



Minnehaha CD Grows Urban Conservation in South Dakota with Support from NRCS, Partners, and NACD Urban and Community Conservation Grant



"This area will become a community garden, providing community members with a place to figuratively and literally learn and grow," says **Alina Krone-Hedman**, Urban Conservation Education Coordinator with the district. The land for SQUARE is part of an agreement the conservation district has with the City of Sioux Falls, a valued partner. The agreement provides for up to ten acres for SQUARE which also receives technical and financial support from NRCS.

"The rain garden installation is part of a project that began with a community group in the Galway neighborhood of Sioux Falls looking to create more pollinator habitat at a local park by a wetland," explains **Krone-Hedman**. The rain garden's proximity to the wetland provides important co-benefits: habitat for wildlife, and filtration to support better water quality where runoff is a concern. The rain garden was installed in July 2024 with support from the City of Sioux Falls and NRCS and monitored for maintenance and additional improvements.

In southeastern South Dakota, the **Minnehaha Conservation District** has launched an urban conservation education initiative aimed to increase urban conservation opportunities available to the community—which includes the City of Sioux Falls, South Dakota's most populous city—and further the work being done through the conservation district's Urban Conservation Demonstration & Awareness Project.

With help from an NACD Urban and Community (UAC) Conservation Grant, the Minnehaha Conservation District has installed multiple demonstration projects and increased educational outreach programs. The main projects supported with this funding are: a community garden and educational space named SQUARE, which stands for Space for Quality Urban Agriculture Resource Education; a rain garden that is part of a larger pollinator project at a city park; and educational outreach on pollinators to further the district's Prairie & Pollinator Garden Program that distributes pollinator garden kits consisting of an educational sign, planting booklet, and seeds for a 100 square foot area to residents.

The SQUARE is a space in Sioux Falls where the conservation district has established several educational demonstrations, such as a high tunnel, raised beds, and various fruit bearing trees.



"Our Prairie & Pollinator Garden Program and distribution of pollinator kits benefited significantly from the NACD funding and partnerships with the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition and Friends of the Big Sioux River who helped get the word out about the availability of our pollinator kits," says **John Park**, Minnehaha Conservation District Manager. "It is because of partnerships and support like this that these programs will continue to benefit our community for years to come."

Heard the Buzz? Join NACD in Salt Lake City, Utah Next Month!

NACD invites you to join us at the 2025 Annual Meeting! Hosted in partnership with the **Utah Association of Conservation Districts**, this year's meeting will take place in Salt Lake City, UT from February 8-12, 2025. Join us in the Beehive State to explore the theme "**Bee the Change: Reaching New Summits in Conservation!**"



Online, pre-registration and lodging is open through **January 17**, and registration is also available onsite.

At the meeting, join our 90-minute general sessions on Monday and Wednesday morning to hear from speakers like Erik Weihenmayer, a celebrated athlete, author, and founder of No Barriers. Erik is the only blind person to climb Mount Everest. He has also kayaked the entire 277-miles of the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River, considered one of the most formidable whitewater venues in the world.

Talk with and learn from conservation districts and partners during a full day of engaging breakout sessions on Tuesday. Explore and learn more about our "Bee-Utah-ful" host state by joining one of three unique tours on Wednesday afternoon.



All the details on registration and exclusive hotel and travel discounts can be found on the Annual Meeting webpage by scanning the QR code. If you have any questions, contact events@nacdnet.org. We can't wait to *bee* with you in SLC!

NACD's "Home is Where the Habitat is" Themed 2025 Stewardship Week is Springing Up Soon!

Stewardship Week 2025, to be celebrated **April 27–May 3**, will focus on habitats and the vital role conservation districts play in protecting them.

To help with outreach, we've created free marketing materials and classroom activities available for download on the NACD Marketplace. PowerPoint templates for classroom presentations can also be found on the NACD Contests page, at nacdnet.org/contests. Be sure to check out these resources to support Stewardship Week efforts!

What's Up in Washington? Gov. Affairs Updates

Throughout the fall, NACD continued working with congressional agriculture committee leadership and staff to advocate for our farm bill requests. We were pleased that the full bills introduced in the U.S. House and Senate strongly supported our priorities. As Congress postponed efforts to pass a full farm bill until 2025, NACD pushed lawmakers to include Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) conservation funding in an end-of-year bill. NACD and the conservation community are deeply disappointed that lawmakers failed to do so.

As we enter 2025, NACD will continue to advocate for Congress to quickly pass a full farm bill that includes IRA conservation funding and our additional priorities. We will also advocate for appropriations and other legislative requests.

In November, a new President and Congress were elected. President-elect Donald Trump has nominated candidates for all major cabinet-level positions in the incoming administration, including Brooke Rollins to serve as Secretary of the USDA. NACD looks forward to working effectively with the incoming administration and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to support voluntary, locally led conservation.

Membership Corner: NACD Membership Updates

Get Involved in NACD

Do you want to get more involved in your national association? Now is the time to make your voice heard! We'll be looking for new members for our subcommittees, whose membership may change in February. As of 2023, both district employees and officials can join these groups. Stay tuned for more information about how to participate. You can also check in with your NACD Region Representative about ongoing regional activities and meetings, join our events, or come to the 2025 NACD Annual Meeting to immerse yourself in the network!

Shoutout to the NACD Officers

Our dedicated volunteer leadership prides themselves on serving you and learning about the work you do at the local level for your conservation district. These conversations inform the work we do at NACD, from our partnership and advocacy to the membership services we provide on your behalf.



NACD will also be considering new internal policy in February at our 2025 Annual Meeting and continuing to develop our 2025 legislative requests and strategies.

NACD's annual Washington, D.C. Spring Fly-In is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 26**. After record attendance in 2024, NACD encourages members to participate at a pivotal time to advocate for federal policy that supports locally led conservation.

You have limited time to connect with our current officers, however! Every position on the officer team has a term limit of two years, and the NACD Board of Directors will vote on a new suite of candidates at the 2025 NACD Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City. Stay tuned to learn more about who your next leaders are and reach out to the current ones while you still have a chance!

Member Services

You may have heard we have revamped access to our Member's Only page, and we're working diligently to update the materials on that site. If you have ideas for resources that would be helpful, or something your district has created that you think others can benefit from, please reach out to the Membership Team at membership@nacdnet.org.

If you have work you are particularly proud of, we'd be happy to feature you on an upcoming Conservation Coffee to share your accomplishments and provide opportunities for other districts to learn from you!

Revamp Your District's Outreach with NACD's Brochure Template

Earlier this year, LeAnn Buck, Executive Director of the **Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts**, shared that "one of the best resources NACD provided was a 'simplified parliamentary procedures' guidebook. In Minnesota, our state parliamentarian still acknowledges what a handy resource it is." Thanks for letting us know LeAnn!

The new year is a great time to brush up on parliamentary procedure as we reconvene for local, state, and national meetings. NACD, with the help of our parliamentarian, Al Gage, has updated and modernized the Pocket Guide to Parliamentary Procedure: A Simplified Guide Based on Robert's Rules of Order.

The booklet, updated to include electronic voting guidance, is now available both electronically—as a handy webpage to reference on your smartphone or computer—and as a downloadable, printer-friendly PDF document at nacdnet.org/parliamentary-procedure.

NACD Leadership Development Subcommittee Recommends List of Inspiring Reads

The 2024 NACD Leadership Development Subcommittee gathered submissions from members and conservation leaders of the books and authors that have inspired them in their personal and professional leadership development journey. Conservation needs good leaders, and continued leadership growth opportunities are key to meeting these challenges. This compilation of books and authors provides an opportunity for individuals to hone their leadership skills at their own personal pace.

Each book title listed is linked to a summary of the book, publisher information, and reviews from other readers. This list will continually be updated as additional titles are submitted. To submit your favorite author or book that has helped you on your leadership development journey, please email beth-mason@nacdnet.org.

"How to Win Friends and Influence People, Pathways to Success, and Leadership Master by Dale Carnegie are all "must-have" books in your leadership library. Dale Carnegie is a classic and timeless read for maintaining, sustaining, and continuous retaining of leadership skills."

—Lena Simmons, NACD Leadership Development Subcommittee member

Access these and other district resources at nacdnet.org/general-resources/district-guides.

