

2020 Annual Meeting Northeast Region Notes

Sunday, February 9, 2020

Board Members in Attendance: Edwin Alexander (DE), Linda Brownson (NACD Executive Board), Sam Casella (NY), Linda Corse (VT), Dorn Cox (NH), Ray Cywinski (NJ), Joe Gumm (WV), Joe Lomax (NJ), Frank Richardson (MD), Denise Savageau (CT)

Agenda:

- Welcome and Call to Order
- NACD Northeast Executive Board Update – Linda Brownson
- Partner Reports – NRCS, NACDE, NASCA, NARC&DC
- Resolutions Pad and Bylaw Amendment Discussion
- USDA-District Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Discussion
- NACD Program/Grants Update
- Capacity Building Pilot Update
- Committee Updates (if needed)
 - Communications Committee – DE, NY, WV
 - District Operations and Member Services – ME, MD, VT
 - Legislative Committee – CT, PA
 - Natural Resources Policy Committee (including any RPG news to note) – NH, NJ, RI
 - Stewardship and Education – MA
- Upcoming Meetings
 - Spring Fly-In - March 25, Washington, DC
 - 2020 Summer Meeting – July 18-21, Bismarck, ND
 - 2020 Region Meeting – August 30 – September 2, Portsmouth, NH
- Adjourn

Notes:

Partner Reports:

- NRCS - Terry Cosby
 - Terry is currently acting Northeast Regional Conservationist while Terrell is out.
 - The Chief has four priorities for this year:
 - Completing Farm Bill Implementation and Rulemaking
 - Servicing Customers
 - Streamlining Programs
 - Soil Health
 - NRCS is actively hiring with direct hiring authority, through the pathways program, and with some entry-level positions. There are about 2,000 vacant positions that NRCS is hiring for right now.
 - There has been a lot of concern in Maryland about car insurance for partner employees driving vehicles. Clarification is needed on this from NRCS.
- NACDE - Jeff Parker
 - Both NCPP and NCDEA have launched new websites.

- NACDE had a face-to-face meeting at the Morris County SWCD in NJ, which was the first in-person meeting like this in six years. They completed their strategic plan, revised the bylaws, and revised travel policies. The budget and fundraising were on the agenda as well.
- NACDE has had a challenge getting their contact list up to date. Thanks are due to a number of people that have helped with that.
- NACDE's next newsletter will be coming out later this month.
- NACDE presents awards annually to a district employee and a district official. Tim Riley, from DE, won the President's Award this past year.
- NACDE offers a stipend for a district employee to attend the NACD region meeting each year, which covers the meeting registration.
- NARC&DC - Pat Pinnell
 - NARC&DC is working on updating their 2021 plan of work and strategic plan. RC&Ds have the ability to leverage resources and partners in flexible ways.
 - NASCA will be featuring RC&Ds in a webinar again this year.
- Presidents Association - Sam Casella
 - The Presidents Association is planning to be very active for the 75th anniversary NACD Annual Meeting next year.
 - Contributions are still being collected in Pat Sueck's name towards the Envirothon.
 - NACD's Board will be voting on the Presidents Association business plan later at this meeting.

NACD Northeast Executive Board Update - Linda Brownson:

- The Executive Board and staff participated in a service project at a local community garden last week.
- Much of their work has been planning for future meetings.
- The HR Committee is updating the employee handbook.
- NACD is updating MOUs and MOAs with different aligned organizations, such as the Land Improvement Contractors of America, the National Association of Counties, and the National Wild Turkey Federation.
- The Fly-In is coming up on March 25th.
- Websites for each of NACD's regions are launching soon.

NACD Officer Team Update - Ian Cunningham and Kim LaFleur:

- The HR Committee has a conversation this morning about the training opportunities that they could bring to states and regions. The Northeast Region meeting could be a place to pilot this if there is interest.
- Kim and Michael Crowder just completed Syngenta's leadership training.

Resolution Pad and Bylaw Amendment Discussion:

- There was no discussion on resolutions.
- The bylaw amendment was driven by Wisconsin. In that state, the conservation districts are county government departments. A group of county commissioners are assigned to the county land and water department, serving as the district officials. The Wisconsin state association is comprised of both these officials and district employees. Wisconsin's voting member on the NACD board is an elected official but their alternate is a county department head. Based on NACD's current bylaws, Wisconsin's alternate cannot vote. The proposed bylaw change is limited to the board, committees, and RPGs. Employees would still not be eligible for the Executive Board or an Officer position.

USDA-District Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Discussion:

- There is a lot of concern about these MOAs still. As the template is drafted, it feels very Midwest-centric. There has been some confusion about how to edit the template, but this is something that districts can work with their State Conservationist on. Districts in the region are encouraged to share their MOAs or edits to the template.

NACD Program/Grants Update:

- New awards for urban grants and Friends of NACD grants will be announced at this meeting.
- Technical assistance grants are back this year. Existing grantees have the option to apply for a renewal now through the "priority request" process. After these renewals are made, an RFP for new agreements will be released.
- Conservation Planning Boot Camp is returning this year. Dates for 2020 will be announced soon.
- NACD has worked with the national Source Water Collaborative on a handout that explains the role of conservation districts in source water (drinking water) protection. Email Eric if you would like a copy.