



National Association of State Conservation Agencies

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Welcome to Pittsburgh!

Thank you for joining us for the NASCA 2026 Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! We're excited to bring together conservation professionals and partners from federal, state, and local agencies to connect, collaborate, and share ideas.

With an outstanding lineup of speakers, networking opportunities, and an engaging field tour showcasing conservation efforts in the Pittsburgh area, we're confident this year's meeting will provide valuable insights, fresh perspectives, and connections you can take home and put into practice.

Note from the NASCA President



Welcome to Pittsburgh!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the NASCA 2026 Annual Meeting!

Our annual meeting is always one of the best opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, build new relationships, exchange ideas, and learn from the experiences of other states. We may approach conservation differently across the country, but we share a commitment to locally-led and locally-delivered conservation.

This year also gives us an opportunity to reflect on how far NASCA has come. Over the past three years, we have strengthened our organization and made great progress on the goals we set together. At this meeting, we will build on that progress as we adopt a new strategic plan and set our direction for the years ahead.

None of us has all the answers, but someone in this organization has probably faced a challenge like yours, tried something worth sharing, or built a partnership you can learn from. NASCA gives us the opportunity to have those conversations and build relationships that continue long after this annual meeting ends.

Over the next few days, ask questions, share what is working in your state, seek out someone you don't already know, and be open to a new idea or opportunity. You never know which conversation may lead to your next great partnership or solution.

I look forward to spending time with you throughout the week. Enjoy Pittsburgh!

Ashley Henderson
*National Association of State Conservation
Agencies (NASCA) President*

Agenda

Sunday, October 4

8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

NASCA Board Meeting

Heinz - 2nd floor

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

First-Timers Session

Oliver - 2nd floor

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Welcome Reception

Oliver - 2nd floor

Monday, October 5

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

Breakfast - Included in Room Reservation

Elevation Restaurant - 25th Floor

8:00 AM - 11:45 AM

Directors Meeting

Heinz

8:00 AM - 11:45 AM

State Ideas Sharing Session

Oliver

12:00 PM - 12:30 PM

**Eat Lunch &
Load Buses**

12:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Field Tour

Tuesday, October 6

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

Breakfast - Included in Room Reservation

Elevation Restaurant - 25th Floor

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Directors Meeting

Heinz

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

State Ideas Sharing Session

Oliver

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Lunch

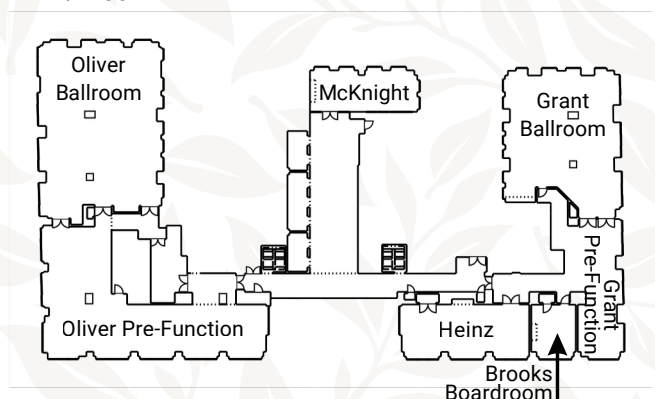
1:00 PM - 2:50 PM

Region Meetings

TBA

Hotel & Event Map

2nd Floor



2:50 PM - 3:00 PM
Break

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Directors Meeting
Heinz

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
State Ideas Sharing Session
Oliver

Wednesday, October 7

Joint Meeting
Oliver Ballroom

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Breakfast - Included in Room Reservation
Elevation Restaurant - 25th Floor

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM
State Spotlight
Secretary Redding
Marty Qually

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM
NRCS Update

9:00 AM - 9:40 AM
State Partner Panel
Amy Brown
Denise Coleman
Marty Qually

9:40 AM - 10:00 AM
State Ideas Sharing Presentation #1

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM
Break

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM
Ag Innovation in Pennsylvania
Mike Roth

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Penn State Ag 101

Brady Seeley
Jen Fetterer

11:30 AM - 11:50 AM
State Ideas Sharing Presentation #2

11:50 AM - 1:10 PM
Lunch

1:10 PM - 1:50 PM
Local Work Group Panel
Michael Kent
Brooke Myres

1:50 PM - 2:10 PM
State Ideas Sharing Presentation #3

2:10 PM - 2:50 PM
Grow Pittsburgh
Denele Hughson
Hayly Hoch

2:50 PM - 3:00 PM
Break

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Conservation Planner Training
Tim Riley

4:00 PM - 4:30 PM
President Reflections
Ashley Henderson

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM
**President's Reception
& Banquet**
Grant Ballroom
Ticketed event
Plated dinner and cash bar

State Ideas Sharing Session

Oliver Ballroom

Monday, October 5

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

**Opening Comments, Self-Introductions,
Session Objectives & Agenda**

Introductory Comments by Ray Ledgerwood

8:30 AM - 9:10 AM

Open Discussion Session

9:10 AM - 9:50 AM

**Building District Capacity &
Training & Partnerships**

- *South Carolina: Employee Onboarding Process | Jessica Egan, Cameron Sabin, Mary Bracey, John Hayes*
- *New York: District Led Watershed Coalitions | Bethany Bzduch*
- *Washington: Partners in Conservation | Regional Managers Supporting District Success | Tami Stubbs*

9:50 AM - 10:00 AM

Break

10:00 AM - 10:40 AM

**Building District Capacity &
Training & Partnerships**

- *Indiana: District Capacity Assessment & Recent Statute Updates | Breegan Andersen*
- *New Hampshire: Supporting District/County Relationships | Ian Hanley*
- *Participant's Examples and Discussion of Building District Capacity & Training & Partnerships*

10:40 AM - 11:40 AM

District Operations & Funding

- *Alabama: Operational Improvements That Matter | Harli Willis*
- *Kentucky: Districts in Good Standing Program | Johnna McHugh*
- *Oklahoma: District Innovation Growth (DIG) Program | Tammy Curry & Amy Weathers*
- *Missouri: Parks, Soils, and Water Sales Tax Renewal | Jake Wilson & Jim Plassmeyer*
- *Kansas: District Manager Performance: Impact of Cost Share Utilization Reports | Jake Dooling*
- *States Structure and Funding Summary Review*
- *Participant's Examples and Discussion of District Operations and Funding*

11:40 AM - 11:45 AM

Review Next Day Agenda

11:45 PM

Lunch & Field Tour

Tuesday, October 6

8:00 AM - 8:10 AM

Field Staff Session Agenda Reviewed

8:10 AM - 9:00 AM

Informal Roundtable Discussion

9:00 AM - 9:50 AM
Program Delivery

- *West Virginia: Drone Technology Use* | **Ben Wade**
- *Connecticut: Nature Based Solutions* | **Lilian Ruiz**
- *Louisiana: Hypoxia Reduction Efforts* | **Jerry Davenport**
- *Ohio: Utilizing Data and Technology to Modernize Nutrient Management* | **Chris Pancake**

9:50 AM - 10:00 AM
Break

10:00 AM - 10:50 AM
Program Delivery (Continued)

- *Iowa: Overview of the New Greater Des Moines Watershed Program* | **Will Myers**
- *Montana: Modernizing Montana's 310 Law | Impact-Based Civil Penalties* | **Stephanie Criswell**
- *Pennsylvania: Practice Approval System (PAS) and Engineering Assistance Request Program (EARP)* | **Justin Challenger & Jennifer Fetter**

10:50 AM - 11:00 AM
Break

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Informal Roundtable Discussion

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Lunch

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
NASCA Region Meetings

3:00 PM - 3:45 PM
Public Outreach, Marketing & Education

- *Utah: Outreach and Education Events and Future of Utah Districts* | **Ben Law & JP Contreras**
- *Georgia: Teaching Conservation from the Classroom to the Boardroom* | **Michelle Conner**
- *Colorado: State Conservation Board - District Outreach Initiatives* | **Rakel Sanchez**
- *Participant's Examples and Discussion of Public Outreach, Marketing & Education*

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM
Informal Roundtable Discussion

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM
Select Plenary Session Presentations | Evaluation | Closing Comments

2027 ANNUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 3-6

Des Moines, Iowa

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE NASCA NEWSLETTER ON NASCANET.ORG TO
RECEIVE ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE.**

Field Tour

(With boxed lunch)

Tour is included with registration

Four Seasons Farm

The Butler County Conservation District partnered with the Kennedy family on a major dairy farm improvement project at Four Seasons Farm in Penn Township, with funding provided through ACAP, EQIP, PENNVEST, and an Agricultural Innovation Grant. The project included two new composting barns, a 12x80 manure storage facility, decommissioning of the existing manure storage, and the addition of robotic milking technology. Construction began in April 2025, with heifers and dry cows moving into the new facilities in December 2025 and the milking herd following in January 2026.



Dirt and Gravel Road Program

The Butler County Conservation District partnered on stream crossing improvement projects along Hartzell Road in Jackson Township, including the replacement of an undersized 5-foot round plastic pipe with a 19.5-foot plated arch. The project demonstrates the benefits of properly sized stream crossings and stream simulation design techniques, while providing an opportunity to compare existing and completed crossings and highlight progress toward current DGLVR standards.



Left: Existing 5-foot pipe creating a large plunge pool and contributing to a failing end wall at the Hartzell Road crossing.

Right: Inlet side of the completed Hartzell Road stream crossing replacement, designed to improve stream flow through the crossing.



Speakers



Amy Brown

*Executive Director
Pennsylvania Association of
Conservation Districts*

Amy Brown serves as Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, where she oversees statewide programs, advocates for conservation districts, and develops partnerships to strengthen conservation initiatives. Brown previously served as Director of Operations and Acting Executive Director, guiding the Association through a period of transition since March 2025. She joined the Association in 2018 as Program Manager after previously working as an Agricultural Technician with the Luzerne Conservation District. Brown also brings an extensive farming background, with her family owning and operating TLV Tree Farm in Glenelg, Maryland.



Denise Coleman

*State Conservationist
Pennsylvania USDA-NRCS*

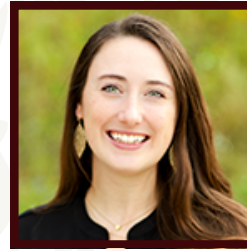
Denise Coleman has served as the NRCS State Conservationist in Pennsylvania since 2010, providing leadership for the agency's conservation programs across the state. Prior to becoming State Conservationist, Coleman held several leadership positions with NRCS in Washington, D.C., including National Program Manager for the Farm and Ranch Protection Program, Team Leader for Easement Support, Budget and Planning Analyst for NRCS Programs, and Chief of Staff for the Regional Conservationists. She began her NRCS career in northeastern Pennsylvania field offices and earned a master's degree in Environmental Management and Policy from George Washington University.



Jen Fetterer

*Director
Center for Agriculture Conservation
Assistance Training*

Jen Fetterer serves as Director of the Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training and Penn State Extension Water Resources Program Team Leader. She leads education and technical assistance efforts supporting conservation professionals and agricultural communities, with a focus on best management practices, water quality, and conservation. Jen specializes in developing programs for conservation professionals and youth and has extensive experience engaging Pennsylvania communities in water conservation. Jen holds bachelor's and master's degrees in Biology from Villanova University.



Hayly Hoch

*Community Agriculture & Soils
Program Manager
Allegheny County Conservation District*

As Allegheny County Conservation District's Community Agriculture and Soils Program Manager, Hayly Hoch manages the Urban Soils Program and provides technical assistance to urban farmers in the Pittsburgh region. Her background in urban agriculture, green infrastructure, youth education, and community development provide a solid foundation for working to protect, restore, and preserve Allegheny County's soil and water resources.



Denele Hughson

*Executive Director
Grow Pittsburgh*

Denele Hughson serves as Executive Director of Grow Pittsburgh, where she leads initiatives that increase access to local food, support community food-growing projects, and advance food security across Allegheny County. A Pittsburgh native, she holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Pittsburgh and an M.S. in Public Policy & Management from Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College. Denele is a recognized leader in urban agriculture and food policy, serving on numerous state and regional advisory groups focused on food justice, sustainable food systems, and agricultural development. In 2025, she was appointed to Governor Shapiro's Strategic Planning Committee for Economic Development in Agriculture and was recognized as a Women of Achievement of Southwest PA, Carnegie Mellon Heinz College Distinguished Alumna, and a member of Carnegie Mellon's inaugural Tartans on the Rise class.



Brooke Myres

*Conservation Districts Program Manager
South Carolina Department of
Natural Resources*

Brooke Myres is the Conservation Districts Program Manager for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Conservation Districts section. Brooke has been a part of this team since 2016 where she started in a grant funded field position working on Farm Bill Programs in joint Conservation District and NRCS offices. She is passionate about conservation education and spreading awareness of conservation districts. Part of Brooke's role is managing the South Carolina Local Work Group Committee with a mission of improving the Local Work Group process in South Carolina.



Marty Qually
Executive Secretary
Pennsylvania State
Conservation Commission

Marty Qually began serving as Executive Secretary of the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission in August 2026, bringing extensive experience in local government, administration, and community engagement. Prior to his appointment, Qually served as an Adams County Commissioner since 2012 and previously worked as a county auditor, small business owner, and assistant director of the Frederick Community Action Agency in Maryland. He has also been an active member of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, serving on the Local Government Advisory Committee and recently as its chair, where he worked with local governments and conservation partners across the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



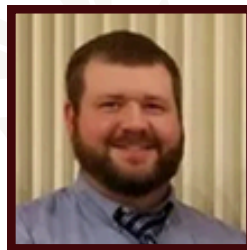
Michael Roth
Director of Innovation
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Michael Roth serves as Director of Innovation at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, where his work focuses on the intersection of agricultural technology, energy, biomaterials, and climate change. A Pittsburgh native, Roth earned a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Washington & Jefferson College and an M.A. in Public Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. After graduate school, he served as a Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA before being selected in 2019 as a William Penn Fellow with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, working on the Department of Agriculture's policy team.



Russell Redding
Secretary of Agriculture
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Secretary Redding has more than 30 years of experience in agriculture and public service, including nearly 25 years with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. He currently serves as Pennsylvania's 27th Secretary of Agriculture, a position he has held since 2023 after previously serving as secretary from 2015–2022 under Governor Tom Wolf and from 2009–2011 under Governor Ed Rendell. Redding also served as Agriculture Policy Advisor to U.S. Senator Harris Wofford and as dean of the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at Delaware Valley University. A Pennsylvania native and longtime dairy farmer, he earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Penn State University and continues to own and operate a farm in Gettysburg with his wife, Nina.



Brady Seeley
Director, Nutrient & Odor
Management Programs
Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission

Brady Seeley serves as Director of the Nutrient and Odor Management Programs for the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission, bringing extensive experience with the Commission's conservation programs. Since joining the Commission in 2019, Brady has worked in the Nutrient and Odor Management Programs and various other SCC programs and duties. He was promoted to Conservation Program Specialist 2 in 2023, overseeing the four Nutrient Management Regional Coordinators, and most recently served as Acting Director of the Nutrient and Odor Management Programs. In his current role, Brady oversees the Act 38 Nutrient and Odor Management Programs, Act 49 Manure Hauler and Broker Program, and related certification programs.



Tim Riley
Executive Director
National Conservation District
Employees Association

Tim Riley serves as District Coordinator of the Kent Conservation District in Delaware, where he recently completed 35 years of service. He also serves as Executive Director of the National Conservation District Employees Association and has held several leadership positions within the organization, including President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Riley has been involved with the National Conservation Partnership since 1992 and brings extensive local, regional, and national experience in conservation district work. Prior to his career with the District, he served six years in the U.S. Marine Corps.



For any questions, please contact:

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