

MEETING MINUTES

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Joint Meeting with Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)

300 Sower Blvd, Frankfort KY, Commissioners' Office Conference Room

Friday, January 23, 2026 | 9:00 AM

SWCC Members

Danny Shipley, Area 3 (Chair)
Bill Harned, Area 4
Jeff Rice, Area 2
Denise Hoffman, Area 9
Keith Tingle, Area 6
Lenville Martin, Area 8
Eddie Monroe, Area 5
Anne Bays, Area 7

KACD Members

Ted Jessup, President
Steve Coleman, Vice President
Jennifer Burgan, Secretary/Treasurer
Doug McLaren, Area 6
Rodney Dick, Area 7
Doug DeRossett, Area 8
Orville Bennett, Area 9

Other Attendees

Jay Nelson, Division of Conservation
Johnna McHugh, Division of Conservation
Melinda Murphy, Division of Conservation
Kim Barton, Division of Conservation
Jeff Gravitt, Division of Conservation
Crystal Renfro, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts
Kayleigh Evans, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts
Eric Allness, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Steve Beam, Natural Resources Conservation Service
David Wayne, Farm Service Agency
Penny Warwick, Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees
Mason Quiram, Oldham County Conservation District
John Chism, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Sarah Charles, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Ryan Whitt, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts
Patti Dischar, Campbell County Conservation District
Bridget Abernathy, Division of Forestry
Debbie Eubank, Union County Conservation District
Debbie Boyd, Hopkins County Conservation District
Sonia White, Department of Natural Resources
David Fields, Department of Natural Resources
Debra Waller, Boone County Conservation District

1. Call to order

Chairman Danny Shipley (SWCC) and President Ted Jessup (KACD) called the meeting to order. Attendees introduced themselves and their organization affiliations. The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, with some members attending in person and others joining via Zoom.

2. Approval of previous minutes

Minutes from the November 11th SWCC meeting were presented for approval. A motion to approve was made by Jeff Rice and seconded by Bill Harned. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes from the November 2025 KACD meeting were presented for approval. A motion to approve was made by Jennifer Burgan and seconded by Rodney Dick. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

3. KACD Treasurer's Report

KACD General Account

- Period: November 8, 2025, through January 15, 2026
- Beginning balance: \$29,005.54
- Total income for period: \$25,000
- Total receipts available: \$55,860.54
- Notable expenditures: public affairs specialist, contract services, travel, administrative expenses, legislative reception (rental and incidentals: \$1,077.86)
- Total expenditure: \$21,974.50
- Ending balance: \$33,886.40
- Note: Warren County first invoice pending; awaiting invoice from fiscal court.

A motion to approve was made by Rodney Dick and seconded by Steve Coleman. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

KACD Foundation Account

- Beginning balance: \$103,905.21
- Total receipts available: \$309,329.57 (includes 90-10 receipts and sponsorships)
- Expenditures include payouts to conservation districts (90-10 program) and Farm Bill outreach positions
- Total expenditure: \$129,190.69
- Ending balance: \$180,138.88

A motion to approve was made by Doug McLaren and seconded by Doug DeRossett. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Invoice Approvals

- FFA Land Judging Teams sponsorship request, \$250 each for 2 teams; KACo Workers Comp Insurance, \$369 (General Acct); Ky Ag Council Dues, \$250 (General Acct); NCF Envirothon Dues, \$450 (General Acct); Legislative Reception Caterer, \$3,450 (General Acct). Motion by Mr. Steve Coleman, second by Mr. Rodney Dick. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Timesheets for Ryan Whitt, Kayleigh Evans, and Crystal Renfro, submitted and reviewed. Motion by Mr. Steve Coleman, seconded by Ms. Jennifer Burgan to approve. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Approve the travel reimbursement reports from Kayleigh Evans and Crystal Renfro to be paid from the Foundation account. Motion by Mr. Steve Coleman, seconded by Doug DeRossett to approve. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion by Mr. Steve Coleman, second by Ms. Jennifer Burgan to approve KACD contractors to be paid from the Foundation account. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Agency Reports

Division of Conservation: Jay Nelson

- Annual Winter Supervisors Trainings: February 10 and February 11. Zoom access provided by KACD to accommodate over 100 attendees.
- National Watershed Coalition Spring Workshop: Planned for the first week of April (tentatively April 6–9) in Bowling Green, KY. DOC is assisting with logistics; tour bus and hotel options in progress. Watershed conservancy districts and conservation districts with WCDs are especially encouraged to attend.
- Employee Spotlight: Kimberly Bartley's district relevancy presentation has gained national traction; delivered at NASCA national conference, and she has been invited to Texas (NACD), Oklahoma, Ohio, and North Carolina.
- Special Called Commission Meeting: To be scheduled for the second half of February to approve state cost-share contracts (maintaining a March effective date). Date discussed at end of meeting; tentatively February 19.
- Art and Writing Contest: Submissions received; rescheduled to February 2nd due to weather.
- Ohio DOC Cooperation: DOC visited Ohio Division of Soil and Water Conservation to share ideas; ongoing collaboration.
- KACDE Area Meeting Trainings: DOC staff will conduct afternoon training sessions for district employees and supervisors at each area meeting (after lunch). Melinda Murphy, Steven Olt, and Jay Nelson will attend.
- CAIP Rollout Update: DOC, KOAP, and KACD met to discuss standardizing CAIP delivery in all counties through conservation districts, with a 5-year target (by 2031). Currently 73 counties administer CAIP. Challenges discussed, work in progress.
- Confidential Alert: A former county conservation district employee is under FBI investigation for alleged misappropriation of district funds over approximately 8 years. No charges are filed yet. DOC staff identified inconsistencies during audit review.

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts: Crystal Renfro

- Partnership Affiliate Program (NRCS-funded): Now at 29 full-time field positions; 8 more being interviewed or advertised. KACD is meeting with individual counties to discuss the program.

- Six Farm Bill contractors (started Oct. 27, funded through at least end of May): Assigned two work units each; reaching all districts not yet in the affiliate program. Grant renewal applied for but outcome uncertain due to changed guidelines.
- Social Media Push: EQIP and CSP posts generated record engagement. A photo featuring a local celebrity farmer drove viral reach in Nicholas County. KACD is building a photo bank on a shared drive for all conservation districts to use.
- Monthly Share Sessions: Now include a 10-minute standing update from Melinda Murphy on state cost-share and audit topics.
- Envirothon Funding: Approval requested to purchase lunches for Envirothon training sessions (3 in Frankfort, 2 regional). Partnering with Panera for boxed lunches at \$8/person. Motion by Steve Coleman, seconded by Jennifer Burgan. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Outreach: KACD tabled at Kentucky Farm Bureau Convention and Kentucky Cattlemen's Association convention.
- KACD Google Calendar: Now live on KACD website; includes all area meetings, NACD events, fly-ins, and grant/report deadlines. Districts can subscribe in Google Calendar for automatic updates.
- Sponsorship Packets: ~100 sent; ~35–40 remaining.
- Envirothon sponsorship letters going out February 1.
- Spring Area Meeting Schedule:
 - Area 1 – Marshall County, March 3
 - Area 2 – Hopkins County, March 5
 - Area 3 – Warren County, March 9
 - Area 4 – Jefferson County, March 23
 - Area 5 – Harrison County, April 1
 - Area 6 – Boyle County, March 30
 - Area 7 – Pulaski County, March 18
 - Area 8 – Fleming County, March 31
 - Area 9 – TBD
- Verizon Cell Phone Program
 - Plan cost: ~\$30/month per line (rate locked for 3 years); includes unlimited minutes, texts, and data, plus free hotspot.
 - New lines receive an iPhone 15 at no cost, keeping an existing phone/number also at \$30.
 - Districts will contract with KACD; KACD pays Verizon directly. Districts must sign a 3-year agreement to protect KACD from early-termination penalties.
 - Districts pay KACD annually (at minimum); a small administrative fee will be determined by the executive team.
 - If 50 lines enrolled, Verizon may offer improved pricing.

A motion to allow executive team to finalize administrative fees and release Verizon cell phone program to all districts was made by Doug McLaren and seconded by Rodney Dick. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Art and Writing Contest Awards
 - Looking for a new location, possibly at Kentucky Castle in Versailles in March, preliminary cost estimate is \$1,500 with hopes of bringing that down through negotiations.

A motion by Doug DeRossett, second by Steve Coleman to approve up to \$1,500 for the Art & Writing Awards program. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Kentucky Association of Conservation District Employees: Penny Warwick

- KACDE is working with KACD at area meetings this year (afternoon sessions) instead of hosting separate area training courses due to declining attendance at standalone events.
- Main topic: Kentucky State Cost Share Program updates with DOC staff.
- Conference promotion for September annual meeting will be on the agenda.
- Logistics (lunch provision) to be worked out per area.

Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts Auxiliary: Crystal Renfro (on behalf of Lisa Mullins)

- Scholarships being updated; expected to be released the following week.

Natural Resources Conservation Service: Eric Allness and Steve Beam

- Federal Funding Status: USDA/NRCS is fully funded for the remainder of the federal fiscal year (through September 30, 2026), regardless of any potential continuing resolution or shutdown affecting other federal agencies. The current continuous resolution for other agencies expires January 30; there is a high probability of no shutdown, but USDA is not affected either way.
- NRCS Organizational Restructuring (late November): The Regional Conservationist Office has been eliminated, and the Office of Assistant Chiefs has been formed. Ken White, the Assistant Chief of our region, and Louis Aspey, the Deputy Assistant Chief of our region, will be visiting Kentucky in the next 1-3 months. Commission and KACD members will be invited to meet with them.
- EQIP/CSP Sign-Up: Sign-up deadlines ended January 15. NRCS received ~3,000 EQIP applications and ~800 CSP applications; a strong showing. Expected attrition will reduce CSP to approximately 400–500 contracts. A second sign-up is possible if needed to obligate available funds.
- PL566 Watershed Dam Repair (EWP): 45 structures identified for repair; surveys nearly complete for all. NRCS covers 75% of repair costs; total NRCS obligation is estimated at approximately \$11 million.
- Federal Hiring Freeze: An executive order requires 4 positions to depart before 1 new hire can be made. NRCS Kentucky does not anticipate hiring new federal employees this fiscal year. The agency will continue to use partner affiliate agreements to meet staffing needs; a notice of funding opportunity (competitive model) will be posted on Grants.gov for partner agreements.
- Agreement Processing Delays: NRCS Grants and Agreements Division has been reduced from 32 to 13 national reviewers. Processing times for agreements have extended significantly.

Farm Service Agency: David Wayne

- Emergency Commodity Assistance Program: \$130 million in payments.
- Emergency Livestock Relief Program: \$7.3 million in payments

- Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (ongoing): \$72.1 million to date in payments
- ARC/PLC (Ag Risk Coverage / Price Loss Coverage): \$29 million in payments
- Conservation Reserve Program: \$22.3 million in annual rental payments (issued post-shutdown).
- Marketing Assistance Loan Program: ~\$47.7 million in payments.
- Direct Loan Program: \$109 million in payments.
- Guaranteed Loan Program: ~\$232–\$329 million (commercial lender partnerships, 90% federal-backed) in payments.
- Total 2025 FSA payments to Kentucky producers: approximately \$541 million
- Farmer Bridge Assistance Program: Announced December 2025; ~\$12 billion nationwide to bridge gap while the One Big Beautiful Bill Act programs are implemented. Payments expected to begin at the end of February.
- New Base Acre Allocation: First update to grain base acres since the mid-1980s. FSA conducting a data dig to establish new bases for acres converted to crop production; aim is to minimize producer burden.
- CRP: No new sign-up in 2026 due to shutdown backlog and implementation workload. USDA is fully funded; program is actively operating.

Kentucky Department of Agriculture: John Chism and Sarah Charles

- Ag Education Weeks: Two successful weeks launched; spring (Inaugural All-In for Ag Education) and fall. Combined, these reached 63% of districts in spring, growing to 84% in fall. The Commissioner visited 30 elementary schools in each season.
- State Fair Recognition: KDA won 1st place internationally for the Agland display; 3rd overall in the watermelon/pumpkin contest (International Association of Fairs and Expositions).
- Farm-to-Fork Dinner: Raised \$60,000.
- Commodity Breakfast: 750 attendees at the Kentucky State Fair.
- Sunshine Class: 70 special needs youth participated at fair exhibitors with animal interactions (expanded from sheep to dairy heifers, beef heifers, and pigs).
- Kentucky Proud/Hospital Partnership: Continued growth demonstrating health benefits of locally grown food. Example: Russell County Hospital serves all-natural Kentucky Proud beef in patient/staff/visitor meals.
- Great American Farmers Market (National Mall, D.C.): Kentucky Proud vendors participated in 250th anniversary kickoff event.
- Kentucky Proud Livestock Classic: Inaugural event in Liberty, KY. 352 entries, 158 youth exhibitors, 123 breeders.
- North American International Livestock Exposition (Louisville): 6,500+ beef entries; 1,850 Junior Cattle Show entries; 14,000 sheep entries. Commissioner hosted the Appalachian Proud Summit with ag leaders from 16 states.
- Kentucky Office of Ag Policy (KOAP) 25th Anniversary: In first 11 months of 2025, KOAP invested \$51.1 million into KY agriculture. Over 25 years, the Ag Development Board has invested nearly \$800 million; the KY Ag Finance Corporation holds \$200 million in assets.
- Elite Heifer Sale Program: Active and relevant given high cattle prices.
- Cattle prices at historic highs.

- Weekly sales volumes remain close to prior year (approx. 20,208 head vs. 21,900 a year ago) despite concerns about declining cow herd.
- USDA Market News Branch lost ~1,600 employees nationally in buyouts; paperwork processing will be slower.
- Kentucky Agriculture Economic Development Board: New \$5 million general fund appropriation. Active initiatives include aviation fuel/ethanol integration with Cincinnati/Kentucky Airport Authority.
- Leopold Award promotion: Featured prominently on KDA and Commission webpages.

KOAP/CAIP Policy Update: Sarah Charles

- Celebrating KOAP's 25th anniversary throughout 2026 (kickoff was June 2025 at Kentucky Historical Society; closing event planned for June 2026 at same venue).
- CAIP Administrator Trainings: All 9 training in-person this year. First training was completed on January 22 at KSU Research Farm with ~45 attendees. Remaining 8 to follow across the state.
- CAIP Standardization Policy: KOAP Ag Development Board received a third-party evaluation recommending standardization of CAIP administration. Goal is for all county conservation districts to administer CAIP by 2031. Alternative models available (inter-district agreements, current administrators contracting with a CD). Positive stakeholder meeting was held on January 22 with DOC, KACD, KACDE, UK Extension, and others.

Division of Forestry: Bridget Abernathy

- Wildland Fire: Participating in Tennessee-Kentucky Wildfire Academy (next two weeks; ~90 staff attending). Spring fire season begins February 15 through end of April. Prescribed burning operations underway through spring green-up.
- Emergency Response: Assisting Transportation Cabinet with snow plowing; staffing at Kentucky Emergency Management Center starting that weekend in anticipation of pending winter storm.
- Forest Health Conference: February 17 at University of Kentucky; ~200 forest/tree care professionals; covers insects, diseases, invasive species, and treatments.
- Stewardship Program: Foresters working statewide with landowners. Continuing joint work with NRCS on existing cost-share recipients; undergoing training with NRCS next week; stopgap agreement in place while a new long-term agreement is prepared.
- Urban & Community Forestry Grants: New round open through early April; aimed at tree planting in small and large communities. Larger containerized/B&B trees eligible (better value than seedlings).
- State Arbor Day: Friday, April 3, at the Old State Capitol in Frankfort (relocated from current Capitol due to construction).
- Nursery Program: Seedling sales continue through April; customers encouraged to order soon as desirable species selling out.
- 11th State Forest: Near closing on Wolf Creek State Forest in Breathitt County (~500 acres); closing expected in the next month or two.

- Kentucky Master Logger Program: Full schedule of 3-day new-logger trainings and CEU courses; details on KY Master Logger website.
- Division continues support of Envirothon and Art and Writing Contest.

5. KACD Correspondence: Crystal Renfro

- No correspondence to report.

6. SWCC Correspondence: Jay Nelson

- Bell County requested to move \$5,500 in remaining environmental grant funds from their septic program to a local cost-share program for lime, fertilizer, and seed.

A motion to deny was made by Keith Tingle and seconded by Lenville Martin due to Commission policy that do not offer practices that overlap with state cost-share offerings, and fertilizer is offered under the Kentucky State Cost Share Program as a pasture renovation component. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Equipment Report: Johnna McHugh

- Beginning balance (start of fiscal year): \$1,569,146.23
 - Receipts this period: \$73,657.24
 - One loan issued: \$15,866.67
 - Ending balance: \$1,626,936.80
 - 19 active equipment loans outstanding; loan balance: \$293,474.23. All loans current.
- Note: Perry County loan paid off (equipment sold).

A motion to approve was made by Bill Harned and seconded by Denise Hoffman. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Conservation District Supervisors: Johnna McHugh

- Vacancy Petitions
 - Harrison County - Ben VanHook to fill unexpired term of Paul Tucker (2026) (1 petition received)
 - Ohio County - Chad Porter to fill unexpired term of Walter Porter (2028) (1 petition received)
 - Taylor County - Sandra Hinton to fill unexpired term of Marion Howard (2026) (1 petition received)
 - Todd County - Kasey Wilson to fill unexpired vacancy (2028) (1 petition received)
 - Wolfe County - Henry Ferguson to fill unexpired term of Timothy Ferguson (2028) (1 petition received)

A motion to approve was made by Keith Tingle and seconded by Jeff Rice. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Incentive Per Diem
 - Christian County

- NR Barwell, III – Area 1 meeting, at least 8 ten-minute trainings
- Lanny Boyd – Area 1 meeting, at least 8 ten-minute trainings
- Mark Claxton – Area 1 meeting, at least 8 ten-minute trainings
- Dustin Love – Area 1 meeting, at least 8 ten-minute trainings
- Wesley Parker – Area 1 meeting, at least 8 ten-minute trainings
- Scotty Parsons, Jr. – KACD convention, Area 1 meeting, at least 8 ten-minute trainings

A motion to approve was made by Denise Hoffman and seconded by Bill Harned. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Agriculture District Program: Johnna McHugh

- Woodford County: (Petition No. 120-09): 366.00 acres. A motion to approve was made by Jeff Rice and seconded by Edwin Monroe. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.
- Woodford County: (Petition No. 120-10): 90.06 acres. A motion to approve was made by Keith Tingle and seconded by Jeff Rice. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

12 Agricultural districts have been submitted to the commission for five-year recertification for a total of 5,650.80 acres.

- Campbell County (019-12) 479.86 acres
- Fulton County (038-01) 2,135.94 acres
- Fulton County (038-02) 304.73 acres
- Henry County (052-07) 83.00 acres
- Jackson County (055-01) 246.00 acres
- Jackson County (055-02) 397.49 acres
- Jackson County (055-06) 256.30 acres
- Jackson County (055-08) 158.78 acres
- Mercer County (084-02) 265.96 acres
- Nelson County (090-10) 915.45 acres
- Nelson County (090-13) 314.07 acres
- Union County (113-01) 93.22 acres

A motion to approve was made by Jeff Rice and seconded by Bill Harned. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

10. NACD Director's Report: Ted Jessup (on behalf of David Rowlett)

NACD Director David Rowlett is absent due to health issues; board asked to keep him in their thoughts.

- NACD Annual Meeting: February 14–19 in San Antonio, TX. Several Kentucky members attended.

- NACD Spring Fly-In: March 25, Washington, D.C. Discussed under New Business (see Item 14).

11. Old Business

- Jay Nelson presented an updated list of EWP applications from watershed/conservation districts for PL566 dam repair. Two applications were previously approved; this item covered the remaining applications.
 - Total applications received: 43 of the 45 eligible structures (2 excluded – one example was Spa Lake owned by Cities of Russellville & Lewisburg, which is outside the Commission's statutory authority).
 - Total funding requested: approximately \$2.3 million (plus an additional \$1,510.87 for a 4th dam missed in Westport/Mayfield Creek's original application).
 - Applications organized according to NRCS Damage Survey Reports (DSRs) for tracking consistency.
 - Condition attached: Short Creek, Fox Creek, and West Fork Mayfield Creek districts which submitted applications without board approval in their minutes. These applications must be approved in an open meeting prior to entering into a contract.

A motion to approve was made by Bill Harned and seconded by Lenville Martin. This motion is conditional for Short Creek, Fox Creek, and West Fork Mayfield Creek until they submit proof of board meeting with a vote to approve the project. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

12. New Business

- NACD Spring Fly-in: Crystal Renfro
 - Discussion of whether KACD should attend the NACD Spring Fly-In in person for the first time in several years. Context:
 - NACD is expecting a large attendance; Farm Bill year increases the importance of DC presence.
 - Senator McConnell continued presence makes Kentucky's representation particularly valuable.
 - Current congressional outreach via Zoom has been partially effective (reaching about half the delegation, mostly through staff meetings). Crystal does all scheduling but cannot participate due to her paid staff status (lobbying restrictions).
 - NRCS Eric Allness strongly encouraged attendance regardless of whether NRCS representatives can accompany, due to access to the full NACD network and guest speakers.
 - Key legislative issue: PL566 dam repair funding. Both Republican and Democratic Farm Bill proposals include a 90/10 federal/local match (vs. current 65/35), which would reduce local share on \$4–5 million projects to 10%.
 - Legislative committee reports that the Farm Bill is expected to be filed before the fly-in; maybe in Senate or Conference Committee by then. Kentucky presence could help move it across the finish line.

A motion to authorize KACD Executive Committee to decide on and arrange attendance at the NACD Spring Fly-In was made by Doug McLaren and seconded by Orville Bennett. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

- 2026 KACD Annual Meeting: Crystal Renfro
 - Dates: July 26–28, 2026
 - Venue: Crowne Plaza (returning for third year); facility worked well and offered a good rate.
 - Contracts also signed for 2027 and 2028 at the Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green (earlier July dates). 2029 venue being explored.
- KACD Employee/Contractor Update: Crystal Renfro
 - Harrison County invoice for Kayleigh Evans position: \$16,209.70 for first quarter of 2026.
Motion made by Steve Coleman and seconded by Dough DeRossett. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - NACD Next Generation Leadership Institute: Rosalind Streeter (Oldham County) accepted; Kentucky's second participant in the program.
 - KACD will be encouraging the signups of Earth Team Volunteers for Junior Board members and Envirothon Team participants. Recently found out that KACo does not cover them on behalf of the district. If signed up as an Earth Team Volunteer, they receive the same coverage as a federal employee, if they complete the necessary time reports which are simple. Need to be a minimum of 14 years old.
 - KACD is exploring a partnership with an Ohio-based HR advisory firm used by the Ohio Association of Conservation Districts:
 - Membership fee: ~\$500/year for KACD; individual calls available to member districts at a reduced rate (\$125 otherwise).
 - Services include unlimited HR guidance calls, personnel issue support, and annual legal/tax information seminar.
 - Ohio Association pays ~\$3,500/year for convention-level training and member access; districts use the service for personnel situations (misconduct, supervisors, policy questions).
 - Discussion noted that some counties rely on county attorneys; however, not all county attorneys support conservation districts. This service fills that gap for HR-specific issues.
 - No formal vote taken; item introduced for board awareness and further consideration by the executive committee.
- 2026 Environmental Grant Approval: Jay Nelson
 - Late application issue with three districts (Monroe County, Oldham County, and Harrison County) submitted Environmental Grant applications after the November 15, 2025, deadline. The Environmental Grant deadline had historically aligned with the Kentucky State Cost Share Program deadline; when the State Cost Share Program deadline was moved due to the federal government

shutdown, the Environmental Grant deadline was not explicitly addressed in initial DOC communications. DOC field staff did send out reminders, however some conservation district staff continue to use federal email, which was inaccessible during the shutdown.

- Monroe County: Application submitted January 5 (deadline Nov. 15). DOC field staff sent email reminders November 5th and 7th. Monroe CD did not respond to reminders, late without clear excuse.
- Oldham County (Mason Quiram): Application form received in August with no deadline on it; deadline only found in September DOC monthly notes (not October). Board meeting was November 19th, after deadline.
- Harrison County: Staff in transition training new employees during federal shutdown; missed the deadline due to confusion about whether the date had moved with the State Cost Share Program deadline.
- DOC acknowledged that when the new State Cost Share Program date was announced in October, the Environmental Grant deadline was not explicitly restated, and the two programs historically shared the same date. DOC will improve communications going forward.

A motion to approve the three late applications (Monroe, Oldham, and Harrison Counties) to be considered for the 2026 Environmental Grant cycle, with understanding they will be subject to existing ranking criteria was made by Bill Harned and seconded by Jeff Rice. Discussion on upholding deadlines going forward. Motion carried unanimously.

○ Environmental Grant Approval

- Total funding available for approval: \$324,278.40
- Three allocation options were presented:
 - ❖ Option 1 (DIGS score only): \$319,782.75 fits within normal budget submitted to KDA.
 - ❖ Option 2 (Option 1 - deduct for districts with 2+ year-old unspent balances): Adjusts down for districts sitting on older funds.
 - ❖ Option 3 (Option 2 - adds back districts with need — scored 75% of DIGS, lower account balances): Maximizes disbursement to higher-need districts; total closest to available amount.

A motion to approve option 3 was made by Lenville Martin and seconded by Denise Hoffman. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Special Called Meeting need discussed for approval of State Cost Share Program applications. Steven Olt (State Cost Share Coordinator) needs 2–3 weeks to review applications for duplicates and inconsistencies after the submission window closes. Tentative special called meeting date: February 19, 2026.
- Mr. Ray Adams, a long-time contributor to conservation districts and a past Chair of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, passed away in December. He was recognized for his years of advocacy and service.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the SWCC meeting was made by Bill Harned and was seconded by Lenville Martin. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion to adjourn the KACD meeting was made by Doug DeRossett and was seconded by Orville Bennett. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously

Next SWCC meeting is May 18th at 9:00 am.

Next KACD meeting is March 19th at 9:30 am