



National Association of
Conservation Districts

Supporting Conservation Leaders in Utah

National Association of Conservation
Districts



National Association of
Conservation Districts

Who We Are

As the national voice for all conservation districts, NACD supports voluntary, incentive-driven natural resource conservation programs that benefit all citizens.

Every acre, every American, every day.



National Association of
Conservation Districts

What We Do... Advocacy

NACD **testifies** before Congress, **submits letters and comments** on proposed federal rules and legislation, and **regularly meets** with federal lawmakers and their staff to advance beneficial policy related to voluntary conservation.



Jeremy Peters, NACD CEO, testifying before the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry on February 28, 2017.



National Association of Conservation Districts

June 16, 2017

Donna Downing Project Lead Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds Environmental Protection Agency 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington DC, 20460	Andrew Hanson Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations Environmental Protection Agency 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington DC, 20460
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Re: Definition of "Waters of the United States"

Dear Ms. Downing and Mr. Hanson,

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) represents America's 3,000 locally-led conservation districts working with millions of landowners and operators to help them manage and protect land and water resources on private and public lands. Established under state law, conservation districts share a single mission: to work cooperatively with federal, state, and other local resource management agencies, and private sector interest groups to provide technical, financial, and other assistance to help landowners and operators apply conservation to the landscape.

Conservation practices help minimize the impacts of major weather events. For example, soil health practices increase infiltration, improve nutrient uptake, reduce runoff and protect water quality. With earned trust and a proven ability partner at the local level, conservation districts are well positioned to play a key role in addressing water quality and water conservation challenges in local communities.

NACD acknowledges the successes of the Clean Water Act (CWA) over its 40-year existence. Clean water is critical to the health and viability of the urban and rural landscapes that conservation districts serve. New guidance is required to provide clarity regarding the scope of waters protected under the CWA.

On February 28, 2017, President Donald Trump issued the "Executive Order on Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the 'Waters of the United States' Rule."¹ The order instructed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to "consider interpreting the term 'navigable waters'" in a manner "consistent with former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Antonin Scalia's opinion" in *Rapanos v. United States (Rapanos)*. NACD appreciates the opportunity to participate in the beginning stages of creating a new guidance, and you will find our comments to the proposed discussion questions below.

¹ Executive Order Number 13778, 82 FR 12497, "Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the 'Waters of the United States' Rule," February 28, 2017.

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National Association of
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The Latest: NACD Policy

NACD has several policy concerns that conservation districts and state associations can help address. **Right now, the main four are:**

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

NACD supports local control over species and not a top-down approach.

Invasive Species Management

NACD supports funding for APHIS Wildlife Services and the national feral swine control program.

NACD supports the use of native plant and seed species in recovery efforts and restoration projects.

Forest Health

Without a wildfire funding change, the USFS will not be able to adequately manage our federal forests.

Wild Horse and Burro Management

NACD urges Congress to support the removal of the Interior Appropriations language that currently prevents the BLM from using all the tools provided to it under the Act to bring down the horse and burro population to AML (appropriate management levels).

Your lawmakers must know how critical districts are to the continued effective delivery of conservation programs.



National Association of
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NACD Technical Assistance Grants

In order to **bolster the volume of technical assistance available for conservation planning and EQIP implementation**, NRCS has granted NACD \$9 million.

90% of these funds will go directly to conservation districts that need additional capacity to meet customer demand.



Additional resources, including a
briefer, FAQ and application for this
funding opportunity, are available
on NACD's website:
www.nacdnet.org



National Association of
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What We Do... Communications and Outreach

NACD produces and disseminates **four regular publications** for our members and partners to keep them informed and engaged.



The NACD eResource

Weekly news briefs from the National Association of Conservation Districts

250 CONSERVATION LEADERS GATHER IN LINCOLN FOR PARTNERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Last Thursday, representatives of the National Conservation Partnership's five members – NACD, NRCS, the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA), and the National Conservation District Employees Association – gathered in Lincoln, Nebraska, for their 2017 Leadership Development Symposium.



September CPBC deadline
is July 26

The last 2017 [Conservation Planning Boot Camp \(CPBC\)](#) session will be held September 12 to 28. The deadline for state associations to submit participant eligibility and contact information to NACD for this session is Wednesday, July 26. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, there may be fewer CPBC sessions open to district employee participation compared to FY 2017. Please contact NACD's staff lead on CPBC, Phylis Vandevere, at Phylis-Vandevere@nacdn.net for more information.



House panel hears importance of farm bill forestry programs



Conservation Clip List is a weekly collection of articles distributed by NACD that provides our members and partners with the latest news in what's driving conservation. If you have a relevant submission, please contact your [NACD Communications Team](#).

[Can Birth Control Save Our Wild Horses?](#) via National Geographic

With euthanasia and sterilization ruled out, the government is banking on contraceptive vaccines to manage the booming population. Horse birth control is a key strategy to better manage wild horses on rangelands throughout the western U.S. Descended from domesticated animals that escaped or were released from captivity, wild horses are technically "feral"—the term used to describe the offspring of any domesticated species that people no longer tend.

[Which states have most land in CRP?](#) via Great Falls Tribune

On Oct. 28, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released details of the nearly \$1.7 billion in Conservation Reserve Program payments made to more than half of a million U.S. property owners in 2016. The 2008 farm bill reauthorized the CRP, but Congress set a downward trend to the program, capping maximum enrolled acreages at 32 million. That cap is scheduled to decline to 24 million acres by 2018.

[President Obama Establishes 17th Wildlife Refuge of his Presidency](#) via The Heartland Institute

Despite chronic under-funding and a \$3.3 billion maintenance and operations backlog on existing federal



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What We Do... Direct Services to Districts

NACD hosts a **national directory** for all the conservation districts and state associations across the U.S. and its territories.

UTAH

UTAH ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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National Association of Conservation Districts

What We Do... Direct Services to Districts

NACD produces **technical reports and guides** for districts to utilize on a regular basis.

NACD Urban and Community Conservation Webinars

NACD's Urban and Community Conservation Webinars are held from noon to 1:00pm EDT/EST on the third Thursday of each month. This webinar series, sponsored by The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, features the projects and programs led by conservation districts and their collaborators, and often imparts strategies for securing funding and structuring urban conservation initiatives.

There is no cost to participate, but space is limited, so please RSVP to NACD Northern Plains Representative [Debra Bogar](#) to reserve your space. To listen to and view webinar presentations from previous Fiscal Years (FY), click below.

- [+ FY 2017](#)

- [+ FY 2016](#)

- [+ FY 2015](#)

- [+ FY 2014](#)

- [+ FY 2013](#)



And runs a number of **programs** that provide education, resources, and networking opportunities for our district members.





National Association of Conservation Districts

What We Do... Members Only Section



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MEMBERS ONLY SECTION

Welcome to NACD's Members Only section!

Thank you for supporting your national voice for conservation by completing your membership dues payment for NACD's 2018 fiscal year, which runs from October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018. Here you'll find an array of timely and relevant resources for conservation districts and state/territory associations to utilize. Every month, NACD adds free, easy-to-download content to this page, so make sure to check back frequently.

Immediately below are several content categories that when clicked, take you straight to the materials you're most interested in. Not seeing what you're looking for? Please email NACD Communications and Operations Coordinator [Sara Kangas](#).

CONTENT CATEGORIES

[Policy](#)

[Communications](#)

[District Tools](#)

[Fundraising](#)

POLICY

2017 NACD Policy Book

*****Note: NACD's policy book is for member reference only. Please do not distribute this resource to outside parties.*****

NACD policy development is a grassroots process, developed through a system of graduated representation, usually beginning with the local conservation districts. Resolutions can be submitted to the NACD Board by state associations, U.S. territories, or the District of Columbia; NACD Region Board of Directors; NACD Foundation Committees; the NACD Executive Board; and the NACD Resolutions Committee. Resolutions are then presented to the appropriate Foundation Committee for consideration and, pending Committee approval, are acted on by the NACD Board of Directors. The policy positions adopted by the NACD Board of Directors become the official position of NACD as it represents the nation's conservation districts.

Members Only

[Members Only Section](#)

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Click the Account Management headline above to:

- Update your NACD username and password
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- Manage membership
- Register for an event
- Access secure NACD Board of Directors or NACD committee pages



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What We Do... Wildfire Policy

Federal wildfire spending has increased steadily over the past three decades, but even more rapidly over the past five years.

In 2015, the Forest Service spent a record \$1.7 billion on fighting wildfires. **This year, once all the federal government's bills are tallied, the tab for fighting wildfires will reach \$2.5 billion – setting an all-time record.**



To end “fire borrowing” once and for all, and to restore our nation’s forestland, NACD **recommends three main changes:**

- Treat wildfire as a national problem.
- Treat wildfires as natural disasters.
- Increase funding for forest management and restoration.



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What We Do... Wild Horse Policy

NACD supports any and all efforts to ensure BLM maintains wild horse populations in designated HMAs and immediately removes all wild horses and burros found outside of HMAs.

NACD insists on wild horse and burro population numbers being managed based on sound scientific rangeland health practices to ensure protection and preservation of critical sage grouse habitat, other wildlife habitat and multiple land use.

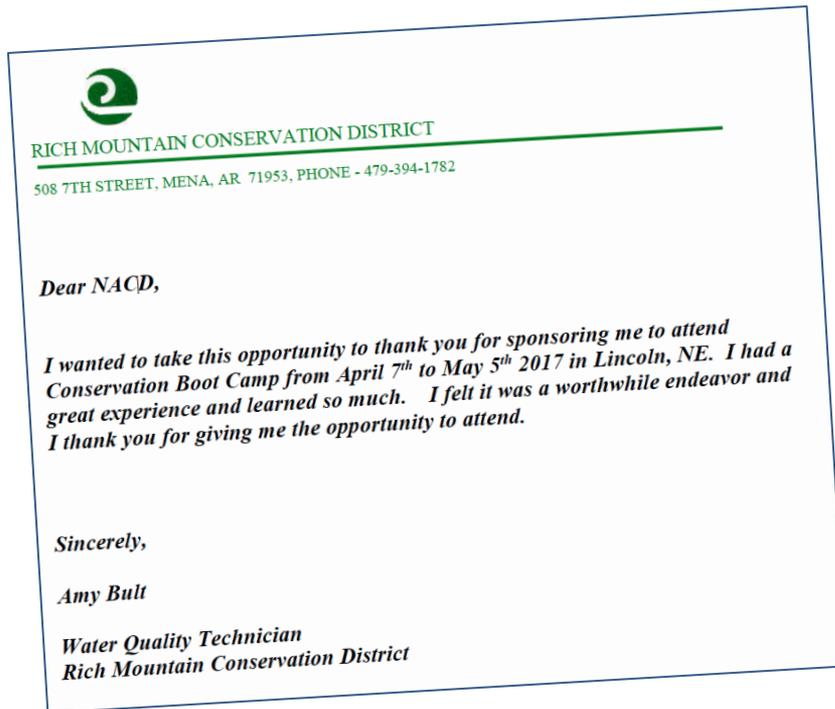




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Conservation Planning Boot Camp

NRCS Conservation Planning Boot Camp is a three-week, intensive training course for technical employees that covers current conservation planning policy, procedures, and guidelines as outlined in the National Planning Procedures Handbook.



NACD in Action



Boot Camp provides technical training free of charge to district employees

Are you a district employee interested in sharpening your conservation planning skills? Have you been looking to take part in a professional development course, but aren't sure it's worth your time?

Look no further – NACD has your answer. NRCS Conservation Planning Boot Camp is a free "meet-all-your-needs" training program for conservation and tribal district employees committed to mastering the delivery of modern conservation planning.

Last year, NACD entered into an agreement with NRCS that made district employee participation in the agency's Conservation Planning Boot

Camp (CPBC) a free opportunity. The three-week training takes place each month in Lincoln, Nebraska, and district participants are reimbursed for their participation expenses by NACD.

Each CPBC session includes a history of conservation planning and comprehensive training in developing, implementing, and evaluating conservation plans. Participants meet and network with other district and NRCS technical professionals, and once they return home, are able to provide conservation technical assistance that is consistent with a national standard.

Danny Sells, the executive director of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts, told NACD that all districts should strongly consider having their employees participate in CPBC. "Improving professional skills makes employees more valuable, districts more capable, and your conservation programs more impressive to funders," he said. *(continued on next page)*



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What We Do... Direct Services to Districts

For decades, NACD has also offered its members **stewardship and education materials** free of charge or at affordable prices.



STEWARDSHIP THEMES

The Stewardship and Education Committee has developed a five-year rotation for stewardship topics – water, soil, habitat, forestry, and a topic of interest – and determines the theme each year. **The 2018 Stewardship theme is “Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home.”**

Water is one of our most precious resources. Watersheds supply water for drinking and recreation, irrigation and manufacturing, and wildlife and bird habitat. It is essential that each of us adopts good water conservation habits so that we can keep our water resources safe and productive now and for future generations.

Rules, entry forms, and other resources related to the 2018 NACD poster contest can be found on our [Contests webpage](#). The 2018 Stewardship Week will take place April 29 – May 6.





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