



Fall 2014

# RESOURCE

*America's Voice for Conservation*

## Soil Health Movement Takes Center Stage



NACD receives a Conservation Innovation  
Grant to advance Soil Health Initiative  
Highlighting District-led Soil Health Efforts  
Conservation Districts: Success in Black and White

# a letter from the president



## Earl Garber

President,  
National Association of  
Conservation Districts

## Investing in Soil Health

As the summer comes to an end and colorful fall foliage takes center stage, private landowners in America will be harvesting a bountiful crop. This plentiful food, fiber, and energy production from America's private working lands is in large part due to a favorable weather pattern. It is also due to hard work and a healthy natural resource base. I am sure many of you have heard about, or have been involved in, one of the greatest movements in America: "soil health." The soil health movement can and will be the basis for sustaining an adequate food, fiber, and renewable energy supply for future generations in America and the world.

The implementation of a national soil health strategy is being led by our oldest partner, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS's depth of knowledge and technical skills makes them capable of leading such a large undertaking. However, with the variability and complexity of soils, cropping systems, and climates from region to region, our partners need local leadership, knowledge, partnership building, and boots on the ground to be successful. Districts are well positioned, through the local conservation delivery system, to provide this vital link in the soil health movement. With nearly 3,000 districts nationwide, our footprint on the landscape is unmatched for delivering conservation.

The soil health movement will need to reach every acre of working lands, both rural and urban. The guidance to determine the best management practices for implementing a soil health system in your region can be provided by your district's leadership. In my home district, our board of supervisors has the challenge of determining the practices needed for a soil health management system for the unique crop rotation of rice and crawfish. The production of two crops which require maintaining a flood on the soil, will require local expertise in determining the necessary management practices.

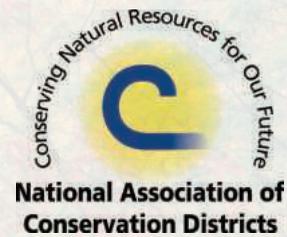
I am sure each of you has a one-of-a-kind land use in your district which will require local input. As your NACD president, I want to encourage each of you and your districts to get involved in this movement. This is an opportunity to bring natural resource conservation to the next level of priority, as the key to a healthy nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Earl J. Garber". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Earl J. Garber  
NACD President

# The RESOURCE

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President

**Lee McDaniel**  
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### Executive Board

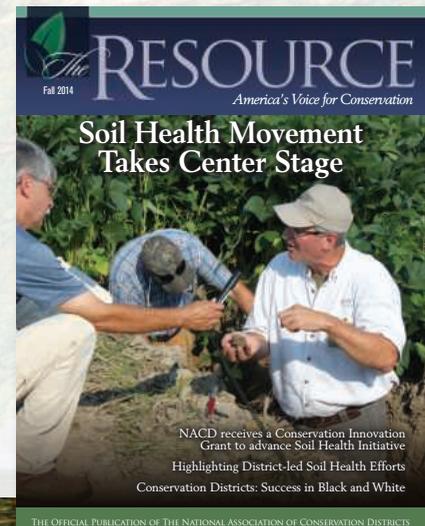
Kimberly Lafleur ..... Northeast Region  
Tim Palmer ..... North Central Region  
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Shaun Sims ..... Southwest Region  
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## about our cover

Barry Fisher of Indiana NRCS and the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), discusses soil health at this year's Soil Health Forum in Indianapolis.





# ceo's corner



**John Larson**  
CEO,  
National Association of  
Conservation Districts

## A Unified Voice for the Growing Soil Health Movement

NACD is proud to provide a national voice for our locally-led conservation district members. NACD provides a unified voice for conservation districts through the growing movement around “soil health.” To many of you who have been engaged with your local district for many years this doesn’t seem like a new concept, and my response to you is “you are absolutely right!” Soil health is at the heart of what started the conservation partnership of federal, state and local groups more than 70 years ago. Practicing good soil health management is one of those stalwart concepts that will always ring true.

NACD is encouraged by the excitement around soil health and is engaging in numerous ways to help to build momentum on this old, new idea. A first step was a 2013 agreement with USDA-NRCS to focus on soil health and the opportunity to engage landowners and managers along with our conservation districts and state associations. This agreement has provided NACD with resources to highlight the positive aspects of implementing soil health practices, and to show its value to member districts and their producers. Our 2014 summer NACD board meeting and Soil Health Forum and Tours in Indiana focused on the solid example that the state of Indiana has put in place around soil health. Another important step was the acceptance of NACD’s Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) by USDA-NRCS to partner with Datu Research. The grant will help NACD and Datu to jointly show the value of soil health practice implementation to agricultural producers nationwide by developing case studies of four agricultural production operations in the area of soil health management.

The second aspect of the grant will be the formation of a national “farmer advocate” network—organized by NACD and facilitated by its local districts, state, and territory associations—to raise awareness of best-management practices for soil health and to increase their adoption by farmers and landowners. The network will include 150 progressive farmers, in every region of the country, who are willing to use, demonstrate, and advocate for soil health practices. The system will utilize conservation districts’ reputation at the local level as trusted resources for on-the-ground conservation planning and implementation. We expect the farmer advocate network to evolve and expand in subsequent years, as there are more successful experiences to share.

NACD showcasing successful experiences throughout the country will help ensure credibility and spur adoption so that local success can be replicated into the future. I hope you share my enthusiasm and will join with us in being part of this resurgence of “soil health!”

John Larson, CEO

## The Regional Conservation Partnership Program Moves Forward

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is in the process of moving forward with the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP). With nearly 600 pre-proposals submitted in July, the amount of funding requested totaled more than six times the funds available under the program. About \$2.8 billion was requested while \$394 million is available for fiscal years 2014 - 2015. Pre-proposal submissions were received from all 50 states and every critical conservation area (CCA).

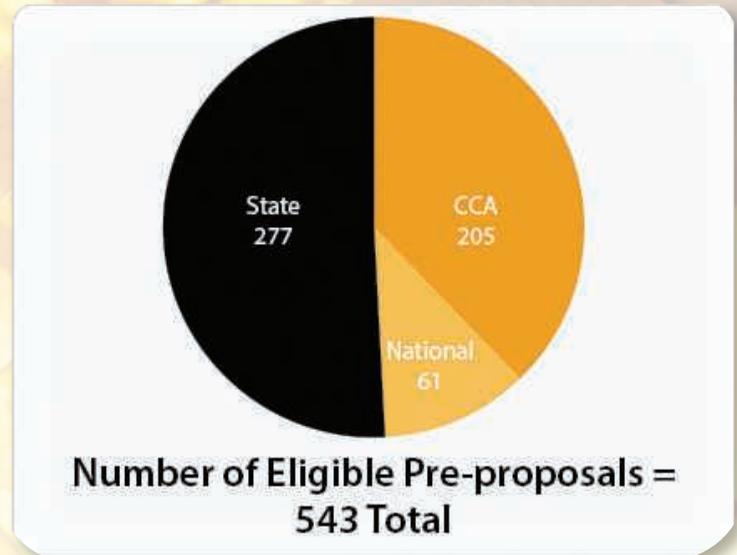
The large amount of pre-proposals made the review process highly competitive. NRCS staff rigorously reviewed the pre-proposals, ranking them based on the project's ability to:

- Address resource concerns and measuring outcomes;
- Deliver high percentages of applied conservation to address conservation priorities or local, state, regional, or national conservation initiatives;
- Leverage significant non-federal financial and technical resources;
- Coordinate with other local, state, regional, or national efforts;

## FY 2015 Appropriations Update

As expected, at the end of Fiscal Year 2014 Congress passed a Continuing Resolution to fund the federal government until a new Congress is in place next session. Pending the political majorities in both the House and the Senate after the midterm elections, it is likely a budget bill or an omnibus will be passed later this year or early next year to fund the government for Fiscal Year 2015. Unfortunately, both the House and the Senate proposed unwanted cuts to mandatory spending allocated by the 2014 Farm Bill.

While the House Agriculture Bill calls for an increase in Conservation Operations to offset building rental payments, totaling \$843,053,000, it unfortunately also calls for the reduction of funding to the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) by \$209 million, the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) by \$60 million and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) by \$109 million.



- Be innovative in conservation methods and delivery; and
- Assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for a natural resource regulatory requirement

About 230 applicants were invited to submit full proposals, approximately 40 of which listed soil and water conservation districts or state associations as the lead partner. Full proposals were due to NRCS by Oct. 2, and final selections are expected to be announced in late October.

The Senate Agriculture Bill reduces funding for EQIP by \$250 million, totaling the allocation at \$1,350,000. Conservation Operations was funded at \$849,295,000.

NACD has met with agriculture appropriations staff and sent letters to the members of the subcommittee to share our concerns and priorities. Copies of NACD's letters, including coalition endorsed letters, are available on the NACD website under the policy tab.

## Soil Health Movement Takes Center Stage

Agricultural producers and their conservation partners across America are on a great mission. Their goal is to grow robust crops and enrich soil health all while reducing input costs.

NACD and America's conservation districts, along with their traditional partner, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), have made soil health a long-term priority. As it gains steam, the soil health movement has embraced all landscapes, from crop and grazing lands to forests and, yes, even urban settings.

It has been a busy but rewarding time. In the past several months, NACD has hosted a successful Soil Health Forum in Indianapolis, conducted two focus groups to gain insight and direction from producers and conservation professionals, and conducted a survey of districts and their soil health needs and activities nationwide. (See accompanying sidebar.)

### Boots on the ground

Producers are getting substantial assistance from local, state and federal conservation agencies and other partners, but many early adopters are quick to point out the movement was, and to some extent still is, farmer-led. These producers have pioneered soil health principles that include no-till, cover crops, increased plant diversity and minimum soil disturbance.

Some conservation districts have been at their side for much of the ride. In Indiana, districts are key members of the multi-partner Conservation Cropping System Initiative that has vaulted the state to a leading position in the soil health movement. As usual, district employees are often the folks kicking dirt with producers.

"It's about getting local boots on the ground and connecting people," says Dan Perkins, watershed and conservation program specialist in Indiana's Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Perkins, dubbed the "Cover Crop Guy," says spreading the word works best at the local level. "Each farming community is pretty unique in how it operates. You need local people to work with local programs," he said.

Indeed, that was one of the more common findings that emerged from NACD's focus groups. Soil health, several producers said, is site-specific, so local champions are keys to adoption of soil health systems.

Indiana State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, a national leader in the soil health movement, recently underscored the importance of the movement.

"If we don't do this, who is going to across the country?" she asked, while speaking at a soil health training session sponsored by the National Conservation District Employees Association held in conjunction with NACD's Soil Health Forum. "We see the whole picture, we get it. We are the ones who have been given the charge in this country to do this. Districts, this is what you're supposed to be doing. NRCS, this is what we're supposed to be doing. But you've got to plan for it. If you're not ready, you're going to be missing out."

### Leading the Way

The Burleigh County Soil Conservation District in North Dakota adopted soil health as its major focus 20 years ago and has emerged as an international leader in the movement. Longtime District Conservationist Jay Fuhrer remembers when the board first embraced soil health. "The nucleus of our team was five district supervisors. When they decided to go down this road and make the



Ray Archuleta, "The Soil Guy," at a Wisconsin field day.

# Feature Story



Menoken farm garden shows produce from a district-owned plot where soil health principles are tested. The garden is part of the overall plot, and food raised in the “soil health garden” is donated to several local food pantries. Burleigh County, ND

change, it got pretty quiet,” Fuhrer says. Today, the team has expanded beyond the district and NRCS to include an array of other partners.

Fuhrer, too, emphasizes that making personal contacts has been a key to their success. “It takes those boots on the ground, having contact with people and making things happen in the county.”



Jasper County SWCD. Dan Perkins, watershed and conservation program specialist at the district, in the field with producers.

Critical in leading this charge, have been the district boards. Working collaboratively, all five of the original board members made soil health their priority in their operations.

This kind of support enables conservation professionals to have a greater impact in the local community.

“I had a farmer tell me, ‘Never underestimate what it means when you stop here and talk,’ ” Fuhrer said.

And the Burleigh County team has been doing a lot of talking lately. National and international visitors have come to the county for soil health tours and workshops. District calendars mark visits with farmers from Spain, Slovakia, Germany, Belgium, France and Australia, along with states across the U.S.



Burleigh international visitors shows district conservationist Jay Fuhrer (second from left) with a group of visitors from several countries, including Australia, South Africa and France who came to learn about soil health. Burleigh County, ND

Gabe Brown, one of the original board members, has emerged as a virtual soil health rock star, addressing groups across the country about the work he has done regenerating his farm’s soil. Meanwhile, Fuhrer’s extensive knowledge, dedication, and hard work led State Conservationist Mary Podoll to recently name him the state’s soil health ambassador.

## States marching forward

In addition to Indiana and North Dakota, which have cadres of soil health specialists, other states are moving forward in the fight to reclaim their soil health. In South Dakota, State



# Feature Story



Ray Archuleta, "The Soil Guy," at a Wisconsin field day.

Conservationist Jeff Zimprich created a "Voices for Soil Health" team as well as a Soil Health Subcommittee of the State Technical Committee. The 67-member Voices for Soil Health team has reached out to every conservation district in the state.

NACD President Earl Garber of Louisiana stressed the opportunity for district engagement across the country. "As more demands are placed on our private working lands natural resource base, both urban and rural, conservation districts have 75 plus years of experience to promote and implement the local delivery of soil health management systems across the American landscape."

NACD's Soil Health Forum sought to underscore these and other points. Speakers ranged from representatives of Indiana's partnership, to agricultural industry representatives and government leaders, including NRCS Chief Jason Weller. Farm tours underscored the economic and environmental benefits of no-till, cover crops and other soil health tools.

The speakers echoed many of the comments from "boots-on-the-ground" folks like Perkins and Fuhrer, and the farm tours featured peer-to-peer learning opportunities, with farm operators presenting their personal experiences.

## Across many landscapes

While the Soil Health Movement has come a long way, it is in many ways still in the early stages. As with producers, some districts and partners are early adopters, while others are more hesitant to change. Some question whether soil health principles will work

on rangelands and in dry climates. The message from leaders is don't wait, and that soil health principles apply across a wide range of landscapes.

Mike Collins, area conservationist for NRCS in Colorado, dispels some of those concerns. "Rangeland is lucky that it is not exposed to tillage, which is not the best treatment for your soil, in fact it's very degrading with the loss of carbon," he said, adding that rangeland also maintains living roots, another key to soil health. "While some rangeland doesn't have the diversity or the residue it should have, that can be enhanced through management, as can diversity of plant species," he said.



Ray Archuleta, "The Soil Guy," at a Wisconsin field day.

Others in dry climates note that good soil health can increase infiltration when precipitation does occur, addressing drought. Likewise, infiltration can abate runoff from heavy rains.

In urban settings, better soil health can improve drainage and reduce storm water runoff.

Clearly soil health principles can apply to every landscape across the nation, and their benefits extend far beyond just the farm.

If it seems like a magical moment, it is. As NACD Chief Executive Officer John Larson noted, "The Soil Health Movement underscores the relevance and important work of local conservation districts."

## Soil Health Survey and Focus Groups Offer Insights into District Soil Health Activities

NACD recently solicited input on district and producer soil health activities through an online survey and two focus groups. The information gathered was part of the Soil Health Movement initiative. The results yielded advice on how NACD can help districts and producers on their soil health journeys, and highlighted areas of strength as well as areas where improvements are needed.

The online survey, conducted earlier this year, received responses from about 100 districts. Questions about district soil health activities across the nation yielded an array of responses. Here are some highlights:

- Some districts have added staff to address demand from producers.
- Districts are using traditional tools to spread the new message, including:
  - Technical assistance
  - Tours, workshops (including some for disadvantaged farmers) and discussion groups
  - Renting no-till drills; and
  - Ordering cover-crop seed
- Districts are helping to organize aerial spraying of cover crops, facilitating farmer-led soil health cadres, and providing no-till test plots.

### Among the needs identified, respondents requested:

- NACD identify more funding opportunities;
- NACD's help in sharing success stories and promoting soil health nationally with diverse audiences, including the general public;
- More outreach materials to help spread the word; and
- NACD advocate for more research to provide greater scientific evidence for soil health.

Focus group respondents from NACD's Northern Plains Region at the Indiana Soil Health Forum also suggested more research is needed overall, and districts could help in this effort by partnering in field-level research projects. Both focus groups stressed how essential it is to establish the economic value of soil health measures through scientific research.

### Other key points raised by producers and conservation professionals included:

- Soil health training for district staff and boards should be a high priority.
- Soil health adoption lags in parts of the country. Historic resistance to practices like no-till continues to be an impediment to its implementation.
- Districts should take steps to assure soil health is integrated throughout all phases of conservation planning and technical assistance.
- Soil health systems are site specific, and producers and districts need to adapt to local conditions. Still, NACD could develop a toolbox or template to help districts develop guidance at the local level.
- Soil health systems build resilience to weather extremes, including droughts and flooding.
- Some regions of the country are experiencing shortages of cover crop seeds, especially the popular rye cereal grain.
- District board members who are producers have an opportunity to be soil health ambassadors and spread the message to their peers.
- A long-term commitment from agencies and partners is needed to assure broad adoption of soil health practices.

We received excellent feedback from districts, and look forward to using this information to grow and improve our soil health outreach efforts for the future.



# Every Acre Counts

## Local and Federal Stakeholders Partner on Fire Prevention and Public Lands Management

For more than a decade, California's Trinity County Resource Conservation District (RCD) has worked closely with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Redding Field Office and the U.S. Forest Service to manage public lands within the local watershed. This unique relationship brings Weaverville community stakeholders to the table with agency representatives. With their guidance, Trinity RCD is able to help spearhead fuel reduction projects that safeguard against catastrophic wildfire while preserving the scenic landscape. Revenues are applied to future work, which in past years has included invasive weed control, post-fire rehabilitative efforts and trail development.



WCF Logging

The project received a U.S. Department of Interior "Partners in Conservation" award in 2009 and has been a model for how conservation districts can work with federal agencies to serve the best interests of the land.

This summer, U.S. Congressman Jared Huffman toured the partnership area. "This project is a prime example of what can be accomplished when the local community and the federal government collaborate to address fire risk to Western communities," Congressman Huffman said.



Weaverville Community Forest (WCF) Tree Planting

Trinity County RCD and the BLM are currently in discussions to expand the scope of the original 10-year agreement to include two new parcels. When finalized, Trinity County RCD will help manage every acre of federal land within the Weaver Creek Basin. Trinity County RCD District Manager Alex Cousins said the community and the BLM are committed to the partnership's future and are, "ready to see what's next."

For more information on this project, visit the Trinity County Resource Conservation District website at [www.tcrd.net](http://www.tcrd.net), or search for the full story on the NACD website.



WCF Logging

# Every Acre Counts

## Conservation Districts: Success in Black and White

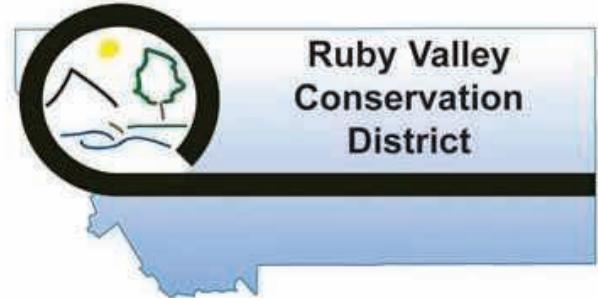
By: Sunni Heikes-Knapton, Madison Watershed Coordinator and Rebecca Ramsey, Ruby Watershed Coordinator

While the communications game today includes a variety of new media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, one pair of conservation districts (CDs) in southwest Montana has seen great success in a more traditional format: the local weekly print newspaper.

Ruby Valley Conservation District (RVCD) and Madison Conservation District (MCD) are the two main CDs in Madison County, Montana, serving an area over 3,000 square miles. Educating the community on natural resource issues and raising awareness about districts' work are important priorities to both CDs.

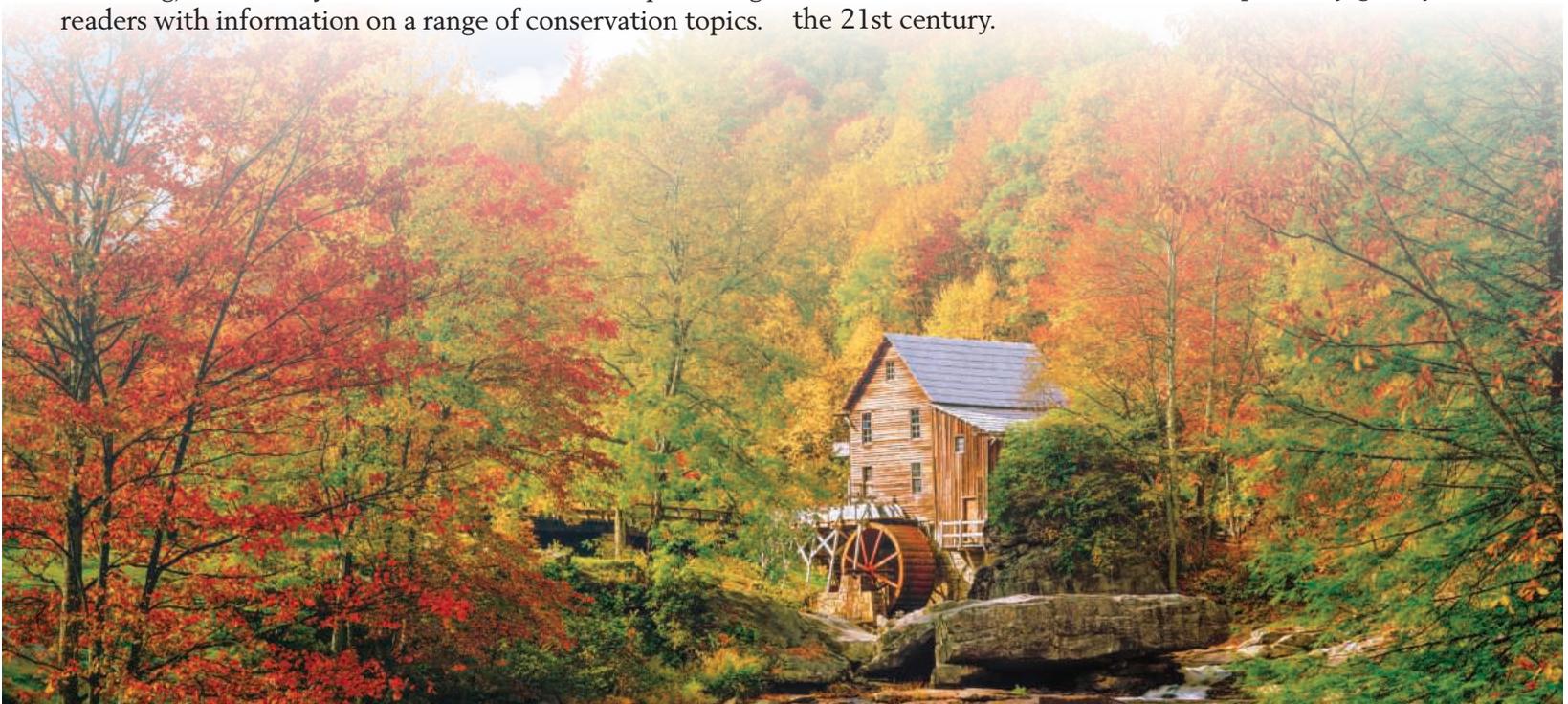
While both CDs embrace electronic outreach efforts, the two have also continued to reach out through an often discounted form of media—the weekly print newspaper. Their efforts have been rewarded with the creation of a weekly Natural Resource News column in *The Madisonian* newspaper. The column features contributions from CD staff and technical advisors.

*The Madisonian* is the oldest published newspaper in Montana, having been in circulation prior to statehood and boasting an established readership. With such a dedicated following, the weekly CD column succeeds in providing readers with information on a range of conservation topics.



Now in its second year, the column has piqued the interest of followers and publishers alike, resulting in a regular readership and more feature articles on natural resource issues and events in our area. Most notably is the value of reaching out to community members who prefer the classic forms of communication; those individuals who lead a perfectly normal life without social media, emails, or even cell phones.

The CDs have discovered that a strong relationship with the local newspaper is a great way to raise awareness about conservation districts and reach an important segment of the region's population. It just goes to show that sometimes even a tool from the 1800s can do a perfectly good job in the 21st century.



## NACD receives a Conservation Innovation Grant to Advance Soil Health Initiative

NACD, in partnership with Datu Research, LCC (Datu), has been awarded a \$750,000 Conservation Innovation Grant to promote soil health. This will be a three-year project, spanning from 2014-2017. Through the project, we seek to significantly scale up the number of farmed acres nationwide that are managed for soil health. The project will address two main barriers:

1. A shortage of economic and cost-benefit information on soil health management
2. Insufficient transfer of knowledge to farmers of available, innovative practices and technologies for local conditions

Work under the grant will include two primary components—development of a National Farmer Advocate Network and four Farm-level Case Studies.

Through the formation of a national “farmer advocate” network—organized by NACD and assisted by local districts, state, and territory associations—the project seeks to raise awareness of and increase the adoption by farmers

## NACD U&C Webinars in FY2015

The NACD Urban and Community Resource Policy Group is looking forward to continuing the monthly U&C webinars, sponsored by The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company and held on the third Thursday of each month. These popular webinars have covered a variety of urban and community conservation topics with districts sharing their projects and programs and other entities sharing information and resources. You can view a full list of the past webinars at <http://www.nacdnet.org/policy/urban/webinars>. The site also provides links to PDFs of all presentations and recordings of the FY2014 webinars.

The FY2015 webinars will follow the pattern of districts sharing their projects and programs and other entities sharing knowledge and resources. The schedule will be finalized and posted on the above website in early October. Contact Debra Bogar at [deb-bogar@nacdnet.org](mailto:deb-bogar@nacdnet.org) for additional information.



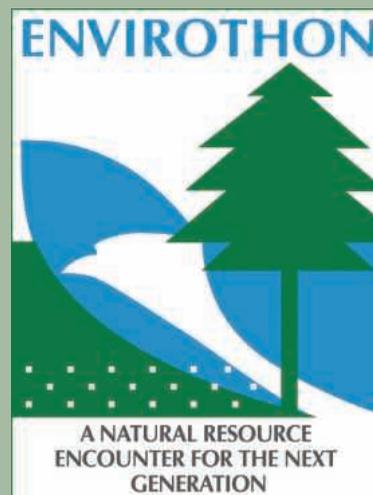
Several NACD members were present for United States Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's (pictured here) announcement in Illinois.

and landowners of best-management practices for soil health. The network will include 150 farmers—in every region of the country—who are willing to use, demonstrate, and advocate for soil health practices.

Datu will conduct a series of four case studies to serve as the basis for an expert-reviewed economic analysis on soil health practice implementation. The case studies will provide robust, farm-level economic data on the impacts of applied soil health management practices based on a 3-year data collection as well as additional details on the application of soil health management techniques.

We will continue to report on the progress of this CIG work as well as our other NACD soil health initiatives.

## Envirothon



[www.envirothon.org](http://www.envirothon.org)

The upcoming Envirothon will highlight Urban and Community Forestry. It will be hosted at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO, from July 27-August 2, 2015.

This will mark the second time the state of Missouri will host the Envirothon, having previously hosted in 2005.

## Highlighting District-led Soil Health Efforts

On September 18, NACD CEO John Larson testified before members of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy and Forestry at a hearing examining “the benefits of promoting soil health in agriculture and rural America.” In his testimony, Larson highlighted the role of soil and water conservation districts in both the history and the future of the national soil health movement.

“Conservation districts across the nation are helping producers and landowners get the tools they need to continue caring for the land and providing food, feed, and fiber for the world,” said Larson. “We firmly believe that it’s better to invest in

long-term conservation measures today, than to be forced to pay for the escalated costs of repair in the future.”

The hearing providing a high-level forum to showcase the longstanding and continuing work of conservation districts as leaders in locally-led soil health efforts across the nation. To read Larson’s full testimony, visit [nacdnet.org](http://nacdnet.org) and click on “testimony” under the policy tab.



## Districts at Work

### Conservation Districts Fighting Fires in Washington

The Carlton Complex fire ravaged much of north central Washington this summer, consuming an estimated 300 homes and 250,000 acres. Lightning in mid-July caused four separate fires within Okanogan County. Eventually, the fires merged, and by the time fire crews contained the blaze in August it had become the largest fire on record in Washington state.

Not long after flames intensified, the Okanogan Conservation District began to prepare local residents for life after the fire. The conservation district organized a series of workshops and assembled a variety of resources for dissemination.

“Our district has worked with many of the landowners that were impacted,” said Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District’s Education and Outreach Coordinator. “Immediately, we felt the need to step up and provide resources to those landowners.”

The district used a Restoration Needs Form—created by the Kittitas County Conservation District in response to the Taylor Bridge Fire in 2012—to collect data from landowners in need, and it enlisted the help of agency partners including the U.S. Forest Service, NRCS and Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

“People are happy to have someone to turn to, and if we don’t have the answer we can steer them in the right direction,” Cook said.

In August, Okanogan Conservation District organized a Carlton Complex Recovery Resource Fair, where more than



Residents and resource managers gathered August 13 for the Carlton Complex Recovery Resource Fair organized by Okanogan Conservation District.

a dozen natural resource agencies and organizations visited with landowners to address concerns regarding post-fire recovery of the landscape. Cook said this interaction helps ease the burden landowners often feel during a catastrophic event like a wildfire.

“Immediately, people want to fix it. They want to make it better,” she said. “We’ve tried to help them understand that land recovery is a process, and fire is a part of the natural ecosystem.”

If there has been a positive to the Carlton Complex Fire, Cook said it’s an increased awareness for the need to make the landscape more resilient to fire. For the past few years, Cook has conducted five or six summer Firewise workshops, the latest of which brought in more than 50 attendees.

To learn more about Okanogan Conservation District’s fire recovery efforts, visit their website at [okanogancd.org](http://okanogancd.org).

# Partnering for Success

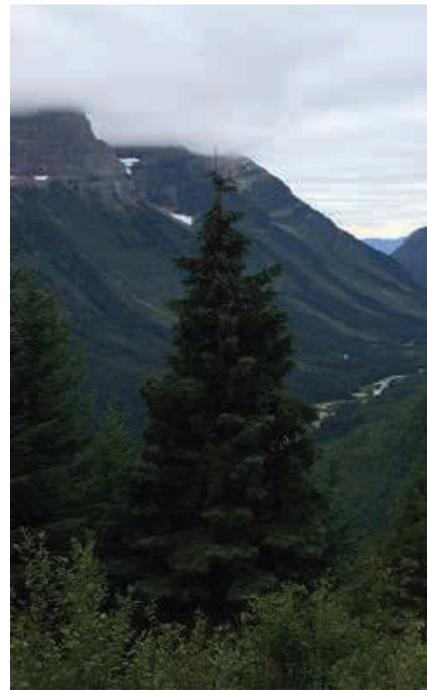
## National Partnership Meeting Update

In September, NACD President Earl Garber and NACD CEO John Larson attended and addressed the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) annual meeting in Whitefish, Mont.

In conjunction with this meeting, on Monday night, the National Conservation Partnership (NACD, NRCS, NASCA, NCDEA –minus the National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils, NARC&DC, who due to circumstances beyond their control were not able to be in attendance) met for one of its regular meetings. A variety of topics were covered, such as: organizational updates; discussions on current issues including the Waters of the U.S. Proposed Rule; and progress on new programs such as the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

One of the outcomes of the discussions was an agreement to strengthen the frequency and consistency of communications between all members and staff. A part of that communications will be a joint partnership letter—to likely be distributed several times each year—to share success stories and to address some of the new, key, or emerging topics on which the members of the conservation partnership are working.

Stay tuned for more details!



Mountains outside of Whitefish, Montana

## District Development

### NACD Leadership & Advocacy Training Opportunity for State and Local Meetings

Are you interested in learning about how you can become a more effective leader and advocate for conservation at the local, state and national level? Do you have district officials in your state or territory that would benefit from learning more about their roles as advocates? If so, NACD has a new Leadership and Advocacy training tool to help you do just that!

This interactive training webcast, made possible through the generous support of the Walton Family Foundation and developed by NACD leadership and staff, explores topics including: leadership expectations, political engagement, shaping public opinion, gaining positive media coverage and developing and expanding partnerships.

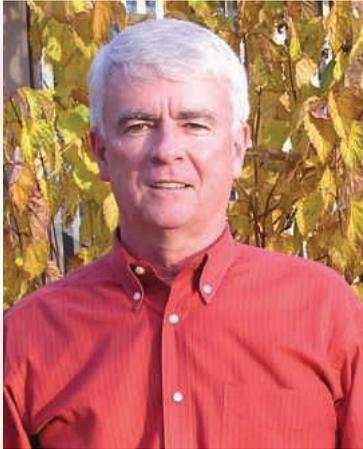
NACD encourages you to consider using this training at your next state, area or other local meeting. An on-demand webcast is now available, allowing for a moderator to

facilitate group discussion based on the video segments and training exercises, and can be catered to fit within your desired session-length needs.

To learn more, contact NACD Communications Director Bethany Shively at [bethany-shively@nacdnet.org](mailto:bethany-shively@nacdnet.org).



# Another Perspective



## More Opportunity, More Responsibility

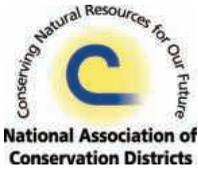
As I moderated a panel of agency and university executives at last week's Conservation Districts of Iowa annual meeting, I was struck by the fact that each report was very different, but communicated activities that were occurring in collaboration with conservation districts. Activities including: three agency sponsored watershed initiatives, four federal and state conservation program sign-up or enrollment opportunities, state and federal regulatory roles, and implementation of the state's nutrient reduction strategy, all emphasized a commitment to conservation planning.

The question and answer session that followed demonstrated not only the interest that commissioners had in these programs, but their desire to see these programs work in ways that address district priorities. Local interest and leadership is strong enough to accept the challenge of focusing all of these programs and opportunities into one vision for the future of agriculture and natural resource protection. In fact, conservation districts remain the most viable framework to make these programs work effectively at the local level where they interface with America's farmers and ranchers.

Districts realize the sense of urgency that exists within agriculture to increase productivity, protect and restore soil resources, and address the serious nonpoint-source environmental challenges that exist at local, regional, and national scales. The manner in which districts have responded is evidence that a nearly 70-year-old concept of model conservation district legislation, enacted and amended over time by state legislatures, has produced a conservation district framework well suited to address both the opportunity and responsibility of providing the leadership necessary to meet the challenge of today and generations to come. We are in good hands.

Jim Gulliford, Executive Director  
Soil and Water Conservation Society





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**2015 NACD Soil and Water Stewardship Week**  
 April 26 to May 3, 2015

**60<sup>th</sup>** Anniversary of Soil and Water Stewardship Week: Start planning your celebration now!

Stewardship Week outreach materials can be found at [www.nacdnet.org/stewardship](http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship).

Look for the new education materials early winter 2014.

For the link to the poster contest, online educator guide, activities and more, visit: [www.nacdnet.org/education/resources/local-heroes](http://www.nacdnet.org/education/resources/local-heroes).

Products will be for sale in the NACD Marketplace: [www.nacdstore.org](http://www.nacdstore.org).

The NACD 2015 education materials have been developed in collaboration with the Pollinator Partnership. Special thanks to District employee reviewers: *Deb Ruff, IL; Erin Snyder, CA, Cindy Pierce, WA; Rick Mickowski, DE; Gina DeMarco, NJ; Karla Beatty, OK.*

Look for the product flyer for "Local Heroes: Your Hardworking Pollinators" in the next issue of *The Resource*.



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[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)