WEST VIRGINIA CONSERVATION AGENCY

NACD Northeast Meeting
August 3, 2015
Conservation Mission

§19-21A-2:

To provide for the conservation of the soil and soil resources of this state, for the control and prevention of soil erosion, for the prevention of floodwater and sediment damage and for furthering the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water, and thereby to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of this state.
14 Conservation Districts
Conservation Districts

• 114 Conservation District supervisors elected in non-partisan countywide elections.
  o First election in 2008 replaced former “shoebox” election.

• Generally 2 supervisors per county.
• Supervisors serve 4-year terms.
• Authority under W.Va. Code §19-21A
State Conservation Committee

4 members appointed by the Governor.

6 members are ex-officio:

- Agriculture Commissioner _ chairs SCC.
- Director of WVU Extension.
- Dean of WVU Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design.
- Secretary of Department of Environmental Protection.
- Director of Forestry.
- President of West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts.

WVCA is administrative arm of SCC.
Keeping People & Property Safe:

Addressing West Virginia’s Aging Flood Control and Water Supply Dam Infrastructure Needs
Elkwater Fork Water Supply

Dedicated 2012
New Creek 14 Rehab

Completed 2013
Dam Numbers

• 170 watershed dams in W.Va.
• 169 are designated “high hazard.”
• 1 is designated “significant hazard.”
• Located in 13 of W.Va.’s 14 CDs.
Dam Numbers

• Oldest built in 1954.
• Newest dedicated in 2012.
• First rehab completed in 2013.
• Second rehab in design, construction estimated to start in 2017.
Dam Numbers

- 66 exceed 50 years of operation.
- 63 exceed 40 years of operation.
- Dams in Southern District are among the oldest in the state.
- Brush Creek 9a, 14 and 15 are among 5 WV dams receiving planning dollars under the Farm Bill.
Agricultural Enhancement Program

A program to assist the agriculture cooperators of West Virginia with the voluntary implementation of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural lands in order to conserve and improve land and water quality.
AgEP Background

• FY 2009-2012 Pilot Program
  - EPCD, GVCD, MCD, NPCD and PVCD
• FY 2013 – Expanded to Statewide Program.
• Provide $880,000 per year in state funding.
• FY 2013 $1,235,512.54 / 868 paid applications.
• FY 2014 $1,459,015.09 / 1,204 paid applications.
• FY 2015 $1,695,447.54 / 1,307 paid applications.
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Potato Demonstration Project

Inside this issue:
Conference Focuses on Groundwater Management
Pilot Project continued
Rainey Students Help Protect the South Branch

Growing potatoes is big business. Whether they’re processed and used for French fries and potato chips or sold fresh at a farmer’s market, one thing is certain - people love potatoes. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, potatoes are the leading vegetable crop in the nation and the fourth most consumed food crop in the world.

In March, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WYDA), West Virginia Conservation Agency (WVCA) and the Guyan (GCD) and Western Conservation Districts (WCD) started a three-year Agricultural Enhancement Program Potato Pilot Project aimed at increasing potato production in the state. According to the 2012 U.S. Agricultural Census, West Virginia ranked 40th in the nation in potato production, a statistic officials hope to improve through this program.

This agreement between the WYDA, the WVCA and the Guyan and Western Conservation districts is a big step forward as we continue to pursue our goal of West Virginians, growing food on West Virginia land for West Virginians to consume,” said Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helble.

The GCD and WCD were selected for the pilot program because of the suitability of the land and their close proximity to a proposed processing plant in the Huntington area. The districts, in cooperation with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the WVCA, will help identify program participants, conduct soil sampling, provide the seed and equipment and develop conservation planting plans for each of the program participants. The districts will also work with the farmers to plant a cover crop after harvest to prevent erosion and improve the organic content in the soil.

Initially, the program calls for a total of 35 acres planted in potatoes for each district. Farmers can plant a maximum of 10 acres, in blocks of two acres at a time. A random number of one acre will be removed to a maximum of five. The only thing the farmer needs to provide for the project is the tractor, hauler and 50 percent of the cost of the cover crop.

The rule of thumbs is that if you plant one pound of potatoes you should receive ten pounds back,” said Stewart.
Potatoes by the Numbers

• 2 Conservation Districts participating.
• 6 different varieties of potato seed.
  o Salem, Chieftain, NY136, Keuka Gold, Red Maria, Kennebec
• 29 farmers participating.
• 83 acres planted.
• $250,000 provided by W.Va. Department of Agriculture.
Potato Demonstration Project

• District provides potato seed, equipment, other items for successful crop.
• Extension provides horticulture expertise.
• Farmers agree to 50 percent cover crop cost share at end of season, maintain a potato diary and other records.
• WVDA provides marketing to help farmer sell crop after harvest.
Questions?

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