

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING
February 12, 2026
10:00 a.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
Devon Kokoska, Watershed Manager, WVCA
Jessica Otte, Watershed Technician, WVCA
Katie Fitzsimmons, District Conservationist, NRCS
David Shipman, Soil Conservationist, NRCS
Heather Duncan, Executive Director, WVACD via Teams
Julie Simmons, Outreach & Communications Specialist, WVACD via Teams
Victoria White, District Administrator, NPCD
Abby Clegg, Soil Tester/Administrator, NPCD
Brent Lyons, Forester, WVDOF
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, February 12, 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 a motion to approve the January 2026 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Bob Straub reviewed the January 2026 NPCD funds. Bob noted that rent was not received from the USDA. The account opened for the PA Dam funds is not an interest-bearing account. **Jim Anderson made a motion to put most of the balance into a CD and/or an interest-bearing checking account. Whichever has the highest rate. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
Chuck Glenn reported a renewal notice for the NPCD CD was received. The renewal date is March 5. The CD is collecting very little interest. **Jim Anderson made a motion to cash out the CD and deposit the funds into the NPCD General Fund and research options to reinvest at a higher rate. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**

- Chuck Glenn reviewed the January 2026 Co-Administered funds.
Amy Wade made a motion to file the January 2026 NPCD and Co-Administered funds for audit. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.
 Robert Luchetti, Jr., will contact the bank to take care of the interest-bearing checking account and cashing out the CD and depositing it into the NPCD General Fund.

Reports

- 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

February 12, 2026

This Report Covers Activities from 11/11/25 - 02/04/26

BROOKE COUNTY

Inspected logging jobs.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Marked a CSP practice. Conducted maintenance on the Hillcrest RAWs. Inspected logging jobs.

MARSHALL COUNTY

Conducted timber recons. Inspected logging jobs.

OHIO COUNTY

Inspected logging jobs.

OTHER

Attended Pollinator Training at Jackson's Mill. Attended online Stewardship trainings. Assisted w/BMP Class in Marion County. Updated Forest Industry Directory.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
 - Devin Kokoska reported that the playground equipment at Turkey Run has been removed.
 - Don Whetzel reviewed a written report.

February 2026 WVCA Report

Conservation Farm Contest

It is time for the districts to begin thinking about the conservation farm families to be awarded this year. District winners are due to the District Operations Manager by June 15.

Agricultural Enhancement Program (AgEP) Administrative Review

To comply with the requirements from the program documentation, including the Legislative Rule, the traditional AgEP spot check procedure has been reevaluated and is now referred to as the 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 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 cooperators file, and that the district's online database records system is in agreement with WVCA financial records system.

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 the reviews, please disregard this request. However, please let us know with a written response that you are already reviewing or will be reviewing the documents.

The district personnel plan and CDO budget are due to SCC by March 1.

Conservation Districts are asked to begin the **Agreed Procedures Engagement (APE) audit** if you haven't already. Please check your current agreement to make sure it is valid.

SB631

Introduced 1-27.

A BILL to amend and reenact §19-21A-3, §19-21A-4, §19-21A-7, §19-21A-8, §19-21A-11, §19-21A-12, and §19-21A-13 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to controlling interests in flood control dams and similar structures; revising definitions; authorizing State Conservation Committee to construct, operate, improve, and maintain flood control dams and similar structures and to contract with other entities to do so; removing authority of conservation districts to employ dam monitors; removing authority of conservation districts to construct, operate, improve, and maintain flood control dams and similar structures and to contract with other entities to do so; mandating conservation districts to transfer interests in flood control dams and similar structures, and any associated property, to the West Virginia Conservation Agency by certain date; and requiring conservation districts to transfer all funds and accounts associated with flood control dams and similar structures to the West Virginia Conservation Agency by certain date.

Currently sent to Senate Natural Resources Committee. Information will be shared as received.

West Virginia Legislature's 2026 regular session

- **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

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)

Ag Day

February 18th

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)
 - Julie Simmons reported she is preparing for Ag Conservation Day at the Capitol and reminded the district she is available to help the district with projects.
 - Heather Duncan reviewed a written report.

February 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 17th at the WVACD office. An agenda has been posted on the WVACD website. Committee meetings will meet prior to the quarterly meeting. Committee meetings are posted on the WVACD website and call in information has been sent to committee members. Others wishing to call into meetings can utilize the website for information or contact Heather to be sent the meeting link(s).

The following day will be Ag & Conservation Day at the Capitol. Updated information is on the WVACD website. 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. Please also bring your pop up banner with you and plan for approximately 3' of table space.

Century Farm Applications Due

A reminder that the Century Farm applications are due February 1st (suggested date) to conservation districts. ALL completed applications are due to Ken Brown by April 1st. 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!

WVACD Scholarship

The WVACD Scholarship is due the first Monday of March to the WVACD office. Applications can be found on the WVACD and WVCA websites. Due date for 2026 is March 2.

SB 631

Information has been distributed on SB 631. Please discuss as a board your feelings and send to Heather. This will be discussed at the quarterly meeting where a general consensus will be needed for WVACD's stance.

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 25th. 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!

WVACD Membership and Sponsorships Available

Half off sponsorships are available along with a BOGO on WVACD membership. Contact Heather for more information! These memberships and sponsorship assist with the general budget, meetings, outreach activities, and supervisor support.

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) 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

Wednesday, February 4, 2026: WVACD District operations Committee, 10 am. Virtual Only

Monday, February 9, 2026: WV Conservation Awards Council, 11 am

Tuesday, February 10, 2026: WVACD Natural Resources Committee, 1 pm. Virtual Only

Thursday, February 12, 2026: WVACD Water Resources Committee, 10 am. Virtual Only

Tuesday – Wednesday, February 17-18, 2026: WVACD Qt Mtg and Ag & Conservation Day

- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - Katie Fitzsimmons reviewed a written report and a report from the USDA Regenerative Agriculture Talking Points

February 2026

NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District

Training/Upcoming Events/Outreach

February 9 – WVU Extension Dinner Meeting on Farming Outside the Box

Programs

Regenerative Ag Program – talking points attached

FY 2026 EQIP/AMA/CSP – 55 applications

- Sign Up Ends January 15th
- Eligibility Deadline – February 27th
- Ranking Deadline – May 6th

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.

- February 19
- March 19

Miscellaneous

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

- April 7-8: Beef Quality Assurance – Jerry Yates confirmed
- April 25: Grazing Field Day
 - Dr. Amanda Grev – confirmed
 - Walter Veselka, Drone Service – confirmed

USDA Regenerative Agriculture Talking Points

SECRETARIAL TALKING POINTS:

- Regenerative Agriculture is a conservation management approach that emphasizes natural resources through improved soil health, water management, and natural vitality for the productivity and prosperity of American agriculture and communities
- Regenerative Agriculture restores America’s natural strength—soil, water, and natural vitality—by empowering producers with simple, outcome-based tools.

- USDA is committing \$700 million in EQIP and CSP, plus technical assistance, to launch a national, farmer-first regenerative agriculture pilot.
 - The pilot will leverage existing NRCS programs in EQIP and CSP, delivering regenerative agriculture through programs our farmers know and trust.
 - This pilot replaces fragmented, practice-by-practice conservation with one unified process that evaluates the whole farm and every resource concern.
 - Producers will benefit from a single application, reducing red tape and making conservation easier to access.
 - The pilot returns NRCS to its historic mission: helping people help the land through practical, voluntary conservation that producers trust.
 - Regenerative agriculture strengthens American food production and supports the Administration’s Make America Healthy Again initiative by improving access to American-grown whole foods.
 - USDA is prioritizing simplicity, transparency, and measurable outcomes—ensuring every conservation dollar delivers real value to farmers and taxpayers.
 - The outcomes report will give farmers tangible credit for the improvements they achieve on their land.
 - Using SUSTAINS, USDA will bring private-sector partners—businesses, labels, and supply chains—into co-investing alongside NRCS.
 - This initiative positions farmers as key partners in improving national health, strengthening rural economies, and restoring local food systems.
 - The Chief’s Advisory Council ensures regenerative agriculture remains grounded in farmer experience and consumer needs.
- This rollout is national in scale and will deliver immediate benefits for producers in all 50 states.
- USDA is committed to reducing bureaucracy, speeding up producer access, and building a conservation system rooted in measurable impact.

More details and talking points are forthcoming

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC)
 - Robert Luchetti, Jr., reported that at the last meeting there was a right of way discussion.
 - Victoria White reported that at the meeting Gene Saurborn said that in October NASCA may want to do a tour of Wheeling Creek site #3.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
 - Veronica Gibson reported on O&M agreements for FY26. The City of Wheeling has not responded to a mailing and two emails. Robert Luchetti, Jr., will follow up with the City of Wheeling.
- District Administrator (NPCD)
 - Victoria White reviewed a written report.

NPCD District Administrator

February 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)
 Promotion for upcoming events has begun (all available on website and Facebook)

Grants:

Name	Amount	Progress
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
WV Beekeepers Association Grant	\$1,000	In Review
Center for Behavior and Climate (CBC)	\$7,200	In Review
Try This WV 2026 February Minigrant	\$3,000	Applications due Feb 26th
RC&D Mini Grant HOA Day	\$1,000 - \$5,000	Applications due March 2nd
DanPaul Foundation	\$15,000	Rolling deadline In review
Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation	Up to \$100,000	Rolling deadline
Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation Grant	Up to \$20,000	Due May 10th

- Soil Tester (NPCD)
 - Abby Clegg reviewed a written report.
 February 12th, 2026
 Board Meeting Report

General Updates & Tasks

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

Equipment Rentals/Sales

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

NPCD Newsletter

-Finalized all changes to newsletter
 -Printed and added postage to all copies

Education/Outreach

-Keeping Facebook up to date with current events and information
 -Creating graphics and updating website with upcoming events for 2026 as scheduled
 -Continuing to reach out to schools about Envirothon & Samara Contests
 -Preparing and delivering Samara Contest Booklets as they are requested
 -Continuing to help Victoria plan/schedule remaining educational activities for 2026

- Beginning to share advertisements/posts for 2026 activities as they are confirmed
- Sending emails to promote upcoming events

Bee Event

- Feb 27th& 28th; I will be tabling the event with Jess

TA Grant

- Waiting to hear if awarded
- Should hear if selected in March

- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
 - Equipment Committee
 - Victoria White provided an equipment rental report.
 - Building Committee
 - Mark Fitzsimmons reported that the Marshall County surveyor will survey the property when the snow melts.
 - High Tunnel Committee
 - Seeds have not been started. There was a discussion for Danielle King or WPHS to start seeds.
 - Education Committee
 - Katie Fitzsimmons reported that the Marshall County Fair Board asked if the district would sponsor the soil trailer at the Kids Day at the Marshall County Fair.
 - There was a discussion to ask the 4th grade students from Center McMechen Elementary School to plant vegetables in the outside garden.
 - Bee Committee
 - Victoria White reported on the Bee Fair to be held at the end of February at Oglebay. Abby Clegg and Jessica Otte will attend the fair. A rain barrel kit will be used as a door prize. Victoria is working on scheduling upcoming bee events.

Old Business

- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to have the engineer firm prepare an in-depth technical report and we will forward to dam safety on the status of the dams. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
 - Devon Kokoska gave an updated report on movement. He will send a report.
- Tygarts Valley CD Lawsuit
 - No updates.
- NPCD Work Crew
 - Interviews for a work crew will be held on 3/19 beginning at 9:00 am.
- Conservation Farm Contest – 2026
 - Hancock County – Chuck Glenn has contacted Chad Lamp. Chad has accepted representing Hancock County.

- Brooke County – Steve Paull will contact Family Roots Farm to see if they will represent Brooke County.
 - Ohio County – No farm currently.
 - Marshall County – No farm currently.
- Mark Fitzsimmons asked each supervisor to contact Veronica Gibson by February 24 with a confirmed farm for their county.

New Business

- CDO FY27 Budget – Due March 31
 - The CDO FY27 budget meeting will be held on March 19.
- FY27 District Personnel Plan – Due March 1
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to approve the FY27 District Personnel Plan as presented. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
- Review CD Annual Plan of Work
 - The CD Annual Plan of Work will be reviewed at the April board meeting.
- WVU Soils Team – 2026 National Contest Support
 - **Chuck Glenn made a motion to support the WVU soils team at the 2026 National Contest in the amount of \$500 to be paid from the Soil Survey account. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed.**
- Appalachian Aquatic Conservation Center (AACC)/WLU Meeting Location
 - Amy Wade proposed having a district board meeting at the WLU AACC to see if it would be a possible location to hold other district events. The meeting space is equipped with Teams. **Amy Wade made a motion to hold the April board meeting at the WLU AACC. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- Harmon Creek Statement of Reviews
 - **David McCardle made a motion to sign the Harmon Creek statement of reviews. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Amy Wade Opposed. Motion passed.**
- Upper Grave Creek Statement of Reviews
 - **David McCardle made a motion to sign the Upper Grave Creek statement of reviews. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Amy Wade Opposed. Motion passed.**
- Marshall County Ham, Bacon & Egg Sale
 - **David McCardle made a motion to spend up to \$300 at the Marshall County ham, bacon, and egg sale. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Motion passed.**
- 2026 WV Envirothon 5th Place Sponsorship
 - **David McCardle made a motion to support the WV Envirothon 5th place sponsorship in the amount of \$1,500. Seconded by Jim Anderson. Discussion. David McCardle withdrew his motion.** The district will ask the NPCD Foundation to support the WV Envirothon 5th place.

- FY25 AUP Draft Report
 - **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to approve the FY25 AUP with the changes discussed. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- SB 631
 - The supervisors discussed SB631. All supervisors asked if they agreed or disagreed with SB631. One supervisor agreed with SB631 and 7 supervisors disagreed with SB631.
 - **Robert Luchetti, Jr. made a motion to send the email Amy Wade wrote regarding SB631 to WVACD. Seconded by David McCardle. Motion passed.**
- Snow Removal
 - No responses were received for snow removal for the USDA Service Center.
- Conservation Agreements
 - Mathew Wood/Ohio County/3.4 acres
 - Shawn Javens/Hancock County/431 acres
Jim Anderson made a motion to approve M. Wood and S. Javens as new cooperators. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.
- Ag Enhancement Program (AgEP) – Jessica Otte
 - Meeting Needed for FY27 Administrative Agreement and Practices
 - A meeting will be held on March 19.
 - Payment – Eric Freeland/Urban & Community Ag/\$654.00
Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the payment for E. Freeland for his completed Urban & Community Ag practice as presented. Seconded by Amy Wade. Motion passed

Correspondence - None

Supervisor Reports - None

NEXT MEETING

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman

Amy Wade, Secretary

Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson