



National Association of Conservation Districts

2026 NACD Hand Drawn Poster Contest

Theme: "Soil. Where It All Begins"

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Hand Drawn Poster Contest is open to kindergarten through 12th grade students. **Only official state poster contest sponsors can submit entries for the national contest.**

Many districts prefer to present checks at annual meetings, awards banquets, or school events, strengthening the connection between the student and the district. Starting in 2025, NACD sends certificates and checks for poster winners directly to the sponsoring district, which will then issue its own check to the student. The district will work with parents or guardians to ensure the check is written correctly, avoiding processing issues and ensuring proper award coordination.

Submission Process:

- All posters must first be judged in a local or area conservation district-sponsored contest and in a state conservation association or state auxiliary-sponsored contest. Please refer to the contest flow chart for more information.
- State Contest Coordinators must submit entries after March 1, 2026 through the online submission form available on the NACD Education Hub Contests page. Email submissions will not be accepted.
- To find the contact responsible for the NACD poster contest in your state/territory, visit the NACD Conservation District Directory or contact your state conservation association.

State Contest Submissions:

- State conservation district associations, auxiliaries, or other official state poster contest sponsors will select one poster per grade division (K-1; 2-3; 4-6; 7-9; 10-12) to enter the national contest. States are not required to submit an entry for every grade division.
- All national contest submissions must be uploaded between **March 1, 2026** and midnight local time **December 1, 2026**.



National Association of Conservation Districts

- Submissions should be in **PDF, JPEG, or PNG format**.
- **File Name Requirement:** When submitting your poster, follow the file naming format exactly to avoid disqualification. There will be no exceptions.
 - **Format:** State_CategoryCode_GradeLevel_LastName_FirstInitial
 - **State:** The full name of your state. Do not abbreviate.
 - **Category Code:** "HD" to indicate a Hand Drawn poster.
 - **Grade Level:** Your grade division
 - **Last Name:** Complete last name. **First Initial:** The first initial of first name.

Example: Oklahoma_HD_2_3_McNeal_P

Hand Drawn Poster Contest Rules:

- Traditional hand-drawn posters should be **scanned and uploaded as a PDF**.
- Scanned files should be **flat, straight, and cropped**.
- Instructions for scanning to PDF using a cell phone (without an app) are available on the Contests page.
- Photographs of posters are **not recommended** due to quality concerns.
- **Size:** The poster design size should meet state contest requirements. **11 x 17 inches** is preferred for durability (60 lb to 90 lb paper is suggested).
- **Media:** Any traditional media may be used, including **paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper, or other materials**. Mixed media art is welcome.
- **Originality:** Posters must be **created by an individual student**—team projects are not permitted. Tracing or copying from photographs or other artists' works is not allowed.
- The **2026 Stewardship theme phrase, "Soil. Where it all Begins," must be included in full on the front of each poster** to be eligible for the national contest.
- While younger students may receive planning assistance from parents or teachers, NACD encourages each student to complete their own work.



National Association of Conservation Districts

Poster Evaluation Criteria:

National Poster Contest entries will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Conservation Message (50%):** The poster effectively conveys the theme and a clear conservation message.
 - **Visual Effectiveness (30%):** The design is eye-catching, well-organized, and visually appealing.
 - **Originality (10%):** The poster demonstrates creativity and fresh ideas.
 - **Universal Appeal (10%):** The design should appeal to a broad audience and be easily understood.
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Additional Notes:

- The winning posters will be announced and showcased during the luncheon at the 2027 NACD Annual Meeting to be held in Las Vegas, NV.
- Local and state contest awards and sponsors may differ by state. Depending on the sponsoring state's conservation association, auxiliary, or agency's preference, national awards can be presented at a regional, state, and/or local conservation ceremony.
- Each state conservation association, auxiliary, or agency contact will receive notification of the judging results and a news release announcing the winners.

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Contest Questions? Email stewardship@nacdn.org



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2026 NACD Additional Assist Poster Contest

Theme: “Soil. Where it all Begins”

The National Association of Conservation Districts Additional Assist Poster Contest is open to kindergarten through 12th grade students who require additional assistance in completing a poster for the contest. Only official state poster contest sponsors can submit entries for the national contest.

Submissions will not be accepted at the national submission link until March 1, 2026

Submission Process:

- All posters must first be judged in a local or area conservation district-sponsored contest and in a state conservation association or state auxiliary-sponsored contest. Please refer to the contest flow chart for more information.
- State Poster Contest Coordinators must submit entries through the online submission form available on the NACD Education Contests page. Email submissions will not be accepted.
- To find the contact responsible for the NACD poster contest in your state/territory, visit the NACD Conservation District Directory or contact your state conservation association.

Please note: Many districts prefer to present checks at annual meetings, awards banquets, or school events, strengthening the connection between the student and the district. Starting in 2025, NACD sends certificates and checks directly to the sponsoring district, which will then issue its own check to the student. The district will work with parents or guardians to ensure the check is written correctly, avoiding processing issues and ensuring proper award coordination.

Additional Assist Contest Additions:

- The Additional Assist Poster Contest ensures that all students have the opportunity to participate, including those who may need assistance.
- While the hand-drawn poster contest encourages individual creation, the additional assist contest celebrates the abilities of all participants and **allows for adult assistance**.
- We value the unique contributions of every student, and entries that prominently feature the student’s hand drawing, writing, and coloring will be especially appreciated, as they highlight the individuality and creativity of the participant, with or without additional assistance.



Contest Rules:

The 2026 Stewardship theme phrase, "Soil. Where it all Begins," must be included in full on the front side of each poster submission to be eligible for the national contest.

- Traditional painted or drawn posters should be scanned and uploaded as a PDF. Ensure scanned files are cropped, flat, and straight. See the Contests page for easy scanning methods using a cell phone. Taking a photograph of the poster is not recommended due to quality concerns.
- **Size:** The poster design size should meet the requirements of the state contest. 11 x 17 inches is recommended for durability (60 lb. to 90 lb. paper suggested).
- Any media may be used, including paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper, or other materials. Mixed media is permitted.
- Posters must be created by an individual student. While adult assistance is allowed in this category, the entry must reflect the contestant's original creation and may not be traced from photographs or other artists' works.
- Submissions should be in **PDF, JPEG, or PNG format.**
- **File Name Requirement:** When submitting your poster, follow the file naming format exactly to avoid disqualification. **There will be no exceptions.**
 - **Format:** State_CategoryCode_GradeLevel_LastName_FirstInitial
 - **State:** The full name of your state. Do not abbreviate.
 - **Category Code:** The word "Assist" to indicate an Additional Assist poster.
 - **Grade Level:** Your grade division
 - **Last Name:** Complete last name. **First Initial:** The first initial of first name.

Example: Georgia_Assist_2_3_Kinder_P

Poster Evaluation Criteria:

- **Conservation Message (50%):** The poster effectively conveys the theme and a clear conservation message.
- **Visual Effectiveness (30%):** The design is engaging, well-organized, and visually appealing.
- **Originality (10%):** The poster demonstrates creativity and fresh ideas.
- **Universal Appeal (10%):** The design should appeal to a broad audience and be easily understood.



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Additional Notes:

- Winning posters will be announced at the 2027 NACD Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV.
- Winning posters will be showcased during the Annual Meeting luncheon.
- Local and state contest awards and sponsors may differ by state. Depending on the sponsoring state's conservation association, auxiliary, or agency's preference, national awards can be presented at a regional, state, and/or local conservation ceremony.
- Each state conservation association, auxiliary, or agency contact will receive notification of the judging results and a news release announcing the winners.

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2026 NACD Braille Poster Contest

Theme: “Soil. Where It All Begins”

The National Association of Conservation Districts Braille Poster Contest is open to kindergarten through 12th grade students who are blind or have low vision. This contest provides a platform for students to express their creativity and conservation messages through Braille and tactile or mixed media elements.

Eligibility: The contest is open only to K-12th grade students who are blind or have low vision and require Braille or tactile assistance to participate.

Submission Requirements:

- Artwork entered in the national competition must first have been judged in a local or area conservation district-sponsored poster contest and a state conservation association or state auxiliary-sponsored contest.
- To find the contact responsible for the NACD poster contest in your state/territory, visit the NACD Conservation District Directory and contact your state conservation association.
- State conservation association, auxiliary, or state poster contest sponsors select a poster to enter in each of the five-grade divisions: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12. States are not required to enter a poster for every grade level.
- If the local district does not participate in the Braille Poster Contest, NACD will make allowances for submission through the state poster contest organizer if permitted.
- Posters must be uploaded through the online submission form found on the NACD Contests page. This link will go live March 1, 2026. Deadline to submit is Dec 1, 2026.
- Braille Poster Submissions can include up to three photos. At least one photo **MUST** showcase the entire poster, with up to two additional close-up photos permitted.
- Submissions should be in **PDF, JPEG, or PNG format.**



National Association of Conservation Districts

- **File Name Requirement:** When submitting your digital poster, follow the file naming format exactly to avoid disqualification:
 - **Format:** State_CategoryCode_GradeLevel_LastName_FirstInitial
 - **State:** The full name of your state. Do not abbreviate.
 - **Category Code:** The word "Braille" to indicate a Braille poster.
 - **Grade Level:** Your grade division
 - **Last Name:** Your last name. **First Initial:** The first initial of your first name.

Example: California_Braille_10_12_Drummon_C

Contest Rules: Participants can create Braille posters in a variety of ways:

- By using their imagination to draw, add tactile elements, fabrics, or other mixed media, and then incorporating Braille labeling with a Braille embosser or similar tools.
- By using a Braille (a Braille typewriter) to create Braille elements and then adding color or additional drawings.
- Braille posters should be scanned and uploaded as a PDF. Please ensure scanned files are cropped, flat, and straight.
- Please see the Contests page for instructions on scanning to PDF using a cell phone. Both Apple and Android phones have a document scan feature without requiring an additional app.
- **Size:** Braille posters can be any size that accommodates the student's needs.
- Any media may be used for tactile elements, including Braille, raised textures, and other materials.



National Association of Conservation Districts

Braille Contest Additions: Students participating in this contest are permitted to have an adult assist them in the creation of their posters, particularly in the Braille labeling process, making it a contest available to everyone.

Poster Evaluation Criteria:

- **Conservation Message (50%):** The poster effectively conveys the theme and a clear conservation message.
 - **Visual and Tactile Effectiveness (30%):** The design is engaging, well-organized, and accessible.
 - **Originality (10%):** The poster demonstrates creativity and fresh ideas.
 - **Universal Appeal (10%):** The design should appeal to a broad audience and be easily understood.
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Additional Notes:

- Winning posters will be announced and showcased during the luncheon at the 2026 NACD Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV.
- Local and state contest awards and sponsors may differ by state. Depending on the sponsoring state's conservation association, auxiliary, or agency's preference, national awards can be presented at a regional, state, and/or local conservation ceremony.
- Each state conservation association, auxiliary, or agency contact will receive notification of the judging results and a news release announcing the winners.

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2026 NACD Digital Poster Contest

Theme: "Soil. Where it all Begins"

The NACD Digital (Graphic Design) Poster Contest is open to **7th to 12th grade students**.

All posters must first be judged in a local or area conservation district-sponsored contest and in a state conservation association or state auxiliary-sponsored contest. For more information on local and state contests, please refer to the contest flow chart.

Submission Process:

- Only official state contest sponsors can submit entries for the national contest.
- State-level contest sponsors will select one poster per grade division (7 - 9 and 10 - 12) to enter the national contest.
- States are not required to submit an entry for each grade division.
- The national contest submission link will go live on March 1, 2026. All national contest submissions must be received between March 1, 2026 and midnight local time on December 1, 2026 at the NACD submission link. Any submissions after midnight will not be considered, no exceptions.
- Submissions should be in PDF, JPEG, or PNG format.

File Name Requirement: When submitting your digital poster, follow the file naming format exactly to avoid disqualification: **Format:** State_CategoryCode_GradeLevel_LastName_FirstInitial

- **State:** The full name of your state (e.g., Maryland, West Virginia).
- **Category Code:** The word "Digital" to indicate a digital poster.
- **Grade Level:** Your grade division (either 7–9 or 10–12).
- **Last Name:** Your last name. **First Initial:** The first initial of your first name.

Examples: Maryland_Digital_10_12-Stanley_M WestVirginia_Digital_7_9-Smith_S



National Association of Conservation Districts

Design Specifications:

- Posters must be created using graphic design software. Participants are encouraged to use the latest graphic design tools to enhance their designs.
 - Posters must be original work. Only individual students are eligible to submit entries. Group or team projects will not be accepted.
 - Posters must reflect the 2026 Stewardship theme: “**Soil. Where it all Begins.**” This theme must be prominently included in each poster submission.
 - Do not include copyrighted, trademarked, or branded marks, images, or phrases, except for the Stewardship Week 2026 theme statement.
 - The design size should meet the specifications outlined by the state contest. 11 x 17 inch landscape or portrait is preferred.
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Digital Poster Evaluation Criteria: Contest entries will be evaluated based on the following:

- **Conservation Message (50%):** The poster effectively uses the correct theme and conveys a clear conservation message.
 - **Visual Effectiveness (30%):** The design is eye-catching, well-organized, and visually appealing.
 - **Originality (10%):** The poster demonstrates creativity and fresh ideas.
 - **Universal Appeal (10%):** The design should appeal to a broad audience and be easily understood.
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Additional Notes:

- The winning posters will be announced and highlighted during the Annual Meeting luncheon at the 2027 NACD Annual Meeting to be held in Las Vegas, NV.
- Local and state contest awards and sponsors may differ by state. Depending on the sponsoring state’s conservation association, auxiliary, or agency’s preference, national awards can be presented at a regional, state, and/or local conservation ceremony.
- Each state conservation association, auxiliary, or agency contact will receive notification of the judging results and a news release announcing the winners.



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2026 NACD Photo Contest

The NACD Photo Contest is open to all amateur photographers who reside in the U.S. or its territories in the following categories:

Conservation Practices (CP)

- Showcases conservation methods, such as contour buffer strips, cover crops, crop rotation, wetland restoration, riparian buffers, and nutrient management.
- Highlights conservation efforts that support environmental sustainability and resource management.

Close-up Conservation (CC)

- Focuses on detailed aspects of conservation, such as soil health, water in various forms, insects, farm animals, irrigation techniques, earthworms, roots, and composting.
- Highlights the small yet significant elements of conservation efforts.

Conservation in Action (CA)

- Captures conservation district activities, such as educational programs, field days, irrigation use, community meetings, and hands-on conservation practices.
- Highlights farmers, landowners, district staff, and volunteers engaged in conservation efforts.

Agriculture and Conservation Across America (ACAA)

- Features barns, crops, farm practices, livestock, grazing, pastures, tree farms, and youth participating in conservation-related activities.
- Captures the relationship between agriculture and conservation across different regions of the U.S.

Contest Rules:

- Minor digital enhancements for cropping, red-eye removal, filters, and corrective functions are permitted. However, images that are significantly altered may be disqualified.
- Contestants may not add borders, frames, watermarks, dates, signatures, or copyrighted images to their photos.
- Previously published photos are not eligible.



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Submission Process:

- NACD Photo Contest is open to the public and does not require submission through local or state contests.
- Participants may submit their entries directly through the online submission form on the NACD Contests page.
- Each contestant may submit up to five photos.
- A description of each photo is required in the submission form.
- The national submission portal will open for 2026 photo contest entries on **March 31, 2026, at 8:00 AM EST.**
- All national contest submissions must be received by NACD **by 11:59 PM local time on December 1, 2026.** Submissions received after this deadline will not be accepted

File Requirements:

Submissions must be in JPEG, PNG, or TIFF format with a high resolution (300 dpi or higher).

Each photo file must be named using the following format, using full state name (no abbreviations), underscores, and numbering files by submissions:

Category_Level_LastName_FirstInitial_State_Submission#

Example: A 16-year-old from Texas named John Smith submits two photos:

- **CC_Y_Smith_J_Texas_1** (Close-Up Conservation, Youth Division)
- **CA_Y_Smith_J_Texas_1** (Conservation in Action, Youth Division)

Example: A 21-year-old from Maine named Anita Jones submits a photo:

- **ACAA_A_Jones_A_Maine_1** (Agriculture and Conservation Across America, Adult)

Photo Evaluation Criteria:

- **Conservation Message (50%):** The photo aligns with the theme and effectively conveys a conservation message.
- **Visual Appeal (30%):** The image is compelling, well-composed, and high-quality.
- **Originality (10%):** The photo showcases a unique perspective or creative approach.
- **Universal Appeal (10%):** The image should engage a broad audience and communicate effectively.



National Association of Conservation Districts

Awards:

- One winner will be selected for each category and age division.
 - **Adult Division:** 19 and older as of December 1, 2026.
 - **Youth Division:** 18 and younger as of December 1, 2026.
 - **First-place winners** will receive a **\$100 cash prize**.
 - **Second-place winners** will receive a **\$50 cash prize**.
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Additional Notes:

- All entries become the property of NACD. NACD reserves the non-exclusive right to use submissions in official publications and promotional materials.
- The photographer retains rights and use of their photo.
- A signed photo release form must be submitted for any identifiable individuals in the photos.

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