



**Hosted by the
NACD NE
AND
NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION of CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS**

**Located at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Syracuse
September 21-24, 2025**

Link for registration:

<https://forms.gle/qT6zJYU7iAy8fmHy7>

Please register by September 5, 2025

Full Registration Fees are \$385

Daily Registration Fees are \$95/day

Banquet only is \$65

Please book your rooms with this link:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/syrdtdt-nac-cc06e6c9-ad80-459c-821d-233fb94965e4/>

Payments must be made by: September 5, 2025, Friday

Check Payable to: NYACD

To: NYACD, 415 W Morris Street, Bath, NY 14810

If you have Questions please contact Blanche Hurlbutt at: nyacd6316@gmail.com or 607-965-6316 or 607-293-0144 (cell)

September 21, 2025- SUNDAY

Registration is Noon to 5 PM

NACDE Sunday Tour (\$120/person) 1PM to 5PM

Come join the Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE) for a narrated historical cruise along the Erie Canal. You will be traveling the same waters used the 19th century industry. The tour will journey wet-ward to Lock 24 in Baldwinsville. You would experience the process of locking on how boats are raised and lowered along the canal system. Lunch will be provided and cash bar will be available. We are looking forward to seeing you on our wonderful expedition through the Erie Canal-Lock 24. Maximum occupancy is 40 people.

Dinner 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

Evening Reception 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM- includes an ice cream social!

September 22, 2025- Monday

Breakfast 7 AM to 8:30 AM

Registration 8 AM to 5 PM

Opening Session 8:30 AM to 9:50 AM

Break 9:50AM to 10AM

Session: Meetings 10AM to 11:30AM

- 1. NACD E Employees Meeting**
- 2. NE NACD Directors Meeting**
- 3. NYS District Divisions Meetings**

Lunch Noon to 1:15PM

Session 1: Classes 2PM to 4:30PM (break is at 3:15PM to 3:30 PM)

1. NYS Environmental Protection Fund and NY Soil and Water Conservation Committee Programs – Presenters: TBD

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in New York State is a vital source of funding for environmental projects, supporting initiatives that protect natural resources, enhance public lands, and promote sustainable practices. Many of the programs administered by the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee are supported by the Environmental Protection Fund. This session will discuss the history of the Environmental Protection Fund and provide a comprehensive review of the programs that are available to Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

2. Farm Force: Building the Next Generation of Conservation Careers through Regional and Island Partnerships" Jennifer Byrne, District Manager White River Natural Resources Conservation District

Join the White River Natural Resources Conservation District for an interactive session on **Farm Force**, a workforce development initiative training the next generation of conservation professionals through hands-on service, mentorship, and technical skill-building. Learn how this innovative program supports both Vermont and U.S. Virgin Islands participants, tackles real-world conservation challenges, and navigates federal systems like AgLearn to expand access to NRCS-aligned career pathways. Discover lessons learned, partnerships forged, and opportunities to replicate or scale this model in your district.

3. The Vermont Experience with Locally Led Conservation

Vermont's Conservation Districts have partnered with the state's NRCS office to create Locally Led funding pools for EQIP that are rooted in a Conservation Action Plan adopted by each district. Learn how districts engaged with the public and drew on existing plans for conservation issues in their region, such as Tactical Basin Plans, to craft conservation plans that identify top conservation priorities in their communities. Those priorities are then used to identify practices which can be funded through NRCS to being focused resources on the conservation needs in each district.

4. Regenerating the Land and Community, One Blade and Farmer at a Time, Troy Bishopp

Whether your interested in watersheds, working farms, wildlife or mouth-watering protein, Northeast grasslands and managed grazing resources offer diverse opportunities to get excited about. Come and learn about resilient, management strategies, new ideas, projects and real-time tools used by new and seasoned practitioners from pasture to plate.

5. Partnerships with Purpose: Growing Wellness and Stewardship Through Community Collaboration

Synopsis:

Discover how strategic partnerships can transform community health and environmental engagement in this dynamic session featuring Indiana County Conservation District's *First Waves Indiana* and *Growing for Good Health* initiatives. Through storytelling, video, and practical insight, attendees will explore how conservation, youth mentorship, food access, and senior wellness converge through innovative collaborations that deliver lasting impact. A 15-minute film will showcase First Waves' journey of environmental art and action, while Growing for Good Health highlights how gardening and nutrition education are empowering older adults and strengthening local food systems.

Diner 5PM -6:30 PM

Hospitality - Hotel lounge - Cash Bar 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM

September 23, 2025- Tuesday

Breakfast 7 AM to 8:15 AM

Registration 8 AM to 5 PM

Session 2: 8AM to Noon- Navigating Workplace Conflicts

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable, but it doesn't have to disrupt team dynamics or productivity. In fact, conflict can lead to stronger relationships, better decisions and lasting solutions. This interactive workshop equips individuals at all levels with tools and strategies to effectively navigate workplace conflicts. Participants will learn to manage difficult

conversations and turn them into an opportunity for growth, collaboration and stronger workplace relationships. This workshop provides practical tools and techniques to identify the causes of conflict, foster open communication, and guide employees toward mutually beneficial solutions. Real-world scenarios will allow participants to discuss conflict resolution approaches.

By the end of this workshop, participants will have greater confidence in their ability to lead and resolve conflicts constructively—whether they are supervisors, team members or the people directly involved in the conflict.

Topics:

1. Understanding conflict – positive and negative aspects
2. Tools for constructive dialogue
3. Cultivating a safe communication environment
4. Preparing for productive meetings
5. “Unpacking” the conflict
6. Identifying interests behind positions
7. Shifting from interest to action
8. Handling impasses
9. Practice using conflict scenarios
10. Putting it all together

Session 3: 8AM to 10AM

1. Post-Flood Emergency Stream Intervention

Increased flooding events have presented significant flood response challenges for state

agencies, county, and local municipal governments throughout New York State.

Immediately following a flood, municipalities are often responsible for protecting public and private infrastructure that is threatened by a nearby flooded stream. In 2009, Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District received grant funding from NYS DEC's Water Quality Improvement Program to develop a proactive training program and technical handbook to help municipal officials, contractors, and

machine operators respond to flood event damages. Delaware County has the most declared flood events in New York State, and this program was created as a way to help municipalities respond to flood events. Training is based on scientific and environmentally sound post-flood stream mitigation techniques that address stream issues of channel relocation, debris clogs and reduced flow capacity, as well as compliance with regulatory requirements. By following these guidelines and recommended procedures, municipalities will save time, money and resources. The Post-Flood Emergency Stream Intervention training program has expanded its reach and is now a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's state-wide program.

2. Agricultural Environmental Management, Planning Process, and Certified Planner Program – Presenters: TBD

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a voluntary, incentive-based program available to all farmers through their local Soil and Water Conservation District. AEM supports common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet farm goals while protecting and conserving natural resources. To become involved with AEM, farmers work with their local Soil and Water Conservation District to progress through a five tiered planning process. AEM also offers an professional certification pathway for individuals to become Certified AEM Planners allowing them to work with farms to create Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans. This session will provide an in-depth review of the AEM framework, planning process, and the AEM Certified Planner Program.

3. NCCP"

Speakers: NCPP Co-Chair and NCDEA President Melissa Higbee, NCPP Communications Action Team Co-Chair and NCDEA Vice President Sarah Tunge, NCDEA Northeast Region Director Mike Kent, Moderator: NCDEA Executive Director Tim Riley

This presentation will outline the significant progress and future strategies of the National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCPP). We will discuss the ongoing efforts to streamline the conservation planner and TSP certification process; highlight our proposed marketing plan aimed at attracting new employees, TSPs, and producers; cover innovative approaches to conservation advocacy, such as leveraging campaigns, engaging the next generation of planners through targeted messaging and school outreach, and utilizing positive producer testimonials; and finally provide a real-life example of a Conservation District's successful Local Working Group strategy employed right here in the Northeast Region.

4. Soil and Water Conservation District Led Watershed Coalitions – Presenters: TBD

Session Description - Please join us for an informative presentation on the formation, function, funding and responsibilities of Soil & Water Conservation District

Regional Watershed Coalitions throughout New York State. To understand why these Coalitions are so successful, NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee staff in cooperation with Watershed Coalition partners from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and Soil & Water Conservation Districts will provide information on why Regional Coalitions are so important to water quality. There will be ample time for questions and discussion throughout the presentation.

5. NYACD Annual Meeting

Break 9:15AM to 9:30AM

Session 4: 10AM to Noon

1. Exploring the Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have a wide-range of applications in conservation work. Learn how staff from the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts have been using UAVs to delineate wetlands, document erosion, locate invasive species, track changes on the landscape over time, map fields and land use for NRCS applications, confirm practices and more. UAVs can be a safe way to find out what's happening on unsafe slopes or quickly document the adoption of a land management practice over dozens, or hundreds, of acres. Join us to find out more.

2. Partnerships in Implementing Manure Innovation in NY

In this presentation you'll get a quick background on agriculture in NY, learn about the value of manure for crop production and farm sustainability, understand the robust partnerships used to advance innovation and conservation, the role of Cornell as NY's Land Grant University in fostering the implementation of beneficial management practices, and get a deep dive into a new grant-funded project led by the Delaware County SWCD in collaboration with federal, state and local partners to spur adoption of manure injection and precision manure application technology through custom services on small farms in Delaware County and the NYC watershed.

3. Cultivating Today's Volunteer from the Grass Roots Matt Ward

Building and sustaining locally led efforts through meaningful and rewarding volunteer development. The key with any soil district is actively fostering and creating the platform for locally led efforts to occur and develop. The HEP SCD has been instrumental in doing that through efforts involving the three largest cities in NJ - Newark, Jersey City and Paterson. The breakout would illuminate specific strategies in cultivating volunteers, valuing their time and building a step process to impactful leadership roles.

4. “NCDEA”

Speakers: NCDEA President Melissa Higbee, NCDEA Vice President Sarah Tunge, NCDEA Northeast Region Director Mike Kent, NCDEA Northeast Region Alternate Velynda Parker, Moderator: NCDEA Executive Director Tim Riley

The National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) aims to support and enhance the professional development and standing of conservation district employees across the nation. This presentation will highlight some of the programs and activities NCDEA employs to that end, such as: serving as a national voice for conservation district employees; empowering regions through a strong structure of Regional Directors; virtual training series on various topics relevant to conservation district work; a webinar service offering training to government, nonprofit, contracted case management, and health and human services professionals that help other people; in-person training sessions; and fostering strong networks among conservation district employees at local, state, regional, and national levels.

5. Market Your Conservation District Presenter: Caitlin Stewart, President, New York State Conservation District Employees’ Association

Description: We all are confronted with being a salesperson at some time or another. Learn ideas for making the 1-on-1 experience easier whether marketing an idea or product or working within a committee. Master how to connect with others in selling the value of your Conservation District’s programs and services. Make social media work for you, reach multiple generations, and shine in the digital world. Leave this workshop with tools and factsheets!

Lunch Noon- 1PM

Tours: 1:30PM 4:30PM

- 1. Onondaga Non-Ag Tour**
- 2. Cayuga Ag Tour**

Reception 5PM to 6:30 PM

Banquet, Auction and Closing 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM- When you register you will be promoted to make a meal selection.

September 24, 2025- Wednesday

Breakfast 7 AM to 8:30 AM

Session 4 9AM to Noon

1. Northeast Region Capacity Building Event: Communications Within and Outside the Conservation Partnership

Description: This year's Capacity Building Event will be focused on improving regional conservation communications locally and regionally. Every year, the Northeast Region holds a Capacity Building Event during the Northeast Region Meeting to train, strategize, and reflect on a key topic aimed to increase regional conservation capacity and partnership. With this year's topic of communications, the 2025 Capacity Building Event will include training and facilitated discussion to better understand and plan for the ways that we can strengthen the understanding of the Northeast conservation partnership and improve communications within and outside the partnership. All are welcome and encouraged to attend this event!