

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Cover Crop Subcommittee
Monday, September 14, 2026
Briar View Farms
Callands, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Cover Crop Subcommittee took place at 7:37 p.m. on Monday, September 14, 2026, at Briar View Farms in Callands, Virginia.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Kevin Dunn
Leigh Pemberton
Stephanie Cornnell

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION STAFF PRESENT

Nikki Rovner, DCR Director
Sarah Spota, DCR Deputy Director
James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager
Breanne Lindsey, Board and Constituent Liaison
Blair Gordon, District Operations Coordinator
Nico Robichaud, Policy and Program Assistant
Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR
Becky Hubble, DCR
Angela Ball, DCR

OTHERS PRESENT

John Schick, SWCB Member
Robert Mills, SWCB Member
Kevin Tate, SWCB Member
Nick Thomas, SWCB Member
Dr. Dan Goerlich, VCE
Dr. Edwin Martinez, NRCS
Kendall Tyree, VASWCD
Benjamin Young, ESSWCD
Lucy Earl, ESSWCD
Carmie Ross, ESSWCD
J. Wyatt Cox, Chowan Basin SWCD
Jennifer Coker, Chowan Basin SWCD
Granville Maitland, Appomattox River SWCD
Buck Tharpe, SSWCD
Jimmy Rigway, PSWCD

Charles Newton, Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Austin Magruder, Peanut SWCD
Courtney Coleman, Peanut SWCD
Robert Waring, Colonial SWCD
Sam Chappell, Blue Ridge SWCD
Luke Longanecker, TJSWCD
David Massie, Culpeper SWCD
Jessy Lacks, Pittsylvania SWCD
Amber Eanes, Pittsylvania SWCD
Jake Tabor, Farm Bureau
Stephen Bartz, VCE
John Womack, NRCS

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 20, 2026

Mr. Dunn moved to approve the August 20, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Pemberton seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Cornell, Dunn, and Pemberton.

DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATION(S) FOR BOARD ACTION RELATED TO COVER CROP VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

Mr. Martin informed the Subcommittee that Districts provided a wide range of responses to the cover crop survey distributed by DCR staff.

The Subcommittee, along with DCR staff and District representatives, engaged in an open discussion on this topic.

Discussion included the survey results, prior conversations from the August 20, 2026, Subcommittee meeting, and the Soil & Water Conservation Board meeting held on September 14, 2026. Significant feedback emphasized the need for training to ensure consistent cover crop verification standards across Districts, while acknowledging that timing and weather conditions may result in some regional variation. The Subcommittee also discussed potential timelines for providing uniform training to Districts. However, members noted that such training may not be feasible this year due to the upcoming cover crop implementation period.

Following discussion, Mr. Pemberton made a motion to recommend the following to the Board:

Training Requirements - Each District will ensure that training is provided to each District employee conducting cover crop verifications. A District may choose to partner with other Districts to provide the necessary training for any reason including limited staffing. The training must focus on enshrining District employees are knowledgeable on both the meter square method and the point-intercept method.

When Verification must be Conducted – Districts must conduct verifications in accordance with the meter square method or the point-intercept method on any cover crops that are questionable (potentially less than 60% cover) or if the cover crop appears to have between 45-70% cover at the discretion of the District staff. The results of the verification must be documented in the Conservation Application Suite (CAS) or the cost-share file.

Ms. Cornnell seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the following: Cornnell, Dunn, and Pemberton.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no additional public comment outside of the open discussion held during the meeting.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.