



**Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - Farmville, Virginia  
January 23, 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  
Mackenzie Gunn – Appointed VCE Director, Amelia County & VCE ANR agent  
Gary Dillard – Associate Director, Amelia County  
Dr. Kathy Gee, Associate Director, Nottoway County & Longwood University Faculty

**Board Members, Staff & Partners Absent:**

**PSWCD Staff Present:**

Kelly Atkinson – Education Specialist  
Kevin Dunn – Senior Conservation Specialist  
Deanna Fehrer - District Manager  
Tyler Smith – Conservation Technician  
Charlie Wootton – Senior Conservation Specialist

**Partners Present:**

Denney Collins, Conservation District Coordinator, Dept. Conservation & Recreation  
Jeremy Evans, NRCS District Conservationist, Nottoway/Farmville  
Tara Ciavarella, NRCS District Conservationist, Amelia  
Joey Shelton, James River Association

**Guests Present:**

David and Deniece Mayberry

**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, January 23, 2024. Associate Director, Gary Dillard welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Attendees introduced themselves. On behalf of the nominating committee (Mr. Dillard, Mr. Arnason and Ms. Fehrer), he provided a slate of officers for 2024. **On a motion by Dr. Gates, seconded by Ms. Morris and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the nominations be closed and approved the slate of officers as presented (Chairman Larkin Moyer, Vice Chairman Richard Rash, Secretary Horace Adams, and Treasurer Chuck Arnason).**

Chairman Moyer resumed the meeting. A quorum was present.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the November 28, 2023 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 November/December 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented to be filed for audit.

**CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

Mr. Dunn presented the conservation report.

The following were approved by the Richard Rash, Conservation Committee Chair, during the month of December 2023 per authority granted at the November 28, 2023 board meeting:

**Amelia**

W.T. Reames	<b>SL-1 Long-Term Vegetative Cover on Cropland</b>
05-24-0087 (581828)	Eligible Tax Credit           \$ 442.15 (additional)

Dunn Right Meadows	<b>SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/ Wide Buffer</b>
05-22-0060 (468988)	Eligible Tax Credit           \$ 4,009.00

**Nottoway**

Robert Morris	<b>SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer</b>
05-23-0060 (518630)	Estimated Cost               \$64,896.00
	Estimated Cost Share       \$61,650.20 (95%)
	Estimated Buffer Payment   \$ 8,000.00
	Total Estimated Cost Share \$69,650.20
	<b>*Increase of Cost-Share- \$5,991.18</b>

Oakmulgee Dairy	<b>NM-6 Manure Injection (71 ac.)</b>
05-24-0011 (582331)	Estimated Cost               \$ 3,195.00
	Estimated Cost-Share       \$ 3,195.00

**Prince Edward**

Marvin Fisher	<b>SL-6W Stream Exclusion with 50' Buffer</b>
05-23-0005 (503548)	Eligible Tax Credit           \$ 247.01

Conservation Plan 05-23-0002 (BMP)

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following FY24 VACS applications (CB \$126,884.95):

**Amelia**

James R. Flemming	<b>SL-8B Cover Crop for Nut. Mgmt. (51 ac)</b>
05-24-0102 (583465)	Estimated Cost               \$ 3,570.00
	Estimated Cost-Share       \$ 3,570.00

	<b>SL-8H Harvestable Cover Crop (13.6ac)</b>	
05-24-0102 (583467)	Estimated Cost	\$ 272.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 272.00
	<b>NM-1A Nut. Mgmt. Plan (64.6) ac.</b>	
05-24-0102 (583469)	Estimated Cost	\$ 129.20
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 129.20
David B. Benson	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (13,890')</b>	
05-24-0043 (583269)	Estimated Cost	\$20,612.50
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$20,612.50
Richard Goode	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (17,275')</b>	
05-24-0072 (583232)	Estimated Cost	\$25,593.75
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$25,593.75
W. D. Coleman	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (1,800')</b>	
05-24-0099 (583326)	Estimated Cost	\$ 3,500.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 3,500.00
Hill View Farm	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (16,000')</b>	
05-24-0100 (583336)	Estimated Cost	\$21,500.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$21,500.00
<b><u>Prince Edward</u></b>		
Clarence C. Wenger	<b>FR-1 Afforestation of Cropland (9ac)</b>	
05-24-0103 (583523)	Estimated Cost	\$ 1,575.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 2,531.25
Wes Reames	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (1,106')</b>	
05-24-0098 (583318)	Estimated Cost	\$ 2,882.50
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 2,882.50
<b><u>Nottoway</u></b>		
Blendon Farm	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (13,765')</b>	
05-24-0095 (583157)	Estimated Cost	\$18,456.25
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$18,456.25
	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Narrow Buffer Maint. (2,200')</b>	
05-24-0095 (583167)	Estimated Cost	\$ 1,650.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 1,650.00
Steve Crews	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (11,650')</b>	
05-24-0096 (583199)	Estimated Cost	\$16,562.50
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$16,562.50

Sunny Slope Orchard 05-24-0097 (583221)	<b>CCI-SL-6W Stream Exclusion w/t Wide Buffer Maint. (6,500')</b>	
	Estimated Cost	\$ 9,625.00
	Estimated Cost-Share	\$ 9,625.00

Mr. Smith reviewed the septic applications. **On a motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Dr. Gates and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following FY24 septic applications:**

**Spring Creek, etc. #16969**

<b>Elizabeth Allen</b> 05-24-0092 (582170)	RB-1 Residential Septic Pump-out	
	Estimated Cost	\$ 400.00
	Estimated Cost Share (50%)	\$ 200.00

<b>Christopher Mountcastle</b> 05-24-0094 (582419)	RB-1 Residential Septic Pump-out	
	Estimated Cost	\$ 400.00
	Estimated Cost Share (50%)	\$ 200.00

<b>Beulah Bolden</b> 05-24-0101 (583454)	RB-1 Residential Septic Pump-out	
	Estimated Cost	\$ 400.00
	Estimated Cost Share (50%)	\$ 200.00

**Flat Creek, etc. #16970**

<b>Brittany Austin</b> 05-24-0093 (582280)	RB-1 Residential Septic Pump-out	
	Estimated Cost	\$ 400.00
	Estimated Cost Share (65%)	\$ 260.00

Ms. Fehrer reported she has submitted an additional funding request of \$107,950 to DEQ and an extension of an additional year for the residential septic grant PO16969 covering watersheds located in Prince Edward County. The approval will most likely be in May or June this year and will extend the grant until 2025.

Mr. Wootton gave an overview of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) program, how it was developed, its purpose and how it is implemented. The intent of the program was to encourage more BMP implementation on agriculture lands to help improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and the incentive to producers was to provide them with 'safe harbor' from any future state regulations 9 years after the implementation of the RMP. Many of the provisions/actions with RMP (such as identifying names and farms) are exempt from FOIA and has been written into the Code of VA. Each SWCD has a Technical Review Committee (TRC) which is authorized to review RMPs and provide suggested action to the Board. Piedmont SWCD's TRC met on January 16, 2024 to review a RMP completed application and plan. **On a motion by the TRC, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved RMP 05-23-0001. On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the minutes from the January 16, 2024 TRC meeting.**

Ms. Collins reported because of problems with Ag BMP practices and design/authorization at a SWCD in Virginia, there have been features added to the VACS tracking program that deal with reporting Engineering Job Approval Authority on practice components of structural practices such as the SL6 series, WP4, etc. This will be monitored by DCR to insure everyone preparing designs and practice check-out has the proper job approval authority. There likely will be more future oversight.

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE** – Chair Arnason

**On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Adams and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following signatures at Truist Bank: Chuck Arnason, Richard Rash, Charlie Wootton and Deanna Fehrer (adding Richard Rash and removing Bill Powers).**

Mr. Arnason reported the Finance Committee was authorized by the Board in October, to purchase a new vehicle to replace the Ford Explorer. A 2023 GMC Sierra truck (4x4) was purchased from local dealer Davis GMC in December that included \$6,000 in rebates and \$4,000 trade-in value for a total of \$38,823. Comparable vehicles from eVA ranged from \$46,732 - \$47,695 plus delivery (did not include any trade-in value). The truck needs a truck cover. **On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the purchase of a truck cover not to exceed \$1,500.00**

#### **PLANNING**

**On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Whittington and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved renewing the annual terms of Associate Directors, Mr. Dillard and Dr. Gee.**

Ms. Fehrer reviewed the Annual Plan of Work for January and February. Several upcoming events were noted: Partner/Ag Producer meeting to be held on Thursday, February 22 8:30am-10:00 at the Amelia Baptist Church; Area V Spring Meeting to be held on Wednesday, March 6 in Keysville (New Director training to following business meeting). Ms. Fehrer also recognized Mr. Arnason as having received the VASWCD Watershed Connections Director Award at the VASWCD Annual Meeting in December and Mr. Dunn for receiving his 15-year service award.

Ms. Fehrer asked for directors to provide her a copy of their oath of office form so she can retain a copy in the office as well as submit to DCR.

#### **WATERSHED** - Chair Arnason

The State 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. Bander Smith, Inc. performed a detailed inspection of risers, gate valves and principal spillway pipe on Bush dams #2, #5, #6 & #7 in June 2023 and provided a cost estimate for repairs. Because of the specialized nature of the work and that it is more economical to sole source the repairs, the Watershed Committee recommends hiring Bander Smith, Inc. to perform the work. **On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved a contract with Bander Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$227,000 for the repairs outlined in the September 29, 2023 cost estimate. (contract attached).**

Ms. Fehrer reported that she and Dennis Thompson were monitoring rain fall amounts on dams via remote HOB0 monitoring during the January 9, 2024 storm event. The following morning Ms. Fehrer and Trey Pyle, Emergency Services Deputy for Prince Edward County,

visited Bush #7 and Bush #2 dams. Mr. Pyle was able to fly a drone over the sites to check for any damage. There was evidence of high water and also small amounts of debris that had washed up along the face of the dam, but neither emergency spillway had been activated. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Wootton visited the remainder of the dams the following day to check for debris and any other impacts. The debris will need to be removed before spring mowing season. Mr. Pyle offered the services of the drone at anytime there may be a concern with the dams.

#### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** - Chair Dillard

Mr. Dillard congratulated Mr. Smith on his Engineering Job Approval Authority and to Mr. Dunn on 15 years of outstanding service to the PSWCD.

#### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE** - Chair Rash

Mr. Rash attended the January 11, Legislative Day with VASWCD staff and other SWCD directors from across the state. He pointed out two bills that are currently a priority for the VASWCD. HB1346/SB577 are addressing changes in the election campaign reporting for SWCD directors to make the reporting easier for directors on election ballots (VASWCD supports). HB636/SB567 are dealing with the authority of the State Corporation Commission to approve the siting of energy facilities (solar and wind) without approval from the locality and also exempt the project from obtaining permits under the regulations and ordinances of the locality (VASWCD opposes). There was also a last-minute budget amendment to extend the Agriculture Best Management Practice tax credit for 5 additional years (it is set to expire in 2024).

The board had some discussion focusing on solar land use and impacts to natural resources. Mr. Rash encouraged citizens to contact their legislative representative about these and other bills of interest. 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.

#### **COMMUNICATION / EDUCATION**

Ms. Atkinson reported on several education programs. Piedmont's higher education scholarship program has been advertised. We are offering four (\$1,000) scholarships this year, with at least one of those being given to a college student currently attending an institute of higher learning and the remaining scholarships to students who will be enrolled in higher learning in Fall 2024. The highest ranked high school student will be forwarded to the VASWCD to be eligible for an additional scholarship. For students residing in the VASWCD's Area V, a scholarship fund has been setup by the estate of the late Dr. Wilkie Chaffin and his wife Dora. Dr. Chaffin was an active member of the PSWCD and VASWCD.

The NACD 2024 Youth Conservation Poster Contest theme is "May the Forest be with you Always". Ms. Atkinson is preparing materials to be distributed to local schools, home school and scout groups. This year there is a digital poster contest as well.

Ms. Atkinson held a girl scout soils patch workshop this past Saturday. She distributed her Winter newsletter to local educators. Gropen, Inc. is working on a final proof for the mobile education trailer. Ms. Atkinson along with Roger Pinholster and L.K. Mondrey (Amelia 4H agent), submitted a grant to the Chesapeake Bay Trust for funds to conduct a train the trainer workshop for local teachers to incorporate Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences (MWEE) into their classroom. She will be assisting with a MWEE in April at Holiday Lake 4H Center for Prince Edward County Middle School.

Ms. Atkinson reported there has been an increase in followers on the District's social media accounts. There were 192 views about Mr. Arnason's award post, 2,584 views about Amelia County High School student 2023 Poster Contest Winner (state wide award) and 1,300 views about the High Education Scholarship program.

**On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Dr. Gates and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved \$200 to support an Ag Producer tour to Virginia State University in February which is being organized by former VCE PE Ag agent, Erin Small.** The tour will also include Goochland county producers.

### **DISTRICT MANAGER AND PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS**

#### District Manager & Staff reports (Attached)

Most items were covered under committee reports. Ms. Fehrer reported that Dr. Mike Gutter, VCE Director at VT, will be attending a regional meeting on Tuesday, January 30 from 3:00-4:00 at the Moton Museum in Farmville. Mr. Moyer will attend on behalf of the PSWCD and Ms. Fehrer will be attending as a representative of the local Master Gardener chapter. Mr. Smith and Ms. Fehrer along with Ms. Gunn will conduct a site visit at Amelia County Library to address runoff issues with a possible VCAP application.

#### Department of Conservation and Recreation (Attached)

Ms. Collins reviewed several highlights on her report including upcoming deadlines and trainings. She requested a copy of the oath of office forms.

#### USDA-NRCS – Farmville & Amelia (Attached)

Mr. Evans reported his office received 21 applications for the EQIP program and is currently working through an assessment and planning for all conservation programs. The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) had 20 contract renewals in December and 7 in January. Mr. Evans is working with the State NRCS office on an application for an agricultural conservation easement in PE/Nottoway county line area. He is attending the VNRLI (Virginia Natural Resource Leadership Institute) program.

Ms. Ciaveralla reviewed her report and summarized the ACT Now funding program and process. (see her report). March 8 will be the ranking deadline for the first round of signups of all programs. The Amelia NRCS office is beginning plans to hire a second soil conservationist.

#### Virginia Cooperative Extension

Ms. Gunn reported she has been providing pesticide recertification classes. She has been assisting Virginia State University with a train the trainer program series for Farm Transition workshops. She is also planning additional 'Women in Ag' programs, a pond workshop and an Earth Day event in partnership with Amelia library.

#### James River Association

Mr. Shelton introduced himself as the Riparian Stewardship Coordinator and has been working with Monacan, Thomas Jefferson and Peter Francisco SWCDs to promote and implement riparian buffers and is looking forward to working with Piedmont SWCD. The program installs buffers at no cost to agriculture and residential landowners. There will be a riparian consortium meeting with local partners on May 23 in Farmville.

**ROUNDTABLE:**

David and Deniece Mayberry, landowners in Prince Edward County, voiced their concerns about a proposed solar development near their property on Falkland Road. The proposed 80-megawatt solar project will encompass 1,000 acres with approximately 800 acres of trees being cleared. Their concerns were the clearing of 500 acres of forested land upstream of the Bush #6 Evans Creek dam (maintained by the PSWCD) and also the potential leaching of heavy metals from the panels if they are damaged. The proposed project includes 232 panels on 500 cleared acres that will most likely contribute to increased water runoff. The Mayberry’s wanted to make the District aware of the potential impacts to the watershed dam from the runoff. Their property includes part of the emergency spillway at Bush #6 dam. Board members recognized their concerns and advised them that the Department of Environmental Quality is the agency responsible for oversight of utility solar permitting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 pm.

**ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:**

Treasurer report; Staff & partner reports

Submitted By \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deanna Fehrer, Piedmont SWCD Staff

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Horace Adams, Director / Secretary