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Description automatically generated2021 NACD State Association Executive Directors’ Conference**

**Asheville, North Carolina | September 27 – 30**

Draft Agenda

*Times are all approximate. No formal breaks are scheduled in advance but will be given throughout the conference as time permits. This is a relaxed setting, so attendees can step out as needed for breaks, phone calls, etc.*

**Monday, September 27**

*Attendees fly in throughout the day. Please let Beth Mason know your flight schedules if you’d like to coordinate shared rides from the airport to the hotel with other attendees.*

**6:00 pm** **Dinner – on your own or meet up with a group**

If you’d like to meet up with other attendees for dinner, plan to meet up in the hotel lobby no later than 6 pm and we can offer some options within walking distance.

**Tuesday, September 28**

*Breakfast is on your own. The hotel has a Breakfast Room with made-to-order breakfast and Starbucks Coffee or a Marketplace Café for grab-and-go sandwiches, fruit and snacks. Options outside the hotel will be provided.*

**8:00 – 8:30 am Welcome and Introductions**

**8:30 – 9:30 am Ecosystems Services**

Conservation practices and management systems that improve soil health can help farmers build drought resilience, reduce input costs, increase nutrient availability, improve access to their fields, and provide other on-farm benefits. Many of these same practices are also good for the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing nutrient losses through runoff and leaching, and increasing carbon storage in soils.

Joining us virtually, Wayne Honeycutt, Ph.D., of the Soil Health Institute will present an overview of how soil health management systems provide such ecosystem services, and Tim Palmer, past President of NACD, will describe how farmers can market those ecosystem services and the opportunities conservation districts have for participating in those markets.

**9:30 – 10:00 am Clean Energy and Natural Resources Conservation**

This session will briefly explore some of today’s clean energy-related issues – its impact on the land, conservation, and policy.

**10:00 – 10:30 am The National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCPP) and Implications for Serving Clients**

The National Conservation Partnership (NACD, NRCS, NASCA, NCDEA, & NARC&DC’s) launched the NCPP six years ago. The initiative was renewed with a second five-year agreement in Las Vegas at the 2020 NACD Annual Meeting. With substantial input from states via surveys and listening sessions the NCPP is addressing needed changes in policy, systems, training, staffing, etc. to reinvigorate conservation planning (which includes implementation) throughout the country. State Conservation Partnership Leaders have been asked to develop state plans to help in this effort. NACD Director of Projects and Partnerships Rich Duesterhaus will join us virtually and lead a discussion on some of the implications for state associations and conservation districts in a 30-minute briefing including time for Q & A.

**10:30 – 11:30 am The Movement Towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusive (DEI) Outreach**

Executive Directors Sarah Blaney (OK) will share a bit about the historical inequities in minority engagement in conservation, an outreach program in Oklahoma to reach minority communities, and lessons learned. Additionally, NACD 2nd Vice President and chair of the NACD DEI Special Committee Kim LaFleur will join us virtually to highlight the committee’s activities, their vision going forward and available resources for NACD members.

**11:30 am – 1:00 pm Networking lunch**

*Group breaks for lunch on your own in the area. Continue your conversations and discussions or just take a breather and enjoy lunch in the area. Options will be provided.*

**1:00 – 2:30 pm COVID-19: Lessons Learned and the Path Forward**

The impacts of COVID-19 on the world of work will be lasting and significant. Attendees will discuss ways in which COVID-19 has impacted the workplace and continues to transform the way we work, support employees and members, connect with colleagues, manage work/life effectiveness and more. Through a facilitated exercise, participants will identify and discuss lessons learned from COVID-19 and how to apply those in the workplace. This session will focus conversation on various lessons learned around the following topics, including:

* Meeting planning and hotel dynamics for in-person events
* Virtual/hybrid training dynamics
* Communication in a now, fully digital world
* Safety in the workplace – workplace preparedness and office policies
* The evolution of workspaces – making remote work, work
* Technology Innovations
* Other participant topics

**2:30 – 4:00 pm Programs and Projects Roundtable**

**Please come prepared to share a program or project in your state.** This can be something the state association is doing or a district within the state. Maybe there’s a program you’d like to START in your state, but you’re not quite there yet. This is an opportunity to exchange program and project ideas with your colleagues and consider how you might do something similar in your state. Please feel free to bring handouts, brochures, fact sheets, etc. that would help explain your program (please bring 20 each). You may also share a couple of slides on PPT if needed.

**4:00 – 5:00 pm Parking Lot Items**

Throughout the day we will be tracking any random discussion items/topics as they pop up and setting them aside in “The Parking Lot.”. If needed, we will use this last hour of the day to address any of these “Parking Lot Items.”

**Dinner – on your own**

Whether in a group or on your own, plan to break for dinner after the last session and consider exploring Asheville! Dining options will be provided.

**Wednesday, September 29**

*Breakfast is on your own. The hotel has a Breakfast Room with made-to-order breakfast with Starbucks Coffee or a Marketplace Café for grab-and-go sandwiches, fruit and snacks. Options outside the hotel will be provided.*

**8:00 – 9:00 am Urban Conservation Assistance Programs**

Urban Conservation Assistance Programs (CAPs) are an emerging opportunity for conservation districts to support homeowners, businesses, landowners with non-point source pollution. As cost-share programs, CAPs typically provide financial, technical, and educational assistance to property owners installing eligible practices with the support of their local conservation district. Executive Directors Bryan Evans (NC) and Kendall Tyree (VA) will share more information about the funders of their program, the role of the state association and conservation districts in the program, starting and implementing the program, and outcomes to date. Learn from conservation district state associations about their efforts and leave with takeaways to adopt and implement in your own state.

**9:00 – 11:00 am North Carolina Capacity-Building Discussion**

* State Commission Delegated Job Approval Authority
* Training Calendar
* Mutual Aid Agreements
* Mentor’s List
* Roundtable

**11:00 am Lunch on your own**

*Consider grabbing a quick bite to eat in the area and meet back in the hotel parking lot by 1:00 pm to depart for the afternoon tours. Lunch options will be provided.*

**1:00 pm Load the bus and depart for the afternoon tours:**

* Buncombe SWCD Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) Best Management Practices

CCAP is a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to improve water quality through the installation of various best management practices (BMPs) on urban, suburban and rural lands not directly involved with agriculture production.

* Biltmore Farms Operation: History, Best Management Practices and Operations

**5:00 pm Cookout at a nearby park**

(included in your registration)

**7:00 pm Return to the hotel**

*The evening is free for networking and enjoying the area.*

**Thursday, September 30**

*Attendees leave throughout the day. We can coordinate any shared rides back to the airport onsite.*