



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 5:00 p.m.

**Due to COVID-19 concerns, this meeting was held
virtually via WebEx**

ATTENDANCE: The following Directors and Associate Directors were in attendance:

Robin Rich-Coates, Chair

Nick Thomas, Director

Fred Holland, Vice Chair

Ursula Deitch, Director

Kyle Sturgis, Director

Others present were:

Carmie Savage, District Manager

Julie Head, Education Director

Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist

Jaclyn Friedman, DCR CDC

Norman Pitt, Conservation Technician

Jane Corson-Lassiter, NRCS

The following enabling motion was made by Robin Rich-Coates and seconded by Fred Holland:

The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District Board certifies that the nature of the declared COVID-19 emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the Board to assemble in a single location and further that the agenda items to be taken up at this meeting are necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities of the Board.

Ayes: 3- Kyle Sturgis, Nick Thomas, Ursula Deitch; Nays: 0

CALL TO ORDER: Robin Rich-Coates, Chair, called to order the January 13, 2021 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS: Fred Holland moved and it was seconded by Nick Thomas to approve the December 16, 2020 meeting minutes and the December 2020 financial reports. Ayes: 2 -Kyle Sturgis, Ursula Deitch; Nays: 0

OLD BUSINESS: There was no Old Business presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY21 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage: Obligated funds for agronomic practices carried over from FY20 to FY21 total \$9,498.00 in Ches Bay funds and \$2,501.40 in OCB funds. FY20 Obligated funds carried over to FY21 for animal waste BMPs total \$1,784,934.17 in Ches Bay funds and \$228,611.87 in OCB funds. The FY21 VACS Allocation totals \$560,561.00 in Ches Bay funds and \$285,682.00 in OCB funds.

APPROVED: _____

BOARD CHAIRMAN

SIGNED: _____

BOARD SECRETARY

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Interest accrued through December 31, 2020 total \$1,200.88 towards Ches Bay funds and \$188.38 towards OCB funds. The District received one repayment of Ches Bay cost share dollars for a non-compliant no-till contract totaling \$218.52. During the December 16, 2020 meeting of the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Board approved reallocating \$552,812 in VACS Ches Bay funds and \$145,291 in VACS OCB funds to the Eastern Shore SWCD. FY20 VNRCF TA remaining funds totaling \$449,471.87 were approved by the District Board to be used towards funding shortfalls. With the new reallocated funding, the Ches Bay cost share requests can be fully funded using VACS funding. After the addition of the reallocated OCB VACS funding there is still a funding shortfall of \$251,507.27 that can be funded using the FY20 VNRCF TA funds. Approved ranked requests from September 14th District Board meeting total to \$1,212,362.45 for Ches Bay funding and \$1,113,375.45 for OCB funds. All actual plantings have been reported to the District drastically decreasing the requested amounts to total \$733,333.20 in Ches Bay and \$682,668.65 in OCB. All Ches Bay VACS funding is fully obligated leaving a balance of \$381,459.20 of available funding in Ches Bay. OCB VACS funds have been fully obligated in addition to \$251,507.27 of the \$449,471.87 available FY20 VNRCF TA funds leaving a balance of \$197,964.60 in FY20 VNRCF TA funds unobligated. **After much discussion, Ursula Deitch moved and it was seconded by Kyle Sturgis for staff to pursue obligating the remaining Ches Bay VACS funds and after using what is needed to fund contracts this program year, to designate the remaining FY20 VNRCF TA funds to be used next program year. Ayes: 2 –Nick Thomas, Fred Holland; Nays: 0**

The District Board approved WFA-1 costs share requests from three contracts totaling \$351,727.10. DCR is in the process of drafting the grant agreement and hope to have it available for approval in the near future. RMP-1 totals of \$17,822 were approved at the September 16th meeting using Statewide source funding but the Bay acreages will be funded under the WFA-1 grant funds.

An addition to NM-1a Contract 20-21-0099 of 14.2 acres totaling \$28.40 to be funded by FY20 VNRCF TA was presented for Board approval **Fred Holland moved and it was seconded by Kyle Sturgis to approve the additional cost share request for contract 20-21-0099 as presented. Ayes: 2- Ursula Deitch, Nick Thomas; Nayes: 0**

Ursula Deitch moved and it was seconded by Fred Holland to approve the cost share report as presented. Ayes: 2- Kyle Sturgis, Nick Thomas; Nayes: 0

B. 2021 District Officers and Committee Appointments: The District officers and Committee Appointments were presented with no change from last year except for the removal of Associate Director Richard Davis since he has moved. **Fred Holland moved and it was seconded by Nick Thomas to approve the 2021 District Officers**

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and Appointments as presented. Ayes: 2- Kyle Sturgis, Ursula Deitch; Nayes: 0

C. VESLT (VA Eastern Shore Land Trust) Support Request: The VESLT has requested support towards their services from the District. **Fred Holland moved and it was seconded by Kyle Sturgis to send \$1,000 in support to VESLT. Ayes: 2- Ursula Deitch, Nick Thomas; Nayes: 0**

D. 2nd Quarter Review of FY21 APOW: Carmie Savage presented the 2nd Quarter Review of the FY21 APOW. Although many cancellations have occurred due to the ongoing pandemic, the District is still extremely busy and reaching all obtainable targets.

E. Update on District Office Space/ Renovations: Carmie Savage reported to the Board that the large additional office space the District is renting for the conference room and education storage has been painted and carpeted as required by December 31 in pursuance to the current rental agreement. The landlord has been getting quotes to update the current lighting system to LED lights which is also included in the rental agreement but was not met by the December 31, 2020 deadline.

ADDITION: VA Farm Voluntary Agricultural Best Management Practices Inventory (Survey) is now open through March 12, 2020: This survey is the result of a large-scale multi-agency partnership that has been underway for over a year. The voluntary bmps captured through this survey are very important to help VA's agriculture achieve its water quality goals for the Ches Bay Watershed Implementation Plan. VCE and Districts have been asked to encourage and help promote the survey and stress its importance to producers. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes. It does ask for the producer's name but is completely confidential and one's specific data will not be shared rather compiled with others. Less than 10% of all surveys will be pulled for spotchecks. The District will be promoting it on the District Facebook page, website and will be sending out individual postcards to encourage and promote to all producers in the District's mailing list.

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 summarized her report to the Board.

FY21 Cost Share:

Agronomic Update:

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- Tracking has been updated to reflect all actual plantings and an increase in both Ches Bay funds and OCB recently approved by the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board. All spreadsheets have been updated. Details were presented under during New Business.
- **Whole Farm Approach Pilot Program (WFA-1):** The funding has been approved and awaiting details on how to proceed in moving forward.

Poultry Update:

- FY20 carryover poultry practices are moving forward. Two virtual pre-construction meetings have been held. Two poultry projects are near completion. Two are in the process of securing dates for pre-construction meetings. One participant is in the process of obtaining contractor bids. Two participants are waiting for DEQ Ag Loan funds to finalize.

Accounting/ Reports: Daily accounting procedures and payroll are always ongoing. Carmie is working on the Attachment E Report for quarter ending December 31, 2020. The deadline for this report to be submitted to DCR is January 15, 2021. The quarterly payroll and year end reports were submitted.

1099G's/1099Misc: Carmie has completed the 1099Gs for those cost share participants who received over \$600 in cost share payments and also the 1099Misc for the certified nutrient management planners and those who receiving VCAP funding. The 1096 was completed as well and all have been mailed to the IRS and participants.

2020 Tax Credits: Carmie completed and mailed eligible tax credits for 2020 to participants and tracking has been updated.

FY2022 Budget Requests for Accomack and Northampton Counties: Carmie received the budget calls for both Counties and have submitted both by the respective due dates asking each for level funding. (Accomack County- \$21,154 and Northampton County \$10,898). Accomack was due November 24 and Northampton was due January 8. FY21 Northampton awarded \$10,626 so requested that level funding be restored to \$10,898 as in previous years.

District Audit: The District is in the process of being audited for FY19 and FY20 by Clifton, Larson, Allen (CLA), LLP. Carmie has scanned and uploaded all requested documents into the secure portal as required. To date, other than taking longer than expected to complete the audits, she has not heard anything from the auditing firm.

Resource Management Plans. Carmie has uploaded the signed approvals for all 13 RMPs the Board approved in December and has mailed approval letters to the participant for each. She has been working with the State Office to distinguish which will be funded through the WFA-1 funding and which will be funded through

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a separate funding source the State has and how to proceed. All funds will be disbursed to the District and processed the same as a cost share payment. Carmie has been working with the participant to obtain the payment authorization forms to allow the District to pay the RMP planner directly for the writing of the plans through RMP-1 (\$10/ ac) the Board approved in December. She has been working in the RMP module to update three plans to certification stage and the State has awarded the certificates. Those three plans are now eligible for RMP-2 (\$5/ ac) to the participant for reaching certification.

Trainings/ Virtual Meetings: Since Graves Mountain Employee Training and the in-person Annual Meeting have been cancelled due to COVID-19, several trainings are being offered virtually.

- 01/06/21: Partner Agency Panel Updates and Q&A: Carmie participated in this virtual meeting and listed to updates from DCR, DEQ, NRCS and NACD

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 summarized his report to the Board.

BMP - Cost Share:

- Completed mapping the reported cover crop for spot checks.
- Ongoing: Working on No-Till spot checks in Accomack County.
- Assisted Carmie in updating the Tracking Program to match revised Bay and Sea Funds.

AG Stewardship Concerns:

- Bill received an email on December 15th from Accomack County regarding several erosion concerns and “brown water” along Warehouse Prong near Bobtown. He reached out to Darrell Marshall (Ag Stewardship Program Manager with VDACS) to assist him with the investigation and resolution of this issue. An on-site meeting occurred on January 7th between the producer, Darrell, Norman Pitt and Bill to conduct the investigation. As a result, it was determined there was one founded complaint. VDCAS will be following up with a letter in the next couple of weeks.

No-Till, Out of Compliance Contracts:

- Contract number 20-16-0030: Two fields totaling (11.8ac.) were found to be in the process of being bulldozed and out of compliance during a spot check on 11/19/20. Bill called the producer on 12/8, 12/10, & 12/14 to determine at what point this tract had been turned into a construction site. He was not provided the information requested during these three calls, so he based the repayment calculations one month past the last in-compliance spot check date which was conducted on 1/10/20. Bill sent a certified repayment letter on 12/18/20 with 60 day deadline to repay the funds to the

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District. The total amount due to the District is \$302.94. Repayment is due by February 18, 2021.

- Contract number 20-16-0030: One field totaling (18.5ac.) was found to be fenced in and converted to permanent goat pasture and out of compliance during a spot check on 11/18/20. Bill called the producer on 12/8, 12/10, & 12/14 to determine at what point this tract had been turned into a goat pasture. He was not provided the information requested during these three calls, so he based the repayment calculations one month past the last in-compliance spot check date which was conducted on 4/23/20. He sent a certified repayment letter on 12/18/20 with 60 day deadline to repay the funds to the District. The total amount due to the District is \$690.56. Repayment is due by February 18, 2021.

Groundwater Committee Meeting:

- No meeting held in January.

VESLT Reports:

- Two monitoring reports were received this month.

Conservation Technician Report: Norman Pitt, Conservation Technician, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. He summarized his report to the Board.

POULTRY:

- Contacting growers concerning any additional required information needed to move the projects along.
- Conducted site visit of one participant's existing shed requested by State Engineer to verify current condition.

V-CAP:

- Finalizing and completing the three board approved applications to be submitted to the State VCAP Steering Committee. Two have been sent on to the Steering Committee and one needs a little more information from the engineer.
- February 1 – March 31, 2021- 2nd Sign-up period open at District for VCAP.

AG STEWARDSHIP:

- January 7, 2021: Accompanied Darryl Marshall, VDACS, Bill Savage and landowner on to investigation a complaint the District received of sediment flowing into the waterway system from farm off Bobtown Road.

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TRAINING:

- Studying and reviewing material from Nutrient Management Plan Writing Classes and preparing to take the exam in February to become certified Nutrient Management Planner
- Still working towards obtaining DCR Conservation Planner Certification

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 summarized her report to the Board.

Education Outreach

- Working with middle school/high school teachers at Northampton to help them with lesson planning using our materials. Have been converting most soils materials to a system that allows for checkout because of COVID.

Plastic Pollution

- Have completed a unit on plastic pollution for grades 7 – 12 that involves scientific reading, analyzing information, and a student led action project. The goal is make students aware of the plastic pollution that is all around them and how it impacts water, soil, and them personally.

Envirothon

- This year's state Envirothon is going to be entirely online. After consulting with our local coaches, we are going to be doing an alternative competition. It is called Settlement 2021. Teams will be "traveling" back to the 1700's to settle a new island (actually one of the islands in American Samoa). Students will be putting together a proposal (written or power point) and a model to show how they will settle the island. Items they will need to consider include protection of native species (plants and animals), not introducing invasive species, sources of drinking water and their protection, use of sustainable forestry methods, appropriate uses of soil types for agriculture, building, sanitation, etc....

Kids Count Forum

- This will be a virtual forum that is being put together by Smart Beginnings Eastern Shore. In addition to being a presenter, Julie will also be a co-host. Virtual program will be held on 2/23.

Other

- ANPDC Hazard Mitigation Plan Steering Committee – we spent 45 minutes in a meeting discussing when we could have meetings.

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- Working with Marcus Riley, Accomack 4-H agent, to see where we can collaborate on programming.
- Elected as an alternate to the VASWCDE board for Area VI.
- Trying to convert many of our materials to boxes that could be checked out by teachers if Julie is not available.

Upcoming

- a. 2/23 – Kids Count Forum
- b. Most school programs are on hold with the uptick in cases. Many don't even want teachers to bring in outside materials for them to use so Julie is meeting with any interested teachers in an off-site location.

PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:

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

Administrative and Operational Items

- **Quarterly reports are due January 15, 2021**- Attachments E, QBs cash balance and P&L reports for the quarter.
- **IRS Mileage Rate** decreased from 57.5 cents to **56 cents effective January 1, 2021**.
- **SWCD Election of Officers and Committee Appointments** to include appointment/reappointment of FOIA Officer & Records Retention Officer
- **Setting the 2021 Calendar Year Meeting Date & Time**-Send all updates to the VASWCD, your CDC, and partners.
- **Directory Changes**- Please keep VASWCD apprised of changes in district personnel, district directors & officers, associate directors and meeting date/time changes for 2021 so your district's information will be reflected accurately in the 2021 District Directory.

Governor's Budget Proposal – was released on December 16. It included \$35 million for agricultural BMP cost share in FY22, \$4.55 million in SWCD technical assistance, \$500K for CREP, \$500K for VCAP, \$1 million for poultry litter transport, Resource Management Plans, and Nutrient Management Plans, as well as \$250K for a DSWC/VSU two-year outreach project to inform disadvantaged farmers in 52 counties about DSWC agricultural programs and encourage them to work with their local SWCDs.

DCR IT Security Awareness On-Line Training: All AgBMP Tracking program users must complete **required on-line training by Jan 29th**. Recall this training is required annually for all users of DCR's web applications, which includes the Tracking Program's Conservation Application Suite. Please provide your CDC with a copy of completion certificates.

Ag Cost Share:

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- **Tax credit data Entered in the AgBMP Tracking Module no later than 01/15/21:** All tax credits must be completed/issued and **data entered into the AgBMP Tracking Module no later than Jan 15th for BMPs completed and paid by 12/31/20.** Central Office will begin running reports early in January. The VA Department of Taxation expects the report by the end of the month.
- **IRS Forms Provided to Participants:** SWCDs must provide an IRS 1099-G to any cost-share program participant who received \$600 or more in cost-share payments per federal tax ID number or SSN during PY 2020. A 1099-MISC is issued if the payment(s) is for NM-1A, RMP-1, or RMP-2 practices are redirected at the participant's request to a TSP, certified nutrient management planner, or resource management planner – the form goes to the entity receiving the cost-share funds. DCR and SWCD personnel DO NOT provide tax advice.
- **Agricultural BMP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – the Ag BMP TAC hosted its final informational webinar on December 17. Twenty Two suggestions to the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share (VACS) Program have been deferred until in-person meetings can resume. **Twelve items will be advanced by DCR to the Soil and Water Conservation Board for their consideration next spring.** For FY22, DCR and the TAC will propose to the VSWCB some key items including the legislatively mandated WP-2P Portable Fencing specification, **raising annual participant cap to \$150,000, loosening of VACS eligibility requirements (i.e. 5 years to 3 years of farming on the land offered in the application), expansion of the SL-7 Extension of Watering Systems practice, and expanded cover crop planting dates.** As a result, the VACS Program will have more options and more flexibility for conservation-minded farmers than ever before, putting them in a better position to succeed in meeting water quality goals.

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) Annual Highlights report has been released. This report contains information about the progress and status of the program, highlighting related activity from September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020. The report can be accessed from the photo slider at the top of the DCR homepage or in the "News" section at the top of the page on the RMP page.

Virtual Training Blitz: Pre-registration is required to participate in any of these

- **Jan 6, 2021 –Partner Agency Panel Updates and Q&A 10-11:30 AM** – Confirmed Speakers: Director Clyde Cristman, Department of Conservation & Recreation; Director Dave Paylor, VA Department of Environmental Quality; State Conservationist Dr. Edwin Martinez, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service; Michael Crowder, National Assn of Conservation District (NACD) President-Elect
- **Jan 7: Legislative Training: Understanding the Legislative Process, the Work of your VASWCD & the SWCD Role and Impact. 10:00AM-11:30AM** Hear from Delegate Ken Plum with General Assembly Insights. (No in person VASWCD Legislative Day in 2021)
- **January 8, 2021 –Chesapeake Bay Best Management Practices (BMP) Survey Effort. 10:00AM-11:30AM** This is a large scale, multi-agency partnership that has been planning for over a year. The information obtained via this survey will help Virginia tell the story of what farmers are doing to conserve soil and improve water quality. This is important information that can help agriculture achieve its water

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quality goals for the Watershed Implementation Plan for the Chesapeake Bay. This training will help build your capacity to assist producers should they agree to complete the survey and have questions during the process.

- **Jan 20: DEQ Ag BMP Loan Program 101. 1:00-2:00 PM**
- **March 3: Cover Crop Training.** Registration and Session Details: To Be Posted
- **April 7: Nutrient Management & Precision Ag Training.** Registration and Session Details: To Be Posted

Review FY21 Grant Agreement Deliverables: FY21 is half over; therefore, you should reference the FY21 grant agreements that the SWCD has with DCR.

- **Long-Range/Strategic Plan Annual Review:** *Plan* should be reviewed at least once during the fiscal year by the Board of Directors and recorded in the minutes, even if the district approves an extension for another year.
- **Strategic Plan/4 year Long Range Plan:** Due to Covid-19, if your Strategic Plan/4 year Long Range Plan has expired or will be expiring soon (12/31/20 or 6/30/21) **a district may extend their current strategic plan up to one year IF formal board action is taken and recorded in the board meeting minutes.**
- **A Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations” annually reviewed by the District Board or their Finance Committee and documented in official minutes**
- Annually update your district's **Fixed Assets Inventory.** See Desktop Procedures.

Important Dates:

- **Jan 13:** General Assembly convenes
- **January 18:** State Holiday – Martin L. King, Jr. Day
- **January 29:** IT Security Awareness Training Completion Deadline

NRCS District Conservationist: Jane Corson-Lassiter, NRCS District Conservationist, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office.

Program Status

NRCS First-round APPLICATIONS for FY2021	
EQIP	
Livestock	11
Wildlife and Black Duck	6
Crop and Small Farm	6

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CSP	
Crop and Private Non-Industrial Forest	12

- State office has set a goal of having 60% of annual financial assistance contracted by June 30.
- Eastern Shore Livestock assistance expected to be similar to FY2020 local obligation of \$600,000. FY2019 obligation was over \$2,000,000.
- This year we see another significant request for CSP funds – approaching \$1,000,000 compared to FY2020 assistance level of \$420,000 on Eastern Shore (which covered about half of FY2020's requested assistance).
- Implementation of planned FY2021 EQIP practices include construction on six Black Duck projects and at Livestock operations for several Heavy Use Area Pads, Animal Mortality Facility and application of Litter Treatment Amendments.

Other

Accomac Field Office is expecting Emily Crum as a summer Pathways Intern. Emily is from New Jersey and attends VA Tech.

Accomac has a job opening coming up for a Soil Conservationist, GS 5, 7 or 9 (depending on experience and education). This will be advertised on USA Jobs website and will be open to the public for applicants. The announcement is not yet out, but if you know of anyone who is interested, they can contact either Jane or Jenny in the field office to be sure they're apprised of when the announcement is posted.

The January 13, 2021 Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage