



NACD Policy Development

Background

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1946 to represent the almost 3000 local units of state government that provide natural resource management assistance to land owners/managers and communities. Over the years, conservation districts have worked to help millions of cooperating landowners and land managers conserve and protect America’s natural resources. NACD is built on the districts’ philosophy that conservation decisions should be made by the local people who are most affected by those decisions.

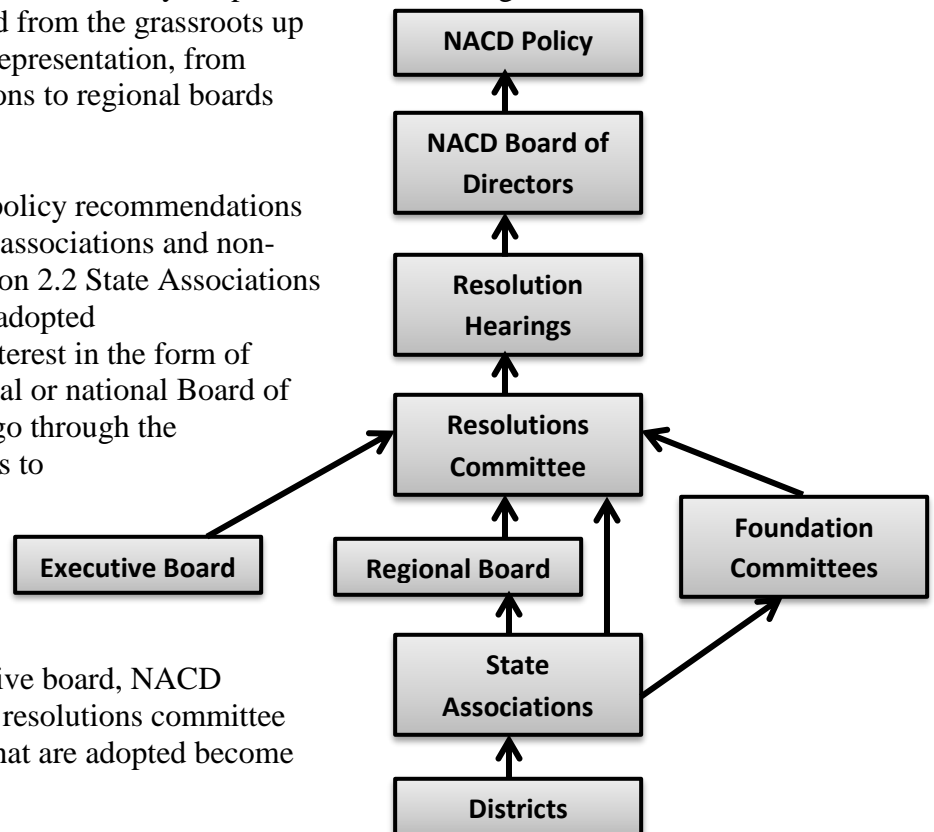
This briefing paper reviews the NACD policy development process. It provides information on what type of policy recommendations (resolutions) will be considered by the national board, how to prepare resolutions, when to submit them, and how they are addressed. In order for a resolution to be presented to the NACD Board, the sponsor(s) must meet the requirements on pages 3-4 of this document.

Overview

NACD policy is the compilation of nationally adopted resolutions that guides the activities of the Association. Policy is developed from the grassroots up through a system of graduated representation, from district boards to state associations to regional boards and/or the national board.

Individual district boards send policy recommendations to their state associations. State associations and non-state members (as listed in section 2.2 State Associations in the NACD Bylaws) forward adopted recommendations of national interest in the form of resolutions to the NACD regional or national Board of Directors. They do not have to go through the regional board but do so at times to engage additional sponsors. The national board acts on these resolutions along with those

submitted by the NACD executive board, NACD foundation committees, and the resolutions committee (defined on next page). Those that are adopted become NACD policy.



DEFINITIONS

NACD Board of Directors – The Board of Directors consists of one voting representative from each state association of conservation districts and non-state members as listed in the NACD Bylaws, and the following nonvoting members: the five NACD officers, the immediate past president, one representative from each NACD geographic region, and one representative from the Conservation Technology Information Center. Each state association determines its method for selecting its representative and an alternate.

NACD Regional Boards – The same state representatives on the NACD Board of Directors also serve on the NACD Regional Boards as designated by the geographical regions set in the NACD Bylaws: Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, Northern Plains, Southwest, and Pacific.

NACD Executive Board – The Executive Board consists of the President, First Vice President or President Elect, Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and one member from each of the NACD geographic regions. The Immediate Past President, the Chief Executive Officer, and one member from the Conservation Technology Information Center all serve as nonvoting members.

NACD Foundation Committees – Foundation Committees are charged by the Board of Directors with exploring their functional area to formulate proposals for action and submit to the appropriate Officers and Official Bodies of the Association. These are usually submitted in the form of resolutions and/or reports. The committees are made up of NACD board members as appointed by the NACD President. The current Foundation Committees are: Communications; District Operations and Member Services; Legislative; Natural Resource Policy; and Stewardship and Education.

NACD Resolutions Committee – The Resolutions Committee is appointed by the NACD President prior to the NACD Annual Meeting for the purpose of reviewing resolutions, the resolutions' assignments to the consent calendar or hearings, and preparing resolutions if determined necessary. Membership usually includes an NACD Officer as Chair and chairs of the Foundation Committees.

Resolutions Hearings – Formerly referred to as 'Hearing Committees', the Resolutions Hearings are conducted by the Foundation Committees. Held during the NACD Annual Meeting only, the purpose of the Hearing is to receive testimony and make recommendations on assigned resolutions for the full Board.

Background Statement (on Resolution Submittal Form) – This is a brief summary of the policy issue, including information essential to the understanding of a problem or situation.

Policy – This is definitive course or method of action to guide and determine present and future decisions.

PRIOR TO THE NACD ANNUAL MEETING

Who May Submit Resolutions to the National Board

According to the NACD Bylaws, resolutions may be submitted, as adopted at their annual or special meeting, by

- ✓ state associations of conservation districts and non-state members as listed in the NACD Bylaws;
- ✓ NACD region boards;
- ✓ NACD foundation committees;
- ✓ the NACD executive board; and
- ✓ the NACD resolutions committee.

Type of Resolutions for the National Board

For resolutions to be considered by the NACD Board of Directors, they must

- ✓ be concerned with the conservation, development or management of natural resources, or with the operations of districts;
- ✓ be of national or significant regional scope; and
- ✓ propose new policy or alteration of existing policy.

How to Prepare Resolutions for the National Board

Resolutions must

- ✓ be submitted in writing, in brief and concise form, without “whereas” and “therefore”, using the Submittal Form provided by NACD;
- ✓ list the sponsoring entity(ies);
- ✓ describe the problems or issues being addressed as background information for Board discussion along with potential outcome if the issue is not addressed, though if adopted this will not be included in the Policy Book;
- ✓ clearly and concisely, using active verbs, state the specific action(s) and timing expected of NACD;
- ✓ be based on fact, avoiding opinions and beliefs;
- ✓ note the date of the meeting where adopted; and
- ✓ be signed by an authorized member of the submitting entity.

The submittal should also include the

- ✓ impact on existing NACD policy;
- ✓ potential financial impact on NACD; and
- ✓ if appropriate, potential fiscal impact on the federal budget.

The Resolutions Committee may reject resolutions that are inaccurate, non-germane, or are of concern only in an individual state, or in some instances region, and will be returned to the submitting entity with an explanation of the reason(s) for rejection. A decision to reject a resolution may be appealed to the Resolutions Committee.

How to Submit Resolutions to the National Board

State association presidents and executives, NACD Foundation Committee chairs, and Regional Board Chairs should submit proposed resolutions in writing, in the required format on the Submittal

Form, to the NACD staff member designated by the NACD Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to coordinate the annual process. The preferred method is email, but all formats will be accepted if an authorized signature is provided. Contact information is provided on page 6.

When to Submit Resolutions for the National Board

Resolutions may be submitted anytime during the year, and sponsoring entities are encouraged to submit them as soon as possible after adoption. According to the NACD Bylaws, “resolutions should be received at least 30 days before the NACD annual meeting”. Those submitted after the 30-day deadline will be presented to the Resolutions Committee as late resolutions to determine if and how they will be addressed at the annual meeting.

NACD Handling of Resolutions

Resolutions submitted to NACD will be edited by the CEO’s designee to ensure appropriateness for the national Board, clarity, proper format and grammatical uniformity. Resolutions that propose substantially similar policy will be combined. Any edits or combinations will be shared with the submitting entities for review and signature to the best extent possible. Each resolution will identify the submitting entity(ies). All resolutions will be assigned to a Board resolutions hearing or to the Consent Calendar, the latter of which contains those resolutions likely to be accepted with no debate and so can be adopted with one vote.

Those resolutions received 30 days prior to the NACD Annual Meeting will be compiled into a preliminary resolutions pad. The draft pad, including the Consent Calendar and the hearing assignments, will be provided to the NACD Resolutions Committee in early January. The Committee will review the original resolutions, recommended edits and assignments, and will make changes as deemed appropriate. It will also review and assign all late resolutions.

When approved by the Resolutions Committee and no later than 15 days prior to the NACD Board Meeting, the preliminary resolutions pad will be distributed to: voting members of the NACD Board of Directors and alternates; state association presidents and executives; NACD officers and executive board members; NACD staff; and other partners as appropriate.

DURING THE NACD ANNUAL MEETING

Board of Directors Meeting

The first meeting of the NACD Board of Directors is held on Saturday afternoon. Board members receive their meeting books, which contain the previously emailed resolutions and each board member’s assigned hearing.

Resolutions Committee Meeting

The Resolutions Committee meets Saturday after the Board Meeting to review, and potentially assign, late resolutions. Sponsors of late resolutions are asked to attend and bring copies to this meeting for discussion.

Board of Directors Meeting

Copies of late resolutions and any re-assignments are provided to the Board at the Sunday afternoon meeting. The updated resolutions pad and hearing assignments are also provided to non-board members as requested.

Resolutions Hearings

Every NACD Board member with his/her alternate is assigned to one of the resolutions hearings through their State's assignment to a Foundation Committee.

These hearings are conducted to allow NACD Board members to hear testimony, and then to debate and vote on the resolutions assigned to them. They are a vital step in the policy development process. The hearings provide for quality, informed discussion among a designated number of board members on most of the issues while reserving major policy concerns for the full Board action.

Resolution hearing procedures follow Robert's Rules of Order. After introducing a resolution assigned to the hearing, the chair calls on the sponsor of the resolution to explain and support it. In many cases, if the resolution sponsor or representative is not present to explain/defend a resolution that is not clear, it is rejected at the hearing. Just like in the Board of Directors meetings, each state has one vote even if both the member and alternate attend.

Any district official in attendance may speak in support of or opposition to a resolution. As in NACD Board meetings, other attendees may also speak to resolutions to address technical clarifications and explanations and/or add factual information when requested by a Board Member or called upon by the presiding officer. They should speak neither in favor of, nor in opposition to, a resolution.

The hearings' actions on resolutions result in:

- ✓ those that are unanimously approved being added to the Consent Calendar;
- ✓ those that are approved, but not by unanimous vote, and those that are approved with amendment(s) being sent to the full Board to be voted on individually; or
- ✓ those that are defeated receiving no further action unless a two-thirds majority floor vote by the full Board brings it up for consideration.

Board of Directors Meeting

Full board meeting sessions are presided over by the NACD President or First Vice President/President-elect. All duly credentialed board members and alternate board members seated on the floor will have equal opportunity to be recognized by the chair. Only seated board members, or alternate in place of the board member, may vote on resolutions. The presiding officer will call on each resolutions hearing chair to give the report of the hearing and status of the resolutions considered.

The procedure for these reports at the Board Meeting is:

1. Upon recognition by the presiding officer, the hearing chair shall announce each resolution and sponsor(s), present the hearing's findings, speak to the resolution if not sent to the Consent Calendar by unanimous vote, explain any amendments adopted at the hearing, and call for technical clarifications, if necessary.
2. After announcement, the presiding officer shall call for a motion and second to adopt.

3. When duly moved and seconded, the presiding officer shall recognize the sponsor to speak to the resolution. The sponsor shall give a brief statement outlining the intent and meaning of the resolution. Discussion and debate may follow. The presiding officer shall follow normal rules of parliamentary procedure for handling amendments and the disposition of the motion.
4. Any tabled motions will die if not removed from the table prior to the conclusion of the final session of the Board of Directors meeting. The presiding officer will not, however, recognize a motion to table as being in order until the sponsor has moved the adoption of the resolution and been recognized for the purpose of explaining it.
5. In the case of late resolutions introduced from the floor and therefore not assigned to a resolutions hearing, the presiding officer will announce the resolution and then call for the Board to vote whether to address it through a two-thirds majority vote.
6. The Consent Calendar is considered in its entirety and is adopted or rejected by one vote of the full Board. Resolutions may be removed for floor debate by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board.
7. Resolutions defeated in the hearings may be brought to the floor for debate by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board.

AFTER THE NACD BOARD MEETING

All policy positions adopted by the NACD Board of Directors will remain in effect for 5 years, or until their purposes have been accomplished, or until they are specifically replaced by newer policy, altered or deleted. Tabling or rejecting a resolution containing partial existing policy does not affect the entire existing policy.

- Within 60 days of adjournment of the Annual Meeting, the CEO will assign newly adopted policies requiring action to the appropriate NACD foundation committee, or other appropriate entity, for follow up.
- Within 120 days of policy assignment, each committee or other appropriate entity, with Executive Board approval, will develop and implement strategies – including timelines and communication feedback to at least the sponsoring state(s) – to achieve the action(s) stated in the policy. Adopted policies that state NACD positions on issues will be incorporated into the NACD policy book.
- Within 30 days of Executive Board approval of a committee action plan, the Association shall make such plans and policies available to membership by request, or on the members’ only website if available.

An action register of resolutions will list the resolution; the sponsoring entity; NACD Board action on the resolution; the committee and staff assigned to take follow up action; and status of the action. This is used by the Board of Directors for reporting back to their states. The CEO or responsible foundation committee shall report on the status of adopted policies at the Association’s Executive Summer Conference, and Annual Meeting.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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