



North Central Region Board Meeting

Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center

Lewis Center, Ohio

January 10 – 11, 2022

Attendance:

Tom Beyers, IL

Roger Wenning, IN

Ramona Nitz, IA (virtual)

Jeri Thornsberry, IA (virtual)

Jerry Miller, MI

Kurt Beckstrom, MN, Region Vice Chair

Steve Sunderland, MN (virtual)

Ryan Britt, MO

Ron Willis, MO

Kris Swartz, OH, Region Chair

Matt Peart, OH

Monte Osterman, WI

Steve Stierwalt, Executive Board

Beth Mason, NACD Region Representative,
Recorder

Others in attendance: 16

Minutes

Monday, January 10

1:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

OFSWCD Executive Director Janelle Mead shares restaurant options for dinner and evening activities. Region Chair Kris Swartz leads the attendees in introductions around the room

NACD Government Affairs Priorities Review

Beth Mason leads the board in a review of the current draft of government affairs priorities and discussion. Monte Osterman recommends inserting Urban Conservation into the document in two areas. The board agrees with the recommendations and an updated draft was then compiled to be sent to the Government Affairs staff for incorporating into the draft.

See Appendix A for the North Central Region draft which was submitted.

NACD North Central Region Resolutions

Motion – Illinois makes a motion for the North Central Region to support the Illinois resolution submitted to NACD:

Stop Using the Term “Conservation Tillage”

NACD will encourage NRCS and the USDA to stop using the term “conservation tillage.”

Motion second

The board discusses the resolution, offering suggested edits to be made at the NACD hearing.

Motion passed unanimously

Kurt Beckstrom mentions Minnesota had a resolution that passed at the state level, but it was not submitted to NACD as it appears NACD already has the issue covered in current policy.

Reminder that the region can bring forward a resolution as our meeting is in January.

Ron Willis brings up the issue of the carbon sequestration programs being established are targeted at new adopters rather than those that are already doing the conservation practices.

Ryan Britt explains that as part of the Climate Action Task Force, they are carrying that message forward.

Committee Reports

- Communications – Tom Beyers
- District Operations/Member Services – Kurt Beckstrom, Monte Osterman
Issues re: the NACD/Mercer insurance program were discussed, and Beth Mason will continue to receive comments/questions, compile them and send them on to NACD Chief Operating Officer Karla Maldonado to address.
- Legislative –Ryan Britt
- Natural Resources Policy – Roger Wenning
- Stewardship and Education – Jerry Miller

EPA Ag Advisor Updates – Sharmin Syed, Region 5

Follow up information was emailed by Syed to send to the board:

Farmer to Farmer Grants: <https://www.epa.gov/gulfofmexico/gulf-mexico-underserved-farmer-farmer-grants-program-rfa>

- There was an information webinar last week. A recording will be posted on EPA's YouTube account in the next few days: <https://www.youtube.com/user/usepagov>

Waters of the US: <https://www.epa.gov/wotus>

- Recent Army Corps announcement on approved jurisdictional determinations: <https://www.usace.army.mil/Media/Announcements/Article/2888988/5-january-2022-navigable-waters-protection-rule-vacatur/>
- Additional info: <https://www.epa.gov/wotus/revising-definition-waters-united-states>
- The public comment period is open until February 7. I strongly recommend submitting comments here: <https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/EPA-HQ-OW-2021-0602-0001>

For further questions or comments, please contact **Sharmin Syed for Region 5** (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) at syed.sharmin@epa.gov, 312-485-1048 or Doug Jones for Region 7 (Iowa and Missouri) at jones.doug@epa.gov, 913-551-7592

State Certification Programs – Presentations and discussion/Q&A

- Illinois – [Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources \(S.T.A.R.\)](#)
Steve Stierwalt
- Michigan – [Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program \(MAEAP\)](#)
John Switzer
- Minnesota – [Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program \(MAWQCP\)](#)
Kurt Beckstrom
- Ohio – [Ohio Agriculture Conservation Initiative \(OACI\)](#)
Janelle Mead

Presentations were submitted for further review and can be found on the NACD website at <https://www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/conservation-district-directory/north-central-region/>

Ecosystem Services Marketplace – NACD Past President Tim Palmer

5:30 pm *Approximate time program ends for the day (whenever previous agenda item is finished)*

Tuesday, January 11

7:30 a.m.

Breakfast and networking

Executive Board Report – Steve Stierwalt

Stierwalt gave an update on the Staff/Executive Board Retreat in Washington, DC in December and then took questions and led follow-up discussion.

Partner Updates

- **National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA)** – John Switzer, Michigan Department of Ag & Rural Development
- **National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA)** – Melissa Higbee, Vice President of the National Conservation District Employees Association and Executive Director of Shiawassee Conservation District, MI
Added a **National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCPP)** update
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** – Xavier Montoya, Acting Regional Conservationist, Central

Resource Policy Group (RPG) and Special Committee Reports

- RPGs
 - Coastal – Kurt Beckstrom, Monte Osterman
 - Urban and Community – Monte Osterman
 - Invasive Species – Steve Stierwalt
 - Public Lands – Jerry Miller
- Special Committees
 - Climate Action – Ryan Britt (Steve Stierwalt has joined the special committee)

Approval of Minutes from July 25, 2021 Region Board Meeting

Motion – Minnesota makes a motion to approve the minutes from the summer region meeting on July 25, 2021 in Chicago.

Motion second

Motion passed unanimously

Region Account Review

Beth Mason reviews the account ledger and the North Central Region scholarship program. The board holds discussion about the finances.

Motion – Minnesota makes a motion to increase the region dues to \$400 per year and to increase the number of region scholarships to four scholarships per year. The process how to decide scholarships will be discussed in Orlando.

Motion second

Motion passed unanimously

Elections – Steve Stierwalt, North Central Region Executive Board Member presiding

Region Chair:

Nomination – Indiana nominates Kris Swartz as North Central Region Chair

Nomination second

Motion – Missouri makes a motion to close nominations and declare Kris Swartz North Central Region Chair

Motion second

Motion unanimously passed. Kris Swartz was declared as North Central Region Chair.

Region Vice Chair:

Nomination – Wisconsin nominates Kurt Beckstrom as North Central Region Vice Chair

Nomination second

Motion – Illinois makes a motion to close nominations and declare Kurt Beckstrom North Central Region Vice Chair

Motion second

Motion unanimously passed. Kurt Beckstrom was declared North Central Region Vice Chair.

North Central Region States MOA Discussion

Beth Mason shares the background and highlights of the Memorandum of Agreement.

Motion – Missouri makes a motion to ratify the MOA

Motion second

Motion unanimously passed. All states signed the signature page of the MOA for 2022

Upcoming Meetings

- 2022 NACD Annual Conference, Orlando, FL – February 12 - 16
- 2022 NACD Spring Fly-In, Washington, DC – March 22 (tentatively)
- 2022 NACD Summer Board Meeting, Puerto Rico – July 16 - 19
- 2023 NACD North Central Region Winter Board Meeting
 - The board started discussion on where and when to hold the 2023 January region meeting taking into consideration to avoid the Indiana Meeting which is January 8 – 10, and the National No-Till Conference.
 - The board will discuss options at the next region meeting in Orlando on February 13

A brief discussion was held on shipping water to the western region.

Motion – Missouri makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion second

Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned around 11:00 a.m.

NACD 2022 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PRIORITIES

Guiding NACD’s Government Affairs Efforts

Issue	Objectives
<p>Annual Conservation Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund Farm Bill conservation programs at full mandatorily authorized levels • Advocate for robust Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) funding for planning and program implementation • Advocate for robust 319 Nonpoint Source Grant funding and State and Private Forestry funding • Advocate for robust funding for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations and Watershed Rehabilitation Program • Advocate for removal of Appropriations language restricting BLM from implementing the Wild Horse and Burro Program • Advocate for increased funding focused on urban conservation and urban agriculture implementation.
<p>Farm Bill Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate a Farm Bill Platform guided by the Farm Bill Task Force • Position NACD to be <i>the</i> key voice on Farm Bill conservation policy • Increase literacy of farm bill conservation programs amongst Capitol Hill, partner organizations and NACD Members • Initiate relationships with Congressional offices and Committee staffs to educate on conservation districts role in conservation delivery • NACD staff will work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NACD’s Membership to encourage advocacy of NACD’s Farm Bill policies • State Associations to locate specific synergies with NACD’s Farm Bill policies • Partner organizations to promote NACD’s Farm Bill policies • Increase funding for urban conservation and urban agriculture programming and implementation.
<p>Natural Resource Conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure NRCS is providing for the staffing needs of local USDA Service Centers • Work with Congress and administration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize importance of voluntary, locally-led conservation in discussions on climate change and the importance of soil health in building resilience to extreme weather events in discussions on climate change as guided by the Climate Action Task Force. ○ Reform ESA to ensure local economic impact and private landowner participation are considered in listing decisions ○ Educate members of Congress on ESA ○ Ensure updates to federal rules and regulations governing natural resource management (NEPA, CWA, etc.) are favorable for locally-led conservation ○ Engage to create a durable definition of “waters of the United States” ○ Track and respond where appropriate to the America the Beautiful initiative ○ Educate on the importance of combatting invasive species

NACD 2022 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PRIORITIES

Guiding NACD's Government Affairs Efforts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Address multiple use on our nation's public and working lands, including further education on recreational use○ Address catastrophic wildfire through needed wildfire management tools for pre- and post-fire work● Coordinate with partner organizations to promote abovementioned priorities● Ensure NACD's policy is reflected in public comments to proposed federal rules
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Maintain a strong external presence by meeting with relative Members of Congress and key Administration and regulatory officials.

DRAFT