



**Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - Farmville, Virginia
February 27, 2024 11:00 a.m.**

Board Members Present:

Larkin Moyer –Director, Amelia County / Chairman
Ricky Rash – Director, Nottoway County /Vice Chairman
Horace Adams –Director, Prince Edward County / Secretary
Charles “Chuck” Arnason –Director, Nottoway County / Treasurer
Jennifer Morris – Director, Amelia County
Dr. James Gates, Jr.- Director, Prince Edward County
Juan Whittington – Appointed At-Large Director, Amelia County
Gary Dillard – Associate Director, Amelia County
Dr. Kathy Gee, Associate Director, Nottoway County & Longwood University Faculty

Board Members, Staff & Partners Absent:

Mackenzie Gunn – Appointed VCE Director, Amelia County & VCE ANR agent
Tyler Smith – Conservation Technician

PSWCD Staff Present:

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

Partners Present:

Denney Collins, Conservation District Coordinator, Dept. Conservation & Recreation
Jeremy Evans, NRCS District Conservationist, Nottoway/Farmville
Tara Ciavarella, NRCS District Conservationist, Amelia
Lyle Currin, VCE ANR Agent, Nottoway
Doug Stanley, Prince Edward County Administrator

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

A regular meeting of the Piedmont SWCD Board of Directors was held at the Prince Edward County Agriculture building on Tuesday, February 27, 2024. Chairman Moyer welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Agenda additions include grant agreements for the small dam repair funding.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the January 23, 2024 minutes as presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the January 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented to be filed for audit.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE Mr. Dunn presented the conservation report.

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Dr. Gates and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following FY24 VACS applications (CB \$70,512.50) and two tax credits (\$2,688.63):

Amelia

AMEVA Farm	NM-6 Manure Injection (78.9ac.)	
05-24-0067 (584772)	Estimated Cost	\$ 3,550.50
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 3,550.50

AMEVA Farm	WQ-4 Legume Cover Crop (78.9ac.)	
05-24-0067 (584770)	Estimated Cost	\$ 3,550.50
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 3,550.50

Watkins and Son Inc	NM-6 Manure Injection (25ac.)	
05-24-0030 (584719)	Estimated Cost	\$ 1,125.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 1,125.00

Nottoway

Sylvan Knolls LLC		
05-23-0025 (513547)	CRFR-3 (3.63ac) Tax Credit	\$ 680.00
(513548)	CRSL-6 (4800') Tax Credit	\$ 2008.63

James R Austin Jr	SL-8B Cover Crop for Nut. Mgmt. (*90.6)	
05-24-0081 (579145)	Estimated Cost	\$4,116.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$4,116.00

* Additional 90.6 Ac added to the Instance- 74.2 Late & 16.4 Early

Prince Edward

Boot Hill Dairy	NM-6 Manure Injection (770.9ac.)	
05-24-0077 (584787)	Estimated Cost	\$ 34,690.50
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 34,690.50

Ronnie Reames	CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (3,200')	
05-24-0106 (584636)	Estimated Cost	\$ 5,500.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 5,500.00

Josh Whirley	CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (8,800')	
05-24-0105 (584431)	Estimated Cost	\$ 13,750.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 13,750.00

Josh Whirley 05-24-0105 (584410)	CCI-SL-6N Stream Exclusion w/t Narrow Buffer Maint. (5,640') Estimated Cost Estimated Cost-Share	 \$ 4,230.00 \$ 4,230.00
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On a motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following FY24 VACS applications (CB \$9,440.00), with Mr. Moyer and Dr. Gates leaving the room:

Amelia

Oakmulgee Dairy 05-24-0011 (584718)	NM-6 Manure Injection (57ac.) Estimated Cost Estimated Cost-Share	 \$ 2,565.00 \$ 2,565.00
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Prince Edward

Jimmy Gates 05-24-0065 (584624)	CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (4,300') Estimated Cost Estimated Cost-Share	 \$ 6,875.00 \$ 6,875.00
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On a motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following FY24 septic application:

Spring Creek, etc. #16969

Sean Fitzgibbons 05-24-0104 (584110)	RB-1 Residential Septic Pump-out Estimated Cost Estimated Cost Share (50%)	 \$ 400.00 \$ 200.00
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Mr. Dunn reported that DCR had asked if PSWCD would like apply to participate in the “Whole Farm Approach” program. He explained the program provides separate funding from the VACS program for agronomic practices that ‘stack’ the practices per applicant/farm which provides additional financial incentives. There are additional requirements for the initial sign up of fields and acreages. It will be most applicable in the “Outside the Chesapeake Bay” drainage area and if PSWCD were to receive a grant, the district is under no obligation or penalty if the funds are not utilized. The Board, by consensus, agreed to ‘throw our name in the hat’.

Ms. Fehrer and the conservation staff reported the Ag Partner meeting held last Thursday in Amelia went well. There were fifteen farmer participants and many agency representatives. PSWCD and NRCS have been on at least one field visit as a result of the meeting. The District received good feedback and most attendees heard about the meeting from the newspaper or word of mouth.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Chair Arnason

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Adams and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved to sponsor the Virginia Tech Soil Judging Team in the amount of \$300.00 for travel expenses to the National Collegiate Soils Contest, which is scheduled for April 2024 in Iowa.

PLANNING

Ms. Fehrer reviewed the Annual Plan of Work for March and April. Several upcoming events were noted: Area V Spring Meeting to be held on Wednesday, March 6 in Keysville (New

Director training to following business meeting). The Clean Water Farm Award and Conservation Educator Award will be presented at the March PSWCD Board meeting.

Mr. Arnason was invited to represent PSWCD on the Leadership Council for the Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research Extension Center (SPAREC). A letter from the Council will be forthcoming. Mr. Whittington mentioned he had served on the council in the past and Ms. Morris is serving as an agricultural producer. The Board was supportive of PSWCD serving as a member.

WATERSHED - Chair Arnason

Mr. Arnason shared draft signage (attached) that several other districts are installing at their dams. It provides notice to anyone who trespasses on the property. There have been several trespassing incidents on district dams that have caused significant damage to the dam and this will provide another notice of the responsibilities of the dam owner. The language has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the Attorney General. **On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and approved by unanimous vote, the Board approved the signage to be installed at Piedmont dams.**

The Virginia Soil & Water Board approved a request from PSWCD for “Small Dam Repair Funding” (SDR) in the amount of \$227,000 for the repair of gate valves. Last month the Board approved a contract with Bander Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$227,000 for the repairs. The grant agreements were not available last month. **On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following grant agreements and amounts by dam:**

- **SDR24003 Bush #2 Gate Valve Repair \$44,500**
- **SDR24004 Bush #5 Gate Valve Repair \$50,000**
- **SDR24005 Bush #6 Gate Valve Repair \$65,250**
- **SDR24006 Bush #7 Gate Valve Repair \$67,250**
- **SDR24015 is a renewal of last year’s grant agreement (SDR23005) in the amount of \$241,270 for wave berm and emergency spillway repairs at Bush #2.**

Mr. Thompson reported he will be conducting the annual owner inspections on eight watershed dams over the next few weeks and invited directors to accompany him on the inspections. Charles Wilson, DCR SWCD Dam Engineer, will be conducting professional engineering inspections on four high hazard dams on March 8, weather permitting. Mr. Thompson reported there have been some data transmission problems with the remote monitoring unit at Buffalo #2 and he is in contact with DCR about getting assistance in resolving the issues.

“Dam Breach Inundation Zone Studies” (DBIZ) were performed on all the district dams in 2011. With new technology and mapping tools, DCR is updating the studies as staff resources become available. Ms. Fehrer reviewed the purpose of the DBIZ studies and shared maps of Buffalo #4 dam, which mapped the downstream impact of a potential breach and large storm event at the dam. After the study has been reviewed and approved by Dam Safety, any updates to the Emergency Action Plan will be added and the electronic shape files will be sent to the Prince Edward County Emergency Services.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - Chair Dillard

Ms. Fehrer will be completing staff evaluations and Mr. Dillard and Ms. Morris will conduct Ms. Fehrer's evaluation. A report will be given at the March board meeting.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE - Chair Rash

Mr. Rash reported that HB636/SB567 (authority of SCC and siting of energy facilities) was continued by both chambers until 2025. HB1346/SB577 addressing changes in the election campaign reporting for soil and water directors passed both chambers. The budget amendment to extend the Agriculture Best Management Practice tax credit for 5 additional years also passed both bodies. Based on reports coming out of Richmond, it is doubtful there will be a finalized budget before June 30.

The VASWCD sends out via "All District" email, at least a bi-weekly update on the various bills. The report can also be found on the VASWCD website. Directors are encouraged to sign up to receive the emails.

COMMUNICATION / EDUCATION

Ms. Atkinson reported on several education programs. Scholarship applications are due March 19; Youth Conservation Camp applications and Poster Contest entries are due April 12. The Envirothon program continues to struggle with student participation, due to many competing after school activities for high school students. Amelia High School will not have a team this year, but Fuqua School will be sponsoring a team. Ms. Atkinson has been providing after school enrichment programs at Amelia Elementary School that have been well received. Gropen, Inc. is still working on final tweaks to the designs for the mobile education trailer. It is anticipated the trailer will be ready by the Fall. Ms. Atkinson will be reviewing proposed changes to Virginia's Standards of Learning for science.

DISTRICT MANAGER AND PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS**District Manager & Staff reports (Attached)**

Most items were covered under committee reports. Ms. Fehrer reported a truck cover was purchased and installed by Mr. Wootton and Mr. Smith, saving the district approximately \$700 from what was quoted by Davis GMC; Mr. Wootton gave a guest lecture on conservation to a Longwood University Environmental Science class; Ty is attending a VCAP training today via zoom and is scheduled to finish up his last conservation planning class and review by the end of March; The VCE Producer Tour to Virginia State University sponsored by PSWCD, had 5 attendees from Prince Edward County.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (Attached)

Ms. Collins reviewed several highlights on her report including upcoming deadlines and trainings. DCR will be sending out second quarter disbursements in the next couple of weeks. Ms. Collins reminded new directors of the training requirements: Phase 1 has two options: Complete the online training with a final quiz (submitting quiz to Ms. Collins after completing); or take the online training as a group with a sign-in sheet documenting the participation and submitting one quiz. Phase 2 training will be given in-person after the Area V Spring Meeting on March 6. The Virginia Soil and Water Board will meet March 27 at Bear Creek Lake State Park.

USDA-NRCS – Farmville & Amelia (Attached)

Ms. Ciaveralla reviewed her report. (attached). March 8 will be the ranking deadline for the first round of signups of all programs. The Amelia NRCS office offered a soil conservationist position to an applicant, but they declined the offer. The office is working to fill the position with an ‘ACES’ employee.

Mr. Evans reported their office has received 20 applications for funding, including high tunnels, tree planting and pasture renovations. He is processing ‘ACT NOW’ applications. Ranking deadline for all programs is March 8. A potential program called the ‘Organic Transition Initiative’, might soon be available. There is a grant opportunity for urban agriculture projects.

USDA-Farm Service Agency (attached)Virginia Cooperative Extension

Ms. Gunn is involved in several upcoming programs: A pond workshop will be held on March 15 in the Prince Edward VCE office; and a ‘Women in Ag’ event on April 19-20 at Virginia Tech. Mr. Currin introduced himself as the new part-time agriculture and natural resource agent representing Nottoway County. He attended the District’s partner meeting last week and provided an overview of services from Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Prince Edward County

Mr. Stanley reported on several upcoming meetings: DEQ will hold a permit hearing for the Sandy River Reservoir withdrawal usage. The Central Virginia Poultry Coop will meet Wednesday, February 28 to receive the announcement of grants that will help local poultry grower operations return to operation after the closure of Tyson operations. There are upcoming public hearings scheduled for the two solar applications – Old Ridge Road and Falkland Road areas. Prince Edward County’s updating of their comprehensive plan is progressing and several work sessions are scheduled during 2024. They have received feedback from 755 surveys and one common thread was the importance of preserving the agriculture and rural character of the county.

ROUNDTABLE:

Mr. Whittington mentioned that ‘Real Virginia’ TV program will air on Fox35 channel on March 16 and is focusing on suburban sprawl into rural communities. He shared that the number of farms in Virginia dropped by 10% in one year and agriculture land acreage dropped by 6%.

Dr. Gates shared information from an article in the National Turkey Federation publication that recommended not bushhogging fields during the nesting season and to leave an un-mowed area of edge around the field. Nesting season for turkey in Virginia is March through mid-summer.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:

Treasurer report; SDR grants; Staff & partner reports

Submitted By Deanna Fehrer Date: 3/26/24
Deanna Fehrer, Piedmont SWCD Staff

Approved By: Horace Adams Date: 3/26/24
Horace Adams, Director / Secretary