



We work with the people who work the land.

MOUNTAIN SWCD MINUTES

The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Directors met on Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 9AM at the Dairy Barn Meeting Room, Warm Springs, VA.

Directors in Attendance:

Chair:	Ellen Ford
Secretary:	Kari Sponaugle, VA Coop. Extension Agent
Treasurer:	L. Ryan Hodges
	Ari Daniels
	Xavier Storey
	Wes White
Assoc. Director:	Dave Peters
Directors not present:	Christine Hodges

Others in Attendance:

David Burnett
Lorie Baldwin, Office Administrator
Chris Swecker, Conservation Specialist
Dorian Perez, NRCS, DC
John Williams, NRCS
Tad Williams, DCR, DC
Denny McCarthy, VDF
Racheal Kim, VDF
Mitchell Kim, VDF
Sammy Vest, Trout Unlimited

Chair called the meeting to order and declared there was a quorum present. The minutes from November 20, 2024 meeting were approved with a motion from Wes White, seconded by Kari Sponaugle all Directors present in agreement.

The following Treasurer's report was presented for period ending November 30, 2024 and filed for auditor review (full report was sent with electronic copy):

Regular NOW Checking Account	\$ 482,093.13
No-Till Seeder Account	\$ 25,533.00
BMP Cost Share	\$4,163,828.66

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- The following slate of officers were approved with a motion from Ari Daniels, seconded by Ryan Hodges with all directors present in agreement.
 - Chair-Ellen Ford
 - Vice Chair-Xavier Storey
 - Secretary-Kari Sponaugle
 - Treasurer-Ryan Hodges

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Sara Jordan

- DEQ-VRO Ag Program Update:
 - The VPA Regulation and General Permit for AFO's was reissued on Monday, November 18, 2024, for all the permitted facilities that elected to continue coverage.
 - Due to the continued threat of avian influenza and the prevalence of Avian Metapneumovirus, we are only able to see a few farms on site each week due to biosecurity protocols issued from USDA. Any farms that we are unable to get on-farm for a site visit, we are continuing to do off-site record reviews.
 - We have increased our ag programs regional responsibilities to include the Northern Regional Office permitted ag facilities. On-site inspections with these facilities started October 1st, the beginning of the new fiscal inspection year.
 - We continue to focus on poultry litter reporting and education for the requirement that has a reporting deadline of September 15 each year.
- DEQ's Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program's Agricultural Loan Dashboard as of November 21, 2024, is found below. For more information, contact Phil Davis, Ag BMP Project Manager with the Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program: (540) 209-4201, philip.davis@deq.virginia.gov.

AgBMP Loan Program Dashboard: As of 11/21/2024

Application Status	Total Number	Total Value	Average	Mei
Application Pending	5	\$ 1,538,000.00	\$ 307,600.00	\$ 315.6
Conditionally Authorized	68	\$ 16,335,021.48	\$ 240,220.90	\$ 199.1
Not Authorized	1	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45.0
Application Withdrawn	67	\$ 10,061,950.04	\$ 150,178.36	\$ 110.6
Inactive	20	\$ 3,593,093.52	\$ 179,654.68	\$ 97.5
Credit Approved	3	\$ 656,000.00	\$ 218,666.67	\$ 176.6
Credit Not Approved	12	\$ 2,190,181.53	\$ 182,515.13	\$ 96.5
Loan Closed	71	\$ 12,793,962.27	\$ 180,196.65	\$ 118.1
Loan Closed with PF Granted	3	\$ 919,035.22	\$ 306,345.07	\$ 440.5
Project Complete	107	\$ 18,525,039.09	\$ 173,131.21	\$ 125.2
Project Complete with PF Granted	14	\$ 2,153,475.97	\$ 153,819.71	\$ 95.1
Completed without DEQ Funding	23	\$ 2,617,632.79	\$ 113,810.12	\$ 57.5
Equipment Purchase Complete	22	\$ 1,639,630.00	\$ 74,528.64	\$ 39.2
PF Granted SWCD	20	\$ 349,370.43	\$ 17,468.52	
Total PF Granted to Producers	17	\$ 1,268,932.43		
Total Applications	436			
Total Active Projects	150			
Beginning Fund Balance		\$ 18,659,552.00		
Additional Funds Authorized by DEQ		\$ 10,000,000.00		
Total Projects and Loan Funds Obligated		\$ 49,530,515.54		
Total PF Granted		\$ 1,562,966.52		
Total Repayments		\$ 17,200,000.00		

CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION – Alston Horn/Lindsay Spotts

- December is slowing down with buffer checks and tree tube maintenance. However, the contractors have been doing site prep on properties that will get buffers planted in a couple weeks.
 - We checked around 32 project sites, with around ~88 acres checked this spring/summer. We are seeing good numbers of survival rates at most of our sites, most are in the 90% and 80% range – some are in the low 70% and 60% and they have been hit hard with drought. We are working on those sites to make sure they will be replanted.
- Working on preparing for Spring planting season, with a volunteer planting in Lexington, hopefully in March sometime

- **Review of the Desktop Procedures Manual.** As per the Operations grant agreement, each SWCD must ensure that “DCR’s Desktop Procedures is annually reviewed by the District Board or their Finance Committee and documented in board meeting minutes.
- **Quarterly reports due by Wednesday, January 15.** 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).

2) Ag and Cost-Share Items

- **IT Security Training: deadline December 20, 2024.** It is that time of year again to do our annual IT security training. This training is a required annual training for all users of the Conservation Application Suite, including those who use the BMP Tracking system, the NMP module, and/or the RMP module. This year again, the training is through the KnowB4 provider, so be sure and follow the directions below. This is the only email you will receive for access to the training.

*Users of the Suite will use this site to access the training <https://training.knowbe4.com/ui/users/login>

***To log in you must use your first and last name, without punctuation or space, plus @dcr.virginia.gov for your login id, DO NOT CHANGE IT. For example, JohnSmith@dcr.virginia.gov

(Because of the state contract the training system is set up to only allow commonwealth of Virginia email addresses. Do not try to log in with your actual email address.)

***Your temporary password is lamTraining1()

**For all newer District Staff that started since January 1, 2024 your training that you completed when hired will count for this year.

***If a district person is only seeing 2023 training to take, they should take that and will be counted and completing the requirements for this year. This is per DCR IT staff as of this week. **For IT training access questions after December 5th contact Steph Dawley for assistance.**

- **Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Nutrient Management Program** will offer a two-part agriculture nutrient management training school in January. The school is for anyone interested in learning about the development of agricultural nutrient management plans or how to become a certified nutrient management plan writer. **The first session, Jan. 9-10,** is a lecture series by Virginia Tech professors on soil science, soil fertility and crop production. The two-day soils and crop lecture series will be hosted through Microsoft Teams. **The second session, Jan. 14-16,** will cover nutrient management plan writing using a case-study farm. The three-day plan writing training will be in-person at Brightpoint Community College in Midlothian, Virginia. Each day will run from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Registration is \$150 for each session with a deadline of Dec. 30. Registration is available online at www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/nmtrain.
- **IMPORTANT:** As a result of recently completed Cost-Share Case File Administrative Reviews, it came to my attention that districts need to review Section 12 (Page 21-22) of the PY25 Cost-Share and TA Policy, which addresses missing signatures on the VACS Contract. I have cut and pasted the section immediately below for your convenience. As a reminder this is not a new policy as it was initially implemented and went into effect July 1, 2022.
 - **Signatures on the VACS Contract - For any practice funded in whole or in part by the VACS Program, a VACS contract must be completed and signed in its entirety by both the appropriate District staff, District Director, and the participant. For any practice marked**

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR – Lorie Baldwin

- Working on updating Strategic Plan. A committee has been formed of Kari, Wes, Chris, and myself to work on gathering the feedback from surveys.
- Attended Annual meeting.
- Envirothon planning proceeding.
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There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:50AM with a motion from Kari Sponaule, seconded by Wes White, with all directors present in agreement.

Respectfully submitted,



Lorie Baldwin, Office Administrator



Ellen Ford, - Chair