



January 27, 2017

To: All Conservation District boards and their employees
From: The Board of Directors of Washington County Conservation District (WCCD)
Re: Letter and email from Debbie Moreland dated January 24, 2017

After reviewing the email and letter submitted by Debbie Moreland dated January 24, 2017, our board decided to respond to correct errors, to ask some questions, to point out areas of concern and to list some topics we feel are appropriate to discuss at the upcoming annual AACD meeting.

- The AACD employee is a Public Employee and board members are Public Servants. Each are held to a high level of accountability by the taxpayers of this state, and as such, they are not simply "private citizens". If they are not comfortable with this and the scrutiny that accompanies their positions, they should resign from service.
- Debbie deliberately conflates the topics of "district funding" with federal "cost-share" funding (such as EQIP). Cost share funds do not come to the districts and do not pay our employees or our bills. Debbie erroneously takes credit for federal funding then promotes it simply to deflect criticism of herself and the AACD board for their total failure to pursue actual district funding with the legislature.
- Debbie blames her failure to seek district funding on the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission and their "flat budgets". We contend that it is the job of the AACD employee to explain the district's importance to the legislature; thereby, ensuring the legislature understands both our importance and our continued need for proper funding levels. Failing to promote the districts at the legislature is a catastrophic failure of the AACD board and their employee.
- Three years ago, when ANRC attempted to obtain additional district funding, Debbie Moreland and the AACD board did absolutely nothing to secure it. They offer no legitimate answers as to why they did nothing; instead, we get more rhetoric about federal programs and AACD's numerous projects that keep AACD flush with cash (for example, last year, districts statewide lost about \$4,000 of license plate money that AACD kept for itself).
- What good does it do districts to have AACD grow rich, while we languish with funding levels that were set twenty years ago? Why are districts expected to continue bankrolling AACD and their employee, while we continue to struggle financially? In her letter, Debbie lists thirty work activities and not one of them concerns our funding.
- Debbie says that her "reputation and credibility have been damaged to the extent" that her "ability to get much help at the Capitol has been severely limited if not destroyed". If this is true, it is because we have exposed the truth about her work performance and the actions of the AACD board of directors.
- Debbie insinuates that the districts are now on their own for funding. We take that to mean that AACD is now refusing to represent our financial interests at the legislature. This brings into question their whole reason to exist.
- Contrary to Debbie's assertions, we believe that the AACD board of directors has little to be proud of concerning their performance. Who could be proud of the "leadership and fiscal management" of a board that wasted tens of thousands to prevent conservation districts and the public from seeing their financial information? Who would brag about a board that approved wasteful spending on opulent meals and unnecessary travel? Who would feel good about a board that never knew that their nonprofit exemption was revoked by the IRS? Who would boast of a board that not only failed to file tax returns for years on end but also routinely approved nonexistent annual audits? How proud can they be to approve a \$5,000 bonus for Debbie Moreland in the same meeting where they reviewed a reported loss of \$65,000? Perhaps they will answer us at the annual meeting.
- The dispute between WCCD and AACD exists solely because AACD refused to follow the law and allow WCCD to examine AACD financial records forcing our district to sue them. Asking Debbie to do her job is not seeking "favors", and we are not seeking special treatment—average, decent treatment would suffice.

In closing, we recognize that AACD does a lot of good, but simply doing good things is not enough—you must also do right. We believe that it is past time to have a serious discussion about AACD, its employee and the future of the organization. We want to improve AACD and make it work for all districts, and we are proud to have performed the work that exposed AACD and its employee. We are ready to discuss this letter with anyone prior to the annual meeting. Feel free to contact me at (479) 643-2715 or (479) 387-7628 if you wish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allen Shumate", is written over a horizontal line. Below the signature is the printed name "Allen Shumate, WCCD Chairman".

Allen Shumate, WCCD Chairman