

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

The Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists met on June 11, 2024, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

Members present for all or part of the meeting:

**Citizens**

Bennette Burks  
Robin Jones  
Steven Yob

**Geologists**

Shannon George  
Matt Heller  
Michael Lawless  
R. Drew Thomas

**Soil Scientists**

Larry Giannasi  
David Hall

**Wetland Delineators**

Robin Bedenbaugh  
Doug DeBerry

Members absent from the meeting with regrets:

**Soil Scientists**

Alexis Jones

**Wetland Delineators**

Justin Brown

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Brian Wolford, Chief Deputy Director  
Steve Kirschner, LRPD Deputy Director  
Kate Nobsch, Executive Director  
Ecila Williams, Licensing Operations Administrator  
Joseph Haughwout, Regulatory Affairs Manager  
Greg Emerson, Executive Director- Examinations  
John Robertson, IV, Communications and Digital Media Manager

Kishore Thota, Director, and Grace Flores-Hughes, BPOR Liaison, were not present at the meeting with regrets.

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

Members of the audience:

Billie Hall  
Charlie Paullin, *Virginia Mercury*

Mr. Thomas, Chair, having a quorum, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**Call to Order**

Mr. Thomas advised the Board of the emergency evacuation procedures.

**Emergency Evacuation**

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that Mr. Brown and Ms. A. Jones could not attend the meeting with regrets. Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that Bonnie Davis accepted a position with another state agency closer to home and congratulated her on her future endeavors.

**Announcements**

Mr. Hall moved to approve the agenda. Ms. R. Jones seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Bedenbaugh, Burks, DeBerry, George, Giannasi, Hall, Heller, R. Jones, Lawless, Thomas, and Yob.

**Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Hall moved to approve all the minutes in block for the following dates:

**Approval of Minutes**

- i. PSSWPG Board Meeting, March 4, 2024
- ii. Wetland Delineators Regulatory Review Meeting, April 22, 2024

Mr. Lawless seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Bedenbaugh, Burks, DeBerry, George, Giannasi, Hall, Heller, R. Jones, Lawless, Thomas, and Yob

There was no public comment.

**Public Comment Period**

Ms. Nosbisch stated the soil scientist update items were provided for informational purposes.

**Soil Scientists Update**

Ms. Nosbisch stated the wetland professional update items were provided for informational purposes.

**Wetland Professionals Update**

Mr. Bedenbaugh shared with the Board information from the 2024 Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals Spring Meeting that occurred on June 7, 2024. Mr. DeBerry thanked Mr. Kirschner and Ms. Nosbisch for their presentation on regulations and General Assembly at the spring meeting.

Ms. Nosbisch stated the geologist update items were provided for informational purposes.

**Geologists Update**

Mr. Lawless shared with the Board information from the 2024 Spring ASBOG Council of Examiners Workshop that occurred from April 5-7, 2024, in Dallas, Texas.

Mr. Emerson presented to the Board Virginia Geology Statistics from March 2023-October 2023 and March 2024 for informational purposes.

**Examination  
Director Report**

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

**Executive Director  
Report**

Mr. Haughwout informed the Board that general review actions for the Professional Soil Scientists Regulations and Regulations Governing Certified Professional Wetland Delineators are at the Proposed stage. The Board has adopted proposed amendments for these regulations and filing of the proposed regulations is pending. Once filed, the proposed regulations will undergo Executive Branch review. Once Executive Branch review is completed, the proposed regulations will be open for 60 days for public comment and a public hearing will be scheduled.

**Regulatory Update**

Mr. Haughwout informed the Board that the General Review of Regulations for the Geology Certification Program are now at the end of the NOIRA stage. The NOIRA was published in the Virginia Register on May 6, 2024, for a 30-day public comment period. The public comment period ended on June 5, 2024, and there were no comments received.

Mr. Haughwout informed the Board that the Board's proposed fee adjustments are currently in Executive Branch review at the Governor's Office.

Mr. Haughwout provided an overview of the proposed amendments for Geology Certification Program regulations that will aid in the reduction of regulatory requirements. The Board reviewed and considered proposed amendments recommended by the regulatory review committee and additional staff recommendations for changes. After a brief discussion, Mr. DeBerry moved to adopt the proposed amendments to the regulation as revised by the Board and to authorize staff to file the proposed regulation. Mr. Gianassi seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Bedenbaugh, Burks, DeBerry, George, Giannasi, Hall, Heller, R. Jones, Lawless, Thomas, and Yob.

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that Jen Sayegh could not attend the meeting with regrets, however, she provided an update for Ms. Nosbisch to share with the Board.

**General Assembly  
Update**

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that House Bill 287 have been signed into law by the Governor as of March 8, 2024. This legislation will take effect on July 1, 2024. The new law expands the definition of the practice of geology to encompass a broader range of professional services and activities where geological principles and methods are applied. Ms. George moved to authorize staff to file an exempt action to amend the Regulations for the Geology Certification Program to conform the regulation to the changes in statute. Mr. Giannasi seconded the motion, which was

unanimously approved by members: Bedenbaugh, Burks, DeBerry, George, Giannasi, Hall, Heller, R. Jones, Lawless, Thomas, and Yob.

House Bill 1182 was signed into law by the Governor on April 5, 2024. This new legislation introduces changes to Virginia’s voluntary Professional Wetland Delineator Certification, aiming to provide a less burdensome certification process and to align with the Universal License Recognition (ULR) statute. The legislation will take effect on July 1, 2024. Key changes under the new law include reduction in required experience for degree holders to three years and applicants seeking certification through professional experience reduced the required experience in wetland science research or as a teacher of wetlands curriculum at an accredited institution of higher education to three years. Mr. Bedenbaugh moved to authorize staff to file an exempt action to amend the Regulations Governing Certified Professional Wetland Delineators to conform the regulation to the changes in statute. Mr. DeBerry seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Bedenbaugh, Burks, DeBerry, George, Giannasi, Hall, Heller, R. Jones, Lawless, Thomas, and Yob.

Mr. Lawless moved to approve the 2025 meeting dates of March 5, June 10, September 16, and December 2. Mr. Burks seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Bedenbaugh, Burks, DeBerry, George, Giannasi, Hall, Heller, R. Jones, Lawless, Thomas, and Yob.

**2025 Meeting Dates**

Mr. Bedenbaugh shared a “A Day in the Life of a Wetland Professional” presentation to the Board and DPOR staff.

**A Day in the Life of a Wetland Professional**

The licensee counts as of May 1, 2024: Soil Scientists – 78; Wetland Delineators – 130; Geologists – 900.

**Licensed and Certified Population**

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that the financial statements were included for informational purposes. Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board that Hope Larson, Director of Finance, will be invited to the next board meeting on September 4, 2024 to give more information about board statements.

**Financial Statements**

Ms. Nosbisch reminded the Board that the Board Member Training Conference is scheduled for October 10, 2024 to October 11, 2024 in Williamsburg, VA.

**Other Business**

Ms. Nosbisch informed the Board she received communication from the Virginia Department of Health indicating that regulations and construction permit for private wells would involve changes in its statutes.

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 11:30 a.m.

**Adjourn**

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R. Drew Thomas, Chair

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Kishore S. Thota, Secretary

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