



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
USDA Service Center, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301**

ATTENDANCE:

The following Board members, Staff and Partners were in attendance:

Nick Thomas- Chair, Ursula Deitch- Director, Jim Evans- Director, Sands Gayle- Director, Sally Williams- Director, Kyle Sturgis- Director, Carmie Savage- District Manager, Julie Head- Education Director, Bill Savage- Conservation Specialist, Palmer Smith- Conservation Technician, Ben Young- NRCS Soil Conservationist, Maggie Herrmann- NRCS Natural Resource Specialist, Rick Hall- Associate Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, Norman Pitt- Associate Director, Olivia Leatherwood- DCR and guest- Brian Broadwater

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, Chip Burlington- Associate Director, Matt Hickman- Associate Director, and Hunter Blake- Associate Director

CALL TO ORDER: Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the March 15, 2023 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS: Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the February 15, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously. Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the February financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. n/a

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY23 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage: Two WP-4 Poultry projects have been completed and paid since the new fiscal year started leaving a balance of obligated '20 VACS funds for Poultry projects of \$65,532.76 in Ches Bay and \$0 in OCB along with a remaining balance of \$108,403.53 in obligated FY22 Ches Bay Transfer funds. The FY23 VACS allocation totals \$1,945,741.00 in Ches Bay VACS and \$1,051,251.00 in OCB VACS. Interest earned through February 28th of \$912.68 and a BMP repayment of \$980.16, and the additional \$500,000 VACS allocation leaves a new balance of \$2,185,552.89 of unobligated funds in Ches Bay VACS. Interest earned in OCB VACS through February 28th of \$302.59

APPROVED: _____ **SIGNED:** _____
BOARD CHAIRMAN **BOARD SECRETARY**

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leaves a new balance of \$1,051,553.59 in unobligated OCB VACS funds. Approved ranked costshare requests through February 28th total \$260,080.95 in Ches Bay VACS along with a \$1,944,298.35 VACS funds transfer to WFA leaving a new balance of \$241,154.54 in Ches Bay unobligated VACS funds. The approved ranked cost share requests through February 28th total \$282,402.20 in OCB VACS and the transfer of \$768,737.71 in OCB unobligated VACS funds to WFA have left a remaining balance of \$769,479.91 in unobligated OCB VACS funds. The transferred Ches Bay VACS to WFA give a beginning balance of \$1,944,298.35 in Ches Bay WFA. The transferred OCB VACS to WFA give a beginning balance of \$768,737.71 in OCB WFA. The approved WFA Ches Bay Cost Share requests total \$1,939,917.35 leaving a remaining balance of \$4,381.00 in unobligated WFA Ches Bay funds. The approved WFA OCB Cost share requests total \$1,334,981.90 leaving a balance shortage of \$567,145.39 in WFA OCB funds. Additional Cost share requests for OCB VACS totaling \$52.80, Ches Bay VACS totaling \$1,076.00 and additional WFA OCB cost share requests totaling \$450.60 were presented for approval. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the new OCB VACS, Ches Bay VACS and WFA OCB Cost Share requests as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sands Gayle, carried unanimously.** After the approvals of the new cost share requests, the unobligated balance of Ches Bay VACS totals \$240,178.54, OCB VACS totals \$360.88. After the approvals of the new WFA OCB cost share requests there is a need of \$566,694.79 to fully fund WFA OCB requests. The unobligated balance of WFA Ches Bay funds totals \$4,381.00. DCR has guaranteed the funding difference so all eligible WFA requests will be funded. Conservation Plan CP-20-23-0002 written by Bill Savage was presented for approval. **Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve conservation plan CP-20-23-0002 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.** After much discussion, it was recommended to return the remaining unobligated Ches Bay VACS funds totaling \$240,178.54 to DCR. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the return of \$240,178.54 to DCR. The motion, seconded by Director Sands Gayle, carried unanimously. Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the FY23 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, carried unanimously.**

B. FY23 VCAP Report: Contracts 20-22-03, and contract 20-22-05 have had approval letters mailed to the landowners. The projects must be started in 90 days and completed by June 1, 2024. The District was contacted on March 9th regarding two additional potential VCAP Living Shoreline projects. SEAS has been contacted and site visit dates will be determined. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**

C. Upgrade of District Computers: The four District computers are over ten years old and need to be updated. Julie researched and gathered three quotes of tower pcs as well as laptops to upgrade. After much discussion, the Board agreed laptops with docking stations should be purchased to replace the current towers as well as a limit of purchase of \$4,000 per

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computer and that Dell has the best package offering 64 GB processors. Once replaced the current computers are to be destroyed and removed from the Inventory list. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to the computer upgrades up to \$4,000 each station along with the destruction of the current computers once upgraded and removal from the inventory list. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**

D. District Truck Update: Bill gave an update on the hunt for a new District truck to replace the current '18 Dodge Ram. The Ram has had multiple issues and now a vital part for the ABS Brake system cannot be found. He stated once he finds a truck it is sold before he has time to present it to the Board for approval. **After much discussion, Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to give Bill the authority to purchase a truck up to \$60,000 with the funds to be pulled from the contingency fund along with the trade-in of the current truck. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

E. DCR Division Director's Report from James Martin, DCR Division Director: A copy of the letter was included in the meeting packets.

F. Election Notice Reminder: Four Director terms are set to expire December 31, 2023. Those planning to run in the November election need to have required paperwork completed and submitted to the Registrar's office by June 20, 2023.

G. Associate Director Update: It has been confirmed by DCR that those who are certified as nutrient management planners can still serve on the District Board as Associate Directors. Brian Broadwater expressed interest in serving again. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to the approve the appointment of Brian Broadwater as an Associate Director to the District Board. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:

A. Jim Evans was on the cover of the January 10, 2023 edition of the Delmarva Farmer. A copy was included in the District packet.

B. A thank you note was sent to the District by Camps Woods and Wildlife for support.

STAFF REPORTS:

District Manager Report: Carmie Savage, District Manager, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

FY 2023 Cost Share:

- **Agronomic:** Starting to pay out nutrient management plans as they have been coming in. Burn down starts March 15th so getting ready to process completed practices.

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- **Poultry Update:** One more poultry practice completed and paid. Two more current FY20 contracts to go.
 - Contract 20-20-0164 (1 manure shed) contacted on 3/10/23: original participant has sold farm, wants to transfer practice to new owner. New owner looking for a contractor. Aware has to be completed by June 30th. No more carryovers available.
 - Contract 20-21-0176 – (2 manure sheds) contacted on 3/10/23: contractor plans to begin in 2 weeks and will have it completed by June 30th (Local funding)

Accounting: Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

VASWCD Area VI Spring Meeting: Hosted by VA Dare SWCD on March 7th at Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways History Museum. All staff attended along with Ben Young-NRCS, and Norman Pitt- Associate Director. Stressed for Districts to get prepared as expecting even more cost share funding for FY24- DCR would like to target more minority farmers.

RC&D lunch meeting: Julie and Carmie met with Edwin Long and Stacey Johnson of RC&D to discuss the revamp of RC&D. They have a lot of project ideas and are hoping to engage partners.

District Website: Updating the District's website to keep it up-to-date as time allows.

Webinars/ Meetings/ Conferences:

- March 13th- Admin/Ops Water Cooler Meeting @ 10am
- March 29th- District Envirothon Testing Day
- TBS- Endowment Committee meeting
- April 19th- Operations Committee Meeting @ 4pm
- April 19th- District Board Meeting @ 5pm
- May 9th- Admin/Director Training
- May 17th- Operations Committee meeting @ 4pm
- May 17th District Board meeting @ 5pm
- June 7th- VASWCD Amin/Ops Committee meeting
- June 21st- Operations Committee meeting @ 4pm
- June 21st District Board meeting @ 5pm

Conservation Specialist Report: Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. He presented his report to the Board.

BMP - Cost Share:

- Working on SL-15A & CCI-CNT spot check inspections
- Checking NMP's as they come in. – Ongoing
- 2/17 – Met with Carl Thiel Goin to review his 1st Conservation Plan. Bill is now a Certified Conservation Planner.

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- Bill has written his second Conservation Plan for submittal to the Board for Approval.
- SL-15A Repayment letter mailed on 3/6/23 for Contract 20-22-0170 for the amount of \$126.00. Repayment due by 5/8/23.
- CCI-CNT Repayment letter mailed on 3/6/23 for Contract 20-22-0024 for the amount of \$46.00. Repayment due by 5/5/23.
- CCI-CNT Repayment letter mailed on 3/6/23 for Contract 20-22-0137 for the amount of \$47.50. Repayment due by 5/8/23.
- CCI-CNT Repayment letter mailed on 2/27/23 for Contract 20-22-0173 for the amount of \$35.00. Repayment due by 4/28/23.
- SL-15A Repayment letter mailed 3/13/23 for Contract 20-22-0066 for the amount of \$105.00 Repayment due by 5/15/23.

VESLT Reports:

- No report filed this month.

VCAP:

- Explained in detail in the VCAP monthly report under New Business.

Meetings:

- 3/7 attended Area VI Spring Meeting

Events:

- 3/1 assisted with Envirothon Training – picked up donuts and pizza.

Trainings:

- 2/15 & 2/16 Completed VCAP field training in Charlottesville

Vehicles:

- Ongoing – Currently contacting Ford & Chevy dealers to locate a potential replacement District truck. As per instructions from the 2/15 Board Meeting.

Conservation Technician Report: Palmer Smith, Conservation Technician, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

BMP - Cost Share:

- As Nutrient Management plans have come in, we have been making the necessary changes and additions and filing them
- We're working on all the SL-15A & the CCI-CNT spot checks
- Also worked on getting the Split App and Side-dress reporting sheets completed and mailed to producers

Groundwater Committee Meeting 2/21:

- No public participation
- Tyson is getting draft permits written for observation wells on & off the property

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- The chicken houses on Country Road are having issues with deep water wells & permits
- The Captain's Cove wells don't contain harmful groundwater, it's mainly an aesthetic issue
 - Final Captains Cove report following this finding were given to the Virginia Department of Health and uploaded on committees website
- A-NPDC has reached out to the committee for help and funding to research/survey the sewage, water treatment facilities, and wells on the shore
- Chairman Muhly took water samples from 8 wells in Northampton County to test & all were rejected from the lab and further testing due to lack of chain of custody
- Committee would like to create a program for more water testing
 - Discussed working with Virginia Tech's water testing facilities or a lab in Salisbury
 - Or sending homeowners at home tests
- Ended the meeting with discussing the severity of salt water intrusion on the North & South ends of the shore, didn't discuss further action
- Next meeting: March 21, 2023 at the ESVA Chamber of Commerce

Trainings and meetings:

- 2/15 & 2/16- VCAP field training in Charlottesville
- 2/21- Groundwater Committee Meeting
- 3/1- Envirothon Training Day, Wildlife judge
- 3/7- Area IV Meeting in Chesapeake

Education Director Report: Julie Head, Education Director, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

Envirothon – Competition day is March 29, 2023. Five local teams attended training day and a team from Peanut SWCD also attended. Area VI paid for the lunch and used it as an area training day. We should have two high school teams and three middle school teams at the local competition. The awards have been ordered as well as the T-shirts.

New programs –

- a. Soil Forensics
- b. Mixtures and Solutions Mysteries
- c. Seed Dispersal

VDOE – pilot program testing of new modules they are introducing for teachers to earn a microcredential.

Spring Pollinator Education – Due to high mortality last year we are building outside enclosures to raise the caterpillars in. Confirmed interest from Occohannock, Kiptopeke, and Chincoteague Elementary Schools. Still waiting on the others.

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Watershed Education – working on some ideas to reinvent this and getting partners on board. In the past all students came to one location in each county. This is harder to do because of bus driver shortages and many teachers are unwilling to take field trips. So trying to come up with something that will result in teacher buy-in.

Environmental Education Council (EE Council)- Trying to reconvene the council. Looking for a meeting day in May.

Upcoming Dates

- 3/15 – OES – Oceans
- Envirothon Special Topic Training
- 3/16 – Soils trailer to Holly Grove
- 3/22 – OES
- 3/24 – AES Career Day
- 3/29 –Envirothon Competition
- 3/31 - AES Science Fair
- 4/4 – Kiptopeke ES Stem Classes
- 4/5 – OES
- 4/5 – Kiptopeke ES Stem Classes p.m.

PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:

Department of Conservation & Recreation Update: Olivia Leatherwood, DCR CDC, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

- Attachment D – FY25 Budget Template: training is tentatively scheduled for May 9 in-person at the Drury Hotel in Glen Allen. Registration information is forthcoming from the VASWCD.
- Interview Panels & FOIA: As districts continue to hire new staff, please remember that FOIA rules apply to conducting interviews. Interview panels made up of 3 or more directors, or a quorum of Committee members, constitutes a public meeting. The interview panel must be advertised as a public meeting and minutes should be recorded accordingly. However, the actual interviews are protected and should be conducted in a closed session. Once the interviews are completed, the meeting will need to certify the closed session and enter back into an open meeting. Please be sure to carefully follow the closed meeting guidance, which can be provided by your CDC.
- FY24 Budget Preparations: Finance committees should begin preparations for FY24 annual budgets for District Board discussions. Budgets should be approved by boards by June 30. Page 6 of the Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations provides information useful in the development of annual budgets.

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- 3rd Quarter Reports: are due Monday, April 17 – Attachment E, Cash Balance, and P&L.

AG COST SHARE

- 90% VACS Obligation: Districts unable to obligate 90% of their FY23 cost share allocation can either transfer allocation to other districts or return allocation with proportional TA to DCR before the end of June. Consider checking records for expired SL-6s, WP-2s, and WP-4s for possible CCI sign-up.
- Carryover Practices: Encourage BMP Participants to complete their projects in time for payment prior to the close of the fiscal year to minimize carryover into FY24.
- CCI Reminder: CCI practices “must not be in lifespan from any other conservation program.” VACS practices that are out of lifespan (including piggybacks) are eligible for CCI. Projects that were federal only are only eligible for CCI after the practices are out of their program lifespan. Note that in terms of EQIP, a “practice” is the same as a “component” in DCR terminology. Districts should be careful to use the longest practice lifespan that applies to the project, which may be up to 20 years for components like fencing.
- Changes & Updates to Conservation Application Suite: Updates are being pushed out for the Conservation Application Suite, so please keep an eye out for emails from Jen Edwards detailing what changes are being made.

CONSERVATION PLANNER CERTIFICATION

- Below is a list of trainings and dates for those who are working towards Conservation Planner Certification; times are TBD
 - April 25-26 – Conservation Selling Skills, Lynchburg
 - May 16 – Perennial Stream Identification, 9:00am – 4:30pm, James City County Library. Register with Carl Thiel-Goin by March 17
 - October 17-18 – Virginia Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species Protection and Cultural & Historic Resources Protection webinar series, must participate in all three to receive credit

SWCD DIRECTOR ELECTIONS ELECTED DIRECTOR POSITIONS

- The general election is scheduled for November 7, 2023. The filing deadline is 7:00pm Tuesday, June 20, 2023
- Information can be found on the State Board of Elections website: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/candidate-bulletins/index.html>
- Choose the Local and Constitutional Offices Bulletin
- Instructions for Candidates – provides links to resources and forms <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/becoming-a-candidate/index.html>
- Below are the forms you will need to complete

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- Certificate of Candidate Qualification – Local Offices
https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaign-finance/2018/candidates/SBE_501_4- rev7-18.pdf
- Declaration of Candidacy – Local Offices
https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaign-finance/2018/candidates/SBE_505_520_Declaration_of_Candidacy_Rev1_15.pdf
- Petition of Qualified Voters
https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaign-finance/2018/candidates/Petition-of-Qualified-Voters-SBE-506_521_letter.pdf
The number of petition signatures required is 25, see page 12 of the bulletin. Recommend at least 30. The petition must be printed two sided! (front and back)
- Campaign Finance Reporting Exemption Form (NEW requirement for all candidates seeking election):
https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaign-finance/2018/candidates/Candidate_Exemption_Request.pdf If a director/candidate is not going to campaign, or their campaign will raise or spend less than \$1,000, they must file this exemption form to be exempt from filing campaign finance information. The form should be filed at the local registrar office. If a candidate does plan to campaign, there are very specific reporting requirements that they need to familiarize themselves with. Information about those requirements is in the Bulletin. All election financial reporting must be done through the Department of Elections online portal, Comet. This is a separate issue from the Statement of Economic Interest. Directors are exempt from filing the Statement of Economic Interest. Expect more information to come out from either DCR or VASWCD in the coming weeks as we are seeking more clarity about campaign finance reporting for those who wish to campaign. Contact your local General Registrar if there are any questions

DATES TO REMEMBER

April

- April 12 – VASWCD: HR Trends for 2023, Virtual – see VASWCD website for registration information
- April 23 – VSWCB Meeting, Pocahontas State Park

Other Dates:

- May 9 – Admin/Director Training, includes Attachment D Budget Template Training, Drury Plaza Hotel, Glen Allen; more details to come
- May 15 – Deadline to submit 4th year carryovers to Sara Bottenfield
- May 25 – VSWCB Meeting, Department of Forestry Headquarters, Charlottesville

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- June 7 – VASWCD Admin/Ops Committee Meeting: Att. D Training Follow Up, Virtual
- June 20 – Filing Deadline, Last day to file election documents with local registrar

Accomack Field Office NRCS Report: Ben Young, NRCS Soil Conservationist, gave a verbal report to the Board.

Ben introduced Maggie Herrmann, new Natural Resource Specialist for NRCS to the Board. All meeting attendees went around the room and gave introductions to her.

PROGRAM UPDATES/DEADLINES:

FY23 programs:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Ranking deadline for fund pools was 3/3/2023

- ◆ Two impoundments and one wildlife planting preapproved in the black duck fund pool
- ◆ Two poultry projects preapproved for litter sheds and pads

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP):**

Ongoing restoration work on 1 WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement) in Northampton County.

- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):**

- ◆ Two contracts in Harborton and one in the works north of Onancock

- **Food Security Act – done by 5/3/2023:**

- 10 tracts on Eastern Shore selected for spot checks

VA Cooperative Extension: Ursula Deitch, Northampton County Extension Agent gave a verbal report to the Board.

Agents have been working on several different upcoming trainings such as:

- March 20th: Private Pesticide License Training at Painter AREC- 8:30 a.m.- noon
- March 23rd: Paraquat (Gramoxone) Training at Painter AREC at 8:30 a.m.
- April 5th: Farm Use Tags- New State Regulations Discussion with Rob Bloxom- 10:30 a.m. at Painter AREC

Eastern Shore RC&D: Edwin Long, RC&D Chair, gave a verbal report to the Board.

Edwin Long passed out the new Annual Report celebrating 50 years to the Board and thanked the District for support.

Putting together an Earth Day Celebration on June 3rd in Onancock with vendors, music and food.

The March 15, 2023 Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage

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