

James River Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting
February 16th, 2023

The James River Soil and Water Conservation District held its monthly Board Meeting at the Prince George Human Services Building on February 16th, 2023

Attendees:

Directors: *Carey Allen, Gregory Powers, Jerry Ford, Andy Petik, Scott Reiter*

Associate Directors: *Avis Bennett, Sierra Seekford*

Agency Partners: *Olivia Leatherwood, Ariel Coleman*

Staff: *Brianna Moring, Joseph Gerdes, Anne Devine*

Absent: *Laura Thompson, Zane Bernard*

Call to order/Invocation: Carey called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM

Chairman's Comments: We hired Anne Devine as our new Conservation Technician. Welcome to the team Anne, we are excited to have you join us.

February 16th Board of Directors Meeting Agenda:

- Greg moved to approve the Agenda, Jerry seconded: Passed

January Board of Directors Meeting Minutes:

1/19/23 BOD Minutes

Edit minutes to include "inside the Extension office" to the location.

- Greg moved to approve the January Board Meeting Minutes, Scott seconded: Passed

Treasurers Report:

Edit accounts to reflect Farmers Breakfast funds into the correct account (currently in Farmers Cookout)

- Greg moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and file it for audit, Jerry seconded: Passed

Conservation Report:

- Scott moved to approve VACS contracts 12-23-0004, 12-23-0015, and 12-23-0027, Jerry seconded: Passed
- Scott moved to approve VCAP contract 12-23-007 and forward it to the VCAP Steering Committee for final approval, Greg seconded: Passed

Agricultural Assessments:

The Board reviewed the two presented Agricultural Assessments completed in Chesterfield.

- Greg moved to approve and pass on the completed Agricultural Assessments to Chesterfield County, Jerry seconded: Passed

Partner Reports:

Olivia Leatherwood, Conservation District Coordinator (DCR)

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: Please continue to work with participants who have maintenance needs. Remember to update the Verification Module as repairs are completed.
- 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 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 an 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/formwarehouse/campaign-finance/2018/candidates/SBE_501_4-rev7-18.pdf
Declaration of Candidacy – Local Offices
https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/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

GRANT DELIVERABLE REMINDERS

- Outreach Event: Deliver an outreach event that meets the following criteria
 - Market event through at least three venues of which one must be directed towards small farmers or socially disadvantaged producers
 - Include at event SWCD history, mission, introduction of directors and staff, and offered programs
 - Must include a discussion featuring ag producers who have participated in the VACS program
 - 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
 - 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)

Ariel Coleman, (Acting) District Conservationist (NRCS)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Received 7 high tunnel applications that were assessed and ranking by Feb 3rd. 6 of those 7 applications have been approved for funding.
- Currently, there are 2 livestock and 2 wildlife applications to be assessed and ranked by March 3rd.

Conservation Technical Assistance

- FSA compliance review field view will be complete by May 26.
- Gordon Barnes will be reviewer for FY23.

Earth Team Volunteer Program

- If you know anyone, (high school age or older) that would like to volunteer pass their info along to me!

VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Changes

- COVID operation status- All three counties in LOW category. Doors are open, masks are not required.

Staff Reports:

Brianna Moring- District Manager

February 2023 Staff Report

Completed Tasks:

- Hired Anne Devine as our new Conservation Technician (Welcome Anne!)
- Signed Scope of Services Agreement with Richmond. Waiting for them to sign and send over Purchase Order for VCAP services.
- Attended Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP) VCAP Training
- Scheduled Spring Rain Barrel Workshops (May 27th & June 24th @ 10 AM)

Ongoing Tasks:

- Onboarding Anne
- Working with Richmond to finalize VCAP
- Working on Envirothon (CTC @ Hull & Clover Hill)
- Working with Area VI on the Area Envirothon (Shirts, Smithfield, Trophies, Ribbons, Gifts)
- Completing the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Level 1 Training (take the test)
- Maintaining Invoices
- Maintaining contact with DCR and other partner agencies

Meetings:

- 2/16 CBLP in Charlottesville
- 2/21 Area VI Envirothon Meeting
- 3/1-3 VNRLI (Farmville) Session 4/6
- 3/7 Area VI Spring Meeting
- 3/20 RVA Green City Commission Meeting

Request:

- Virginia Tech Soil Judging
 - The president of the Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team sent our District a letter asking us to sponsor a student on their team to travel to the national competition in Oklahoma in April. They are requesting \$300 to sponsor one student.
- Andy moved to sponsor the VT Soil Judging Team for \$300, Greg seconded: Passed

Joseph Gerdes- Conservation Specialist

February 2023 Staff Report

VCAP:

- Completed three site visits in Chesterfield

- Chesterfield Master Gardener Training – Water Quality, SWCDs, and Stormwater/VCAP
- VCAP is now offering a program to give 50% cost-share payment upfront to encourage more sign-ups. Districts can choose to participate or not.

Agriculture:

- Field Work
 - Spot checking cover crops
 - Met with Jim Dyson to see his farm and review plan for cropland conversion to pines
- *Contract #12-22-0014 (WQ-12 – Roof Runoff Management)*: Gutters and downspouts are installed. Held pre-construction meeting with contractor (Perkinson), outlet pipe should be installed this week or next.
- Updating NMPs and recommending other agronomic practices to interested producers.

Misc:

- Area IV Spring Meeting – March 7th
 - Great Bridge Battlefield & Waterways History Museum; Chesapeake VA; 10am – 2pm

Committee Reports:

Legislative:

- For VASWCD legislative updates, please review the report from Don Wells

Staff/Director Comments:

Scott: Farm Day is set for April 18th at Willie Bresko's Farm. This is the first farm day in three years. The rain date is set for April 19th. I will be meeting with the Farm Bureau Board on March 15th. Drill parts for the repair came out to around \$3,000.

Greg: I have a friend who is interested in getting Hoop Houses. The Board recommended he reach out to NRCS.

Carey: Chesterfield is interested in doing two additional horse shows per year after the response at the County Fair.

Sierra: CCE is holding a session on Intro to Forest Carbon Markets on March 3rd from 9:00 AM- 3:15 PM

Adjournment:

- Scott moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM, Greg seconded: Passed

Respectfully submitted,

Brianna Moring, Secretary

Carey Allen, Chair