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**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Thursday, October 20, 2022**  
**8033 Ashton Avenue, Manassas, VA**

(Zoom virtual option for Associate Directors, Partners, District Staff, and Citizens)

***In-person Attendees:***

Jim Gehlsen, Director – Chairman  
Will Lintner, Director – Vice Chairman  
Mansimran Kahlon, Director – Treasurer  
Tiziana Bottino, Director – Secretary  
Thomas Bolles, Director – VCE Representative  
Harry Glasgow, Associate Director  
Debbie Cross, VA Conservation District Coordinator – DCR  
Jacob Zielinski, Bay Watershed Specialist – Dept. of Forestry  
Duane Mohr, District Manager  
Nicole Slazinski, Conservation Specialist  
John Price - Citizen

***Virtual Zoom Meeting Attendees:***

Sonnie Cuffey, Associate Director  
Veronica Tangiri, Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator

Chairman Gehlsen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Gehlsen introduced Mr. John Price, the former Chairman of the Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District. Mr. Price recognized the Prince William SWCD staff for the great job they did preparing for the Farm Field Days event.

Citizen's Time – None present

Minutes of September 15 meeting – The motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Kahlon with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Bolles and passed by a 5/0 vote.

Board of Directors Meeting, October 20, 2022

Treasurer's Report for September and 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. FY 23 Financials – The motion to file the Treasurer's report for audit was made by Mr. Gehlsen with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Bolles and passed by a 5/0 vote.

July - September 2022

Income

DCR FY 23 1st Qtr. Operations Funding	\$45,707.50
DCR FY 23 1st Qtr. Technical Assistance Funding	\$27,969.75
FY 23 1st Qtr. PWC Secured Funding	\$71,186.25
Cash Reserves Money Market Interest	\$215.19
Total	<u>\$145,078.69</u>

Other Income

FY 23 1st Qtr. Cost Share Disbursement	\$94,417.00
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Total Staff Payroll Expenses are lower than budgeted, as projected Conservation staff interim increases have not yet been implemented, and several full-time staff members are not yet eligible for benefits.

Total Staff Benefits are below budget, as 4 staff members are not yet eligible to enroll in full-time staff benefits.

***Managers Time – Presented by Mr. Mohr***

Mr. Mohr states that Ms. McCaulley and Ms. Tangiri assisted with the Occoquan River cleanups. Farm Field Days was held October 12 – 13. He recognizes staff for a successful event. Ms. Dunn will issue donation letters to Mark Hawthorne of Clean Cut Trees for the value of his time in providing forestry education to the Prince William County public schools, as well as to Ahmet Aksoylu, the owner of the fairgrounds, for the value of the use of the barns and buildings.

Will be meeting with Ben Eib and Clay Morris to discuss an increase of 20% in county funding for:

- Increase VCAP projects from 2 to 4
- Add 40 additional monitoring sites

Conservation staff is working with farmers on several cover crop projects.

VCAP – 5 projects currently

Mr. Mohr plans to contact the Personnel Committee to schedule a meeting in December to discuss staffing changes.

**Upcoming Meetings/Events**

October 20	12 pm	Finance Committee Meeting, 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D
October 20	1 pm	BOD Meeting, 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D
October 22	9-4pm/POSTPONED	Virginia Citizens for Water Quality Conference
November 5	9-12pm	Neabsco Boardwalk Cleanup
November 10	1 pm	TRC Meeting, 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D
November 12	9 -12 noon	Cleanup with the Bull Run Protectors
November 17	1 pm	BOD Meeting, 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D
December 8	1 pm	TRC Meeting, 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D
December 15	12 pm - 2 pm	BOD Holiday Lunch/Meeting - Location TBD

**Meetings/Events Attended**

See attached September staff reports

***Partner reports***

***NRCS – Casey Iames, District Conservationist – (written report submitted)***

**Program Updates/Deadlines:**

**Staff:** Casey Iames officially started as new District Conservationist.

Contact information: [Casey.iames@usda.gov](mailto:Casey.iames@usda.gov) office direct line 540-316-6518

**Environmental Qualities Incentives Program (EQIP) –**

- We are open for signups for FY2023. Application deadline is **November 4<sup>th</sup>**. Anyone interested should contact Casey 540-316- 6518
  - o 23 Active Contracts 13 in Fauquier, 1 in Fairfax, 2 in Prince William, and 7 in Loudoun for \$1,581,429.38.

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) –**

- We are open for signups for FY2023. Application deadline is **November 4<sup>th</sup>**. Anyone interested should contact Casey 540-316- 6518
  - o 5 Active Contracts. 3 in Fauquier and 2 in Loudoun for \$114,760.31
  - o 36 Active CSP-GCI Contracts, 3 in Prince William, 9 in Loudoun, and 24 in Fauquier for \$154,889.48.

**Outreach/Agency Activities/Events (dates)**

- Warrenton USDA Service Center open house Monday October 31<sup>st</sup> 8am -4pm (see attached for details)

### **Upcoming Training Opportunities in the Area (JEDs, Webinars, Field Days)**

- The local JED (Joint Employee Development) trainings for October are Soil Health Dig and Demo Training we have multiple date options:
  - October 11<sup>th</sup>: Orange County at the VT AREC Station
  - October 27<sup>th</sup>: Afton at a private farm
  - November 1<sup>st</sup>: Harrisonburg at a private farm
- Our 2022 Cultural Diversity Day will be held October 20, 2022, virtually via teams and feature presentations from NRCS staff and Hui Newcomb of Potomac Vegetable Farm to highlight the theme “Asian American and South Pacific Islanders: Building Legacies through Agriculture, Education and Leadership”

*DCR – Debbie Cross, Conservation District Coordinator – (written report submitted)*

#### **From the Division Director James Martin:**

With the PY23 VACS Program underway, and the record levels of cost share allocations, we want to take the opportunity to pause and **recognize the significant efforts underway by Soil and Water Conservation Districts**. Your efforts to efficiently implement the program are greatly appreciated. We recognize that the increased funding brings with it increased pressure for SWCDs to obligate their allocations and put practices on the ground. The record levels of funding also brings **increased scrutiny from the General Assembly members and Stakeholders** about whether the dollars are being spent wisely to improve water quality. It is

**critical that everyone maintains our focus on the Program’s mission, manual, and procedures to ensure we are implementing properly designed and installed practices that produce the greatest water quality benefits for the taxpayers of the Commonwealth.** If any SWCD has concerns about their ability to effectively utilize the funding that has been allocated, please contact your assigned Conservation District Coordinator to discuss available options.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL ITEMS:**

- **Quarterly reports are due by Monday, October 17** (the 15<sup>th</sup> is a Saturday). This includes attachment E plus QuickBooks cash balance sheet and P&L for the quarter. The “official” excel version of attachment E must be used throughout the course of the year. Please use the same workbook and corresponding tab for each quarter to ensure that all values roll together for the End of Year Report (last tab).
- **SWCD Audits:** Robinson, Farmer & Cox conducting audits in Oct & Nov FY 21 & 22 for Culpeper, Northern Virginia & Thomas Jefferson (11/28) SWCDs and a one year (FY22) audit for Loudoun SWCD.

#### **AG & COST SHARE ITEMS:**

- **Bid Process Threshold Increase to \$50,000:** At their September 26th meeting, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approved an increase to the component cost threshold for the Cost-Share Program bid process established in the Manual (pages II 36-38). **The component cost threshold has been increased from \$30,000 to \$50,000. This change should be applied to all FY23 contracts that require bid sheets as well as any carryover contracts that might not have gotten through the bid process yet.**
- **End of Lifespan (EOL) Verifications:** Districts will be reimbursed \$200 for CY22 EOL Verifications verified **by November 30.** EOL BMPs are those BMPs under contract whose lifespan expires on 12/31/22 and

unless field verified will fall out of the Bay model. An additional incentive of \$50 each will be added for verifying EOL BMPs that fall out of lifespan in 2023 & 2024 if completed by the Nov 30 deadline.

- **Reminder: "Neither the local SWCD nor DCR provides tax advice...."** See page II-34 of the VACS manual. VACS contract Part 1: "Recipients of [VACS] are responsible for compliance with all applicable tax requirements including requirements of the Internal Revenue Service."

**Freedom of Information Act requirements for Elected Directors:** (appointed directors encouraged to attend)

- The FOIA Council is hosting a live webinar FOIA training on October 12. 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.
- **Local Elected Officials Virtual Training Webinar: October 12@ 10:00 am**
- **The link to register:** <https://event.webinarjam.com/register/16/9p2qmhp>

**UPCOMING TRAINING AND IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Oct 18:** Full TAC, 9:00 am, VA Dept. of Forestry Training Room, Charlottesville

**Oct 18-19:** Virginia Rare, Threatened & Endangered Species Protection & Cultural & Historic Resources Protection Webinars. 1 ½ days. Registration process and webinar times to follow. (required CPC courses)

**Nov 19:** Area II Envirothon training, 9am-4pm at Graves Mountain Lodge. \$20 per person. Open to any staff, coach or student Register with [Stephanied@culpeperswcd.org](mailto:Stephanied@culpeperswcd.org)

**Dec 4-6:** VASWCD Annual Meeting Hotel Roanoke in Person!!! (Hotel is filling up fast so get your rooms now!)

Dec 7: VSWCB Meeting, Hotel Roanoke

**Other Important Information:**

**OAG Rep:** temporary contact Michael A. Jagels, 804-225-4878, [MJagels@oag.state.va.us](mailto:MJagels@oag.state.va.us)

**Grant Agreement Reminders:**

**FY23 Admin & Ops Grant Agreement Deliverables #17 & #18 (Attachment F):** SWCDs should start planning for the required agricultural community outreach event, which must be held before 06/30/23.

**ATTACHMENT F: GRANT DELIVERABLES RELATED TO OUTREACH CONDUCTED BY THE DISTRICT**

**#17. District hosted at least one agricultural community outreach event during year that met the following:**

1. The outreach event was **marketed through at least three venues** such as a radio spot, local news print media, local news broadcast media, social media, flyers, District or partner newsletters, flyers at local farm stores or local cooperatives, or mailers. One of the three marketing venues used must be directed towards producers with small farms or producers considered socially disadvantaged.
2. The outreach event **included an introduction to the District for the community**. The introduction should include the history of the District, mission statement, Directors, staff, program offered (including agricultural programs, educational programs, and urban programs if offered).
3. The outreach event **included a discussion featuring local agricultural producers who have utilized the VACS Program to install BMPs on their operations**.
4. The District **notified all partners, including the Virginia State University-Small Farm Outreach Program (Program) of the event and a representative from each organization was invited to participate on the agenda**.

**#18. The District notified the Virginia State University – Small Farm Outreach Program (Program) of every outreach event conducted by the District focusing on agricultural producers.**

At least two weeks prior to an outreach event both the Program's state representative and the regional representative, if known, were notified by email; the state representative (Frederick Custis) should be emailed at [fcustis@vsu.edu](mailto:fcustis@vsu.edu). A Program representative was invited to participate on the agenda for the event if they chose to do so

Ms. Cross stated that the FOIA virtual classes are no longer available but can be accessed through the MP4 site. She will include a link to the training in her November report.

***PWC Dept. of Public Works - Clay Morris, Natural Resources Section Chief, Watershed Mgmt. Branch***

Mr. Morris unable to attend

***Virginia Cooperative Extension Office – Thomas Bolles, Associate Extension Agent***

Mr. Bolles recognizes the staff for the great job they did coordinating the Farm Field Days event. He asked that Ms. McCaulley and Ms. Tangiri provide him with attendance and demographics data for the event.

***VA Dept. of Forestry - Jacob Zielinski, Bay Watershed Specialist – (written report submitted)***

**Fall Fire Season**

The fall fire season starts October 15th meaning the 4pm Burning Law will go into effect.

- The 4pm Burning law bans open air burning prior to 4:00 p.m. if the fire is within 300 feet of the woods or dry grass which could carry fire to the woods
  - Burning is allowed between 4:00 p.m. and midnight as long as the burner takes proper precautions are taken
  - Open air fire may be acceptable if it meets the following criteria: it is completely contained within a ring of rocks, cinderblocks, metal ring, or a similar device and is covered by a ¼ inch or smaller metal screen

More info: <https://dof.virginia.gov/wildland-prescribed-fire/fire-laws/4-pm-burning-law/>

**DOF Nurseries**

The online seedling store for our two nurseries is now open and can be purchased at [BuyVaTrees.com](http://BuyVaTrees.com).

- Packaged as bare-root seedlings, trees can be picked up from our Augusta Nursery or delivered between February 22 and April 26, 2023
- Seedlings can be ordered in quantities ranging from 5 to 25,000
- Orders will be accepted until April next year, but order soon
- Acorn collection deadline was Oct 14, 2022 thank you to those who participated

Board of Directors Meeting, October 20, 2022

### **DOF Reorganization**

The department recently went through a reorganization that moved us away from the previous work area breakdown to create larger district areas  
Prince William was previously in the Potomac Work area and is now in the Rappahannock District

### ***Associate Directors –***

Sonnie Cuffey – Mr. Cuffey thanks our staff for supporting STEM Night with the NAACP.

Steve Danziger – unable to attend

Harry Glasgow – no further updates

Clay Morris – unable to attend

### **Operations**

Approve the FY 23 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. Attachment E - The motion to approve was made by Mr. Bolles with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Bottino and approved by a 5/0 vote.

Approve the PWC FY 23 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. Report – The motion to approve was made by Mr. Bolles with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Bottino and approved by a 5/0 vote.

Approve the recommendation of re-appointment of Jim Gehlsen as the At-Large Director of the Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District effective 1/1/23 – The motion to approve was made by Mr. Bolles with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Lintner and approved by a 4/0 vote. Mr. Gehlsen abstained from the vote.

### **Discussion**

Ms. Cross states that the VA Soil & Water Conservation District board will meet on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> where they will take action on the Prince William SWCD Board's recommendation to approve Mr. Gehlsen's re-appointment.

Approve Additional \$376.00 to Contract # 35-23-0002 and BMP ID: 505517 – This is an SL-8H for Jonathan Bender. On the TRC Report, the Tracking Program #: 35-22-0002 and BMP ID: 467887 are incorrect. The amount approved was \$2,800.00 but should have been \$3,176.00 (158.8 acres \*\$20/acre). This is where the \$376.00 difference comes from (\$3,176 - \$2,800) – The motion to approve was made by Mr. Kahlon with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Bottino and passed by a 5/0 vote.

Reviewed data of students who took part in the Conservation District's Water Quality program from June 2021 – July 2022.

Discussed Directors who plan to attend the annual meeting. Mrs. Bottino and Mr. Bolles are unable to attend.

Discussed day and time for Directors to visit Virginia National Bank and Truist to change signature authorization. Ms. Dunn will coordinate.

Board of Directors Meeting, October 20, 2022

Discussed Calendar Year 2023 meeting calendar. All meetings will remain the same days and times of the month for TRC, BOD, and Finance Committee meetings.

Discussed the 2022 BOD meeting and holiday lunch. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> @ 12 noon at Cedar Run Brewery with lunch at 1 p.m. Spouses and children are invited.

### **Conservation**

The TRC meeting was not held in October.

### ***Education Programs Update – Duane Mohr***

Mr. Mohr recognized Ms. McCaulley for her coordination of Farm Field Days. This was her first year as lead on the event. He also recognized Ms. Slazinski for her assistance. The event went very well with the leadership of these two individuals. He also recognized all staff members for their help in making the event a success.

Ms. McCaulley has replenished the education capsule supplies and is coordinating pickup with area school teachers.

### ***Water Quality Programs Update – Veronica Tangiri***

- Conducted Water Quality Monitoring & Certification with local teachers
- Assisted with the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Upper Occoquan River Annual Cleanup with Prince William Trails & Stream Coalition
- Attended EPA Webinar
- Attended Potomac River Conference on PFAS

### ***Directors' Time –***

Mr. Bolles – no further comments

Mrs. Bottino –

Mrs. Bottino asked the board to endorse a 5-cent plastic bag tax in Prince William County to support environmental cleanups, litter and pollution mitigation, and environmental education efforts. Ms. Cross recommended that an ad-hoc committee, separate from the board, be created to discuss the topic in further detail. Mrs. Bottino will Chair the committee. Information on the plastic bag tax fee can be located at <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/disposable-plastic-bag-tax>

Mrs. Bottino was made aware that the District does not currently offer maternity leave for full and part-time employees. Mr. Mohr stated that this topic will be discussed at the Personnel Committee meeting to be



Board of Directors Meeting, October 20, 2022

scheduled on December 8, at 2 p.m. He will obtain input from full and part-time staff on the topic. Ms. Cross will email Mr. Mohr two other Districts' personnel policies regarding maternity leave.

Mr. Lintner – Attended the Potomac Roundtable meeting on 10/7/22. The consensus was that we need another Water Summit to discuss surface and ground water conditions and water needs through 2025. The council is going to provide administrative support.

Mr. Kahlon – no further comments

Mr. Gehlsen – no further comments

Motion to adjourn

The motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 p.m. was made by Mr. Kahlon with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Lintner and approved by a 5/0 vote.

Next TRC meeting – Thursday, November 10, 1 p.m., 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D, Manassas, VA 20109

Next Board meeting – Thursday, November 17, 1 p.m., 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D, Manassas, VA 20109 (Zoom virtual meeting available for non-essential members)


Personnel Committee meeting - Thursday, December 8, 2 p.m., 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D, Manassas, VA 20109

Next Finance Committee meeting – Thursday, January 19, 12 p.m., 8033 Ashton Avenue, Conference Room D, Manassas, VA 20109

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

  
Linda Dunn, Office Manager

  
Tiziana Bottino, Secretary

