



**Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Farmville, Virginia
May 23, 2023 11:00 a.m.**

Board Members Present:

Larkin Moyer –Director, Amelia County / Chairman
Ricky Rash – Director, Nottoway County /Vice Chairman
Bill Powers –Director, Prince Edward County / Secretary
Charles “Chuck” Arnason –Director, Nottoway County / Treasurer
Allison Crews – Director, Amelia County
Erin Small – VCE Appointed Director, Prince Edward County (not for quorum)
Gary Dillard – Associate Director, Amelia County
Mackenzie Gunn – Associate Director, Amelia County & VCE ANR agent
Dr. Kathy Gee, Associate Director, Nottoway County & LU Environmental Science Prof.

Board Members, Staff & Partners Absent:

Horace Adams- Director, Prince Edward County
Juan Whittington – Appointed Director, Amelia County
Sarah Eck – Associate Director, Nottoway County
Jeremy Evans, NRCS District Conservationist, Nottoway/Farmville

SWCD Staff Present:

Kelly Atkinson – Education Specialist
Kevin Dunn – Conservation Specialist
Deanna Fehrer - District Manager
Tyler Smith – BMP Conservation Technician
Dennis Thompson – Dam Program Manager
Charlie Wootton – Senior Conservation Specialist

Partners Present:

Denney Collins, Conservation District Coordinator, Dept. Conservation & Recreation
Tara Ciavarella, NRCS District Conservationist, Amelia
Elwood Vega-Rivera, NRCS Soil Conservationist, Amelia
Cristy Cook, Farm Service County Executive Director, Nottoway and Prince Edward
Doug Audley, Department of Forestry, Amelia
Patrick Murphy, Department of Forestry, Prince Edward
Jordan Rabon, NRCS, Private Lands Biologist

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

A regular meeting of the Piedmont SWCD Board of Directors was held at Prince Edward County Natural Resources and Agriculture building on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Chairman Moyer called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with prayer. A quorum was present.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Ms. Crews and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the April 25, 2023 minutes as presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Powers and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the April 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented to be filed for audit.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE – Presented by Conservation staff

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following VACS practice cancellation and correction (reduction in \$24,698.56 CB funds):

Cancellation

Richlands Dairy Farm

05-23-0035(525977)

NM-6 Manure injection (501.7ac)

Estimated Cost \$ 22,576.50

Estimated Cost-Share \$ 22,576.50

Correction

Blendon Farms

05-22-0080 (525717)

SL-6W Stream Exclusion with Wide Buffer (50'/10yr) (2,020')

Estimated Cost \$ 36,650.00

Estimated Cost-Share \$ 34,817.50 (95%)

Estimated Buffer Payment \$ 4,000.00

Total Estimated Cost Share \$ 38,817.50

\$40,939.56 approved in April – reduction of \$2,122.06

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the transfer of contract 05-23-0018 Wilford Poore (deceased) to his spouse, Linda Poore.

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Ms. Crews and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following VACS tax credits:

Nottoway

Harrison Moody (OCB)

05-23-0038 (527988)

NM-5P Precision Nut. Mgmt. (215.7ac)

Estimated Cost \$ 2,588.40

Estimated Tax Credit \$ 647.10 (No OCB funding)

Lee D Vaughan (CB)

05-23-0055 (517881)

SL-6W Stream Exclusion with Wide Buffer

Total Cost \$40,729.17

Total Cost Share \$35,641.27

Tax Credit \$ 1,271.98

On a motion by Ms. Crews, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following 319 Residential Septic contract:

Spring Creek #16969

Approval

Wilnesha Holman

05-23-0082 (527799)

RB-1 Conventional Septic System Pump out

Estimated Cost \$ 400.00

Estimated Cost Share (50%) \$ 200.00

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following PSWCD conservation plans:

Valerie Ferguson	CP 5-23-0014	Lee D Vaughan	CP 5-23-0013
Blendon Farms	CP 5-23-0011	Robert Mottley	CP 5-23-0007
John Shepherd	Tax Credit	Harrison Moody(2)	Tax Credit
Triple R Dairy	Tax Credit		

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Chair Arnason

Mr. Arnason received the FY21 and FY22 final audit report from Robinson, Farmer and Cox. There were no deficiencies or items that needed to be addressed. A copy is on file in the office. The Finance Committee met prior to the Board meeting and will present a budget at the June meeting.

WATERSHED - Chair Arnason

Mr. Thompson reported that contractor, Bander Smith, completed the gate valve and pipe inspections at Bush #2, #5, #6 and #7. Bush #5 was not originally on the list, but because they were finding heavy beaver debris around the base of the risers at the other Bush dams, Ms. Fehrer authorized the extra inspection (cost savings of another trip and equipment setup). Bush #2, #6 and #7 gates were found to be inoperable. The final report including video, pictures, findings and recommendations will be forthcoming. Inspection and testing of gates will be included in the long-term maintenance plan for all the dams. The spring mowing of the dams is completed.

PLANNING

Ms. Fehrer reviewed the Annual Plan of Work upcoming workload for June. The staff reviewed all goals, objectives and strategies of the current strategic plan, noting what was accomplished this year and items that will be in next year's Annual Plan of Work. After the end of the fiscal year, staff will provide a quantitative update of accomplishments for each goal. The following changes were agreed upon by consensus:

Goal 1, Objective 1, Strategy 2: Change the word "Reinstitute" to "Continue".

Goal 2, Objective 3 – Add Strategy 4 – "Investigate funding and construction options for the mobile education trailer".

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Powers and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the FY24 Annual Plan of Work as presented.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - Chair Dillard

No report.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE - Chair Rash

Piedmont SWCD to host another VASWCD Legislative tour on Tuesday, June 13 where they will tour a beef cattle exclusion project and watershed dam in Prince Edward County. DCR leadership, staffers from House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees, and VASWCD staff will be attending. The goal will be to better educate leadership about SWCD programs and structure.

COMMUNICATION / EDUCATION - Chair Powers

Ms. Atkinson reported on the following activities:

- The State Envirothon was held this past Sunday and Monday at Virginia State University. Jamestown High School took the honors and will represent Virginia at the National Envirothon competition in July.
- A hands-on program constructing vermiculture bins was successful. The Farmville Library hosted the workshop and reimbursed the District for the material costs. Roger Pinholster, a local volunteer natural resource educator, assisted with preparing the plastic bins for assembly.
- Ms. Crews presented scholarship awards at Prince Edward High School and Kenston Forest Schools during their senior awards program.
- PSWCD received 458 posters from the annual conservation poster contest. The winner was a 10th grade student, Ethan Russell, from Amelia High School. Other winners include: Austin Zheng (Prince Edward 1st grade) Addison Zirkle (Prince Edward 3rd grade) Yaretzi Cruz (Girl Scout 6th grade).
- Gardening classes at Sunrise Learning Center have been completed and students learned about soil, water, plants and ecosystems during the past six weeks of lessons.
- Ms. Atkinson is continuing the 'Spotlight' series on social media and has included Instagram as a social media outlet.
- The office received a thank you note from Cameron Moon, scholarship recipient.
- The Longwood University Design Lab completed the design package for the mobile education trailer. The designs were shared during the meeting. The next step will include procurement of a design/build firm.

DISTRICT MANAGER AND PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS

Staff reports (Attached)

Department of Conservation and Recreation (Attached).

Ms. Collins reviewed several highlights on her report including upcoming deadlines and trainings. Any return of VACS funds to meet the 90% obligation will need Board action by the June Board meeting and is required to be the exact dollar amount of return. Ms. Collins reported that DCR is having a training with VSU-Small Farm Outreach staff to help with meeting SWCD grant deliverables that focus on outreach and utilizing the Small Farm Outreach program.

USDA-NRCS – Farmville & Amelia (Attached)

Ms. Ciavarella reported for Amelia and Farmville offices. She will lead the Local Working Group (LWG) meeting this afternoon and asked for board members and others in attendance to submit any comments if they are unable to attend the LWG meeting.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)

Ms. Gunn reported she will be at several trainings during the month of June. She has the following programs scheduled: May 24, Beef Field Day in Doswell; May 31, Estate Planning. There are 2 openings for Nottoway producers to apply for the Tobacco Commission grant.

Ms. Small reported on the following activities: A new Master Gardener class completed its initial training; She represented Virginia in a National Extension meeting in Idaho; Ten local VCE agents are working on a program called "Better Together" to help bring agriculture producers together with local business opportunities; The cut flower research plots at Hampden Sydney College are established; There are 4 openings for Prince Edward producers to apply for

the Tobacco Commission grant; Her office is beginning planning for a producer tour next year at Virginia State University; The Farm Pond workshop was successful.

Ms. Small also reported that Prince Edward County is applying for a grant to help prepare an Agriculture Economic Development Strategic Plan. They are requesting letters of support from clients and partners.

Ms. Small along with VCE agents and County Administrators from six local counties met with poultry producer representatives and Matt Lohr, Secretary of Natural Resources, to discuss opportunities for the poultry broiler growers that were closed when Tyson ceased operations in this area of Virginia. The closures have affected 75 growers, plus the many businesses that support growers, such as feed processing plants, corn growers, poultry operation supplies and other small businesses.

Farm Service Agency (Attached)

Ms. Cook reported her office is working on 2 potential CREP contracts, finalizing file clean up and that the County Committee elections for area LAA2 will be held in August. Details can be found in her report.

Virginia Department of Forestry

Mr. Audley reported that the DOF will no longer advertise the “No Burning Law” dates via mobile digital signage. The widely used signage has been a very good visual reminder about the burn law.

Mr. Murphy followed up with a report of the increase in fire fatalities in Virginia. He also reported that this program year 1,200 acres have been planted in the reforestation program with 80% of the clear cuts being replanted. DOF is revamping its hardwood program with strategies to better manage forest land.

USDA-Private Lands Biologist

Mr. Rabon attended 2 outreach events that included a tour in Halifax County and Conservation Days in Pittsylvania County. He will be conducting bird nesting monitoring surveys during the month of June, focusing on land uses where there is prescribed burning and timber stand management practices.

ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Crews announced she was not chosen to serve on the Amelia Landfill Advisory Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm. Following the meeting, NRCS convened their Local Working Group to discuss NRCS priorities and programs as they apply to local clients and partners.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:

Staff & partner reports;

Submitted By _____ Date: _____
Deanna Fehrer, Piedmont SWCD Staff

Approved By: _____ Date: _____
Bill Powers, Director / Secretary