



NACD North Central Region Meeting

January 11 – 12, 2024 • Springfield, IL

The NACD North Central Region will be holding the winter meeting in Springfield, IL, January 11 – 12, 2024 at the President Abraham Lincoln Springfield: a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.

Attendees

NACD invites all conservation partners and their membership within the NACD North Central Region to attend the meeting. The conservation partners include:

- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD/SWCDs) – local, state, and regional, and national board members and employees
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – local, state, and regional, and national employees
- National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) – local, state, regional, and national members
- National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) – state, regional, and national members
- National Association of Resource Conservation Development Councils (NARCDC) – local, state and national members
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 and Region 7 Ag Advisors and others.

Other conservation-minded partners and attendees are welcome as well – just be sure to notify [Beth Mason](#).

There will be no virtual option for attendees or speakers.

Location

President Abraham Lincoln Springfield: a DoubleTree by Hilton, 701 E. Adams St., Springfield, IL 62701

Reservations: Hotel rooms can be reserved online at [this link](#) or by calling (217) 544-8800 and using the **group code ACD**.

Rooms will be available the night of January 10 and January 11 for a rate of \$101 per night + tax. Parking is on-site and \$10/day.

The room block expires December 27. At that time, the special rate or room availability can no longer be guaranteed, however, the hotel can still take reservations if the rooms are available.

Amenities:

- Complimentary wireless internet in all guest rooms
 - Onsite Restaurant and Bar
 - Indoor pool
 - Business center
 - Restaurants and night life within walking distance
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Potential for Partner Meetings

If any attendees would like to have breakout meetings with your association or agencies, on the front or back end of this meeting, please contact Beth Mason for some options and to make sure we have any additional rooms secured in the room block to accommodate any extra evenings that might be required.

Arriving early for a restaurant group lunch on January 11 or staying a little later on January 12 for a restaurant group lunch can be a way to squeeze in some dedicated time for discussion, planning, and networking.

Meeting Registration

There is NO REGISTRATION FEE for this meeting – as the North Central Region Board of Directors and State Associations are covering the cost through their annual collection of region dues. However, we will need the attached registration form filled out and returned to plan for catering and other logistics. You may also just email the information to beth-mason@nacdnet.org in lieu of the form.

Air Travel/Transportation

Attendees can fly into the Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport (SPI) and take a taxi/Uber/Lyft to the hotel which is only four miles away.

Local Attractions

This downtown Springfield location has multiple dining and socializing options as well as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and other visitor-friendly options within walking distance. As home to the largest number of Abraham Lincoln historical sites in the world, while in Springfield, you can also visit the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Lincoln Tomb, Old State Capitol, and more. The room block includes a few rooms the night before the meeting to allow for some local touring.

For more information

Please contact Beth Mason, NACD at beth-mason@nacdnet.org or (317) 946-4463 (office and cell).

Draft Agenda

The program agenda is still under development with some speaker confirmations needed. As the agenda develops, updates will be made. All times are approximate.

Thursday, January 11

1:00 pm **Welcome/Introductions**

1:10 pm **Approval of Minutes**

1:15 pm **Climate Smart Commodities** – NACD has invited Dr. Chinmay Soman, Co-Founder and CEO of EarthSense and Professor Girish Chowdhary, Director of the iCOVER Project for the University of Illinois to share their CSC project. Their presentation will be followed by Q&A.

Innovative Cover-crop Opportunity, Verification and Economy stimulating technology for underserved farmers using Robotics (iCOVER)

The iCOVER project plans to scale up robotic cover crop planting and verification of soil carbon through innovative radiological robotic sensing technologies, creating markets for climate-smart products for minority underserved farmers growing specialty crops and animal products. The project plans to use standard and well-established soil sampling and remote sensing methods to measure and quantify the effect of cover crops on carbon sequestration, and then develop and scale up an innovative in-situ robotic system capable of soil carbon measurements at high-throughput using a contact-free radiological method for fast, accurate and automated soil organic carbon quantification. The project is planned to also focus on market building for underserved producers through an existing resource and partnerships with grocery chains and restaurants.

NACD Climate Smart Commodities Grant Program update

Beth Mason, NACD North Central Region Representative will share the status of the NACD grant program and some of the projects being proposed in the North Central Region states.

Basic and an even broader discussion of this topic will end this session, exploring the role of conservation districts and what lies ahead.

2:15 pm **Investment Recovery Act (IRA) Funding**

Panel discussion on the impacts this historic level of funding on the various members of the conservation partnership and getting conservation on the ground.

3:15 pm **Break**

3:30 pm **Resolutions**

All states must submit their resolutions with a national scope to NACD by December 29 through [this link](#). Once submitted, please send a copy of the resolution to Beth Mason at beth-mason@nacdnet.org so she can provide it as a handout for this meeting. While the resolutions do not need regional support to move forward as a national resolution, the North Central Region reviews them for discussion and possibly additional regional support. Conservation partners are encouraged to weigh in with background and other helpful information.

4:15 pm **NACD Committee/Subcommittee discussion**

With NACD's new committee structure and newly formed subcommittees, this is an opportunity to discuss with NACD President Kim LaFleur on the vision for these committees/subcommittees, what's working, what's not, and just some overall clarity.

NACD President Closing Comments for the day

Immediately following the committee discussion, NACD President Kim LaFleur will end the day with some closing comments and respond with a short Q&A.

5:00 pm Approximate time to end

Friday, January 12

Attendees can eat breakfast on their own in the hotel restaurant or across the street at Starbuck's.

7:45 am **Coffee and Networking**
Coffee and tea service will be available in the room.

8:00 am **Local Work Groups** – Melissa Higbee, NCDEA President and Eric Shidler, NCDEA Region Representative will conduct a training/presentation followed by Q&A/discussion on how these are managed in each state – successes, issues, additional guidance, etc.

8:45 am **Partner Panel**

- EPA Ag Advisor(s) – Region 5 & 7 (invited)
- NRCS Regional Conservationist(s) – Central &/or Northeastern (invited)
- NASCA (invited)
- NCDEA (invited)
- ACED (invited)

10:00 am **State Round-Robin**
Each state partnership as a group should share one or two issues/projects within their state. Enlighten your neighboring states with something that is going on in your state!

11:15 am **Region Elections**

- Chair
- Vice Chair

11:30 am Approximate time to end

(Because many items require discussion, times may vary, and we schedule this meeting to end no later than 12:00 pm)

Registration (Due December 20)

You may send in this information in the text of an email to beth-mason@nacdn.org if that works better for you.

Contact/Basic info

Name _____
Organization/
Agency _____
Title _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
E-mail _____ Cell # _____

Special Dietary Needs _____

By sending in your registration, you will:

- Reserve your seat at the meeting
- Receive all associated meeting materials
- Be notified if there's a weather emergency at the location (there's always a chance in the winter!)

To register and for questions/more information, please contact Beth Mason, NACD at 317-946-4463 (cell/office) or beth-mason@nacdn.org.