



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Grant Opportunities

Conservation Trust Grant: The objective of the Conservation Trust is to support conservation activities around the world as they fit within the mission of the National Geographic Society. The trust will fund projects that contribute significantly to the preservation and sustainable use of the Earth's biological, cultural, and historical resources.

Organic Farming Research Foundation Grant: Supports education and outreach projects in the categories of organic seed quality or crop breeding. OFRF accepts proposals via electronic submission. Proposals are due by Wednesday, May 15, 2013.

National Gardening Association Grant: Each applicant is asked to create a Garden Registry profile for their program. The Garden Registry profile can be displayed publicly or privately depending on your organization's preferences. Garden Registry profiles are required to apply for grants hosted by National Gardening Association for 2012-2013.

NRCD 4

Q and A?

Q: Can districts host conference call meetings, and is there a way to facilitate it?

A: Yes districts are allowed to use conference calls as a way to conduct meetings. Open Meeting Law still applies. Please look into Freebridge Conference Calls.

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NRCD Newsletter



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS.

Willie Sommers

Mr. Sommers is the Manager of the Range, Agriculture & Conservation Section and has been with the State Land Department since 2005. Prior to becoming Section Manager, he worked as a Range Resource Area Manager in Prescott and Phoenix. He has a Degree in Environmental Resources from Arizona State University and a Master's Degree in Range Management from The University of Arizona. His areas of professional interest include invasive species management, collaborative conservation and desert ecology.

Amber Morin

Ms. Morin was hired on with the State Land Department in October 2012 to serve in the capacity of State Natural Resource Conservation District Manager. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in American Political Studies from Northern Arizona University. Previously, she has worked for the Arizona House of Representatives and the Arizona Cattle Growers Association.

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New State Land Commissioner

Governor Jan Brewer has named Vanessa Hickman the new Land Commissioner for the Arizona State Land Department, replacing outgoing Commissioner Maria Baier. Ms. Hickman has served the Land Department as Deputy Commissioner since 2009. Previously, she was Deputy General Counsel to Governor Brewer (2009), and worked in private practice for the law firms of Withey Morris; Wilenchik & Bartness; and Wilcox & Wilcox.

"Vanessa is an experienced and talented real estate lawyer, and is a natural choice for this important role in my administration," said Governor Jan Brewer. "I have the utmost confidence she will continue to serve the people of Arizona with great distinction in her new position."

Maria recently announced she is departing the Land Department in order to accept a position as CEO of the Sonoran Institute. She served the State of Arizona as Land Commissioner since June 2009.

"Maria has been a wonderful asset to my administration through her leadership of the Arizona State Land Department," said Governor Brewer. "She has such a wealth of public policy experience, so I'm glad she will continue to positively impact the way in which Arizona grows and develops via her important work at the Sonoran Institute. I wish her all the best."

NRCD 1

10 ways to reach your Representative

1. Send a letter
2. Send an email
3. Call on the phone
4. Meet at the capitol
5. Meet in their district office
6. Participate in local meetings
7. Participate in virtual forums
8. Make a speaking invitation
9. Schedule a capitol tour
10. Get to know legislative staff

Keep in mind that effort pays off. The more of these that you can do, the better! Gain name recognition with your representatives, and help them understand what NRCDs do!



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS.

Why Should I Contact My Representatives?

To be effective and re-elected, legislators must, at the very least, know who their constituents are and have some familiarity with the institutions in their district. You, as a member of your local NRCD board, can help inform your representative by sending informational letters, making phone calls, sending emails, and making personal contact. The amount of information a representative receives from an interest group can significantly impact their vote. Develop a relationship with your congressman so that you can serve as a resource to them educating them on issues that are important to your group.

If your legislator understands your mission and service to the community, he or she will be more sensitive to your concerns and may contact you in the future to find out how a particular piece of legislation would impact your institution. In return, legislative staff and your legislator can also serve as a source of information to you.

What Can Be Gained?

One of the most important things that your institution will gain from a relationship with your representative is the opportunity to lobby your cause.

NRCD 2

Contacting your Representatives

Why it is important and what can be gained...

Legislators are lobbied every single day by phone calls, emails, voter opinion polls, protests, and other legislators. Even though they are overwhelmed with a wealth of information pertaining to proposed legislation, if you make contact with your elected official you are giving your organization a voice. This is highly significant because NRCDs are receiving state supplemental funds from an already lean state budget. This is your opportunity, not to beg for money but to explain the value of what NRCDs do with their state funds and to highlight the federal matching assistance funds that NRCDs bring to Arizona.



Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS.

District Outreach

When issues arise that affect soil health, water quantity and quality, energy, livestock, wildlife, air quality, plants, and quality of life issues NRCDs and the NRCS are there to help. Sometimes the entire community is not aware of the things this partnership is engaged in on their behalf. If this is your situation, there are things you can do to recruit new members and generate interest!

Recruiting people of different skills and backgrounds is a positive method of enhancing creativity on your board and promoting ideas that will appeal to a wider range of people. Answering the following questions can help guide your recruitment efforts:

Who in the community is affected by your committee's actions?

How many sectors of the community should be represented?

Does the representation of your group mirror the diversity in the community?

Can your organization do more to help deliver conservation programs and services to a broader group of customers in the community?

Upcoming Events & Meetings

AZNRCDC Winter Conference

Annual Legislative Meeting

Date: February 21, 2013

Registration: 7:30 A. M.

Location: Arizona State Land Department, Basement Auditorium, 1616 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, AZ 85007

National Association of Conservation Districts

2013 Annual Meeting

Date: January 27-30, 2013

Location: Marriott Rivercenter Hotel
101 Bowie Street
San Antonio, TX 78205
210-223-1000

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Big news! Willow Bend Education Center now has an online gift shop! Mugs, t-shirts, tote bags, and more is available.