

UTAH ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE: MIKE LARSON

A year has passed since you gave me the honor of representing Utah's Conservation Districts as President of this Association. The UACD Board and I are here to help address your concerns, obstacles, and any difficulties your Conservation Districts encounter, as well as celebrate your accomplishments and victories.

Every District Supervisor has been appointed to serve their District's Natural Resource Concerns. We all need to take this responsibility very seriously; the public is relying on you to represent them the best you can. It is every supervisor's job to know what conservation efforts are happening in their district and to connect producers with the available agriculture programs. We do a lot of good, and we need to let the public know how we, the original conservationists, serve them.

It is a very exciting time for conservation in Utah and for UACD because so many partners are working together to address conservation needs in our state. These partners include all producers in the state as well as anyone concerned or interested in the development and future of our great states' natural resources.

The UACD Board has strived to strengthen our connection with our local, state and federal partners by putting agriculture and conservation at the forefront of our relationships. These efforts have led to agreements and conservation opportunities that can only happen when people work well together.

I want to thank all who attended and contributed to our successful 75th Anniversary Convention. We appreciate

our sponsors and partners; without them it would be very difficult to host this event. A special thanks to all the supervisors who took time out of their lives to come and participate.

The Utah Legislature session starts mid-January. There are important water bills that will affect the Districts and our producers. We will keep you advised and be asking for input as they develop. Take time to introduce yourselves to your Local, State and Federal representatives. Let them know your positions on the items they will be dealing with.

I must give a big shout out to Kristy Davis, UACD Executive Director. She works tirelessly with our partners, the UACD Board and Utah Legislature to support the Conservation Districts. I want to thank her for all her years of service and unwavering support for conservation in Utah.

Your Zone Meetings will be different this year. There will be a unique training opportunity designed to help everyone understand their roll and how to help make our district more effective. This is a very special opportunity that will be hard to provide again, so we need all supervisors to attend one of the events.

Finally, I want to wish all of you, your families, and friends a wonderful holiday season. May it be a productive and prosperous year for all. Take this time to enjoy and celebrate with family and friends. Remember to thank God for all we have to be thankful for and to include our Service Members in your prayers, they make it possible to live in this great nation and state.

CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANT

UACD, on behalf of the USHP, manages the national NRCS CIG with 17 participating producers. UACD secured \$500,000 in state funds to partner with \$1.7 million in federal funds. We are working with UDAF and USU to create soil health research projects on these 17 sites. After the first two years of the project, we have completed soil health plans with participants and collected initial soil and water data on each site.

Continue to watch our soil health web page on www.uacd.org or check out all of the information on our partnership site www.utahsoilhealth.org. **Please attend one of our on site field days, they start this spring.**




**SOIL HEALTH IN THE WEST
CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP**
February 6th-8th, 2024
Dixie Convention Center
St. George, Utah

- Networking
- Vendor Fair
- Workshops
- Keynote Presentations
- Lessons from soil health practitioners and experts & more!

Registration open November 1st

UTAHSOILHEALTH.ORG
SCAN QR CODE TO LEARN MORE



NRCS PARTNERSHIP

We are excited to be growing our partnership with NRCS. We entered into an agreement to manage 13 new positions throughout the state. The employees will assist the NRCS offices with the additional workload expected from the much anticipated IRA funds coming to our state. The goal is to get good conservation on the ground as fast as we can.

We are hiring two Cultural Resource Technicians, one for the southern and another for the northern part of the state. We are also hiring 11 Program Support Specialists, one for each NRCS team. Many of these will be located in offices with limited staff and will be able to help NRCS better serve their customers.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

There was important work done this year at the legislative session. UACD worked with Senator Vickers and was able to successfully obtain \$1,000,000 in funding for soil health equipment grants.

UDAF manages these grants through the Utah Soil Health Program. We thank all those who supported our efforts and spoke to our state legislators on its behalf.

**2023 CONSERVATION
AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Connecting Conservation Award
Tyce Palmer
Zone 5 Resource Coordinator

President's Award
Emily Fife
NRCS UT State Conservationist

Bill Rigby Award
Loyd Jessop
Dixie CD Supervisor

Conservation Foundation Award
Kristy Davis
UACD Executive Director

ZONE MEETINGS

We have a unique opportunity to have Ray Ledgerwood host a supervisor training workshop for us. Ray has been working with CD's for many years to help grow their capacity and influence.

In lieu of the "regular" zone meetings we will be holding three combined meetings throughout the state this year.

Zones 1 & 2: March 5th, Ogden
Zones 3 & 6: March 6th, Heber
Zones 4,5 & 7: March 7th, Richfield

There will be one hour of zone business and training by UACD and NRCS, Ray will follow. Our partners are invited to participate. Lunch will be provided.

We tentatively plan to start at 10:00am and end between 3:00 and 4:00pm. We want most participants to be able to drive in that morning and make it home by evening. Those who need to stay overnight can use SERA to cover costs.

LOCAL WORKGROUP

We have been working with NRCS to increase the work and capacity of the Local Working Groups (LWG) by providing facilitators the past two years.

This year we partnered with NRCS to create an exciting opportunity for NRCS and UDAF staff to receive facilitator training and be able to provide that training for the LWGs. We believe this will provide a trained facilitator who is familiar with our state, our issues and projects.

Please plan on bringing your districts resource concerns to the next LWG meeting.

UACD dues invoices will be sent out soon. Be on the lookout. If you have questions or concerns please ask your Zone Director or call Kristy.

**UACD OFFICERS &
SUPPORT STAFF**

President
Mike Larson

Vice President
Stuart Bowler

2nd Vice President
Kerry Cook

Secretary/Treasurer
Thomas Walbridge

**Executive
Director/CFO**
Kristy Davis

Zone 1
Jeff Kent
Thomas Walbridge

Zone 2
Wade Judd
DeVan Pack

Zone 3
Sid Smart
Vacant

Zone 4
Kerry Cook
Devan Gass

Zone 5
Bruce Bunting
Vacant

Zone 6
Bryan Bell
Steve Remund

Zone 7
Blaine Nebeker
Dee Taylor

