



We work with the people who work the land.

MOUNTAIN SWCD MINUTES

The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Directors met on Wednesday, January 21, 2025 at 9AM at the Dairy Barn Meeting Room, Warm Springs, VA.

Directors in Attendance:

Chair: Ellen Ford
Vice Chair: Xavier Storey
John Quantz
Ari Daniels
Wes White

Directors not present: L. Ryan Hodges
Christine Hodges
Kari Sponaugle
Allen Dressler

Others in Attendance:

Lorie Baldwin, Office Administrator
Chris Swecker, Conservation Specialist
Sammy Vest, Trout Unlimited
Tad Williams, CDC, DCR

Chair called the meeting to order and declared there was a quorum present. The minutes from December 18, 2024 meeting were approved with a motion from Wes White, seconded by Ari Daniels with all Directors present in agreement.

The following Treasurer's report was presented for period ending December 31, 2024 and filed for auditor review (full report was sent with electronic copy):

Regular NOW Checking Account	\$ 476,830.59
No-Till Seeder Account	\$ 25,601.02
BMP Cost Share	\$3,683.087.95

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- The Strategic Plan was approved with a motion with a motion from Ari Daniels, seconded by Wes White, with all directors present in agreement.
- The meeting dates for 2025 have been set (3rd Wednesday of every month to be held at the Dairy Barn meeting room, Warm Springs, VA beginning at 9AM) with a motion from John Quantz, seconded by Xavier with all directors present in agreement.
- The Annual Plan of Work was discussed and reviewed by all present.
- The IRS standard mileage rate has increased for business use to .70 per mile. Mountain SWCD will follow this rate with a motion from Ari Daniels, seconded by Wes White, with all directors present in agreement.
- Dave Peters was approved as an associate director for year 2025 with a motion from Wes White, seconded by John Quantz, with all directors present in agreement.

- The following BMP projects, BMP Conservation Plans and Tax Credit Approvals were presented as follows:

Contract #16-25-0006, Highland County, WP-4LL, \$110,910.00

A motion was made to approve conservation plan.

(John Quantz, Ari Daniels/Unanimous)

A motion was made to approve the contract.

(Wes White, John Quantz/Unanimous)

Total BMP CS Approvals: \$ 110,910.00

Total Tax Credit Approvals: \$ 9,242.50

WP-4LL Loafing Lot Management System w/Manure Management

Total 2025 CB VACS Allocation: \$2,986,609.00

Allocation Remaining: \$2,627,075.35

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel, Budget, & Finance-

- Discussion held of the progress made towards hiring a part-time Conservation Technician. Ari Daniels made motion to authorize the Personnel, Budget, and Finance committee to continue with hiring the position, second from Xavier Storey, with all directors present in agreement.

Technical Programs: -No report at this time.

Public Relations: No report at this time.

AGENCY REPORTS AS FOLLOWS:

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY – Denny McCarthy

No report at this time

TROUT UNLIMITED – Sammy Vest

- Ongoing projects. Time restriction in streams.
- Concerns of invasive species.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Sara Jordan

No items to report this month.

CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION – Alston Horn/Lindsay Spotts

No items to report this month.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE – Dorian Perez

No report at this time.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION(CDC) – Tad Williams

Administrative and Operational Items

▪ Directory Updates. Please review your SWCD’s respective SWCD directory page(s) and submit any SWCD directory updates or changes to Shannon Mitchum at the VASWCD. Please ensure that contact information for newly appointed VCE Agent directors is included as part of your SWCD’s submitted updates.

▪ FY25 3rd Quarter Disbursement Letters: Disbursement letters are scheduled to be sent out via e-mail 02/13/25. Expect to receive these funds via direct deposit within 30 days of the date of the disbursement letter. Check to ensure that deposits match the disbursement letter and notify me of any discrepancies. In addition, check the corresponding cost-share data entries in the AgBMP Tracking Program.

▪ SWCD Director Appointment and Resignation Deadline 03/01/24: Should a SWCD have any director appointments and/or resignations that need approval from the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board (VSWCB) those need to be submitted to Blair Gordon via email with the assigned CDC copied no later than 03/01/24. Director appointment submittals must include the following documents: DCR 199-014 (Nomination for Appointment Form), DCR-199-015 (Bio Form), and a copy of the SWCD board meeting minutes. Note: DCR-199-015 is not required for VCE Agents. Resignations must include a copy of the SWCD board meeting minutes.

▪ Federal Mileage Rate for CY 2025: Effective 01/01/25, the IRS standard mileage rate for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be 70 cents per mile driven for business use, up 3 cents from the PY 2024 rate. The new mileage rate should officially be approved by the Board of Directors at the January board meeting. Source: <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>

▪ New eVa Requirement for All Contracts: As of Jan. 1, 2025, changes to the Va. Public Procurement Act will take effect and all public contracts with nongovernmental contractors for the purchase or lease of goods, services, insurance or construction will be required to go through eVa. While SWCDs may still advertise through their normal process, they must also post to eVa and accept electronic bids/proposals through the eVa platform. The SWCD may still accept hard copies bids from advertising contracts in other places but must also accept bids/proposals through eVA. Email is not considered an acceptable, safe platform for receiving bids, thus eVA is offered as the alternative safe procurement platform. The procurement act only applies to contracts from public bodies; this does not impact the bid process used by producers for Ag BMPs. The eVA system is available to SWCDs free of charge. If you do not already have an eVA account, you can contact your local government procurement account executive for assistance. Their contact information can be found at:

<https://dgs.virginia.gov/globalassets/business-units/dps/documents/localgovernment/virginiafullcounties-asof04242018.pdf>. DCR has arranged for eVA training on February 3. Zoom link to come soon.

▪ Review of Annual Plan of Work. Please recall that, as per the Operations grant agreement, SWCDs must conduct a mid-year review of the annual plan of work. This review should also be recorded in the minutes.

- Finance Committee Meetings. The Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations requires that “the finance committee (or designated group) meet at least twice a year to establish a budget and to review financial statements. Minutes of these meetings must be prepared and maintained by the district in accordance with FOIA. The Chair of the Finance Committee should sign the minutes.

- 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.

2) Ag and Cost-Share Items

- NRCS/ SWCD Piggyback Reminder. Please make sure that both the SWCD and NRCS are working together in the planning stages of piggyback practices to ensure that these practices receive SWCD board approval prior to the participant initiating the practice. Remember that the VACS program goals are slightly different than those of NRCS and there may be items included by NRCS that are not eligible to receive VACS funding so please check

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components carefully against VACS practice specifications. It is also important to note that there may be

additional requirements in the VACS specifications that must be met prior to practice approval, particularly where animal waste practices are concerned. Finally, please remember to abide by the rate set forth in the VACS practice specifications to ensure that it is not exceeded when paying the SWCD portion of the cost-share.

- BMP QA Reports: To ensure that technical staff understand my process, the BMP QA Reports are generated and emailed to the assigned CDC every other Monday. I will forward to individual SWCDs only if there are identified QA issues. Technical staff should promptly address.

- VACS Program Practices Requiring Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) Before Cost-Share Payment/Tax Credit Issued: This is the annual reminder that a number of VACS Program Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as cover crop and animal waste, require that a NMP be prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner before such BMPs can be certified as complete and paid. Refer to Pages 1-4 of the PY25 VACS Program Manual for a complete practice list. Cost-share payments or tax credits cannot be issued until a current NMP is on file with the SWCD. Please assist participants in need of NMPs to contact a planner well in advance of practice completion to ensure that payments are not delayed. DCR nutrient management specialists are available and willing to write plans but cannot always fulfill last minute requests. Another option is to refer producers to DCR’s Direct Pay Program that pays private plan writers to provide plans. There is an NMP Information Sheet that DCR developed for districts to use. It can be downloaded from the DCR Marketing Toolkit page.

- DCR Conservation Planner Certification Courses Announced: Training dates have been announced for CY 2025 for anyone working towards the DCR Conservation Planner Certification. Questions should be directed to Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR-DSWC Conservation Planning and Training Coordinator at carl.thiel-goin@dcr.virginia.gov

- Virginia Agriculture BMP and Cost-Share Program: 02/28/25, 9:00 AM, Via ZOOM

- RUSLE 2 Part C: April, Details and information to come

- Conservation Selling Skills: 04/02-04/03/25, Central VA Community College, Lynchburg, VA

- Stream ID Course: 05/21/25, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM, Charlottesville, VA
- Nutrient Management Training Schools: Summer 2025
- VA Resource Training: 10/15-10/16/25, Online
- RUSLE 2 Part A, B, C: Fall 2025
- DCR Conservation Planner Course: October 21-23, In person, Buckingham County
- Follow-up to Random BMP Verifications: Please continue to work with participants who have BMPs with maintenance needs and remember to update the Verification Module as repairs are completed.

Upcoming Training and Important Dates

- Feb 4: Virginia General Assembly Crossover
- Feb 22: Virginia General Assembly adjourns
- March 5: Area V Spring Meeting in Spencer, VA – Spencer-Penn Centre
- March 25: Area I Spring Meeting in Buchanan, event details TBD
- April 29: Area I Envirothon, McCormick Farm, Raphine, VA
- April 30: Area V Envirothon, Gentry Farm, Ringgold, VA

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR – Lorie Baldwin

- Sending out Youth Conservation Camp applications to schools.
- Working on 1099 Tax Forms to IRS and participants.
- Working with Counties on Entity requests.
- Envirothon conversations ongoing. (Sue and I will be volunteering)

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:05AM with a motion from Xavier Storey, seconded by Ari Daniels, with all directors present in agreement.

Respectfully submitted,


 Lorie Baldwin, Office Administrator

 26 Feb 2025
 Ellen Ford, - Chair