

NORTHERN PANHANDLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING
March 12, 2026
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 via Teams
David McCardle, Marshall County
Mark Fitzsimmons, Marshall County – Chairman

Others Present

Veronica Gibson, Administrative Specialist, WVCA
Don Whetzel, District Operations Manager, WVCA
Devon Kokoska, Watershed Manager, WVCA via Teams
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
Abby Clegg, Soil Tester/Administrator, NPCD
Bob Straub, CPA, Hartley & Straub

Chairman Mark Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the USDA Service Center in McMechen.

Pledge of Allegiance – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Minutes

- **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the February 2026 board meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Steve Paull. Motion passed.**

Financial Report

- Bob Straub reviewed the February 2026 NPCD funds. Bob Straub asked if there are upcoming deposits to the General Fund.
- Chuck Glenn reviewed the February 2026 Co-Administered funds.
Chuck Glenn made a motion to file the February 2026 NPCD and Co-Administered funds for audit. Seconded by Eric Freeland. Motion passed.

Reports

- Farm Service Agency (FSA) – No report
- WV Division of Forestry (WVDOF) – A written report was reviewed.
West Virginia Division of Forestry Activities
Brooke, Hancock, Marshall and Ohio Counties
March 12, 2026

This Report Covers Activities from 02/05/26 – 03/11/26

BROOKE COUNTY

Seasonal FC contacts. VFD contact. Inspected a logging job.

HANCOCK COUNTY

Seasonal FC contacts. Issued a burning permit. Maintenance on Hillcrest RAWS. Changed banner on Tomlinson Run Smokey sign.

MARSHALL COUNTY

Seasonal FC contacts. Conducted 3 timber recons. 2 school contacts. Inspected logging jobs.

OHIO COUNTY

Seasonal FC contacts.

OTHER

Attended Regional FC meeting in Farmington. Attended annual FSNRPO training in Flatwoods. Ranked local VFDs for VFA Grant. Attended online Stewardship trainings.

- WV Conservation Agency (WVCA)
 - Devon Kokoska reported that due to the rain in the last couple of weeks, Upper Grave Creek dams #7 and #9 reached above first stage trash rack. ACNR did not have all the pumps running but did get the water level down until the storm last night. Harmon Creek dams, Wheeling Creek #3 and Upper Grave Creek #7 and #9 are rising from last night's storm. There was a discussion regarding a potential seep.
 - Don Whetzel reviewed a written report.

**March 2026
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.

AGEP 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)

Senate Bill 631

Never came out of committee

Senate Bill 894

This bill would replace SB631 and would mean that the Districts would transfer all ownership, funding, and responsibility relating to the flood control structures to the WVCA.

Passed senate on 3/4/26, updated will provided as available.

- WV Association of Conservation Districts (WVACD)
 - Heather Duncan reviewed a written report.

March 2026 Board Report from Heather Duncan, WVACD Executive Director

April Quarterly Meeting

Join the Eastern Panhandle CD April 21-23 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Martinsburg for the next quarterly meeting. The evening of April 21 will be set aside for state fair and legislative committee meetings. The 22nd will begin with standing committee meetings in the morning and then a tour of Kitchen's Orchards in the afternoon, along with a catered dinner. April 23 will be the business meeting with a goal to end by lunch time to allow travel time home.

The room block will end March 31st. Please get your room reservation early! Information and hotel information can be found on the WVACD website: <https://www.wvacd.org/quarterly-meetings/april-2026-meeting>. For those who prefer to call the hotel for the room reservation, please call the front desk at: (304) 263-0101 using code "WVACD."

Century Farm Applications Due

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! WV Conservation Awards Council will only be providing awards for the state level of the contest.

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.

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 Museum. Registration and vendor forms are available now.

Contact Allen Rush or myself for more information. ***There were difficulties with the original website. Please utilize the new website:*** <https://www.appalachian-grazing-conference.com/>.

Local Work Group Meetings

Please remember your Local Work Group meetings. If you are interested in ways to expand these meetings, please don't hesitate to reach out. These meetings should involve all stakeholders of the conservation district and be engaging, not just another checkmark to the activity calendar.

SB 631 / SB 894 / HB 5364

While it appears that SB 631 will not be gaining traction, the essentials of SB 631 have been incorporated into SB 894 which is a bill concerned with eliminating boards. A committee substitute was presented to the Senate Government Organization committee on February 26th which transferred ownership to DNR (this was a change from SB 631 which transferred ownership to WVCA). Scheduling has been difficult to follow with committee meetings, however, WVACD is staying on top of meetings and trying to obtain documents as they are available. An action alert email was sent on February 26th and again on March 1st and we encourage you to continue to contact your legislators and to make known that your desire is to maintain control of watershed structures, etc.

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.

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. Please be sure to have teams show their interest soon!

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, March 4: 10 am Envirothon Committee Meeting
Friday, March 20: 10 am AGC Committee Meeting
Monday, March 23: 10 am Western Area Meeting at OUCD
Wednesday, March 25: NACD Fly In
Friday, March 27: 10 am Central Area Meeting at GCD
April 15-17: WV Envirothon at Camp Caesar
April 21-23: WVACD Spring Quarterly Meeting in Martinsburg
April 30-May 2: Appalachian Grazing Conference Tour

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

March 2026

NRCS Report: Northern Panhandle Conservation District

Training/Upcoming Events/Outreach

April 7th & 8th: Beef Quality Assurance
April 25th: Grazing Field Day

Programs

Regenerative Ag Program – talking points handed out in February
FY 2026 EQIP/AMA/CSP – 51 eligible applications
Sign Up Ends January 15th - complete
Eligibility Deadline – February 27th - complete
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 – 4 attendees

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

Kevin has been assisting area office engineering staff on a part time basis.

- Wheeling Creek Watershed Commission (WCWC) – No report.
- Administrative Specialist (WVCA)
 - Veronica Gibson reported that a request to use the soil trailer was sent using the Farmer’s Market webpage. A response has not been received.
- District Administrator (NPCD)
 - Victoria White reviewed a written report.
NPCD District Administrator
March 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, and Poster Contest (all available on website and Facebook)

Beginning to draft the 2025-2026 Education District of the Year Binder - due at July WVACD Quarterly Meeting

Coordinating with NRCS on a Youth Gardening Program with Center McMechen Elementary students

Events:

NPCD and WVCA (Abby and Jess) tabled the Bee Fair: Spring Summit at Oglebay on Friday February 27th and Saturday, February 28th- WV Beekeepers Association reported over 250 people attended

Planning Summer/Fall Events (Pollinator Field Day, Forestry Field Day, etc.)

Upcoming Spring Events:

Tuesday, April 7th-BQA Training South (two registered)

Wednesday, April 8th - BQA Training North (two registered)

Saturday, April 25th- Grazing Field Day (four registered)

Thursday, May 21th - New Manchester Vol. Fire Dept.

Thursday, May 28th - USDA Service Center Open House

Newsletter:

Spring 2026 Newsletter will be sent out the first or second week of April- please email anything that needs to be included

Envirothon:

Oak Glen High School confirmed their team is registering by Friday, March 13th and will be attending the training held by UOCD on Tuesday, March 31st

Grants:

Name	Amount	Progress
Northern Panhandle RC&D (Educational Material)	\$500	Awarded \$275 remaining - needs spent by June 2026
GLCI Pasture Walk (Grazing Field Day)	\$3,000	Reimbursement from WVCA for Grazing Field Day \$1,952.13 remaining for Grazing Field Day \$500 budgeted towards Virtual Learning Station
Helen J. Prince Foundation	\$20,000	Awarded
WV Beekeepers Association Grant	\$1,000	Awarded to Tri-State Beekeepers Assoc. Will be used towards maintenance of NPCD Apiary and Educational Events
Center for Behavior and Climate (CBC)	\$7,200	In Review
Try This WV 2026 February Minigrant	\$3,000	In Review Youth Gardening Program with Center McMechen Elementary students
RC&D Mini Grant (HOA Day)	\$3,000	In Review
DanPaul Foundation	\$15,000	Rolling deadline In review
Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation	Up to \$100,000	Rolling deadline Drafting
Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation Grant	Up to \$20,000	Due May 10th Drafting

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

General Updates & Tasks

- Daily Office Tasks; phones, equipment, anything Victoria/Veronica need, etc.
- Helped prepare materials, documents, etc. for RC&D and Foundation meetings

Equipment Rentals/Sales

- Prepared Compost/Rain Barrels for pick up as purchased
- Cut and prepared fabric for pick-up as purchased
- Helped cooperators with their equipment rental needs

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 help Victoria plan/schedule remaining educational activities for 2026
- Sharing advertisements/posts for 2026 activities as they are confirmed
- Sending emails to promote upcoming events
- Helping accept and log registrations for upcoming events

Bee Event

- Feb 27th& 28th
- Jess and I attended

High Tunnel/Garden

- Removed all weeds from beds
- Prepared beds for upcoming planting by tilling and cover with plastic
- Started tomatoes in office
- Helped develop a plan for 2026 planting

TA Grant

- Waiting to hear if awarded

- Visitors - None
- Committee Reports
 - Equipment Committee
 - David McCardle reviewed a written report provided by Victoria White.

Equipment Committee Report March 2026

2013 Cricket is currently at Mike Weeks

When he picked up the '13 Cricket he was concerned that several of the grease fittings did not appear to be greased recently. These were mainly on the bearings under the driver belt on the rear and the drive shaft universals on the side. He wanted it noted that he felt that they were not adequately greased and that he would not be responsible for any repairs if something broke in these locations.

2013 Cricket was serviced by American Tire the first week of January 2026

Four cooperators on the waitlist for the 2013 Cricket

Dave Henderson, Mark Fitzsimmons, Lloyd Earnest, and Bill Parsons

One Rain Barrel Kit (\$60 value) was donated as a door prize for the Bee Fair: Spring Summit

- Victoria White provided an equipment rental report.
- The battery in the district truck needs replaced.
- Belts need to be purchased for the spreaders to have on hand.

- High Tunnel Committee
 - David Shipman reviewed a written report.
 - NPCD High Tunnel committee Report**
 - Tomatoes and Peppers have been started in the office
 - Additional seeds needed have been ordered
 - Planning for planting has been started by Abby and David.
 - See image below
 - Soil will be needed for new Raised bed
 - Abby and David Cleaned and tilled the Beds and prepped them for planting.
 - See pictures below of before and After
 - Walkways still need cleared
 - Pile that needs composted needs moved
 - Planting of tomatoes and peppers Currently planned for End of March early April depending on seedling growth rates.
 - Extra plants are planned on being given to students to take home if able to coordinate to have students plant High tunnel.
 - Some seeds ordered By Victoria
 - See invoice attached
 - Workday needs planned to complete additional Prep work if students are planting.

Possible Needed Supplies:

Soil

- Needed for New raised beds and potato Towers
 - Getting Prices from Local locations

Straw

- Looking to see if anyone has an extra bale at home before purchasing
- Needed for potato and Mulching beds when needed.

Grass Need for pipeline disturbance.

- Mulch need for covering also

Cucumber Starts

- It was decided by the group

Onion starts

- There was a discussion about having the 4th grade students from Center McMechen School plant vegetables the first week of May. The principal will be contacted about available dates.
- Grass seed is needed to cover where the water line was dug. A bale of straw is needed to cover the grass seed and to plant potatoes.

- Grasslands Committee

- Jim Anderson will attend the next meeting by phone.

- Education Committee

- Katie Fitzsimmons received a phone call from Matt Bonar. Matt asked if kids from an after-school program can attend the Grazing Field Day to be held at his farm. It would be up to 12 kids. There is \$275 remaining from the NP RC&D grant that could be used to pay for the meals for the kids.

- Bee Committee

- Victoria White received a thank you from the WV Beekeepers for the district attendance at the WV State Bee Fair in February.

Old Business

- Upper Grave Creek #7, #8, & #9 – ACNR Mining
 - Amy Wade mentioned emails that were sent to all supervisors regarding heavy rain concerns. Also, a detailed report dated 3/10 was received from D'Appolonia Engineer Bob Shusko. This email was forwarded to all supervisors.
 - Don Whetzel said he spoke to Judith Lyons regarding funds that were provided by the WVCA to the district for UGC/ACNR expenses. The funds need to be paid back to the WVCA.

- 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.

New Business

- SB 894 (Original SB 631)
 - Discussed during WVCA report.
 - Amy Wade said that as soon as the bill is finalized, the NPCD attorney should review.

- USDA Lease Amendment No. 7
 - An amendment to the USDA lease was presented. The rent increases to \$22.50 per square foot. The term of the lease is 01/01/2025 through 12/31/2029. **Jim Anderson made a motion to approve the USDA lease amendment No. 7 as presented. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**

- NPCD/WVCA Phone System
 - Chris Ellison briefly called into the meeting to explain the process of removing the WVCA employees and the district phone lines from the USDA phone system to the WVCA system. **Jim Anderson made a motion to move forward with transferring phone lines from the USDA phone system to the WVCA phone system. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**

- Terminated Cooperator
 - **Amy Wade made a motion to reinstate the terminated person with the understanding that the person works directly with their two county reps and not the office staff. Permanent termination would occur if there is another incident. Moving forward, any concerns with a cooperator's behavior result in a one-year suspension and a written notice. Second would be permanent termination.** The motion died from a lack of a second.

- Placement of WV DEP Air Pollution Sensor
 - The WV DEP Air Pollution Sensor will be installed on the northwest corner of the building.

- Soil for Garden and High Tunnel
 - Four to 5 yards of mushroom mulch are needed. Payment will be made from an available grant or the soil survey funds.
- WV Century Farm Application
 - One application was received for the Century Farm recognition. Family Roots Farm applied.
- FY27 RC&D MOU
 - **Jim Anderson made a motion to accept the FY27 RC&D MOU. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion passed.**
- FY25 AUP Invoice
 - **David McCardle made a motion to approve and pay the FY25 AUP invoice to Lowe & Associates, PLLC in the amount of \$3,550.00. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Wheeling Creek #18 Chain
 - Upon the recommendation of Devon Kokoska, **David McCardle made a motion to table the purchase of a chain for Wheeling Creek #18. Seconded by Robert Luchetti, Jr. Motion padded.**
- FY26 O&M Agreement – City of Moundsville
 - All supervisors were in favor of approving the FY26 O&M agreement with the City of Moundsville.
- Repaint Parking Lines
 - Victoria White will find someone to repaint the parking lines at the USDA Service Center.
- Conservation Agreements
 - Richard T Woods/Marshall County/.25 acres
 - Evan & Chelsea Hewitt/Marshall County/8.835 acres
 - Jim Anderson made a motion to approve R. Wood and E. & C. Hewitt as new cooperators. Seconded by Chuck Glenn. Motion passed.**
- Ag Enhancement Program (AgEP) – Jessica Otte
 - An AgEP meeting will be held on 3/19. Jessica provided each supervisor with an approved practice list and asked the supervisors if there are any new practices that any of the supervisors are interested in adding to their program, to let her know as soon as possible.

Correspondence

- A thank you was received from NACD/WVACD.

Supervisor Reports - None

NEXT MEETING

The next board meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.**, at the West Liberty University Appalachian Aquatic Conservation Center in West Liberty.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Mark Fitzsimmons, Chairman

Amy Wade, Secretary

Minutes submitted by Veronica Gibson