**Event:** Spring Fly-In 2019, Pacific Region Activities  
**Date:** March 13, 2019

**Summary:** Every spring, NACD invites its members to join NACD staff in Washington, D.C., to promote the interests of conservation districts on Capitol Hill. In 2019, 1 representative from California and 6 from Washington attended:

- Tom Wehri (CA), NACD Executive Board Member  
- Michael Crowder (WA), NACD First Vice President  
- Wade Troutman (WA), NACD Alternate Board Member  
- Roylene Rides at the Door (WA), NRCS State Conservationist  
- Kirk Robinson (WA), Interim Executive Director of Washington Conservation Commission (WSCC)  
- Dean Longrie (WA), Western Area Representative, Washington Conservation Commission  
- Patricia Hickey (WA), Executive Director, Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Participants organized their own meetings with legislators from their respective states and advocated for NACD per information provided by NACD’s legislative affairs staff (see attachments) and for their own state needs.

**Activities:**

Tom Wehri met with the offices of the following legislators:

- **Salud Carbajal** (CA-24): Jeremy Tittle, Chief of Staff  
- **Jim Costa** (CA-16): Ben Goldeen, Legislative Assistant  
- **TJ Cox** (CA-21)  
- **Senator Dianne Feinstein**: Tom Delgado, Legislative Correspondent  
- **Josh Harder** (CA-10): Congressman Harder and Adela Amador, Jr. Deputy Chief of Staff  
- **Jared Huffman** (CA-2): Christine Sur, Legislative Assistant  
- **Doug LaMalfa** (CA-1): Congressman LaMalfa and staff  
- **Tom McClintock** (CA-4): Congressman McClintock and staff

The delegation from Washington met with the following offices:

- **Suzanne DelBene** (WA-1)  
- **Denny Heck** (WA-10)  
- **Jaime Herrera Beutler** (WA-3)  
- **Derek Kilmer** (WA-6)  
- **Rick Larsen** (WA-2)  
- **Cathy McMorris Rodgers** (WA-5)  
- **Dan Newhouse** (WA-4)  
- **Kim Schrier** (WA-8)

Together with other NACD staff (Jeremy Peters, CEO and Jeff Burwell, Western Issues Specialist), NACD’s Pacific Region Representative, Ariel Rivers, and Vice President Crowder also met with the **Department of the Interior** (see attached agenda):

- Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Liaison to State & Local Government, Office of Intergovernmental & External Affairs
The group discussed several programs of relevance to the Pacific, including:

- Updating and signing of new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between NACD and two DOI agencies: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). These documents will help guide strategic talking points between the two agencies and NACD and help prioritize common activities. The organizations will work towards signing the documents at either the NACD Summer Conservation Forum (Santa Fe, NM, Aug. 2019) or the next NACD Annual Meeting (Las Vegas, NC, Feb. 2020).
- [Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Incentive Program](#), effective March 12, 2019
- BLM, working with various western governors to amend land use plans for Greater Sage Grouse habitat management on public lands, signed Records of Decision on March 15, 2019. More information about amendments and actions related to the environmental impact statements undertaken in Pacific Region states (OR, CA, ID) are available [online](#).
- FWS [proposed removing the gray wolf](#) from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and is currently [accepting comments](#) until May 14, 2019.

**Photos:**

Washington delegation: Dean Longrie (WSCC), Patricia Hickey (WACD), Wade Troutman (NACD Alternate Board Member), Michael Crowder (NACD Second Vice President), Roylene Rides at the Door (NRCS), Kirk Robinson (WSCC) with NACD Pacific Region Representative, Ariel Rivers.
Agenda for NACD Fly-In  
Wednesday March 13, 2019  
*rooms are tentative and subject to change*

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Legislative Breakfast and Briefing**  
*The State Room – 201 D Street NE – Starred on map on next page*  
- Issue papers and other handouts will be given to Fly-In participants

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Hill Meetings**  
- Fly-In participants will meet with congressional delegations from their state  
- Each state will set up their own meetings at their convenience with their Congressional Delegation  
- Tip: Try to schedule your House meetings and your Senate meetings around the same times to prevent traveling back and forth across the Capitol Building

5:00 -7:00 p.m. **Congressional Reception**  
*1300 Longworth House Office Building*  
- Fly-In participants will come together to celebrate their work on Capitol Hill  
- Attendees will be addressed by invited Members of Congress  
- An invitation to the Congressional Reception will be provided at the breakfast for offices you visit throughout the day

Please contact NACD Director of Government Affairs Coleman Garrison with any questions:  
coleman-garrison@nacdnet.org
The State Room, 201 D Street NE
Endangered Species Act (ESA) Modernization

NACD supports local management of habitat and species, rather than a top-down approach. Legislation is needed to improve and modernize the ESA to reflect current scientific wildlife management principles. ESA recovery plans need to have local public involvement from the outset in order to provide clearly defined goals, objectives and alternative recovery options. Stakeholders have shown that through proactive, collaborative, voluntary, locally-led conservation practices, meaningful achievements can be made in species recovery.

NACD supports the proposed language by Chairman Barrasso (WY) in the 115th Congress to strengthen states’ rights and states’ input on species management throughout the listing and delisting process. The proposal supports locally-led conservation activities to mitigate the need to list species and provides states the opportunity to lead recovery planning and implementation programs.

Invasive Species Management

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conducts management activities to mitigate damages caused by invasive species like feral swine. NACD encourages full funding both for APHIS Wildlife Services and the national feral swine control program. NACD supported the 2018 Farm Bill’s inclusion of $75 million to create the Feral Swine and Eradication and Control Pilot Project. NACD supports technical and financial assistance for trapping or other removal methods of feral swine and other invasive species.

NACD supports the use of native plant and seed species in recovery efforts and restoration projects and urges the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to develop and disseminate geographically-specific lists of “recommendations on what to plant and what not to plant” to help guide recovery and restoration efforts and to avoid using invasive species. NACD supports NRCS policies to allow for technical and financial assistance for trapping or other removal methods of feral swine and other invasive species.

Wild Horse and Burro Management

The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 as amended directs U.S. federal agencies to manage wild herds to “maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship” on herd management areas (HMAs). Bureau of Land Management (BLM) scientists have established appropriate management levels (AML) to achieve that balance. Unfortunately, current management efforts including limited gathers, fertility control via PZP, adoptions and sales have failed to control the ever-increasing horse and burro population, which continues to strain the natural resource capabilities of these lands beyond their carrying capacity, resulting in rangelands that in certain areas are already unrecoverable.

NACD urges Congress to support the removal of the Interior Appropriations language that prevents BLM from using all the tools to bring down the horse and burro population to AML provided under the Act and to oppose similar language being applied to the U.S. Forest Service.

Forest Management

The National Forest System (NFS) consists of 232 million acres. There is currently an over-abundance of natural resources on NFS lands. By comparison, private lands are often healthier and more productive than their neighboring federal lands.

NACD supports site appropriate silvicultural techniques and advanced, scientifically-proven forest management practices to promote the growth and maintenance of healthy, diverse forests, reducing their susceptibility to widespread insect or disease outbreaks, wildfire danger and soil erosion. Furthermore, NACD supports the use of additional cross-boundary authorizations and re-authorizations, such as Good Neighbor and Stewardship Contracting Authority, and other opportunities for work to be successful at a landscape scale.
Conservation Operations and Conservation Technical Assistance

Conservation Operations (CO), which includes Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and helps provide funding for NRCS staff in local offices. Technical assistance helps landowners become better stewards of their natural resources by assisting with resource assessment, practical designs, planning, and monitoring of conservation practices. Other programs included in CO are the snow survey, soil survey and plant material centers. NACD requests $890 million for Conservation Operations. While NACD continues to be concerned about the further centralization of functions into the new Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Business Center, this request includes NRCS’s contribution to the Business Center to support those functions.

Farm Bill Conservation Title Funding

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (also known as the 2018 Farm Bill) maintained overall Conservation Title funding, a key priority for NACD. However, Congress must ensure this funding is not reduced through the annual appropriations process. NACD calls on Congress to maintain all mandatory farm bill conservation program funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 at the levels recently authorized in the Agriculture Act of 2018.

Watershed Operations and Small Watershed Rehabilitation

The Watershed Program generates about $2 billion worth of improved water quality and erosion control benefits annually. These benefits help rural communities strengthen their local economies and restore ailing infrastructure, like dams and water storage facilities. Over decades, conservation districts across the country have stepped up to sponsor these projects, which often require significant financial resources and long-term technical assistance. Along with the continued support from the 2018 Farm Bill, NACD requests a total of $200 million for Watershed Operations and $75 million for Watershed Rehabilitation for FY 2020.

State and Private Forestry Programs

State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs are administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The agency works with a broad range of forestry organizations, conservation districts and others to address the protection and management of forested lands. The S&PF program helps sustain the nation’s forests and prevent harm caused by forest pests, invasive species and wildfires. NACD requests a total of $339 million for S&PF programs, which includes a small increase to the incredibly important Forest Stewardship program to $23 million.

319 Nonpoint Source Grants

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards grants to states, territories and tribes to support water quality activities that assist in mitigating nonpoint sources of water pollution. These grants increase the utilization of agricultural best management practices, low impact development and stormwater management. NACD requests level funding of $171 million for this critical program.

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<th>FY 2018 Final</th>
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Conservation Technical Assistance

The Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program helps landowners become better stewards of their natural resources by assisting them with resource assessment, practical design, planning, and monitoring of conservation practices. NRCS uses CTA funding, along with farm bill programs, to hire the critical staff in local NRCS offices who work directly with landowners. Without sufficient NRCS staff in place, as is the case today, USDA’s customer service and conservation program implementation are negatively impacted.

Putting a Plan in Place

Working with conservation planners, landowners can evaluate their specific resource needs and develop a tailored plan to meet their stewardship goals. Conservation plans give landowners the confidence and know-how to implement conservation practices on their land, and in many instances, also help landowners apply for farm bill conservation financial assistance.

Despite having a desire to implement the best conservation practices, many landowners do not have the technical or scientific expertise to evaluate their land’s unique resources needs – such as sediment runoff or wind erosion – and need CTA assistance to address their unique resource concerns. Through the CTA program, landowners are able to work with technical experts to identify and address their most pressing resource concerns.

Conservation plans not only help agricultural producers be better stewards of their land, they can help producers achieve greater yields and decrease input costs while achieving greater sustainability to improve the lives of all Americans.

Administration

CTA is administered by NRCS. Conservation expertise is provided by NRCS staff funded through the CTA program in partnership with a voluntary conservation network, including employees from conservation districts, throughout the nation. By utilizing conservation districts and other partners, NRCS is able to expand their ability to put conservation on the ground.

Funding

The CTA program is funded by Congress under the Conservation Operations (CO) account in the annual appropriations process. While USDA has provided hiring authority, Congress should continue to encourage USDA to make progress in filling vacancies at the local level to strengthen the ability of local NRCS offices to effectively deliver conservation. In order to continue assisting our nation’s agricultural producers to be the best stewards of their natural resources, continued investments in CTA are required. NACD requests Congress fund the Conservation Operations account at $890 million in FY 2020.
Agenda

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

March 13, 2019

- Introductions
- NACD region staff updates
- MOU development/renewal with BLM and FWS
- NACD Resource Policy Groups discussion
- Upcoming NACD meetings
- Other topics

Participants

Department of the Interior:
Tim Williams, Deputy Director of Intergovernmental & External Affairs
Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Office of Intergovernmental & External Affairs

NACD:
Michael Crowder, 1st Vice President
Jeremy Peters, Chief Executive Officer
Jeff Burwell, Southwest Region Representative