



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, February 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, Carmie Savage- District Manager, Julie Head- Education Director, Jenny Templeton- NRCS District Conservationist, Ben Young- NRCS Soil Conservationist, Rick Hall- Associate Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR.

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

Kyle Sturgis- Director, Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, Chip Turlington- Associate Director, Matt Hickman- Associate Director, Hunter Blake- Associate Director, Norman Pitt- Associate Director, Bill Savage- Conservation Specialist and Palmer Smith- Conservation Technician.

CALL TO ORDER: Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the February 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 January 18, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously. Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the January financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. ESVA Ground Water Committee Draft Minutes- January meeting- A copy of the meeting minutes were included in the meeting packet for review.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY23 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage: One WP-4 Poultry project has been completed and paid since the new fiscal year started leaving a balance of obligated '20 VACS funds for Poultry projects of \$245,044.12 in Ches Bay and \$0 in OCB along with a remaining balance of \$168,847.83 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 January 31st of \$732.57 and a BMP repayment of \$980.16 leaves a new balance of \$1,947,453.73 in Ches Bay VACS. Interest earned in OCB VACS through January 31st of \$182.51 leaves a new balance of \$1,051,433.51 in OCB VACS. Approved ranked cost

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

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share requests through January 31st total \$262,205.25 in Ches Bay VACS and the approved ranked cost share requests through January 31st total \$281,953.60 in OCB VACS leaving a remaining unobligated balance of \$1,685,248.48 in Ches Bay VACS and \$769,479.91 in OCB VACS. The approved WFA Cost Share requests total \$3,270,342.75. Additional Cost share requests for OCB VACS totaling \$742.20, Ches Bay VACS totaling \$544.90 and additional WFA cost share requests totaling \$16,324.45 were presented for approval. **Chair Jim Evans made a motion to approve the new OCB VACS, Ches Bay VACS and WFA Cost Share requests as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.** After the approvals of the new cost share requests, the unobligated balance of Ches Bay VACS totals \$1,684,703.58, OCB VACS totals \$768,737.71. After applying the unobligated balances to the WFA need, there still leaves a need of \$833,225.91 to fully fund WFA requests. DCR has guaranteed the funding difference so all eligible WFA requests will be funded. The issues of the completed poultry BMPs have been corrected and now Carmie is just waiting on the actual receipts/bills so that cost share can be paid to the participant. **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: There are currently six potential VCAP living shore line potential projects that Bill and Palmer have conducted site visits. Of the six, two contracts were approved by the District Board for submittal to the VCAP Steering Committee for approval of the projects. (Contract 20-22-03 and 20-22-05). The Steering Committee met on January 27th, contract 20-22-03 was conditionally approved pending additional site photos and slope verification. Contract 20-22-05 was approved for construction. An approval letter has been mailed to the landowner. The project must start in 90 days and be completed by June 1, 2024. **Director Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

C. 2023 Area VI Spring Meeting: This year's meeting is being hosted by VA Dare SWCD on March 7, 2023. It is being held at the Great Bridge and Waterways History Museum in Chesapeake. Registrations are due to VA Dare SWCD by February 24th so Carmie asked that those interested in attending to please let her know as soon as possible.

D. Election Notice for Directors: The Eastern Shore SWCD has four Directors whose terms will end on December 31, 2023. In order to be placed on the ballot for the November 7, 2023 election, paperwork must be picked up at the Registrar's office and returned by June 20, 2023. Jim Evans and Sands Gayle have terms ending for Accomack County as well as Sally Williams and Kyle Sturgis for Northampton County. Public Notice announcing dates and the process has been posted on FSA's door as well as posted on the District website. It will also be included in the next District newsletter.

E. District Reappointment of Edwin Long to RC&D Council: Edwin's new term would begin

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retroactively January 1, 2023 and end on December 31, 2026. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the reappointment of Edwin Long to the RC&D Council through December 31, 2026. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**

F. Camp Woods and Wildlife support request: Camp Woods and Wildlife will be held June 19-23 at Holiday Lake 4-H Center and is open to VA residents aged 13-16 who has an interest in natural resources and has not attended before. The camp has asked the District for \$300 to support one camper. **Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the sponsorship support of \$300 to Camp Woods and Wildlife. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.**

G. VA Tech Soil Judging Team support request: The VA Tech Soil Judging Team will be traveling to Oklahoma to compete in the 23023 National Collegiate Soils Contest. The trip will cost approximately \$10,600 so the team has asked the District to sponsor one of the students attending at \$300.00. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the sponsorship support of \$300 for the VA Tech Soil Judging Team. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:

A. n/a

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:** As cover crops have been checked, Carmie has been adjusting payments if needed. Split application on N and Side-dress on Corn BMPs have been compiled for Board approval and entered into tracking.
- **Poultry Update:** Updates on practices will be given during the FY23 Cost Share Report. Latest completed poultry project had some issues that have been corrected. Once actual receipts/bills have been submitted to the District, cost share payment will be disbursed. Two more current FY20 contracts.

Accounting: Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

CAS Rebuild Focus Group Meeting: Attended this meeting via Zoom on February 3rd. At this point the group is trying to gather suggestions of changes that the group would like to see made in the new software that the current software is incapable of doing.

ESVA Climate Equity Workshop: Staff attended this workshop at the ESCC on January 30th.

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Quickbooks Support: Recently, Carmie helped two Districts with Quickbooks. Also, had Sara Adams, CPA, help me with setting up a recent Hybrid change within VRS in Quickbooks.

Request for Advice from Office of Attorney General (OAG): On February 7th, Nick and Carmie met with Ross Phillips (OAG) via conference call to discuss any options the District may have in regards to a participant submitting paperwork late and/or reporting over 700 acres of “planted” cropland that was not planted or could not be planted. He said the “Part 1” of the application contract does not currently have language to support either issue and until that is added, there really is nothing that can be done. He suggested we work with him to develop language to be added to the “Part 1” and then present to DCR for consideration. He is going to review the “Part 1” closely and get back to us.

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

Webinars/ Meetings/ Conferences:

- January 25-26- Ag Conference – Exmore Moose Lodge

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 was unable to attend due to out-of-town training.

BMP Cost Share:

- Completed cover crop inspections.
- Entered data for Split App and Side dress signups in Tracking.
- Began logging in cover crop spot check dates in Tracking.

Groundwater Committee Meeting 1/17:

- No public participation
- Supervisor Muhly requested additional funding for water testing and public outreach from both County Boards and was granted it.
- Well drillers have been approached about drilling shallower wells in the Surficial Aquifer, but they prefer to use the Yorktown Aquifer.
- Britt McMillian – ARCADIS suggested we may eventually end up with a prohibition on some areas of wells in the future.
- Joe Grist – DEQ gave a presentation on the DEQ pilot program to drill test wells for farms in the Surficial Aquifer and if the test wells don’t meet needs, wells could be drilled into the Yorktown.
- Captains Cove – Groundwater Report Completed. The system was built in the 1970’s and 30 – 40 years of buildup in the pipes has reduced their inside diameter and affected the flow capacity. The Groundwater will not approve report until VDH clarifies what it will do with this issue.
- The next meeting is scheduled for 10am. February 21st at the ESVA Chamber of Commerce.

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VESLT Reports:

- One report filed his month.

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

Meetings:

- 2/10 -Virtual check in meeting with VCAP Coordinator Blair Blanchette.

Events:

- 1/30 - Attended Climate Equity Workshop at ESCC.

Trainings:

- Completed VCAP Certificate Level 1 virtual workshops on 1/20 & 1/26.
- Leaving on 2/15 to attend VCAP field training in Charlottesville and will return on the 16th.

Vehicles:

- 2/2 - Carried District Truck to Hertrich Ford in Pocomoke to diagnose antilock brake sensor problem. They are having trouble acquiring replacement part to date and we may have to carry truck to another dealer to get problem addressed.

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 was unable to attend due to out-of-town training.

BMP Cost Share:

- We finished cover crop inspections and have started to enter the spot check dates into tracking.
- As Nutrient Management practice sign-ups have come in, we have been making the necessary changes and additions.

Trainings and meetings:

- 1/20- 2 of 3 VCAP online training
- 1/24- VACDE Exec Meeting online
- 1/26- 3 of 3 of VCAP online training
- 1/25 & 1/26- Ag Conference
- 1/30- ESVA Climate Equity workshop
- 2/10- VCAP Check-In meeting with Blair Blanchette
- 2/15 & 2/16- VCAP field training in Charlottesville

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 – Training Day is March 1, 2023, and testing day March 23, 2023. We received a \$1000 grant from Dominion Energy. Pelts are here. Scat replicas have been ordered. Remainder will be used for skull replicas. Middle schools have been invited to

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have teams compete at our local level. Arcadia High School, Broadwater Academy, and Homeschool group have confirmed competing. Possibly a Cape Charles Christian will be sending a middle school group.

New programs:

- Power from wind and water – STEM where students have to create a wind mill or a water wheel.
- Water quality programming for middle school
- 5th grade science review bingo – updated to include new topics

Certified Environmental Educator Training with VAAE – Criteria 1 completed. Criteria 2 will be in June.

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

Upcoming Dates:

- 2/13 – CMS – water quality programming
- 2/14 – Homeschool Programming – Poster Contest
- 2/15 – AES – Holland – Wind and water power
- 2/16 – CCCS field trip to KSP - living off the land – My Side of The Mountain
- 2/21 – Area VI Envirothon Meeting
- 2/22 – CE – the role of bivalves in water quality
- 3/1 – Envirothon Training Day
- 3/2 – NHS 4-H Reality Store
- 3/7 – Area VI meeting
- 3/29 – Envirothon Competition

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

- Quarterly Disbursement Letters: sent February 10, funds should follow in less than 30 days – will include EOL verification reimbursements

AG COST SHARE

- Follow Up on Random BMP Verifications
- Cost Share Obligations and Transfers: As the General Assembly begins to discuss and amend the budget introduced by the Governor, legislators and this administration are asking frequent questions about how much of the funding provided to Districts for cost-share has been obligated. As of January 1, 2023, the Bay Districts have obligated approximately 44% of these funds, while Southern Rivers Districts have obligated about 64%. These percentages do not include amounts requested for the WFA practices, and we have made that clear. While FY2023 provided an

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unprecedented level of cost-share funding, the amount of funds that have been obligated is causing concerns.

- DCR currently has a list of Districts that need funding both in the Bay watershed and outside of the Bay watershed. If your District is unable to obligate the cost-share funds provided, it is time to either transfer money to another District or release the allocation back to DCR. Your CDC is ready to assist with either of these processes if needed.
- VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program course February 23: DCR led training will provide introduction, overview, and operation information for the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program and VACS Manual. Training will include a review of the guidelines and policies that are key to the operation of the Best Management Practices and Cost Share program. There will also be a review of the most common BMPs across the state to instruct how to understand practice specifications and required qualifications to properly recommend, approve or deny practices, and implement effectively for Soil and Water Conservation District participants. (This training is NOT the annual VACS update trainings usually held in June.)

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 (by the third Tuesday in June – this is a change from previous elections).
 - § 24.2-507. Deadlines for filing declarations and petitions of candidacy. For any office, declarations of candidacy and the petitions therefor shall be filed according to the following schedule: 1. For a general election in November, by 7:00 p.m. on the second third Tuesday in June;
- Information can be found on the State Board of Elections website: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepacinfo/becoming-a-candidate/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
 - ♣ 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/campaignfinance/2018/candidates/SBE_505_520_Declaration_of_Candidacy_Rev1_15.pdf
 - ♣ Petition of Qualified Voters https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formswarehouse/campaignfinance/2018/candidates/Petition-of-Qualified-Voters-SBE-506_521_letter.pdf ○ SWCD Directors are not required to submit the Statement of Economic Interests (confirmed with the Ethics Council Jan 2023) ○ 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) ○ Contact your local General Registrar if there are any questions

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GRANT DELIVERABLE REMINDERS

- Outreach Event: Deliver an outreach event that meets the following criteria
 - o Market event through at least three venues of which one must be directed towards small farmers or socially disadvantaged producers
 - o Include at event SWCD history, mission, introduction of directors and staff, and offered programs
 - o Must include a discussion featuring ag producers who have participated in the VACS program
 - o Notify and invite all agency partners, including the VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, to participate

DATES TO REMEMBER

February

- Feb 7 – Crossover Day in the VA General Assembly
- Feb 20 – President's Day Holiday, State Offices closed
- Feb 21 – VA No-Till Alliance (VANTAGE) Winter Conference, Agriteer in Rockingham; Register Here
 - o 4 CEUs available (sign-in sheet at event) for VA DCR Nutrient Management Planners & VA DCR & SWCD Conservation Planners
- Feb 23 – VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program Course, 9:00-12:00 – part of DCR Conservation Planner Certification Register:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYod-qrrzMjHNSNW77ZwqJIT1VZH8NU0G2A>
- Feb 25 – General Assembly Adjourns

March

- March 1 – Area V Meeting, 10:00 – 3:00, Spring House, Appomattox
- March 7 – Area VI Meeting, 10:00 – 2:00, Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways History Museum
- March 23 – VSWCB Meeting, Hungry Mother State Park, Marion, VA
- March 23 – Area VI Envirothon Other Dates:
- April 18 – Area V Envirothon
- April 23 – VSWCB Meeting, Pocahontas State Park
- May 16 – Perennial Stream Identification, Williamsburg (Participants who need this will receive an invite via email)
- May 25 – VSWCB Meeting, Department of Forestry Headquarters, Charlottesville
- June 20 – Filing Deadline, Last day to file election documents with local registrar
- October 17-18 – Virginia Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species Protection and Cultural & Historic Resources Protection webinar series (required for DCR Conservation Planner Certification)

Accomack Field Office NRCS Report: 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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PROGRAM UPDATES/DEADLINES:

- **FY23 programs:**

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

- Ranking deadline for High Tunnel & CAP (Conservation Activity Plan) fund pools: 2/3/2023

- ♣ High Tunnel applications: 5 (none preapproved for funding at this time; if more funds become available, they may be funded in the future)

- ♣ Forestry CAP applications: 2 (both have been preapproved for funding)

- Ranking deadline for all other fund pools: 3/3/2023

- ♣ Poultry applications: 9

- ♣ Black Duck applications: 3

- ♣ Livestock: 1

- ♣ Wildlife: 8

- ♣ Forestry: 3

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

- 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

- 3 sites to be re-surveyed and marked in February.

Outreach:

Ben & Jenny attended the Eastern Shore Ag Conference & Trade Show, January 25-26. The NRCS booth provided information to attendees on programs and outreach possibilities.

VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Updates:

- Natural Resource Specialist position o Maggie Herrmann (Southern Illinois University & Louisiana Tech graduate) was selected for position; start date March 13, 2023
- COVID operation status
 - o No masks are required, but employees, customers and visitors are welcome to continue wearing a mask if they choose.
 - o COVID status update received weekly

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

- Recurring SRC (State Resource Conservation) webinars, Wednesdays 8a-10a
- USDA's 99th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum, 2/23-24
- Northampton County Reality Store, 3/2
- SWCD Area VI Spring Meeting, 3/7
- March JED (Joint Employee Development) training, 3/9
- Accomack County Job Fair, 3/15

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

Busy planning several different upcoming trainings such as Pesticide Recertification, Paraquat Dicamba Training, Farm Employee Pesticide Training

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

Edwin Long, Chair, thanked the District for the support. He has served RC&D for 50 years

RC&D has published their Annual Report

The February 15, 2023 Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage

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