



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**.



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- 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.



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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.

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@nacdnet.org