



**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, August 14, 2019**

**EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
USDA Service Center, Accomac, Virginia**

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

Robin Rich-Coates, Chair
Jim Evans, Director
Fred Holland, Director

Nick Thomas, Director
Rick Hall, Assoc. Director

Others present were:

Carmie Savage, District Manager
Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist
Julie Head, Education Director
Brooke Budd, '19 Camper
Jessica Bernard

Blair Gordon, DCR
Brian Broadwater
Jane Corson-Lassiter, NRCS
Ta'vonta Timmons, '19 Camper

CALL TO ORDER: Robin Rich-Coates, Chair, called to order the August 14, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

MINUTES: The June 12, 2019 meeting minutes were approved. (Evans, Holland)

TREASURER'S REPORT: The financial reports for July and August 2019 were approved. (Evans, Holland)

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **ESVA Groundwater Co. Meeting Minutes- June 18, 2019-** These meeting minutes were included in the meeting packet.
- B. **Environmental Education Council Meeting Minutes- July 9, 2019-** These meeting minutes were included in the meeting packet.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Youth Conservation Camper Reports:** Brooke Budd and Ta'vonta Timmons reported to the Board their experiences at camp and what they enjoyed the most. Both agreed they would recommend the camp to others. Robin Rich-Coates presented each a District check for \$75 towards their travel expenses.

APPROVED: _____
BOARD CHAIRMAN

SIGNED _____
BOARD SECRETARY

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B. Final Assessments of FY19 DCR/ESSWCD Grants: Blair Gordon, DCR, presented the annual grant assessments for both the FY19 Administrative & Operational Support Grant and the FY19 Cost Share & Technical Assistance Grant. The past DCR CDC provided most of the information before he left. In Both reports the District received A++ and met all grant deliverables. Blair stated that the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board would be provided with the assessments as well.

C. FY19 Final Cost Share Report: Carmie Savage presented the FY19 Final Cost Share Report to the Board. The FY19 DCR Grant Allocation for Chesapeake Bay was \$222,484.00 and \$163,985.00 for Outside Chesapeake Bay (OCB). Interest earned totaling \$325.51 through June 30, 2019, contracted no-till repayment funds in the amount of \$13,353.92, additional funding from other Districts totaling \$128,989.00 and a return of \$252.00 brings the total available Chesapeake Bay funds to \$365,404.43 and the total available OCB funds including contracted no-till repayment funds of \$1,160.08, additional funds from other Districts of \$125,000 and a return of \$628.00 to \$290,773.08 as of June 30, 2019. Funding also included an additional \$3,562.47 towards Ches. Bay practices and an additional \$6,210.12 towards OCB practices using '19 VNRCF funds budgeted in the Operating budget under "Cost Share Support". In total, \$368,966.90 in Ches. Bay practices and \$296,983.20 in OCB practices were funded as of June 30, 2019. Leaving a balance of zero in each funding source. Carmie also presented a final breakdown of practices and total acres funded in each county. A total of \$665,950.10 was disbursed to Eastern Shore producers in FY19. One CREP contract totaling \$10,567.00 was approved for carryover at the June 12th District Board meeting. **A motion was made and carried to approve the FY19 Final Cost-share report as presented. (Holland, Evans)**

D. FY20 Cost Share Report: Carmie Savage presented the FY20 Cost Share Report to the Board. The FY20 DCR Grant Allocation for Chesapeake Bay is \$1,568,171.00 and \$300,352.00 for Outside Chesapeake Bay (OCB). Interest earned totaling \$2.06 was reported for July 2019. Carmie reported a large sign-up so to date.

The following nutrient management plans were submitted for approval which included one plan written by smithAg & Environmental, Inc. and one plan written by Keen Consulting, Inc.

| Name of Planner | Operator | Total Cropland Acres | Plan Expiration Date |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| smithAg & Environmental, Inc. | Kemper Goffigon | 361.1 | 7/15/2020 |
| Keen Consulting, Inc. | FA Holland & Sons | 1,669.4 | 1/15/2020 |

A motion was made and carried to approve the FY20 Cost-share Report as presented including two nutrient management plans. (Thomas, Holland)

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- E. Update on District's Mobile Soils Trailer:** Julie Head presented updates to the Board regarding the Mobile Soils Trailer and showed pictures of its progress. Adler Display still is on target for completion at end of August. Julie is in the process of creating lesson plans that can be used in conjunction with the soils trailer.
- F. EPA's Evaluation of VA's Draft Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan:** The board was provided a copy of EPA's evaluation in their meeting packets. On page 4 of the evaluation, model simulations are indicating a Nitrogen shortfall for the Eastern Shore. James Davis-Martin, DEQ, and William Keeling, DEQ, clarified the evaluation in regards to the Shore. DEQ stated that, "first, the EPA did not consider Basin-to-Basin exchanges, second, that the shortfall they reported was less than 1% (well within the margin of error of the models), and, third, with the exchanges VA proposed, the Draft WIP III was as or more protective of water quality in all Bay segments when assigned to planning targets."
- G. FY20 Office Space Rent Agreement for period 9/01/19 through 8/31/20:** Carmie reported the landlord had not yet responded with the new agreement so this will have to be revisited at the September District Board meeting. **VESLT Support Request:** Instead, Robin Rich-Coates reported to the Board that the VA Eastern Shore Land Trust has sent a letter of support to the District. The District has supported VESLT with \$1,000 in the past. **A motion was made and carried to approve supporting VESLT with \$1,000. (Evans, Holland)**
- H. Operations Committee Meeting Written Minutes- 6/12/19** The draft Operations Committee meeting minutes were presented for approval from the June 12th meeting. **A motion was made and carried to approve the 6/12/19 Operations Committee meeting minutes as presented (Holland, Evans)**
- I. Operations Committee Meeting 8/14/19- Verbal Report:** Chair Robin Rich-Coates presented the following summary from the 8/14/19 Operations Committee meeting:
- The Conservation Specialist has meet the 6-month new-hire probationary period as of August 4th. The committee reviewed the salary and recommended a salary increase reflected in an updated FY20 District Budget for approval. **A motion was made and carried to approve the FY20 Updated Budget that reflects a salary increase effective August 18, 2019. (Holland, Thomas)**
 - The committee reviewed the Designated Funds Report as of June 30, 2019 and recommended it for approval with one update. Adler Display suggested a solar panel system for the mobile soils trailer. Adler Display quoted \$9,000 to include all required: one 190 watt Solar Panel on the roof, two 155 ah Batteries, all the electronics and wiring with installation. The committee is going to ask the Conservation Specialist to gather more detailed information but recommend the transfer of \$7,995.22 in designated funds from projects related to conservation to the mobile soils trailer budget. After it has been researched further, if the Board decides to go with solar vs. the purchase of a generator, the funding will be in place. **A motion was made and carried to approve the recommended**

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Designated Funds Report to include the transfer of \$7,995.22 to the mobile soils trailer budget. (Holland, Thomas)

STAFF REPORTS

District Manager Report: Carmie Savage, District Manager, gave an oral report to Directors. Her written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

FY 2019 Cost Share Program: All practices were paid and completed. VCAS funds were fully spent with the help from transfers from 5 Districts and the use of District TA funds we were able to fully fund all sign-ups for FY19. Carmie created the FY19 Final Cost Share Report and the breakdown of practice acres by county report which is included in new business.

FY20 Cost Share Program:

- Advertising for the new fiscal year program included media releases, FB posts, Website Advertisements, and postcard announcements mailed directly to individual farmers. Sign-up for the 1st ranking period started July 15 and will run through August 16.
- Developed an electronic sign-up form that is available for use on the District website as well as a ton of information on BMPs under the Conservation Programs tab.
- FY20 Cost Share Rally was held at Painter AREC on July 17, also well-advertised. Lunch was provided by Exmore Diner and over 30 farmers attended. Carmie gave a presentation on available BMP practices and a walk through on how to use the District's electronic sign-up form as a sign-up option.
- Sign-up is going strong for the 1st ranking period which so far includes: cover crops, nutrient management, poultry litter sheds, split application practices for corn and small grains.
- Bill and Carmie have been trying to stay on top of all of the required data entry.

DCR's Required Reports:

- FY21 approved Attachment D Budget Template was submitted by June 30.
- The Cash Balance report and the Carryover (CREP) report were submitted by June 30.
- FY19 Self-Assessment Questionnaire was submitted by June 30.
- The 1st Quarter FY20 Attachment E, Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss reports were submitted by July 15 deadline.

Accounting: The books were closed for FY19 and I have set up the FY20 District Budget in QB as well as payroll changes in QB and VRS for the new fiscal year. Accounting and payroll are always on going.

- Carmie completed the Designated Funds report as of June 30 and presented to the Operations Committee.
- Richard and Rikki Sterrett have donated \$150 towards the Ellis-Humphreys Memorial Camp Scholarship bringing the available funds to \$545.05.

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Awards Banquet: The FY19 Awards Banquet was held on July 26th at the ESCC Workforce Development Center with over 55 in attendance which also included Sec. of Natural Resources- Matt Strickler, Senator Lynwood Lewis, Delegate Rob Bloxom and DCR Division Director- Darryl Glover. Exmore Diner catered and Etch-Art Design in Salisbury created the award plaques.

EE Council Meeting: Carmie attended the EE Council Meeting on July 9th to update the committee on the success of the Watershed Festivals.

Shore Big Trees: A-NPDC partnered with the District to conduct the educational deliverable of their VA Coastal Zone Management Program NOAA Grant. Carmie submitted a final Grant Report and the District will receive \$3,200 in October. After the reimbursement of expenses for the two etched granite markers and mulch, the District will have \$ 1,835.97 remaining.

District's Mobile Soils Trailer: Julie and Carmie participated in a conference call with Adler Display on 8/5. Julie will present details during new business but they are still saying it will be completed the last week of August. A few tweaks were made on Monday and things are progressing.

ES Women in AG Gathering: This event was held on 8/12 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 am. at the Painter AREC. Carmie presented information on programs the District offers along with other partner agencies. The District, upon request of VCE, will provided morning refreshments.

Update on Non-Compliant No-till practices (SL-15A): In preparing for randomly selected DCR no-till spot checks, Bill contacted each participant selected to notify them. In doing so, one applicant reported to Bill that he no longer rents that land and has not had it for several months. The land has started growing in trees. He is aware that he is now out of compliance and will have to repay a portion of cost share funds that have not been in compliance. Carmie mailed a letter to the participant giving him 60 days from the date of the letter (October 8, 2019) to repay the funds totaling \$ 340.20 to the District.

Graves Mountain VACDE Training: All staff is scheduled to attend this training in Syria, VA on August 20th through August 22.

Trainings:

- Carmie completed 6 webinars on the VA Public Records Act by June 30. She is now listed as the Records Retention Officer for the District with the Library of VA.
- Carmie participated in a DCR webinar on VACS and Ag BMP Tracking Updates on 8/6/19.

District Website: Carmie has been keeping the District's website up-to-date which is ongoing and has added updated Awards Banquet information and a lot to the Conservation Programs.

District Facebook Page: Carmie has been keeping the District's FB page updated as time allows and promoting District and partner events.

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Conservation Specialist Report: Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist, gave an oral report to Directors. His written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

Groundwater Meeting- June 18, 2019: Bill attended this meeting on June 18th at A-NPDC in Accomac. The following is a summary of the meeting:

- During the public comment period, Mr. Ken Dufty voiced his concern on groundwater issues including the Potomac aquifer dropping 200 feet within the last century. According to the Newport News Daily Press, a 300 foot drop could result in wells running dry. Mr. Dufty also brought up the fact that carbon filtration will not remove nitrates from groundwater. It takes reverse osmosis treatment to accomplish that.
- Also, during the public comment period, Roberta Kellam voiced concerns over low-income and non-English speaking people not understanding the Planning District Commission (PDC) mitigation plan. She believes the plan may need board review to examine discrepancies. Example: 72 hours for a poultry house operation to provide drinking water to landowners in the vicinity following a pollution problem. Anyone affected by potential water shortage should be notified letter.
- Committee Member Elaine Meil spoke about the failing alternative treatment systems spilling sewage into the bayside and / or seaside waterways. She feels landowners may not report failing systems due to the expensive replacement costs eventually leading to a return of the pit privy.
- The Groundwater Committee proposed that all new applicants (residential and commercial) use the Columbia aquifer. DEQ currently requires exploration of 53% of wells. The Groundwater Committee would like 100% exploration on all wells to see if they could use the Columbia. Exploration and testing expenses would be approximately \$7,000 per well. Holly Porter of DPI said the added expense of these test wells to existing operations would be unfair to all operations, both in and out of problem areas.

BMP – Cost Share:

- The press releases for the new BMP went out June 2nd to WESR and Eastern Shore News to announce the Cost Share and Cover Crop sign up beginning July 15th. Post cards were also mailed out to farmers announcing the BMP - Cost Share program sign up and the upcoming rally.
- The 1st annual BMP Cost Share rally was held at the AREC on June 17th. This rally was scheduled as a means of getting information to a large crowd of farmers in order to brief them on the latest changes to the program, as well as a chance for the farmers to ask questions about any portion of the program's numerous practices that they may be interested in or need clarification on.
- Sign up began July 15th and will run until August 16th. The program has been well received to date with numerous farmers and poultry operations signing up.

DCR Tracking Program: As the sign up progresses, all Farm, Tract, Field & Acres information has to be adjusted on the District sign up and NM spread sheets and then entered into the DCR tracking program. This process is ongoing and will be completed prior to the September District Board meeting.

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District Vehicle Maintenance: The District van was serviced June 17th at 79,000 miles. New tires were installed and aligned by Shore Tire and Auto. The District truck was driven to Hertrich in Pocomoke on June 19th to have the recalled “faulty” tail gate latch repaired in order to keep the tailgate from unexpectedly dropping and spilling cargo on the road.

VCAP: Bill participated in a VCAP webinar 7/1/2019. Some of the highlights were as follows:

- No changes were made to cost share rates and caps.
- \$1,000,000 funding dollars this year
- 419 projects approved and 390 completed between March 2016 and June 2019.
- Native plants required for all vegetated practices.
- Online versions of the FY20 VCAP manual are now available with the paper copies being mailed out soon.

Bill has been working with the town of Cape Charles on an interest in a VCAP project. He has received the application and will contact the VCAP administrator to move forward.

USDA Linc Pass: Bill drove to the Delaware Sea Shore on July 24th to have his photo and finger prints taken again in order to get the Linc pass. He has scheduled an appointment for August 28th to pick up the pass.

VESLT Monitoring Reports: Bill has been filing VESLT Monitoring reports as they are submitted to the District. Only one VESLT monitoring report filed since the last meeting.

Annual DCR Spot checks: Bill and Blair Gordon, DCR, conducted spot checks of continuous no-till practices (SL-15A) with Blair Gordon on 8/14/19 in both Accomack and Northampton Counties.

2019 Awards Banquet:

- On July 8th Bill began working on my portion of the program which included interviewing David Rew for the Clean Water Farm Award and Jim Evans for the Conservation Farmer Award. He composed the first draft of the power point narrative for their awards and took photos for use in the slide show.
- Carmie, Julie and Bill set up the banquet room on the afternoon of July 26th.
- The annual ESSWCD 2019 Awards Banquet was held in the evening of July 26th at the Eastern Shore Community College. Besides the presentation and awards, Bill’s favorite part of the event was the excellent crab cake and shrimp dinner catered by the Exmore Dinner!

Trainings:

- On July 1st Bill viewed the VCAP webinar.
- On August 6th Bill viewed the DCR - BMP webinar

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Education Director Report: Julie Head, Education Director, gave an oral report to Directors. Her written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

Outdoor Exploration Day- Planning meetings were held 7/1 and 8/5. Not counting ESOAC, ESSWCD, or KSP, there are 18 exhibitors lined up to attend. This year's event is September 28, 2019. Passports have been redesigned so they can be used over multiple years.

Nature Detectives Camp – held July 29 – August 2, 8 campers attended. Campers learned about worms and made a worm composter, bird migration, made bat houses, and went kayaking.

EE Council – met July 9 and August 13th. Shore Outdoors will be published in October and the theme is migration. Current articles include migrating birds, bird watching, what happens when you can't migrate, monarch migration, sea animal migration, puzzles, and a fun kids activity. Working on an online version of an educational directory for teachers.

Cape Charles Summer Splash Camp – June 27 -43 kids were in attendance. They learned about worms and how they help the soil. July 16 – did nature painting with 16 campers from ages 5-7. Campers 8 -11 played "It's A Risky Business – Bird Migration."

Big Share – held 6/26 at AREC. Met a lot of other individuals involved in education programs to schools and learned about what they had to offer.

Project Learning Tree – attended Project Learning Tree training in Newport News on August 8, 2019. DOF is trying to find enough folks interested to do a facilitator training on the Eastern Shore.

Environmental Column in Eastern Shore First – Julie has talked to Ted Shockley and will be contributing a column each month with an environmental/agricultural focus. August 2019 edition was on Conservation Camp with Brooke Budd and TaVonta Timmons. September will feature some of the award winners and the practices they have implemented to be environmentally responsible.

Classroom Education Programs – working on handouts for each grade level that will be teacher friendly and let them know what the District has to offer for their particular grade and which SOL's the program correlates with.

PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:

DCR District Liaison, Blair Gordon: Blair Gordon gave an oral report to Directors. Amy Walker's written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

Administration and Operations:

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- **Newly revised *Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations*** effective July 2019
- **Dedicated Reserves**-On page 12 of the *2019 Desktop Procedures for Fiscal Operations* is guidance regarding Reserve Fund Balances. "Public funds ... are provided to districts not for savings, but strictly for the performance of conservation."
- FY19 annual report due by September 30. (ESSWCD completed)
- Reminder: Residual **RMP TRC training funds** may be used for travel expenses related to attending Conservation Planning training & recertification hours. These '14 funds may not be transferred into general operations accounts.

AG COST SHARE:

- **FY20 1st Quarter Cost-Share and Technical Assistance (TA) Disbursements:** Per the FY20 Policy and Grant Agreement, cost-share disbursements are based on the projected 90-day needs for completed and certified BMPs and Tracking Program data showing approved and completed practices. Disbursement letters will be transmitted to SWCDs on August 26. (RMP funds will be included.)
- Reminder: From page II-14 in the PY2020 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 a FY20 Contract Part 1 prior to planting.
- **SL-9 has changed to SL-10 effective 7/1/19.** Please mark through all references to SL- "9" in your hard copy FY20 VACS Manual and replace with SL-10. The new language in the 20 Manual stays the same, just the number changes. This was simply a typo not caught before the manual went to the printer.
- **Please fully review Part I of the VACS contract with all PY20 sign-ups.** Be sure they are fully aware of the strings attached to the acceptance of cost-share and tax credits. Be sure to have the applicant check the box on Part 1 about any possible PY20 sign-up at other SWCDs! The limit of 2020 contract payments for any one participant (signer of Part I) is \$100,000 across all 47 SWCDs. The "participant contracts" button within a contract in tracking is available to check if a participant has approved contracts at other SWCDs. The only exception to the \$100,000 participant cap is via a variance request available only for WP-4 or WP-4B practices. (There are a couple of practices with lower caps)

Random BMP Verifications/Spot Checks: Eastern Shore SWCD spot checks were completed on 8/14/19.

Clean Water Farm Awards: Local award nominations as well as Basin nominations are **due to DCR no later than 10/1/2019**. The 10 Grand Basin winners will be recognized at the VASWCD Annual Meeting in Norfolk. Basin nominees require a 1-2 page written narrative, at least six PowerPoint slides & a completed application form.

Periodic Review of the Resource Management Plan Regulations (4VAC50-70)

The Department of Conservation and Recreation on behalf of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, is conducting a periodic review of the Resource Management Plans regulations. The Department is seeking comments on ways

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the regulations could be improved. Comments may be submitted online at <http://www.townhall.virginia.gov/L/comments.cfm?periodicreviewid=1834>. Comments may also be sent to Christine Watlington at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, 600 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219 or to christine.watlington@dcr.virginia.gov. Comments must include the commenter's name and address (physical or email) in order to receive a response to the comment from the agency. It is expected that responses to the public comments received will be presented to the Board at the December 11, 2019 meeting. Please feel free to contact Christine Watlington, DCR Policy and Regulatory Coordinator with questions. The comment period ends September 6, 2019.

USDA NRCS District Conservationist, Jane Corson-Lassiter: Jane Corson-Lassiter, USDA NRCS DC, gave a verbal report.

Jane Lassiter updated the Board on EQIP contract status since NRCS staff are completing FY2019 contracts. Accomac is finishing up on 7 poultry contracts and 2 Black Duck Initiative contracts. She reported that NRCS area engineer Marques Hunter and DU Chase Colmorgon were on site with Accomac Field Office to survey the Black Duck sites that day.

NRCS is working on CRP and CREP re-enrollment contracts at this time. Jane also announced FY2020 sign-up dates. **(Note that notice was received on 8/15/19 that these dates are not accurate since authority to establish sign-up for new FY has not been conferred.)**

The August Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie Savage