




LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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Memorandum

Date: August 15, 2022
To: Board of Directors
From: David Potter, Assistant General Manager 
RE: 2022 NACD Summer Meeting in Puerto Rico

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) held the 2022 Summer Meeting and Conservation Forum in conjunction with the NACD Southeast Region Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico and I had the opportunity to attend. LPSNRD has been a member of NACD for many years. We have received four Technical Assistance (TA) grants and are about to sign our fifth. Fifteen TA grantees were given an option to attend the meeting at no cost. NACD would pay for the meeting registration and hotel accommodations and reimburse travel costs and meals for the grantees selected. I was one of the fortunate TA grantees chosen and could not pass up on the opportunity to meet those NACD staff members I've been working with for the last four years, meet the NACD officers, talk to National organization leaders in NRCS and U.S. Fish & Wildlife, learn of conservation concerns and efforts around the country, and to network with other individuals in conservation. This was my first NACD event that I attended and appreciate the LPSNRD Board allowing me to attend.

Hosted in partnership with the Puerto Rico Association of Soil Conservation Districts, this summer's meeting held July 16th-19th gathered conservation leaders from across the country and Caribbean to discuss natural resource concerns and innovative solutions. Throughout the meeting, we heard from conservation leaders and partners who shared their experiences addressing the natural resource issues and challenges in their respective regions.



NACD President Michael Crowder opened the Board of Directors meeting on Saturday morning with his report to NACD's Board of Directors, which is composed of representatives from each U.S. state and territory. Crowder shared his experiences from his recent travels to the Pacific Islands Area and a trip to the U.S. Virgin Islands. NACD CEO Jeremy Peters gave his report and Secretary/Treasurer Gary Blair provided a budget report to the delegates and guests. Orval Gigstad of NNRD is our Nebraska delegate on the Board. Saturday afternoon, I attended the Legislative Committee meeting, the Natural Resources Policy Committee meeting, and the Farm Bill Task Force discussion.

The Region meetings were held Sunday morning. Nebraska is part of the NACD Northern Plains Region along with Kansas, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana. Orval Gigstad of NNRD chairs the Northern Plains Region. Aubrey Evans of Kansas is our Region Representative. This meeting provided an opportunity to hear in detail what each state is doing in conservation work. Orval and I had a chance to

describe Nebraska's unique NRD system to the group. Sunday afternoon began with another session of the Board meeting, then partnership roundtables, and concluded with the Southeast Region dinner. At Monday's breakfast, we heard a presentation from Fernando Lloveras San Miguel, President of Para La Naturaleza. The agenda continued with the Forum, which included remarks from Dr. Bradley Doorn with The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), NRCS Chief Terry Cosby, and a discussion panel of Caribbean Conservation Leaders. On Monday, I also attended a breakout session on Climate-Smart Conservation (innovative approaches to changing climate in Florida and Caribbean), the Southeast Region Hall of Fame Lunch, a breakout session on Technology in Conservation and Agriculture (use of drones and NASA studies), and the NCF Board of Trustees Meeting. Orval Gigstad and I were able to meet and talk to NRCS Chief Terry Cosby and NRCS Acting Central Regional Conservationist Xavier Montoya (and grab a photo). In Chief Cosby's presentation he spotlighted the Nebraska NRD system and congratulated us on our 50th year anniversary.



On Tuesday, I was able to get out of San Juan on a guided tour of Hacienda La Esperanza which is a rehabilitated historic site of what was one of the most prosperous sugar cane plantations in Puerto Rico during the 19th century. The hacienda is located in a 2,150-acre reserve and is home to a sugar mill and its unique 1861 West Point Foundry steam engine. The Steam engine mill was named a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark in 1979. Hacienda La Esperanza sugar estate is located in Manatí and is on the US Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places. It was started in the 1830's by Fernando Fernández, a Spanish officer. The rich soils of the area were perfect for sugar cane production, and Fernández was able to grow a profitable business here. Most of the trees were cleared in order to grow the sugar cane. Today, the Para la Naturaleza is working to replant selected tree species in the area to restore the landscape and to manage vegetation along the Grande de Manati River. Many of the trees and shrubs are grown in the onsite greenhouses. It's also amazing how shallow the root system is for sugar cane plants.



A copy of the "NACD 2022 Summer Meeting Eresource" is attached and provides more information and photos of the summer meeting. The NACD Annual Conference will be February 11-15, 2023 in New Orleans, LA.

About the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

The National Association of Conservation Districts is the nonprofit organization that represents the nearly 3,000 conservation districts across the United States, their state and territory associations, and the 17,000 men and women who serve on their governing boards. For more than 75 years, local conservation districts have worked with cooperating landowners and managers of private working lands to help them plan and apply effective conservation practices. For more information about NACD, visit www.nacdnet.org.



NACD 2022 SUMMER MEETING ERESOURCE

San Juan, Puerto Rico | July 16-19, 2022

NACD AND CONSERVATION PARTNERS MEET IN SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

July 19, 2022



This week, NACD held the 2022 Summer Conservation Forum and Tours in conjunction with the Southeast Region Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Hosted in partnership with the **Puerto Rico Association of Soil Conservation Districts**, this summer's meeting gathered conservation leaders from across the country to discuss natural resource concerns and innovative solutions.

The NACD Board of Directors had a several days full of productive meetings, opening on Saturday with updates and reports from **President Michael Crowder**, **CEO Jeremy Peters**, and **Secretary Treasurer Gary Blair**. President Crowder shared his experiences from his recent travels to the Pacific Islands Area, including Guam and Palau, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Reinvigorating districts within the island territories and supporting their conservation development has been a goal of President Crowder throughout his term in office.

NACD and Partners Meet in USVI



On July 13-14, 2022, **NACD President Michael Crowder**, **President-Elect and First Vice President Kim LaFleur**, and **Southeast Region Representative Candice Abinanti** met with partners from the U.S. Virgin Islands on St. Croix. These partners included: **Caribbean Area Director Luis Cruz-Arroyo** from the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** and members of his team in St. Croix; the **Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture Commissioner**

On Sunday, the board of directors heard discussion of conservation leaders during a partnership roundtable. Speakers included representatives from NRCS, the National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils, and other leaders within our conservation partnership.



Monday's events began with a Conservation Breakfast which featured a presentation from **Fernando Lloveras San Miguel**, President of Para La Naturaleza. The agenda continued with our Conservation Forum. Local FFA Students from within Puerto Rico opened the

session with a presentation of colors, the pledge of allegiance, the Anthem of Puerto Rico, and U.S. National Anthem. During the forum attendees heard from **Dr. Bradley Doorn** with The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), **NRCS Chief Terry Cosby**, and a panel of Caribbean Conservation Leaders. The panel included **Puerto Rico Secretary of Agriculture Ramon Gonzalez Beiro**, **U.S. Virgin Islands Commissioner Positive T.A. Nelson**, **Dr. Anibal Il Rulz Lugo** with the Extension of the College of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico, and **Mr. Stafford Crossman** with University of the Virgin Islands School of Agriculture.



Throughout the meeting, attendees were able to hear from conservation leaders who shared their experiences addressing changing natural resource challenges in their regions. Keynote speakers, panelists, breakout session presenters, and board members addressed the importance of partnerships to delivering successful conservation now and in the future. NACD is excited to continue fostering these

Positive T.A. Nelson, Assistant Commissioner **Diana Collingwood** and staff; and several prospective board members of the forming Virgin Islands Conservation District (VICD). All convened to discuss reviving the VICD, natural resource concerns in the Virgin Islands, and opportunities to address these concerns through partnerships. Staff members of the offices of **Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett**, and **U.S. Virgin Islands Governor Albert Bryan** also joined the conversation as the process to appoint more members to the VICD Board of Directors continues.

Later, partners visited with **Dale Browne** of [Seiah Farm](#), a 15 acre farm where Browne and his wife Yvette grow organic vegetables and livestock for local markets, and conduct community outreach activities such as the annual Bush Cook: Chef Cook event to promote local cuisine and agriculture. Browne was inducted into the [NACD Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame](#) this year. The group also visited the ranch of 2021 NACD Distinguished Service awardee **Hans Lawaetz** to learn more about the Senepol cattle breed and conservation on his farm. Additional visits included to [Island Fresh aquaponics](#) and the [Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve](#).

partnerships in the Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and across the continental United States.

SOUTHEAST REGION INDUCTS CONSERVATION LEADERS TO HALL OF FAME



Today, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) announced the names of eleven individuals inducted into the 2022 [NACD Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame](#).

The NACD Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame annually recognizes and honors individuals from NACD's Southeast Region who have had a significant impact or influence on conservation practice or partnerships at the local, state, territory, regional or national levels. Inductees were selected by their state or territory associations and inducted into the NACD Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame during NACD's Summer Conservation Forum and Tours and Southeast Region Meeting held on July 18, 2022 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"Congratulations to all the 2022 Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame inductees and their families," said **NACD Southeast Region Chair Steven Meeks**. "We thank you for your passion and your commitment to conserving natural resources for future generations."

Inductees included: **Joseph Laslie Hall, Jr.** of Alabama, **F. Woody Snell** of Georgia, **Greg Stone** of Kentucky, **Pete Hunter** of Mississippi, **Franklin Williams** of North Carolina, **Pedro J. Fuentes Ortiz** of Puerto Rico, **J. Kenneth Mullis** of South Carolina, **John Thomas Leeman** of Tennessee, **Richard Chaffin** and **Steven Meeks** of Virginia, and **Dale Browne** of the Virgin Islands.

Read the full announcement [here](#).

See photos from the event!



Have you been taking photos during the 2022 NACD Summer Meeting? We want to see them!

Email them to us at [nacdnnews@nacdn.net](mailto:nacdnews@nacdn.net), tag us using **@NACDConserve** or **#NACDSummerMeeting** on social media to share your photos!

Check out all of our photos from the meeting [here](#).

Check out the Presentations



Want to revisit something from a session you attended, or catch up on one you missed? You can view some of the slideshows from our general and breakout sessions [here](#).

CONSERVATION IN ACTION: SUMMER MEETING TOURS EXPLORE PUERTO RICO



On Tuesday, July 18, attendees of the Summer Meeting had an opportunity to explore the island of Puerto Rico through conservation tours. Groups traveled to El Yunque National Forest, the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest Service. With an average rainfall of 120 inches a year, El Yunque has a very diverse ecosystem, hosting hundreds of unique plant and animal species, including Puerto Rico's famous coquí frog.

Others travelled through the mountains on Puerto Rico's scenic Ruta Panorámica ("panoramic route") to Caribe Soil Conservation District board member Milly González's farm. Here, attendees experienced an 18-acre forest under conservation bursting with fruit trees and wildlife, and learned about a well-planned apiary with 8 beehives to learn about soil conservation and protecting pollinators.

NCF-Envirothon Happening Next Week

The 33rd Annual National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon Competition will be held July 24-30 in Oxford, OH in partnership with the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD). The NCF-Envirothon Competition challenges students in the five areas of study: aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and this year's current issue.

The 2022 NCF-Envirothon will spotlight the ecology and natural resources of Ohio, with a special focus on this year's current issue of "Waste to Resources." Students will learn about different types of waste and explore how various waste management strategies impact natural resources. Students will be challenged to examine the social, economic, and political impacts of reclaiming and repurposing waste products and degraded lands. Complete event details can be found on the [Envirothon website](#).



Another group joined Para La Naturaleza for a guided trip to the Hacienda la Esperanza, located in Manatí, on the northern shore of Puerto Rico. Hacienda la Esperanza is a 19th century sugar cane hacienda with the only sugar mill steam engine of its kind in existence completely restored to operating condition. The Hacienda is located in the karst region of Puerto Rico and includes a diverse environment that incorporates farming while safeguarding wetlands, grasslands, mangroves, and a crystal-clear estuary.

These tours allowed attendees to witness conservation practices on the island up close and in person, with information from local conservation leaders.

July 2022 ~

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Promote your conservation district or state association's tree sale, annual meeting, webinar, field day, or other events on NACD's [Calendar of Events!](#)

[Submit an Event](#)