

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

**DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S MONTHLY REPORT**

**9/11/2024**

**PERSONNEL/OFFICE**

- The Lancaster and Cass County Service Centers are under normal operations.

**LPSNRD LAND TREATMENT**

- Current soil moisture conditions are variable across the district; staff are conducting soil moisture evaluations on all projects prior to construction. Projects are being released on a site-by-site basis, some may be withheld due to inadequate soil moisture conditions.
- LPSNRD currently has the following land treatment cost-share program applications:
  - Lancaster County
    - 10 Fall 2024 Structural Applications
    - 7 Fall 2024 Cover Crop Applications
  - Cass County
    - 15 Fall 2024 Structural Applications
    - 2 Fall 2024 Cover Crop Applications

**USDA PROGRAMS**

- Technicians are working on structural projects and checking completed projects. Finishing up summer projects and preparing for fall projects.
- Planning staff have finished FY24 contract obligations for FY24 EQIP/CSP and writing CRP plans/contracts. Now they are beginning field work/planning for general conservation plans and FY25 EQIP/CSP applications and certifying completed practices.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- 9/30/24 – End of Federal Fiscal Year 2024
- 10/1/24 – Start of Federal Fiscal Year 2025
- 10/14/24 – Federal Offices closed for Columbus/Indigenous People's Day


Tom Cowan – District Conservationist



## 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](http://www.lpsnrd.org)

### Memorandum

Date: September 13, 2024  
To: Board of Directors  
From: David Potter, Assistant General Manager   
RE: 2024 NACD Summer Meeting in Boston

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The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) held the 2024 Summer Meeting, Conservation Forum, and Tours in conjunction with the NACD Northeast Region Meeting in Boston, MA and I had the opportunity to attend. LPSNRD has been a member of NACD for many years. We have received six Technical Assistance (TA) grants and are about to apply for our seventh. The summer meeting offered the opportunity to meet those NACD staff members I've been working with for the last six years, meet the NACD officers, talk to National organization leaders, learn of conservation concerns and efforts around the country, network with other individuals in conservation, and to tour some conservation projects in the area. I also had the opportunity to visit with NRCS representatives regarding our current WFPO project and some other concerns/issues the District has been experiencing.

Hosted in partnership with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts, this summer's meeting held August 9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> gathered conservation leaders from across the country 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.

The NACD Board of Directors opened their meeting on Saturday morning. NACD CEO Jeremy Peters gave his report and the NACD Secretary/Treasurer Mark Masters provided a budget report to the delegates and guests. Orval Gigstad of NNRD is our Nebraska delegate on the Board. The District and Partner Relations, Legislative, and Natural Resources Policy Committees met Saturday afternoon. Bipartisan efforts to pass a new farm bill were highlighted. Congressional staffers shared their perspectives on the prospects of the farm bill advancing this year, the status of NACD's priorities, and negotiations on policies within the conservation title. NACD's top farm bill priority is to integrate all remaining Inflation Reduction Act conservation investments into the conservation title to permanently increase funding for voluntary conservation programs.

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 was our Region Representative. She recently stepped down and NACD is currently taking applications for a new Northern Plains 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 brag about Nebraska's unique NRD system and update the Region on what is going on with Nebraska NRDs and our conservation efforts. Sunday afternoon included a tour around Boston with several conference attendees. This guided tour was paid for by the attendees but proved to be very educational. As you know, there are a lot of historical and engineering things to see in Boston. Sunday concluded with a welcome dinner reception.

The Conservation Forum was held Monday morning. Attendees heard from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Terry Cosby, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Ashley Randle, Ocean Spray Senior Vice President of Research & Development and Sustainability Katy Galle, and Indigo Ag Vice President of Sustainability Sciences Dr. A.J.



Kumar emphasized partnerships among producers, government, and the private sector for sustainable, resilient food systems. Next was a panel discussion on water quality and climate resilience with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Dr. David W. Cash, Massachusetts' first Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer, and Cape Cod Conservation District Program Manager Martha Craig. We then heard from USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie. Monday afternoon included an Urban Agriculture and Conservation Tour. These Boston tours were led by the Mystic River

Watershed Association (MyRWA), The Food Project, and the Urban Farming Institute (UFI). The tours helped show how urban areas interact with agriculture and conservation. MyRWA has created a vision of a high-quality park along the Little Mystic Channel to provide better opportunities for recreation, access to nature, social gatherings, and climate resiliency in an area that is susceptible to coastal and inland flooding and a neighborhood threatened by increasing surface temperatures in the summer. The UFI and the Food Project highlighted urban farming in Boston neighborhoods and creating opportunities for meaningful interaction in the cultivation of food. High school students and neighborhood volunteers help run these urban farms.



Tuesday was a full day tour in Bristol and Plymouth Counties. Stops included Westport Rivers Vineyard, Bristol County Agricultural High School, and A.D. Makepeace Company. The Winery highlighted conservation work being done at the vineyard. The agriculture high school was founded by an act of the Massachusetts Legislature in 1912. The school's science majors in agricultural mechanics, animal science, arboriculture, environmental conservation, floriculture, and landscape design and contracting. The high school students work with the land and the animals daily and prepare them for the work force or post-secondary schooling. The A.D. Makepeace Company was founded in 1854 and is one of the world's largest cranberry growers. Abel D Makepeace established hundreds of acres of bog and became known as the "The Cranberry Kiing." Today the company farms approximately 1,750 acres of bog. The cranberry business is big in Massachusetts and the use and reuse of water to grow and harvest the cranberries is very interesting. The evening ended with a traditional New England clambake.

On Wednesday I attended the Northeast Region Capacity Building session in the morning and then had an opportunity to walk the Freedom Trail and see some additional sites that afternoon and evening. Overall, the summer meeting was fantastic. It was a great opportunity to network and learn what's going on in conservation across the country. Keynote speakers, panelists, and board members addressed the importance of partnerships to delivering successful conservation now and in the future. I've attended other NACD events in the last couple years and I'm getting to know the NACD staff and key members. I greatly appreciate the LPSNRD Board allowing me to attend.

A copy of the "NACD 2024 Summer Meeting eResource" is attached and provides more information and photos of the summer meeting. NACD's 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will be February 8-12, 2025, in Salt Lake City, UT.

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#### **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](http://www.nacdnet.org).*



# NACD Summer Meeting eResource

Weekly news briefs from the National Association of Conservation Districts

## NACD HOSTS

August 13, 2024

## CONSERVATION FORUM IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



This week, NACD held the 2024 Summer Conservation Forum in Boston, Massachusetts. Hosted with the NACD Northeast Region Meeting, in partnership with the **Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts**, this summer's meeting gathered nearly 300 conservation leaders from across the country to discuss natural resource concerns and solutions.

During Monday's Conservation Forum, attendees heard from Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Ashley Randle, NACD Northeast Region Chair Denise Savageau, Ocean Spray Senior Vice President of Research & Development and Sustainability Katy Galle, Indigo Ag Vice President for Sustainability

### NACD and Trust In Food™ Affirm Partnership



During Saturday's Board of Director's Meeting, Trust In Food™ (TIF), a sustainability initiative of Farm Journal and NACD signed a letter of agreement.

The agreement affirms partnership between NACD and TIF, and builds on recent collaborations. Both organizations share common ground championing a locally led approach to natural resources conservation.



Sciences Dr. A.J. Kumar, NACD President Kim LaFleur, and NRCS Chief Terry Cosby.

Conservation leaders also discussed natural resource concerns like water quality and climate resilience, and projects like the [Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project](#) during a "campfire chat" panel discussion. The discussion included U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Dr. David W. Cash, Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer, and **Cape Cod Conservation District** Program Manager Martha Craig.



During Monday's luncheon, attendees also heard remarks from USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie who was introduced to the stage by the Massachusetts Envirothon team.

Throughout the meeting, attendees heard from conservation leaders who shared their experiences addressing changing natural resource challenges in their regions. Keynote speakers, panelists, workshop presenters, and board members spoke about unleashing the power of partnerships to deliver successful conservation now and in the future.

## WORKSHOPS, COMMITTEE & REGION MEETINGS, AND MORE

Over the weekend, NACD Summer Meeting participants and partners gathered for workshops, committee meetings, region meetings, and more.

On Saturday, NRCS hosted two sessions of a PL-566 watershed workshop where watershed programs and sponsor responsibilities were discussed. Attendees learned about emergency watershed protection through different funding sources. In the afternoon, various committees, including the District and Partner Relations, Legislative, and Natural Resources Committees convened for discussion and to hear from subcommittees.

Sunday began with region meetings. NACD Region Representatives provided updates, invited partners to speak, and held conversations with meeting attendees and local conservation district leaders with their respective regions.

"We look forward to growing our partnership with Trust In Food™ and encourage conservation districts to participate in activities like field days and peer networking with TIF's America's Conservation Agriculture Movement (ACAM)," said **NACD President Kim LaFleur**.

Learn more about the signing in this [NACD press release](#).

### NACD Northeast Region Meets



The Northeast Region met alongside NACD this weekend in Boston, hosting meetings and taking region members on an exciting "Duck-of-a-Day" Tour around the waterfront!

The Northeast Mid-Atlantic Partnership for Forest and Water gathered for a meeting on Sunday. An interagency, multi-partner collaboration dedicated to enhancing forest and water priorities across a 13-state footprint, from Maine to West Virginia and Ohio, the partnership was [recently awarded a grant](#) from the USDA Forest Service's Landscape Scale Restoration program to continue to advance its mission.

## NACD BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONVENES FOR SUMMER

Members of NACD's Board of Directors from 38 states and territories met in Boston over the weekend and heard updates and reports from NACD President Kim LaFleur, CEO Jeremy Peters, and Secretary Treasurer Mark Masters.



NACD welcomes the following new board members: Josh Curry from Illinois, Bruce Yerkes from Maryland, and Randy Smith from Minnesota.

The Board of Directors also heard an update on bipartisan efforts to pass a farm bill from staff representing Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stebanow and Ranking Member John Boozman. The staff shared respective leaders' farm bill priorities, challenges the bill faces, NACD priorities, and more.



During the board meeting, partners spoke during a panel that included NRCS Chief Terry Cosby, Northeast Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils President Craig Hartsock, National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) President Melissa Higbee, and National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) President Tyler Brown. They discussed the importance of partnerships, answered questions from

The Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE) also honored several individuals who have made remarkable contributions to locally led conservation in the region.

### "Up to Bat" for Conservation



NACD kicked off the Summer Meeting with 100 conservation colleagues enjoying a Red Sox vs. Astros game at iconic Fenway Park!

Attendees enjoyed hot dogs and an eventful game, while sporting a limited-edition Friends of NACD t-shirt. T-shirt proceeds benefit the [Friends of NACD District Grants Program](#).

Throughout the meeting, leaders continued to go "up to bat" for conservation!

**See photos from the event!**

board members, and talked about the future of conservation and natural resources.

Board members also participated in a workshop on persuasive communications, heard committee updates, reviewed resolution changes from this year's Annual Meeting, and approved the FY2025 budget for NACD.

## CONSERVATION IN ACTION: SUMMER MEETING TOURS EXPLORE GREATER BOSTON



On Monday, NACD Summer Meeting attendees had the opportunity to visit three urban sites in Boston to learn about urban agriculture and conservation. Attendees visited with the [Mystic River Watershed Association \(MyRWA\)](#) in Charlestown and learned how they are building solutions, rooted in science and an understanding of environmental injustices, so that all people across the watershed have safe and easy access to nature and a healthy environment.

Attendees also visited the [Urban Farming Institute \(UFI\)](#) and [The Food Project](#), to learn about the growing momentum to green cities and how developing more sustainable solutions for urban economic development has resulted in growth in urban and suburban farms.

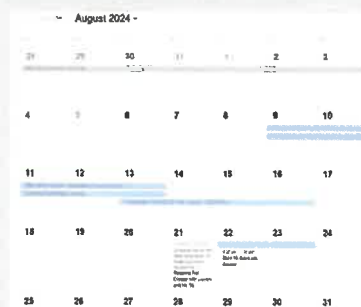
On Tuesday, attendees are spending a full day exploring Bristol and Plymouth counties south of Boston. The tour takes attendees to a



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

Have you been taking photos during the 2024 NACD Summer Meeting? We want to see them!

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



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](#)



vineyard, a high school leading the way in agricultural education, and a cranberry bog implementing a variety of conservation practices.

Tuesday's tour will culminate in friends and fellowship at a traditional New England clambake. Clambakes originated with coastal Native Americans who taught early settlers how to steam seafood on the shores of New England. This amazing food will close out the meeting!



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NACD | 509 Capitol Court NE | Washington, DC 20002 US

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