



Press Releases 101

Whitney Forman-Cook
NACD Director of Communications



2017 Annual Meeting

REPORTER TURNED COMMS DIRECTOR

- Former conservation-beat reporter for a Capitol Hill-based agricultural news outlet
- As director of communications at NACD, I head up:
 - NACD's publications: The Resource, eResource, Conservation Clip List, Forestry Notes, daily/weekly blog posts
 - Edit all of NACD's outward facing documents (comments on regulations, letters to Congress, congressional testimony); write speeches and talking points (for radio and print interviews with officers), op-eds, promotionals, and **press releases**

THE POWER OF A PRESS RELEASE

- Press releases are the most expedient and official way you can communicate the objectives, values, and views of your organization to the public.
- You can use releases to make funding or programmatic announcements, state your organization's position on a policy or regulation, call attention to an upcoming or past event – the possibilities abound!



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Whitney Forman-Cook
Whitney-Forman-Cook@nacdn.net
(202) 595-9139

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS TO LEAD RECORD 25 RCPP PROJECTS IN 2017

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 2016 – Over \$46 million in federal funds will be awarded to 25 district-led conservation projects through the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) in 2017, setting a program record for conservation district leadership. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) congratulates both the districts selected to lead these 25 projects and those that will play crucial support roles as partners on other RCPP projects in the new year.

Authorized by the 2014 farm bill, RCPP allocates federal dollars to large-scale conservation projects developed and implemented by localized partnerships. USDA pledged a total of \$225 million in funding for 2017 (with the private sector contributing up to an additional \$500 million) for 88 new RCPP projects to improve water quality and quantity, soil health, and wildlife habitat nationwide.

"Conservation districts are natural RCPP partners," said NACD President Lee McDaniel. "Districts are professional innovators, experienced collaborators, and natural resource experts that have been working with landowners to put conservation on the ground since the days of the Dust Bowl."

One of the 2017 RCPP projects led by a district or state association of districts spans three states – Florida, Georgia, and Alabama – and the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin. There, a team of over 30 partners led by the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District (FRSWCD) will put \$3 million in RCPP funds to work developing and implementing climate change adaptation solutions.

"Assisting producers and landowners in the implementation of best management practices in these watersheds is critical to the long-term health and resiliency of our shared natural resources," said FRSWCD Chairman Marty McLendon. "We look forward to working with NRCS and our project partners to implement a strategic project with enduring and impactful outcomes."



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Whitney Forman-Cook
Whitney-Forman-Cook@nacdn.net
(202) 595-9139

NACD'S STATEMENT ON THE 2016 ELECTION

WASHINGTON, Nov. 11, 2016 – The National Association of Conservation Districts has congratulated President-elect Donald J. Trump on his election to the presidency and stands ready to work collaboratively with his transition team.

In a letter from NACD President Lee McDaniel and President-elect Brent Van Dyke, the association offered its congratulations to President-elect Trump and expressed its hope that voluntary, locally-led conservation will be among his administration's top priorities.

"The natural resources concerns facing our nation's diverse landscapes – from our private agricultural working lands to forestlands and urban lands – span political parties and presidential administrations," McDaniel and Van Dyke wrote. "It is only through a locally-led, voluntary approach that we will achieve the healthy soils and clean water and air we all desire to leave for our future generations."

The National Association of Conservation Districts is the non-profit organization that represents the nation's 8,000 conservation districts, their state associations and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. For more than 70 years, local conservation districts have worked with cooperating landowners and managers of private working lands to help them plan and apply effective conservation practices. For more information about NACD, visit: www.nacdnet.org.

WHAT A RELEASE SHOULD COMMUNICATE

Think of your releases as mini news stories.

–First (para)graph should be who, what, where, when, why.
(Your dateline can help a little with this.)

–Second graph is either:

- A pithy, helpful quote, or
- An explanation of the first graph

–Third graph is what the second graph wasn't

–Subsequent graphs make up the rest of your story

ELEMENTS OF A PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Whitney Forman-Cook
Whitney-Forman-Cook@nacdn.org
(202) 595-9139

Contact information for one or two people

Concise headline (more concise than this)

NACD PLEASSED WITH FINAL ACEP RULE'S EMPHASIS ON CONSERVATION PLANNING

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21, 2016 – The National Association of Conservation Districts has reviewed the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) final Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) rule and is pleased to hear of its submission to the [Federal Register](#) on Tuesday. NACD believes the finalized rule will give voluntary conservation program participants the certainty they need to confidently enter into easements on working lands.

First graph generally has no more than two sentences.

The 2014 Farm Bill combined the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and Wetlands Reserve Program into the ACEP program. One of the most significant changes this final rule makes to ACEP is requiring participants to obtain an Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) plan. To complete these plans, individual landowners will need to think proactively about how natural resource concerns specific to their property can be addressed now and into the future. NACD strongly supports this approach to locally-led, voluntary conservation.

"The 3,000 districts NACD represents constitute the largest delivery system for voluntary conservation in this country," NACD President Lee McDaniel said. "Our member districts stand ready to assist landowners with the design and implementation of these ALE plans."

Good quotations are novel and add relevant information

As NRCS implements the final rule, NACD urges the agency to continue to work with its local partners, in particular, the Local Working Groups and State Technical Committees.

"Many of these groups include district representatives who have worked on the ground with American producers for decades," NACD CEO Jeremy Peters said. "We hope NRCS will include these groups when prioritizing easements for funding, particularly when choosing grasslands of special significance."

###

The National Association of Conservation Districts is the non-profit organization that represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts, their state associations and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. For more than 70 years, local conservation districts have worked with cooperating landowners and managers of private working lands to help them plan and apply effective conservation practices. For more information about NACD, visit: www.nacdn.org.

"Boiler plates" should appear at the bottom of releases, not in the body of the text.

TIPS FOR WRITING GOOD RELEASES

- Be concise.
- As a general rule, refrain from using value-laden language outside of quotes.
- Even if it's genuinely exciting news, exclamation points aren't appropriate 99% of the time.
- Pick a style and stick with it.

GET YOUR RELEASES READ

Reporters/members of the media generally do one of three things when you send them a release:

- Ignore it, because the subject line didn't appeal.
- Copy and paste it onto their website without giving attribution.
- Read it, and use a quote or two in their own original story.

1

Part A. Find what makes the story you want to tell newsworthy.

Part B. Communicate that value in the release and in a pitch to reporters.

2

Build a relationship by:

–Being available

–Answering their questions honestly and as quickly as possible.

Questions?

Whitney Forman-Cook
NACD Director of Communications
whitney-forman-cook@nacdnet.org