

BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS, WETLAND PROFESSIONALS
and GEOLOGISTS MEETING MINUTES

The Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists met on September 30, 2026, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

Members present for all or part of the meeting:

Wetland Delineators

Justin Brown
Emily Drahos
Emily Salkind

Geologists

Ernest Beasley
Matt Heller
Shannon Lukens
John Pollard

Citizens

Steven Yob

Soil Scientists

Alexis Jones
Richard Michniak

Members absent from the meeting with regrets:

Citizens

Cayman Lowe

Soil Scientists

Jay Conta

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Laura McClintock, Director
Steve Kirschner, LRPD Director
Kate Nosbisch, Executive Director
Kyle Mathews, Regulatory Operations Administrator
Summer Saunders, Licensing Operations Administrator
Davon Jones, Administrative Coordinator
Jennifer Sayegh, Policy & Legislative Affairs Manager
Greg Emerson, Director of Examinations
Brandon Bouknight, Examination Data Administrator

Josh Laws, Assistant Attorney General, was present from the office of the Attorney General.

Jackson Dyer, BPOR Liaison, was not present from the Board of Professional and Occupational Regulation with regrets.

Members of the audience:

Robin Bedenbaugh, *Citizen*

Elijah Wright, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*

Ms. Jones, Chair, finding a quorum present, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Call to Order

Ms. Jones advised the Board of Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

Emergency Evacuation

Mr. Yob moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Beasley, Brown, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard, Salkind, and Yob.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Beasley moved to approve the PSSWPG Board Meeting, June 3, 2026, Wetland Delineators Workgroup Section Committee, August 27, 2026, and Soil Scientist Workgroup Section Committee, August 27, 2026. Ms. Salkind seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Beasley, Brown, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard, Salkind, and Yob.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Nosbisch welcomed and introduced Ms. Summer Saunders as the new Licensing Operations Administrator and introduced the members of the audience.

Welcome and Introductions

Robin Bedenbaugh addressed the Board and discussed his professional experience in wetland delineation, the importance of maintaining competency standards for certified professional wetland delineators, and concerns regarding individuals obtaining certification through ULR without qualifications he believed were comparable to Virginia's standards. He encouraged consideration of a statutory change that would address the application of ULR to professional wetland delineators.

Public Comment Period

Ms. Nosbisch provided an update for informational purposes. There was a discrepancy with ASBOG's national exam statistics. Ms. Nosbisch reached out to ASBOG for clarification.

Examinations Update

Ms. Nosbisch stated the Executive Director Report was provided for informational purposes.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Mathews advised the Board that the House Bill 1254 amendment, which changes the certified continuing education requirement to eight hours per renewal cycle, will become effective November 1, 2026. He also reported that the House Bill 1835 amendment regarding the transition of geology from certification to licensure was awaiting pre-filing approval at the proposed stage, and the House Bill 1289/Senate Bill 492 amendment was awaiting pre-filing approval of the Notice of Intended Regulatory Action.

Regulatory Update

Mr. Kirschner and Director McClintock reviewed the Board's financial position, including its negative cash balance, cost allocation, and the anticipated need for future fee adjustments. Discussion also addressed the agency's development of a revised cost-allocation and fee model.

Financial Monthly Statement

Ms. Sayegh arrived at the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

**Arrival of DPOR
Staff**

Ms. Nosbisch provided information regarding the upcoming Board Member Training Conference. Topics to be covered include informal fact-finding conferences, the complaint process, public protection, lessons from experienced Board members, public meeting requirements, technology initiatives, examination development, and the General Assembly and regulatory processes.

**New Board
Member Training
Conference -
October 22-23,
2026**

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board of the meeting dates for 2027.

**2027 Meeting
Dates**

- i. Tuesday, February 23, 2027
- ii. Tuesday, May 11, 2027
- iii. Tuesday, August 17, 2027
- iv. Thursday, November 4, 2027

Mr. Pollard moved to approve the 2027 Meeting Dates. Ms. Drahos seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by Beasley, Brown, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard, Salkind, and Yob.

The Board recessed at 10:52 a.m. and reconvened at 11:08 a.m.

Recess

Ms. Nosbisch and Ms. Jones provided an update regarding the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) examinations and the recommendations arising from the August 27, 2026, Soil Scientist Workgroup Section Committee meeting. Ms. Nosbisch reported that the revised Fundamentals examination had launched in August, with 23 candidates taking the examination, 12 passing and 11 failing. The Professional examination, initially anticipated for November, is expected to launch in February due to challenges obtaining sufficient volunteers.

**Soil Scientists
Update**

The Board discussed continued efforts to address low examination participation and pass rates while allowing SSSA's revised examination process time to demonstrate results. Efforts included monitoring examination statistics, expanding examination-preparation resources, increasing outreach to colleges and universities, encouraging prospective soil scientists to pursue licensure, and working with the Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists regarding potential examination scholarships. Ms. Jones indicated that she would continue discussions with the professional association and report back to the Board regarding additional initiatives.

Mr. Brown presented the August 27, 2026, Wetland Delineators Workgroup Section Committee report regarding Universal License Recognition and proposed statutory revisions. The Board discussed the definition of wetland delineation, applicable state and federal regulatory guidance, examination waiver language concerning "shall" versus "may," and the recommendation regarding professional

**Wetland
Professionals
Update**

services. Staff was requested to conduct additional research on the proposed changes and bring the information back to the Board for further consideration.

**Wetland
Professionals
Update (cont.)**

Ms. Nosbisch advised the Board that, because of the Board's financial situation, DPOR did not anticipate funding attendance at the upcoming ASBOG meeting. Ms. Lukens volunteered to attend the meeting at her own expense and expressed the importance of maintaining Virginia's representation at ASBOG's annual business meeting. Ms. Nosbisch agreed to provide any necessary information regarding participation.

Geologists Update

Ms. Jones informed the Board of the licensee counts as of September 1, 2026: Soil Scientists – 77; Wetland Delineators – 160; Geologists – 959.

**License and
Certified
Population**

Conflict of Interest forms and travel vouchers were completed by all Board members present.

**Conflict of Interest
Forms/Travel
Vouchers**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Adjourn

Alexis Jones, Chair

Laura V. McClintock, Secretary