



The Iowa delegation discusses engaging young leaders and Iowa 2017 NACD Forum and Tour over lunch.



Marty Adkins talks with Astor Boozer. Marty works with many different partners in his position with NRCS. Astor used to work in Iowa as a D.C. and is now a Regional Conservationist with NRCS.



Alex Schmidt participates in the legislative committee meeting.

"NACD reaches more people through its members than any other non government agency in the nation."

- NRCS Chief Jason Weller

National Association of Conservation Districts 2016 Summer Forum & Tour

In attendance from Iowa: Alex Schmidt, CDI Vice President - Clare Lindahl, CDI Executive Director - Courtney Slagle, CDI Office & Projects Manager - Tim Palmer, Madison SWCD Commissioner & NACD NC Executive Board Member - Marty Adkins, Iowa NRCS

SAVE THE DATE FOR IOWA'S FIRST NATIONAL COMMISSIONER'S EVENT:

2017 NACD Summer Forum and Tour, July 15 -18, 2017

Courtney, Alex and I arrived Thursday evening and pitched Iowa as the host of the 2017 Summer Forum and Tour.

We had prepared a PowerPoint with the what, when, where and why Iowa. We also spoke about CDI's capabilities to take a lead on organizing and managing the event and the next steps to take should we be selected. We had handouts with Prairie Meadows Conference Facility details and a draft schedule.

We were not back to the hotel room 10 minutes after the presentation when Tim Palmer texted that Iowa would be the host.

We received great feedback on our pitch. One Executive Board Member told us he was ready to move to Iowa after our presentation!

We are so excited for this opportunity to showcase Iowa and bring this national opportunity to our state and commissioners!



Pitching Iowa as the host of the 2017 Summer Forum & Tour to the NACD Executive Board.



We were keeping our fingers crossed for NACD 17 in Iowa!

NACD involvement inspires! Let's increase our Iowa engagement! Many opportunities to get involved!

Being early allowed me and Courtney to attend NACD board meetings.

We attended the legislative committee meeting with Alex and Courtney sat in on the Stewardship and Education Committee Meeting. We all three attended the North Central Region Meeting as well.

And you all know Courtney! She had pages of notes about the facility in anticipation of us hosting. While it was very important for Courtney to be at this NACD event in particular on account we will be hosting next year, I can see the benefit of her coming to NACD activities in the future.

She was very inspired by the content and networking and was constantly sharing what Iowa was doing with our programs and inquiring of what other states were doing with theirs.

It is just like we say at the state level, if we can get a commissioner to a state meeting they get the bug! Courtney got the national bug and I would really like to have her attend future NACD events as I think it would broaden and enhance her abilities and connections to serve Iowa.

Just like at the District and State level, leaders are needed at the national level and there are many ways to get engaged. For example, there are still opportunities to become an NACD Soil Health Champion and we will be sending out that information shortly. Also, there are scholarships to cover the registration cost of the NACD Annual Meeting.

Minnesota's great forum & tour hits home with Iowa!

- Minnesota's Water Quality Certification program is getting ready to scale up state wide. With a focus on water quality, the voluntary, locally implemented program recruits and assists farmers through Districts to enhance conservation on farm. We visited a certified farm on the tour.
- One Watershed seeks to combine the groups and efforts in a watershed. There were concerns that One Watershed would do away with the Districts but that is not so! One Watershed recognizes that everyone has a role in watershed work and the field scale projects conducted by the Districts are pertinent to the success of the project.
- Minnesota's watershed projects are using free software to determine people's values in the watershed so you they could best promote conservation. Something I think our Iowa watershed coordinators would find very beneficial.
- We visited an urban, natural stream bank stabilization on Regal Creek. Similar to Iowa, Minnesota has found streambank erosion significantly contributes to their P issues.
- The Forever Green Initiative pairs the University of Minnesota and the USDA Agricultural Research Center to advance new winter annuals and perennial crops. Keeping the ground covered all year round is necessary to achieving nutrient reductions in Iowa and Minnesota. An inspiring tour stop.
- Minnesota's dedicated sales tax (a funded IWILL) brings in over \$100 million/year for clean water and \$100 million/year for habitat, which includes practices that benefit water quality as well like wetlands.
- Minnesota is gearing up to implement its new Buffer Law which requires 16.5' buffers on drainage ditches and 50' buffers on protected public waters.
- Having vision, leadership and a group think are common denominators to Minnesota's successful projects.
- The Minnesota Commissioner Association is partnering with their Extension to provide training to commissioners which focuses on leadership through a process of framing, solving, leading and managing.
- Minnesota has found being able to tell legislators "what's new" is vital when requesting funding.



Regal Creek **Before**



Regal Creek **After**



National content from NACD always delivers!

- NACD has some great staff. We really enjoyed reconnecting with existing staff and meeting new ones. They are so excited to serve the Districts through policy, communications and development and we are just as excited to work with them!
- NACD & NRCS are partnering with Districts on urban farming. 1 in 7 Americans live in poverty, 1 in 5 of them children. These projects increase food availability for those in need and broaden the partnership's reach into urban areas engaging them in supporting conservation in the Farm Bill. This is not about changing the focus, but widening the lens.
- Shout out by Chief Weller to Iowa Commissioners Jack Bensink and Don Elsbernd for their participation in the Resource Enhancement and Stewardship Tool and CSP. I can't wait for RSET tool to go nationwide in about a year.
- Improvements coming to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), which is the largest conservation program in the world.



NACD CEO Jeremy Peters is an asset to commissioners all across the nation!

Our NACD Regional Representative Beth Mason works so hard for our region! We look forward to working with her in 2017!



NACD Communications Specialist Bill Berry never disappoints! He had us excited about the new NRCS RSET tool during his presentation on the panel!

Selfie with NRCS Chief Weller!



Thank you to the CDI Board for allowing Iowa staff to attend!