



# SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



**TN Conservation District  
Employees Association**

# HISTORY



1985 - TN Association of  
Conservation Districts Secretaries  
Organization



# TACDSO bylaws created, approved and officially recognized February 26, 1985.

## Approved by TACD Board of Directors April 18, 1985.

### Purpose:

1. To promote resource conservation in Tennessee and in local districts
2. To more adequately assist in the implementation of district programs and activities
3. To establish and maintain a standard of quality for conservation district secretaries
4. To carry on an education and improvement program for conservation district secretaries
5. To instill in conservation district secretaries the same pride and dedication as is displayed by district supervisors

### Long-Range Objectives:

1. To strive for professionalism
2. To enhance our positions as conservation secretaries
3. To increase awareness of conservation problems and improve assistance to cooperators in our communities



*Introducing*

## Area Co-Ordinators

Tennessee Association  
of  
Conservation Districts

## Secretaries' Organization

### A Word From the Chairman . . .

*Cheryl Patterson*  
Humphreys Soil Conservation  
District



1985 has proven to be a most exciting year for Soil Conservation District Secretaries in Tennessee. With the events of and following the 1985 TACD convention, the Secretaries' Organization has become an official, functioning part of the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts. This organization has already opened lines of communication among secretaries, District Supervisors, District Conservationists, and other conservation personnel. Striving toward excellence and professionalism in our positions as district secretaries can only enhance the overall conservation program statewide. While improving our skills and capabilities, we are becoming an integral part of the conservation team. The SCD secretaries throughout the state represent a wealth of talent and knowledge. Let us tap this most valuable resource, working together always for conservation.

For the effort, support, and encouragement given by many of you, whether TACD, SCD, or SCS, let me express my thanks and that of the organization. An organization is only as effective as its members and supporters. With that in mind, the TACD Secretaries' Organization has a bright and promising future.

*Cheryl Patt*

### Area I

*Donna Kitts*  
Grainger Soil Conservation District



I feel the Secretaries' Organization will be an asset to the district secretaries and the district offices in Tennessee. I hope that we can work together to accomplish goals to make our organization a big success. Hopefully, this will contribute to better understanding and better relationships between district secretaries, district supervisors and SCS personnel.



## Area II

*Alfreda Johnson*  
*Knox Soil Conservation District*



I intend to contact the district secretaries in my area, letting them know that I am here and available as an advisor, sounding board, information officer, or crying towel if needed. I don't have all the answers but if I don't know, I'll try to find someone who does. It seems that one point keeps coming up in my discussions with other secretaries and that is the fact that when first hired, they had no one to explain the role expected of them as district secretaries. One of my first suggestions is that as co-ordinator any time we are aware of a new district secretary in our area, we should set a date to spend at least one day with her sharing our knowledge and experiences with her. Believe me, I sure wish someone had done that with me. They probably could have told me in one day what it took me at least a year to find out by trial and error.

## Area III

*Alice Burchfield*  
*McMinn Soil Conservation District*



I feel if this organization gets off on the right foot (so to speak), it will be beneficial not only to the district secretaries, but also to the D.C.'s and area clerks, as it will or could lessen their workload. I feel the area clerks or secretaries would greatly appreciate the district secretaries being better informed as it would leave them more time to take care of other things.

## Area IV

*Henrietta Burch*  
*Putnam Soil Conservation District*



I am very interested and encouraged over the establishment of this organization and I hope that our contributions and services will benefit everyone involved at the district level as well as the state level.

## Area V

*Judy House*  
*Maury Soil Conservation District*



Our organization will be advantageous for each district secretary in Tennessee. Both full- and part-time secretaries will benefit. I know there will be a feeling of pride which will develop through our association. This feeling, joined with each secretary's desire to work in the interest of (1) improving our clerical skills and (2) assisting District Supervisors in support of conservation activities, will make the TACD Secretaries' Organization great.

## Area VI

*Sonja Boswell*  
*Davidson Soil Conservation District*



I am excited about the TACD Secretaries' Organization! We will be able to accomplish so many things — things we could not do single-handed. In talking with some of the secretaries in Area 6, I can see that each one has so much to offer. They are bursting with ideas for seminars, workshops for conventions, etc. There is an old saying "two heads are better than one." Can you imagine what's going to happen when all districts have a secretary? It will be wonderful.

I guess the one thing that has impressed me the most since I have been a district secretary is the fact that all of the girls that I have met from the other districts love their jobs as much as I do mine and have so much pride in what they are doing. Isn't that wonderful! With that being the general feeling among all of us, the sky's the limit. There are so many exciting things ahead for the district secretaries now that we have the opportunity to make everything official. I am really anxious for us to get started.

## Area VII

*Patsy Lipford*  
*McNairy Soil Conservation District*



I am delighted to have been selected to serve as co-ordinator for TACD Area 7 and to help organize the TACD Secretaries' Organization. I feel this organization will serve to promote resource conservation in Tennessee and to improve the quality of assistance provided in district offices. I plan to meet with the secretaries in my area soon to get their comments and suggestions.

## Area VIII

*Denise Settle*  
*Henderson Soil Conservation District*



This is a greatly needed organization which will unite the district secretaries and add professionalism to our jobs — jobs that are a vital part of the conservation team and its efforts. I plan to meet with the secretaries in my area and to encourage them to participate in this critical time of organization.

## Area IX

*Rona Needham*  
*Weakley Soil Conservation District*



By having a Secretaries' Organization, I hope to see more communication between the districts throughout the year. I would like to see a quarterly newsletter started. I would also like to visit with each district secretary in my area for an exchange of ideas and information to improve our skills, knowledge, and efficiency. I will encourage these secretaries to attend the various meetings and take advantage of training available to her. The Secretaries' Workshop at the annual TACD convention is an excellent time of reporting one's progress or sharing an avenue of training that might be available to others of us, plus being a time of training that it has always been.

# PURPOSE

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE – 2. the purposes for which this organization is formed are:

- (a) To promote resource conservation in TN and in local conservation districts;
- (b) To more adequately assist in the implementation of district programs and activities;
- (c) To establish and maintain a standard of quality for conservation district secretaries;
- (d) To carry on an education and improvement program for conservation district secretaries, and
- (e) To instill in conservation district secretaries the same pride and dedication as is displayed by district supervisors



# TODAY



JANICE WEISS, President  
GENA COATS, Vice President  
STACY FULLER, Secretary  
AMY LIES, Treasurer  
JANICE GILISPIE, Past  
President  
VINA WINSTEAD, Historian

## AREA COORDINATORS

WEST – Mendy Carnell, Danielle Rogers, Paula Gould

MIDDLE – Sara Steelman, Nancy Holt, Lynn Carey

EAST – Amy Dishner, Regina Hamby, Renita Beaty

# WHERE WE ARE NOW

- Increased job duties = increased training needs
- TCDEA Executive board will be updating the training guide to provide framework to DEs this summer
  - New “How-To” book coming soon
- Currently, the training packet is located on the TACD website (also will be changing) -

## **WELCOME TRAINING PACKET**



[tnacd.org/TCDEA](http://tnacd.org/TCDEA)

History of SCDs and NRCS  
Ag Best Management Practices (BMPs)  
303d list  
SCDs in Tennessee  
The Landowner Process  
Other Responsibilities  
Acronym Guide



# ALWAYS IMPROVING YOUR POSITION/JOB DESCRIPTION

## Revise yours annually

- Not too vague, be detailed
- Your county uses your position descr. during pay studies
  - When a county dept does a pay study, they will use whatever they have on file for you. The more specifics about your position, the more detailed they will evaluate your pay against other counties with similar descriptions.



SAMPLE JOB  
DESCR.



xx County Soil & Water Conservation District  
"Conserving xx"

### POSITION DESCRIPTION

*Revised November 2021*

Job Title: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT II  
Department: SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION  
Reports to: SWCD Board Chairman / County Chief of Staff  
FLSA Status: Non-exempt

### SUMMARY

This position is that of an administrative assistant responsible for performing professional and administrative work for the Soil & Water Conservation District in an agricultural environment. Work involves all aspects of customer service, extensive technology skills, acquiring and managing agricultural grants in cooperation with other agencies, and hosting informational and educational projects and events for residents of Montgomery County for the benefit of soil and water conservation.

### QUALIFICATIONS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. Knowledge of local farming or agricultural systems is preferred. Successful candidate must pass a pre-employment physical, drug screen, and background check.

### EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEE

- Adheres to County Government Policy and Procedures
- Acts as a role model within and outside the work environment
- Performs duties as workload necessitates
- Maintains a positive and respectful attitude
- Communicates regularly with supervisor about department issues
- Demonstrates flexible and efficient time management and ability to prioritize workload
- Demonstrates awareness and understanding of the various internal and external cultures that utilize department services
- Consistently reports to work on time prepared to perform duties of position
- Meets County Government productivity and quality standards
- Maintains appropriate customer relations

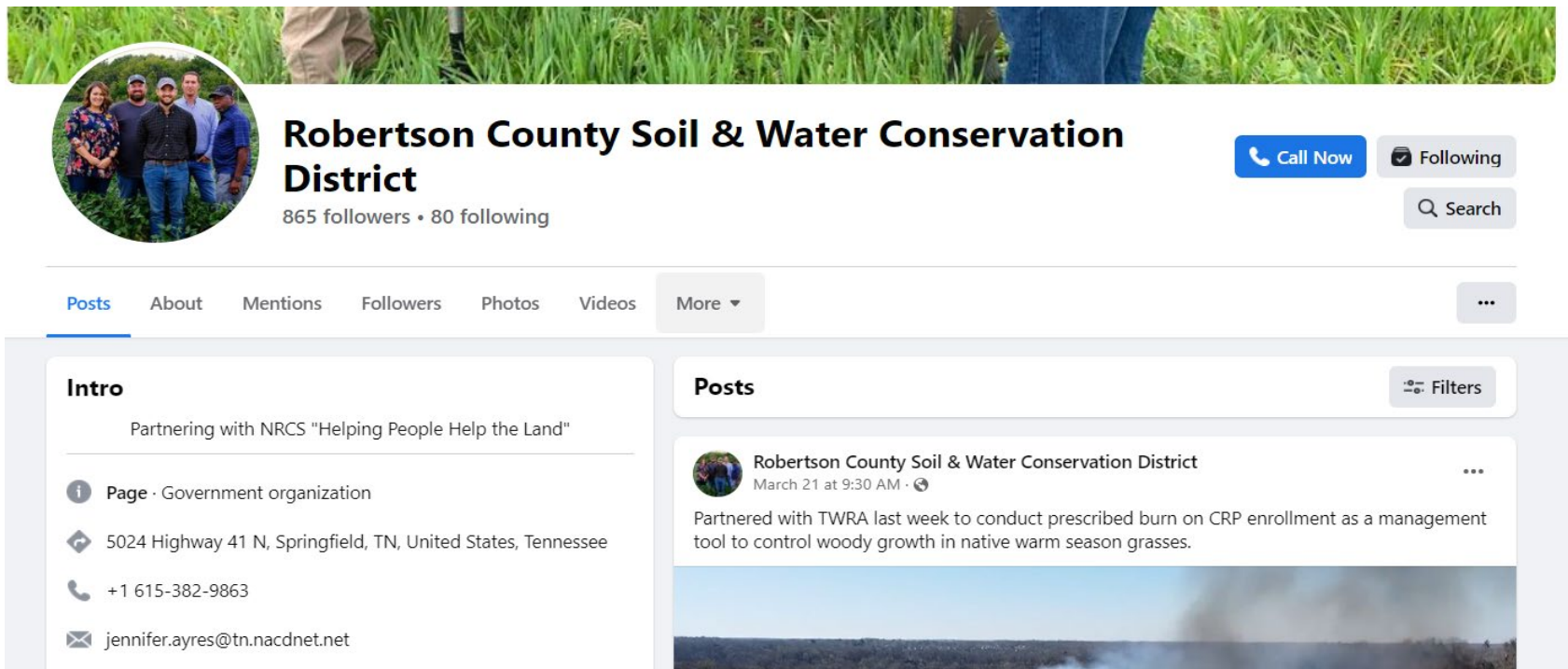
DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES include the following. Other duties may be assigned.

- Provide all aspects of customer service for the District office in a professional manner. Meet the general public in a courteous and helpful manner, serve as a liaison to other agricultural agencies for Montgomery County participants.

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

## YOUR DISTRICT "FACE" - **Social media**

- Keep updated
- Keep separate from personal
- Make sure you have a 2<sup>nd</sup> admin assigned



The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook profile page for the Robertson County Soil & Water Conservation District. The profile picture is a circular photo of five people standing in a field. The cover photo is a landscape image of tall green grass. The page header includes the name "Robertson County Soil & Water Conservation District" with 865 followers and 80 following. There are buttons for "Call Now" and "Following". Below the header are tabs for "Posts", "About", "Mentions", "Followers", "Photos", "Videos", and "More". The "Intro" section on the left describes the organization as a government organization located at 5024 Highway 41 N, Springfield, TN, with a phone number and email address. The "Posts" section on the right shows a recent post from March 21 at 9:30 AM about a prescribed burn on CRP enrollment.

**Robertson County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
865 followers • 80 following

[Call Now](#) [Following](#) [Search](#)

[Posts](#) [About](#) [Mentions](#) [Followers](#) [Photos](#) [Videos](#) [More](#)

**Intro**  
Partnering with NRCS "Helping People Help the Land"

**Page** · Government organization  
5024 Highway 41 N, Springfield, TN, United States, Tennessee  
+1 615-382-9863  
jennifer.ayres@tn.nacdnet.net

**Posts** [Filters](#)

**Robertson County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
March 21 at 9:30 AM · 🌐

Partnered with TWRA last week to conduct prescribed burn on CRP enrollment as a management tool to control woody growth in native warm season grasses.

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

## YOUR DISTRICT “FACE” - **Website**

- SO important to have a website that showcases what your District does. County commissioners, budget committee members and others in your County look for that when evaluating position reclassifications (pay raises that are not cost of living)
- Could use for basic info about your District site for those not on social media
- Can be created by you/your District OR use someone from IT in your county



# ALWAYS IMPROVING

## YOUR DISTRICT "FACE" - **Website**

- Option: I used Wordpress (free – click image below for link)
- Has a place where they can enter email address so they'll see announcements when you post directly to their inbox

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*"Conserving Montgomery"*



[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [PROGRAMS](#) [SERVICES](#) [EQUIPMENT](#) [EDUCATION](#) [MEETINGS & EVENTS](#) [CONTACT](#)

APPLICATION CUT-OFF PERIOD EXTENDED FOR  
EQIP AND CSP IRA FUNDING IN TENNESSEE-

APRIL 21ST

SEARCH

Search

EMAIL ME ANNOUNCEMENTS,  
FOR MORE INFORMATION

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

## YOUR DISTRICT “FACE” - **Email signatures**

- What's wrong with the below signatures?



*Nancy Holt  
Montgomery County SCD  
25 Jefferson St.  
Clarksville, TN 37040  
Phone-931-368-0252 ext 3*

Verycool Employee  
District Secretary

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
United States Department of Agriculture  
111 Hardworker Street  
Everywhere, TN 37011  
Phone: 123-456-7890

Stay connected with USDA:



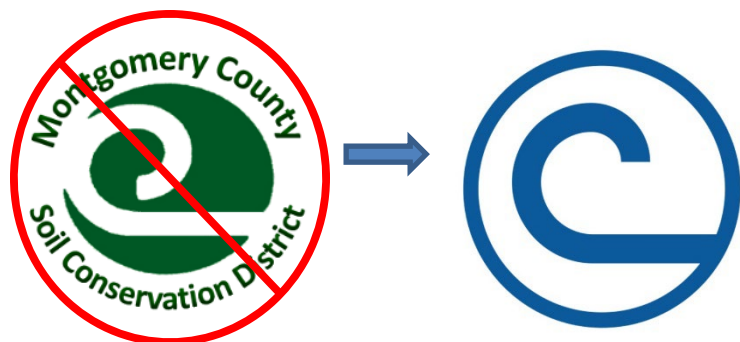
**“Helping People Help the Land”**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

## YOUR DISTRICT "FACE" - **Email signatures**

Should be using new logo or a logo that your county created specifically



*Nancy Holt  
Montgomery County S<sup>W</sup>CD  
25 Jefferson St.  
Clarksville, TN 37040  
Phone-931-368-0252 ext 3*

Should reflect who you work for. NO District positions are funded by NRCS. Contribution Agreement employees are still technically District Employees.

Verycool Employee  
District Secretary

Cool Co. Soil & Water Conservation District  
~~Natural Resources Conservation Service~~  
~~United States Department of Agriculture~~  
111 Hardworker Street  
Everywhere, TN 37011  
Phone: 123-456-7890

Stay connected with USDA:



**"Helping People Help the Land"**

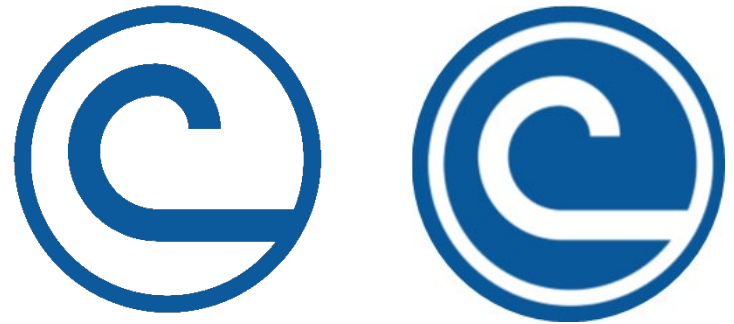
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



# ALWAYS IMPROVING

## YOUR DISTRICT "FACE" - Email signature

- current logos – use Publisher to add curved text



- EXAMPLES



**Jennifer Ayres, Office Manager**  
Robertson County Soil & Water  
Conservation District

**Phone:** 615-667-3404  
**Email:** [jennifer.ayres@usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.ayres@usda.gov)

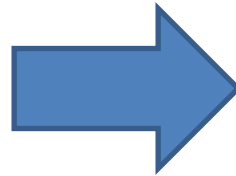
5024 HWY 41 North  
Springfield, TN 37172  
<https://www.robertsonscd.wordpress.com>  
[Find us on Facebook!](#)

*Susan Hunter*

Office Manager  
Marshall County Soil & Water Conservation  
District  
1427 New Columbia Highway  
Lewisburg, TN 37091  
(931) 359-6268 Ext. #3

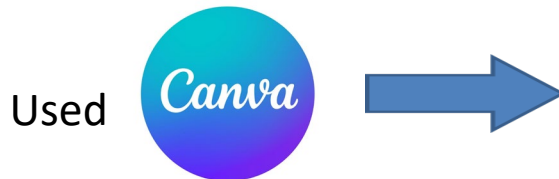
# YOUR DISTRICT “FACE” - **Your current headshot**

- Not blurry
- Get outside/good lighting
- Shoulders up



# YOUR DISTRICT “FACE”

- Current board headshots
  - If I’m going to have to update my headshot, so are they!
- Business cards?
  - Buy Avery printables, cheap, easy, professional
  - Handy for your board to give to local producers with your contact info for programs, etc





# YOUR DISTRICT “FACE”

- **Annual reports**
  - Total \$\$ brought into your county in each program
  - Total \$\$ paid out through each program
  - ALL operational funding from every source
  - Should include BIG total of what your District brings to the county! This number really speaks on its own when you send out your annual report to Mayor, Commissioners, etc.



*Total Appropriated benefit to Montgomery County landowners, residents and farming operators through the Montgomery County Soil Conservation District:*

**\$1,069,038**

## 2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### USDA/NRCS/FSA:

CSP	55,923
EQIP	459,019
CRP	17,315
OPERATIONAL FUNDING	<u>265,100</u>
	<b>\$797,357</b>

### TDA:

BMPS	226,063
OPERATIONAL FUNDING	2,100
EQUIPMENT GRANTS	0
TECHNICIAN ASSISTANCE	4,513
SUPERVISORS PER DIEM	<u>1,650</u>
	<b>\$ 234,326</b>

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

OPERATIONAL FUNDS	<b>\$37,355</b>
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### MONTGOMERY SWCD:

OPERATIONAL FUNDS	<b>\$5,000</b>
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## YOUR DISTRICT “FACE”

- **Annual reports**
- **Sample Annual Report BROCHURE format and “unabbreviated” format are attached to this email – they were too large to embed**

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- Your FINANCIAL processes

1. ALL District finances cannot be left to a single staff member or board Treasurer



**Ex:** staff balances monthly statement, board Treasurer evaluates at board meeting and SIGN/DATE – petty cash included

2. receipt/invoice for every penny attached to bank statement



# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- Your FINANCIAL processes

## 3. TDA AUDITS (per Francis Lee)


- ☐ List of current board members and all employees
- ☐ Board minutes reflect supervisors attendance AND match up with per diem payments
- ☐ Any checks written to board members other than per diem?
- ☐ Any checks written to employees other than payroll? (use official claim expense form)



# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- Your FINANCIAL processes

## 3. TDA AUDITS continued...

- ☐ Checkbook/debit card safeguarded? 
- ☐ Who is authorized to sign checks?
  - ☐ Number of required signatures?
- ☐ Any blank checks pre-signed?
- ☐ Rubber stamp used?
- ☐ Any disbursements made by means other than check?

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- Your FINANCIAL processes

## 3. TDA AUDITS continued...


- ☐ Bank reconciliations performed monthly? (show calculations)
  - ☐ Who performs?
  - ☐ Who approves?
- ☐ Review cash disbursement records (must have receipts for every penny)



# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- Your FINANCIAL processes

## 3. TDA AUDITS continued...

- ☐ Best Management Practice file review
  - ☐ Paid projects are fully completed
  - ☐ Field personnel have adequate certification that the project meets NRCS specs
  - ☐ Payments to cooperators reported on IRS form 1099-G 
  - ☐ Invoices from cooperators accurate?
  - ☐ Are expenses reported allowable?
  - ☐ Cost share adheres to District and TDA guidelines


# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- Your FINANCIAL processes

## 3. TDA AUDITS continued...

- ☐ And Justice For All poster displayed?
- ☐ Written documentation in board minutes of most recent Civil Rights review

# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- COOL TOOLS – CANVA 
- Has TONS of ready made templates for flyers, announcements, etc
- FREE
- non-profits get FREE use of Canva-PRO
- App for phone too – (link in pic below)





# ALWAYS IMPROVING

- **YOU**

- Work towards certification process

## **LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION:**

Standard	100 points
Associate Standard	300 points
Professional	500 points
Master I	700 points
Master II	1,100 points
**Master III	1,500 points

- Attend workshops
- Send comments, suggestions, questions to your Area Coordinator for what you would like to see included in upcoming onboarding/training manual?

**JEREMIAH DURBIN**  
**TACD SOIL HEALTH SPECIALIST**  
**865-696-1517**



**TOPICS HE CAN COVER FOR YOUR WORKSHOPS/FIELD  
DAYS (free speaker):**

Rain fall simulator  
Field day shovel talks  
Soil health testing explanations  
Help make cover crop mixes  
Pasture stands and mixes for grazing