



Cecil Soil Conservation District

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Board of Supervisor's Meeting April 23, 2025

The Cecil Soil Conservation District held a Board of Supervisors meeting with a Zoom call-in option. The meeting was called to order at 8:36 AM by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, and Jonathan Quinn. Associate Supervisor – Alice Crothers. Other attendees: District Conservationist – Rob Weaver, District Manager - Chris Brown, and Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce. Visitors: n/a

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the March 19, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Vic Priapi seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the treasurer's report, expenses, and supplementary emails. There were no questions. Vic Priapi made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and pay bills. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Old Business

- Chris Brown provided an Education and Outreach update.
 - Chris Brown provided a presentation and attended a follow-up tour with Cecil County School of Technology students at Long Green Farms. Alice Crothers shared details of the day and feedback received from the School of Technology and presenters. Jessica Zebley also attended to highlight the district's involvement in BMP engineering.
 - Ag Day at the Dupont Farm on April 9th was a great success. Farmers who attended and signed the Nutrient Management sheet will receive 2 CEUs for the event. There were over 80 attendees there including the students from the School of Technology Ag Science Program. The district is planning to host this event again in 2026.
 - Lauren Gilbert and Josh Fitzgerald attended the School of Technology's Career Day on April 10th. The district booth had over a dozen students visit and six scholarship applications were handed out.
 - The Cecil County Envirothon Competition will be held at the Fair Hill Nature Center on April 24th. Mari McNinch, our Soil Conservationist/Envirothon Coordinator expects to have 55 students participate. The district will be providing t-shirts for the event and lunch to the students.
 - District Scholarship applications have been advertised in the Cecil Whig, handed out at Rooted in the Community in March and forwarded over to contacts at the School of Technology and Cecil Community College. Currently, one application packet has been received. The deadline for applications is May 1st.

- As a reminder the 7th Grade Ag Education Day is scheduled for April 29th to May 1st. A great group of volunteers. School of Technology will have a booth with several tables for all programs offered at the school. Zoom orientation for volunteers is being offered for volunteers on Friday, April 25th at 10am.

New Business

- Rob Weaver presented the District Activities Report. Staff visited eleven farms for Inventory & Evaluations for various practices. Four projects were surveyed. One design was reviewed "in-house". One design was approved "in-house". Nine projects are in progress. Seven waterways were staked out and one waterway was laid out. One application for best management practices was submitted to MDA/MACS. Two agreement transfers were received from MDA. WIP reconciliation round 28 was completed. Rob Weaver shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities. Farm Conservation Plans Completed annual goal and year to date acres information was shared with the group. Twenty-nine urban E&S plans were reviewed and twenty-five urban E&S plans were approved. Two 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed. Nine urban meetings were attended. Staff visited one Inventory & Evaluations' including an existing pond dredge request and inspection of dry hydrant. Three stream restoration/wetland creation projects are in progress. Five information and education events were attended by staff. Staff attended nine trainings and twelve-monthly meetings. Chris Brown, Bruce Yerkes and Van Funk attended the MASCD Board meeting. Staff attended on-site reviews with Western Area Engineer Warren Johnson. Staff attended ag preservation inspections with Cecil County Planning and Zoning. Jonathan Quinn made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Rob Weaver and Chris Brown presented the District Project Tracking/Planning Report and NRCS Updates. Our office is awaiting approval from NRCS engineering for a pond. Planners are working through higher acre farms for planning in order to count towards the WIP and will need to get a greater number of plans vs/acres in the future. WIP goals look at acres and while staff's MS-22s evaluate both number of plans as well as acres. Brooke Rollins is the new USDA Secretary of Agriculture. Federal staffing and the deferred resignation were discussed. There is a federal hiring freeze. Inflation Reduction Act money and projects were also discussed. Some federal offices are being closed. The group discussed office space and monthly lease operating. Our office should not close due to current Farm Bill although information is contradicting.
- The District Awards have been submitted to MASCD. Submissions include Outstanding District of the Year, Outstanding Education Award, Outstanding Cooperator and Employee Award.
- Vic Priapi made a motion to accept Piney Creek Farm, George and Earl Wickersham, S&A Kreider & Sons, Inc., and Maeve Hession as new cooperators. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Chris Brown provided an update on some MACS challenges. MACS is asking that districts reach back out to cooperators who had older projects to re-do their recordation. Chris emphasized that MACS need to get these squared away prior to approval of an application. Districts cannot be going back out after a project is complete to get this info as the landowner has already been paid. Doing so also makes districts look incompetent at no fault of their own. If MACS has additional requirements after a project is complete, they should be reaching out to get this information and keep districts out of the conversation. MACS has said that there will need to be a title search done without explaining who would pay for this. Do they expect the landowner to pay, the district? Chris will continue to work on this through our area coordinator. MACS has indicated that if these are not done by May 7th, they will be putting the landowners on probation.

- Van Funk shared an SSCC Meeting update. The meeting was April 17, 2025 and held at the MDA Headquarters. Meeting in Caroline County next month. Update regarding forest and stormwater.
- MASCD Annual Summer Meeting Registration has opened up. The meeting will be at Rocky Gap, August 4th-6th. Chris asked Board members who will be attending. Tracey Rach would like to register everyone soon that will be attending. A workgroup will be MDA/NM compliance without sharing conservation plans will take place at meeting. Chris also discussed with the Board this year's sponsorship for the meeting. Our Associate Board Member Alice Crothers with Long Green Farms will be Key Note Speaker at the meeting. The board agreed to fund the Keynote speaker at \$2,500. Chris plans to make a cash donation for the endowment auction over a gift item as they have not generated as much as would have been liked at previous auctions.
- NACD fly in was March 26th. Bruce Yerkes (Cecil), Lee McDaniel (Harford), and Chris Brown attended. MASCD arranged legislative meetings for the group. Bruce Yerkes shared information with the group regarding their visit. Andrew Sipe shared an NACSD annual meeting staff report. He appreciated the opportunity. He learned so much. He attended several breakout sessions and shared details of what he learned specifically regarding cover crops in other states. He attended emergency watershed discussion.
- The County Budget hearing for the district is May 13, 2025 at 5:30 pm.
- Chris Brown shared an update regarding the recent twenty-acre grading policy meeting with Chesapeake Club.
- Solar project south of Chesapeake City was discussed. Discussions at State Level put out for public comment regarding pollinator habitats planting requirements. MDA is trying to understand where these requirements are being required, i.e. are pollinator mixes being shown on the E&S plans for stabilization or are these requirements being implemented another way. It seems to be a requirement that is not making its way onto any of the construction plans. Districts are awaiting direction.
- Ag update study – request for proposals was discussed. The issue will be pursued at future meetings.
- Bruce Yerkes and Jonathan Quinn attended Kent County Soil Conservation District Banquet. They indicated that it was a very good event and was sold out.

The next meeting will be held on May 21st at 8:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the office with a teleconference option. The teleconference option will continue to be offered for those working in the field.

As there being no further general business, Bruce Yerkes called for a motion to adjourn the general meeting. Jonathan Quinn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vic Priapi seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 10:20AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Pierce

Patricia A Pierce
Administrative Assistant