Continuing to reach out to schools about Envirothon & Samara Contests
- Continues helping Victoria plan/schedule educational activities for 2026
- Beginning to schedule & share advertisements/posts for 2026 activities

- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
  - Equipment Committee
    - American Tire came to the office to repair the tire on the 2013 Cricket spreader.
  - Building Committee
    - There was a discussion about the property survey that the WVCA completed.
  - High Tunnel Committee
    - David Shipman said seeds need to be started for the high tunnel.
  - Education Committee
    - Mark Fitzsimmons will present district activities and education programs to EQT to request sponsorship. Dates for upcoming events were reviewed.
  - Personnel Committee
    - NPCD employees will need to review and sign updated NPCD policies.

### Old Business

- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
  - Amy Wade and Robert Luchetti, Jr., worked on a status report as suggested by the NPCD attorney. There was a discussion regarding who to send the report to.
  - Mark Fitzsimmons passed out pictures of site #9. He visited the site on 12/27. The pictures were of the pumps.
- Tygarts Valley CD Lawsuit – No update.
- Grant Funds Bank Account
  - Robert Luchetti, Jr., will open a new account for the grant funds today or tomorrow.
- NPCD Work Crew
  - The personnel committee will review the resumes received. Abby Clegg asked how long to continue to advertise the position. It was decided to no longer accept applications.

### New Business

- NACD Fly-In – Robert Luchetti, Jr. Requesting Per Diem Only
  - Robert Luchetti, Jr., would like to attend the NACD Fly-In in Washington D.C. He is requesting payment for daily per diem only. **David McCardle made a motion to pay daily per diem to Robert Luchetti, Jr. while attending the NACD Fly-In in Washington D.C. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.**
- Ag/Day Legislative Meet and Greet – February 18
  - Amy Wade plans to attend Ag Day/Legislative Day.
- Bee Fair Summit Sponsorship
  - The Bee Fair Spring Summit will be held at Oglebay Park February 27 – 28. Abby Clegg will attend the summit to promote the NPCD and Jessica Otte will attend to promote the AgEP. Up to 400 attendees are expected. **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to sponsor the Bee Fair Summit at the bronze level - \$100. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**

- 2026 GSA Mileage Reimbursement Rate - \$.725/mile
  - The supervisors and NPCD staff were informed to use the 2026 mileage rate of \$.0725 beginning 01/01/2026. The NPCD policy manual follows the GSA mileage rate.
  
- Conservation Farm Contest - 2026
  - Mark Fitzsimmons requested that supervisors have a recommendation for a farm from their county at the next board meeting.
  
- Ag Enhancement Program (AgEP) – Jessica Otte reported the following.
  - Attended the FY27 AgEP state meeting.
  - Will make phone calls to current cooperators to check on contract status.
  - Will put on Facebook a request from cooperators to find out what practices they would be interested in for FY27.

**Correspondence** - None

**Supervisor Reports**

- Chuck Glenn – Charlie Pugh will be nominated to the Ag & Forestry Hall of Fame. Veronica Gibson has sent information to Chuck to include. Chuck asked if anyone else had anything to add.
- David McCardle – File his financial disclosure statement a few weeks ago. He had a lot of trouble getting logged in.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next board meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.**, at the USDA Service Center in McMechen.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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**Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman**

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**Amy Wade, Secretary**

**Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson**