

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Friday, March 20, 2026
Twin Lakes State Park – Cedar Crest Center
Green Bay, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board took place at 10:01 a.m. on Friday, March 20, 2026, at Twin Lakes State Park, Cedar Crest Center in Green Bay, Virginia.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Charles Newton, Chair	John Schick, Vice Chair
Jason De La Cruz	Kevin Dunn
Stephanie Cornell	Leigh Pemberton
Nick Thomas	Robert Mills
Dr. Edwin Martinez, NRCS, Ex Officio	

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Adam Wilson
Dr. Dan Goerlich, VCE, Invitee

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION STAFF PRESENT

Nikki Rovner, DCR Director
Sarah Spota, DCR Deputy Director
Lisa McGee, Director of Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs
Darryl Glover, Deputy Director, Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
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
Andrea Henry, Chief Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT

Kemper Marable, Hanover Caroline SWCD
Amy Walker, Colonial SWCD
James "Buck" Tharpe, Southside SWCD
Suzanne Brown, Loudoun SWCD
Kelly Snoddy, Peter Francisco SWCD
Christine Wolfe, JLARC
Sara Bottenfield, DCR Ag Incentives Program Manager
Marissa Roland, DCREastern Area Manager

Denney Collins, DCR CDC
Olivia Leatherwood, DCR CDC
Tad Williams, DCR CDC
Crystal Lavin, DCR CDC
Kendall Tyree, VASWCD

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With eight (8) members of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board present a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Newton called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and asked for introductions.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 10, 2025

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Mills moved to approve the December 10, 2025, Board meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Pemberton seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Cornell, De La Cruz, Dunn, Mills, Newton, Pemberton, Schick, and Thomas.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Nikki Rovner, DCR Director*

Director Rovner opened by introducing herself to the Board and outlining her professional background, including her work with The Nature Conservancy and prior experience collaborating with DCR.

Director Rovner provided an overview of the 2026 General Assembly Session. The General Assembly adjourned on March 14, 2026, without adopting a budget, marking the eleventh instance since 2000 in which the Session concluded without a budget. The General Assembly is not expected to reconvene on the budget until after the veto session, scheduled approximately six weeks after adjournment. The veto session will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, during which legislators will consider the Governor's amendments and vetoes, followed by a special session beginning Thursday, April 23, 2026, to adopt a budget.

Director Rovner noted that both the House and Senate have approved their respective versions of the budget.

Director Rovner provided a summary of key legislation considered during the 2026 General Assembly Session, including:

- HB 747 (Runion) – Consolidation of Agricultural BMP Reporting: Streamlines reports related to District finances, funding needs, and progress toward Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals into a single, comprehensive report on Virginia's water quality efforts.
- HB 1381 (Bloxom) and SB 784 (Stuart) – Prohibition on Bioslurry Injection: Prohibits the underground injection of bioslurry—including agricultural and sewage waste—into wells located

within groundwater management areas designated prior to January 1, 2020, including the Eastern Shore region.

- SB 742 (Aird) – Agricultural Use Exemption for Clutter Ordinances (Planning District 19): Limits the application of local “clutter” ordinances on agriculturally zoned properties, exempting most agricultural lands except for small residential parcels, within Planning District 19.
- PFAS-Related Legislation: Several bills address the monitoring and regulation of PFAS in sewage sludge:
 - HB 1072 (Laufer): Authorizes localities to adopt ordinances for testing and monitoring PFAS in land-applied sewage sludge.
 - HB 1443 (Lopez) and SB 386 (Stuart): Establish requirements for sampling and testing sewage sludge beginning January 1, 2027, set limits on PFAS concentrations for land application, require permit modifications by DEQ, and direct further study and recommendations through an advisory group or workgroup.

REPORT FROM AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE – *John Schick, Audit Subcommittee Chairman*

As Audit Subcommittee Chair, Mr. Schick provided an update to the Board, noting that the Subcommittee reviewed the 2025 audit results and considered staff recommendations for addressing districts experiencing operational challenges. Ms. Watlington Jones presented an overview of the specific issues identified among the affected districts during the audit process.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Mills made the following motion: The Virginia Soil and Water Board, at the recommendation of the Audit Subcommittee, directs the Department to take the following actions related to certain Soil and Water Conservation Districts:

Big Sandy

- Withhold \$2,000 of the District’s FY2027 administration and operations allocation for continuing to pay sales tax after repeated notices to discontinue these payments.

Halifax

- Withhold \$2,000 of the District’s FY2027 administration and operations allocation as penalties for the incomplete Part II contracts, rather than requiring full repayment of the cost-share funding and technical assistance for these practices.
- Withhold \$80,819.92 of cost share funding and \$10,506.59 of technical assistance funding from the District’s FY2027 allocations for the incomplete Part III contract.

Henricopolis

- Withhold 20% of the District’s total administration and operations allocation established under the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2027.
- Return 50% of the funds being withheld to the District either through the regular fourth quarter disbursement of FY2027 or through a special disbursement during the fourth quarter of FY2027 if no new findings or concerns are identified during the special financial audit.

- Require the District to undergo a special financial audit for the time period of April 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026. The cost of this special audit will be at the expense of the District and will be reduced from the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocations.

Holston River

- Withhold 7% of the District's administration and operations allocation established under the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2027 due to the severity of the findings during the financial audit.
- Return 75% of the funds being withheld to the District either through the regular fourth quarter disbursement of FY2027 or through a special disbursement during the fourth quarter of FY2027 if no new findings are identified during the special financial audit.
- Require the District to undergo a special audit that focuses on verification of accounts in the SPDA system and dual approval of invoices. The expense of the audit will be reduced from the District's FY2027 administrative and operations allocation.
- Withhold \$4,000 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation for the repeated inadequacy of the meeting minutes.
- Require an additional Cost Share File Administrative Audit to be conducted by the Department with a close examination of the District's board meeting minutes for accurate cost share approval documentation.

Lord Fairfax

- Withhold \$500 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation as a penalty for the incomplete Part II, rather than requiring full repayment of the cost-share funding and technical assistance for this practice.

Mountain

- Withhold \$285,840.52 from the District's FY2027 cost share allocation for the failure to obtain signatures on the Part IIs of the reviewed VACS contracts;
- Withhold \$3,450 from the District's FY2027 cost share allocation for the failure to obtain all signatures on the Part III contract; and
- Withhold \$37,607.77 from the District's FY2027 technical assistance allocation, determined to be 13% of the cost share funds to be withheld.
- Withhold 7% of the District's total base technical assistance allocation established under the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2027.
- Return 75% of the administration and operations funds being withheld to the District either through the regular fourth quarter disbursement of FY2027 or through a special disbursement during the fourth quarter of FY2027 if no new findings or concerns being identified during a special Cost Share File Administrative Audit conducted by the Department.

Mountain Castles

- Withhold \$500 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation as a penalty for the incomplete Part II, rather than requiring full repayment of the cost-share funding and technical assistance for this practice.

Natural Bridge

- Withhold 7% of the District's total base technical assistance allocation established under the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2027.
- Return 75% of the funds being withheld to the District either through the regular fourth quarter disbursement of FY2027 or through a special disbursement during the fourth quarter of FY2027 contingent if no new findings or concerns are identified during a special Cost Share File Administrative Audit conducted by the Department.

Prince William

- Withhold \$2,000 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation as a penalty for the inaccurate minutes and cost share approvals.

Robert E. Lee

- Withhold \$1,000 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation as penalties for the incomplete Part II contracts, rather than requiring full repayment of the cost-share funding and technical assistance for these practices.
- Withhold \$5,950.00 of cost share funding and \$773.50 of technical assistance funding from the District's FY2027 Outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed allocation for the incomplete certification of technical need on a Part II contract.

Shenandoah Valley

- Withhold \$500 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation as penalty for the incomplete Part II contract, rather than requiring full repayment of the cost-share funding and technical assistance for these practices.

Southside

- Withhold \$173,829.45 of cost share funding and \$22,597.93 of technical assistance funding from the District's FY2027 allocations for the incomplete Part IIIs.

Three Rivers

- Withhold \$1,500 of the District's FY2027 administration and operations allocation as penalties for the incomplete Part II contracts, rather than requiring full repayment of the cost-share funding and technical assistance for these practices.

Ms. Cornell seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved by: Cornell, De La Cruz, Dunn, Mills, Newton, Pemberton, Schick, and Thomas.

The Board also reviewed the guidance regarding the use of funds withheld from soil and water conservation districts, as previously approved on September 25, 2023.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Pemberton made the following motion: The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, at the recommendation of the Audit Subcommittee, authorizes the Department, to the extent allowable, to utilize administration and operations funds and base technical assistance funds withheld from a Soil and Water Conservation District (District) in response to deficiencies found during yearly grant deliverable assessments, cost share file administrative audits, or financial audits to provide for training and learning opportunities for Districts and District Directors. Trainings and learning opportunities should focus on common deficiencies noted during financial audits and the cost share file administrative audits and should assist Districts with achieving the requirements established in the yearly grant deliverable assessments.

Mr. Mills seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved by: Cornell, De La Cruz, Dunn, Mills, Newton, Pemberton, Schick, and Thomas.

DAM SAFETY AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT – *Andrea Henry, Chief Engineer*

Ms. Henry presented the division report.

A NOIRA will be presented during the June meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Board to address additional regulatory revisions including an updated IDA methodology, significant and high hazard classification distinctions (traffic volume, economic damages, railroads), and regulatory exemptions for impoundments that can safely route the probable maximum flood (PMF). Several guidance documents will also be presented to the Board in 2026 including revised mapping and modeling procedures, vegetation maintenance on earthen embankments, and an updated enforcement manual.

A draft report with recommendations for an Incremental Damage Assessment (IDA) methodology was submitted by Schnabel Engineering on October 16, 2025. DCR concurs with the review committee's recommendations and the report was finalized in February 2026 with no significant changes. DCR Dam Safety staff are currently conducting an impact analysis using the proposed IDA methodology on 16 dams with previous hazard classification and/or spillway conveyance reductions.

Schnabel delivered the first draft of an updated Emergency Action Plan (EAP) template, with a review checklist, tabletop exercise guidelines, and owner instructions, in January 2026. An internal DCR peer review has concluded, with the emergency responder peer group and engineering consultant peer review group scheduled to meet in March and April, respectively. This project is scheduled to be completed by July 2026.

A pre-enforcement program strategy was launched in 2026 to focus communication and technical support on select dams meeting at least two condition triggers: unidentified ownership, screening level study indicating high hazard potential (high-preliminary), previous PE inspection resulting in a Poor or Unsatisfactory condition followed by over five years of inactivity, and/or a desktop inspection that indicates a high-preliminary hazard dam might be in poor condition. There are currently 25 dams on the pre-enforcement list, will be removed as owners move toward compliance, recommend for formal enforcement action, or identified for continued reminders of dam owner responsibilities (applicable to low hazard dams).

Dams of Concern

Burke Dam (Gloucester, 073006, High Hazard Potential): The dam is in poor condition due to a failing primary spillway and undersized auxiliary spillway. The dam has three owners: Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast (GSCC), VDOT, and a private owner. To date, only GSCC has taken on ownership responsibility. On October 1, 2025, GSCC legal counsel sent a letter to the Governor's office requesting resolution of the interagency dispute regarding VDOT ownership of Burke Dam. The dispute has not been addressed by the Governor's office as of March 2026.

Killarney Dam (Goochland, 075004, High-Preliminary Hazard Potential): A pre-enforcement letter was sent to the previous dam owner requesting a complete safety inspection and conditional O&M certificate by October 3, 2025, due to the unsafe condition of the dam. The property was auctioned in February 2026, and the new owner is working with the DCR Regional Engineer to develop a grant application for a safety inspection and dam break inundation study. This dam will remain on the pre-enforcement list until DCR receives the safety inspection with recommendations for remediation.

Lake Culpeper Dam (Warren, 187017, High-Preliminary Hazard Potential): A pre-enforcement letter was sent to the dam owner (Virginia Tech) in September 2026 to identify the appropriate point of contact and alert the owner of the poor condition of the dam (assessed during a regional engineer site visit). A contact has been identified, and they have hired Dewberry to develop an inundation study and conduct a safety inspection. This dam will remain on the pre-enforcement list until DCR receives the safety inspection with recommendations for remediation.

Afton Drive/Chappell Creek Dam (Prince George, 149027, Significant Hazard Potential): An Informal Fact-Finding Conference (IFFC) was held on June 17, 2025, and a Notice of Violation was sent on September 25, 2025. A DCR-developed simplified study determination is that the dam is a significant hazard due to the potential economic consequences to the four residential lots that have need of the single access road over the dam. Two of the four lots are owned by the dam owner's family. The Owner has filed a notice of appeal, and a court hearing is scheduled for April 2026.

Greene Mountain Lake Dam (Greene, 079014, Significant Hazard Potential): The Owner has, to date, addressed compliance requirements issued in the Notice of Violation. An alteration permit was approved on October 20, 2025, to address the unpermitted cuts into the downstream embankment and the installation of a toe drain. Construction will begin in late March 2026 after winter weather delays. Once the work associated with this permit is completed, the dam owner will need to submit a second alteration permit on a timeline coordinated with the regional engineer to repair the primary spillway pipe.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION REPORT – *James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation*

Mr. Martin provided the division report.

JLARC Study of the VACS Program – Overview and Status Update

On December 16, 2025, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) authorized a study resolution for the VACS program directing staff to evaluate six areas: (1) the Department's nonpoint source assessment process; (2) the criteria and processes used to allocate cost-share and technical

assistance funding to districts; (3) the criteria and procedures used by districts to select agricultural landowners and operators for cost-share participation; (4) the contract development process for cost-share practices, including cost assignment and award determination; (5) the quality of technical assistance provided; and (6) efforts by DCR and districts to verify compliance with program requirements.

JLARC staff have begun conducting interviews with the Department, stakeholders, and districts, with work expected to continue through Spring 2026 and potentially into the Summer. A final report outlining observations and findings is anticipated later this calendar year, likely in the Fall or Winter. Ms. Christine Wolfe of JLARC was present at the meeting observing the Board's proceedings, and the Department will continue to coordinate with JLARC throughout the study.

Grant Update

Mr. Martin provided an update on the Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture grant, noting that the grant, administered by Virginia Tech, has received a one-year extension from the USDA, extending the project through September 2027. This extension allows for a third round of applications. While the first two rounds were limited to the Thomas Jefferson and Colonial District service areas, the third round is expected to be open statewide and will utilize a self-service application model.

Virginia Tech has developed and tested an online application portal through prior rounds, and the Department is confident that producers will be able to independently navigate the system. The third round is anticipated to offer three eligible practices—pasture and hay planting, nutrient management, and grazing management—with payments of \$100 per acre for implementation of one practice on up to 120 acres per producer. A sub-pilot component will also allow producers to implement all three practices on up to 50 acres, with a payment of \$300 per acre.

Additional details regarding the third application round will be announced in the near future. Virginia Tech maintains a dedicated website and newsletter for the program key resources for updates, and an email will be distributed to all Districts with information on available grant opportunities to ensure awareness and participation.

Conservation Application System Rebuild – Project Update

Mr. Martin informed the Board that the Department continues to advance development of the conservation application system through ongoing coordination with contractors. Phase III of the project is nearing completion and is expected to be fully released by May of this year. Enhancements included in this release will feature improved mapping capabilities, a redesigned home landing page, and an optional general assistance module to enable districts to document technical assistance activities. Additional components outside of the VACS program will include a new financial management module to support more effective tracking of financial data, as well as an expanded certification tracking module to support conservation planner, nutrient management planner, and resource management plan developer certifications, along with engineering job approval authority at the district level.

Phase IV is anticipated to begin later this summer, with a continued focus on system modernization and user experience. Planned enhancements include automated soil loss calculations for agricultural BMP tracking, improved oversight of engineering practices, and a new module to support administration of

the VCAP program. Mr. Martin emphasized the importance of district participation in system testing to ensure that deliverables meet contractual expectations and that the system functions effectively to support district operations.

Nutrient Management Regulations – NOIRA and Regulatory Advisory Panel Update

In September 2025, the Board authorized Department staff to file a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) for the Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations. Department staff have since convened a Regulatory Advisory Panel to assist in developing recommended regulatory revisions for Board consideration. The Panel will hold its initial meeting on March 30 and will also provide recommendations related to updates to the Conservation Planning program.

APPROVAL OF BUDGETS FOR WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS – *Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager*

Ms. Watlington Jones provided an overview of budgets for two Watershed Improvement Districts (WID), Lake Barcroft and Timberlake.

Lake Barcroft

At the beginning of FY 2027, the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District (LBWID) anticipates a beginning balance of \$3,505,926, distributed among four reserve funds: Operations, Dredging, General Capital, and General Reserves. Property tax revenue is projected at \$1,672,014, representing an 8.7% increase over FY 2026, and, together with other modest income sources, total available funds are expected to reach \$5,194,440. Planned expenditures for FY 2027 total \$3,330,677, including \$1,160,000 for operating expenses (personnel, administration, overhead, environment, maintenance, and equipment), \$2,025,000 for dam renovation projects (including ingress and egress improvements to the WID operational facility), \$90,177 for dredging and silt removal, and \$55,000 for general capital expenditures, including the biennial recertification of the dam. The projected ending balance for FY 2027 is \$1,863,763.

The LBWID is focused on the armoring of the dam's east and west embankments to ensure compliance with Virginia Dam Safety regulatory requirements. This multi-year project, which began in FY 2023, is expected to be completed in FY 2028, with a total estimated cost of approximately \$8 million.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Cornell made the following motion: The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District FY2027 budget as submitted by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District and presented by the Department.

Mr. Pemberton seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved by: Cornell, De La Cruz, Dunn, Mills, Newton, Pemberton, Schick, and Thomas.

Timberlake

For FY 2027, the Timberlake Watershed Improvement District's budget includes operating expenses of \$2,848, interest expenses of \$15,345, loan amortization of \$37,847, and dam wing reinforcement of \$85,500.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Pemberton made the following motion: The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the Timberlake Watershed Improvement District FY2027 budget as submitted by the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District and presented by the Department.

Ms. Cornell seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved by: Cornell, De La Cruz, Dunn, Mills, Newton, Pemberton, Schick, and Thomas.

REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL BMP COST-SHARE MANUAL AMENDMENTS – *Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager*

Ms. Watlington Jones provided an overview of the Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Manual Amendments. Several amendments were made to the document provided to the Board. Under WP-9, the reference to "cost-share" was removed, as this practice qualifies solely as a tax credit. A minor revision was made to SE-2, adding the word "for" in Section B for clarity.

Matrix of Recommended Changes to the BMP Specifications

Individual BMPs were revised to reflect recommendations discussed at the Ag BMP TAC subcommittee meetings, as well as input provided by the Department.

The TAC submitted two recommendations that the Department does not support. The first (5P, page 101) proposes revising the existing bundle variance process in the VACS Guidelines to allow combinations of BMPs, excluding combinations consisting solely of agronomic practices, that exceed the participant funding cap to be eligible for a variance. The variance procedure was originally intended to allow funding for high-cost structural practices exceeding the cap when approved by both the District Board and the Variance Committee. The proposed revision would instead allow participants to circumvent the funding cap, including scenarios where relatively small structural practices are combined with significant agronomic practices.

The second recommendation (14S, page 105) pertains to timber harvesting and proposes updated language to restrict harvesting within the minimum setback buffer area for certain practices, requiring the buffer to be maintained as perennial vegetation for the lifespan of the practice. While the proposed language further clarifies restrictions on grazing and haying within protected riparian areas, the Department does not support it, noting that installation of forested buffers has been challenging and that allowing timber harvesting within established buffer areas would undermine Virginia's commitments to increasing riparian forest buffer acreage.

The Department also provided several recommendations, including minor updates to language and formatting for clarity in WFA-CC and WFA-NM. Revisions to SE-2 (Shoreline Erosion) include added

detail regarding eligible components - specifically authorizing funding for sand fill necessary to stabilize sills and breakwaters and to establish vegetation - as well as clarification of ineligible components, including living shoreline projects on sites with a fetch greater than five miles and beach replenishment not required for structural stabilization or vegetation establishment. Further updates to SE-2 include removal of the lifespan waiver for practices damaged by natural events and elimination of the requirement for SEAS to review all designs.

Department Recommended Changes to Other Sections of the Manual

- Guidelines:

The Department made editorial revisions throughout this section to update dates and correct spelling, punctuation, and formatting. Key revisions to the Guidelines section of the AgBMP Manual include updates to Program Year references from 2026 to 2027 and revisions to references for NPS assessment information (Sections II-7 and II-12). The naming of practices FR-3 and FR-3M has been updated throughout the Guidelines to reflect TAC recommendations, now identified as Riparian Forested Buffer practices.

Additional revisions include updates on page II-31 to reference VACS practice lifespans rather than a fixed 10-year period, recognizing that practices have varying lifespans. On page II-33, language has been added to allow Districts to coordinate with the Department regarding funding availability to address unforeseen circumstances, including support for projects already under construction. Revisions to the variance procedures (pages II-33 through II-35) reflect TAC-approved recommendations and include clarification that variance approvals are specific to the practice information and supporting documentation reviewed by the DCR Variance Committee; any subsequent changes must be submitted to the Agricultural Incentives Program Manager for review to ensure continued eligibility, regardless of whether additional cost-share is requested.

Further updates include revisions to the bid process (pages II-37 through II-38) and to practices eligible for one- or two-year completion timelines (carryover status) on pages II-44 through II-45, consistent with TAC recommendations. On pages II-52-53, language has been added to address the completion of a transfer of responsibility form in the event of a participant's death.

- CREP:

The "CREP Enrollment" section (Page IV-3) was updated to reflect current contract signature requirements.

- Tax Credit

The Guidelines were updated to include the new WP-9 practice, Decommissioning of Liquid Manure Storage Facilities, in the table of tax credit-only practice components requiring EJAA or PE review and approval (Page IV-9). Additionally, language was added on Page IV-11 to address the completion of a transfer of responsibility form in the event the original participant is deceased.

- Poultry Litter

The Guidelines were revised to remove the cap on the amount of litter eligible per applicant per request (Pages VIII-1 and VIII-8). In addition, minor amendments, including formatting corrections and date changes, were made throughout the document.

- Other Documents

All dates on the cover, schedule, and tables were updated from 2026 to 2027. The Table of BMPs was revised to incorporate TAC recommendations, including the addition of new BMPs and updated naming for FR-3 (Riparian Forested Buffer) and FR-3M (Riparian Forested Buffer Maintenance). Newly reflected practices include the Continuing Conservation Initiative Long-Term Vegetative Cover on Cropland – Maintenance Practice (CCI-SL-1) and the tax credit-only specification for WP-9 (Decommissioning of Liquid Waste Storage Facilities).

Revisions were also made to VACS contracts, including the addition of language in Part 1 requiring that the producer's address match the address provided on the submitted W-9 form, and the relocation of the participant signature block in Part 2 for improved clarity and consistency.

APPROVAL OF DISTRICT DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS – *Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager*

The Board reviewed the following Soil and Water Conservation District Director appointments and resignations:

Appomattox River

Resignation of Mr. Michael Parrish, of Dinwiddie County, effective 2/15/2026, extension agent director (term of office expires 12/31/2028).

Culpeper

Resignation of Mr. Robert Brame III, of Orange County, effective 12/1/2025, elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Appointment of Ms. Molly Elgin McWilliams, of Orange County, effective 3/20/2026, to fill the vacant elected director position (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Ms. McWilliams is dairy farmer and avid support of 4H and the Virginia dairy industry. She serves as a Director for the Orange County Farm Bureau, is a board member for the Dairy Alliance, and sits on the council for Maola Local Dairies. She is passionate about youth development and mentorship and volunteers with 4H. She has been serving Culpeper SWCD as an Associate Director.

Henricopolis

Resignation of Ms. Quinn Bracken, of Henrico County, effective 2/26/2026, extension agent director (term of office expires 12/31/2028).

Monacan

Resignation of Ms. Sandy Brindley, of Powhatan County, effective 1/30/2026, elected director position (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Appointment of Mr. Daniel Jones, of Powhatan County, effective 3/20/2026, to fill the vacant elected director position (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Mr. Jones is a board member of CRLC, has a background in economics, and is dedicated to serving the community of Powhatan. He is involved with his local church, is a founding member of the Powhatan Rotary Club, and a past board member of the Powhatan YMCA and Habitat for Humanity. He enjoys restoring tools, gardening, art collecting and spending time with his family and rescue animals.

Mountain Castles

Resignation of Ms. Anne Jones, of Botetourt County, effective 8/1/2025, extension agent director (term of office expires 12/31/2028).

Appointment of Mr. Jonathan Stanley, of Craig County, effective 3/20/2026, to fill the vacant extension agent director position (term of office expires 12/31/2028).

Robert E. Lee

Appointment of Mr. James "Ed" Jones, of Campbell County, effective 3/20/2026, to fill the vacant elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Mr. Jones farms over 350 acres of hay, soybeans and wheat, and raises beef cattle. He also works for Phillips Equipment (John Deere Dealership). In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, softball and volleyball. He holds a special interest in conservation practices on the farm in hopes of leaving it to his son and grandchildren in better condition than when he started.

Thomas Jefferson

Resignation of Mr. John Pfaltz, of Charlottesville, effective 11/21/2025, elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Appointment of Dr. Aaron Mills, of Charlottesville, effective 3/20/2026, to fill the vacant elected director position (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Dr. Mills was a professor of soil science and water quality at the University of Virginia for 47 years. He has been serving as an Associate Director for Thomas Jefferson SWCD and sits on the board of their foundation which oversees easements.

Resignation of Mr. Mark Wastler, of Albemarle County, effective 1/26/2026, elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Appointment of Ms. Rosalyn Koontz, of Albemarle County, effective 3/20/2026, to fill the vacant elected director position (term of office expires 12/31/2027).

Ms. Koontz has been serving as an Associate Director for Thomas Jefferson SWCD and is a board member of their foundation which oversees easements. She and her husband own a beef cattle operation, purchasing a run down farm and working for over 20 years to make it sustainable with buffers, fencing, rotational grazing, and more.

BOARD ACTION

After reviewing the list, Ms. Cornnell made the following motion:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the appointments of the individuals being recommended.

Mr. Mills seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved by: Cornnell, De La Cruz, Dunn, Mills, Newton, Pemberton, Schick, and Thomas.

REVIEW OF REVISED CONSERVATION PLANNING CURRICULUM – *Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager*

Ms. Watlington Jones provided an overview of revised conservation planning curriculum. The Department continues to develop a tiered training curriculum for the conservation planning program in response to comments and concerns raised by Districts and stakeholders. A draft was presented at the Association's annual meeting in December during a breakfast roundtable session, and the Department has since amended the curriculum based on feedback received. Final recommendations are anticipated to be presented to the Board for approval at the June meeting. Board members are encouraged to submit any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the curriculum to Carl Thiel-Goin or Vanessa Lewis by April 22, 2026.

PARTNER REPORTS

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Dr. Edwin Martinez

Dr. Martinez gave the report for the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Dr. Daniel Goerlich, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Mr. Goerlich provided the report for the Virginia Cooperative Extension prior to the meeting.

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Dr. Kendall Tryree, VASWCD Executive Director

Dr. Tyree gave the report for the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

A handout was provided with information regarding Spring 2026 updates and upcoming meetings.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR INTRODUCTION – *Sarah Spota, DCR Deputy Director*

Ms. Spota introduced herself to the Board and provided an overview of her professional background, including her prior roles as Deputy Secretary of Higher Education and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources. She also highlighted key initiatives and areas of work she supported and led in those positions.

ATTACHMENT E DISCUSSION – *Leigh Pemberton, Board Member*

Mr. Pemberton informed the Board of concerns raised by several Districts regarding Attachment E, cover crop verifications, and the potential for a pay-for-outcome type of practice for cover crops.

The Board and staff discussed these concerns. Mr. Martin advised the Board of a pilot program utilizing satellite imagery to evaluate vegetative index, which will be initiated in the Colonial District. Satellite imagery may assist Districts with conducting cover crop verifications.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next Board meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2026, at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield. The May 11, 2026, meeting has been cancelled, and a poll has been distributed to the Board to determine a date for a June 2026 meeting.

The September 2026 meeting will include a field trip to Mr. Mills' farm to observe his farm operations, similar to the Board's field visit to Mr. Wilson's farm in September 2025.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.