



2021 NACD North Central Region Survey Report – 7/6/21

Special note: Wisconsin runs its local conservation delivery through counties, having statutorily replaced the district model in 1982. Land conservation departments ("LCDs") in Wisconsin are close equivalents of conservation districts in other states. Land Conservation Committees ("LCCs") in Wisconsin are close equivalents of conservation district boards in other states.

STATE ASSOCIATION STRUCTURE

Employees:

State	Number of Staff	Roles	Funding Source
IL	3 full time 1 part time	1 – Executive Director 1 – Grant Manager (Programs) 1 – STAR Coordinator (Programs) 1 – Special Projects Manager (Programs/Admin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWCD dues • Federal grant • NGO grants
IN	9	1 – Executive Director 1 – Communications & Program Manager 1 – Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) Director 2 – CCSI Program Managers 1 – Urban Soil Health Program Director 3 – Regional Urban Soil Health Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWCD dues (Executive Director) • Half SWCD dues/half NRCS Contribution Agreement (Communications & Program Manager) • Contribution Agreements (CCSI staff, Urban Soil Health Program Director, Regional Urban Soil Health Specialists)
IA	17	1 – Executive Director 1 – Office Manager 1 – Program Manager 4 – Planning Coordinators 1 – Communications/Planning Coordinator 5 – Private Lands Wildlife (PLW) Staff 4 – Wetlands Easement Team (WET) Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations budget (Executive Director, Office Manager) • Private grants (Program Manager) • Cooperative agreements (Planning Coordinators, Communications, PLW, WET)
MI	1 full time 4 part time	1 – Executive Director (full time) 1 – Accounting 1 – Media/Outreach 1 – WLEB Grant Coordinator 1 – NACD TA Grant Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational budget (all staff) • Grants (part time staff)
MN	3	1 – Executive Director 1 – Assistant Director 1 – Office Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWCD dues • Contract agreements • Conference registrations

		(Roles include programs, policy, legislative, admin, financial, meeting planning)	
MO	1 part time	1 – Executive Director (administration and program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations budget
OH	2	1 – CEO 1 – Project Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWCD dues • Grants
WI	6.5	1 – Executive Director 5 – Program 0.5 – Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37% Operations budget (LCD dues, Event income) • 51% State contracts • 12% Federal contracts

Voting Members:

State	Voting Member	Number of Votes	Misc. Info
IL	Dues paying districts	1 voting delegate per dues paying district	97 districts = 97 potential delegates
IN	Dues paying districts	1 voting delegate per dues paying district	Each district is represented at the state association annual meeting with 1 delegate. An alternate can vote in the absence of the delegate.
IA	All 500 elected SWCD commissioners	1 vote per elected commissioner	We are considering a bylaw change to go to one vote for each district
MI	Dues paying districts	1 voting delegate per dues paying district	Annual dues are October 1 – September 30
MN	All elected local SWCD board of supervisors from dues paying districts	1 vote per board member of a dues paying district (440 members from potentially 88 districts)	
MO	Dues paying districts	1 vote per dues paying district	
OH	Dues paying districts	1 vote per dues paying district	
WI	County Land Conservation Staff and County Land Conservation Committee Members from counties in good dues-paying standing.	Each dues paying county gets 1 vote from staff and 1 vote from the board (for the annual business meeting)	For association committee meetings, counties are not bound by the same 1-vote clause for the annual business meeting. For instance, a committee may have 3 representatives from a particular county, each of whom may vote on committee affairs.

Association Board:

Directors on the Association Board		Officer Term Limits	Meeting Frequency	Elect Directors by Area/Region or At Large?
IL	27	President – 2-year term but can be elected to 2 consecutive terms Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer elected annually	Quarterly, plus Annual Meeting Special board meetings as necessary	By area/region

IN	13 Directors 5 Executive Officers 8 Regional Directors 8 Regional Assistant Directors (who can vote in the absence of their Director)	Executive Officers – 1-year term but can be elected to 2 consecutive terms (which is typical)	6 times per year (Feb., March, June, Sept., Nov., Dec.)	By region
IA	14	President – 1-year term for 2 consecutive terms. No other term limits are spelled out, but it is understood that the Vice President moves up, so effectively they have a 2-year term limit.	Quarterly	By region
MI	4 Executive Committee 10 Regional Chairs	No term limits	Quarterly	By region
MN	8 Area Officers 1 Vice President 1 President	President – 2-year term Vice President – 2-year term	10 times per year	By area
MO	8 1 President 1 Treasurer	2-year term, no limits, but it is a general consensus that the President limits to 2 terms	Quarterly	By area
OH	25 members 5 officers 1 non-voting, senior advisor to the president (Kris Swartz)	2-year terms for all offices	Quarterly	By area
WI	8 land conservation department staff 8 land conservation committee members	2-year terms, no term limits	Quarterly	By area (1 Land Conservation Department Representative and 1 Land Conservation Committee Member)

# of Areas/Regions		How Many Director Positions per Area/Region
IL	16 Land Use Councils, each with an elected representative 4 areas, each with an elected “Area Vice-President” responsible for liaising with several land use councils	4 Directors (Council Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer) in each of the 16 Land Use Councils
IN	8 Regions	2 in each region (a director and an assistant director)
IA	9 Regions	1 regional director and up to 2 alternates
MI	10 Regions	Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer
MN	8 Areas	3 per area
MO	8 Areas	1 director and up to 2 alternates per area

OH	5 Areas	1 chair per area
WI	8 Areas	4 per region (President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Coordinator)

	Do You Have an Executive Committee?	How many members serve on the Committee?	Who does this include? (roles in the association)	How often do they meet?
IL	Yes	13	4 current officers 4 Area Vice Presidents 1 Immediate Past President 1 Auxiliary Chair 2 Co-Chairs of Employees Association	Monthly
IN	Yes	5	President Vice-President Treasurer Secretary Past-President Ex-Director (ex officio)	As needed. Usually between board meetings and for special meetings like annual budget and staff performance
IA	Yes	5	President Vice President Immediate Past President Treasurer Secretary	As needed
MI	Yes	4 voting 1 non-voting	Past President President Vice President Treasurer Executive Director (non-voting)	Every 3 – 4 weeks
MN	Yes	4	President Vice President Secretary-Treasurer Executive Director	As needed
MO	No			
OH	Yes	10	5 officers 5 area chairs	As needed
WI	Yes	6	President/Vice-Chair Vice-President/Chair Secretary Treasurer	A minimum of quarterly, but in reality, as needed. Usually 6 – 8 times per year.

		<p>2 at-large members (Note: due to our unique structure, our Executive Committee is made up of 3 land conservation department reps and 3 land conservation committee members. The President also serves as Vice-Chair, and the Chair as Vice-President. These top two positions MUST be served by a land conservation department rep and a land conservation committee member – it could not be that both would be served by LCC or LCD reps.)</p>	
--	--	--	--

Association Committees:

	# of Committees	Committees	Frequency of Meetings
IL	7 standing committees	Executive Legislative Planning Nutrient Loss Education Financial Forestry	Determined by each committee chairperson per recommendations received from committee members and/or state association board members
IN	5	Executive Governance Legislative Natural Resources Policy Finance	As needed, in between board meetings. We had been doing committee meetings during our “lunch break” at board meetings prior to COVID, but have not done that to keep virtual meetings shorter. Committees, like Executive and Finance, may meet also during important decision times of the year, like reviewing the annual budget prior to the full board review.
IA	9 standing committees	Policy Finance and Personnel Awards, Scholarship and Poster Cover Crop Champion Resolutions Audit Budget Event Planning Executive	As needed but generally at least once per year
MI	10 standing committees, plus ad hoc	Executive Finance Legislative Funding Development Governance HR	Executive Committee: every 3 – 4 weeks Finance and Legislative: every 4 – 5 weeks Event Planning: every 2 – 3 weeks prior to the summer conference and fall conference. Other committees variable meeting dates

		Policy Event Planning Conservation Education Current ad hoc: Awards	
MN	4 standing committees with representative (both staff and supervisors) from each of the MASWCD areas. Advisors are Association and agency staff if warranted.	Awards Finance Legislative Resolution/Policy Note: we also have MASWCD Representatives serving on several workgroups with partners and may authorize special workgroups as needed. The workgroups are authorized by the board for a specific period of time	1 – 3 times per year, pending committee work
MO	3	Budget Resolutions Conference	Annually or as needed
OH	2 regular committees 3 additional committees added by the president	Urban Legislative Newly added: District Governance Ag Issues Youth Programming	As needed
WI	7 standing committees 2 additional which include Executive and Board	Great Lakes Basin Legislative-Administrative Mississippi River Basin Public Outreach Professional Improvement Technical Youth Education	Frequency depends on the committee. Some as few as twice a year. Others, like Youth Ed or Legislative-Administrative, up to 8 times per year.

STATE ASSOCIATION FUNDING

District Dues:

How much are your district dues?		Benefits/Penalties	Hardship exemption?
IL	Dues are calculated at 3% of the state's appropriations for operations. Typically this is in the range of ~\$1,200 - \$1,400	Benefits: services/advocacy offered via AISWCD Penalty: loss of voting privileges at the Annual Meeting	No
IN	\$2,000 per district	Benefit: Voting membership with the ability to direct IASWCD policy focus via the resolution process	Not currently
IA	\$850 per district	Penalty: Not allowed to participate in the Association	No
MI	Tiered: \$1,000; \$650; \$250	Benefits: 501c3 grant umbrella; HR consultant; Quickbooks Assistance; Events member discount; 2 nd CD board director free registration for summer and fall conference; Marketing and Branding tools; Group purchasing options Penalties: Lose voting privilege; lose access members only feature on MACD website; lose group liability and vehicle insurance; lose workman's compensation benefit	No, but districts are allowed to pay dues on a quarterly basis
MN	Ranges from \$2,489 - \$5099 per district	Penalty: unable to vote at the annual meeting, pre-resolution balloting, election of officers, and do not receive legislative updates, conference registrations or additional communications from the Association's office	Yes, upon request. The board or finance committee may review their request and their budget.
MO	\$450 per district	Penalty: unable to vote on Area Directors and resolutions, etc. at the Annual Meeting	No
OH	Total income x .006 + \$200	Benefits: you get to take advantage of grant programs, educational opportunities, cost sharing, etc.	Yes, at the discretion of the board

		Penalties: you are not eligible for full reimbursement on programming	
WI	Sliding scale, using a formula based on county assessment property values. Ranges from \$1,333 - \$3,025 per LCD.	Benefits: voting at annual business meeting Penalty: can't vote at annual business meeting	No

Funding Sources:

	Receive state funding?	Receive significant private grants?	Income from sale of product/service?	Your main fundraising activity
IL	No	Yes	Service rendered in accordance with USDA NRCS CRP Contribution Agreement	Pursuit of grants – federal, state, NGO along with needed advocacy
IN	No	Not significant in terms of administration that might come in. We have some large pass-through grants with The Nature Conservancy, but we only get about \$1,000 in administration fees.	No	We receive sponsorship for covering the cost of our Annual SWCD Conference, however, we mostly break even on conference due to the size
IA	No	Yes	No	Auction and/or donations for scholarships
MI	No	No	Minimal – through the sale of signs	Sponsorship for summer and fall conferences
MN	No	No	No	None
MO	No	We receive grants from a partner agency for specific incentives to landowners which range in the amount of \$500,000. We do receive an administrative fee for handling these grants and payments to landowners	No	Auction at annual conference
OH	No	No	No	Grants and events
WI	Yes – we have a number of state contracts: <u>Training</u> – our Department of Ag pays us to coordinate and provide statewide training to county conservation staff, supervisors, and agency staff	No	Yes – we periodically sell branded apparel	Our annual conference (registration, as well as sponsorships), and semi-annual county conservation meeting

<p><u>Source Water Protection</u> – our Department of Natural Resources pays a program staff person to work with counties to better understand how to protect drinking water from private wells.</p> <p><u>Standards Oversight Council</u> – both our Departments of Ag and Natural Resources contribute funding to a coordinator position for the Standards Oversight Council, who facilitates the development of new conservation standards (or renewed standards, every 5 years) for NRCS, DNR, and Dept. of Ag.</p>			<p>registration – which are like “mini-conferences,” in a way.</p>
---	--	--	--

Non-tax Revenues:

How are they accounted?		Do you keep separate accounting for grants?
IL		Yes
IN	Individual accounts in QuickBooks	We account for everything in QuickBooks, but do have separate accounts for grants, contribution agreements, and contracts for tracking
IA	Built into overall organization budget	No
MI	501c3	Yes
MN		No
MO	As a 501c3 we pay no taxes and all of our revenue is non-tax	Yes
OH	All revenues are non-tax	Accounting, yes. Accounting system, no.
WI	We work with a private CPA	Yes

COMMUNICATIONS/ADVOCACY

What regular communication does your association publish/produce, how often is it sent and who is the intended audience?

IL	<p><u>Newsletter</u>: AISWCD sends a digital newsletter each Friday. The newsletter is forward-facing, members, partners, and others receive it</p>
IN	<p><u>Newsletter</u>: We send an email newsletter every other week, and it has sections for association/district news, NRCS and NACD news, as well as other partner news. It is intended mostly for districts, but many partners and interested citizens can subscribe to it.</p> <p><u>Social Media</u>: We also have daily social media posts geared toward districts but also applicable to partners.</p> <p><u>Direct emails</u>: We also have direct emails that go to member district board members and staff on related NRCS programs and upcoming deadlines/opportunities that are better suited to direct communication instead of newsletters.</p>
IA	<p><u>Newsletter</u>: We send a monthly newsletter to all commissioners on our email list as well as sending it to our partners for their distribution. We intend it to be informative for commissioners, but our partners find useful information in it as well.</p>
MI	<p><u>Newsletter</u>: MACD issues quarterly e-Newsletters to legislators and the entire conservation district community. (see Appendix A for recent sample of legislative advocacy documents)</p>

MN	<p>Newsletter: Monthly distributed</p> <p>Social Media: Weekly Twitter and Facebook postings</p> <p>Legislative Communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative updates during the legislative session which amounts to 11 – 14 updates during the course of the five-month session Legislative outreach and advocacy emails and alerts <p>Emails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press release templates before and after annual meetings Training offerings State association board meeting agendas (monthly) SWCD job announcement postings by members
MO	No regular publications. Emails to districts on programs, deadlines and any training opportunities
OH	We do not have a regular publication. We are in regular communication via Constant Contact and digital media
WI	Newsletter: we produce 3 – 4 newsletters a year, with our membership being the main audience, but with a secondary audience of agency partners, conservation and farm organizations, and policymakers

Because of COVID, are there plans to change the way the association communicates with the supervisors/commissioners/board members by creating less in-person meetings, trainings, etc., and if so, what are the changes?

IL	No definitive plans yet, but virtual meetings have saved time and financial resources and have offered other benefits such as greater opportunities for inclusion for more parties. The benefits are apparent, and some events may ultimately become more virtually-based in the future.
IN	We do not intend to hold less in-person meetings per se, but rather supplement our already held in-person meetings with virtual meetings and trainings. We completed several virtual trainings last year, as well as our virtual conference this year. We recorded all of our trainings using Zoom, so they are available on our webpage for districts. They include legislative training, board capacity-building, technical trainings from/with partners, and virtual updates. Having the ability to create a recorded library of trainings is attractive to us to have available for districts, especially newer staff and supervisors.
IA	We have 6 Zoom accounts which we offer to commissioners for their monthly meetings as well as the five-year planning process
MI	MACD has been holding all meetings virtually, we've shifted some of our regular in-person trainings to virtual webinars and have found a higher participation rate.
MN	We anticipate changes but have not clearly articulated the specifics
MO	None at this time
OH	We have done more virtual events and training
WI	We have embraced Zoom meetings, though rural broadband remains an obstacle for full participation of our membership. We will continue to utilize "virtual" meetings in some capacity, going forward, but will retain at least some in-person meetings. Many have pointed out the hypocrisy of being a "conservation" organization, and having members drive all over the state for a single 2-hour meeting that we could have done virtually.

Does your association have a lobbyist, and if so, what are their terms?

IL	Yes – the AISWCD employs a contractual lobbyist at the cost of \$20k per year. Additionally, the Executive Director also registers as a lobbyist annually, as well.
IN	We have a contract lobbyist that represents IASWCD throughout the year with legislators and partners as needed. Terms: IASWCD hereby retains [lobbyist] to perform lobbying and government relations services in order to support its public policy objectives within state government. [Lobbyist] and IASWCD will work together to identify specific legislation that benefits IASWCD. This agreement continues the focus on planning for new and permanent funding streams while serving the IASWCD Task Forces and any other committee assignments working on General Assembly Budget legislation plus any other needed public policy issues that arise. It also includes the following deliverables – annual or reoccurring deliverables like working on specific policy direction on IASWCD resolutions.
IA	Yes, we hire a lobbyist on an annual contract basis
MI	Not at this time. The Executive Director previously worked as a legislative aide and leads the association’s lobbying efforts.
MN	Yes, we contract with a public relations firm. Our Assistant Director is the lead for our legislative work and directs the consulting PR staff.
MO	No
OH	No
WI	Our Executive Director is our registered lobbyist. We also employ a contract lobbyist whose two-year term aligns with our state legislative term.

Please share templates and/or examples of how your association conducts advocacy activities with your state legislature

IL	
IN	We have handouts that we worked with an independent contractor to create during the 2020 legislative session that we put together in folders, along with specific code summaries (like our Clean Water Indiana code and source funding), and conservation summaries from partners.
IA	We send out a legislative update from our lobbyist several times a year to commissioners to make them aware of important conservation issues. We hold a legislative day at the capitol once a year where commissioners are invited to meet with their representatives and set up displays highlighting our work across the state.
MI	We schedule direct meetings with legislators to discuss funding or other needs. Preceding these meetings, we provide a legislative worksheet which highlights the work we do as conservation districts and why funding is so critically important. When specific issues arise, we also write letters and send them to legislators via email. We also post said letters on our website’s blog.
MN	We host an annual SWCD day at the capitol – with COVID this was conducted virtually. We also coordinate and schedule specific meetings with key legislators and key SWCD reps as needed.
MO	No exact templates, we have contacts handled by the individual state board members and local district supervisors. If there is legislation we are concerned with or that affects the districts, we always provide a copy of the legislation along with a summary of the effect of the bill.
OH	
WI	Our Office provides a number of resources for our members in support of our advocacy efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A budget priorities document• Template county resolutions in support of budget priorities• Talking points for members to use at legislative/budget hearings• Targeted solicitation of members to get engaged in the political process in key legislative districts/with key legislators

- Periodically bringing local members into meetings with state legislators to demonstrate how the state's investment in conservation staffing funding has met local priorities/needs.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

	# of districts	Average # of employees per district	Association benefits/services provided to districts	Does the Association provide benefits to district employees such as health/dental/vision insurance, retirement savings plan, etc.?
IL	97 districts	1 – 2 employees/district	State association furnishes training opportunities to SWCD Directors and Employees. State association coordinates insurance coverage (e.g., group health/life/disability insurance) with state agency that covers insurance costs. State association contracts with carriers that provide liability and workers comp coverage to Districts	No, see previous answer.
IN	92 districts	1 – 3 employees/district on average. We have some that do not have staff or just a part time staffer, and others that have 7 or more staff.	We hold a liability insurance policy for all districts, provide education and training for supervisors and staff (coordinate with our IN State Department of Ag district support staff on needs and trainings), we administer contribution agreements with NRCS that provide technical and financial assistance for districts to reach producers and landowners (NRCS Program Support agreement, NRCS Communications agreement, contribution agreement for Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative and Urban Soil Health Programs that provide staff to assist districts).	No
IA	100 districts	Approximately 40 staff combined in all 100 districts. Not all districts have staff, but some have multiple	Regional meetings in the late winter/early spring update commissioners and partners, training video series on our website. We can offer grant administration, but it must run through our office. We do not offer any insurance or payroll benefits, but wish we could.	No
MI	75 districts	Varies from 1 – 8 employees/district	(same as earlier answer regarding benefits of paying dues) Benefits: 501c3 grant umbrella; HR consultant; Quickbooks Assistance; Events member discount; 2 nd CD board director free registration for summer and fall conference; Marketing and Branding tools; Group purchasing options	No
MN	88 districts	Approximately 470 employees in 88 offices which averages to about 5 employees/district	Governance ad leadership training, informational sessions, policy development forums via resolutions process, including pre-balloting, state Envirothon event	No
MO	114 districts	2 – 3 employees/district	Training at our Annual Conference. We were a major player in getting districts eligible for public entity liability insurance and also coverage	No special benefits, but we have played a strategic role

			through that public entity insurance for district employees driving NRCS vehicles.	in getting health insurance and retirement for the district employees
OH	88 districts	It really varies from 2 – 20 employees/district	(See Appendix B for the list that is enclosed with the OFSWCD dues letter to districts)	No
WI	72 counties	Very hard to say. Actual average of 370 staff across 72 counties is slightly more than 5 employees/county. The reality is that the number is skewed by larger counties with large staff, and many of our counties have 2 – 4 employees.	We offer educational/training opportunities (many with PDH/CEU credits), many committee meetings throughout the year – some which are designed to facilitate important discussions with agency partners. We also have a contribution agreement with NRCS that allows us to contract with counties to receive NRCS funds for technical service provider work.	No

SUPERVISORS/COMMISSIONERS/DIRECTORS

	Do you have a Past Presidents Association? How do you involve previous leadership?	What kind of New Director Training?	Benefits to supervisors/ commissioners/ directors?
IL	Past Presidents are Members of the Board and Executive Committee per state association bylaws	New Director Training is conducted jointly with the State Department of Ag and state association	No, however, SWCD Directors can enroll in the same group insurance plans offered to SWCD Employees through the state of Illinois
IN	Not formally	Annual Conference (winter) and regional trainings (summer), virtual trainings and support new staff/supervisor trainings put on by IN State Department of Ag. Recently we have been considering bolstering efforts to better reach out to new supervisors and staff to provide support.	No
IA	We have duties for the immediate past president and are working to form a past presidents association.	Video training series on our website. These videos are often viewed during monthly meetings as well.	No, but wish we could. Our health insurance provider turned down our request to do so.
MI	No	New Director Training, which is now done virtually	No

MN	No	We have a Governance 101 that includes the history, parliamentary procedures, review of statutory authorities, governance sessions related to board roles and staff roles, etc.	Our Association does not provide benefits, but the state of Minnesota allows a small percentage of their local meeting per diem (\$75 per meeting) to be contributed to a public retirement account.
MO	No	There are workshops at our Annual Conference; there is also a Supervisor handbook that is available for new Supervisors	No
OH	“We just really never let them go.” – Janelle Mead	New supervisors go through a training annually	No
WI	No	We have training that we provide new supervisors, as well as many resources on our website that we direct them to. We also produce a handbook every two years for new supervisors who become members.	No

NACD

	How do you designate your NACD Board Member & Alternate?	Are there term limits?	Are there exceptions to who and how long they serve?	What formal efforts has your association made to promote NACD to districts and the advantages of paying NACD dues?
IL	They are elected by the state association board.	No	N/A	Through the newsletter mentioned under Communication/Advocacy earlier in the survey. The state association board member who serves as a representative to NACD always presents a report at board meetings detailing NACD activities. Further, a current state association board member is actually a NACD Past President that extols NACD accomplishments regularly.
IN	They are designated by the full IASWCD Board Annually	Positions are appointed annually, but the individuals can be reappointed as	No	We promote NACD meetings and learning opportunities, as well as opportunities like TA and Urban Grants. We try to lead by example by being involved in the NACD meetings throughout the year and reporting on our involvement to districts. In our biweekly newsletter we have individual sections for various partners and their updates. We have an NACD section that we provide updates on meetings, news

		many times as desired.		and programs to keep folks throughout the state engaged with the national proceedings.
IA	Association President is the NACD Board Member Association Vice President is the NACD Alternate Board Member	Two 1-year terms for President and it is assumed that the Vice President will move up	No, but that might happen in the future	Training video and NACD officer presentation to all districts
MI	Current President and Vice President	No term limits. Association officers serve 2-year terms and can stand for re-election	No	Limited communications and promotion. Focus is on paying state association dues.
MN	The state board determines the Minnesota NACD board member and alternate annually during the association meeting every December.	No	No	We forward NACD information to our members on a regular basis. We have a NACD report as part of our annual meeting.
MO	They are appointed by the President with approval from the Board of Directors	2-year terms, no limit	No	We have NACD representation at our Annual Conference as often as possible. Information on NACD is included with information that we send with the state dues request.
OH	At the discretion of the president	No	No	We send our reminders with our dues notices and invite our NACD representatives to speak at our meetings.
WI	We don't have a formal process, but the default has typically been that one position is filled by our Board Chair/Vice President and the other by our Vice Chair/President	No	Not really	We have promoted paying NACD dues, but we were in a holding pattern for a long time, waiting to see whether NACD bylaws would be changed to allow our Land Conservation Department Staff (who serve in leadership roles for our association) to cast votes as our representatives at NACD events. We are pleased that this is changing/has changed, and accordingly, we will probably promote membership in NACD more prominently. One challenge in doing that for our state is that our counties are less reliant on federal NRCS funding, and the perception is that one of the benefits NACD provides is advocacy and representation on the federal level.

EVENTS

Annual Meeting:

When do you hold your Annual Meeting?		How long is the meeting?	Do you or have you held your meeting in conjunction with another entity?
IL	Normally July	Typically 2 days	Yes, but not in recent times. Nevertheless, the state association has a long-standing arrangement with the state agency to hold our annual meeting in connection with their summer training conference on conservation topics.
IN	January	2 full days (evening Sunday, full day Monday, half day Tuesday)	No
IA	August	1 ½ - 2 days, depending on the program	No
MI	Late October/Early November	3 days	No
MN	December	2 ½ days	No. We have approximately 600 people attend our annual event
MO	The week following Thanksgiving	3 days	No
OH	February	Typically 3	No
WI	Early March	In-person conferences are usually 3 days. Virtual conference in 2021 was 4 days	No

What are your funding sources?		Is this event a major source of revenue?
IL	Usually sponsors, exhibitors, registration fees, partner involvement/contribution	Somewhat. Under previous administrations, the event generally lost money. The current Executive Director has begun to make it a revenue-generating event - \$10k profit prior to the onset of the pandemic
IN	Sponsorships, exhibitor fees, registration fees	We mostly break even on annual conference due to the size (400 – 500 attendees), and trying to keep rising costs down for district attendance.
IA	Sponsor fees and registration	Breakeven at best
MI	Registration fees, sponsors, exhibitors	Yes, provides income (not necessarily a major source of revenue)
MN	Paid registration and trade show	Yes
MO	Registration fees	No
OH	Sponsors, exhibitors, registration (although we try not to make money there)	Yes
WI	Registration fees, sponsorship income. We also have excellent attendance from our agency partners which is included in the category of “registration fees,” but in recent years they have used the occasion	It is about 15% of our annual revenue.

of our conference to host their statewide agency staff meetings adjacent days at the same site as our conference.

What recognition/awards does your state association sponsor?

IL	Conservation Farm Family of the Year, District Director and Employee Service Awards, Conservation Photo and Poster Contests (children and adults), Conservation Teacher of the Year, Legislator of the Year, SWCD Director of the Year and Conservation Woman of the Year and George McKibben Memorial Scholarship Award
IN	District Showcase Awards, Conservation Farmer of the Year, District Supervisor of the Year, Friend of Conservation (3), Earth Team Volunteer Award, Presidents Award – All of these are presented at annual conference in January. We also have our River Friendly Farmer Awards (each district can nominate up to 2 farmers) that we present during Farmer’s Day at the Indiana State Fair in August.
IA	Izaak Walton League Windbreak Award, Ken Wagner Award, Outstanding SWCD Commissioner Award, Outstanding Watershed Award, Ruth Wagner Award (to an outstanding Assistant Commissioner), Woodland Owner of the Year Award, CDI Honorary Member Award, Conservation Woman of the Year Award, Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District, Conservation Farmer of the Year (jointly sponsored)
MI	Outstanding District Director and Friend of Conservation
MN	MASWCD/MPCA Community Conservationist Award, MASWCD/DNR Outstanding Forest Steward Award, MASWCD Legislator of the Year Award, MASWCD Outstanding Supervisor Award, MASWCD Outstanding Conservationist Award, MASWD District of the Year Award.
MO	Educator, Cooperator, Distinguished Service, Hugh Hammond Bennett
OH	Teacher of the Year (up to 2), Supervisors Hall of Fame (up to 3), District of the year (1), President’s Award (1), Employee’s Association (2)
WI	Outstanding Employee (3 categories), Outstanding Supervisor, Special Recognition/Friend of Conservation, Conservation Steward, Conservation Farm Family of the Year, The Brad Matson Youth Education Award/Outstanding Youth Educator

What other statewide conferences does your association coordinate?

	Other Events	Focus/Purpose of the Event	Funding Sources
IL	District Employees Winter Training Conference	Bring District Employees up-to-date on conservation topics, partner reports, motivational speakers, networking	State agency grant funds, Illinois soil and Water Conservation District Employees Association funds
IN	No other statewide conferences, other than regional summer meetings (long evening events). Our IN District Employees Association (IDEA) has a fall conference in October that supports district staff, and IASWCD staff attend and support that meeting	The focus of the summer regional meetings is partner updates (like NRCS, ISDA, IDEA, Purdue, etc.), training opportunities (typically multi-track), and networking dinners.	Registrations and donations/non-profit discounts.
IA	None		
MI	None at this time		
MN	Governance 101	Overview of SWCD Statutory requirements, operational issues and policies	Registration

	Leadership Cohort Training	One-year leadership training development	
MN	Governance 101	Leadership Cohort	Registration
MO	Legislative seminar, now scheduled for every other year or when needed if sooner	Legislative issues	Registration fees
OH	Summer Supervisor School	Training, tours, conversation	Sponsors, partners
WI	We have 2 smaller meetings we call our "County Conservation Meeting," occurring annually in July and December	To bring together land conservation department staff – specifically "County Conservationists," who in Wisconsin are the heads of their department, to learn from their peers on relevant conservation topics, troubleshoot conservation challenges, or to connect with relevant (invited) agency staff on particular conservation subjects.	Registration fees (usually around \$110)

Does your association hold field days for new programs and practices or are they to just promote the districts?

IL	To promote SWCDs and have them carry out the field days.
IN	We hold field days through our technical programs, the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) and the IASWCD Urban Soil health Program. We partner with other organizations like The Nature Conservancy and the Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance to hold field days as well.
IA	Yes, grant related
MI	Delegated to the Conservation Districts
MN	Not at a statewide level. Each area or local SWCD may have a field day pending their work, schedule and what needs to be addressed.
MO	Our districts handle the field days.
OH	Districts
WI	We offer many trainings that occur in the field

ENVIROTHON

	Who manages your Envirothon?	Who manages the content?	Funding sources?
IL	The state association contracts with one of its member districts to provide for event management	The state association and the respective committee	The Envirothon Coordinator from the member district raises funds to support the event and ensure it is a financially neutral endeavor. This person has much success doing so.
IN	We have a state Envirothon Committee made up of district employees	The Envirothon Committee	Local sponsorship
IA	Program manager at the association	Program manager at the association	Sponsorships
MI	Currently in hiatus due to lack of funding	Previously a MACD contract employee	Contribution agreements with NRCS

MN	State association staff with two lead SWCDs' staff	The lead SWCD staff	MASWCD Board via an auction fundraiser held in conjunction with annual meeting
MO	The Missouri Envirothon is its own 501c3 organization	The state Envirothon Committee manages the program, overseeing the testing and training. The state committee does include advisory and/or voting members from partnering organizations	Membership dues and donations
OH	A committee supported by the Federation (Association)	The committee	Sponsors, district sponsorships
WI	The Association's Youth Education Director who works closely with our very active Youth Education Committee	The Envirothon Subcommittee of the Youth Education Committee, made up of county land conservation department (LCD) staff and county Land Conservation Committee (LCC) members	Our subcommittee raises money from sponsors and grants, and county Envirothon dues (dues that counties voluntary pay for, explicitly allocated to Envirothon). Our Youth Education Committee also holds a silent auction, the proceeds of which go to support all of our Youth Education Programs including the Envirothon.

What are the Awards?

IL	Certificates for all participants; certificates for the team with highest score in each of the resource topics; team that wins the Spirit Award receives the traveling Rain Stick Trophy and T-shirt awards for the best T-shirt designs
IN	Participation certificates to all participants, top three placing teams at a regional event will receive medals for each of the five students on the team; top teams will also receive a plaque for their school. At the Indiana Envirothon State Contest, medals will be given to the top three placing teams in each of the following categories: written tests, oral presentation, and overall. Plaques will also be given out for the top three teams. A traveling trophy will be given to the top overall team in the Indiana State Contest. The team representing Indiana at the NCR-Envirothon competition will have registration fees paid for the 5 team members and 1 or 2 advisors, along with an additional undetermined monetary sponsorship to help defray other expenses by the Indiana Envirothon Committee. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the winning team. A portion of the expenses incurred MAY be reimbursed by Indiana Envirothon.
IA	Top team has expenses paid to the national competition
MI	N/A
MN	Plaques
MO	Monetary award to the state winner to help cover their travel to the national event (this does vary by year depending on where the national event is located and expected travel costs). Plaques for the first through third place team winners. Certificates for top score in each resource area. Participation stars every year for all participants. \$750 scholarship awarded each year remembering Envirothon committee members that have passed away from cancer.
OH	Medals and cash prizes
WI	Medals for 1 st place winners in each station category and wildlife canvas prints for the overall winners that place 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd .

MISCELLANEOUS

How does your state association track its membership (individuals, dues payments, committee membership, etc.)?

IL	Excel
IN	Dues paying membership is tracked through Quickbooks and Excel. We use Constant Contact for email distribution lists for communications
IA	Excel
MI	We use a combination of Excel spreadsheets and a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System/Platform called MemberClicks
MN	Excel and Access
MO	Excel
OH	Excel and a map
WI	We maintain membership communications lists via our marketing/email distribution lists (Constant Contact) and the membership dues we track through QuickBooks. We do not have a CRM database...yet.



Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
Phone: (517) 324-5274, Fax: (517) 324-4435
www.macd.org

April 27th, 2021

Dear Representative Albert,

The Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) urges you and your fellow caucus members to reverse course regarding HB 4394 and HB 4395, as well as other appropriations bills, and appropriate the entire proposed FY '22 annual budget for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. As you are likely aware, many of the local conservation efforts in your districts are MDARD, DNR, and EGLE programs implemented by your local Conservation District staff, who are *employed by local Conservation Districts, not the State of Michigan*. Switching to a quarterly appropriations process will most certainly disrupt Conservation District operations and have a substantial negative impact on state-wide conservation efforts.

While the intended desire to increase monitoring, accountability, efficiency, and efficacy of government programming by appropriating funds on a quarterly basis is a noble endeavor; this new approach will disrupt and destabilize Michigan's Conservation Districts in several ways. For example, since Conservation Districts hire and manage the employees who implement the programming for various state programs, such as MDARD's Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI), and Forestry Assistance Program (FAP); this new appropriations process will change how state contracts are administered. Using MAEAP as an example, this change will mean MAEAP contracts with Conservation Districts, which are currently evaluated and paid out on an annual basis, will be re-evaluated, and distributed every three months. Already, due to the uncertainty regarding funding renewal on an annual basis, Conservation Districts struggle to find appropriately educated and trained professionals to hire for one-year MAEAP contracts. By reducing the contracts to three months, it will mean further uncertainty regarding future employment for prospective employees. This will make attracting, interviewing, and hiring the actual staff to perform and implement the program, *substantially* more difficult for Michigan's Conservation Districts. This will dramatically reduce the number of MAEAP evaluations performed and thus the overall efficacy of a widely popular agriculture conservation program. Many of your colleagues in the legislature are farmers who own MAEAP verified farms and they can speak to their experience with the program. In addition, the result of these changes will require more time constraints for Conservation Districts and even less resources for districts to achieve and sustain financial self-sufficiency. Moreover, quarterly distributions of grant dollars will be incredibly disruptive to Conservation Districts as many of them do not have sufficient cash flows to front paychecks for employees that are funded by state programs like MAEAP, CTAI and FAP. This will result in employees being furloughed or laid off while the legislature debates renewing funding, *every three months*. As you can imagine, this will dramatically affect employee retention, which will substantially destabilize conservation programs state-wide.

Without a doubt, the result of these disruptions will be a decline in the efficacy of programs like MAEAP, CTAI and FAP; because it will further contribute to a climate of uncertainty, which will mean that the farmers, landowners, and the general public – who are the beneficiaries of these programs – will be hurt the most. Moreover, the effects of reduced efficacy in conservation programs will *most certainly* lead to larger environmental challenges and



Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
Phone: (517) 324-5274, Fax: (517) 324-4435
www.macd.org

problems down the road, which are far most costly to address when they become environmental emergencies such as the algae blooms in the Western Lake Erie Basin or Saginaw Bay: the drinking water sources for millions of people.

Moreover, this new budget approach will negatively impact Michigan State departments' and local Conservation Districts' capacity to leverage Federal grant dollars, such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and U.S. EPA Section 319 watershed grants, which often require matching funds from grantees. If either State Departments or Conservation Districts, lack the cash flow due to match federal grant dollars due to quarterly appropriations, this will literally make or break some of these proposals. Michigan could potentially lose out on millions of dollars in Federal support, at a time where protecting the Great Lakes and our wealth of natural resources is at a critical juncture. In addition, staff instability can result in Michigan farmers and landowners potentially losing access to Federal USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs that are implemented by local conservation districts. Many of these programs provide farmers and local landowners with *free* technical assistance and training, *free* engineering services, *free* site planning services, and/or financial support in times of global crisis or supply chain disruptions. The economic impact is *immeasurable*, and Michigan's farmers will have further difficulty competing in the global or national market, when compared to other states that robustly fund Conservation Districts and related state department conservation programming on an annual basis.

The existing process of annual appropriations already allows for transparency, accountability, and efficacy. By changing the existing appropriations process in favor of quarterly appropriations, it will only create additional bureaucratic barriers, which will slow down government programming, making it substantially less effective and less efficient, which will have a tremendously negative impact on Michigan's environment and economy. In essence, you will be spending *more* tax dollars for *worse* outcomes.

As Michiganders, we collectively pride ourselves in Michigan's wealth of natural resources and the wealth of glacial soils. By making these changes to a process that is not currently broken, the legislature will be putting in jeopardy Michigan's environment, natural resources, and the health and well-being of its people. Thus, MACD strongly urges you to reverse course and immediately appropriate the entire remaining proposed FY'22 budgets for MDARD, DNR, EGLE, and Michigan's Conservation Districts, and resume the annual appropriations process. Should you or any of your staff members wish to meet with MACD to discuss these impacts further, we are happy to schedule a meeting at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danil D. Moilanen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Moilanen
Executive Director



Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

Operational Funding Request
FY '21 and FY '22
www.macd.org

Background:

Michigan Conservation Districts are local special purpose units of government of the State. They are the local service delivery platforms for natural resource management programs and practices that help our citizens conserve their land and our environment for a cleaner, healthier, economically stronger Michigan.

Codified into law in 1937 with PA297, the Soil Conservation District Law, Michigan Conservation Districts are currently guided by PA 463 of 1998 as amended

Michigan's Conservation Districts take an ecosystem approach to conservation and protection. They utilize and deliver Federal Farm Bill Conservation Title Programs and Michigan's private lands conservation programs via the Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD); Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE); and Natural Resources (DNR).

Michigan's 75 Conservation Districts provide coverage to all 83 counties, providing the "boots on the ground" that implement essential conservation work within their communities. They are locally-driven by a publicly elected five-member board of directors, who guide the programs and services to best meet the needs of local communities. All District conservation programming is voluntary, and a majority of it is free or low cost to local residents. Moreover, Districts help farmers and landowners to stay in compliance with environmental regulations by providing planning, engineering, cost sharing and other specialized assistance.

The Issue:

Since 2009, Michigan's Conservation Districts have received ZERO State operational funding. None. This has resulted in uneven levels of service to farmers and landowners across the State. More importantly, **the lack of operational financial support has resulted in less local assistance to conserve and protect soil and water resources.** Districts hire technicians and engineers *as their own employees* to implement various programs from the State and Federal government. These programs usually come in the form of grants, which do provide a small percentage of the total dollar amount allocated for administrative support:

- MDARD Grants:
 - MAEAP: ~15-20% indirect admin support
 - CTAI: ~11% indirect admin support
 - FAP: ~15-20% indirect admin support
- EGLE 319 Grants:
 - ~10% indirect admin support, 25% match required
- DNR Grants:
 - ~10% indirect admin support

Administrative support dollars can only be used by the CD to implement the program, and cannot be used on other operational expenses the CD incurs. For example, the CD can use grant admin support for payroll fees, HR expenses, training, required conferences, travel (mileage, meals, and overnights), forestry equipment, postage, printing, and materials to carry out the program. However, there are other expenses involved with program implementation where administrative support dollars cannot be used.

For example, only a limited portion of “admin support” can be spent on administration or supervisor’s wages, because supervision of the grant/staff is a requirement of the program. This accounts for a very small percentage of the supervisor’s total wages. Other areas include: payroll processing, office space and equipment, email and internet access, administrative tasks like scheduling appointments, assistance with field days or outreach events, evaluations of the program, goal progress and benchmark reviews, and community outreach. Thus, there are many additional expenses incurred by local Districts to implement State programming, creating a strong tangible need for operational funding support from the legislature.

Moreover, the lack of capacity for under-developed CDs to engage in conservation practices on the land directly creates lost opportunities to address non-point sources of pollution from rural and urban landscapes. Fewer conservation practices employed means a greater impact on surface water bodies -- such as the Western Lake Erie Basin and Saginaw Bay -- where there is a high risk of algal blooms that result in public health issues connected to surface drinking water sources.

Lastly, a note on Michigan’s aging infrastructure. Many dams throughout the state -- the Edenville Dam for one -- were designed in the 1950s or earlier, when robust soil conservation practices were employed by farmers and landowners *with the help of consistently funded Conservation Districts*. Today, many of those crucial conservation practices are no longer in place due to land use changes and funding cuts, thus limiting the potential for water infiltration and reduction of surface runoff. A 1% increase in organic matter in soil can help soil hold 20,000 gallons more of water per acre. CDs can directly help landowners implement critical soil conservation practices to help reduce the pressure on aging infrastructure, including dams and stormwater drainage systems. But they urgently need the funding to make it happen on the statewide scale of Michigan’s immediate infrastructure needs.

Request:

- \$3 Million supplemental budget request for FY '21, and
- \$3 Million subsequent request for FY '22.

Request provides all 75 Michigan Conservation Districts with \$40,000 each to provide critical operational support.

Funding will be utilized to:

- Provide core funding for all 75 Conservation Districts.
- Expand District capacity to leverage other funding channels.
 - Examples:
 - **Grant Match Dollars** - Many of our under-developed Districts do not have the cash flow to match grant dollars for funding opportunities provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), U.S. EPA, U.S. Forest Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Federal Farm Bill Programs.
 - **Private Foundations** - Capacity building grants are sometimes offered through foundations, but the grant writing and reporting process is extensive and all but impossible to do without a full-time staff member to apply/implement the programming.
 - **Public Outreach and Education Efforts**
- Assist Michigan NRCS in leveraging additional Farm Bill dollars to farmers and producers. 100% of those funds go to local farmers and landowners.
- Identify and prioritize soil, water and plant issues based on input from landowners and citizens.
- Develop a plan that identifies programs and technical resources needed to address the local issues.
- Implement programs to assist landowners.

Outcomes

- Funding would be administered by MDARD, who have committed to partner in this capacity to distribute dollars to local Conservation Districts.
- Enhanced services to private landowners and get more conservation practices on the ground.
- Leverage additional Federal cost-share dollars into the state for farmers and landowners.
- Strengthening our “boots on the ground” foundation that is critical to Michigan’s natural resource protection over time.
- Building organizational capacity with Conservation Districts at the local level.



Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

A Glimpse of the OFSWCD Office:

- Statehouse News and Legislative Information (both state and federal)
- NRCS Contribution Agreement Opportunities
- Backyard Conservation support material
- Survey opportunities through the use of Survey Monkey
- Video production opportunities through the use of Animoto
- Press kit templates that includes flyer, brochures, powerpoints and more
- Legislative Efforts and Outreach
- Training Meetings (Winter Area, Annual Meeting, SSS): Networking opportunities and program sharing
- Software acquisition through TechSoup
- Formsite registration tool
- Technical assistance and guidance
- ARC GIS
- GrantStation
- RCPP
- Soybean Council Grants: Currently AG BMPs Outreach with the Lake Erie Watershed Counties
- Cooperator of the Year Signage
- State Cooperator of the Year Award
- Service Awards
- Envirothon Support / Insurance / Financial
- Farm Science Review Outreach / Conservation Farm Family
- Donation and Grant opportunities through the use of OFSWCD Non-Profit Status
- Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative Leadership
- Tom Spellmire Leadership Academy, through OSUE (and soon ONLINE classes!!!)
- NACD Boot Camp Opportunities
- OFSWCD is a member of the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations (OANO). As a result of this membership, we have access to materials such as strategic planning drafts, employee handbook templates, board member engagement initiatives, speakers and other various programs that can further assist district by providing tools, contact and other key items to ensure great success.
- Website / Social Media Outreach
- And so MUCH MORE!