

# ---CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF IOWA (CDI)---

## CONNECTIONS

The Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) informs, educates, and leads Iowans through our local soil and water conservation districts to promote conservation of natural resources.



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### CDI EXECUTIVE BOARD:

President: Dennis A. Carney  
Vice-President: Jack Boyer  
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### CDI OFFICE STAFF:

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### From: CDI President Dennis Carney

I hope everyone has by now safely finished up their fall harvest and field work. 2019 was certainly another challenging weather year across the state.

The resolutions that were approved at our CDI conference in August have certainly spurred a great deal of discussion among agencies and the news media. I don't believe we have ever had so much attention given to our resolution process. Our actions have been successful when they force the needed discussion on Iowa's environmental issues.

Your officers, board, and staff have been busy planning CDI's events for next year. **Partnership Day will be held on February 26, 2020.** This is later than in the past but will fit well in the legislative calendar. We encourage commissioners to participate; many issues that affect us directly will be debated next session and we need to have our opinions heard.

Keep up the good work and remember to share with us any activities unique to your district that might be of interest across the state.

### *Save the Date!*

Please plan to attend the annual

## Partnership Day

February 26, 2020 · Des Moines

## Executive Director Report – John Whitaker

The Iowa Legislature will convene for the 2020 session beginning on January 13, 2020 and as always, there will be many legislative bills considered that could affect our work in soil conservation and water quality. The individual bills may not directly affect our work but can still have an effect on our operations, such as the nomination filing bill did last year. Please be sure to remember to timely file your nomination petitions in March so that you can continue to support your local conservation work.

Of course, IWLL might be discussed this year as it has been a possibility since Iowans overwhelmingly passed the constitutional amendment almost ten years ago. As a former Legislator, I can tell you that money doesn't solve every political issue or urgent public need but I will also tell you that when 63% of voters back a tax increase for water quality, parks, trails, soil conservation, and other needs in Iowa, it should be a message to our elected officials.

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) has been a very successful program in Iowa to offer help for our natural resources. There are many SWCD Commissioners in Iowa who attend their REAP assemblies locally and even the REAP Congress at the state level. 2020 is an important year for REAP in that when the original legislation was passed, it contained a sunset provision so that in 30 years, if it had not been effective, it could just sunset. 2020 is the end of that 30 years so we must ask our Legislators to re-authorize REAP this year.

There will be many more bills to talk about as the session progresses. Soil Health may be an opportunity for action. Senate action on the revisions to Chapter 161A, which unanimously passed the House last year is something we will work toward. I am sure there will be more. As we have asked in the past, if you would like to receive the weekly update from our lobbyist, please send us an email here at the office and we will get you the update during the session.



### Staff Spotlight

#### **John Whitaker – CDI Executive Director**

John most recently served as the State Executive Director for USDA Farm Service Agency in Iowa under President Obama. John served ten years as County Supervisor in Van Buren County and seven years in the Iowa House of Representative – two years as an Assistant Minority Leader and three years as an Assistant Majority Leader. He also served three years as Vice President and nine years as President of the Iowa Farmers Union. John continues to be actively engaged in their family farm operations with his brother Bruce and son Gabe, raising corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, rye, and hay by no till methods. They feed hogs for Niman Ranch in a deep bedding system and have a cow/calf herd. John and his wife Lorrie are both graduates of ISU along with their three children Gabe, Daniel and Becca.

## Conservation Innovation at the Forefront of NACD 2020 Annual Meeting

By Laura Demmel/NACD

This year's [NACD Annual Meeting](#) in Las Vegas brings together many technologies and innovations that exist and are in use today that impact conservation delivery on the ground. With ag tech startups raising over \$16.9 billion in 2018 alone, and with longstanding private companies and the public sector investing in more technological tools to support working lands conservation, NACD's goal this year at the 74th Annual Meeting is to elevate the conversation on how we can better integrate these innovations across the public and private sectors. **How can we build stronger conservation planning tools for public employees, agronomists, other trusted advisors and farmers/ranchers/foresters?** NACD President Tim Palmer encourages you to consider joining your peers at the [2020 Annual Meeting](#) in Las Vegas, February 8-12, 2020 at the Bally's Hotel, and make sure to stop by the [Innovation Fair](#) to engage in the conservation innovation conversation.



## Deadline Approaches for 'Friends of NACD' District Grant Program

By Ariel Rivers/NACD

'Friends of NACD' provides an opportunity for individuals to donate to the work NACD conducts in support of the districts. As of this fall, funds raised through the program will support four grants of \$2,500 to member districts. Districts may view the complete request for proposals on the [Friends of NACD webpage](#) and [submit applications online](#) prior to the **Jan. 15, 2020** deadline. If you have any questions about this new 'Friends of NACD' or the new grant program, please contact Kimberly Uldricks at [kimberly-uldricks@nacdn.org](mailto:kimberly-uldricks@nacdn.org) or Ariel Rivers at [ariel-rivers@nacdn.org](mailto:ariel-rivers@nacdn.org).

**WHAT'S MISSING?**

**?**

**(Your District's news could be featured here!)**

Please send your articles to [joe@cdiowa.org](mailto:joe@cdiowa.org) to be featured in *Connections*

## Conservation Districts of Iowa – Resolution Process 2020

District Commissioners are empowered to affect change in administrative rules, policy, or law. If a district believes that a change is needed, the Commissioners are encouraged to bring their idea forward to CDI in the form of a resolution. CDI will help by assisting with the best possible wording, and by checking current policies to prevent redundancy. Resolutions that are eventually approved at the state level carry the weight of 500 elected officials in moving forward.

Resolutions can address a problem in your district that CDI should act on, challenge or make a proposed change to IDALS administrative rules, or be a suggestion to improve Farm Bill or federal programs. Following is our timeline for the resolution process:

DUE ON OR BEFORE	RESPONSIBLE	ACTIVITY
March 13	District Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit your written resolution (approved by the district’s commissioners) to CDI.</li> <li>If you have questions, concerning the formatting or validity of the idea, contact CDI prior to submitting the resolution.</li> </ul>
March 27	CDI Resolutions Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review submitted resolutions.</li> <li>Check to see if the resolution conflicts with existing policy or is already addressed in current policies.</li> <li>Suggest different wording or a change in scope, as needed.</li> <li>Submit feedback on the proposed resolution to the district.</li> </ul>
May 1	District Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve any changes to the original resolution and submit final approved version to CDI.</li> </ul>
May 15	CDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mail a resolution package with all submitted resolutions to the districts.</li> </ul>
July 3	District Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individually submit vote to approve, disapprove, or discuss at annual conference each resolution.</li> </ul>
July 17	CDI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post voting results on CDI website.</li> <li>Resolutions that have a 60% or greater approval are passed.</li> <li>Resolutions with 50-59% approval are advanced to the CDI annual conference.</li> <li>Resolutions that receive less than 50% approval are failed.</li> </ul>
At CDI Annual Conference August 10-11	Sponsoring District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring forward the approved resolution during the business meeting portion of the CDI Annual Conference.</li> <li>There is an opportunity for commissioners in attendance to speak for or against the resolution.</li> <li>A resolution must receive 60% or greater approval to be passed.</li> </ul>

CDI then advances the adopted resolution to the proper group:

- If it is a change to Iowa Rules, the resolution will be brought before the State Soil Committee. Either the sponsoring district or CDI will defend in person.
- If a change to Iowa Code, CDI will lobby the state legislature for its adoption.