

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Cover Crop Subcommittee
Briar View Farms, 1101 Wynnell Dr, Callands, VA 24530
September 14, 2026; 6:00 p.m.**

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order and Introductions
- B. Approval of minutes from August 20, 2026
- C. Discussion of recommendation(s) for Board action related to cover crop verification procedures
- D. Next steps
- E. Public Comment

For copies of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board meeting materials contact Breanne Lindsey, Board and Constituent Liaison at 804.786.8445 or by email at breanne.lindsey@dcr.virginia.gov.

Cover Crop Subcommittee Members

Stephanie Cornnell
Leigh Pemberton
Kevin Dunn

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Cover Crop Subcommittee
Thursday, August 20, 2026
Graves Mountain Farm & Lodges – Large Lounge
Syria, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Cover Crop Subcommittee took place at 1:01 p.m. on Friday, July 24, 2026, at Graves Mountain Farm & Lodges in Syria, Virginia.

COVER CROP SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Kevin Dunn
Leigh Pemberton
Stephanie Cornnell

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION STAFF PRESENT

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
Olivia Leatherwood, DCR
Denney Collins, DCR
Marissa Roland, DCR
Marie Schirmacher, DCR
Crystal Lavin, DCR
Sara Bottenfield, DCR
Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR
Vanessa Lewis, DCR

OTHERS PRESENT

Amy Walker, CSWCD
Robert Waring, CSWCD
Jim Wallace, CSWCD
Brandy Maxey, Peter Francisco SWCD
Kelly Snoddy, Peter Francisco SWCD
Cory Hoar, VA Dare
Kemper Marable, HCSWCD
Hunter Gravatt, HCSWCD
Sharon Conner, HCSWCD
Michael Tabor, BRSWCD
Sam Chappell, BRSWCD
Allyson Ponn, LFSWCD

Kendall Dellinger, Culpeper SWCD
Lynn Graves, Culpeper SWCD
Luke Longanecker, TJSWCD
Tim Talley, TJSWCD
Glenn Mitchell, Henricopolis SWCD
Keith Burgess, Monacan SWCD
Bryan Johnson, VA Farm Bureau
Buck Tharpe, SSWCD
Megen Dalton, SVSWCD
Hunter Arehart, SVSWCD

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. Subcommittee members and staff introduced themselves.

ORGANIZATION OF SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee agreed not to appoint a Chair and to make decisions by consensus. DCR staff will coordinate and present recommendations and reports developed by the Subcommittee for the Soil and Water Conservation Board to review.

REVIEW OF SUBCOMMITTEE CHARGE

Ms. Watlington Jones reviewed the process and timeline for the Subcommittee's consideration of the topics identified by the Board at its July 2026 meeting, with work continuing through spring 2027. She emphasized that district participation would be essential to the work of the Subcommittee.

DISCUSSION OF TRADITIONAL COVER CROP VERIFICATION METHODS

Ms. Watlington Jones presented a document outlining procedures for verifying cover crop percent cover that are currently used for research and field work and used by the Natural Resources Conservation Service for determining residue assessment. Subcommittee members and district staff discussed the procedures and shared their relevant experiences.

The group also discussed the previous use of tiller count as a standard. Ms. Watlington Jones requested that district staff submit any recommendations on the procedures document, along with supporting scientific evidence, by September 8 for the Board's consideration at its September 15 meeting.

DISCUSSION OF THE INFORMATION NEEDED FROM DISTRICTS

Ms. Watlington Jones stated that a survey would be developed and distributed to districts to gather information on current cover crop verification procedures. The data collected will help the Subcommittee better understand district workload impacts and inform its work moving forward.

Subcommittee members and district staff discussed the types of information to be collected. The group also noted that the Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees had established a Cover Crop

Committee. The Subcommittee and the Employee's Association committee will collaborate as appropriate to coordinate their efforts.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Keith Burgess asked how the Board plans to address mid-year changes while maintaining consistent cover crop standards.

Charles Newton addressed the Subcommittee regarding the Board's funding policy.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

DRAFT