

# 2019 Summer Meeting Northeast Region Notes

Sunday, August 4, 2019

**Board Members in Attendance:** Linda Brownson (Executive Board), Sam Casella (NY), Dorn Cox (NH), Ray Cywinski (NJ), Kim LaFleur (NACD Second Vice President), Joe Lomax (NJ), Frank Richardson (MD), Denise Savageau (CT), Cassius Spears (RI)

## Agenda:

- Welcome and Call to Order
- NACD Northeast Executive Board Update – Linda Brownson
- Partner Reports – NRCS, NECDEA, NASCA, NARC&DC
- Topical Roundtables:
  - Forestry
  - Source Water Protection
  - Partnership Capacity Building
- Committee Reports
  - Communications Committee – DE, NY, WV
  - District Operations and Member Services – MD, ME, VT
  - Legislative Committee – CT, PA
  - Natural Resources Policy Committee (including any RPG news to note) – NH, NJ, RI
  - Stewardship and Education – MA
- Upcoming Meetings
  - 2019 Region Meeting – Aug 25-28, Connecticut
  - 2020 Annual Meeting – Feb 8-12, Las Vegas, NV
- Adjourn

## Notes:

NACD Northeast Executive Board Update - Linda Brownson:

- The FY20 budget was presented yesterday to the full board. Membership dues are budgeted at \$1.2 million. Of the conservation budget item, 72% of the funds are pass-through grants.
- NACD is working on a strategic plan for 2020-2022. Major goals include strengthen membership; maintain and strengthen fiscal stability; promote grassroots policies; enhance the organization's recognition; and strengthen capacity and governance.
  - The plan is in draft form right now and the Executive Board really wants input from the states. Feedback should be sent directly to Linda Brownson.
  - Possible topics to add include developing districts through existing grant programs and quantifying conservation outcomes.
- Technical Assistance Agreements have funded 212 positions across the country. The Executive Board has discussed conducting a survey to measure the impact of these agreements.
  - Single year grants are difficult to plan for.
- Urban Agriculture Grants have awarded \$4 million over 34 states.
- NACD now has more than 200 Soil Health Champions across the country.

- There is a new portal on the NACD website to request officer and staff participation at a meeting: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMlurwJYf4DkYcdTQ2UedTi0AcpyAEIISwDr\\_LqBN8dULkSQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMlurwJYf4DkYcdTQ2UedTi0AcpyAEIISwDr_LqBN8dULkSQ/viewform)

#### Partner Reports:

- NRCS - Terrell Erickson
  - NRCS is very thankful for partners' participation in the cycle time study. This makes a big difference for hiring and employee caps.
  - Vicky Drew (VT) is working with the CEAP team on a study of the effect of cover crops on water quality in Lake Champlain.
  - For coastal areas, EQIP has been used quite a bit on oyster farms. NRCS has conservation standards for this. NRCS has also been surveying subaqueous soils on eel grass beds.
  - The NRCS Employee Development Board is still located in Ft Worth, TX, but it is now a part of the FPAC Business Center. The Board is made up of staff from both DC and the states. It determines which trainings should be nationally funded and which should be state funded. While the Board is still charged with developing the list of trainings, states have stepped up to do a lot more of this work in recent years.
    - More information about NRCS's employee development plans would be helpful as districts employ more staff doing the same work as NRCS employees.
  - CART will be out to field offices on Oct 1. NRCS will be hosting many trainings on this that districts can join.
- Presidents Association - Barbara Perlman-Whyman and Bill Wilson
  - Joe Lomax has helped the Association put together a draft business plan.
  - The Association has been relooking at its vision, mission, bylaws, strategic plan, and business plan. This should be ready for a vote by the Board in Las Vegas.
  - An updated brochure is on the website.

#### Topical Roundtables:

- Forestry:
  - The Forestry RPG is still looking for state representatives from CT, NY, and MD. These individuals help disseminate information, etc.
  - The Long Island Sound RCPP has been using the Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP), with a requirement that it be used for source water protection. This has been a major partnership and it has brought land preservation folks to the table.
    - CT is interested in bringing a resolution that would add source water protection to the purposed of the HFRP. This would help the program be used more in the Northeast.
    - There is a Joint Chiefs project in NH that is focused on source water protection as well.
  - Agricultural land and forested land continue to be converted to solar farms. Many of the models we use, like the Chesapeake Bay model, are based on existing land use and conversion has impacts on them.
    - Preference for least cost solar has meant that agricultural lands are being targeted. CT has passed legislation that requires the consideration of agricultural use; consultation with districts and NRCS; and erosion and sediment control.
    - The cumulative impact of conversion, rather than the impact of each small project, is the real issue here.
    - Mixed use boundaries between different land uses can be a particular challenge.
- Source Water Protection:

- NRCS has a new requirement to use 10% of their conservation program funding for source water protection. State Resource Assessments will help identify source water protection areas.
- The Trust for Public Land has been very involved in this issue. When you protect public open space, it gathers support if it also protects the public drinking water supply.
- In NH, they had their state funding reinstated using arguments for soil health and water quality, especially as it relates to EPA requirements.
- There is interest in using EPA 319 grants for healthy watersheds as well as stream delisting.
- Partnership Capacity Building:
  - NACD will be hosting a half day workshop on capacity building at the region meeting. NRCS is working on securing a facilitator. Right now, Kasey Taylor is working on connecting this effort with NRCS of the Future and NCPP.

#### Committee Reports:

- Communications - DE, NY, WV:
  - No report beyond the board report.
- District Operations and Member Services - MD, ME, VT:
  - There are discussions about a grant program to help more successful districts partner with less successful districts.
  - The committee is looking into the District Official Training Program and bringing in a more unified training approach.
- Legislative - CT, PA:
  - Appropriations is moving forward and we expect to see funding bills before Christmas. There will be a CR to fund the government until then.
  - Grassroots meetings are continuing this August.
  - The district-NRCS MOA renewal process is continuing. It's important that states get these signed.
  - USDA is requiring NRCS state offices to compete an increasing percentage of their contribution agreements each year.
- Natural Resources Policy Committee - NH, NJ, RI
  - The committee has asked the Forestry RPG to review a resolution on the American Tree Farm system. This system has increasingly been pushing certification rather than recognition and has been increasingly top-down. NRPC is not sure whether NACD should continue to offer the system blanket support.
  - The committee also discussed the RECLAIM Act, which would release a lot of money for land reclamation from the trust fund set aside by mining companies. There has been opposition to this out of OK and AR, who are concerned about the equitable distribution of funds.
  - RPG Updates:
    - Forestry - NACD has recently received two grants from the Forest Service. One will fund listening sessions on wildfire and the other will address the priority landscape project.
      - The RPG has also been focused on promoting forestry activities by districts, including writing articles highlighting districts.
    - Coastal - The RPG's charge has been approved, members appointed, and staff assigned. The RPG is holding monthly calls, focused on reviewing and clarifying the goals of the RPG. A couple of questions that have come up so far include:
      - What are the coasts? How far inland should the RPG be looking?
      - Who are our partners? Who should we be bringing to the table?

- Stewardship and Education - MA:
  - No report

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Other Business:

- Is there way that NACD could set up recurring payments for dues? Nonprofit research shows that people contribute more when it's a recurring payment.
- On Oct 2nd, Wolfe's Neck Farm in Maine is hosting a field day on soil health measurement.