



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, April 19, 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, Jenny Templeton- NRCS District Conservationist, Ben Young- NRCS Soil Conservationist, Maggie Herrmann- NRCS Natural Resource Specialist, Rick Hall- Associate Director, and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR.

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

Edwin Long- Associate Director, Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, Chip Turlington- Associate Director, Matt Hickman- Associate Director, Hunter Blake- Associate Director, Norman Pitt- Associate Director, and Brian Broadwater- Associate Director.

CALL TO ORDER: Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the April 19, 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 March 15, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously. Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the March financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, 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 March 31st of \$1,000.83 and BMP repayments of \$1,167.66, and an additional \$500,000 VACS allocation leaves a new balance of \$2,447,909.45 of Ches Bay VACS funds.

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

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Interest earned in OCB VACS through March 31st of \$473.69 and BMP repayments of \$46.00 leaves a new balance of \$1,051,770.69 in OCB VACS funds. Approved ranked costshare requests through March 31st total \$262,906.75 in Ches Bay VACS along with a \$1,944,298.35 VACS funds transfer to WFA and new BMP Ches Bay VACS cost share requests of \$92.00 leaving a new balance of \$240,612.39 in Ches Bay unobligated VACS funds. The approved ranked cost share requests through March 31st total \$280,925.60 in OCB VACS along with the transfer of \$768,737.71 in OCB unobligated VACS funds to WFA, new BMP OCB VACS cost share requests of \$1,863.40 and the transfer of \$1,340.92 from WFA OCB funds back to OCB VACS, have left a remaining balance of \$1,584.90 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 \$1,894,381.50 plus new BMP WFA CB cost share requests of \$276.00 leave a remaining balance of \$49,640.85 in unobligated WFA Ches Bay funds. The approved WFA OCB Cost share requests total \$1,297,984.95, new WFA OCB costs hare requests totaling 8,090.40 and the transfer back to OCB VACS of \$1,340.92 leaves a balance shortage of \$538,678.56 in WFA OCB funds. The additional Cost share requests for Ches Bay VACS totaling \$92.00, OCB VACS totaling \$1,863.40, WFA Ches Bay totaling \$276.00 and additional WFA OCB cost share requests totaling \$8,090.40 were presented for approval.

Chair Jim Evans made a motion to approve the new Ches Bay VACS, OCB VACS, WFA Ches Bay and WFA OCB Cost Share requests as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, carried unanimously. DCR has guaranteed the funding difference so all eligible WFA requests will be funded. Conservation Plan CP-20-23-0003 written by Bill Savage was presented for approval. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve conservation plan CP-20-23-0003 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.** During the March 15th District Board meeting, the Board approved the return of remaining unobligated Ches Bay VACS funds totaling \$240,178.54 to DCR but the return of the associated TA to those funds was not presented. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the associated TA totaling \$21,826.26 along with the return of \$240,178.54 to DCR. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.** Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the FY23 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.

B. FY23 VCAP Report: The District was contacted on March 9th regarding two additional potential VCAP Living Shoreline projects. SEAS was contacted and met with Bill and Palmer to conduct site visits but unfortunately neither project meets the requirements of the VCAP program. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

C. Endowment Committee Draft Minutes- 4/17/23 meeting: The draft minutes from the April 17th Endowment Committee meeting were presented for approval. The committee

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selected 5 spring grant recipients, two scholarship recipients and will provide funding for up to two Conservation Camp attendees. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the April 17th Endowment Committee meeting as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

D. District Truck Update: Bill gave an update on the purchase of a new District truck to replace the current '18 Dodge Ram. The purchase of a 2023 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 has been made with the trade in of the '18 Dodge Ram from IG Burton in Berlin, MD. They gave \$30,000 for the trade-in of the truck which left a balance owed of \$24,340 for the new truck. Bill stated that the '12 Dodge Caravan that the District owns has 1,500 miles before hitting 100,000 miles which then it will loose 30% of its value. Staff recommended to the Board that this may be a good year to also upgrade the van as well. After much discussion, the Board asked that quotes be gathered for different models/styles and be brought back to the Board for discussion during the May District Board meeting.

E. Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield Health/ Vision/ Dental Insurance Update: The District is enrolled in Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield for health, vision, and dental insurance through Accomack County. The rates are increasing effective June 1, 2023. The health/vision insurance will be increasing by \$116.99 per month per person. The dental insurance will remain the same.

F. District Audit Results-VASWCB Audit Subcommittee- A copy of the District Audit results with comments and recommendations was included in the meeting packet. This letter came from Adam, Wilson, Chairman, Audit Subcommittee of VA Soil and Water Conservation Board.

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

CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:

A. A thank you note to the District from the VA Tech Soils Judging Team was included in the meeting packet along with a copy of their newsletter.

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:** Adjusting cost share and paying out Nutrient Management Plans, Cover Crop, and WFA-NM as they are submitted. Keeping up with the accounting in tracking and spreadsheets.

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- Processing Non-compliant BMP repayments as received and adjusting current funding pots accordingly.
- **Poultry Update:**
 - 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.

Ag Study Selection Committee meeting: A-NPDC was awarded grant funding from DCR to conduct an ag study regarding the effects of rain events on soils, sea level rise impact, climate change impacts, etc. As a member of this committee, Carmie attended this Zoom meeting on April 6th with Anne Doyle- A-NPDC, Mark Reiter- Painter AREC and Kellen Singleton- A-NPDC. The consultant selected, Abhilash Kumar Chandel, PhD- VA Tech, is working on the following objectives:

- Determining the influence of weather parameters on crop phenology of three primary crops (corn, cotton, and soybean) in the two counties
- Satellite imagery processing over past 14 years to map crop phenology with NDVI
- Understanding temporal variations in crop NDVI over past 14 years
- Mapping acreages of crop grown in the past years in the two counties using GIS data
- Prediction of crop phenology using weather variables and machine learning

Once the data has been collected, they would like to be able to present to farmers in a useful format- perhaps during the Eastern Shore Ag Conference and Trade Show.

ESVA Coastal Resilience and Sustainability Plan Steering Committee: The A-NPDC invited me to be a member of this committee. It will meet the 3rd Wednesday of each month starting May 17th. The Steering Committee will work to prioritize and incorporate local resilience projects in need of funding. A part-time paid intern will be hired to be a critical asset in public engagement. Data gathering and assessment will be another key role the intern will play to ensure a comprehensive resilience and sustainability plan is developed. The Steering Committee members will assist with community outreach including attendance at community listening sessions and community presentations, advocate for locality needs, engage local residents and constituents to participate at public meetings, assist with plan development, review and publication, and share resources as needed.

Soil Fertility and Crop Nutrition Workshop: Along with Maggie Herrmann- NRCS, Bill and Palmer, I attended this training day at the Tidewater AREC in Suffolk on March 31st. Carmie earned 4 CEUs towards her conservation planner certification.

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New District Purchases:

- 4 District Laptop Computers/ Docking stations were purchased and Staff is in the processing of transferring data from tower hard drives and setting up.
- 2023 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 was purchased on April 5th and the Dodge Ram was traded in.
- Current Quickbooks Pro 2020 software would become obsolete on May 31st so purchased upgrade to Quickbooks Pro 2023 at a cost of \$549.00. All data transferred successfully.

Attachment E: The Attachment E for the 3rd quarter of FY23 has been submitted to DCR along with the required Quickbooks Reports- Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss.

Endowment Committee: The Endowment Committee will be meeting on April 17th at 3:00 p.m. to review and select scholarship recipients.

ESCC Scholarship Donor Luncheon: Attended this luncheon on behalf of the District for our support of the Robin Rich-Coates Opportunity Scholarship.

- Paid this year's \$500 scholarship support

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

Webinars/ Meetings/ Conferences:

- April 17th- Endowment Committee meeting @ 3pm
- 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:

- Checking NMP's and filing as they as they are reported. – Ongoing
- Checking Split App on Wheat forms as reporting - Ongoing
- Bill has written my Third 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. Repaid in Full 3/15/23
- 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. Repaid in Full 4/12/23
- 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. Repaid in Full 3/15/23

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- 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. Repaid in Full 3/15/23

VESLT Reports:

- Three reports filed this month.

VCAP:

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

Meetings:

- 3/28 Two VCAP Meetings – see VCAP report

Events:

- 3/29 Attended Area Envirothon at the Painter AREC and assisted with food

Trainings:

- 3/31 Attended Soil Fertility / Crop Nutrition Workshop at the Suffolk AREC

Vehicles:

- 4/5 Purchased a 2023 Silverado 2500 Chevrolet work truck for the District

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:

- All spot checks for cover crop, SL-15A, & CCI-CNT have been completed
- As producers have reported kill down to us, we have been making necessary changes and updates on tracking
- As Nutrient Management plans have come in, we have been making the necessary changes and additions and filing them

Groundwater Committee Meeting 3/21:

- Public participation from Captain Cove residents
- The Virginia Department of Health is updating their current water testing program to include PFAS ratings
- Committee has requested a NASA representative to come to a meeting and have a discussion about what they are doing to protect groundwater from PFAS that are produced from their fire testing trials and the data that has been collected surrounding PFAS in general
 - No response but reached out again
- After the submittal of the final Captain Cove's report, the president of Aqua Virginia (the water service company) stated that they plan to hire an outside consultant to look at the water system and to provide updates as needed
 - Will be given to the Accomack County Board of Supervisors
- Plan to submit the final report to DEQ as well
- Proposed a residential water testing program with A-NPDC that is geared toward high school education while also getting data

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- Send water testing kit home with students and test in classrooms, if water issues are indicated, the sample can be sent to a lab for further testing
- In February & March, DEQ received 10 draft permits
- According to the Aracadis study, there are 67 shallow wells on the shore in the superficial aquifer and these wells are the wells that they want to specifically test
 - A formal study plan & budget for this study has been requested
- Next meeting: April 18, 2023 at the ESVA Chamber of Commerce

Trainings and meetings:

- 3/28- VACDE Meeting & 2 VCAP meetings with homeowners
- 3/29- Envirothon Testing Day
- 3/31- Soil Fertility & Crop Nutrition training at Tidewater AREC

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 – 2 high school teams (Arcadia and Broadwater), and 4 middle school teams (Northampton Middle, Cape Charles Christian, and Montessori) competed. It was a really good day and AREC was a fantastic place to have it. AREC is willing to host again.

VDOE – pilot program testing completed

Spring Pollinator Education – Due to high mortality last year we are building outside enclosures to raise the caterpillars in. Confirmed interest from Occohannock, Kiptopeke, Montessori, Cape Charles Christian, Accomack Christian, Chincoteague, and Metompkin Elementary Schools.

Environmental Education Committee – this will be reconvening on May 16th at 1:00 p.m. if you know anyone who is interested in attending. We will be discussing a revamped watershed education program for 6th graders. Possible topics include water chemistry, keystone species, migratory birds, area history going back to native Americans, animals of the Chesapeake Bay, and possibly others.

Arbor Day – April 29th from 9 to Noon at Strawberry Square in Cape Charles. Palmer and I will be handling this in conjunction with the Department of Forestry, Master Gardeners, and the Cape Charles Tree Advisory Board. The focus is on native plants again this year. Tree seedlings available include: buttonbush, chinkapin, white dogwood, American elderberry, red maple, and white oak. Plant plugs available include trumpet honeysuckle, blue flag iris, butterfly weed, perennial phlox, spotted bee balm, black eyed Susan, and swamp sunflower. Seeds available include Bergamot, spotted bee balm, lanceleaf coreopsis, swamp sunflower, and black-eyed Susan.

Upcoming Dates

- a. 4/18 – Occohannock Elementary – food webs

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- b. 4/19 – Metompking Elementary – trailer
- c. 4/25 – Chinoteague Elementary – regions review
- d. 4/26 – Area Envirothon – Wakefield
- e. 4/27 – Chincoteague Elementary – Science fair
- f. 4/28 – CCCS – science fair
- g. 4/29 – Arbor Day
- h. 5/3 – Occohannock Elementary – science review
- i. 5/3 – 5/4 – Kiptopeke – stem lab – seed dispersal

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

- 3rd Quarter Reports: are due Monday, April 17 – Attachment E, Cash Balance, and P&L.
- Attachment D – FY25 Budget Template: training is scheduled for May 9 in-person at the Drury Hotel in Glen Allen. Registration information is forthcoming from the VASWCD.
- FY24 Budget Preparations: FY24 Budgets should be approved by your Board by June 30. Finance committee meetings are a great time to review the Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations.
- Annual Plan of Work & Strategic Plan Review/Development: FY24 Annual Plans of Work should be ready for board approval in June so that they are in place for the new fiscal year.
- SWCD Director Elections:

General election is November 7, 2023. The filing deadline is 7:00pm on Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

There are new campaign finances reporting requirements and an exemption form. It is a multistep process. Directors need to talk to their local registrar for specific details. Even if you talked to your registrar a month ago, you should follow up because there is now greater understanding of the new process. Below are helpful links:

- Instructions for Potential Candidates
- Candidate Bulletin for Local & Constitutional Offices
- Candidate Forms
 - Certificate of Candidate Qualifications:
https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaign-finance/2018/candidates/SBE_501_4-rev7-18.pdf
 - Declaration of Candidacy:
<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaign->

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
 - Directors are not required to submit the Statement of Economic Interests (confirmed with Ethics Council Jan 23)
 - 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). All questions should be addressed to your local registrar's office.

AG COST SHARE

- 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. Please review pages II-41-44 in the VACS Manual regarding carryover procedures as well as the Logi report ("Cost-Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs To Be Completed, Canceled, or Carried Over into FY24"). Practices nearing completion but requiring a 4th year carryover are due for review to Sara Bottenfield by May 15.
- Transfer of Responsibility: When completing Transfers of Responsibility, the Transfer form and W-9 for the new participant should be attached to the contract or instance in Tracking, then send an email to DCR Data Services (Jen Edwards) and/or SWCD Liaison (Blair Gordon) with the contract or instance number to request the participant change (Guidelines pg. II-50 and 51). The forms contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII), and this method is more secure than sending the forms by email. Also remember that the Transfer form must be used for all Transfers of Responsibility, whether the practice is complete or under construction and even if the transfer is between an individual and their farm/business.
- Tracking/Conservation Application Suite (CAS) Accounts: Tracking/CAS accounts cannot be shared. Security is closely monitored due to storing PII and all users agree not to share their password or use anyone else's as a condition of having access to the system.
- Update Contact Info in CAS: Carl Thiel-Goin has asked District staff who have changed Districts or changed emails to update their information under "My Account" in Tracking.
- End of Lifespan (EOL) Verifications: Reminder EOL verifications are loaded in CAS through 2025. Practices expiring at the end of 2023 are due by September 30, 2023 in order to receive compensation for work done. Each verification completed will receive \$200, and any 2024 and 2025 verifications completed will receive an early bonus of \$50.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

April

- April 12 – VASWCD: HR Trends for 2023, Virtual – see VASWCD website for registration information
- April 21 – Average Cost List & Secondary Considerations Info Session, virtual at 9:30am, [Register Here](#)
- April 23 – Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting, 10:00am, Pocahontas State Park
- April 28 – Suggestions for Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) due to Sara Bottenfield (sara.bottenfield@dcr.virginia.gov)

May

- May 9 – Admin/Director Training, includes Attachment D Budget Template Training, Drury Plaza Hotel
- May 15 – Deadline to submit 4th year carryovers to Sara Bottenfield
- May 16 – Stream Identification, James City County Library, 9:00am - 4:30pm
- May 25 – VSWCB Meeting, Department of Forestry Headquarters, Charlottesville

June

- June 7- VACS Update Session, Virtual (1:00-4:00)
- June 7 – VASWCD Admin/Ops Committee Meeting: Att. D Training Follow Up, Virtual
- June 15 – VACS Update Session, Virtual (9:00-12:00)
- June 20 – Filing Deadline, Last day to file election documents with local registrar

Accomack Field Office NRCS Report: Jenny Templeton, NRCS District Conservationist, gave a verbal report to the Board.

Program Updates/Deadlines:

• IRA Funding

Investment in climate and clean energy; promote climate-smart agriculture & forestry greenhouse gas mitigation

Applications must include one or more core conservation practices or activities (see attached)

Allocations:

EQIP-IRA: \$2,568,184

CSP-IRA: \$4,831,036

Ranking Deadlines: 4/21 (EQIP-IRA), 5/26 (CSP-IRA)

• FY23 programs

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Preapprovals: 7

3 Black Duck Initiative

2 Forestry CAPs

2 Poultry

• Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

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Ongoing restoration work on 1 WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement) in Northampton County. Field Office working with NRCS Easement Team & Engineering Staff, Northampton County, DEQ, USACE, VMRC for permitting purposes.

13 Wetland Easement on-site annual monitoring visits will be scheduled for this winter/spring

VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Updates

- Natural Resource Specialist position
 - Maggie Herrmann (Southern Illinois University & Louisiana Tech graduate) was selected for position; started 3/13
 - Leann Schmidt, new Area IV ASTC-FO (Assistant State Conservationist—Field Operations)
- COVID operation status
 - No masks are required, but employees, customers and visitors are welcome to continue wearing a mask if they choose.
 - COVID status update received weekly

Training Opportunities in the Area/State (JEDs, Webinars, Field Days)

- Recurring SRC (State Resource Conservation) webinars, Wednesdays 8a-10a
- April JED (Joint Employee Development) training: 4/12
- May JED: 5/11

The April 19, 2023 Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage

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