



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, August 17, 2022, 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, Kyle Sturgis- Director, Sands Gayle- Director, Sally Williams- Director, Matt Hickman- Associate Director, Chip Turlington- Associate Director, Carmie Savage- District Manager, Bill Savage- Conservation Specialist, Palmer Smith- Conservation Technician, Julie Head- Education Director, Ben Young- NRCS Soils Conservationist, Amy Walker- DCR, and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR.

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

Jim Evans- Director, Rick Hall- Associate Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, Hunter Blake- Associate Director, Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, and Bill Shockley- Associate Director

CALL TO ORDER: Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the August 17, 2022 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS: Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to approve the July 20, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously. Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the July financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sands Gayle, carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. n/a

NEW BUSINESS:

A. **Welcome Palmer Smith, Conservation Technician:** Chair Nick Thomas welcomed Palmer Smith, new Conservation Technician to the District

B. **FY23 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage:** The balance of obligated '20 VACS funds for Poultry projects is \$316,168.97 in Ches Bay and \$0 in OCB along with a remaining balance of \$182,634.40 in obligated FY22 Ches Bay Transfer funds. The FY23 VACS allocation totals \$1,945,741.00 in Ches Bay funds and \$1,051,251.00 in OCB funds. Interest earned through July 31 totals \$72.63 in Ches Bay leaving a new balance of Ches

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

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Bay funds of \$1,945,813.63. Cost Share signup is underway through August 17th. Poultry projects are moving along. The re-inspection conducted by Amanda Pennington, DCR, has passed. Now waiting for receipts to complete and disburse payment. **Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the FY23 Cost Share Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

- C. End of Lifespan BMP Verification Inspections-** Eastern Shore SWCD has one stream exclusion practice whose lifespan will expire December 31, 2022. BMPs not verified by re-inspection by the end of their lifespan will no longer receive any nutrient reduction credits in the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Model resulting in a loss of nutrient reduction credits for VA. DCR will reimburse the District \$200 for every completed inspection. Verifications and data entry must be completed by November 30, 2022.
- D. FY23 VCAP Report- Bill Savage:** There are currently four VCAP living shore line potential projects. They are all in the beginning site visit stages. Bill will be going with SEAS on August 23rd to conduct inspections of three of the potential projects. One has already been inspected by SEAS on June 1st and Bill will be conducting a site evaluation on August 26th. **Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**
- E. Operations Committee Draft Minutes from August 2nd meeting:** The draft minutes from the August 2nd Operations Committee Meeting were presented for approval. After conducting five interview, the Committee approved offering the Conservation Technician position to Palmer Smith. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the August 2nd Operations Committee draft meeting minutes as presented and approve and support the motion passed by the Operations Committee to hire Palmer Smith as the new Conservation Technician. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, carried unanimously.**
- F. DCR's FY22 Assessment of EasternShore SWCD Admin/Ops and Cost Share/TA Grant Agreements:** Olivia Leatherwood, DCR reported the District scored "A's" across the Board on all deliverables.
- G. Update on VDOT requesting Utility and Slope Easements on Barnes Conservation Easement to widen Shield's Bridge in Belle Haven:** A conference call was held with the OAG's office on July 29th. After counsel review, the OAG's office felt the project could move forward as proposed. Nick Thomas had several documents notarized and they have been submitted to VDOT as required.
- H. VA Conservation District Employees Training (VACDE) - August 23-25, 2022 Graves Mountain, Syria VA** The Eastern Shore SWCD will not be attending this year.

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- I. Verizon DSL upgrade to ES Broadband-** The District's Internet Service with Verizon DSL is extremely slow. ES Broadband has proposed to offer service for \$70/ month with a one-time \$500 installation fee. The District could do away with its fax line as seldom used which one save \$66/ month alone. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the upgrade to ES Broadband and eliminating the Fax line. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, carried unanimously.**
- J. District's ASA Policy for Ag Stewardship Complaints-** It's that time of year again to change the District's ASA Policy if needed. Currently, Bill Savage is the lead and Carmie if Bill is not available. The Board agreed the ASA Policy did not need to be changed.
- K. NRCS State Conservationist, Edwin Martinez-Martinez Visit-** On September 19th, NRCS State Conservationist, Edwin Martinez-Martinez is scheduled to spend the day on the Eastern Shore. A working lunch at Accomack Service Center is being planned for Directors/Staff to have an opportunity to discuss any concerns, ideas, etc. **Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the District providing the lunch. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**
- L. VES Land Trust Support Request-** The VESLT has requested support. As a co-holder of easements, the District has supported them with \$1,000 annually over the past few years. **Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to approve \$1,000 support to VESLT again this year. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**
- M. Eastern Shore SWCD Awards Banquet:** The ESCC has offered the Great Hall at no charge for the District's Awards Banquet as an "in-kind" for the support we sent to Robin Rich-Coates Opportunity Scholarship. Several dates were provided to select from. After much discussion, Wednesday October 26th at 6:00 p.m. was set.
- N. At Large Director Re-appointments Due to DCR by September 2nd-** Nick Thomas' appointment is up for renewal and the appropriate paperwork will need to be submitted. **Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to approve the re-appointment of Nick Thomas for another term as an At Large Director. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:

- A.** A thank you note to the District from Robin Rich-Coates family for the \$500 scholarship support in memory of Robin Rich-Coates was included in the meeting packet.

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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:** Completed the Cost Share report for FY23 found under New Business for Board approval. Carmie created several new spreadsheets for the new program year. It's now the time of the year that we are strapped to our computers entering data as signup is received both in the spreadsheets and in the Tracking program.
- **Poultry Update:** Updates on practices will be given during the FY23 Cost Share Report. Amanda Pennington, DCR Engineer inspected and approved the one poultry project requiring a re-inspection. Waiting on receipts to disburse payment and close the project.

- 1) **Accounting:** Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.
- 2) **Local Funding FY23 Allocations:** Carmie has requested the first half allocation from Northampton County (\$5,449.00). The District's funding from Accomack County will not be released until the audit has been conducted. They require an annual audit and DCR requires every other year. The District will be audited this fall.
- 3) **Office Rental Agreement:** Drafted new rental agreement for September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023 and waiting for response from landlord.
- 4) **VDOT- Sheild's Bridge Project:** Participated in a conference call with the OAG's office along with a representative from VESLT regarding their opinion on the project in terms of how it will affect the conservation easement. The OAG's opinion was that it was not affecting the value of the easement due to the size they are asking for and it was fine to move forward. Contacting VDOT to make them aware and they sent several documents that were notarized by Nick which have been completed and submitted to VDOT.
- 5) **Interview Panel:** Participated on the interview panel along with Nick and Rick. Interviewed the 5 applicants we received and one stood out far above the rest: Welcome Palmer Smith!! Contacted the other four verbally and with a follow-up letter.
- 6) **Operations Co Mtg:** Since three of the four Operations Committee members were present after the interviews, it was decided to hold a quick meeting to vote on the hire. Carmie drafted the meeting minutes that are included under New Business.
- 7) **District Website:** Carmie been updating the District's website to keep it up-to-date as time allows.
- 8) **Webinars/ Conference Calls:**
 - 7/22/22: Participated in the WFA Tracking Training

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- 7/28/22: Participated in the DCR Tracking Training

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:

- Ongoing: FY 23 Cost share sign up until 8/17.
- Meeting with farmers and putting info in Tracking.
- Assisted with a poultry litter shed inspection on 7/27.

Groundwater Committee Meeting:

- Bill was unable to attend the 7/19 meeting do to a training conflict.
- The next scheduled meeting is 8/16.

VESLT Reports:

- Four filed this month.

Trainings and meetings:

- Bill attended the (virtual) Tracking Trainings on 7/19 - 7/26 and updates on the 7/28.

Events:

- Bill attended the 2022 Ag Expo in Port Royal, VA on 8/14.

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:

- Training using the BMP tracking program and have been entering data
- Training using the Federal computer and have been looking up tracts

Trainings and meetings:

- 8/10/22- DCR IT Security training completed, now have access to DCR's tracking program
- 8/05/22= NMP Ag Exam- waiting to hear results

Misc.:

- Filling out important new employee paperwork
- After seeing Palmer's introductory bio sent All-District, she was contacted by NACD that she had been selected as a feature spotlight because of her experience participating in the District's Envirothon and then later after college going to work for the District. Wrote the article and submitted as they asked.

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 In The Classroom - cancelled because of low sign ups. We are going to see if maybe we can do it at some of the individual schools as a professional development for continuing teachers.

Northampton New Teacher Farm Tour – new teachers will be meeting at the farm of Kyle Sturgis. We will be providing breakfast along with 4-H and Julie getting to talk about what we offer. Julie is hoping we can do mostly Virginia products for breakfast. Julie is also hoping to put together bags for the teachers featuring info from ESSWCD, 4-H, and Ag In The Classroom. She would also like to include other items from the shore and commodity groups. i.e. lesson plans, informational material, swag, samples (honey, ESCR coffee, Barrier Islands sea salt, Blue Crab Bay samples, etc... If you have any ideas or access to any of these groups please let her know.

VSU Mobile Education Unit – Working with VSU to have their mobile classroom visit the shore on October 18 and 19. We are also going to have an opportunity to have farmers visit. A new grant deliverable was included in Fiscal Year 2023 that requires us to do an outreach to underserved agricultural groups. This will meet that requirement once the required advertising is done.

Master Naturalist Training – Julie will be participating this fall. It is 10 weeks on Thursdays and focuses specifically on resources and issues of the Eastern Shore.

Upcoming Dates

- a. 8/17 – Climate Adaptation Working Group
- b. 8/18 – Northampton New Teacher Welcome
- c. 8/22 – NCPS All District Welcome.
- d. 8/23 – Watershed Roundtable
- e. 9/1 – Kiptopeke Elementary School Open House
- f. 9/20 – Accomack Farm Tour
- g. 9/21 – Northampton Farm Tour
- h. 9/28 – Otter Fest – Accawmacke Elementary
- i. 10/8 – Eastern Shore Ag Fair

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 AND OPERATIONS

- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Training for Elected Directors: Please remember it is time to retake FOIA training for most elected Directors. Training is due two years after the

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last time you completed it. Please be advised DCR/CDCs do not keep track of FOIA training for elected directors. The training is available online at the FOIA Council website (be sure it's for Locally Elected Officials). The FOIA Council is also hosting several live webinar FOIA trainings. The FOIA Council confirmed that attendance at the live virtual training sessions will be tracked with the virtual presentation software so the FOIA Council can provide a completion certificate for those attending the virtual training sessions. The link to register: <https://event.webinarjam.com/register/16/9p2qmhp> Local Elected Officials Virtual Training Webinars August 9 @ 10:00 am, September 13 @ 2:00 pm, October 12 @ 10:00 am

- **FY22 Grant Assessments:** FY22 Grant assessments will be presented at either the August or September Board meetings.
- **At-Large Director Appointments/Reappointments:** Due to Blair September 2nd to go before the VSWCB then. If it is a reappointment, only form 14 is necessary. If it is a new appointment, DCR needs form 14 and 15. Please let Olivia know if you need those documents.
- **Return of Funds Invoices:** Olivia is currently finishing up reconciling EOY reports which includes reviewing the return of cost-share funds. Districts will receive an invoice from her along with instructions on the return process. Please have these postmarked by Sept. 9.
- **SWCD Audits:** Robinson, Farmer, & Cox will be reaching out to SWCDs soon to schedule dates for Oct/Nov. SWCDs to be audited: Appomattox River, Chowan Basin, Eastern Shore, Virginia Dare

AG COST SHARE

- CY22 Random Verifications and Admin File Reviews: She is currently working to schedule CY22 Verifications and admin file reviews hopefully by the end of the month for some time during the fall, if not already completed.
- CWFA Awards: For local awards, please send Olivia the name of the individual/entity receiving the award (exactly as it should appear on the certificate). Nominations for the Chowan Basin and Coastal Basin will be due to her on or before 11/1/22. James River Basin nominations will be due to Denney Collins.
- FY23 Secondary Considerations and FY23 Average Cost List: Both documents must be approved by the SWCD Board of Directors and secondary considerations must be approved by DCR prior to allocating any FY23 cost-share.
- Quarter 1 Cost-Share Disbursements: Letters will be sent to Districts on August 24. Please let her know how much cost-share you anticipate needing in the first disbursement.

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GRANT DELIVERABLES/ REMINDERS

• **Dedicated Reserves:** On page 14 of the 2022 Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations is guidance regarding Reserve Fund Balances. “Public funds … are provided to districts not for savings, but strictly for the performance of conservation.” Board action is necessary to dedicate, for specific purposes, any amount above twelve months of routine operating funds (undesignated reserve funds). Once the books are closed for FY22, this action should be placed on SWCD board meeting agendas. This should happen before 9/30 in Quarter 1 of FY23 so that necessary transfer can be made on the Attachment E Q1 Report.

• **FY23 SWCD Annual Report for 7/1/21-6/30/22** should be completed by September 30th .

• **New Outreach Deliverable:** Please keep the new outreach deliverable (Admin/Ops deliverable #17) on your radar as you begin/continue planning for the year. For more information, please see Attachment F on the DCR Admin/Ops grant. DCR STAFFING UPDATES:

• New CDC: Amanda “Mandy” Fletcher starts 8/10/22 in the Abingdon office.

• Nutrient Management Specialist: DCR is hiring a Nutrient Management Specialist to work out of the Radford Regional Office. Please see the DCR website for information on how to apply. Open until filled. August 2022 – CDC Report Olivia Leatherwood, DCR Division of Soil and Water Conservation olivia.leatherwood@dcr.virginia.gov | 757-353-7973

DATES TO REMEMBER:

• AUGUST

Aug 5 – Nutrient Management Certification Exam – Agriculture, 8:20-11:30am, Location TBD. For more information: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/nmtrain>

Aug 23-25 – VACDE Summer Training, Graves Mountain Lodge, please see VACDE/VASWCD for more information.

• SEPTEMBER

Sept/Oct – DCR Conservation Planner Certification Program Final Course, more info to come

Sept 15 – VASWCD Quarterly meeting

Sept 26 – Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board – Audit Subcommittee, 9am, VDOF, Charlottesville

Sept 26 – Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, 10:30am, VDOF, Charlottesville

Sept 30 – Dedicated Reserves Sept 30 – Annual Report due to DCR

• OCTOBER

Oct 1 – Clean Water Farm Award nominations due to DCR

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Oct 18-19 – Virginia Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species Protection and Cultural & Historic Resources Protection Webinars. Registration and webinar information to follow. These are required Conservation Planner certification courses.

• **NOVEMBER**

Nov 30 – CY22 End of Lifespan Verifications completion date

• **DECEMBER**

Dec 4-6 – VASWCD Annual Meeting, Hotel Roanoke

Dec 7 – VSWCB Meeting, Hotel Roanoke

Acomack Field Office NRCS Report: Ben Young, NRCS Acting District Conservationist, presented a verbal report to the Board

EQIP

- Obligated 2 Heavy Use Area Protection- concrete pads and one high tunnel
- Approved 1 Heavy Use Area Protection- concrete pads
- Preapproved 2 Black Duck shallow water impoundments
- 2 Shallow water impoundments for Black Duck were cancelled.

CSP

- Preapproved 1 long leaf pine planting
- Eligible renewals for FY23: Cropland-2, Forestry-1

ACEP

- Ongoing restoration work on 1 WRE (wetland reserve easement) in Northampton County
- Wetland Easements annual monitoring completed

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

- Hosting an Italian Ryegrass Prevention in Wheat Workshop on Wednesday, August 31, 2022 at 7:30 am at Painter AREC.
- Eastern Shore Ag Fair- October 8th at Machipongo- Working to pull this event together and line everything up. Should be a great day full of fun things to do for the community to attend.

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The August 17, 2022 Board meeting was adjourned.
Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage

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