



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 11, 2021, 5:00 p.m.

USDA Service Center, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

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

Robin Rich-Coates, Chair

Sands Gayle, Director

Nick Thomas, Vice-Chair

Edwin Long, Associate Director

Jim Evans, Director

Others present were:

Carmie Savage, District Manager

Julie Head, Education Director

Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist

CALL TO ORDER: Robin Rich-Coates, Chair, called to order the August 11, 2021 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS: Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the July 14, 2021 meeting minutes and the July 2021 financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Nick Thomas, carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. There was no Old Business presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. **FY22 Cost Share Report:** Carmie presented the following report: Board approved carryover for Poultry BMPs from FY20 to FY21 and then to FY22 is \$1,002,440.78 in Ches Bay VACS and \$228,611.87 in OCB VACS. The FY22 VACS allocation is \$1,198,908 in Ches Bay VACS and \$583,598.00 in OCB VACS. Interest earned through July 31, 2021 totals in \$43.41 towards Ches Bay funding and \$10.18 towards OCB funding bringing the total of available FY22 funds to \$1,198,951.41 in Ches Bay and \$583,608.18 in OCB. There is one obligated FY21 poultry project, Board approved on 3/10/21, funded by FY20 VNRCF TA funds totaling \$204,007.71. Carmie stated that current cost share sign-up is steady and requests for OCB funds have already exceeded the FY22 allocation with many large farmers still to sign-up before the first sign-up period ends on August 18th. She will let Jackie Friedman know there will definitely be a need for additional OCB funds. **Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the FY22 Cost Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Nick Thomas, carried unanimously.**

APPROVED: _____ **SIGNED:** _____

BOARD CHAIRMAN

BOARD SECRETARY

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- B. FY22 Office Space Rent Agreement for period September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022:** The Office Space Rent Agreement for \$15,000 for the new period was presented to the Board. The Board discussed that the landlord had not replaced the current lights with LED lights as she agreed to the last rental period. After much discussion, Chair Robin Rich-Coats stated she will email the landlord with the Board's concerns. **Director Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the new Office Space Rental Agreement for \$15,000 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.**
- C. Accomack and Northampton VCE/ ESSWCD potential project:** A detailed summary of the Oil Recycling Program that VA DARE SWCD offers was presented to the Board for consideration of partnering with VCE to offer a similar program on the Shore. The Board stated that farmers here already have people/ places that use their oil so they were not sure it would be a great need for that program on the Shore. It was suggested to survey the farmers as they come in for cost share sign-up to gauge the need and interest then it will be discussed further in the future.
- D. VCDE Annual Training:** The annual employees training at Graves Mountain in Syria will be held August 24-26. Julie, Bill and Norman will be attending. Carmie and Robin have registered to attend virtually.
- E. Resource Management Plan (RMP) Program Periodic Review:** The Eastern Shore SWCD was selected for a periodic review of its administration of the RMP program by DCR. The review consisted of a personal interview between Carmie and Scott Ambler, DCR's Resource Management Plan Program Coordinator, a review of the District files and other applicable documents, a review of a sample of the RMPs approved by the District Board, review of the certification and compliance inspections, and a review of the information entered into the DCR Conservation Planning Suite. The review has been completed and a letter was mailed to the District stating that "Eastern Shore SWCD has very adequately acted as the RMP program authority. They should be commended for their implementation and promotion of the program. There are no recommendations for the District at this time. The results of this review will be presented to the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board at the September 2021 meeting." The following are the results of the review:
- General Program Administration: Eastern Shore SWCD received a score of 30 out of a possible 30 points. The District has established a Technical Review Committee (TRC) and all information is protected from FOIA as required. TRC and District Board meeting were conducted in accordance with the Administrative Process Act and all Guidance.
 - Review of Approved Plans: The District received a score of 100 out of a possible 100 points. The TRC has reviewed all of the RMPs within the required time (90 days) for revised submittals and requests for additional information. Clear comments were

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provided to the plan developer. All of the required information and minimum standards were contained in the RMPs.

- Verification Inspection of RMPs: The District received a score of 100 out of a possible 100 points. The TRC conducted a verification inspection when a request was submitted by the producer. All of the required information was completed and current nutrient management plan (NMP) was submitted and a NMP verification was provided by the NMP planner. The inspection ensured all of the required minimum standards had been completed by the producer.

F. VA Eastern Shore Land Trust (VESLT) Support Request: The VESLT has sent a letter of request to the District for support. The VESLT is a partnering agency in which the District co-holds many easements. The support would help with the monitoring requirements. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve \$1,000 of support to VESLT. The motion, seconded by Director Nick Thomas, carried unanimously.**

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 2022 Cost Share:

- **Agronomic**: Completed the Cost Share report for FY22 found under New Business for Board approval. Carmie created several new spreadsheets for the new program year. Bill and Carmie have been taking sign-up, and entering data into spreadsheets and tracking as received. She has been running RUSLE (soil loss calculations) on all cover crop practices as required by DCR.
- **Poultry**: The seven approved poultry practices that have been Board approved to carry over to a 3rd year were reflected in the FY22 Cost Share Report under New Business as well as the one FY21 project.

Accounting: Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

Local Funding FY22 Allocations: She has requested the 1st quarter FY22 allocation from Accomack County (\$5,288.50) and the first half allocation from Northampton County (\$5,449.00).

Office Rental Agreement: Drafted new rental agreement for September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2022 and received signature/date from landlord. Found under New Business for Board approval.

AREC Summer Field Day: Attended and spoke on District programs and announced sign-up deadlines.

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District Website: She has been updating the District's website to keep it up-to-date-check it out!

District Facebook Page: Julie and Carmie have been posting to the District's FB page as time allows.

Webinars/ Conference Calls:

- August 3rd- participated in Beginner Quickbooks Training I, (signed up for Advanced QB Training in September)
- August 5th- participated in Beginner Quickbooks Training II

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:

- Bill has been working to sign up farmers into the FY22 Cost share program as they make appointments or just stop by the office.
- Assisting Carmie in Tracking by entering sign up data and looking up Farm and Tract information on the Federal computer.

VCAP Site Visits & Inspections:

- Contract: 20-20-02: Bill has emailed this Living Shoreline VCAP participant to follow up on replanting issues and coir log installation noted on the initial spot check inspection conducted 5/4/21. He received an email from the project landowner on July 17th stating that he had received the new plants and was planning to start planting them the week of the 19th. He followed up with an email on August 2nd to verify the status of the replanting and since has conducted a spot check after being notified the plantings had been completed. He was satisfied with the review and felt the project is now in good standing.

SL-15A No-Till Repayment:

- Contract 20-16-0013: On July 15th, the producer requested to pull the remaining acres of a specific tract out of No-Till. This tract totaling 28.9 acres has a calculated repayment in the amount of \$269.76. Repayment is due to the District by September 15th.

Ground Water Committee Meeting, July 20th:

- During the public comment portion of the meeting Sue Masterum raised concerns over how slow the regulation process to use the Columbia aquifer is

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going. She also mentioned four pending lawsuits between poultry producers and DEQ that are moving slowly as well.

- Supervisor Muhly and Chair John Coker opened a discussion over additional funding for the Groundwater Committee. The \$50,000 request proposed at the last meeting will go before the County Board for FY23 budget. Supervisor Muhly is planning to request an additional \$20,000 from the Federal Covid Relief Fund. Chair John Coker suggested requesting additional funding from the County on a yearly basis. The Committee will work to present and specify a list of projects to the County Board.
- The ANPDC staff received permission from the Extension offices to share the data of the water tests and 911 address of water tested.
- Sam Caldwell - (Hydrologist, USGS) gave a presentation of USGS Logging 2020. The presentation focused on very minor changes in salinity from the groundwater sampled at the test wells in Accomack and Northampton County.
- Britt McMillian-(Principal Hydrologist, Arcadis) gave a presentation on the (TAC) Technical Advisory Committee Draft regulations (9VAC25-920) for use of the Surficial Aquifer. The next steps are to submit the draft regulations for review to the State Water Control Board, public review, and a final presentation of the regulations to the Board.
- The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, August 17th.

VA Soil Health Coalition Quarterly Meeting, July 26th:

- Welcome remarks from Dr. Ed Jones, VCE (VA Co-Operative Extension) thanking the Coalition forming to address soil health issues in Virginia.
- Four farmers that sit on the panel were interviewed on farming history, background, interest in soil health, soil health practices used in their operations, transition of their operations into BMPs and opportunities or challenges in mentoring.
- The Coalition was recently established by a Grant through (NFWF) National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. It was set up through a Steering Committee and divided into a three pillar system: 1. Forming the structure for the group 2. Implementation through multiple organizations and paid mentors. 3. Leveraging marketing opportunities such as: The Soil Awareness Initiative and Integration of Soil Health into DCR Cost Share Program.
- The meeting attendees divided into three break-out groups: Marketing & Economics, Technical Assistance & Training and Measurement & Evaluation. Ideas and suggestions were then passed around the groups. Once the groups reformed back into the main meeting, a summary of each group's ideas was presented.
- The Coalition welcomes any organization who supports the Coalitions mission, vision and principals to share their logo to be used on the website: www.virginiasoilhealth.org

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- The next scheduled meeting will be Monday August 23rd.

VESLT Reports:

- No monitoring reports this month.

Events:

- Attended the Field Day at the AREC on July 21. Besides lunch, Bill enjoyed the precision drone spraying demo and various cover crop plots on display.

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 was unable to attend the meeting.

Poultry:

- Norman has been in contact with poultry growers concerning any additional required information needed.

Programs:

- Attended the Summer Research Field Day at the Painter AREC, Topics discussed fresh marketing of vegetables, corn, cover crop, an unmanned aerial vehicles demonstration to be used in applying insecticide and weed killing application, and other ongoing agricultural research programs.

Cost Share Program:

- Assisting Carmie and Bill in the updating of the Progress Signup Spreadsheet, and clients data in the State's Tracking program.

V-CAP:

- The project in Town of Onancock along North Branch Onancock Creek, withdraw their application due to upfront costs.
- In the process of seeking new candidates for VCAP projects.

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.

Ag Camp for Kids at the Barrier Islands Center, July 22-23, 2021:

- The kids went home smiling and tired and so did Erin and Julie. The Barrier Island Center is interested in partnering on future projects.

New Teacher Orientation:

- Northampton County Public Schools – providing lunch on August 17th along with information on the various programs offered by the District

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- Accomack County Public Schools – to be held on August 18th

Fall programming for homeschool students:

- Presented a year-long schedule to the coordinators. They will be meeting with Julie on the second Tuesday of each month for programming. Also putting together a fall book club based on the book “Dust to Eat.” This is about the dust bowl. Additional activities will be centered around soil erosion and prevention. Julie also attached to her report a copy of the *Environmental Education Programming for Homeschoolers 2021-2022 School Year* flyer she created detailing the programming for each month.
- Made some contacts with a homeschooling group comprised of mostly older kids who may be interested in having an Envirothon team.

Teaching Credential: Julie’s renewal finally came through

Upcoming:

- 8/17 – NCPS New Teacher Orientation
- 8/18 – ACPS New Teacher Orientation
- 8/24 – 8/26 – Graves Mountain – presenting a map update session
- 9/14 – Academy of Lifetime Learning – Best Management Practices
- 9/14 – homeschool – All About Trees
- 9/28 – Accomack Farm Field Days
- 10/9 – Northampton County Ag Fair
- 10/12 – homeschool – Everything but the baa, moo, cluck, and oink
- 10/14 – Master Naturalist presentation on Soils

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 was unable to attend the meeting.

Administrative and Operational Items:

- **Dedicated Reserves** - On page 14 of the 2020 *Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations* is guidance regarding Reserve Fund Balances. **Board action is necessary** to dedicate for specific purposes any amount above six months of routine operating funds (undesignated reserve funds).
- **QuickBooks Training:** DCR and the VASWCD have teamed up with the VASWCD to offer Beginner QuickBooks training virtually Aug 3 & 5 and Advanced QuickBooks Sept 21 & 23 Advanced QuickBooks. If the SWCD staff with financial responsibilities attends one of the four sessions, the required grant deliverable will be met for FY22, however attending several or all sessions is optimal.

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Ag and Cost Share Items:

- **Conservation Planners:** Planners still needing certification, please submit plans to Carl Thiel-Goin by September 1
- **VACS Contract signatures:** From page II-16 in the PY2022 VACS manual, "BMPs initiated prior to submitting a cost share or tax credit application are not eligible." Producers interested in cover crop BMPs need to sign an FY22 Contract Part 1 prior to planting.
- **VACS 22 Fliers:** With Program Year 2022 providing record VACS cost-share and the need to spread the conservation word near and far, DCR has updated all six of the Agency's VACS Program fliers.
- **TAC & Subcommittees:** Technical Advisory Subcommittees have started to meet and the TAC intends to have its work completed by December 1, 2021.

Director Reminder:

- **Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) Training:** The Code of VA requires once every two years locally elected officials must take COIA training. Most directors took this in 2019 between July and December. The training can be accessed at <https://ethicswebinar.dls.virginia.gov/>. Each module is specific to your role so select "Local elected officials or EDAs/IDAs" in order to complete the correct training to fulfill the training requirement as a District Director.

DCR Staff News: Russ Baxter retired and Mr. Darryl Glover has accepted the position of Deputy Director of Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety and Flood Prevention! Recruitment for the next Director for the Division of Soil and Water Conservation is underway.

Summer To-Do List:

- FY22 Annual Plan of Work (board approval required) include "partnership acknowledgement" statement
- Review and update Dedicated Reserves Policy (record in board meeting minutes)
- Complete property inventory
- FY21 Annual Report (due to CDC 9/30) include "partnership acknowledgement" statement

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Upcoming Training And Important Dates:

- **Beginner QuickBooks Training - Part 1 & Part 2**
 - Aug 3, 2021 – 2:00PM-4:00PM – Part 1
 - Aug 5, 2021 – 2:00PM -4:00PM – Part 2.
- **Aug 13:** Deadline to register for VACDE Graves Training
- **Aug 16:** Corrections needed in tracking as a result of QA/QC report run by Jen Edwards must be completed
- **Aug 19:** VASWCD Legislative Committee Zoom Meeting 10:00 AM.
- **Aug 24-26:** VACDE Annual Training, Graves Mountain Lodge Registration due by Aug 13
- **Sept 1:** Deadline for Buffer Data Corrections in tracking for BMPs paid in 2020 and 2021
- **Sept 1:** Conservation Plans submitted to DCR
- **Advanced QuickBooks Training - Part 1 & Part 2**
 - Sept 21: 10:00AM-12:00PM – Part 1.
 - Sept 23: 10:00AM-12:00PM – Part 2.
- **Sept 22:** VASWCD Quarterly Board Meeting_9:00 am Drury Plaza Hotel, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA
- **Sept 23:** VA Soil & Water Conservation Board Audit Subcommittee 9:00 am Drury Plaza Hotel, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA. This will be an in-person meeting.
- **Sept 23:** VA Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting 10:00 am Drury Plaza Hotel, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA. This will be an in-person meeting.
- **Sept 25:** grant applications due Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (funding from sale of Ches. Bay license plates)
- **Sept 30:** SWCD's FY22Annual Report due to CDC
- **Oct 1:** Clean Water Farm Award local and Grand Basin nominations due
- **Dec 31:** Deadline for Locally-Elected Directors to complete COIA Training

Eastern Shore Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D): Edwin Long, Chair, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- ES RC&D is currently advertising for a Projects Director.
- They have been working on their Strategic Plan and look forward to its completion.
- Edwin had a few extra copies of the *Bay Journal* he offered to the Board.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Jenny Templeton, NRCS District Conservationist, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

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Programs:

- EQIP obligations (in contract):
 - Organic/hoop house: 1
 - Poultry: 1
- EQIP applications approved for funding (almost to contract):
 - Black Duck program: 1
 - Livestock: 1
- EQIP applications preapproved for funding:
 - Black Duck program: 1
- CSP applications preapproved for funding:
 - Cropland: 1

Staffing:

- District Conservationist: Jenny Templeton
- Soil Conservationist: Ben Young
- Intern: Kelly Crum, last day 8/13
- Possible agronomist position has been closed.

USDA Operational COVID-19 Restrictions: Updated CDC guidance means our employees, on-site contractors, partners, volunteers, customers, and visitors in areas of “substantial” or “high” community COVID-19 transmission are required to wear a mask in Federal buildings and government owned or leased vehicles regardless of vaccination status.

- Accomack County: high
- Northampton County: high

Outreach/Events:

- Pollinator walk in partnership with Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust: 7/22
- Interview with UVA group studying climate change in Accomack County: 7/29
- Engineering/surveying training: 8/3
- Field visits with group from Virginia Tech studying marsh migration onto Virginia’s Eastern Shore Farmlands: 8/4
- Ag Expo: 8/5
- Area IV JED: 8/12

The August 11, 2021 Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage