



2018

Kentucky Association of  
Conservation Districts  
Committee Reports

Presented at the 75th KACD Convention  
July 10, 2018

**LEGISLATIVE – (PG. 13-14)**

Chairman: Shane Wells, Vice President, KACD

V.C.: Jeff Rice, Daviess Co.

Paulette Akers: DOC

Karen Woodrich: NRCS

Pat Henderson: Breckinridge Co.

Bruce Quarles: Franklin Co.

Anne Bays: Whitley Co.

Vincent Thompson: Hardin Co.

Susie Fenwick: Graves Co.

Gayle Horn: Mercer Co

LaJuana Wilcher: Warren Co.

John Chism: Clark Co.

## **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS (PG. 15-28)**

Chairman: Randy McCallon: Calloway Co.

V.C. Danny Shiple:, Allen Co.

Pam Williams: DOC

Deena Wheby: NRCS

Pat Henderson: Breckinridge Co.

Myrel Trunnell: Daviess Co.

Curtis Kirk: Franklin Co.

Andy Wilson: Jessamine Co.

Doug Teater: Jessamine Co.

Kelvin Greenfield: Todd Co.

Anne Bays: Whitley Co.

Debra Messer: Boone Co.

Billy Bransetter: Metcalfe Co.

Mark Dyehouse: Rockcastle Co.

Ernie Ezeil: Logan Co.

Valerie Ousley: Bath Co.

Jimmy Richardson: Scott Co.

Barbara Davis: Carter Co.

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Chairman: Steve Coleman: Franklin Co.

Vice Chairman: Scotty Parsibs: Christian Co.

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Anne Bays: Whitley Co.

Jeff Mowers: Cumberland Co.

Wanda Gibert: Cumberland Co.

Henry Holley: Cumberland Co.

Larry Gomer: Simpson Co.

Melodie Bush: Carter Co.

John Chism: Clark Co.

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Vice Chairman: Orville Bennett, Lee Co.

Doug Wilson: DOC

Susan Wise: Franklin Co.

Patsy Bishop: Green Co.

Andy Wilson: Jessamine Co.

Wayne Ezell: McCracken Co.

Debbie Gabbert: Taylor Co.

Linda Russell: Taylor Co.

Shannon White: Montgomery Co.

Danny Montgomery: Montgomery Co.

Tony Best: Mercer Co.

Dave Stahl: Henry

Buster Estes: Simpson Co.

Randy McCallon: Calloway Co.

Allen Hanson: Greenup Co.

Jeff Holder: Simpson Co.

Barry Smith: Taylor Co.

Gordon Womack: Carter Co.

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Chairman: Lenville Martin, Floyd Co.

James Wright: DOF

Jeff Chandler: DOC

Jack Stickney: Estill Co

Fred Hart: Caldwell Co.

Don Girton: Campbell Co.

Todd Akers: Franklin Co.

Doug Teater: Jessamine Co.

Ricky Humphrey: Nelson Co.

Becky Ortwein: Boone Co.

Jim Wheeler: Mercer Co.

Jeff Holder: Simpson Co.

Buster Estes: Simson Co.

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Chairman: Allan Bryant, Henry Co.

V.C.: David Stipes: Madison Co.

Kimberly Bartley: DOC

Tim Hafner: NRCS

Fred Hart: Caldwell Co.

Jimmy Sidebottom: Green Co.

Andy Wilson: Jessamine Co.

Doug Teater: Jessamie Co.

Marc Hult: Kenton Co.

Joe Paul Mattingly: Marion Co.

Glenn Barrick: Barren Co.

Bobby Wilson: Monroe Co.

Rodney Bruce: Greenup Co.

Frank Orndorff Jr.: Logan Co.

Debbie Gabbert: Taylor Co.

Tracey Joe Elliott: Carter Co.

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Chairman: Ted Jessup: Muhlenberg Co.

V.C.: Rod Murphy: Lyon Co.

Jeff Chandler: DOC

Amanda Gumbert: UK

Tim Hafner: NRCS

Fred Hart: Caldwell Co.

Ronnie Graves: Green Co.

Marc Hult: Kenton Co.

Debra Messer: Boone Co.

Larry Gomer: Simpson Co.

Mike Pedigo: Metcalfe Co.



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Steven Olt: DOC

Mike Spencer: Franklin Co.

Gayle Horn: Mercer Co.

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Chairman: Rodney Dick, Pulaski Co.

Kimberly Bartley: DOC

Steve Blantford: NRCS

Myrel Trunnell: Daviess Co.

Tom Karsner: Franklin Co.

Kelvin Greenfield: Todd Co.

Dave Heise: Mercer Co.

Lary Miller: Pendleton Co.

Mark Chapman: Warren Co.

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Chairman-Kevin Jeffries, Oldham Co.

V.C: Randy McCallon, Calloway Co.

Shanna Drake: DOC

Sonya Keith: NRCS

Greg Abston: Clinton Co.

Kelvin Greenfield: Todd Co.

Gene Jarvis: Fleming Co.

Susie Fenwick: Graves Co.

Tommy Webb: Little KY River

Mark Wilson: Caloway Co.

Sophia Campbell: Taylor Co.

Vic Vanover: Boone Co.

Herbie Suttles: Carter Co.

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Chairman: Allan Bryant, Henry Co.

Kevin Jeffries, Oldham Co.

Rodney Dick, Pulaski Co.

Steve Coleman, Franklin Co.

Randy McCallon, Calloway Co,

Ethan Brown, Monroe Co.

Ted Jessup, Muhlenberg Co.

David Rowlett, Carroll Co.

Shane Wells, Butler Co.

Orville Bennett, Lee Co.

Jeff Rice, Daviess Co.

Mike Farmer, Jefferson Co.

Lenville Martin, Floyd Co.

Ava Adams, Jefferson Co.

Paulette Akers, DOC

Karen Woodrich, NRCS

## **COMMITTEE CHARGES**

### **LEGISLATIVE:**

Track & develop KACD positions on federal & state legislation which may impact Kentucky's conservation district programs.

### **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS:**

Review & make recommendations on federal, state, & local conservation issues as they may relate to Kentucky's conservation district programs, such as EQIP, RAMP, RC&D, State Cost Share, etc.

### **DISTRICT OUTLOOK & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

Provide future direction to Kentucky's conservation district program & assist with the development of the Leadership Training Program for district supervisors, watershed directors, & district employees.

### **EDUCATION & YOUTH:**

Develop informational materials to assist conservation districts in promoting conservation education at all levels & encouraging more youth involvement in the conservation districts.

### **FORESTRY:**

Review & make recommendations on forestry issues as they may relate to Kentucky's conservation district program.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES:**

Review & make recommendations on federal, state, & local natural resource & water issues as they may relate to Kentucky's conservation district program.

### **RESEARCH:**

Review & make recommendations on conservation & water quality research issues as they may relate to Kentucky's conservation district program.

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION & AWARDS:**

Develop informational materials to assist conservation districts to better communicate with the public on conservation district programs. Promote national, state, & local awards programs to increase participation to recognize outstanding efforts in soil & water conservation in Kentucky. Assist the Auxiliary in promoting the Auxiliary Scholarship Program.

### **SOIL STEWARDSHIP:**

Continue to promote the Soil Stewardship Program in Kentucky & assist conservation districts in their local efforts.

**I. Federal Report:**

The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75th Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8, 9, and 10, 2018. This report outlines the activities and concerns of the Federal and State Legislative Committee and KACD regarding legislative matters during the past year.

**II. State Report:**

This report outlines the activities and concerns of the Legislative Committee and KACD regarding support for state legislative matters for the 2018 General Assembly (Regular Session) and they are:

For the seventh time this past February KACD, in cooperation with several agricultural groups sponsored the Kentucky Agriculture Legislative Appreciation Reception at Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort. This was a tremendous success, with a large number of legislators and state officials in attendance. The Legislative Committee encourages the State Association to continue to host a similar event in Frankfort for the 2019 General Assembly Session.

During the 2018 Budget Session, KACD tracked legislative activities during the sessions and was involved in contacting members on several legislative bills that were important to the conservation district programs across the state KACD would like to thank Kentucky Farm Bureau and the numerous conservation district supervisors who took time to contact their respective leaders.

On behalf of the KACD Board of Directors and the State Legislative Committee, We would like to compliment district supervisors for the assistance each of you provided in legislative matters during this past year. Each conservation district and district supervisor needs to take it upon themselves to maintain the appropriate contacts to ensure the continued success and support of Kentucky's conservation program through our state legislators and congressional delegation support. As we see continued cutbacks at the federal level, the state and local support for the conservation program will continue to increase in its importance to ensure a sound conservation program in each of our 120 counties in Kentucky. The 2019 Session will bring new challenges. We will need your help again.

As a committee, we would recommend that KACD continue its past efforts in co-sponsoring a Kentucky Legislative Reception in January of 2019 along with the agriculture commodity groups and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. It provides an excellent opportunity to showcase conservation district programs across the state with the General Assembly.

Likewise, we recommend continuing to send representatives from Kentucky to the “NACD Fly-In” in Washington, DC each spring with the Kentucky Congressional Delegation and their staff. We would also recommend that conservation districts contact their local representatives from the Congressional Office and Senator’s Office and invite their staff to local events such as field days and banquets.

**Shane Wells, Legislative Chairman**

## 2018 Conservation Programs Committee Report

The purpose of a conservation district is to conserve and develop all renewable natural resources within the district. As subdivisions of state government, they have been formed for the special purpose of assisting landowners and land users in:

- identifying and solving soil, water and other natural resource problems;
- setting priorities for conservation work to be accomplished;
- coordinating the federal, state and local programs and resources needed to accomplish this work; and
- Providing the leadership at the local level and a means for local citizens to work together to achieve desired results.

Over the years, federal, state, and local governments have successfully channeled assistance through conservation districts to address virtually every aspect of natural resource conservation. Districts focused on setting priorities and carrying out programs based on local conditions and needs.

State and district conservation leaders were left with more of the burden to balance limited program resources against growing conservation needs.

The enactment of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 - "the 1996 Farm Bill" - signaled a shift back to this original approach of locally led conservation. Elected federal officials and policy makers realized the value of local leadership and grassroots decision making as keys to successfully managing and protecting our natural resources. They again recognized the need for the conservation districts to be fully involved in the development and delivery of USDA conservation programs.

The intent of congress was clarified in the Farm Bill's conference report, which states:

*...The Secretary of Agriculture should, to the fullest extent practicable, recognize the responsibilities and utilize the authorities of state and local governments including conservation districts ... In particular, Congress intends for the Secretary to acknowledge and maintain the historic role of conservation districts in assessing natural resource priorities, approving site-specific conservation plans, and coordinating the delivery of federal conservation programs at the local level...*

The 2008 Farm Bill continued the locally led conservation effort and the 2014 Farm Bill strengthens this approach.

NACD, in defining its role for the 21st century, states that it is an organization that first and foremost supports the grassroots nationwide network of conservation districts and state associations. This committee feels strongly that they must remain committed to gathering input and directives at the grassroots level through locally led and other conservation district processes. Then, through collective leadership, represent the national interest of conservation districts in the areas of policy development and program delivery.

Districts have accepted this challenge to provide local guidance, not only with those programs associated with the Farm Bill, but with all conservation programs. They should address locally identified needs and represent local stakeholders' interests. In so doing, they should:

- Expand partnerships to ensure all stakeholders (individuals & organizations) can have input.
- Maintain a current assessment of conditions and needs.
- Identify conservation programs to address local needs - not identifying needs to fit existing programs.
- Look at combinations of programs (e.g. EQIP & State Cost Share) to better meet goals and objectives.
- Develop sound conservation plans that again emphasize local needs, local concerns, and local input.
- Publicize programs and successes with all stakeholders to keep them informed and to attract new partners, funding sources, and public input into an open-ended process.
- Maintain a strong commitment in implementation of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill).

### **Technical Support:**

Each of the programs addressed in this report requires not only adequate financial resources for the programs to succeed, but sufficient technical resources as well. While the number of programs on both the state and federal level has increased over the past several years, the number of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees who have traditionally provided the technical assistance for these programs has decreased, and is likely to continue to decrease. In order to provide quality implementation of these programs, sources in addition to NRCS must be considered.

### **1. This Committee Recommends That:**

**1a.** Adequate financial resources are provided to conservation districts in order to maintain the quantity and quality of technical assistance that is required to implement the programs discussed in this report.

**1b.** NRCS maintains an adequate (in number and in skill) technical workforce at the county level to help conservation districts implement state administered programs in addition to the federally authorized and administered programs and that a strong field-minded technical staff be maintained at the state level to help set policy and direction for these programs.

**1c.** Conservation districts employ and train quality technical assistance providers to help meet the need for technical assistance.

**1d.** Districts continue to support the technical assistance efforts of other groups and agencies such as the Kentucky Division of Forestry and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, as well as seeking other, non-traditional sources of assistance



such as Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited and other groups that can provide valuable resources.

**1e.** Conservation districts are encouraged to stay abreast of development in technical service provider policy as it evolves.

**1f.** NRCS is encouraged to provide an adequate workforce in regards to meeting the workload analysis of each county in order to better service all districts by **distributing workforce**. Conservation Districts are encouraged to develop a technical source within their District or reach out to surrounding Districts for support.

**1g.** NRCS is encouraged to continue to consider current Conservation District Technical staff for employment as full time NRCS employees as funding allows, vacancies exits, and as eligible candidates are considered best qualified.

**1h.** The partnership between NRCS, KACD, KACDE, and the districts is a vital tool that ensures the needed technical assistance is available for all conservation programs administered through the conservation district office.

**1i.** Conservation Districts, KACD and all partners are encouraged to work with both state and federal delegation to seek funding for technical positions and ensure that there is adequate assistance in all District offices.

**1j.** KACD should send all district employees to Boot Camp Training which is a joint effort between NRCS and NACD to train district employees in the same way NRCS technicians are trained. This will build of the capacity for conservation districts to be a better technical provider to their communities.

## **2. Agriculture Water Quality Act (AWQA):**

This legislation was passed to protect both surface and groundwater from pollution that may be the result of agriculture or silviculture operations. The Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Division of Conservation and Kentucky's 121 conservation districts have a major role in the development and implementation of this legislation by providing information, education, technical and financial assistance to landowners to ensure their compliance with the intent of this 1994 law.

This committee strongly recommends that each supervisor having ten acres or more of agricultural land complete and update their own agriculture water quality plan as required by law and file it in the district office immediately so they may lead by example.

This committee recommends that KACD, as a member of the Agriculture Water Quality Authority, encourage conservation districts to continue to make it top priority to successfully carry out their responsibilities under the Agriculture Water Quality Authority. This committee further recommends this be accomplished by encouraging local districts to acquire agriculture water quality plans in order to participate in incentive programs including state and local cost

share programs. As of June 12, 2013 we can document that there are approximately 67,000 agricultural water quality plan certifications on file in conservation district offices. Legislation was enacted by the 2002 session of the General Assembly to provide limited protection of these plans from open records requests.

To better measure and assess their progress implementing the AWQA, districts should be tracking their efforts and accomplishments. Any activity associated with the implementation of the AWQA, such as individual plan certifications filed, producer workbooks and other information distributed, meetings and workshops conducted, etc. should be documented and reported to the Division of Conservation on a quarterly basis. Recognizing that agriculture operations were not required to file their plans, districts must be able to chart progress and results that agriculture operations are addressing nonpoint source pollution problems on a farm by farm basis. Currently there are several significant efforts underway to measure progress at the field level such as: agriculture water quality plan self-certifications, cost share assistance, and technical assistance provided BMP installation, corrective measures, etc. Conservation districts should also update and promote the implementation of the BMPs in the plans.

This committee recognizes the outstanding work of Amanda Gumbert, with the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and a liaison with the Kentucky Division of Conservation for her effort in working with Conservation Districts and District Employees to assist landowners in the updating and revision of Agriculture Water Quality Plans.

This committee also recognizes the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission for placing high emphasis on having updated Agriculture Water Quality Plans for the Kentucky State Cost Share program as well as the importance for the plans for other Federal Cost Share programs.

This committee further recommends KACD encourage the members of the Agriculture Water Quality Authority to support conservation programs and available financial/technical assistance in implementation of these plans.

### **3. Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program:**

The Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Fund provides cost share assistance to persons engaged in agriculture and silviculture production for the implementation of best management practices for such purposes as providing cleaner water through the reduction in the loading of sediment, nutrients and pesticides in Kentucky's streams, rivers, and lakes; reduction the loss of topsoil vital to the sustained production of food and fiber; and prevention of surface water and groundwater pollution. KACD and conservation districts should work to keep Kentucky's legislative leadership informed as to the major concerns and needs of this program and to emphasize the value of this program to Kentucky. The KACD, Soil, and Water Commission, Conservation District Board of Supervisors and others should make every effort to work closely with our legislators and others to secure additional and adequate funding to implement this important program.

In 2016-2017 program year 1845 applications were received for \$14,677,640 million.. Of that 1200 applications were approved for \$10,292,084. This committee recognizes the major workload the Cost Share Program thrusts upon the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Division of Conservation in a very short time frame each spring. To better manage this increasing workload, this committee recommends that the NRCS continue to support the electronic submittal process for cost share applications and to ensure that this process is fully operational in every field office.

KACD should encourage the Soil and Water Conservation Commission to maintain a continual evaluation of the adoption and effectiveness of approved cost share practices. They should identify their inclusion into the approved list of practices if they meet program specifications and standards and conform to the purpose of the Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program. Those not meeting any of these criteria should be excluded.

The committee recommends that the KACD Board of Directors and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission emphasize funding new innovative local projects/programs and reduce funding for projects/ programs with alternate tax payer funding sources in place including but not limited to the following: tire buyback, illegal dump site clean-up which are available through county solid waste programming.

#### **4. Dead Animal Disposal Program:**

This committee recommends that KACD, Soil and Water Commission and Division of Conservation encourage and promote to all conservation districts the need to implement, partner or support a legal dead animal disposal program in each county. To assist in the implementation of the programs conservation districts are encouraged to take advantage of funding sources through Environmental Grants available through the state cost share program and to apply for matching funds available from the Agricultural Development Program. Conservation Districts are also encouraged to promote to landowners the on farm fallen animal composting practice available under the state cost share program.

#### **5. Aging Watershed Infrastructure Issue/Watershed Rehabilitation:**

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566) has been used as an effective tool to conserve natural resources by thousands of local communities for over 60 years. Since 1944, NRCS and local sponsors have built approximately 11,000 small watershed dams in the United States. Kentucky's watershed program includes 200 dams in 32 watershed projects, which were built between the mid-1950s through 2009, primarily constructed under the authority of PL-566. These dams were constructed to provide benefits such as flood control, rural water supply, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Many of these structures are now reaching the end of their design life, and unless rehabilitated or decommissioned, can pose significant threats to human health, safety, and to the environment. As these dams age maintain cost and needs rise substantially, frequently beyond the funding of many sponsors. The biggest threat to Kentucky's watershed dams and dam owners and their protection efforts is reclassification due to development downstream of low hazard dams. A hazard classification change can result in increased liability to the dam owner and rehabilitation cost in excess of \$3 million per

occurrence. As these dams age, maintenance cost and needs rise substantially, frequently beyond the funding capacity of many sponsors.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill) authorized \$250 million to be utilized over the next 5 years for the PL-566 Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Kentucky NRCS has received over \$1.7 million to complete a Watershed Rehabilitation Plans for three PL-566 dams across the state. These dams are considered non-compliant by the Kentucky office of dam safety due to downstream development resulting in a hazard class change. The Watershed Rehabilitation Plan will identify an alternative to alleviate this issue and bring the dam into compliance with state and federal safety regulations.

This committee recommends that since KACD has established a PL-566 Watershed Committee, which addresses the concerns and needs of PL-566 projects, that conservation districts support the **2017-2018** KACD PL-566 Committee report and recommendations.

## **6. Equipment Revolving & Infrastructure Loan Program:**

The Equipment Revolving Loan Program was established by the 1948 General Assembly to provide loans to Kentucky's conservation districts for heavy or specialized equipment. The Kentucky Division of Conservation administers the Equipment Revolving Loan Program. During this time over \$68 million has been loaned to 2,400 individuals and conservation districts for the purpose of purchasing specialized equipment. Equipment eligible for loans through the program include dozers, backhoes, no-till drills, precision applicators for agriculture chemicals and other equipment suited for conservation work. The equipment is used for the application of conservation and best management practices throughout the state. Loans are for a specified period with interest rate at 2% to offset the cost of sales tax, provide more affordable money and to increase the participation in the revolving loan program on a statewide basis.

The infrastructure loan program was incorporated into the Equipment Revolving loan program in 2007, due to the fact of USDA consolidating Service Centers. The loan is to provide conservation districts with the money to be able to purchase or construct buildings that can be used for servicing the citizens within their district. In 2010, the infrastructure loan program included the availability for Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts to assist them with obtaining loans for rehabilitation of Watershed structures (PL 566 projects) Eligibility requirements include: the financial stability to make payments for 10 years of the loan and that, the district can still support its other programs as well. Districts also have to follow specific procedures according to State Procurement Laws through the Division of Real Properties, which includes having title searches, environmental surveys of the property and land surveys. Infrastructure loans are also eligible for the 2% interest.

## **7. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a program established by the 1996 Farm Bill which combines the functions of the Agriculture Conservation Program, Water Quality Incentives Program, Great Plains Conservation Program and the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill) reauthorized the program to

be funded at over \$1 billion annually. Funding begins at over \$1.3 billion in federal fiscal year 2014 and ramps up to over \$1.75 billion by fiscal year 2018.

The 2014 Farm Bill made several changes to EQIP. The former Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) was folded into EQIP, with a percentage of EQIP funding to be used for habitat activities. Advance practice payments for Historically Underserved (HU) customers are now larger (increased to 50 percent from 30 percent) and allow for a longer period of time to implement the practice. Veterans have been added to the beginning farmers group. Payment limitations are set at \$450,000 for the life of the farm bill (February 7, 2014 through fiscal year 2018).

In the early years of EQIP conservation districts assumed the leadership role and convened local work groups to guide the implementation and the equitable distribution of the EQIP assistance to address identified resource concerns. Most local work groups have not met in recent years.

Authorized under EQIP in the 2002 Farm Bill, Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

In local Farm Bill work groups, conservation districts provided leadership for the assessment of natural resource conditions and needs. Districts and other work group members should also:

- Identify program priorities and available resources;
- Develop proposals for pooling areas;
- Make policy recommendations for eligible practices based on local natural resource concerns; and
- Encourage nationwide funding at maximum authorized level and gear funding and practices to area's concerns not have a blanket set of practices for the state.

**The Committee feels that NRCS should:**

**7a.** Pay strong attention to the recommendations of the local workgroup meetings and conservation districts should take a stronger role at the local workgroup meetings with NRCS respecting the broader list of priorities.

**7b.** Assist Conservation Districts with meeting dates and times and by having written notices sent to each of the respective conservation district in an adequate amount of time for full participation of all partners and interested parties.

**8. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):**

The CRP protects highly erodible and environmentally sensitive lands and improves habitat for declining wildlife species through establishment and management of grasses, forbs, trees and shrubs. KACD and conservation districts should continue to support and promote both the General CRP when signups occur and the continuous CRP.). Continuous CRP will become an

increasingly important tool for protecting sensitive areas with buffers as producers expand production and as large amounts of expiring General Signup CRP acreage are being put into production. KACD should encourage the use of CRP as an important tool for producers to use to reduce erosion, improve water quality and to meet their needs under the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act.

The Green River CREP enrollment goal was fulfilled with enrollment of 100,917 acres in FY 2009 concluding the enrollment phase for the program. Most CREP acreage will require participants to perform mid-contract management practices to maintain and improve their CRP cover for grassland wildlife species.

CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) with technical assistance provided by NRCS.

### **9. Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP):**

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) was established by the 1996 Farm Bill and reauthorized in the 2008 Food Conservation and Energy Act. The 2014 Farm Bill repealed this program, but required that a percentage of EQIP funding be used to address wildlife habitat. Existing WHIP contracts will continue to be honored by NRCS until they are completed or expired. As of federal fiscal year 2017 only four active WHIP contracts remain and these are “Essential Plant and Animal Habitat Contracts” which are 15 to 20 year contracts

This committee recommends that NRCS with full support of KACD and conservation districts works to seek future funding to reinstate the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program to increase wildlife habitat as well as improve water quality and soil health on private lands.

### **10. FRPP (Farm and Ranch Land Protection Programs) (FRPP)**

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) was established by the 1996 Farm Bill. The 2014 Farm Bill repealed this program, but includes provisions similar to FRPP under the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) in the Agricultural Land Easement component of this new program. Terms and conditions of existing FRPP easements remain unchanged and in full force. Through this program, NRCS in Kentucky provided more than \$30 million as matching funds to five state and local entities to acquire nearly 200 permanent conservation easements covering more than 33,000 acres. These easements have a total investment of nearly \$67 million.

### **11. Agricultural District Program**

KACD and conservation districts should support and promote this program. Over the years, Kentucky has been a leader in slowing the conversion of its best agriculture land to non-farm use through the Agricultural District Program.

Conservation districts recognized the importance of protecting our agricultural land base and the impacts it has on Kentucky's taxpayers.

The Conservation Programs Committee would like to compliment conservation districts for their involvement in identifying local resource concerns, setting priorities, and providing the leadership to develop and implement sound conservation programs across Kentucky. As of June 2016, 987 petitions or amendments from 82 counties who are participating in the Agriculture District Program for a total of 567,216.50 acres originally approved with 86,426.58 acres have been withdrawn to date. 41 petitions or parts of petitions have been with denied due to planning boundary conflicts or other reasons, for a total of 5,662.60

The committee supports changes to the Agricultural District Law that strengthen the protection of prime farmland as passed by Resolution #4 in 2001 which stated that land in an Agricultural District be protected against incorporation as well as annexation. Resolution #1 passed in 2002 which states that landowners/farmlands in agricultural districts are given consideration by developers on the impact that new road/utility construction will have on them. Resolution #2 passed in 2002, which states the Division of Conservation, the Legislative Research Commission, the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, and other such individuals or organizations propose modifications to the Agricultural District and Conservation Act, and monitor the implementation of these modifications. The committee encourages districts to take an active role in supporting legislative changes to this law, and recommends implementation by legislation as legally applicable.

This committee recommends that conservation districts promote Agricultural Districts and other farmland preservation programs in their communities by hosting local meetings and publishing articles about their programs.

## **12. Resource Conservation and Development Council: (RC&D)**

In FY 2011, the federal budget has zeroed out funding for the RC&D program and federally-funded RC&D Coordinator positions were eliminated, however, the Councils are non-profit organizations and are still in existence unless action is taken to dissolve them. The RC&D program is a multi-faceted approach to rural development and to strengthening of resource conservation programs, which improve the economic and social plight of rural Americans. The program utilizes a limited base of technical assistance, which is available from local councils and concentrates on bringing together local individuals, organizations and groups to work together in identifying and solving problems. Project priorities are set and reset as needs change by local individuals who know what the needs are and who then work together to obtain adequate funding from private, federal, state and local sources to solve these needs. Conservation districts are in a position to know the needs and have at their disposal the technical assistance and resources to assist in addressing those needs.

### **This Committee Recommends That:**

**12 b.** KACD should continue to encourage the expansion of RC&D Councils to include traditional and non-traditional partners (Chambers of Commerce, colleges and universities, local Boards of Education, farmers groups and organizations, environmental groups, etc.) and that these councils continue to address local issues based upon input from local sources. The diversification of the councils will strengthen the RC&D council programs in Kentucky.

**12c.** KACD and conservation districts should encourage local support and the funding of RC&D Councils throughout Kentucky. This committee also recommends that councils unite or pool funds to maintain and complete any ongoing projects.

**12d.** With the RC&D Program and Positions being zeroed out of the federal 2011 budget this committee recommends that the KACD and other supporting agencies encourage NACD and other lobbying organizations to request full reinstatement and funding of the RC&D Program.

### **13. Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP):**

Established in 1995, WRP was a nationwide voluntary program that offered easement payments, based on an adjusted market value, for former wetlands that had been previously drained and converted to agricultural uses. The program also paid up to 100 percent reimbursement for restoration cost and let landowners retain control of access, ownership, and hunting and fishing rights within the guidelines of the WRP Program. The program was well received by landowners in Kentucky, enrolling nearly 28,000 acres valuing \$75 million since inception. The 2014 Farm Bill repealed this program, but includes provisions similar to WRP under the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) in the Wetland Reserve Easement component of this new program. Existing WRP contracts and agreements will continue to be honored by NRCS until they are completed or expired. Terms and conditions of existing WRP easements remain unchanged and in full force.

### **14. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):**

CSP is a voluntary conservation program to support ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural lands by providing payments to producers who maintain and enhance the condition of natural resources. CSP will identify and reward those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations. In addition, CSP will create powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance. In short, CSP will reward the best and motivate the rest. Through these rewards and incentives, CSP will build a foundation of natural resource conservation that will provide benefits to the public for generations to come.

The 2014 Farm Bill reauthorized CSP to enroll 10 million acres annually. The CSP enrollment level is down from the 12.7 million acre level in the 2008 Farm Bill, but it remains a substantial contributor toward improving land stewardship across the country.



KACD would like to recommend that NRCS nationally review the rules and regulations for CSP to eliminate problems, make it more user friendly and examine possible ways to make the program more accessible to landowners who reach certain benchmarks on their operations.

#### **15. Grassland Reserve Program (GRP):**

The 2014 Farm Bill repealed this program, but includes provisions similar to GRP under the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) in the Agricultural Land Easement component of this new program. Existing GRP contracts will continue to be honored by NRCS until they are completed or expired. Terms and conditions of existing GRP easements remain unchanged and in full force.

#### **16. Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program and Emergency Conservation Program (ECP):**

A. The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program was authorized by Congress to respond to emergencies created by natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, ice events and wildfires. The program is administered by NRCS and provides technical and financial assistance to protect life and property threatened by excessive erosion and flooding. Public and private lands are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. The project sponsor must be a public agency of a state, county, or city government, or a conservation district. NRCS may bear up to 75% of the construction costs of authorized emergency measures installed. The remaining 25% of costs is the responsibility of the sponsors and can either be in cash or in-kind contributions.

In Kentucky, EWP work generally includes debris removal from stream channels, road culverts and bridge abutments and reshaping and protection of eroding stream banks adjacent to infrastructures (roads, homes). All work must be economically and environmentally defensible and must conform to NRCS technical standards.

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress. ECP is administered by state and county FSA committees. Subject to availability of funds, locally elected county committees are authorized to implement ECP for all disasters except drought, which is authorized at the national office of FSA.

#### **This Committee Comments:**

- USDA NRCS for continuing to implement EWPP and including Conservation Districts in helping local communities to implement needed EWPP recovery efforts for national disasters.
- USDA NRCS for securing over \$45 million in EWPP Federal assistance to protect over \$380 million in infrastructure across the Commonwealth since 2009

#### **This Committee Recommends:**

- NRCS to continue to pursue federal funds to assist local communities in the continued recovery effort.
- KACD, conservation districts and NRCS work together to secure and utilize this funding anytime it is applicable.
- KACD, Conservation Districts, and NRCS to continue to work together to continue the education and promotion of floodplain protection. (This is very important to those HIGH RISK FLOOD areas in Eastern Kentucky). Conservation Districts need to be aware of the importance of the program and how it will benefit not only the landowners but protect land and lives of their communities.

### **17. Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) Program:**

Kentucky was identified as one of 12 (now 13) states to take part in the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI), a special NRCS initiative. Focus areas were identified in each state. The Kentucky focus areas include the Licking River, Lower Green River, Red River and Mayfield Creek/ Bayou de Chien. Smaller watersheds within these watersheds had the opportunity to be selected as “target watersheds” in which partnership projects were conducted to improve soil and water quality by improving the management of nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrients are being targeted by NRCS, as they are associated with impaired water quality in the Mississippi River Basin.

USDA used a competitive process to distribute funding from 2010 through 2015 using two conservation programs, Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) and Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). USDA used CCPI Program to enter into multi-year agreements with eligible partner organizations to address conservation priorities related to agriculture and non-industrial private forestland. The Division of Conservation submitted four project proposals that have been accepted for MRBI assistance. Land users in these project areas have focused EQIP funds (above the normal state allocations) available for contracts on their farms. The Kentucky projects have reached the end of their project lifespan and while they will no longer receive dedicated annual funding, implementation of conservation practices continue under the contracts that were entered through MRBI. Two WREP projects have also been approved in Kentucky; one submitted by The Nature Conservancy, and one with the Mississippi River Trust. These project areas will have focused WRP funds above the normal state allocation. For 2011-2013, this resulted in an additional \$14,000,000 in WRP funds for Kentucky, to enroll an additional 4,500 acres

CCPI was repealed in the 2014 Farm Bill. NRCS recognized there was still much work to be done in the Mississippi River Basin, so the agency committed additional funding through 2018. Kentucky was able to add an additional project areas in the Lower Green River, and the Upper Buck Creek, as well as to continue the Red River project for an additional year.

There is also an employee hired in Graves County thru funding by The Nature Conservancy and NRCS to assist with the WREP program in the targeted MRBI area of Bayou de Chien in Western Kentucky.

This Committee recommends that KACD and conservation districts support and promote the MRBI in their districts.

This Committee recognizes the Conservation Districts have hired employees through the financial assistance of NRCS to assist Conservation Districts in the MRBI focus areas, and to recognize the work being done by these employees.

### **18. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

This new program was established by the 2014 Farm Bill and consolidates FRPP, GRP, and WRP.

ACEP has an Agricultural Lands Easement (ALE) component which is targeted to working agricultural lands and will provide for similar activities that FRPP and GRP provided. These working land easements will provide for the long-term viability of the nation's food supply by preventing conversion of productive lands to non-agricultural use. Since the establishment of the program in 2014, NRCS has committed almost \$12 million to assist state and local entities to acquire 30 easements on 3,800 acres.

ACEP also has a Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) component that incorporates the purposes of the former WRP, which enables USDA to restore wetlands. Over \$16 million is invested annually to acquire voluntary conservation easements from landowners across Kentucky.

### **19. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

Authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, this new program combines the authorities of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Great Lakes Basin Program, and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative.

RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. RCPP does not establish any new programs to deliver this assistance, but rather uses the existing EQIP, CSP, Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) and the new ACEP to deliver assistance as identified in approved partner project proposals. Partners must leverage RCPP funding in project areas and are responsible for reporting on the benefits achieved. NRCS will announce annual opportunities for partners to submit project proposals for consideration.

In 2015 the Kentucky Division of Conservation, along with several partners, submitted and was approved for an RCPP proposal entitled “Managing Poo.” The project has both EQIP and state cost-share available to address livestock issues. The five year project is expected to target a minimum of 250 livestock operations in Kentucky with emphasis on producers nearing regulatory action, to develop conservation plans and implement conservation practices to address water quality and soil erosion resource concerns.

This committee commends the partnership and efforts of NRCS, Division of Conservation and local conservation districts in promoting, supporting, and implementing this program in the targeted areas.

**Randy McCallon, Chairman**  
**Danny Shipley, Vice-Chairman**

## **2018 District Outlook & Leadership Development Committee Report**

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The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8, 9, and 10, 2018.

In view of the great challenge before us in the future, the outlook for districts will depend upon supervisors dedicating themselves to bringing about a higher national, state, and local priority for conservation.

### **The Committee Recommends That:**

- A. Leadership Development - The Division of Conservation and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, **in cooperation with KACD**, should continue a Leadership Development Program for district supervisors as well as district employees that stress district decision making opportunities and changing administrative responsibilities. Leadership development training shall be offered annually in conjunction with the area meetings' 10 minutes supervisors and employee 10 minute trainings provided by field representatives and state or national conventions. Training opportunities should also be provided to all district employees similar to the Leadership Development Training offered to district supervisors.
- B. Funding - Conservation districts should actively support and pursue all possible means of maintaining and increasing funds, technical assistance, and support for conservation programs. Conservation districts are also encouraged to involve local, state and nationally elected officials in the year round activities and programs of the district. This will better familiarize these officials with the entire conservation program of the districts and the importance of these programs to their constituency.
  - a. State Legislature - KACD should sponsor a state legislative meeting similar to the Congressional Breakfast to promote and encourage support for Kentucky's conservation program on the state level. This **should continue to** be accomplished by holding a legislative breakfast at the annual KACD convention and/or a legislative **event** during the General Assembly session for districts to come to Frankfort and meet with their legislators. Consideration should be given by KACD to holding the first legislative day and/or legislative function in conjunction with the annual General Assembly. KACD also is to participate in the legislative reception to meet with their legislators.
  - b. The committee further recommends that with the help of the KACD board of Directors and Soil and Water Commission that a plan for pilot fall legislative

meetings be developed in an area or region that coincides with legislative members of the agriculture committees. These joint meetings hosted by conservation districts and supported by the Division of Conservation, KACD and Soil and Water Commission should be held during November or December just prior to the general assembly session convening. This framework would improve legislative attendance and ensure that priority requests are fresh in legislator minds as the session begins. This is a prime opportunity for districts to detail the successfulness of conservation promotion and education and to justify the need for and continued funding support to maintain conservation programs and a presence in every county.

- c. This Committee further recommends that Kentucky have a strong voice when in Washington and Frankfort and lobby for funds to assist our conservation programs and conservation districts. Also, have a strong voice in how these funds are best distribute to assist each conservation district in their efforts.
- Of most importance is the Kentucky Conservation District Direct Aid to local conservation districts and should be top priority of KACD with the Kentucky General Assembly.
  - Federal Direct grants to districts in particular districts that remain on general funds appropriations from their fiscal court
  - Federal funding for watershed structure rehabilitation
  - Federal funding to fully replace retiring NRCS employees
- d. Federal Funding - As concern grows over cutbacks in federal funding to NRCS, coupled with increased workload and the loss of federal matching dollars, KACD and conservation districts should continue their efforts to keep the federal conservation program funding at a level that fully supports base level funding and technical assistance needed to carry out the state conservation district program at the local level. Conservation districts need to be able to utilize the technical service provider monies included in the proposed 2014 Federal Farm Bill or other pass through funds enabling the conservation districts to provide additional technical assistance to landowners. This includes the newly released Regional Conservation Partnership Program which is a locally led based program. KACD should support efforts by NACD for additional funding and work with the Kentucky Congressional Delegation to get additional monies to support conservation efforts in Kentucky.
- e. Grant Funding - KACD and conservation districts should keep current with the potential financial sources, assistance, and the procedures in requesting and

accepting conservation grants at the district level. Conservation districts are encouraged to work with their active RC&D Councils on assistance in grant application efforts. They should also seek additional funding and be prepared for any opportunities that may arise to apply for grants and also apply for grant monies from the Kentucky Soil & Water Conservation Commission to augment their programs. KACDE has received their 501(C) (3) status and can now be a conduit for handling grant funds for districts who wish to apply and gain approval through grant foundations. KACD **Foundation** has also received the 501 (C) (3) statues also providing a conduit for districts applying for foundation grant funding. Conservation districts should be encouraged to utilize funding possibilities offered through the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board. Conservation districts located in the PRIDE area should seek PRIDE Grants. Conservation districts located in coal producing counties should seek coal severance grants and work with local agencies to secure grants for district programs.

- f. Volunteers, Part time & Seasonal Personnel - Conservation districts should utilize volunteers, summer employees, NRCS Earth Team volunteers etc. to accomplish many of the programs of the conservation program of the partnership at the federal, state, and local level.
  
- g. Cooperation with District and Local Fiscal Courts - With emphasis being placed on accountability of special districts and many new reporting forms being utilized by the conservation districts, it has become quite confusing when requesting local funds from fiscal courts. Therefore, it is suggested that each conservation district personally present to their fiscal court request at their regular scheduled court meeting. This allows questions to be asked and answered concerning any conservation district carry over or expenditures or planned program of work, this will also meet the requirements of the Districts in Good Standing Policy. The committee further recommends that district's maintain open lines fiscal court members to maintain that open line of communication and promote their district activities.
  
- h. Millage Tax - This Committee feels it is imperative that Resolution Committee research and pursues legislative language to present a bill to general assembly allowing millage tax or fee funding for all conservation districts. The committee would also recommend that this issue be a priority focus of KACD and the Resolution Committee in the coming fiscal year both research and language

furthering the legislative process of acquiring millage tax funding for the remaining districts.

i. During the January 2011 Soil & Water Commission meeting the District's in Good Standing Guidelines was adopted for use by the commission to better award direct aid requests from districts as decreased funding continues. These guidelines require each district to submit on January 5<sup>th</sup> and July 5<sup>th</sup> of each fiscal year a report that details their submission and compliance of 3 statutory requirements and 9 policy requirements. The guidelines have 3 levels of funding 100%, 90% and 75% based on each district's efforts in complying with the requirements.

C. Conservation District Supervisor's Responsibilities Handbook - This handbook should be delivered to each newly elected/appointed supervisor by their field representative, or downloaded from the Division of Conservation website at <http://conservation.ky.gov> once certified by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. District supervisors should obtain a copy and study its contents to become more effective supervisors. Conservation districts should set aside one board meeting each year to cover in more detail supervisors' responsibilities. It should be updated and maintained as needed.

D. District Employees –

- a. KACD strongly encourages conservation districts to develop job descriptions and perform yearly evaluations on all their district employees.
- b. The Division of Conservation, Soil and Water Conservation Commission and KACDE should develop a Workshop Development Program for district employees. These development programs should be offered annually for all district employees. The Board of Supervisors should strongly encourage employees to attend all training opportunities.
- c. KACD encourages KACDE to pursue scholarships for employee training. Membership with KACDE is also encouraged.
- d. District employees are also encouraged to take advantage of any and all NRCS training programs. We encourage districts to support their technical employees to attend the NRCS/NACD Conservation Boot Camp.
- e. Training should also be provided to all district employees similar to the Leadership Development Training offered to District Supervisors.



- f. District employee training meetings should be conducted by the Division of Conservation field representatives annually and training sessions are to be held in conjunction with the KACD State Convention.
- g. KACD strongly encourages district supervisors and employees to become familiar with and implement the Accounting and Administrative Procedures Manual.
- h. KACD also encourages the implementation of 10-minute training sessions to be provided by field representative to district employees during board meetings.
- i. The Committee recommends that research and possible development of a web based training site be developed with specific training criteria for district staff. We further recommend this be an annual requirement for all district personnel to participate and complete aiding in their continuing education.
- j. This committee recommends that to improve overall effectiveness of programs, duties, and responsibilities of district employees there need be more emphasis on better communication between them, division of conservation, KACD, Soil & Water Commission and KACDE. The district employees are the face of conservation in the state and we further urge agencies make additional efforts to communicate, train and support district staff in carrying out the conservation mission of the commonwealth.

E. Water Quality Information - As a result of the passage of the Agriculture Water Quality Act in 1994, discussion on the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act and the increasing concern in the pollution of our surface and ground water resources, the conservation districts are being asked to assume an increasing role in water quality in this state. KACD, Soil & Water Conservation Commission and the Division of Conservation should continue to work jointly with other agencies to provide up-to-date informational sessions on this topic at area and state meetings. District supervisors and district employees should take advantage of every opportunity to increase their understanding of water quality issues in order to better assist landowners in dealing with these problems, incorporating this issue into district programs and communicating the importance that resource conservation plays in good water quality. Additionally the Division of Conservation web site has located under the “Resources” tab the “KY. Erosion & Sedimentation Control Field Guide” that can be printed from the web site. Also located on the web site is the “Agriculture Water Quality Plan” and Ky. Nutrient management plan tool where Agriculture Best Management Practices are listed, and Ky nutrient management plan assistance tool.

- Conservation districts should continue to solicit the help of other agricultural agencies to promote and assist landowners in the implementation of Agriculture

Water Quality Plans. Districts should actively promote the development of agriculture water quality plans with landowners that have not complied with the laws, and continue to encourage those with plans to revise based on their current active operations.

- F. Video Library - The Division of Conservation should continue to take digital photos of the highlights at the state convention to be made available to those supervisors who are unable to attend the meeting and for possible use in future training sessions. The material should be edited and publicized as to its availability to conservation districts and also include all newly developed leadership development power point presentations. KACD suggests that this information be made available on the Division of Conservation website at <http://conservation.ky.gov>.
- G. Committee Action Items – **This Committee strongly encourages** the KACD Board of Directors should continue to see that appropriate action be taken on all adopted committee recommendations. A board member will be on each KACD committee and see that timely subjects are included in the KACD board meetings. Consideration should be given by the Board of Directors to publishing the adopted committee reports and resolutions into a book format for distribution or on the Division of Conservation website.

This committee recommends that beginning in January that all standing committee reports be sent to all conservation districts and encouraged to review all reports and each district appoint a district committee to review the standing committee reports and provide a full report to the entire board to better educate conservation district board members of the KACD standing committee reports

- a. **This Committee recommends that the KACD and Soil and Water Commission research and implement incentives to effectively encourage conservation district KACD standing committee members actively participate in the Standing Committee conference calls each year or appoint someone from their district to participate in their place if a conflict occurs on scheduling.**
- b. **This Committee recommends that beginning in January that all standing committee reports be sent to all conservation districts and encouraged to review all reports and each district appoint a district committee to review the standing committee reports and provide a full report to the entire board to better educate conservation district board members of the KACD standing committee reports goals and objectives.**

- H. Position on Issues - The Committee strongly encourages KACD and Division of Conservation to provide as soon as possible during general assembly sessions an “*Action Alert*” fact sheet on upcoming legislative issues that affect the conservation district and programs. We understand this is a vital issue in continuing conservation sustainability and at times require immediate attention by the board of supervisors in contacting their state representatives and senators for support. Also realizing the importance and timeliness we recommend a distribution list of email contacts be developed and utilized during these legislative sessions to keep the board of supervisors up to date on the status of bills that may require their immediate attention and possible contact of legislatures
- I. Laws and Regulations - Better cooperation and coordination between state agencies and conservation districts on laws and regulations which affect agricultural production are needed. Conservation districts should be informed on these issues so they may be better informed and able to assist landowners. A good example would be wetland regulations and ground water protection programs. Past programs have been good and cooperation among agencies is critical and must be continued. KACD should develop a Watershed Conservancy District Committee to overhaul any needed laws or changes.
- J. Promotion/Public Awareness - The committee encourages conservation districts to work on their public image within their local community through the use of signs, newspapers, newsletters, news media articles, slide shows, videos, radio, cable TV, websites and Facebook pages. Extra effort by conservation districts should be made to inform the public and to promote the use of GIS capabilities. The Division of Conservation should develop informational materials, including videos, to be used by districts at the local and state levels to inform citizens of conservation problems, solutions and programs.
- K. Swearing-In of Supervisors - KACD encourages conservation districts to hold an official swearing-in ceremony for new supervisors in the local county judge’s office every two years and publicize in local media sources to make citizens aware of the conservation district. Conservation districts are encouraged to contact fiscal court and let them know that newly elected supervisors want to be a part of their official swearing in ceremony.
- L. Conservation Partnership - KACD should maintain the equal partnership between conservation districts, **Division of Conservation, Soil & Water Conservation Commission, KACDE** and NRCS. Supervisors should be kept informed and consulted on the development of new regulations being considered by the agency. Both KACD and NRCS should keep the other informed on issues that have the potential to affect either agency.

**The KACD and Soil & Water Commission become strong partners and leaders with continued representation and priority emphasis on the **Kentucky Water Resources Board and the** Kentucky Management Work Group, which includes Kentucky Farm Bureau, Division of Conservation, NRCS etc. Conservation Districts in Kentucky are leaders on environmental issues and with the occurrence of many extreme weather events, potential drought conditions and the devastation possible on Kentucky's environment and agriculture industry, we support the vital necessity of this work group to focus on inventorying, monitoring and developing an effective and efficient water resource plan addressing the potential concern of available water resources within the state and this be a matter of utmost significance to all partner agencies.**

**We further recommend that as conservation districts and leaders within our counties continued support, education and action be committed to the watershed dam rehabilitation as many of these dams continue to deteriorate and demand attention to remove their hazardous classification. We strongly recommend that KACD and Soil and Water Commission look for funding support to assist watershed districts from all resources federal, state and local to aid in this endeavor.**

- M. Long-Range Planning - Since district long-range plans are being used to allocate financial and technical assistance, Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share, and the Agriculture Water Quality Act, all districts are strongly encouraged to develop or to have available a current long-range plan. Conservation districts should review their long-range plan each year to note progress on action items and identify important action items remaining to be completed. The KACD District Outlook & Leadership Development.

Committee strongly encourages those conservation districts whose long-range plan is three (3) years old or older to revise those plans to take into consideration the rapidly changing natural resources and environmental concerns (particularly water quality issues and urban versus rural concerns) of their county. Long-range plans should include:

(1) An appraisal of resource conditions and needs;

(2) Determination of long-term objectives;

(3) Establishment of priorities and

(4) Development of a program for addressing the needs and the impact these programs have on staff needs.

- N. Districts should utilize other agencies, organizations and individuals, such as NRCS, FSA, 4-H, FFA, Planning & Zoning, Agriculture Development Boards, Farm Bureau, schools, universities, Cooperative Extension, real estate associations, Chamber of Commerce, local agriculture commodity groups, local governments, etc. that share common interests in conservation and cooperate with them in attaining mutual goals.

- O. Conservation districts should review the make-up of their boards and consider the diversity of their counties in planning and implementing of their local programs.
- P. The committee believes that conservation district success begins and ends at the local level. Therefore the committee recommends that at least one board member from each conservation district be REQUIRED to participate in the KACD standing committees report development and review. This committee recommends that Division of Conservation and field representatives provide 10 minute trainings on the final standing committee reports each year. These committees and reports are the foundation of successful conservation delivery and policy and should be a priority to each district in the state. District supervisors input is vital in ensuring local concerns are recognized and gain attention locally, statewide and nationally through the standing committee reports.
- Q. To greater improve landowner assistance on the local level this committee recommends that Division of Conservation, KACD, Soil and Water Commission and NRCS work with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to develop a memorandum of understanding with conservation districts that will allow sharing of information, such as farm maps, farm numbers, and other documents required in carrying out district program work. This is becoming more of an issue as NRCS employees are not in the counties as much as they used to be to aid in getting the necessary documents. This agreement would mean landowner assistance could be processed more efficiently and effectively if district staff had direct access through a MOU with FSA also.
- R. This committee recommends that USDA NRCS look to fully fill and fund any positions that are vacated through retirements. We also recommend that those positions that are in line to be vacated an employee be hired so as training and mentoring of new employees may be accomplished with the experienced staff before they vacate their current position to better serve landowners of the commonwealth.

Steve Coleman, Chairman

## 2018 Education and Youth Committee Report

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The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### **The Committee Recommends That:**

1. KACD and conservation districts should continue their strong support and promotion of the annual Art and Writing Contest and continue to work toward increasing student participation in the contest by:
  - Getting materials into the classroom through Division of Conservation and Kentucky Farm Bureau web site and use of KACDE tabloids.
  - Providing compact discs of contest materials where needed.
  - Trying to have at least one entry for the Art and Writing Contest.
  - Continuing to recognize the winners.
  - Recognizing teachers involved in the contest. Examples of recognition would be:
    - (i) Teacher with highest percentage of entries.
    - (ii) Teacher with most entries.
    - (iii) Teacher with winning entry.
- KACD should continue to distribute the flyer developed by Farm Bureau with brief description of contest theme, rules, and web address that can be readily available to conservation districts for distribution to teachers.
- Encourage KACD to provide report to districts with total statewide participation in both contests.
- Encourage Kentucky Farm Bureau to provide a PDF, text only or printer friendly version of material for ease in download from websites.
- Encourage KACD to include art and writing contest promotion ideas in the sharing idea sessions during area meetings and state convention.
- Encourage Kentucky Farm Bureau to develop a brief news release for use by districts in their local newspapers, and also encourage Kentucky Farm Bureau to advertise/promote contest in their magazines, newsletters etc.

- KACD should work with NACD to merge contest themes for the NACD poster contest and Jim Claypool art and writing contest to increase participation in both contests.
  - KACD should recognize school with entries from 100% of classrooms (not 100% of students) participating.
  - Recognize area and state winners in a ceremony in Frankfort.
  - Encourage districts to recognize their winners and participating teachers at events throughout the year, in addition to at the annual awards program.
  - Districts should be provided with a comprehensive list of incentives for all contests.
2. KACD encourages each district board to charge the board's education committee to develop and implement an environmental education program for the district by:
- Considering the development of an education coordinator position either jointly among districts or on an individual district level to help with education efforts.
  - Working with teachers in public, private, and home schools to promote soil and water conservation.
  - Encouraging participation in the KACD Teacher Awards Program.
  - Streamline the nomination process for the awards to make it easier for the districts to nominate.
  - KACD should ask the Division of Conservation to send out a reminder in February to the Districts announcing the Teacher Awards Contest and deadline of April 30<sup>th</sup> for entries.
  - Division of Conservation and its field reps should make sure districts know of educational programs
3. KACD and conservation districts should promote and/or co-sponsor:
- Teacher education seminars, such as in-service days, workshops, and credit courses that deal with natural resource conservation and agriculture education.
  - In-service training through the Professional Development Consortium at state universities or local colleges.
  - Ag Aware Program through the Department of Agriculture.
  - Earth Day events.
  - Tree giveaway programs.
  - Arbor Day events.
  - Public workshops in their counties that address specific resource concerns such as soil erosion, water quality plans etc.
  - Kentucky Farm Bureau Regional Agriculture Teacher Workshops.
  - Educational materials in a second language (Spanish).
  - Agriculture Adventures: Kentucky Program through the Owensboro Museum of Science and History.

- Community gardens (including, but not limited to, vegetable, herb, flower, container, and rain gardens).
  - Backyard conservation programs (including urban conservation, rain barrels, etc.).
4. KACD should encourage communication between the conservation districts and the community they serve by encouraging districts to develop a presence:
- Online
  - At county fairs
  - At other community events
  - Websites
  - Facebook, Twitter, other social media sites.
  - Take part in local agriculture related radio and TV shows if available in your area.
5. KACD and conservation districts should encourage and actively promote usage of local resources in schools or in the community by developing and maintaining an environmental resource center.
6. KACD encourages all districts to actively promote youth participation in and provide conservation education programs for:
- FFA.
  - YMCA (Latch Key).
  - Home School Association.
  - 4-H.
  - Boy and Girl Scouts.
  - Church Youth Programs.
  - County Elementary School Family Resources Centers.
  - Junior Conservation District Boards.
  - Community Centers.
  - Youth hunting and fishing groups.
  - Envirothon Teams.
  - FCCLA (Family Career and Community Leaders of America).
7. KACD should continue to recognize and honor:
- Outstanding conservation district educational programs.
  - Local individuals who have provided natural resources education.
  - Participants in the NACD National Poster Contest.
  - Promote and encourage Aldo Leopold award



8. KACD and conservation districts are encouraged to continue assistance, financially and technically, at the state, regionally and the local level in:
  - Envirothon.
  - FFA Land Judging Contest.
  - Statewide Science Olympiad.
  - Kentucky Water Watch/Watershed Watch Program.
  - Collegiate Land Judging.
  - Research Extension Apprenticeship Program (REAP).
  - Science fairs.
  - Kentucky Forest Leadership Program.
  
9. Committee encourages each district to coordinate with local developers in the area of soil erosion and best management practices on job sites by local conservation districts providing workshops to:
  - Developers.
    - Contractors.
    - Home building associations.
    - Planning and zoning boards.
    - Local government officials.
    - Lending institutions.
    - Lawn care companies and landscapers.
  
10. Conservation districts are encouraged to support the Auxiliary Scholarship Program and to nominate students in their local community to apply for these three annual scholarships. KACD is encouraged to develop a brief news release available to districts promoting participation in the non-traditional scholarship.
  
11. Committee recommends that a training seminar be developed and presented to supervisors by Division of Conservation field representatives and other staff at area meetings. This meeting will change location annually.
  - After each election the District should ask the field representative to present newly elected district supervisors who did not attend the area meeting a training program at a special meeting in January or February.
  - KACD encourages field representatives to provide district supervisors with 10-minute supervisors' trainings during monthly board meetings.
  
12. Committee recommends that districts educate their citizens about the watershed in which they live, and how those actions may impact their watershed. Examples are:

- Enviroscope.
  - Groundwater models.
  - Water testing.
  - Newsletters, articles, and/or brochures.
  - Field Days.
  - Community cleanups (PRIDE, Bluegrass PRIDE, River Sweep activities etc.).
  - Urban storm water models.
13. Encourage districts to seek alternative funding to purchase environmental educational materials and tools.
14. Encourage districts to conduct and/or attend environmental education workshops.
15. Conservation districts are encouraged to promote to teachers within their counties the following workshops:
- Food, Land and People (A non-profit organization dedicated to promoting a better understanding of agriculture, the environment, and the people of the world)
  - Project Wet (develops materials and curriculum to educate children and youth of water resources)
  - Project Aquatic Wild (provides aquatic based conservation education to promote responsible actions toward our aquatic systems)Project Wild (provides wildlife based conservation education to promote responsible actions toward our wildlife and related natural resources)
  - Project Learning Tree (education program that emphasises how to think about environmental issues)
  - Wonders of Wetlands (Instructional guide for educators that provides activities and information on wetlands)
  - 
  - Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom (non-profit organization that works to support educating students about agriculture and environmental issues)
  - Biologist in Training Program (activity based program that teaches kids to use their observation skills while in the outdoors through a 5 step curriculum)
  - Flying Wild (practical hands on program that provides education based upon birds involving language arts, social studies, math, and community outreach)
16. The field representative in conjunction with the education coordinator will be responsible for educating supervisors and other personnel on educational programs. KACD encourages conservation districts and district supervisors to:

- Take a more proactive responsibility in environmental education within their counties.
- Develop training sessions on environmental education programs and encourage supervisors and district staff participation.
- To encourage the inclusion of and participate in environmental training sessions during area meetings and KACD convention.
- To provide community workshops on environmental education.

17. Conservation districts should consider recognizing a student who has excelled in conservation functions with a yearly award, similar to the Master Conservationist program for landowners.

- The committee recommends that the KACD board of Directors develop guidelines and policies for a Junior Master Conservationist Certification/Recognition program for youth. We also recommend that with the implementation of this program that conservation districts sponsor or support community type gardens that promote conservation education. The program should require meeting minimum requirements for certification or recognition in the areas of understanding and utilizing conservation practices in all five areas listed below:

1. Water Quality/Conservation—Rain barrels/Testing
2. Recycling—Compost Bins
3. Soil Testing--Nutrient Management
4. Soil Erosion—Cover Crop
5. Wildlife—Crop Residue/Habitat

**Ava Adams, Chairperson**

## 2018 Forestry Committee Report

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The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8, 9 and 10, 2018.

### **The Committee Recommends That:**

1. KACD and local conservation districts should continue to promote the use of timber harvesting best management practices and the Kentucky Master Logger Program. The model timber sales contract should be distributed and promoted by districts for use by woodland owners. Conservation districts should help promote silviculture best management practices and the Kentucky Master Logger training sessions in their local communities. KACD encourages landowners to comply with the silviculture section of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act and supports the provisions of the Kentucky Forest Conservation Act. This committee commends the University of Kentucky's Department of Forestry for its research efforts at Robinson Forest about the effects of BMPs on water quality and recommends continued funding for this program. This committee further recommends that conservation districts provide the University of Kentucky's Logger violator list web address to landowners who may be in the process of entering into a contract with a commercial logger for timber harvest.
2. KACD supports the Kentucky Forest Stewardship Program, which was developed in cooperation with the Divisions of Forestry and Conservation and the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and encourages each conservation district to become familiar with this program and its benefits to forest landowners. In addition, KACD encourages each conservation district to recognize annually an Outstanding Forest Steward similar to the Outstanding District Cooperator.
3. KACD, along with its Congressional Delegation, should attempt to secure adequate federal funding for all state and private forestry programs.
4. KACD commends the Division of Forestry, the University of Kentucky Department Of Forestry, and the Department for Energy Development and Independence for their efforts and accomplishments and requests that they continue research on utilizing waste products from the timber industry. KACD recommends that conservation districts work with federal, state, and local agencies to promote the utilization of damaged timber so forest landowners can receive some economic

benefit. This recommendation particularly applies to the dying ash timber currently being impacted by the emerald ash bore.

5. The KACD Forestry Committee commends the efforts of the Forest Health Task Force in monitoring and addressing the potential threats to Kentucky's forests from sudden oak death, emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, hemlock wood adelgid, 1000 Cankers Disease, and other forest insects and diseases that could devastate forests. The Kentucky Woodland Owners Association is currently trying to have emerald ash bore declared a disaster in Kentucky and seeking disaster assistance funding for woodland owners under the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) administered by the Farm Service Agency. The committee supports the work of the Forest Health Task Force and its member agencies including the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, State Entomologist, Division of Forestry, the USDA Forest Service, APHIS, the Division of Conservation, the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, Kentucky Forest Industries Association, Kentucky State Nature Preserve Commission, and KACD. This committee encourages additional funding from the state, for efforts recommended by the Forest Health Task Force to fight these threats to Kentucky's forests.
6. KACD encourages the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to continue their work with USDA in the enhancement of the non-timber forest products and to provide an alternative to timber harvesting. KACD supports and encourage the Department of Agriculture to strengthen a strong forestry marketing effort within the department.
7. KACD supports the efforts to promote the efficient cost effective processing of Kentucky's wood products within the state's borders rather than shipping out of state and supports the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's request for continuing their staffing needs for forest products development. KACD strongly encourages the Economic Development Cabinet, the Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Forest Industries Association to actively seek and encourage businesses and industries to use small diameter, low quality, and damaged waste wood and undesirable species.

Annually, Kentucky experiences millions of dollars in losses of timber value due to wildfires. The leading cause of wildfires in the state is arson. KACD recommends the establishment of a dedicated law enforcement unit to investigate wildland arson, aggressive prosecution against arsonists, a comprehensive media campaign to support law enforcement efforts and the inclusion of wildland arson as part of environmental education in Kentucky school curriculum. KACD recommends that

each conservation district promote fire prevention and encourage the courts to prosecute violators of forest fire laws. The committee should initiate action that will better enable conservation districts to establish local Firewise councils. KACD asks districts to annually encourage landowners to manage their privately owned property to reduce the potential for forest fires. Local conservation districts to work within their community to promote fire prevention and Firewise activities. KACD recommends that the Commonwealth of Kentucky fully fund the recommendations of the 2006 Final Report from the Governor's Task Force on Wildland Arson. KACD recommends that funding for the use of bloodhounds to be used in arson investigation be continued and promoted within the conservation districts.

8. KACD supports the continued operations of the 2 state nurseries maintained by the Kentucky Division of Forestry. KACD commends prior governor leadership for their commitment to rebuild the nursery damaged from the 2012 tornado. However, adequate personnel and funding for these nurseries are needed to serve the landowners of this state. Continued tree nursery operations are vital to KACD. Tree planting and tree seedlings give away programs are among the most popular forestry related activities for county conservation districts. KACD encourages all conservation districts to participate in the tree giveaway program and encourages conservation districts to promote seedlings from the state nurseries for forestation efforts.
9. KACD recommends an increase in staff and funding for the Division of Forestry in order for division to provide sufficient technical assistance to Kentucky's forest landowners and to protect and conserve the forest resources of the Commonwealth.
10. KACD supports the efforts of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative to encourage the returning of land that was in forests prior to mining back to forests using reclamation practices that promote tree survival and growth. KACD commends the efforts of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative to identify and initiate reclamation contracts through the appropriate channels for the large number of reclaimed sites. When working with coal operators, conservation districts should encourage post-mining reclamation to woodland and wildlife options. KACD supports the reforesting research efforts of the UK Department of Forestry, the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, and the Kentucky Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement's work with post-mined reclamation sites.
11. KACD recommends that the Daniel Boone National Forest and Land between the Lakes National Recreation Area continue to be managed for multiple uses, including timber production and harvest. KACD supports the harvesting of timber with criteria

for harvesting in accordance with site conditions, age of timber stand at time of harvest, effects on wildlife and archaeological sites and established recreational sites in our national forests on a continuing basis. We recommend all conservation districts be involved in the implementation.

12. KACD urges each conservation district to incorporate programs that address forestry resource needs into their annual and long-range plans. Districts should utilize the assistance of the Kentucky Division of Forestry, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, US Forest Service, NRCS, FSA , and the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service when developing plans and carrying out programs to assist landowners.
13. The committee recommends that KACD and local conservation districts support financial incentive programs that promote the sustainability of our privately owned forests. This support should focus on the use of forestry best management practices in the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality State Cost Share Program administered by the Division of Conservation and on future funding from the Forest Stewardship Incentives Fund established by the Kentucky Forest Conservation Act. We support additional funding for the Forest Stewardship Fund. KACD strongly encourages support for timber management programs in the current federal farm bill development.
14. KACD supports the Division of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Program and its efforts to assist communities, regardless of size, with the management of their forest resources and the education of our communities regarding forestry issues.
15. KACD recommends that local conservation districts and active RC&D Councils promote forestry and conservation education in the classroom.
16. KACD supports the effort of the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association to promote legislation for fair and equitable property tax evaluation for forest lands. KACD encourages districts to contact their local legislators to gather support when a legislative bill is offered.
17. KACD supports the Forestry Legacy Program, which purchases forestland or easements from willing sellers to keep lands in forestland for management, preservation, and conservation

18. KACD supports the Kentucky Chapter of American Chestnut Foundation's research and efforts to repopulate the American chestnut in Kentucky as well as the effort of the Kentucky Division of Forestry to repopulate the American Chestnut in Kentucky through the state tree nursery in Morgan County
19. KACD encourages local conservation districts, partnering with cooperative extension, to host meetings that encourage the creation of local forest associations or councils to be established by local forest landowners and other forest partners.

KACD encourages districts to make available local to assist landowners with recovery efforts when forests have been destroyed by natural disasters such as: flood, fire, landslides, insects, and diseases. KACD supports the federal and state efforts to assist private landowners whose forests are damaged by natural disasters.

Encourages the pursuit of efforts to obtain federal funding to assist woodland owners in recovering losses and management costs association with emerald ash bore losses discussed in paragraph 5 above. This committee recommends for districts to apply for local, federal and state grants to fund these programs. KACD commends the Division of Forestry, University of Kentucky Department of Forestry, Kentucky Division of Conservation, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and local conservation districts for assisting private forest owners, landowners and communities recover from natural disasters.

20. KACD commends Kentucky Natural Resource Conservation Service for their strong commitment of annual appropriations that address forest health issues in USDA Farm Bill Program funding. KACD supports increased funding for the EQIP Forestland Initiative to ensure non-industrial private forest owner's needs are met on equal footing with other agricultural interests.
21. Timber theft has become a major problem for landowners. KACD encourages the general assembly to recognize timber theft as theft of personal property; and violators should be punished accordingly.
22. KACD supports a broad definition of renewable biomass such as the one included in the 2014 Farm Bill. Kentucky's private forest landowners are uniquely suited to help meet our nation's renewable energy needs. Forest biomass should include all forest types, rely on forest practices established at the state and local level, define sustainable practices using existing tools, (such as state water quality Best Management Practices), and provide authority and funding to state forestry agencies and their conservation partners. KACD encourages the continued research on the value of biomass production and the long-term impacts on the natural resources of Kentucky.



23. KACD supports the concept and utilization of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration, by Kentucky's forests and encourages landowners to practice sustainable forest management. The societal benefits of a healthy vigorous forest go far beyond an increase in monetary timber values, but benefits in water and air quality, native plant and animal community vigor, and general well-being of our local communities are realized.
24. KACD recommends conservation districts work with the Kentucky Division of Forestry with implementing the Kentucky Statewide Assessment of Forest Resources and Strategy, June 2010, which analyzes the current conditions and treats to Kentucky's forests and provides a five-year plan for protecting, enhancing and conserving Kentucky's trees and forests. KACD encourages conservation districts to share this information with landowners in their districts
25. KACD encourages the National Association of Conservation District to participate in discussions for the next Farm Bill to ensure that the interests of non-industrial private forest owners are included. KACD supports Center for Forest and Wood Certification established by the University of Kentucky.
26. KACD encourages local conservation districts to lead in the effort to educate land owners on the fair market value of their timber and additional non-traditional forest products that can be derived from their woodlands in association with the Division of Forestry, University of Kentucky Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wildlife biologists and UK Agriculture Extension Agents. The non-traditional forest products could include presentations on bee keeping, growing mushrooms, planting ginseng, and harvesting maple syrup. These environmentally sustainable activities may increase the economic output of our woodlands in addition to a once in 30 year timber harvest.
27. KACD and Conservation Districts should encourage and support local boy and girl scout troops as well as other groups or organizations to participate in "Kentucky's 20/20 Vision For Reforestation" campaign. The campaigns goal is to plant 20 million trees over the next 20 years. Information on the project and to sign up a member can be found on Kentucky Division of Forestry website.
28. KACD supports and should encourage the Regional White Oak Initiative aimed at addressing the long term need for white oak timber resources.

**Lenville Martin, Chairman**

## **2018 Natural Resources Committee Report**

The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75th annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8,9 & 10, 2018.

Conservation districts are assigned by law the responsibility of providing for the wise use of our natural resources. Natural resource management is very complex. We depend on soil and water for our vital existence as it is vital for food and fiber production, liquid consumption, energy and industrial production, transportation and recreation.

This committee urges that each district incorporate the following recommendations into its long-range and annual plans of work. The Committee Recommends That:

### **1. Resource Information**

1a. All districts should have an updated long-range plan based on present land use, resource problems, current trends and other data in accordance with the National Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act. Conservation districts' long-range plans should be reviewed annually and updated, at least every five years, as conditions warrant, to include the many changes and address the new resource problems facing districts.

1b. NRCS should emphasize and assist conservation districts in promoting the use of the LESA (Land Evaluation and Site Assessment) system with local planning commissions.

1c. KACD requests that NRCS continue toward an updated version of the soil survey mapping process. Districts should continue to promote recognition of prime farmlands and realize the value of this resource information. Districts should request these maps and use them in the approval of agricultural districts and agricultural conservation easements, and in the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Program. The maps should also be utilized when working with fiscal courts, planning, and zoning agencies on their local land use decisions and Farmland Protection Programs.

1d. KACD and conservation districts support the development of a state soil survey computerized database to include digitizing all completed soil surveys. This automation of the large volume of county soil survey data will make it much easier to use and interpret in use of Web Soil Survey. KACD supports efforts to accelerate the use of the GIS digitized soil survey data. KACD should seek state funding for these efforts to ensure continuation of this program.

1e. KACD encourages continuing the implementation of the GIS that is rapidly being adopted by NRCS, Division of Conservation and others. Long-term goals include access to GIS technology in many field offices, digital soil surveys for every county, digital orthophotography for every county, user support for units of government and close coordination among local, state, federal, and private users of the technology. This will assure quality data for planning future developments. KACD will promote the access and use of GIS technology.

1f. Districts should promote the use of the —Best Management Practices for Agriculture manual with farm owners, operators, others, and the —Best Management Practices for Construction manual for contractors, developers, equipment operators and others.

1g. KACD should encourage research by Kentucky's colleges and universities on the effectiveness of best management practices to reduce cropland erosion and improve water quality. Emphasis should be placed on alternative methods to control perennial weeds such as grazing, mowing, and efficient chemical usage in all types of applications.

1h. As concern continues to increase with animal agriculture production particularly the storage, handling, and the research of land application of animal waste, focuses needs to be on ensuring the effectiveness of BMPs in order to address environmental concerns. Conservation districts need to stay informed on changes in laws and regulations that impact confined livestock operations in an effort to better inform producers in their counties. KACD should support efforts to develop and strengthen nutrient management standards to ensure the best and wise use for animal waste nutrient values. Respective Districts should assist the Regional Conservation Partnership Program developing Nutrient Management Plans for livestock operations and share that experience with other Districts.

1i. KACD encourages Conservation districts to stay informed of changes in Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) and Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) that affect livestock operations. KACD supports the development of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) and their implementation.

1j. Conservation districts should assume the leadership role in developing and implementing sediment and storm water management control programs for the protection of sinkholes and other sensitive areas as required in Kentucky's Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Plan.

1k. KACD and conservation districts should continue to assist in efforts to identify research needs and support the necessary monitoring required to better assess and understand the ground water resources in Kentucky and their pollution sources. KACD and districts should be involved in the development of ground water protection programs as they relate to agriculture. KACD encourages participation of each conservation district in the Ground Water Education and Well Water Testing Program and recommends that this be an annual program offered to counties. The program should be conducted in cooperation with other farm organizations at the local level such as Farm Bureau, Extension Service, etc. KACD should work with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and local health departments to obtain their assistance in providing bacteria testing available to participants of the Well Water Testing Program. Also, conservation districts should support and promote the Agricultural Chemical Container Rinse and Recycle Program in their community.

## 2. Education

2a. District supervisors should be kept abreast of new developments in land use concepts and practices and apply them in their district. This would include the Agricultural District Program. Districts should work to better inform citizens, both urban and rural, as to the value of sound

land use planning and benefits it can provide to their community in protecting individual land rights while meeting the future growth needs of the community.

2b. Districts should encourage the use of conservation videos at community meetings with county and regional officials, local community TV stations or other interested groups. Locally produced tapes on local problems are very effective and districts should make these available to schools, cable TV channels, etc. The Division of Conservation is encouraged to explore possibilities of obtaining conservation related materials on video tapes to be made available to schools, libraries, citizens groups, etc. and continue to encourage joint newsletters with other agencies. Districts should encourage the use of conservation videos, DVDs, Websites, and other multimedia, including NRCS Web Videos on conservation topics that are posted on —You Tubel.

2c. Districts, through their various public information programs, and in cooperation with the Extension Service, should stress the seriousness of cropland erosion and water quality with direct attention to proper use of crop residues. Conservation districts (in cooperation with local extension agents) should continually update information to cooperators on new chemicals available for conservation tillage and new methods of handling these chemicals safely.

2d. Districts are encouraged to utilize all their resources by informing cooperators and landowners of conservation compliance sections of farm bill legislation and the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act.

2e. Land use conversion from other uses to cropland to meet the demands for grain poses a conservation risk. Districts should cooperate with their natural resource conservation partners to encourage agricultural landusers to follow program requirements and maintain conservation compliance when converting lands to cropland.

2f. KACD and conservation districts should work to better inform cooperators and landowners on the proper handling of chemicals and proper disposal and possible recycling of waste oil on the farm and around the home. Districts should become familiar with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Division of Environmental Services' General Pesticide State Management Plan. This plan provides a framework to promote an understanding of the issues associated with chemical usage, protection of water quality and to ensure the use of emerging technology that is available in regard to best management strategies. KACD supports the strengthening of the Chemical Applicators Certification Program and strengthening of the educational program to address environmental concerns with chemical usage and disposal. The KACD Board of Directors should support, promote and assist in the development of any program to address the proper disposal of unused chemicals and chemical containers in Kentucky.

2g. Districts are encouraged to cooperate with other agencies in encouraging homeowners to identify and eliminate domestic, untreated sewage discharges to the environment, provide public education and assist in local community wide initiatives for sustainable waste management solutions. They should utilize all their resources to encourage participation by landowners in straight pipe initiatives, provide technical assistance, site alternatives, assist with operation and maintenance and evaluate successes.

2h. Districts should promote the Envirothon, Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom, and other significant conservation education programs. KACD should encourage and promote the funding of special education employees by the conservation districts. KACD will also promote and encourage the funding of conservation related educational programs by conservation districts.

. 2i. Districts should promote and encourage soil health practices, activities and education.

### 3. Cooperative Relations

3a. KACD should encourage the development and strengthening of the conservation partnership at the local, state and national level. The members of the partnership need to be kept informed on changes and new developments in the soil and water conservation program. The Regional Conservation Planning Program is an example.

3b. Each conservation district should be the local leader in its community in the promotion and support of sound resource management planning according to the land capability and limitations. Districts should strengthen working relationships with their local planning and zoning commission by participating in any comprehensive planning activities and work toward a planning effort if one does not exist. Districts should make every effort to raise the public's awareness that farmland preservation programs should be used as planning tools. They should work to have agricultural districts, PACE and other farmland that is being preserved denoted in all new or updated comprehensive plans.

3c. Conservation districts should arrange an annual joint meeting with their fiscal court, city councils and other local officials to develop cooperative land use planning activities and consider other land use decisions, such as floodplain ordinances.

3d. Districts should cooperate with local agencies in land set-aside programs and encourage the application of adequate conservation treatment on these areas.

3e. The Division of Conservation should continue the practice of notifying conservation districts of PACE projects which are being reviewed in the respective county.

3f. With the abolishment of the Interagency Farmland Advisory Committee, districts should encourage the formation of a similar group to provide oversight of government projects proposed on agricultural land of 50 acres or more. Districts should encourage the retention of these prime and unique agricultural lands to the maximum extent possible. Districts should also emphasize the importance of having landowners/land users and local citizens identified as standing members on any such committee.

3g. Districts are encouraged to partner with PRIDE Programs across the state to identify viable projects and provide local resources, such as manpower, technical and financial assistance, public education, site assessments that focus attention to a variety of environmental problems and to finding solutions and other information.

3h. Districts are encouraged to continue their support and cooperation with the Agriculture Development Councils by continuing to nominate two persons to represent conservation districts

on these councils in every county. They should also take the lead in developing and implementing proposals and projects that encourage the use of best management practices and protect our valuable natural resources.

3i. Conservation districts should support the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the Green River Watershed, Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI), Ohio River Basin Initiative (ORBI) and promote the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to significantly reduce erosion loss and improve water quality.

3j. Conservation Districts should support the RCPP (Rural Conservation Partnership Program) in looking for opportunities to develop partnerships and promote those areas that have been approved. Districts involved in RCPP should share experiences with other districts and agencies.

3k. KACD and districts should continue to support NRCS in implementing conservation practices under their many available programs such as EQIP and other federal cost share and land preservation programs. They should also promote the USDA Conservation Buffer Initiative which includes such practices as filter strips, riparian buffers, field borders and others that promote on-site as well as offsite benefits to the environment. Buffers and related practices address water quality, and also provide important wildlife habitat and other resource protection benefits.

3l. The responsibilities and work load of conservation districts, the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Division of Conservation and NRCS has greatly increased with the passage of Farm Bills, the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act, the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Programs. At the same time the NRCS and other USDA offices are being directed to close, the ability to deliver or apply on the ground, unmatched scientific and technical expertise is strained. The conservation districts and KACD encourage an effort to maintain the current ability to assist all landowners/land users in Kentucky to implement conservation and water quality plans and stay eligible for USDA benefits. They also encourage expanding these capabilities through the addition of specialists at the state and local levels

3m. Districts should participate and cooperate in a local Farmland Protection Program.

3n. KACD and Conservation District should encourage PACE and Agricultural District participants to abide by the agreements of the respective programs and keep land enrolled in order to protect farmland.

#### 4. Legislation

4a. KACD should explore possible legislation mandating comprehensive land use plans in all decisions by state government in the location of industries, regional landfills, highway projects, etc. State government projects and acquisition of land should take into consideration and conform to locally develop comprehensive plan which are set forth in state law for land use in their community. Public meetings announcing and explaining such projects should be held in the evenings to permit those who work in daylight hours to attend. Input from citizens should be encouraged and given serious consideration.

4b. The Division of Conservation should continue to monitor the activities of the General Assembly in relation to local planning and zoning laws and advise KACD and conservation districts of proposed legislation which may impact farmers, agriculture production, and conservation district efforts. KACD and conservation district supervisors and employees should be encouraged to develop and maintain good rapport with their state legislators.

4c. Districts should be aware of legislation and local regulations relating to hazardous or toxic waste disposal sites and become involved with the selection of their location. Districts should be aware and involved in legislation dealing with solid waste issues.

4d. KACD should continue its representation on future state agriculture land study committees or other statewide efforts to study or manage any of the natural resources within the Commonwealth related to or used by agriculture.

4e. KACD should continue its emphasis toward local land use regulations rather than federal control. Districts need to promote the development of sound local planning and zoning. In the absence of local action, state and federal governments are forced to assume these responsibilities.

4f. Conservation districts support the philosophy of locating large housing and commercial developments on sewers and a requirement of cluster buildings when location sites are on prime farmland. Developments that cannot feasibly be located near sewer lines, septic tanks, sewage lagoons and other approved on-site systems, should only be installed after thorough study of soil tests and interpretation of results indicating that the soil has the capability to dispose of the sewage safely. This information should be provided by a qualified soil scientist or by using information obtained from soil surveys which have been published for the area. On-site evaluations by a qualified soil scientist or other appropriately trained persons are encouraged for all septic leachfield installations.

4g. KACD and districts should encourage the Kentucky Revenue Cabinet and local Property Valuation Administrator to carry out the intent of the Agricultural Property Valuation System on an equal basis across the state and these evaluations should be based on soil survey information as published in the county soil surveys across the state.

4h. KACD should support efforts to change the minimum to 5 acres requirement to meeting the definition of agricultural use in KRS 100.111, which allows developers to get around local planning and zoning regulations.

4i. KACD should encourage legislation that would protect existing farmlands from lawsuits stemming from farming operations.

4j. KACD should promote the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program which would protect farming areas subject to development. KACD should be involved in any Smart Growth initiative that would support and promote a sound conservation program in Kentucky.

4k. KACD and districts should become active in petitioning to change the FDA ruling on brain and spine removal of cattle 30 months and older as it pertains to the environmental problem in the groundwater due to cattle not being disposed of properly.

4l. KACD should pursue legislation that limits importation, growth for sale, or planting and for control of problematic invasive plants. Legislation and support is needed from various organizations to including enforcement to protect the state's natural setting.

## 5. Nonpoint Source Pollution

The Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission has been designated the lead implementation agency for the agriculture and construction components of the Kentucky Nonpoint Source Pollution Program and assigned major roles in implementing the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act and the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program. The Commission's policy is to coordinate all projects and efforts to address nonpoint source pollution at the state level and work in cooperation with local conservation districts.

Conservation districts must be active participants in the process of identifying water needs, both current and future, and voice their ideas and concerns where appropriate. The Department for Environmental Protection, through the Kentucky Environmental Management Plan document and its implementation, provides the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and Kentucky's 121 local conservation districts the opportunity to participate in protecting and enhancing both the quantity and quality of our water resources.

5a. Too little water leads to drought, crop failure, forest fires and inadequate municipal and urban water supplies. Polluted water threatens human health, aquatic ecosystems, and recreational, municipal, agricultural, and industrial uses of Kentucky's water. The solutions for water quality and quantity problems need the input of many interests and the consideration of many alternatives. KACD should encourage implementation of interagency agreements to insure coordination and cooperation of the many agencies involved in water-related issues at the local, state and federal levels through all phases of planning and implementation. KACD should track and support the Farm Bureau Water Management Quality Work Group on water quantity issues and keep conservation districts informed of the actions of this group.

5b. The Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act, as passed by the 1994 General Assembly, requires the protection of surface and groundwater resources from pollution as a result of agriculture and silviculture activities. The Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Division of Conservation and local conservation districts have a major role in the implementation of the legislation by providing information, education, technical and financial assistance to landowners/land users to ensure their compliance with the intent of this law. KACD and conservation districts support efforts to provide adequate funding to carry out the provisions of this piece of legislation (KRS 224.71-100 to 224.71140) and educate landowners/land users about the provisions of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act and their roles and responsibilities. Conservation districts should continue to promote the voluntary cooperation and cooperator's agreements with all landowners/land users within their respective areas to apply appropriate best management practices on their land.

5c. The 1994 General Assembly passed into law The Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program that increased the role of conservation districts and the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission in assisting the landowners/land users in addressing water



quality problems by protecting surface and groundwater from pollution through the use of "Best Management Practices". It is to be administered by local conservation districts and the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission with the assistance of the Kentucky Division of Conservation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. KACD supports and encourages the future development and implementation of the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share Program by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Division of Conservation. It is vital to the implementation of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act. KACD and conservation districts support and encourage complete and adequate funding to carry out this program. Due to the increasing demand for state cost share dollars, the committee supports increased appropriations from the general fund and a continuation of the Phase I Tobacco Funds that were appropriated to the Environmental Stewardship Program. These funds provide cost share assistance to farmland owners for compliance with the state Agriculture Water Quality Act and other environmental compliance programs.

5d. Interagency efforts to implement and coordinate the agriculture and construction portions of the Kentucky Non-point Source Management Plan are of the utmost importance. The Division of Conservation, on behalf of the Commission and conservation districts, is charged with this responsibility. KACD and conservation districts support efforts to provide adequate funding to conservation districts and landowners/land users to demonstrate the effectiveness of the voluntary conservation program. KACD should encourage districts to apply for non-point source funds (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act) through the competitive EPA 319 grant process to provide technical assistance to landowners.

5e. KACD should continue to obtain the necessary state funding in order to match any federal funds available for program implementation. These are required for conservation districts to carry out their responsibilities under Kentucky's Non-point Source Pollution Management Program.

5f. Conservation districts should educate and inform each landowner/land user on the importance of the voluntary Non-Point Source Pollution Program. Also, districts should make every effort possible to inform land users of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act.

5g. Conservation districts should continue to emphasize water quality through educational and informational delivery programs. To publicize, encourage the use of and make available such publications as the Best Management Practices Manual for Construction, Best Management Practices Manual for Agriculture, Kentucky Forest Practice Guidelines for Water Quality Management and other appropriate materials.

5h. Districts should utilize information available to better inform landowners/land users and chemical users on the application of chemicals, animal waste and fertilizers.

5i. The Division of Conservation should continue to develop sediment erosion and storm water management control model ordinances for use by conservation districts to promote the adoption of construction BMPs with local units of government, contractors and developers to more effectively minimize soil erosion from urban areas and construction sites across Kentucky.

5j. KACD and districts should encourage all landowners/land users to use soil and nutrient tests to determine fertilizer and nutrient application needs and to protect water quality. Districts should continue to educate landowners/land users about the proper method of collecting soil and nutrient samples and encourage laboratories to assure precise and dependable analysis. .

5k. KACD and districts should encourage continued research on precision application of chemicals and nutrients to save landowners/land users money and promote better water quality.

5l. Districts should continue to recognize and utilize the Division of Conservation's Equipment Revolving Fund as a tool to provide landowners with the latest technology in precision application equipment for both chemical and manure application.

5m. KACD encourages the monitoring of constructed wetland systems to evaluate the effectiveness of these components to treat animal waste and recommends these monitoring efforts to be a long-term study to look at management requirements and system effectiveness over the long-term. KACD believes these are effective components for treating animal waste and with proper management by producers should be allowed to be permitted without monitoring requirements by the Division of Water. Animal waste handling continues to be a focus of non-point source pollution efforts. Conservation districts and the Division of Conservation are encouraged to continue with their educational efforts in these areas.

5n. KACD and conservation districts recommend that adequate water quality monitoring data be utilized in updating or establishing surface and groundwater quality standards. District participation in local basins of the Watershed Watch in Kentucky is encouraged. The Division of Water and Division of Conservation, working with the Agriculture Water Quality Authority, should cooperate to document the relationship between agriculture and construction land use activities and their impact on water quality and designated use support within the watersheds of this state.

5o. Districts should target non-point source programs to conservation districts and landowners/land users with the greatest problems and provide adequate funding to those landowners/land users. Conservation districts should work with the Division of Conservation staff to identify water quality problems and project proposals in their respective counties to apply for the Non-Point Source Section 319(h) funding as available. KACD supports the efforts of the Kentucky Agriculture Science and Monitoring Committee to set priorities at the state level. This Committee encourages districts to channel any excess 319 funds into district cost share programs for local use.

5p. Concerns regarding excessive nutrients in the Mississippi River basin and the need to implement nutrient management strategies across the state (including Air and Water Quality Trading programs on the Ohio River and tributaries) will increase the demand for technical services for nutrient management and monitoring. Districts are encouraged to provide technical services related to nutrient management required by trading programs.

## 6. Dam Safety

6a. KACD encourages the continued development and dissemination of materials available through the Division of Water which inform the general public and agencies concerned with the general information requirements as spelled out in the law and other provisions of the law which deal with renovation of dams which are unsafe.

6b. Watershed conservancy districts are requested to work with the Division of Water and are encouraged to maintain watershed structures in accordance with their annual inspection reports. Conservation districts shall review and evaluate watershed conservancy district activities in their county at least annually, including watershed structure maintenance plans and hazard class evaluations.

6c. KACD recommends that all PL 566 projects include consideration for community and industrial water supplies in addition to flood control.

6d. Conservation districts should promote the wise use of planning and zoning in watersheds where dams or reservoirs are located, or may be located in the future, to ensure that the design classification of these structures is protected and that future development downstream is restricted to protect these structures, individual lives and property.

6e. KACD will continue to secure all possible funding available for rehabilitation assistance to maintain, repair or remove those structures classified as high hazard.

6f. KACD will continue to secure all possible funding for research, maintenance & rehabilitation of PL 566 structures.

## 7. Floodplain Management

7a. Floodplain management needs to be stressed in Kentucky. Maps delineating floodplain boundaries based on 10 through 500 year frequencies should be used by communities in planning future developments. Kentucky's Division of Water and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) should continue to utilize available funds to expedite future flood plain mapping in flood prone areas that need assistance and newly annexed areas of flood prone cities and continue to revise and update maps as conditions change. KACD encourages these efforts to also include studies and consideration of karst area floodplain management and delineation.

7b. KACD should encourage state government to develop a tax incentive program, consisting of either property tax exemptions or tax breaks for the development of land outside the floodplain instead of lands within the flood prone areas within a community. This would provide financial incentives to land developers for selecting sites out of the floodplain and result in controlling development in the floodplain. Floodplain insurance programs should be modified to provide insurance on property presently located in the floodplain (100 year frequency); however, insurance should not be provided on new development within these areas. Land transfer and property sales should continue to be required to have a disclosure statement noting the location of property located in a floodplain (100 year frequency).

7c. KACD should encourage state government to provide incentive funds to match federal and local funds to purchase flood prone land for the development of parks, open spaces, and other less susceptible types of development to flood damage.

7d. Conservation Districts should encourage local governments or local communities to seek out and participate in cost share assistance that may be available for flood plain mapping with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 22.

7e. The construction of additional flood control structures is one solution to flooding that needs to be studied. KACD encourages feasibility studies to be evaluated for new structures with regards to water quality enhancement, pollution control, and water needs and uses. Agricultural land conversion impacts should be evaluated for new structures designated to be built. In conjunction with flood control structures, the use of non-structural measures such as land use planning, effective evacuation and warning systems, flood-proofing, flood insurance, etc. should be included in any study to reduce damages due to flooding in order to provide a more effective comprehensive community-oriented approach.

7f. KACD supports the Division of Water in its efforts to develop maps to include increased flood heights and velocities reflecting the downstream danger area if an existing dam should fail (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 22 also has money available for dam failure studies). These records should be filed in the Office of the County Court Clerk or copies made available by the conservation district in which the dam and any portion of the danger area are located and a notice be published annually in the newspaper having the largest circulation in the county or counties affected in order to provide the public with notice of the existence of a potential danger zone.

7g. Many watershed conservancy districts are unable to expend taxes collected for the purpose of maintaining watershed structures or practices because of the denial of permits.

7h. KACD and districts should continue to support NRCS efforts that impact flooding and SWPP by promoting measures to purchase easements for runoff retardation to safeguard livestock and pasture from flooding.

7i. KACD and districts should educate lending institutions, local PVA and Planning and Zoning about floodplain risks and the benefits of flood proofing measures.

7j. KACD encourages Watershed Conservancy Districts and Conservation Districts to maintain emergency action plans for high hazard structures and review on a yearly basis.

7k. KACD encourages Watershed Conservancy Districts and Conservation Districts to identify locations that have been subject to flood damage and to seek Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood mitigation funds, and NRCS Emergency Watershed Management funds where appropriate and cost-effective.

## 8. Water Quantity

8a. KACD and districts should encourage inventory and evaluation to determine the availability of surface and ground water for water consumption by homeowners, businesses, factories, agricultural operations, energy production facilities, and other uses in the future years.

8b. Conservation districts should support efforts to identify and protect the groundwater resources in Kentucky. KACD will encourage data to be available to the public. Surface and groundwater use and its replenishment role should be monitored to assure that an ample, pollution-free supply will be available and not abused. KACD should encourage Kentucky Division of Water to coordinate and conduct monitoring and report preparation for groundwater resources.

8c. KACD encourages the conservation districts to keep informed and become involved in the community water supply planning required by the General Assembly. Conservation districts should be involved with water supply issues on the local level and promote future planning to ensure available resources. Conservation districts involvement should also include water conservation planning, and being involved with both water and wastewater issues.

8d. Committee recommends that KACD and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission work with the Corps of Engineers and the TVA to ensure stream water level will not adversely affect farmers and/or the environment

#### 9. Additional Recommendations

9a. .Committee recommends that KACD consider actions and recommendations that have joint concern with other KACD committees

Allan Bryant, Chairman

## 2018 Research Committee Report

The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8, 9 and 10, 2018.

The goal of the KACD Research Committee is as follows: To utilize KACD assets to promote agricultural research that benefits Kentucky agriculture while protecting its natural resources.

### PRIORITIES:

1. Promote the use of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act as the primary means for landowners/producers to protect water quality.
  - a. Support review of existing best management practices (BMPs) and introduction of new BMPs. BMPs should be scientifically sound and research based.
  - b. Support the study of BMP effectiveness to protect water quality.
  - c. Promote implementation and updating of individual Agricultural Water Quality Plans.
  - d. Encourage all conservation district supervisors to have an up-to-date (2 years old or less) KY Ag Water Quality Plan.
2. Support research with emphasis on soil health and agricultural productivity.
  - a. Promote utilization of cover crops.
  - b. Encourage No-till and nutrient management
3. Support research that protects drinking water sources, including surface and groundwater resources.
  - a. Encourage utilization of urban water quality best management practices.
  - b. Support study of urban water quality BMP effectiveness.
4. Promote the communication and distribution of agricultural research information.
  - a. Support the utilization of the Kentucky Agriculture Science and Monitoring Committee (KASMC) website.
  - b. Encourage effective relationships with the University Of Kentucky College Of Agriculture, Food & Environment (including county Cooperative Extension Offices), regional universities, Division of Conservation, USDA agencies, commodity organizations, and other agricultural service entities.
  - c. Utilize all forms of media to distribute research based information to landowners/producers.
  - d. Encourage conservation districts to host field days, workshops, trainings, cooperator meetings, etc. to educate livestock producers and other cooperators on proper, researched fallen livestock composting techniques.
5. Promote financial support for agricultural research.
  - a. Encourage the KY State Legislature to provide financial support to research institutions/organizations.
  - b. Encourage the utilization of cost share dollars as appropriate to support on farm BMP effectiveness research.
6. Promote watershed monitoring efforts.
  - a. Encourage conservation districts to participate in local watershed monitoring efforts, such as Watershed Watch.

- b. Designate a KACD representative to the Kentucky Agriculture Science and Monitoring Committee (KASMC).
- c. Support research related to invasive species.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Encourage KY Division of Conservation to publish a 10 minute supervisor's training on the KY Agriculture Water Plans/ KY Agriculture Water Quality Act.
2. Challenge all district supervisors to update their own plans on a 2 year basis.

Chairperson: Ted Jessup

## **2017 Public Information and Awards Committee Report**

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The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8, 9, and 10, 2018.

### **The Committee Recommends That:**

1. District Image and Mission Statement - We encourage conservation districts that have not developed a new brochure that clearly states the mission of the district to do so. It should point out that the board members are locally elected officials, elected to assist and represent all citizens while nurturing, protecting, and enhancing all natural resources of the county. The brochure should be updated as needed. The district's position should clearly state that we are here to make sure the environmental laws and regulations serve the best interest of all landowners and users and applied in a fair, reasonable, common sense way. We encourage districts to submit the latest version of their brochure to the DOC and to host the brochure on the district's website, if available.

The most important message to be spread throughout the county is that the conservation district shall assume the leadership role concerning natural resources issues at the local level.

2. Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act - Districts have the responsibility to continue working with landowners to assure compliance with the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act. We recommend that conservation districts continue to report Agriculture Water Quality Self Certifications to the Division of Conservation for inclusion in the state database.
  - In the event of water quality violations or disputes between landowners and the local and state government, the district should help the landowners better understand what is being required. We recommend they meet their obligation to guide them through the corrective measures protocol and assist them in finding financial and technical assistance (when requested) to get the problem corrected. We would like to make the public aware, landowners will receive no cost share



or incentive funding from NRCS, SWCC, or GOAP, unless they have completed an agriculture water quality plan.

3. We suggest that conservation districts have a booth or display set up at the county fair and/or festivals. They should also set up displays in banks, libraries, farm tours, etc. The display should also be brought to conservation district programs, such as awards banquets. Each booth and display should have a sign-up sheet requesting information on conservation programs. The committee recommends that districts make presentations at farm tours, demonstrations, field days, schools, civic organizations, etc. Also, districts are encouraged to host local legislative functions each year in addition to participating in the Agriculture Legislative Reception in Frankfort by presenting their displays. We recommend that the Division of Conservation set up a booth or share a booth at the state fair to promote current conservation and natural resource concerns. Since districts do such a good job with keeping their displays creative and relevant, we suggest that KACD add a display contest at the KACD Convention. This contest would recognize displays for being the most creative, most informative, etc. with small, inexpensive awards and would be voted on by the convention attendees. The Committee recommends that the DOC specify judging criteria for the presenters and attendees.
  
4. We suggest that all conservation districts set up an online presence to share information for promoting education and conservation programs. KACD encourages the Division of Conservation to assist districts and identify resources available for setting up a website, Facebook page, or Twitter account for each district. We would like to remind districts Facebook is a free way to receive publicity for your district and its programs. We encourage conservation districts that do not currently have a website to work with a web hosting company such as <http://greenearthhost.com/>, the company recommended by NACD, and their field representative in building an informative and interesting website for the public. We also encourage those districts that have an online presence to maintain and update their entries with program changes and deadlines as necessary. The committee would like to encourage all members of the Conservation Partnership to take advantage of the free nature of Facebook. We remind districts that all of the information that they can put on a website, they can also put on a Facebook page. The committee recommends that districts utilize the NRCS groups on Facebook to gather information and share knowledge of programs. The committee encourages KACDE to contribute to the Conservation Partnership Facebook page. Counties should work with their field representative if they need help creating a new Facebook page. The Committee suggests that having an online

presence be a factor in the District in Good Standing scoring. They also recommend the DOC survey the conservation districts about the conservation programs they have available.

5. Supervisor Identity - We recommend that all districts provide each supervisor with a tag that clearly states his/her name and the name of the conservation district. We encourage all supervisors to wear these nametags at all district functions such as public meetings, fair booths, award programs, and area meetings. These tags are available from NACD as well as locally. Districts might also want to consider business cards, hats, district shirts, jackets, and other promotional items.  
\_Swearing In of District Supervisors - When elected or appointed, we encourage districts to arrange to have supervisors sworn into office by the County Judge Executive with a photo and press release for local press. There is no better opportunity to inform the public that you are duly elected, sworn public officials.
  
6. Newsletters/News Articles - With the large number of new and existing programs each district is administering, it is of utmost importance that communications between the district and the citizens be at its very best. We highly recommend that every district develop and publish a newsletter at least quarterly in addition to news articles published in the local press. If not economically feasible, we encourage districts to combine efforts with adjacent conservation districts to publish newsletters.  
\_Multi-agency newsletters with good photographs are also an effective way of reaching the public and districts are encouraged to work with NRCS, FSA, CES, etc. in these efforts. Districts should encourage our technical partners to take advantage of their many opportunities to photograph conservation work in progress.  
\_Districts should pursue articles that inform the public about conservation issues and promote conservation programs that have a positive impact on these issues. The committee encourages the Division of Conservation to develop and provide news releases that the districts can use to promote programs. The committee recommends that conservation districts work with the NRCS staff within each field office to submit a “Conservation in My Community” article on a regular basis to the local newspaper. These articles about conservation topics are ready for publication in local newspapers with only the addition of local contact information. Districts are encouraged to utilize the Division of Conservation quarterly newsletter *Conservation Conversations* as a way to get information out to other districts and to the public. All members of the Conservation Partnership are encouraged to submit articles to the *Conservation Conversations* newsletter. District office personnel are encouraged to provide a copy of the DOC newsletter to all supervisors. The Division of

Conservation field representatives should be utilized to develop and provide district new releases and newsletter articles.

7. Art and Writing Contest – Districts are encouraged to work closely with each county Farm Bureau Board of Directors to promote and recognize the Art and Writing Contest at the local level. We encourage each district to publish a picture and story of the Art and Writing contest winners along with their work. This committee will continue to encourage that all artwork be laminated before they are judged at the state level. We encourage each district to give as much public exposure to the winners as possible. The committee recommends that districts recognize and present awards to the district and area winners at the local schools’ award night or at a district or county Farm Bureau event and to encourage and recognize teacher involvement and school support. Districts are encouraged to assist schools with any material needs. The committee encourages districts to use NACD materials for the Art and Writing Contest, as well as for soil stewardship educational opportunities. The committee would like to commend KACDE for finding a vendor for hard copies of the tabloid. We strongly encourage districts to purchase copies of the tabloid for use in the local schools. The committee would like to inform the public of a change to the art and writing contest rules. The previous year’s state winners can now participate in the contest the following year. The Committee encourages seeking professional input when preparing the Art and Writing tabloid.
8. Promote NACD Auxiliary Poster Contest in cooperation with KACD Auxiliary. We also recommend the promotion of auction items and other donations to support the educational programs. The committee encourages the KACD Auxiliary to increase the prize money for the poster contest to increase participation. The committee also encourages KACD to promote the annual auction more in to increase participation.
9. Public Notice of District Meetings - Every district should notify their local newspaper, at least once a year, of date, location, and time of the regular district meetings. When special district board meetings are held, it is a must that the local press is notified at least 24 hours in advance and notice be posted ahead of time in a public place (district door and courthouse bulletin board, etc.). All board and committee meetings must comply with the Open Meetings Laws.
10. Envirothon - We would encourage districts to work with KACD and schools to promote and sponsor the Envirothon competition and continue to make it a statewide success. This committee encourages districts to have input into the Envirothon planning process. We encourage districts to seek *corporate* sponsorship for the Envirothon. As an

additional incentive for sponsorship, districts should support the KACD Foundation. The foundation has acquired the 501 c (3) status in order to seek *corporate* sponsorship for the Envirothon and act as fiscal agents to local conservation districts. The Committee encourages recognizing the Envirothon Team at the banquet or luncheon during the annual convention.

- 11.** Amnesty Programs- We encourage districts to promote their involvement in programs such as the tire amnesty program to allow for the disposal of old tires found during the cleanup of illegal open dumps or tires found along roadsides and around farmsteads. Districts should work with area solid waste coordinators and/or county judge executives to promote other amnesty programs that might be associated with roadside litter cleanups, used, and discarded appliance roundups, white goods and other recycling programs and utilize other resources such as Commonwealth Cleanup Week, which is normally held during the fourth week of March each year.
- 12.** This committee encourages districts to promote the Department of Agriculture's Farm Chemical Collections and the Rinse and Return programs. Encourage all districts to promote and continue to educate citizens on farm and home safety. We also encourage districts to support, promote, and sponsor safety programs in the schools. Districts should establish partnerships and work closely with other agencies such as the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, RC & D Councils, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and others in carrying out these efforts. Districts are encouraged to support 4-H, FFA, Boys and Girl Scouts, and any and all youth and conservation organizations.
- 13.** We encourage the Division of Conservation to explore what other states are doing to promote soil stewardship and give districts some suggestions and encourage districts to share successful ideas on how to more successfully promote Soil Stewardship Week. We also recommend conservation districts to contact their local Ministerial Association and schools for further promotion. We encourage the use of NACD materials (folders, bulletins, place mats, etc.) to promote soil stewardship.
- 14.** We encourage the participation of more districts in the Conservation District Awards Program such as the Outstanding Conservation District Award, Outstanding Conservation Education Award, Teacher of the Year Awards, and Outstanding Conservation Cooperator Award.
- 15.** We suggest that districts step up their efforts in the area of awards. We encourage districts to continue to nominate outstanding cooperators, districts and other outstanding conservation efforts. We would like to see the development of more competitive nomination forms and other assessment tools for nominations. Districts should pursue other sources of funding and support for these recognition efforts such as seeking more sponsors and partners with similar interest. We encourage districts to recognize their Master Conservationist at a local Fiscal Court meeting. This would allow additional

publicity for the district and the award winner. The Committee encourages the DOC to include a list of all past and present Master Conservationists on the DOC website.

16. We encourage KACD to continue their support of the Agriculture Legislative Reception and Districts to participate. We ask that each year districts send an invitation to Representatives and Senators that represent their area to inform and invite them to the Agriculture Legislative Reception. The committee recommends a supervisor from each district make a phone call to a state legislator about attending the reception. The Committee recommends that the DOC evaluate the time and location of the reception to better serve all involved.
17. We encourage districts to support employee participation in training/workshop opportunities when possible. To help alleviate the financial burden, districts can explore scholarships to trainings for employees that are offered by the KACDE. These training opportunities will allow districts to explore what other counties are doing to promote programs and activities and allow for successful sharing of ideas and fresh perspectives.
18. The committee encourages districts to nominate outstanding landowners for the Leopold Award and be encouraged to apply.
19. The committee encourages districts to be aware of awards given by commodity groups. Landowners who qualify for these awards should be encouraged to apply.
20. Encourage conservation education and outreach to be added to the agenda of the KACD Area Meetings.

**Orville Bennett, Chairman**

## 2018 Soil Stewardship Committee Report

The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75th Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) July 8, 9, and 10, 2018.

Stewardship sometimes is a difficult product to sell. The United States of America and the Commonwealth of Kentucky build their strength and rely upon an abundant clean food supply to feed not only us, but most of the world. Maintaining a strong resource base is vital for a clean, safe and abundant source of food and fiber. Stewardship of the land and water resources are the key.

The Soil Stewardship Committee is committed to increasing the awareness of wise use of natural resources and feels that it is important to broaden the base of basic stewardship training and information. The following recommendations are submitted for consideration:

1. At future KACD meetings, traditional programs should be expanded to include professional motivational speakers, in addition to continuing to recognize supervisors and all conservation personnel that have passed away the previous year. KACD will send emails to districts asking for these speakers and a list of deceased.
2. The State Soil Stewardship Committee should start an educational information program to be promoted by the local conservation districts, theological institutions and theological based colleges/universities that are within their counties with the following suggestions:

- a. Develop a positive relationship with ministers and educate them on the importance of including natural resource stewardship in their sermons, musical presentations and within their realm of influence.

Distribute information and educational materials to parks, schools, restaurants, libraries and other interested organizations with the potential to spread the word to thousands of people in an organized professional manner.

3. Continue to request the Governor to declare Soil Stewardship and Conservation Week during the annual state convention to promote conservation districts efforts statewide. The Executive Committee at KACD should ensure that the above measure (#3) is taken.

4. KACD should present a plaque to the district with the outstanding Soil Stewardship Program. Applications for the award will be submitted in narrative form by June 1 each year. A committee will review and select one outstanding conservation district from the applications received and present the award at the annual KACD Convention.

### **Local Conservation District Recommendations:**

Below are recommendations and suggestions for local conservation district

KACD shall provide a copy of this report for each conservation district during the month of January and encourage a full review via 10 minute training for preparation of Soil Stewardship Week which occurs in March. This will allow consideration by Supervisors, Auxiliary and Junior Board to work toward bringing the message of Soil Stewardship Week before ministerial associations, civic and service clubs, 4-H clubs, FFA clubs, Boy and Girl Scout clubs and others. NACD should consider including biblical passages appropriate for the theme of each year's Soil Stewardship material.

1. Ensure that Soil Stewardship Week observance is brought before the general public through the means of the place mats & other educational information given to restaurants, churches, civic and service clubs, schools, and used during award banquets.
2. County Board of Supervisors should meet with ministers of the county for a breakfast, luncheon or dinner meal and provide materials to distribute at the same time if possible.
3. Have ministers at annual awards banquets and recognize them for their efforts in promoting Soil Stewardship Week.
4. Ask the local conservation district boards to address various groups mentioned above on Soil Stewardship Week.
5. Display soil stewardship material at county fairs, local businesses, libraries, banks, schools, or anywhere as appropriate.
6. Have mayors of towns and county judges issue the suggested proclamation.
7. Districts consider having a vesper service at some conservation site in the county.
8. Invite ministers on county tours of conservation sites and farms.
9. All district supervisors who have passed away shall be recognized at their respective Spring Area Meetings.
10. One-minute spots in the local media by local ministers, District Board Supervisors and other partners and organizations concerning soil stewardship.
11. As a Board of Supervisors, Auxiliary, Junior Board, and/or District employees, make a personal contact with the ministers of the county to inform and educate the message of Soil Stewardship Week.
12. Consider purchasing extra educational material from KACDE and NACD related to the topic or locally generate your own information on Soil

- Stewardship to provide to schools and/or other children's activities.
13. Encourage conservation districts to hire or have multiple counties pool resources to hire personnel to develop and promote conservation stewardship within their county and possibly make them available for stewardship promotion in other counties in the state convention stewardship program.
  14. Select two of the above projects and put conservation district's emphasis on them and also utilize at least one of their local media contacts during Soil Stewardship week to promote this observance.
  15. Encourage Conservation Districts to utilize social networking sites to share natural resource ideals which would allow counties to network knowledge, information and resources in promotion of soil stewardship.
  16. Encourage NRCS in Kentucky to publish articles "highlighting" soil stewardship week.
  17. Encourage KACD to contact land grant universities and request them to showcase the accomplishments of conservation districts that have been recognized at the state KACD convention by publishing them through media such as KET.
  18. Encourage Farm Bureau, Farmers Pride and other farm magazines and related entities to publish articles promoting Soil Stewardship during Soil Stewardship Week.

### **Committee Recommendations**

The Soil Stewardship Committee once again recommends that KACD / Division of Conservation continue to send out this report to every Conservation District in the state during the month of March for their consideration.

Continue to request that the Governor to declare Soil Stewardship and Conservation Week during the annual state convention to promote conservation districts statewide. The Executive Committee at KACD should ensure that the measure is taken.

**Rodney Dick, Chairman**



## **2018 P.L. 566 Watershed Issues Committee**

The following report is submitted for consideration at the 75th Annual Convention of the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), July 8th, 9th and 10th, 2018.

### **1. Aging Watershed Infrastructure Issue:**

Since 1944, NRCS and local sponsors have built some 10,400 small watershed dams in the United States. Kentucky's watershed program includes about 200 dams in 32 watershed projects, which were constructed between the mid-1950s through 2009. These were primarily constructed under the authority of PL 566. These dams were constructed to provide benefits such as flood control, rural water supply, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Many of these structures are now reaching the end of their design life, and unless rehabilitated or decommissioned, can pose significant threats to human health, safety, and to the environment. The biggest threat in Kentucky dam hazard is reclassification due to development downstream of low hazard dams.

### **2. Operation and Maintenance Agreements:**

All PL-566 dams have an operation and maintenance (O&M) agreement between the sponsor and NRCS. Some of these agreements were for 50 years, others for 100 years. Many of the 50 year agreement have expired, or will expire within the next 5-10 years. For all dams whose operation and maintenance agreements have expired NRCS is sending a letter of notification to those sponsors. The sponsors are reminded that although the O&M requirements to NRCS have been completed, they are still required to operate and maintain the dam under Kentucky Dam Safety laws. NRCS is still available for technical assistance.

### **3. Watershed Projects in Progress in 2016/2017:**

To date in FY 17, the Watershed Rehabilitation Program has not received an appropriation. The following outlines specific projects within Kentucky that are in progress:

3a. Red Lick MPS #1 – Madison County – The watershed environmental assessment is almost complete, it is currently undergoing national programmatic review at the NRCS headquarters. The planning process for rehabilitation. The planning process has identified a preferred alternative that will upgrade the structure to meet federal and state high hazard dam safety

criteria and provide additional water supply for Berea and portions of Madison County. The preferred alternative, estimated to cost approximately \$14 million, includes modifying the auxiliary spillway and raising the top of the dam and normal pool area. The sponsors (City of Berea and Red Lick Creek Watershed Conservancy District) has requested funding for the design phase of the project.

3b. Red Lick Creek FRS #12-Madison County- The planning process for rehabilitation for this structure is nearing completion and is estimated to be finished in July 2017. This process has identified a preliminary preferred alternative for the sponsors (Red Lick Watershed Conservancy District) to upgrade the dam to meet federal and state safety criteria, which includes modifying the auxiliary spillway. This alternative is estimated to cost approximately \$500,000. The sponsors have requested funds to begin the design phase of the project.

3c. East Fork Clarks River FRS #32-Marshall County- The planning process for rehabilitation for this structure is nearing completion and is estimated to be finished in May 2017. This process has identified a preliminary preferred alternative for the sponsors (Marshall County Soil and Water Conservation District) to upgrade the dam to meet federal and state safety criteria, which includes modifying the auxiliary spillway, raising the top of dam, and replacing the riser and principal spillway pipe. This alternative is estimated to cost approximately \$2.7 million. At this time, the sponsors have not requested funding for the design portion of the project.

This Committee Recommends That:

1. KACD and conservation districts support new technical, financial and informational resources to:
  - a. Protect the integrity, safety, and continued functioning of these structures
  - b. Upgrade some of the structures to meet dam safety requirements due to unanticipated development below or near the dams, which increase the potential for loss of life and economic damage. It is estimated that 31 out of the 200 PL566 dams in Kentucky are noncompliant due to downstream development.
  - c. Correct the deterioration of structures in karst settings from latent site conditions such as increased subsurface leakage causing suspected erosion of embankment and abutment materials.
  - d. Replace damaged and deteriorating components.

- e. Remove, or otherwise deal with, the sediment and debris that have accumulated in reservoirs to the point that the dams cannot function properly.
  - f. Seek funding to remove fallen and/or dead trees.
  - g. Seek funding for more technical assistance.
2. Meet natural resource needs not previously addressed such as rural water supply, water quality, rural fire protection, wetland restoration, wildlife habitat and community pride
  3. Advise downstream landowners and potential developers of dam hazard reclassification in breach zone or upgrade dams to meet new hazard requirements.
  4. Districts with Notices of Violation from the Division of Water should seek financial and technical assistance from the State Legislature and NRCS under the dam rehabilitation funding authorization provided by Congress.
  5. Seek funding from the State Legislature to help sponsors develop breach maps to control downstream development and avoid hazard reclassification.
  6. Pursue legislative action that requires the Energy and Environment Cabinet to prevent the office of Floodplain Management from issuing a flood plain management permit downstream of any permitted dam without evaluating breach zone hazard and landowner mitigation requirements. Stipulations should be incorporated into 401 KAR 4:060 that require any new construction to have the first floor elevation at or above the dam breach wave elevation and constructed on a foundation and/or stem wall/support construction that can withstand the force (velocity) of the breach wave.
  7. Several conservancy districts had the opportunity to participate in a study of dams that were built at low or moderate hazard levels that could currently be upgraded to high hazard due to downstream development. NRCS and the Division of Water's Office of Dam Safety had to agree on these sites. This allowed watershed sponsors to request assistance from NRCS to complete the assessment. In 2010, LiDAR was being used to establish breach inundation mapping for 16 watersheds to determine if any residences would be impacted during a dam failure. A risk assessment evaluation of the structure was included in the assessment. To date, no additional assessments have been funded in Kentucky. Districts can still request assistance with watershed assessments. The results of the 2010 assessments are as follows:
    8. KACD & SWCC along with Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts should work closely with legislators to develop an ordinance for Downstream Development Control that is consistent across the state.
    9. KACD & SWCC along with Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts should work closely with local government to develop an ordinance for Downstream Development Control that will be consistent across the state. Spencer and Logan Counties have successfully implemented some type of downstream development control through local ordinances.

10. The Committee encourages Conservation Districts and Conservancy Districts to consider joining the National Watershed Coalition. Information can be found at [www.watershedcoalition.org](http://www.watershedcoalition.org)

## Dam Safety

1. KACD encourages the continued development and dissemination of materials available through the Division of Water which inform the general public and agencies concerned with the general information requirements as spelled out in the law and other provisions of the law which deal with renovation of dams which are unsafe.
2. Watershed conservancy districts are requested to work with the Division of Water and are encouraged to maintain watershed structures in accordance with their annual inspection reports.
3. Conservation districts shall review and evaluate watershed conservancy district activities in their county at least annually, including watershed structure maintenance plans and hazard class evaluations.
4. KACD recommends that all PL 566 projects include consideration for community and industrial water supplies in addition to flood control.
5. Conservation districts should promote the wise use of planning and zoning in watersheds where dams or reservoirs are located, or may be located in the future, to ensure that the design classification of these structures is protected and that future development downstream is restricted to protect these structures, individual lives and property.
6. KACD will continue to secure all possible funding available for rehabilitation assistance to maintain, repair or remove those structures classified as high hazard or dams where the hazard classification could potentially increase. It should be made known that the Soil and Water Conservation Commission recently expanded the language of the Equipment and Infrastructure Revolving Fund to include loans to assist Conservancy Districts in funding for the rehabilitation of dams within the state at a low interest rate of 2%.
7. KACD encourages conservation district and watershed conservancy districts to make an effort each year to educate the county fiscal court about the importance and the status of the PL 566 structures in their county.
8. KACD encourages conservation district and watershed conservancy districts with high hazard dams to develop and annually update emergency action plans.
9. KACD encourages Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts to try annually to make sure that the gates/valves work properly and are operable and able to drain the water out if necessary on an annual basis.
10. Emergency alert for first responders and sponsors – not emanate alerts – just an alert to go and check the structures for possible issues. This alert will go to NRCS

Personnel and sponsors and first responders at the local level. Conservation Districts and Conservancy Districts are encouraged to sign-up to receive emergency alerts.

11. This fact sheet was developed for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service by the National Watershed Coalition. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. December 2012.

### New Dam Monitoring Tool will soon be Available to Watershed Project Sponsors

DamWatch® is a new dam monitoring tool that came on line in May 2015. It is now available for watershed project sponsors and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to monitor NRCS-assisted flood control dams. Local watershed project sponsors have constructed 11,800 flood control dams across the Nation with NRCS assistance.

As these dams age and homes, businesses, and highways are constructed downstream, it becomes increasingly important to use all possible means to monitor and manage the dams to ensure they function as they were designed and that they remain safe.

To assist project sponsors in this monitoring effort NRCS has entered into an agreement with US Engineering Solutions Corporation (USES) to provide a web-based monitoring tool named DamWatch for NRCS-assisted project dams. This tool will provide real-time monitoring of potential threats to dam safety including rainfall events and seismic activity.

DamWatch alerts essential personnel via electronic medium such as email, text message, or pager when dams are experiencing a high rainfall or earthquake event. This allows for resources to be allocated at the right time and place.

DamWatch also provides a “one-stop” source for critical documents, databases, and geospatial information through an interactive Web interface. This will allow NRCS and watershed project sponsors to more efficiently manage and access important project dam information such as as-built plans, operation and maintenance agreements, emergency action plans, inspection reports, photos, videos, assessment reports, etc. on a DamWatch Web site.

NRCS is working on loading existing “as-built” plans and hydrology information about dams into the DamWatch system. DamWatch can be an effective and important tool for project sponsors to utilize in managing their watershed projects. Watershed project sponsors can contact NRCS to learn more about DamWatch, how they can become involved in the project, and how they can utilize DamWatch to better monitor and manage their dams. Although NRCS personnel

may elect to receive alerts this does not change the roles and responsibilities of the sponsors or NRCS. The sponsor is still the responsible party for monitoring the dams and notifying authorities during an emergency situation. NRCS may be available to provide assistance upon request from the sponsor.

NRCS highly encourages local sponsors and first responders to sign up in Dam Watch to receive alerts and notifications for dams in their areas.

#### Floodplain Management:

1. Floodplain management needs to be stressed in Kentucky. Maps delineating floodplain boundaries based on 100 through 500 year frequencies should be used by communities in planning future developments. Kentucky's Division of Water and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) should continue to utilize available funds to expedite future plain mapping in flood prone areas that need assistance and newly annexed areas of flood prone cities and continue to revise and update maps as conditions change. KACD encourages these efforts to also include studies and consideration of karst area floodplain management and delineation.
2. State government should be encouraged to develop a tax incentive program, consisting of either property tax exemptions or tax breaks for the development of land outside the floodplain instead of lands within the flood prone areas within a community. This would provide financial incentives to land developers for selecting sites out of the floodplain and result in controlling development in the floodplain. Floodplain insurance programs should be modified to provide insurance on property presently located in the floodplain (100 year frequency); however, insurance should not be provided on new development within these areas. Land transfer and property sales should continue to be required to have a disclosure statement noting the location of property located in a floodplain (100 year frequency).
3. State government should provide incentive funds to match federal and local funds to purchase flood prone land for the development of parks, open spaces, and other less susceptible types of development to flood damage.
4. Local governments or local communities should be encouraged to seek out and participate in cost share assistance that may be available for flood plain mapping with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 22.
5. The construction of additional flood control structures is one solution to flooding that needs to be studied. The feasibility of such structures with regard to water quality enhancement, pollution control, water needs and uses, and agricultural land conversion should be evaluated for new structures designated to be built. In conjunction with flood control structures, the use of non-structural measures such as land use planning, effective evacuation and warning systems, flood-proofing, flood

- insurance, etc. should be included in any study to reduce damages due to flooding in order to provide a more effective comprehensive community-oriented approach.
6. KACD supports the Division of Water in its efforts to develop maps to include increased flood heights and velocities reflecting the downstream danger area if an existing dam should fail (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 22 also has money available for dam failure studies). These records should be filed in the Office of the County Court Clerk or copies made available by the conservation district in which the dam and any portion of the danger area are located and a notice be published annually in the newspaper having the largest circulation in the county or counties affected in order to provide the public with notice of the existence of a potential danger zone.
  7. Many watershed conservancy districts are unable to expend taxes collected for the purpose of maintaining watershed structures or practices because of the denial of permits. KACD recommends that a committee be developed to resolve this critical roadblock and the potential liability placed on watershed districts and supporting agencies.
  8. KACD and conservation districts should continue to support NRCS in efforts to reduce the impacts of flooding through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Small Watershed Protection Program and Flood Prevention Program (PL 566). Districts should promote purchase of floodplain easements for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention in order to safeguard lives and property from floods, droughts and sedimentation.
  9. KACD urges conservation districts to educate landowners and local officials about permanent easement programs such as PACE (Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements), Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, and NRCS' Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs when there is an absence of adequate flood plain protection or local zoning in order to prevent development below watershed dams.
  10. KACD encourages Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts to educate Local officials, Realtors, Health Department, and other agencies about development in flood prone areas (IE-looking on the Floodplain maps for high risk areas).

#### Water Quantity:

1. Water consumption by homeowners, businesses, factories, agricultural operations, energy production facilities, etc. should be inventoried and evaluated to determine the availability of water (surface and groundwater) for all these uses in years to come. Conservation districts should support efforts to identify and protect the groundwater resources in Kentucky. KACD will encourage data to be available to the public. Surface and groundwater use and its replenishment role needs to be monitored to assure that an ample, pollution-free supply will be available and not abused.

2. KACD encourages the conservation districts to keep informed and become involved in the community water supply planning required by the General Assembly. Conservation districts should be involved with water supply issues on the local level and promote future planning to ensure available resources. Conservation districts involvement should also include water conservation 2012 planning, and being involved with both water and wastewater issues.
3. State Government has a water resources board in place that is looking at supply issues across Kentucky.

#### Education:

1. KACD encourages conservation districts and watershed conservancy districts to make an effort each year to educate the county fiscal court and landowners about the importance and the status of the PL 566 structures in their county.
2. KACD urges conservation districts to educate landowners and local officials about permanent easement programs such as PACE (Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements), Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, and NRCS' Wetland or Grassland Reserve Programs when there is an absence of adequate flood plain protection or local zoning in order to prevent development below watershed dams.
3. KACD encourages Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts to educate Local officials, Realtors, Health Department, and other agencies about development in flood prone areas (IE-looking on the Floodplain maps for high risk areas).
4. KACD thanks the Kentucky Farm Bureaus Water Management Working Group for developing recommendations that will enhance the quality and quantity of water resources accessible for agriculture production in the state. Included in the groups mission is research of emerging critical issue of inadequate water supplies, examination of potential actions to solve this deficiency and make recommendations for bringing new and reliable water sources to the key areas of farm production in Kentucky.

#### Legal Opinions:

1. For KACD and SWCC to work closely with Conservation and Watershed Conservancy Districts to seek legal opinions from the Cabinet attorneys of the roles and responsibilities of Conservation and Conservancy Districts in regard to what is stated in the Operations and Maintenance agreements as described for each PL 566 Structure.



This committee recommends the support and education of Conservation Districts and Watershed Conservancy Districts to utilize the availability of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission's Revolving Loan Program for dam rehabilitation.

Example Ordinance from Spencer County: Spencer County Ordinance No. 13 in 2006 stated "Therefore, be it ordained by the County of Spencer, the Taylorsville Spencer County Joint Planning and Zoning regulations are hereby amended to read as follows:

Article X to add Section 1003-Building in breach zones of Dams 12, 15, 16, 17 or 18 of the Spencer County Plum Creek Watershed Conservancy Districts:

No structure as defined in Article 1, Section 103, Paragraph 36, to be occupied by a person, shall be located, extended, converted or substantially altered which is or would be within the breach zone of dams 12, 15, 16, 17, and 18, located in the Spencer County Plum Creek Watershed Conservancy District in Spencer County, Kentucky without compliance with the following requirements and no permit shall be issued by the Administrator for any new structure unless and until the applicant agrees and complies with the following requirements:

- A. All structures occupied by any person, must be elevated or constructed so that the lowest floor of the structure, elevated to or above the breach flood elevation level , and.
- B. The foundation of a structure will withstand a breach wave if a dam failure will occur
- C. The structure has been approved by the Kentucky Division of Water Dam Safety and Compliance Division

Special flood hazard (breach zone of dams) are those areas located below the dam subject to flooding, inundation or damage as a result of a breach or failure of the dam as determined by the Kentucky Division of Water

A dam is any impounding structure that is either 25 feet in height, measured from the downstream toe to the crest or has a maximum impounding capacity of 50 feet of water or more as defined by the Division of Water.

The property owner shall be required to provide the engineering analysis and design as approved by a licensed engineer for the Commonwealth of Kentucky as needed.

Kevin Jeffries, Chairman

**Resolution #1**  
**"New Chart of Accounts" Changes Request**  
**Area 1**  
**McCracken County Conservation District**

The McCracken County Conservation District does hereby present on March 6, 2018 to the KACD Area 1 supervisors the following resolution for their consideration.

Be it therefore known that the Kentucky Division of Conservation has informed Conservation Districts that they will implement a "New Chart of Accounts" effective July 1 2017. This "new Chart of Accounts" will have an impact on all past entries in Quicken and QuickBooks unless KACD and the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission require the Division of Conservation to make the following changes.

1. Since training for this change has only occurred in the past month, and since DOC wants districts to go back to July 1, 2017 and change all entries they have put in place to date. Be it therefore requested that the implantation of this "New Chart of Accounts" would not go in to affect until July 1 2018. This will give districts the opportunity to enter the changes to the categories and begin the new fiscal year fresh.
2. Since some of the "New Chart of Accounts" categories will change past entries, be it therefore requested that by adding the letter E to make the Expense entries to be an EE instead of only E and RR instead of R for Revenues. This will not cause any change in past entries.

Whereas, Conservation District supervisors, Accountants, Lawyers, and District employees have raised these concerns to the Division of Conservation; the Division of Conservation is still pushing thru trainings and the implementation of these changes for this fiscal year.

Therefore, the McCracken County Conservation District Board of Supervisors passed this resolution on February 26, 2018 at their monthly board meeting. And therefore requests that KACD along with the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission make the Division of Conservation make the above changes to the "New Chart of Accounts" and its implementation date.

Passed at the Area 1 meeting.

**Resolution #2**

**Bidding Guidelines for Procurement Purposes**

**Area 2**

**North and South Logan County Conservation Districts**

The North and South Logan County Conservation Districts do hereby present to the KACD Supervisors the following resolution for their consideration...

Whereby the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission presently requires all county conservation districts to follow bidding guidelines for procurement purposes with the following limits; \$500.00 - \$1,000.00, get at least 3 bids or quotes, and over \$1,000.00 requires public bid. Requirements for construction or maintenance of construction, \$3,000 - \$10,000, get at least 3 bids or quotes, and over \$10,000 requires public bid.

This places a hardship upon the Conservation Districts to conduct basic business throughout the year, thus the North and South Logan County Conservation Districts propose a resolution to address the spending limits on the Kentucky Conservation Districts administered by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission to allow a match of allowed State spending limits, defined in KRS 45A.100, which are presently set at \$1,000 for procurement purposes and \$10,000 for construction and maintenance of construction.

Therefore, the North and South Logan County Conservation Districts Board of Supervisors passed this resolution on February 28, 2018 at their monthly board meeting. And therefore request that KACD along with the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission make the above changes to the bidding process guidelines.

### **Resolution #3**

#### **Division of Conservation Report Requirements by Business Days vs. Calendar Days**

##### **Area 5**

##### **Carroll County Conservation District**

Whereas, in order to meet the Division of Conservation's reporting deadline requirements in a timely manner, it is proposed that DOC reporting requirements be submitted in 5 business days of Monday thru Friday and not 3 calendar days.

Districts have different hours and days according to district requirements and budgets so therefore for some offices it is impossible for a part time employee to submit a report in 3 calendar days.

Example:

*The reports are required to be reviewed, approved and signed at the Board Meeting. District has a part time employee working 20 hours per week, and office is closed on Fridays. The Board meets on Thursday evening. Report is due no later than Sunday. Five (5) business days would require reports be submitted by Thursday of the following week.*

Now, therefore, be it resolved KACD should work to advocate for a change in regulation that would require all Division of Conservation reporting due date requirements be five (5) business days of Monday thru Friday, not three (3) calendar days.

This resolution is submitted by the Carroll County Conservation District supervisors, to be voted on and adopted at the Annual Area 5 Spring Meeting on March 14, 2018, and to be considered at the 2018 Annual KACD Convention.

**Resolution #4**  
**KACD Leadership Training**  
**Clark County Conservation District**

Whereas, the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts are Seventy-five years strong,

Whereas, Conservation Districts Programs have evolved dramatically over the last decade,

Whereas, local district supervisors responsibilities have become more innovative and demanding,

Whereas, supervisors are being called upon to accept leadership roles in other state and national organizations.

Whereas, the recent collaborative survey shows that over 50 percent of supervisors have less than 10 years of service on district boards.

Therefore be it resolved that the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts with the full support of the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission actively plan, promote, and hold leadership training seminars on a regional basis throughout the commonwealth. Seeing that some conservation districts face physical and financial restraints to their programs, be it further resolved that the KACD President appoint a special committee to pursue the sponsorship of this program. These regional seminars should be completed prior to the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Adopted by the Clark County Conservation District at the May 15, 2018 meeting.