

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST MONTHLY REPORT****3/9/2023****PERSONNEL/OFFICE**

- District Conservationist Vacancy Filled (NRCS - Lincoln Field Office) – Tom Cowan was selected to be the District Conservationist in the Lincoln Field Office (FO), replacing Cory Schmidt. Tom has been Acting District Conservationist Since January 30th, 2023 and will begin his official duties on March 13th, 2023. He began his NRCS career as a Pathways student intern in the Grand Island FO in 2014 and then the Lincoln FO in 2015. After graduating from UNL with an agronomy degree, Tom was hired full-time in April 2016 as a Soil Conservationist in the Lincoln FO. In November 2019, Tom was promoted to his most recent position, Resource Conservationist in the David City FO.
- Soil Conservation Technician Vacancy Filled (NRCS - Lincoln Field Office) – Cole Johnson was selected to be the NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, replacing Mitch Schoenfelder. Cole graduated from UNL with a geology degree in 2017 and is currently the LPSNRD Resources Technician in the Weeping Water Field Office. He started with LPSNRD in September of 2021 and his final day will be March 24th, 2023. He will officially start with NRCS in Lincoln on March 27th, 2023.
- LPSNRD Resources Technician Vacancy (Lincoln Field Office) – Vacancy/Job announcement has been posted and will be open until March 24, 2023, to replace Evan Sisel.
- LPSNRD Resources Technician Vacancy (Weeping Water Field Office) – Vacancy/Job announcement has been posted and will be open until March 24, 2023, to replace Cole Johnson.
- The Lancaster and Cass County Service Centers are under normal operations.

LPSNRD LAND TREATMENT

- Drought conditions have been impacting the installation of structural practices across the district. Extra consideration is required prior to construction to make sure there is enough soil moisture to obtain compaction requirements. With the recent precipitation events, we have been able to release some jobs again.
- The LPSNRD currently has the following land treatment cost-share program applications:
 - Lancaster County
 - 24 Fall Structural Applications – 1 Completed Project (1 paid)
 - 36 Cover Crop Applications
 - Cass County
 - 37 Fall Structural Applications – 5 Completed Projects (3 paid)
 - 4 Cover Crop Applications

USDA PROGRAMS

- Planning staff are completing planning/contracting for preapproved Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications.
- Planning staff are beginning to assess/rank Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 28th – NRCS Local Work Group Meeting – 9:00am @ Lower Platte South NRD Office Building
- March 31st – Application deadline for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)-EQIP and IRA-CSP
- April 7th – Deadline for Conservation Reserve Program General Sign-up (CRP)

Tom Cowan – District Conservationist

Nebraska's 108th Legislature (2023 & 2024)
(NRD Issue Related Bills)

BILL	INTRODUCER	DESCRIPTION	COMMITTEE	HEARING	ACTION	POSITION		GENERAL FILE	SELECT FILE	FINAL READING	GOVERNOR SIGN
						NRD	NARD				
2023 BILLS (OF INTEREST)											
7	Blood	Provide a statute of limitations for exposure to hazardous or toxic chemicals	JU	1/25/2023			M				
40	Blood	Adopt the Riparian and Water Quality Practices Act	NR	2/23/2023		M	O as written				
49	Dungan	Change provisions relating to solar energy and wind energy, declare certain instruments void and unenforceable, and provide for a civil cause of action	JU	2/23/2023		M w/comments					
121	Bostelman	Repeal the Trail Development Assistance Act	NR	2/16/2023			M				
125	Bostelman	Change provisions relating to the Surface Water Irrigation Infrastructure Fund	AP	3/14/2023			S				
147	Kauth	Change procedures for property tax refunds	RV	2/1/2023			M	2/7/2023			
158	McDonnell	Appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture	AP		WD						
205	von Gillern	Adopt the Government Neutrality in Contracting Act	GM	2/10/2023			S	2/16/2023			
218	Ibach	Change provisions relating to intent to appropriate money for management of vegetation within the banks or flood plain of a natural stream	AG	2/7/2023		S	S	3/2/2023			
241	Briese	Change provisions relating to transfer of water to another state	NR	1/26/2023		M	M				
281	Jacobson	Require the Department of Economic Development to provide grants for youth outdoor education camp facilities	NR	2/15/2023		S					
287	Brewer	Prohibit creation of joint public agencies under the Joint Public Agency Act	GM				M				
292	M. Cavanaugh	Prohibit the use of eminent domain under the Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Act	NR	2/8/2023			M				
302	Linehan	Change provisions relating to conflicts of interest by certain officeholders and public employees	GM	2/15/2023			M	2/24/2023			
304	Linehan	Require political subdivisions to disclose membership dues and lobbying fees	GM	2/9/2023		M	M				

BILL	INTRODUCER	DESCRIPTION	COMMITTEE	HEARING	ACTION	POSITION		GENERAL FILE	SELECT FILE	FINAL READING	GOVERNOR SIGN
						NRD	NARD				
312	Lowe	Change provisions relating to withholding money due to noncompliance with budget limits and annual audits for certain political subdivisions	GM	2/9/2023		M	M	2/16/2023			
322	Linehan	Prohibit creation of new joint public agencies with power or authority relating to tax	RV	3/9/2023			M				
332	Linehan	Prohibit creation of new joint public agencies with power or authority relating to education	ED				M				
361	Dorn	State legislative intent to appropriate funds for the Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program	AP	3/1/2023			S				
394	Erdman	Change provisions relating to the determination of damages as a result of eminent domain	JU	2/23/2023		O	O				
396	Erdman	Provide for streamflow augmentation projects and retention of water rights	NR	3/1/2023		O	O				
400	Brewer	Adopt the Nebraska Pheasant Restoration Act	NR	2/8/2023			M				
401	Dorn	State intent regarding appropriations to the Department of Natural Resources	AP	3/14/2023		S	S				
411	Dungan	Appropriate funds for Wyuka Cemetery	AP	3/16/2023							
428	Walz	Require the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency to provide matching funds for the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	GM			S	S				
456	Brewer	Provide for claims for monetary compensation for damage caused by elk or mountain lions and authorize control of elk and mountain lion populations	NR	2/9/2023							
457	Holdcroft	Require video surveillance of voting and provide requirements for paper ballots, vote scanning devices, and vote tabulating equipment	GM								
483	Raybould	Redefine qualifying mutual financial institution for purposes of regulation of public funds deposit security	BC	3/7/2023							
506	Bostar	State intent to appropriate federal funds to the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy	AP	3/14/2023		S	S				
513	Brewer	Change proof of publication requirements for legal notices and published notice and virtual conferencing requirements under the Open Meetings Act	GM	2/10/2023			S	2/16/2023			

BILL	INTRODUCER	DESCRIPTION	COMMITTEE	HEARING	ACTION	POSITION		GENERAL FILE	SELECT FILE	FINAL READING	GOVERNOR SIGN
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514	Brewer	Change provisions relating to elections ***PRIORITY BILL ***	GM	2/2/2023							
534	Slama	Appropriate federal funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for community water systems	AP	3/13/2023		S	S				
560	Blood	State intent to seek federal funds under Inflation Reduction Act of 2022	AP	3/6/2023		S	S				
571	Lippincott	Appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy to carry out the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Practice Act	AP	3/13/2023		S	S				
576	Cavanaugh, J.	Provide limitations on liability and nuisance related to land-management burning	JU	3/3/2023		M	S				
613	McDonnell	State intent to appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy	AP	3/13/2023							
614	McDonnell	Appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture	AP	2/22/2023			S				
637	Albrecht	Require members of the public to be allowed to speak at each meeting subject to the Open Meetings Act	GM	2/24/2023			M				
651	McDonnell	Provide for appropriations relating to cybersecurity improvements for state agencies and political subdivisions	AP	3/16/2023		S	S				
655	McDonnell	Appropriate funds to the State Fire Marshall	GM	2/16/2023							
656	McDonnell	Change provisions relating to the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund	NR	3/1/2023		M	S				
662	Ballard	Change provisions to the Nebraska Right to Farm Act relating to certain public or private nuisances	AG	2/14/2023		O					
695	Linehan	Provide a property tax exemption	RV								
721	Ballard	Appropriate funds to the Department of Transportation for the East Beltway project in Lancaster County	TR	2/28/2023							
723	Bostelman	Adopt the Public Water and National Resources Project Contracting Act	NR	2/2/2023			S				
749	Cavanaugh, M.	Prohibit possession of deadly weapon in the State Capitol or on State Capitol grounds	JU	3/16/2023							
750	Albrecht	Change provisions relating to the valuation of agricultural land and horticultural land	RV	2/2/2023							

BILL	INTRODUCER	DESCRIPTION	COMMITTEE	HEARING	ACTION	POSITION		GENERAL FILE	SELECT FILE	FINAL READING	GOVERNOR SIGN
						NRD	NARD				
766	DeKay	Appropriate Federal Funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for reverse osmosis systems	AP	3/13/2023			S				
776	Bostar	Provide for nomination and election of candidates on the nonpartisan ballot	GM	3/2/2023							
808	Halloran	Provide for counting and recounting ballots under the Election Act by hand count	GM								
814	Arch (at request of Governor)	Appropriate funds for the expenses of Nebraska State Government for the biennium ending June 30, 2025, and appropriate federal funds allocated to the State of Nebraska pursuant to the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021	AP	2/13/2023			M				
LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTIONS (OF INTEREST)											
1CA	Blood	Constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to reimburse political subdivisions as prescribed	GM	2/24/2023			S	3/3/23			
6CA	Erdman	Constitutional amendment to prohibit governmental entities from imposing any taxes other than retail consumption taxes and excise taxes	RV	3/3/2023			O				
7CA	Erdman	Constitutional amendment to require the state to impose a consumption tax or an excise tax on all new goods and services and to provide a tax exemption for grocery items	RV	3/3/2023			O				
30CA	Murman	Constitutional amendment to provide for a different method of taxing commercial real property	RV	3/3/2023		M					



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

3125 Portia Street | P.O. Box 83581 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-3581
P: 402.476.2729 • F: 402.476.6454 | www.lpsnrd.org

Memorandum

Date: March 9, 2023
To: Board of Directors
From: David Potter, Assistant General Manager (together with Directors Tom Green and John Yoakum)
RE: 2023 NACD Annual Meeting in New Orleans

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) held their 2023 Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA on February 11th through the 15th. I had the opportunity to attend the meeting along with Directors Tom Green and John Yoakum. LPSNRD is a Diamond Member of the NACD and has been for many years. As you are aware, the District has received five consecutive NACD Technical Assistance (TA) grants that help fund one of our resources technician positions. This was a great opportunity to meet those NACD staff members I've been working with for the last several years, meet the NACD officers, meet and listen to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and national organization leaders in NRCS and U.S. Fish & Wildlife, learn of conservation activities and projects around the country, and to network with other individuals in conservation. This was the first NACD annual meeting for me and Directors Green and Yoakum, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity granted by the Board to attend and represent LPSNRD.

NACD kicked off the 77th Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 11th with NACD's Resource Policy Group meetings and an orientation session for new members joining the Board of Directors. The NACD Board of Directors convened to begin their meetings and additional committee and partner meetings were held throughout the afternoon. Due to our flight arrival, we were not able to attend the policy group meetings, but we did take an opportunity to visit the National WWII Museum mid-afternoon. What a great place! We registered for the Annual Meeting after returning and I then attended the President's Reception that evening. LPSNRD received one invite to the reception as a Diamond member. This was a relaxing atmosphere to meet the NACD officers and other conservationists across the country.

On Sunday I attended the Natural Resources Committee meeting. We received updates on the Farm Bill and WOTUS regulations from Chris Young, NACD Director of Government Affairs. NRCS Chief Terry Cosby also provided an update at the meeting. I also attended part of the Technical Assistance meet and greet session where we heard from other TA recipients and their projects. Sunday afternoon the LPSNRD reps attended the Northern Plains Region meeting. Orval Gigstad with Nemaha NRD and NARD President chairs the Northern Plains Region. Aubrey Evans of Kansas is our Region Representative. The Northern Plains Region includes Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Each state gave a report at the meeting, and we also heard from Carrie Lindig the new NRCS Acting Regional Conservationist for the Central Region, the 2023 NACD officer candidates, and from some NACD staff on things they're doing. Directors Green and Yoakum attended the First Timer Attendees Session later that afternoon and then in the evening we were able to meet up with some other Nebraska attendees to cheer on the Kansas City Chiefs.

Monday morning started out with the opening general session. This included welcome programs (Director Yoakum represented Nebraska on stage in the parade of flags), presentation of colors, NACD President's (Michael Crowder) Address, NACD CEO (Jeremy Peters) Report, and Keynote Speaker Retired U.S. Army General Russel Honoré. General Russel Honoré is a decorated 37-year army veteran, a global authority on leadership, and an expert on climate change and disaster preparedness. The General led the security review of the U.S. Capitol's security infrastructure following the attacks on January 6, 2021. As the commander of Joint Task Force Katrina, he became known as the "Category 5 General" for his leadership in coordinating military relief efforts in post-hurricane New Orleans. The Leadership Luncheon included membership recognition and awards, Friends of NACD recognition, NCF Recognition & NGLI 2022 Cohort Graduation, and keynote speaker Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Secretary Vilsack laid out the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) where \$850 million has been set aside for four conservation programs - \$250 million for EQIP, \$250 million for CSP, \$250 million for RCPP, and \$100 million in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Funding for these programs could be as high as \$1.7 billion in 2024. He stated "This is the time for folks to learn that as you embrace conservation you don't have to worry about productivity because as you do this you're going to be more productive over time... It all leads to more, new and better markets and jobs." The four afternoon breakout sessions I attended included 1) "Watershed Planning with Ohio's Caesar Creek Collaborative", 2) "Leadership and Conservation Development", 3) "Conservation Crusaders: An Education Partnership", and 4) "How Districts Can Leverage Advances in Technology to Provide Climate Smart Agriculture Insights to Producers". Short summaries include: a WQMP to improve and maintain the water quality and soil health; work with adults and students in North Carolina to promote careers and leadership in conservation; information on an outdoor education day camp for children 5 to 12 in Warrick County, IN; and a panel discussion on how we can work together to support farmers with climate smart agriculture and emerging carbon markets. Directors Green and Yoakum also attended selected breakout sessions. The evening ended with a social hour and the National Conservation Foundation live auction.

Tuesday morning's general session featured keynote speaker USFWS Director Martha Williams; an environmental, social, and governance panel; a collaborative approach to Natural Resources Stewardship Panel; and keynote speaker NRCS Chief Terry Cosby. Chief Cosby elaborated on the IRA funding and charged the state conservationists to promote work and fill positions. Lunch included "Wings Over Water" film screening and a film discussion and panel sponsored by Ducks Unlimited. This is a film telling the story of bird migration along the flyways to the Northern Plains and the need to protect that precious ecosystem. Yes, the Sandhill Cranes in Nebraska are mentioned! The film is narrated by Michael Keaton and very well done. Tuesday afternoon I attended four more breakout sessions including 1) "Conservation Delivery in Partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service", 2) "Innovations in Managing Soil Water Resources to Optimize Climate Resilience, Environmental Results, Soil Health, and Crop Production", 3) "Creating a Planning Process for Strategic Watershed Opportunities", and 4) "District Success Stories in Meeting Ground Water Challenges". Short summaries include: how the voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs of the USF&W restore fish and wildlife habitat, contribute to climate resilience, and help sustain working lands; science-based management of soil water resources by producers; the Allegheny County Conservation District evaluation and ranking of watersheds based on need and workability in categories of community condition, ecological condition, and existing programming; and lessons learned and success stories from four conservation districts on their implementation of innovative groundwater management and conservation. Directors Green and Yoakum also attended selected breakout sessions. The evening ended with the Appreciation Banquet which included Michael Crowder's retiring address, award announcements, leadership & officer transitions, and the presidential address by the new NACD President Kim LaFleur. In the 75+ years of NACD, Kim is the first female president. She is from Massachusetts. It should also be noted that the winner of the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for

Conservation Excellence – Planner Award was Pamela Pavsek of Moscow, Idaho. Pamela is a native of Lincoln and attended Northeast High School and UNL. Congrats!

On Wednesday I attended the Urban and Community Agriculture Conservation Symposia where past and possible projects, ideas, successes, and opportunities within urban and nontraditional agricultural spaces were discussed. Tim Fowler from PMRNRD serves on the NACD Urban and Community Resource Policy Group. This group is charged with providing guidance to NACD leaders on how best to increase district visibility in urban and developing communities; strengthen district capabilities and funding; and showcase districts' work to address resource issues specific to urban and urbanizing communities. NACD offers grants for urbanizing projects and maybe someday LPSNRD will have such a project need.

Overall, the Annual Meeting was an exceptional event with lots of great speakers, sessions, and topics. The venue was awesome, and the networking was amazing. In addition to the meeting activities, we managed to see a few sites/activities while in "The Big Easy", including the French Quarter, Bourbon Street, Mardi Gras parades (in front of our hotel), National WWII Museum (as mentioned before), and Caesars Superdome. Nebraskans attending the Annual Meeting included: me, Tom Green, and John Yoakum from LPSNRD; Orval Gigstad from NNRD; Tim Fowler from PMRNRD; Eric Gottschalk and Sydney Abbott from LPNDRD; Jeanne Dryburgh from NARD; and Rob Lawson, NRCS State Conservationist. Also attending the meeting to receive the "National NACD Earth Team Award" was NRCS Water Management Specialist Curtis Scheele from the Holdrege Field Office on behalf of the Tri-Basin NRD (see attached article).

A copy of the "NACD 77th Annual Meeting eResource Recap" which provides more information and photos of the 2023 Annual Meeting is attached. This year's NACD Summer Meeting will be July 15-19, 2023, in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Again, thanks so much to the Board for allowing me to attend and represent LPSNRD at the 2023 NACD Annual Meeting!

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.

Tri-Basin NRD Receives National Recognition by NRCS Chief

During the National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) Annual Meeting in New Orleans, the Nebraska Earth Team Volunteer Program was recognized. NRCS Water Management Specialist Curtis Scheele in the Holdrege Field Office was presented the "National NACD Earth Team Award" on behalf of the Tri-Basin NRD.

This award is presented to the most effective conservation district in the nation, demonstrating shared leadership among district officials, NRCS employees, and Earth Team volunteers. NRCS Chief Cosby (on left) and NACD President Michael Crowder (on right) presented the trophy to Curtis at the NACD Annual Meeting on Valentines Day.

For many years the Tri-Basin NRD and the NRCS have worked together to provide an opportunity for college students to volunteer and gain field experience in irrigation water management. This effort has been coordinated by Curtis for many years. Several of these Earth Team volunteers have gone on to become permanent NRCS staff. Congratulations to Curtis and the Tri-Basin NRD on this outstanding partnership!

The news release sharing information about all the awards presented during the NACD Annual Meeting is available [HERE](#).





NACD HOSTS 77TH ANNUAL MEETING

February 21, 2023



Last week, NACD welcomed nearly a thousand conservation professionals to the [2023 Annual Meeting](#) in New Orleans, LA. Hosted in partnership with the **Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts**, the meeting explored the theme "Local Resiliency, National Community." We are excited to share a recap of the meeting in this special edition of eResource!

To explore the daily newsletters, see photos, read press releases, revisit presentations, and more - [see the meeting's media page](#).

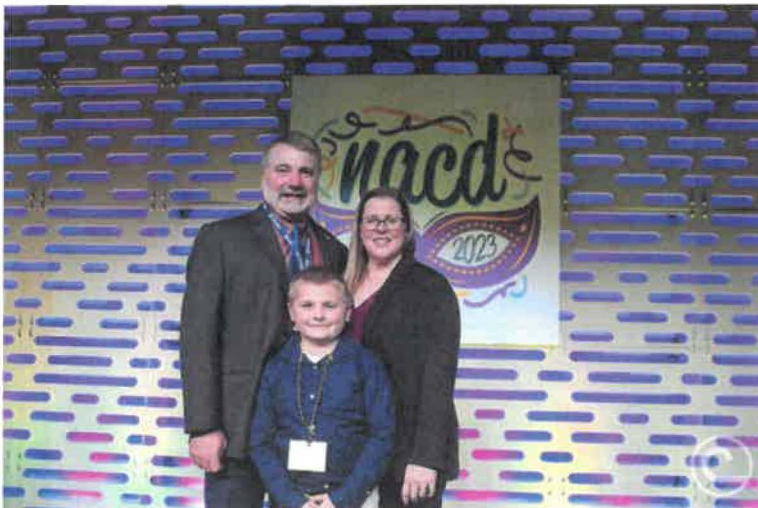
NACD and USFWS Sign MOU



On Tuesday, Feb. 14, NACD announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The MOU memorializes the partnership between the organizations and builds on a successful history of collaboration. Conservation districts were the first partners when its Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program was established in the early 1990s.

Read the full press release [here](#).

NEW NACD LEADERSHIP ELECTED



While in New Orleans, a new slate of NACD Officers and Executive Board members were elected and later sworn in during Tuesday's Appreciation Banquet.

Kim LaFleur was sworn in as NACD President. She has served in several leadership roles at NACD since 2007, including as a board member, executive board member, and most recently as an officer as NACD's First Vice President and President-Elect. She also serves as the Board Chair of the Plymouth County Conservation District. LaFleur is the State Advisor and Program Director for the Massachusetts FFA Association, which is part of the nation's largest agricultural youth leadership development organization.

President LaFleur is the first woman to serve as NACD President, saying in her opening address, "I am not the first woman qualified to do this job, I am just the first one given the opportunity."

The NACD Board of Directors also voted to elect the other members of the leadership team. **Gary Blair** of Mississippi was elected as First Vice President, and **Bill Simshauser** of

Kansas, was elected as Second Vice President. **Mark Masters** of Georgia, a graduate of the National Conservation Foundation's Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) inaugural 2020 cohort, was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. Immediate Past President **Michael Crowder** of Washington, and NACD Chief Executive Officer **Jeremy Peters** round out the national association's officer team.



NACD also welcomed new region representatives of the Executive Board:

- **Ryan Britt** - Missouri, North Central Region Rep.
- **Karl Jensen** - South Dakota, Northern Plains Region Rep.
- **John McAlpine** - Arkansas, South Central Region Rep.
- **Cliff Lane**- Pennsylvania, Northeast Region Rep.
- **Josh Smith** - New Mexico, Southwest Region Rep.
- **Michael Aguon** - Guam, Pacific Region Rep.

These district officials join re-elected Southeast Region Representative **Franklin Williams** of North Carolina in rounding out regional representation on NACD's Executive Board.

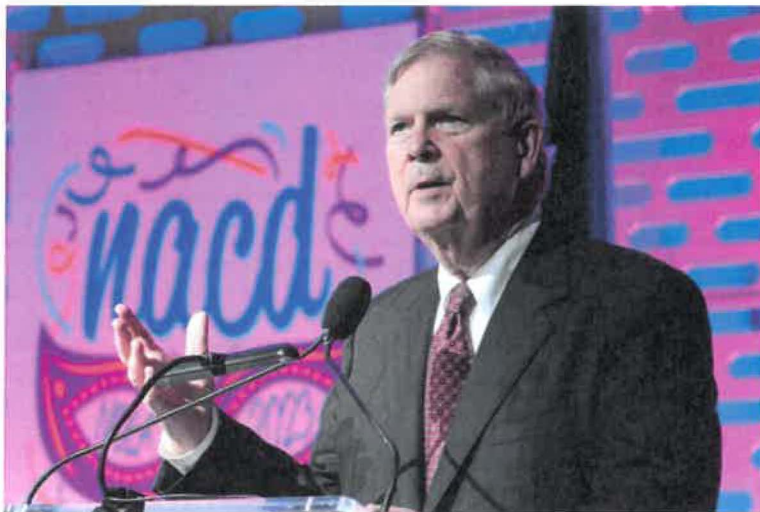
Rich Duesterhaus Lifetime Achievement Award Created



During the NACD Appreciation Banquet, the leaders of **National Conservation Planning Partnership** presented the first ever Rich Duesterhaus Lifetime Achievement Award to its namesake, NACD Senior Advisor **Rich Duesterhaus**. This award recognizes exceptional dedication and commitment to a career serving with the conservation partnership.

Leadership from the conservation partnership; NACD, the National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA), the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA), the National Association of RC&D Councils (NARC&DC), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) created this award to honor the more than 6 decades Rich Duesterhaus has spent supporting conservation.

SECRETARY VILSACK GIVES KEYNOTE ANNOUNCING CONSERVATION FUNDING



During Monday's Leadership Luncheon, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack provided a keynote address for the session and made an announcement regarding the availability of Inflation Reduction Act funding to support oversubscribed voluntary conservation programs.

"The reality is, we can't get it done without you. There needs to be a strong partnership between USDA and conservation districts. You're the trusted source in your communities," remarked Secretary Vilsack. "Now, for the first time in a long time you're going to have significant resources to drive adoption, get producers ready to participate in climate-smart markets, and quantify and measure those outcomes. This is the moment for people to understand what you've been advocating for a long time – conservation. This is your opportunity."

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will make \$850 million available for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). NACD applauds this investment in voluntary and locally-led conservation efforts. It is critical for the conservation districts to have the tools needed to face the challenges of the future.

To read more about Secretary Vilsack's remarks and announcement, visit NACD's [newsroom](#).

NACD Leadership Attends Service Project in Wetlands



On Friday, Feb. 10, NACD Executive Board and staff joined Ducks Unlimited, the Meraux Foundation, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Crescent Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Wetland Watchers from Hurst Middle School for a service project.

The group gathered at the 40 Arpent Wetlands Observatory just outside of New Orleans to install duck boxes for various species of cavity nesting birds that call the wetlands home.

NACD would like to thank our partners for bringing the NACD team, local conservationists, and students together for this memorable event!

CONSERVATION PARTNERS SHARE WITH KEYNOTES AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS



The first General Session of the NACD 2023 Annual Meeting opened on Monday, February 13 with addresses from **NACD President Michael Crowder** and **NACD CEO Jeremy Peters**. They gave updates on the association and discussed the meeting's theme of "Local Resiliency, National Community," including the opportunities and challenges on the horizon for conservation districts.

Lt. General Russel L. Honoré gave an engaging keynote address, highlighting the the key principles of leadership and the challenges that leaders face in a world of emerging natural resource concerns and natural disasters.

Tuesday morning's General Session of the 2023 NACD Annual Meeting featured keynotes and panels with a variety of conservation and natural resources experts from private and federal partners.



Addressing the importance of partnerships in her keynote address, **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams** highlighted the need for collaborative approaches to implementing conservation and natural resource management.

2023 Friends of NACD District Grant Program Recipients Announced

NACD District Operations and Member Services (DOMS) Committee **Chairman Franklin Williams** announced the 2023 Friends of NACD District Grant Recipients during Monday's Leadership Luncheon.

The Friends of NACD District Grants Program supports locally led conservation and advances climate resilience, education and youth development, and food security. Now in its fourth round of funding, the program is funded through donations individuals and organizations make to NACD. This year, eight conservation districts will receive \$2,500 to implement community-based projects.

Read about the recipients in [NACD's newsroom](#).

2022 Poster and Photo Contest Winners Announced

During Monday's Leadership Luncheon attendees were able to view the photos and posters that were recognized as winners of the 2022 contest. The theme for this year's contest was, "Healthy Soils, Healthy Life."

Read more about this year's winners in [NACD's newsroom](#) and view the winning posters and videos on [NACD's Flickr page](#).

Following the opening keynote, the first panel of the general session discussed governance, social, and environmental issues and was moderated by **Agri-Pulse Communications Managing Editor Spencer Chase**. Panelists included **Steven Wall** with Sygenta, **Brooke Wynn** with Smithfield Foods, and **Robert Zemenchik**. This was followed by a panel focusing on collaborative approaches to natural resource stewardship and included **Martha Williams** with Fish and Wildlife Service, **Kristin Thomasgard** with the Department of Defense, Deputy Under Secretary **Gloria Montañó Greene**, and **Charles Sutcliffe** with the Louisiana Governor's Office as panelists. Each panelist shared their unique experiences, perspectives, and insights with the audience.



Tuesday also featured a viewing of the "Wings Over Water" film and a panel discussion about the importance of conservation to managing wildlife habitats. The panel was moderated by **Will Primos**, founder of Primos Hunting, and included NACD Past

President **Michael Crowder**, Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation President and CEO **Charles Potter**, Audubon Chief Conservation Officer **Marshall Johnson**, and Ducks Unlimited Chief Operating Officer **Nick Wiley** as panelists.

NGLI CELEBRATES 2022 COHORT GRADUATION AND WELCOMES 2023 COHORT



NCF Auction Raises \$43,000 for Education Programs



The 2023 **National Conservation Foundation (NCF)** Live Auction was held on Monday night to support Envirothon, the Next Generation Leadership Institute, and the organization's other conservation education programs.

The auction raised approximately **\$43,000** in support of NCF's mission. Thank you to all who participated! If you'd like to make a donation to NCF, please do so [here](#).

See Photos from the Meeting!

See photos and videos as we shared them by following NACD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram [@NACDconserve](#).

Check out all of our photos from the week [on flickr](#). Full videos of the general sessions will be posted on our [YouTube page](#) in the coming weeks.

The **National Conservation Foundation's** (NCF) Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) wrapped up the 2022 Cohort with a graduation celebration on Monday, Feb. 13 at the Leadership Luncheon. NGLI was established to equip leaders with skills and resources related to personal, civil, and organizational leadership development. These cohort members have spent the last year learning and preparing to serve as the conservation leaders of the future.

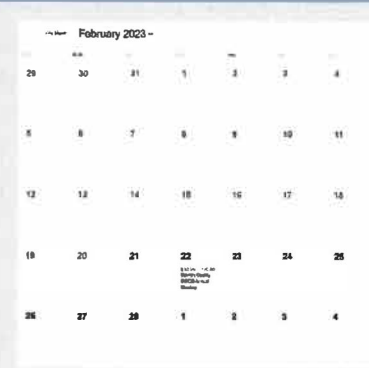
The 2023 Cohort of the Next Generation Leadership Institute (NGLI) also met for the first time at the Annual Meeting. These NGLI participants will meet for four training sessions throughout the year, with a capstone session and graduation at next year's annual meeting.



The 2023 Cohort participants are:

- **Daryl Donohue** – Kansas
- **Eric Hansen** – South Dakota
- **Craig Myers** – North Carolina
- **Angela Rosol** – Iowa
- **Dawn Salcito** – Arizona
- **Donald Stephens** – Oklahoma
- **Michael Stewart** – South Carolina

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