

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Monday, September 25, 2023
Bear Creek Lake State Park, Cumberland, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board took place at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, September 25, 2023, at Bear Creek Lake State Park, in Cumberland, Virginia.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Charles Newton, Chair	Pamela Mason
Adam D. Wilson, Vice Chair	John Schick
Charles A. Arnason	Matthew S. Wells, DCR Ex Officio
Jason De La Cruz	Dr. Edwin M. Martinez, NRCS, Ex Officio
Jay C. Ford	

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Dr. Stephen R. Hill
ONE VACANCY

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Andrew Smith, Chief Deputy Director
Stuart Blankenship, Data Services Manager
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Blair Gordon, SWCD Liaison
Darryl Glover, Deputy Director, Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager
James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation

OTHERS PRESENT

Suzanne Brown, Loudoun SWCD
Sharon Connor, Hanover-Caroline SWCD
Anne Coates, Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Kevin Dunn, Peter Francisco SWCD
Dr. Daniel Goerlich, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Luke Longanecker, Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Charlotte Mabie, Peter Francisco SWCD
Darrell Marshall, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Kelly Snoddy, Peter Francisco SWCD
Dr. Kendall Tyree, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With seven (7) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Arnason called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and asked for introductions. He welcomed Mr. De La Cruz and Mr. Schick to the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 12, 2023

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the minutes from the June 12, 2023, meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board be approved as submitted. Ms. Mason seconded, and the motion carried.

OFFICER ELECTIONS

Chairman Arnason advised that the Board bylaws call for the election of a Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of each fiscal year. He expressed appreciation for his four years as Board chair and noted that he will continue to serve his term on the Board but that it was time to pass the baton.

Mr. Arnason nominated Mr. Newton to serve as Chairman of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. Mr. Wilson seconded. There were no further nominations and Mr. Newton was elected Chair.

Mr. Newton assumed the Chairmanship and called for nominations for Vice Chair.

Mr. Ford nominated Mr. Wilson to continue to serve as Vice Chair. Ms. Mason seconded. There were no further nominations and Mr. Wilson was reelected Vice Chair.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Matthew S. Wells, DCR Director*

Director Wells welcomed members to Bear Creek Lake State Park. The park covers 330 acres but is connected to the Cumberland National Forest. About 80,000 people visit Bear Creek Lake State Park each year.

Director Wells continued with the Director's Report.

Adoption of revised budget

Director Wells reported that, as of September 14, there is a revised budget. The legislature passed and the Governor signed an amended FY24 budget.

Highlights from the budget include:

- \$25 million for the rehabilitation of District-owned dams
- \$100 million for the Resilient Virginia Revolving Loan Fund
- 10 positions for key needs throughout the Department

- Water Quality Improvement Fund deposits (2 separate deposits)
 - \$1 million for the development of a new platform for the Conservation Application Suite

 - Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund
 - BMPs within the Chesapeake Bay watershed \$174,609,245
 - BMPs outside the Chesapeake Bay watershed \$74,832,534

▪ Additional technical assistance funding	\$37,272,909
▪ Total funding	\$286,714,688

- \$50,773,180 deposit to the WQIF Reserve

Director Wells also noted the following:

Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund grant manual public comment period

The grant manual for the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund is required to undergo a 30-day public comment period pursuant to §2.2-4002.1 of the Code of Virginia. The public comment period began on September 11, 2023, and will close on October 11, 2023. DCR has informed all dam owners of the public comment period through the Dam Safety Information System (DSIS) and issued a press release as well. Staff hopes to bring a final grant manual to this Board for approval at the December meeting.

Resource Management Plan Regulation (4VAC50- 70)

The Board approved the initiation of a periodic review for the Resource Management Plan regulations at the June 2023 meeting. The comment period for the RMP periodic review begins on September 25, 2023, and ends October 16, 2023. DCR is seeking comments on ways the regulations could be improved. Staff anticipates that responses to the public comments received will be presented at the December 2023 meeting.

Chapters 735 and 736 Stakeholder Advisory Group

The “Bay backstop bills” (Chapter 735 and 736) that were passed during this year’s session require the establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Group (Group). The Group is charged with reviewing annual progress and making recommendations toward the implementation of the Commonwealth’s agricultural commitments in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan. The first meeting of this Group will be held on Thursday, September 28th and will be convened by both the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources.

Agricultural Needs Assessment Workgroup

The Agricultural Needs Assessment Workgroup met twice this summer to discuss the funding needs for both the VACS Program and technical assistance funding for the Districts. Those recommendations will be included in the 2023 Impaired Waters Clean-up Plan Report issued by DEQ in accordance with §62.1-44.118 of the Code of Virginia; the report is currently under review. The Workgroup includes representatives from industry organizations, the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and environmental organizations.

New VACS Participants

There were 705 new participants in the VACS Program in FY2023. Director Wells commended the efforts of the Districts, Virginia State University – Small Farm Outreach Program, partners, and Department staff that participated in or contributed to this accomplishment. The outreach events, marketing materials, and efforts made by everyone are having an impact.

Community Flood Preparedness Fund and Resilient Virginia Revolving Loan Fund

The Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) was established to provide support for regions and localities across Virginia to reduce the impacts of flooding. Grant round is open from September 13, 2023, through November 12, 2023. There is \$85 million available for this grant round.

The Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund was established in 2022 to aid communities and property owners impacted by flooding. Grant round is open from September 13, 2023, through December 12, 2023. There is \$18.5 million available for this grant round.

REPORT FROM THE AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE – *Adam Wilson, Chair, SWCB Audit Subcommittee*

Mr. Wilson reported that the Audit Subcommittee met that morning prior to the full Board meeting. The Subcommittee reviewed the report regarding the assessments of District grant agreement deliverables.

Mr. Wilson noted that the Subcommittee took the following actions.

Skyline SWCD

In response to the financial audit, at their March 23, 2023, meeting the Audit Subcommittee directed Skyline Soil and Water Conservation District to address and correct the repeated unnecessary payment of sales tax. The District was directed to provide proof of requesting tax exempt status from stores by June 1, 2023. An update was provided to the Department on June 21, 2023; however, the District had not taken the necessary actions to comply with the directive.

With frequent reminders, the District provided an update on August 18, 2023.

One of the grant deliverables is complying with directions issued by the Audit Subcommittee and the Board. The District failed to comply. The Department recommended a \$1,000 penalty for failing to comply with directions. This penalty will not impact district operations.

Mr. Wilson noted that the Subcommittee recommended that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board direct the Department to withhold \$1,000 from the District's FY2024 administration and operation allocation for failing to act on the directives from the Subcommittee.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson submitted the Subcommittee recommendation as a motion. Mr. Ford seconded, and the motion carried.

Tri-County/City

Mr. Wilson advised that at the March 23, 2022, meeting, the Board took action to withhold funds from the district if they failed to meet certain conditions. The District failed to submit an accurate and complete year-end report. The report was signed by a District Director after financial policy had been revised in response to the PIP, however the report was clearly inaccurate and incomplete.

Numerous trainings have been provided to District employees. The Conservation District Coordinator was in the office on a weekly basis throughout this time. Department staff was readily available to assist with any questions or concerns.

The District was aware that they had failed to meet the conditions and that funds would be withheld.

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that in the future, the Department will keep the Audit Subcommittee more informed when Districts are failing to meet deliverables related to resolving findings discovered during financial audits or during annual assessments.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved the recommendation from the Subcommittee that the Board affirm the decision to withhold the funds as approved at the March 23, 2022, meeting. Mr. Arnason seconded, and the motion carried.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson advised that the Subcommittee discussed the use of administration and operations funds withheld from Districts. Mr. Wilson moved the recommendation from the Subcommittee as a recommendation. Mr. Arnason seconded, and the motion carried.

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) directs the Department of Conservation and Recreation (Department), to the extent allowable, to utilize administration and operations funds withheld from a Soil and Water Conservation District (District) to provide for training or learning opportunities for Districts. Trainings should be focused on addressing audit findings, best financial practices, and other items that are routinely found deficient on the yearly assessments conducted by the Department or financial audits.

DAM SAFETY DIVISION

Report on status of dams and program initiatives - Darryl Glover, Deputy Director, DSFPM/SWC

Mr. Glover presented the Division report. A copy of the report is included as Attachment A.

Extension of grant agreements for certain projects funded by the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund - Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager

Ms. Watlington Jones noted that at their June 24, 2022, meeting the Board approved the 202 grant applications, with an approval amount of \$1,600,001 as recommended by the Department. The grant agreements were approved for twelve months.

Historically, grant agreements have been approved for twenty-four months, rather than twelve. The Department is requesting extensions for an additional twelve months for all projects that were approved on June 24, 2022.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Mason moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve a twelve-month extension for all projects that were approved on June 24, 2022. Mr. Arnason seconded, and the motion carried.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION

Division Report – James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Mr. Martin gave the report for the Division of Soil and Water.

Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Division Director's Report

September 25, 2023

Prepared by James E. Martin
Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, DCR

Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program Technical Advisory Committee

The Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program Technical Advisory Committee and its subcommittees have begun their series of meeting to consider changes for the PY25 VACS Program. Recommendations for changes to the program are submitted to the Department and considered by the TAC for inclusion in VACS. We greatly appreciate the many SWCD staff serve on the TAC and its subcommittees.

Conservation Application Suite Upgrades

Work continues on the development of the system requirements and VITA process for releasing the request for proposals to solicit bids for a contractor to implement the CAS system upgrades. We are shooting to have the RFP out by the end of October 2023.

NRCS Verification Pilot

On August 29th, Division staff met with NRCS to discuss the next steps in the Verification Pilot Project. The project was developed to attempt to solve the challenges of NRCS funded practices being lost in the Bay Model due to expiring credit durations. Several Pilot efforts have attempted to have DCR and/or SWCD staff contact NRCS participating producers with practices that are out of the model credit duration to seek permission for NRCS to share their data and allow a verification check on the practices by DCR/SWCD staff. Both efforts have had very low response rates. The envisioned third pilot will have NRCS staff initiate contact and discussions with the participants. The hope is that the existing relationship of trust between NRCS and their participating producers will generate an improved response rate. The meeting also explored several other approaches that NRCS might employ to extend model credit duration. These included updating inspection dates for practices installed early in a contract at the end of the contract (could gain 1-5 years of additional credit); and the possibility of re-verifying older out of contract practices for producers that sign up for new contracts. The joint agency team is continuing to work out the final details for the third pilot effort.

Agency Updates

There are several agency updates that I would like to share.

Caroline Schrider has been hired as the Nutrient Management Specialist-Staunton, filling the vacancy left by Becky Barlow's retirement on 08/01/23. Caroline is scheduled to start on Monday, 09/25/23. Her assigned service area includes the following counties: Louisa, Albemarle, Fluvanna, Cumberland, Buckingham, Nelson, Amherst, Appomattox, and Campbell.

Mandy Fletcher's effective resignation date from the CDC-Abingdon position is 10/09/23. The Department will work as quickly as possible to begin recruiting for that position.

Scott Ambler is retiring after numerous years of state service. His position will be repurposed into a nutrient management planner position to assist with the increasing workloads impacting the Department's nutrient management staff. Barbara McGarry will remain as the Department's primary Resource Management Plan Program resource.

Update on perennial stream dataset and viewer - Stuart Blankenship, Data Services Manager

Mr. Blankenship presented an update on the perennial stream dataset and viewer.

- The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board was tasked with creating a perennial stream dataset to aid in compliance with Code of Virginia §62.1-44.123.
- Code of Virginia §62.1-44.123 states:
 - **“Any person who owns property in the Chesapeake Bay watershed on which 20 or more bovines are pastured shall install and maintain stream exclusion practices sufficient to exclude all such bovines from any perennial stream in the watershed.”**
- The methodology used to identify perennial streams could not require field verification.

Perennial Stream Identification Overview

A dataset identifying perennial stream segments has been developed for Virginia's portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed using the following reference datasets.

- **DEMS Derived from Virginia LiDAR** – Available from USGS and VGIN for the entire watershed.
- **SSURGO Soils** – Available from USDA-NRCS and includes information about soils as collected by the National Cooperative Soil Survey over the course of a century.
- **2002 VGIN Stream Network** – Derived from digital elevation models and aerial photography during a significant statewide drought.
- **National Hydrography Dataset (NHD)** – Nationwide water drainage network provided by USGS.

Mr. Blankenship reviewed the information provided in the dataset and viewer. The Perennial Stream Viewer may be seen at the following link: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/perennial-streams>.

Actions related to Resource Management Plan Program

Update on District Program Reviews – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that the RMP Program regulations (4VAC50-70-130) require that the programs are reviewed every five years. Programs are reviewed for general program administration, plan review inspections, and compliance inspections.

The Districts reviewed this year were:

- **Chowan Basin**
 - The District was found to have reviewed these RMPS in a timely matter and provided helpful feedback to the RMP developer to facilitate the approval of these RMPS. The Department has several suggestions for documenting the review and certification process, which have been shared with the District.

- **Lake County**
 - Received all possible points
 - The Department finds that the Lake County TRC and Board conducted RMP review duties in accordance with regulations and in accordance with guidance provided to them by the Department. The District is commended for reviewing these RMPS in a timely manner and providing helpful feedback to the RMP developer to facilitate the approval of these RMPS

- **Natural Bridge**
 - The Department finds that the Natural Bridge TRC and Board conducted RMP review duties in accordance with regulations and in accordance with guidance provided to them by the Department. The Department has provided recommendations to the District that would strengthen the oversight and administration of this critical program.

- **Peanut**
 - Received all possible points
 - The Department finds that the Peanut TRC and Board conducted RMP review duties in accordance with regulations and in accordance with guidance provided by the Department. The Department commends the Peanut TRC for thorough attention to detail in the review of the RMP and for providing helpful feedback to the RMP developer to facilitate the approval of these RMPS.

- **Robert E. Lee**
 - Received all possible points
 - The Department finds that the Robert E. Lee TRC and Board conducted RMP review duties in accordance with regulations and with guidance provided by the Department. The Department has provided recommendations to the District that would strengthen the oversight and administration of this critical program. The District was found to have reviewed these RMPS in a timely manner and

- **Southside**
 - Received all possible points

- The Department finds that the Southside TRC and Board conducted RMP review duties in accordance with regulations and in accordance with advice provided by the Department. The Department commends the Southside TRC for thorough attention to detail in the review of the RMP and for providing helpful feedback to the RMP developer to facilitate the approval of these RMPs.
- The Department is developing a mechanism to flag RMPs that are in need of a compliance inspection to assist Districts in administering this Program. The Department will also be developing template motions related to the approval of RMPs and the approval of BMPs within RMPs, as there seems to be confusion regarding the language in these motions.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Ford moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board accept the report and approve Department recommendations concerning the RMP programs reviewed. Mr. Wilson seconded, and the motion carried.

Highlights from Annual Report – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones noted the following from the annual report:

- RMP: A comprehensive farming plan that uses proven agricultural best management practices to ensure a farm is meeting a high conservation standard.
- Program results
 - 643 RMPs across the state totaling 144, 720 acres
- Highlights from the last year
 - 8.25% increase in number of plans written
 - 7.4% increase in plans developed within the Chesapeake Bay watershed
 - 44% increase in plans developed outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed

Approval of District program review schedule – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the District program review schedule for FY2024.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the following Districts for program reviews as required pursuant to 4VAC50-70-130:

1. Culpeper;
2. Headwaters;
3. Peaks of Otter;
4. Prince William; and
5. Three Rivers.

All program reviews will follow the process presented to the Board by the Department and will utilize the program review forms previously approved by the Board at the September 27, 2018, meeting.

Ms. Mason seconded, and the motion carried.

Approval of District Director Appointments and Resignations – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the list of District Director Appointments and Resignations.

Eastern Shore

Resignation of Ms. Ursula Deitch, of Northampton County, effective 6/21/2023, Extension Agent appointed director (term of office expires 12/31/2024).

Halifax

Resignation of Dr. Bobby Hall, of Halifax County, effective 6/30/2023, at-large appointed director (term of office expires 12/31/2026).

Appointment of Mr. Adam Davis, of Halifax County, effective 9/25/2023, to fill the vacant at-large appointed director position (term of office expires 12/31/2026).

Loudoun

Resignation of Mr. Jim Hilleary, of Loudoun County, effective 6/16/2023, Extension Agent appointed director (term of office expires 12/31/2024).

Monacan

Resignation of Ms. Nicole Shuman, of Goochland County, effective 8/31/2023, Extension Agent appointed director (term of office expires 12/31/2024).

Piedmont

Resignation of Ms. Allison Crews, of Amelia County, effective 7/25/2023, elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2023).

Robert E. Lee

Resignation of Mr. Chad Barrett, of Lynchburg, effective 7/27/2023, elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2023).

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the appointment of the individual being recommended. Mr. Arnason seconded, and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

PARTNER REPORTS

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Dr. Martinez presented the report for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A copy of the report is available at this link: [stewardship-report.pdf \(virginia.gov\)](#).

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Mr. Marshall gave an overview of the Agricultural Stewardship Act Report. A copy of the report is included as Attachment D.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Dr. Goerlich gave the update for Virginia Cooperative Extension. He noted that there will soon be a new Agriculture Experiment Station Director and a new Dean of the College of Life Sciences at Virginia Tech.

Dr. Goerlich noted that drought conditions are particularly bad in the Shenandoah Valley region.

Dr. Goerlich noted that the Virginia State Fair was in progress and invited members to visit the VCE exhibit.

Dr. Goerlich complimented the DCR staff and particularly the staff at New River Trail State Park for conducting the New River Trail challenge.

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Dr. Tyree gave the update for the Association. She noted that the Association is also exhibiting at the State Fair which runs through October 1, 2023.

The Admin and Ops committee of the Association is very active. A survey was sent to Districts to better understand what resources are available, and what training is needed with regard to human resource issues. Dr. Tyree will report on that at the December meeting.

There is an Association training schedule for October 11 regarding administration and operations. This is open to all Directors, partners, and District staff. The training will focus on risk management.

Additional trainings include a Conservation Planning workshop on October 17 and 18, and a Soil Erosion workshop on October 20.

The quarterly Association Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27 at the Drury Hotel.

Dr. Tyree will be participating in the Bay Stakeholder meeting on behalf of the Association.

An email will be sent out regarding the Annual Meeting to be held in Norfolk on December 3-5. Registration and hotel information is on the Association website.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Virginia Association Soil and Water Conservation Board will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, following the Association meeting in Norfolk.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm

Attachment A

Division of Dam Safety Division Director's Report

Presented by Darryl M. Glover

Deputy Director, DSFPM/SWC

Critical Statistics of the Dam Safety Program as of August 31, 2023

Count of Dams Regulated by DCR by Hazard Classification				
Calendar Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Dams Regulated by DCR	2056	2663	2645*	2560
High	326	348	371	385
Significant	170	173	171	166
Low	261	266	269	273
Regulatory Size with Undetermined Hazard Classification	1299	1876	1828	1736
*Note: Fully breached and decommissioned dams excluded in 2022				

Type of Hazard Classification for Dams Regulated by DCR				
Calendar Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Dams Regulated by DCR	2056	2663	2645	2560
High	16%	13%	14%	15%
Significant	8%	6%	6%	6%
Low	13%	10%	10%	11%
Regulatory Size with Undetermined Hazard Classification	63%	70%	69%	68%

Certificate or Permit Status			
Calendar Year	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Dams Regulated by DCR	2663	2645	2560
Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificate or General Permit Issued and Current	10%	10%	8%
Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate Issued and Current	9%	10%	11%
Regular or Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate Expired	10%	12%	14%
No Operation and Maintenance Certificate	68%	68%	66%

Certificate or Permit Status – High Hazard Dams Only			
Calendar Year	2021	2022	2023
Confirmed High Hazard Potential Dams	348	371	385
Active Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificate	35%	37%	32%

Active Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate	7%	16%	33%
Expired Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificate	17%	5%	7%
Expired Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate	17%	39%	23%
No Operation and Maintenance Certificate	3%	3%	5%

Dams of Regulatory Size without Hazard Classification:

As of this report, there are 1,736 dams of regulatory size without a hazard classification in the DCR dam safety inventory. This is down from 1,828 from our report in December 2022

DCR has implemented a mapping initiative to develop inundation maps with impact data for emergency plans and hazard classification determinations. To date 25 maps with hazard classification have been created. This data is now in Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS) and available for emergency planning and response. These maps do not relieve the dam owner of their responsibility to provide the required information listed below. A mapping engineer was hired October 25, 2022, to assist with this effort and a second mapping engineer position is under recruitment. A second mapping engineer has since been hired in 2023 to enable the Department to reinstate the Simplified Mapping Program as outlined in 4VAC50- 20-54. Dam break inundation zone mapping.

Staff are conducting property research to identify owners of dams. Regrid, a nationwide provider of accurate and current date parcel ownership and tax information is now being leveraged to streamline this effort. As a result of staff's efforts, the number of dams of regulatory size with unknown ownership has been further reduced from 812 initially, to 638 last year, to 376 currently.

Letters of Engagement:

DCR has sent "Letters of Engagement" to the owners of 401 dams considered to have the highest downstream risks. These "Letters of Engagement" are directly tied to the funding strategy identified in the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund (DSFPPAF) grant manual approved by the Board in September 2021 and September 2022.

9/30/2021	127 letters issued for 100 dams (multi-owners)
12/17/2021	112 letters issued for 100 additional dams (multi-owners)
10/31/2022	211 letters issued for 201 additional dams (multi-owners)

The letters provided a specific pathway to compliance for dam owners and advised that as the owner of a regulated dam, dam owners were responsible for the safe design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the dam and must, at a minimum, have the following on file with DCR:

1. Annual Inspection Report (4VAC50-20-105(C)(2) and (E))
2. Dam Break Inundation Study to determine Hazard Classification (4VAC50-20-54)
3. Emergency Action or Emergency Preparedness Plan (4VAC50-20-175 and 4VAC50- 20- 177)
4. Operation and Maintenance Certificate (4VAC50-20-105 and 4VAC50-20-150)

Dam owners were advised that financial assistance would be available through the DSFPPAF grant to those who received a Letter of Engagement. Dam owners were encouraged to apply for all eligible categories under the 50/50 matching grant program. Dam owners who chose not to apply for grant funding were provided a specific timeline to provide the required documents to DCR.

A total of 100 dams submitted for cost-share grants. Dam owners submitted the following to DCR as a result of the letters of engagement: 91 O&M certificates, 90 inspections reports, 37 dam break inundation studies and 13 EAPs. Additionally, 43 dams submitted for ag-exemptions, and a number of dam owners or representatives responded in some manner to DCR but did not provide an official submission as requested by the letters.

Public Outreach:

From January 1st to August 30th, DCR Dam Safety Staff, primarily the Lead Engineer and Regional Engineer’s public outreach activities can be summarized as follows:

Outreach / Communication Type	Members of Public
E-mail Discussion	245
Virtual Meeting	204
RE Site Visit	198
Phone Discussion	134
Correspondence	116
Training/Class	60
Meeting	58
In-Person Meeting	39
Emergency Communications	3
Ownership Discussion	1
Total	1,058

Additional activities as part of the Collaborative Technical Assistance are summarized as follows:

Thu 4/6/2023	FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance Virginia Kickoff (In-Person)
Fri 5/5/2023	FEMA One Off Session on CTA
Fri 5/5/2023	FEMA CTA Planning Team and VDCR Coordination Call
Mon 5/15/2023	Communities with Dams: Threats, Hazards, and Risk (Virtual: 2-hr Session) - FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance in Virginia
Tue 5/16/2023	VDCR/VDEM - FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance Virginia State Meeting (In-Person)
Wed 5/17/2023	Emergency Operations Center and Dam Tours - FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance in Virginia
Thu 5/18/2023	Aligning and Integrating Emergency Planning Documents - FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance in Virginia (In-Person)
Tue 5/23/2023	VDCR public education and outreach discussion
Wed 6/7/2023	Risk Communications and Public Outreach & Engagement - FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance in Virginia (Day 1)
Thu 6/8/2023	Risk Communications and Public Outreach & Engagement - FEMA's Preparing for Dam Related Emergencies Collaborative Technical Assistance in Virginia (Day 2)
Wed 6/28/2023	VA CTA Office Hours: Dam Incident Tabletop (TTX) Development (Virtual)

Additional outreach activities conducted in 2023:

- Flood Awareness Week: March 12-18. 2023
- Low Head Dam Awareness Month: April 2023
- Dam Safety Awareness Day: May 2023

Status Report on Key Initiatives:

1. Lake Accotink Dam Consulting Committee: Staff continues to work with the Office of the Attorney general to identify a path forward.
2. Local Government Pilot Project: Southampton County and City of Franklin: Staff continues to work with the Office of the Attorney general to identify a path forward.

Dam Incidents and Failures 2023:

Inventory Number	Dam Name	Hazard Class	County	Event Type	Event Date
08100 7	Smiths Dam	Unknown	Greenville County	Partial Failure	8/21/2023
14502 9	Sunfish Pond Dam	Low, Special	Powhatan County	Partial Failure	5/21/2023
10300 9	Lancaster County Dam #2	Unknown	Lancaster County	Total Failure	5/4/2023
05910 1	Springfield Golf & Country Club Lower Dam	Unknown	Fairfax County	Spillway Collapse	2/10/2023

Enforcement

At present, 18 dams are under enforcement; six of these are classified as high hazard, one as significant, two as low, and three as unknown.

In conjunction with the Letters of Engagement, the Department also is focusing on reenlisting dam owners with expired O&M Certificates. A total of 401 Dams with expired certificates were identified in all five regions. The hazard classification for these dams varies between High, Low, and Significant since no emphasis was put on hazard classification when identifying dams with expired O&M's. Once these dams were identified, telephone calls and emails were sent to the Professional Engineers for each dam in order for them to help with interpreting the letters to be mailed out to dam owners and to help explain options that may be available to them. Presently, DCR is working with regions 2,4, and 5. Out of these regions, 274 dams were identified as having an expired certificate. As of today, 64 of that 274 no longer have an expired O&M certificate or have either an agricultural or size exemption. Based on the Regional Engineers notes and communications with dam owners, 25 of the 274 are cooperating with DCR in renewing an active O&M Certificate. DCR will begin sending reminder letters to Regions 1 and 3 once the Regional Engineer positions have been filled.

The Kingsley Dam, located in Loudoun County, is owned by the Richard A. Rogers Trust and is represented by the owner's Trustees. The Trustees reached out to their Delegate, the Hon. Dave LaRock, with questions regarding the Dam's hazard classification as "Significant" rather than "Special Low Hazard." DCR staff met with the Trustees and addressed their questions, and the classification issue was resolved. The Trustees have submitted an application for a Certificate and alteration permit to make needed upgrades and repairs to the Dam. DCR issued a Conditional Certificate to the dam owner on July 31, 2023, and the enforcement case was closed.

Additional Activities:

The following activities are currently underway in the division and directly impact the results above:

- **DSS-WISE Lite:** DSS-WISE Lite is a web-based dam-break flood inundation modeling and mapping service available 24/7 to Federal, State, and Local dam safety officials through a

cluster maintained by the National Center for Computational Hydroscience and Engineering (NCCHE) at the University of Mississippi. Dam Safety received the final deliverable in February 2023, which integrated 1-meter statewide topographic data into DSS-WISE and provided an improved computational resolution. A custom toolset for analysis and cartographic production was developed and documented by DCR Dam Safety staff. Datasets, models, and DSS-WISE training were provided to the two Mapping Engineers positions. These tools leverage DSS- WISE analysis results and streamline the creation of Screening-Level Dam Break Inundation Study Maps.

- **Dam Safety Inspection App:** DCR is working with GeoDecisions to develop and deploy a dam safety inspection app that will allow inspections to be primarily completed and automatically uploaded into DSIS. This application will reduce the administrative burden for dam owners and engineers in completing the inspection. The app should also reduce the overall time necessary to complete inspections and may reduce costs for dam owners. With increased efficiency, it is anticipated owners will be able to provide condition assessments more readily for dams where condition assessments are missing. DCR has completed upgrading its servers and ESRI technology needed to support development. The application was successfully deployed on 5/26/2023.
- **Grant Application:** NOAA Dam Removal and Fish Passage Restoration Notice of Funding Opportunity under the IIJA: DCR submitted a grant application to remove two dams along Cedar Creek located on the property of Natural Bridge State Park in Rockbridge County, VA. This project has three objectives: 1) decommission Natural Bridge Dam #4 and Natural Bridge Dam #5 so that they no longer pose a potential failure and flood risk downstream of the dams; 2) eliminate potential hazard to aquatic species because of sedimentation; and 3) re-establish the natural aquatic and riparian systems that existed prior to dam construction. The removal of unsafe dams furthers the mission of the department to protect public safety.

Removal of Natural Bridge Dam #5 and Natural Bridge Dam #4 will fully open approximately 30 miles of Cedar Creek to aquatic species. DCR collaborated with DWR and FWS on the application. This is a 100% federal grant. DCR requested \$9,671,226.

US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) received requests that far exceeded the available funding. As of March 2023, DCR's proposed dam removal projects did not move forwards for funding consideration and national review. At this time DCR has not pursued revising the application and reapplying for a subsequent NOFO, but may consider doing so in the future.

Funding and use plan for increased funding in the budget

Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund: \$10,000,000. Per Section 10.1-603.19 F of the Code of Virginia "[t]he total amount of expenditures for grants in any fiscal year shall not exceed 50 percent of the total non-interest or income deposits made to the Fund during the previous fiscal year, together with the total amount collected in interest or income from the investment of monies in the Fund from the previous fiscal year as determined at the beginning of the fiscal year."

While \$10,000,000 will be deposited into the Fund during SFY2023, funds will not be eligible for grant award until SFY2024. In SFY2024 up to \$5M will be used for grants and loans to address all non-compliant dams, including the more than 1,800 dams of regulatory size without a hazard classification. Where appropriate and allowable, funds will be used to leverage and reduce match requirements for federal funding for dam safety projects. Funds will also be used to continue the support of agency needs in the administration of the program including personnel, contractual services, and emergency dam removals.

- **American Rescue Plan Act Funds:** \$10,000,000. Per 2022 Special Session I Budget amendments - HB30 (Conference Report) Bill Order » Item 486 #25c Water Impoundment Structures Central Appropriations, provides funds to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for improvements to privately owned high-hazard dams across the Commonwealth.

Four million (\$4M) of ARPA grant funds was announced for application on November 1, 2022, under the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund. Due to potential greater availability of non-state funding during the SFY2024 application period, remaining funds are reserved to maximize the Commonwealth's ability to match and leverage future federal funds, including Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act funding. Up to \$6M will be offered in SFY24 for dam safety projects.

- **National Dam Safety Program (NDSP):**
DCR made application for the SFY24 application cycle of the NDSP State Assistance Grant and is awaiting FEMA's award announcement. The total funding opportunity across 50 state dam safety programs was \$6,250,000. Virginia is expected to be awarded \$207,397. The decrease from last year's award is a result of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) fund source being removed from this round of the State Assistance Grant. FEMA is expected to announce a NOFO for an additional round of the State Assistance Grant program consisting of the IIJA funding source. A forecasted award of \$873,324 has been proposed to Virginia from a total fund pool of \$26,328,000.

Per the IIJA, \$148,000,000 of the amounts made available in this Act shall be for grants to States pursuant to section 8(e) of the National Dam Safety Program Act (33 U.S.C.467f(e)). The NDSP is allocated based on total number of all regulated dams for all programs relative to the number of dams regulated by each state. Based on current estimates over a five-year allocation period, this will translate to over \$900,000 per year or \$4.5M over five years. If the allocation period is extended to eight years, the annual allocation will be approximately \$560,000 per year. This

High Hazard Potential Dam Program (HHPD): Per the IIJA, \$585,000,000 of the amounts made available in this Act shall be for grants to States pursuant to section 8A of the National Dam Safety Program Act (33 U.S.C. 467f–2), of which no less than \$75,000,000 shall be for the removal of dams: Provided further, That dam removal projects shall include written consent of the dam owner, if ownership is established. Maximum funding available in previous years has ranged from \$10M to \$22M annually.

The HHPD is allocated based on total number of regulated dams in poor or unsatisfactory condition for all applicants relative to the number of regulated dams in poor or unsatisfactory conditional for each applicant. Eligible dams must also have a known and documented Dam Safety Deficiency and not solely have a poor or unsatisfactory condition due rating to deferred maintenance. This increase in funding and the identification of new high hazard eligible dams will drive additional funding to the Virginia Dam Safety Program. The amount will be dependent upon the number of other states that apply. DCR intends to use the DSFPPAF and ARPA funding to offset 50% of the dam owner match to expand the number of owners who are able to bring dams into compliance.

Virginia participated in a HHPD Risk Screening pilot program organized by FEMA and their technical services contractor: Advancing Resilience in Communities (ARC). As part of this program, ARC contractors utilized a new Risk Screening toolbox on a subset of HHPD grant eligible dams in the state. The toolbox includes a Risk and Project Prioritization tool, and a Dam Screening Tool. The tools are under ongoing development and being reviewed for feedback by national industry experts. They provide excellent information and utility in the current state as demonstrated.

Virginia has requested FEMA early access to the Risk Screening tool to beta test them and prepare for the FY2023 HHPD Grant. DCR has begun engaging with our contracting office to hire Engineering Services to conduct risk screening evaluations for all grant eligible HHPD dams. The project will be funded by the IIJA portion of the 2022 NDSP State Assistance grant.

The project will ultimately prioritize grant funding awards across competitive dam sub-applicant projects through a risk screening lens. This information will be provided to FEMA as part of the second application phase of the FY2023 HHPD dam grant process.

Lastly, in anticipation of the FY2023 HHPD Grant, DCR issued a notice to potentially eligible dam owners to return a letter of interest of which 25 dam owners returned.

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Dams: Eight (8) SWCD high hazard dams are slated to begin or complete rehabilitation by 2028. General fund appropriations of \$15M in SFY2021 and \$45M in SFY2023 are available for this effort.

One dam is to begin construction Fall 2023, and a second dam will begin sometime in the spring or summer of 2024. Both of these are utilizing the \$15 M awarded in SFY2021.

NRCS has committed design funding (approximately \$865,000) for one more of the above mentioned eight dams and the engineering firm has been selected. Three additional applications for planning funding have been submitted to NRCS. The current funding, \$15M and \$45M, will fund approximately 12 dams total to completion of rehabilitation. There are three phases to the rehabilitation process.

Planning, design and construction. Each phase takes about 2 years to complete, so it takes approximately 6 years to complete a rehabilitation. The above mentioned 8 dams should be completed by 2028, and the four additional dams should be completed by 2034.

NRCS REPORT
Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting
September 25, 2023 • Bear Creek Lake State Park, Cumberland, Virginia

STC Highlights

- **Agency Priorities:** All agency priorities were exceeded in FY23, including but not limited to: addressing equity via our agreements and state strategies; promoting, implementing, and educating on climate-smart agriculture and forestry; taking the urban conservation efforts to the next level with over 40 urban gardens under the PGI; the STC and LT members have made a difference diversifying our state workforce and leveraging innovative partnerships using all our initiatives.
- **IRA:** 100% of all IRA FA and TA funds were successfully obligated to address our agency priorities.
- **Partnership:** Virginia remains a model of technical excellence, innovation, and sound fiscal management. Streamlined processes have made the team more efficient and an increased emphasis on recruiting is helping us identify more diverse candidates for critical vacancies. Our strong partnership focus is opening doors for collaborative conservation with a priority on Chesapeake Bay water quality.
- **PGI:** VA finalized five new People's Garden Initiative grant agreements totaling \$150K to support community garden projects in Richmond. We are continuing to elevate recruitment and recognition efforts to build and retain a more diverse team.
- **Staffing:** Filled critical staffing needs through Regular Hires (18 – 3 from 1st IRA Soil Conservationist Bundle), Pathways (1 new intern, 10 recent graduates, 3 returning and 7 conversions), hosted 3 interns from mano-Y-ola/Thurgood Marshall programs, ACES (26), contractors (administrative support) and partnership agreements for Farm Bill program implementation, WLFW Initiative delivery and forestry management services.
- **Soil Health:** We helped organize and lead 27 soil health-themed events that helped train 2,606 producers, partners and NRCS field staff members. Since 2013, our total is 307 events with 26,446 attendees. During the COVID period we offered 69 virtual training opportunities that were accessed by 6,432 individuals.
- **STC Collateral Duties:** The State Conservationist has been assisting the agency with three special projects as co-chair or chair of the following Committees: NCPP Performance and Outcomes Team, NCPP Local Work Group project and the geospatial replacement for PRS/IDEA test group.
- **Local Work Groups (LWG):** The LWG exercise for FY23 has been successfully completed. The NRCS Team is currently finalizing the date that was received from local Service Centers.
- **The National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCPP):** This group represents the effort of the key national conservation partners responsible for working directly with private landowners using a locally based, voluntary conservation delivery system. The partnership consists of the following partners: NRCS, NACD, NASCA, NCDEA and NARCDC.
- **State Technical Committee meeting:** Scheduled for October 24th – Location TBD

STC Events September and October: Working Effectively with Am. Indians (WEWAI), Conservation Planning: CD & CART, Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF), Va. Soil & Water Conservation Board meeting, FY24 Programs Roll-out Webinar, Rappahannock River Symposium, NCPP Leadership Team meeting, October In-field Erosion Training, Wetland & Floodplain Restoration Projects discussion.

ASTC-Programs (ASTC-P)

EQIP, CSP, RCPP, VPA-HIP, CIG, TSP and Easement Programs

- **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)**
Received and ranked 1,031 EQIP applications. EQIP allocation is \$24.5 million. Preapproved 342 applications. 291 are currently obligated for \$20.5 million. 14 applications were preapproved for EQIP-CIC for \$1.3 million. EQIP-IRA allocation is \$2.5 million, 100% obligation.
 - **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)–Classic, Renewals & GCI**
Obligated \$7.6 million for 122 CSP renewals on 46,617 acres. ProTracts currently shows 255 CSP Classic applications. CSP classic allocation is \$12 million. Funded 14 CSP-GCI contracts for \$39,280 (all applications submitted). CSP-IRA allocation is \$4.8 million, ~100% obligation.
 - **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**
Currently managing 16 active contracts with total funding of \$2 million covering 6,687.6 acres. Four RCPP proposals awarded as renewals. Notice of Funding Opportunity resulted in six proposals received for review.
 - **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**
Received 9 ALE applications with funding requests for \$3.2 million on 2,199 acres: 7 obligated. 11 ACEP-ALE acquisitions underway. 2 ACEP-WRE restorations in progress. 146 existing recorded easements totaling 17,112 acres of land protected and monitored.
 - **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**
2023 Virginia CIG Notice of Funding Opportunity closed May 29, 2023. The recommended proposals topics were Soil Health and Forestry. A \$200k grant was awarded for one project. Currently managing 12 CIG's totaling \$1.1 million with various partners like: Virginia Tech, Sustainable Chesapeake, Virginia State University, Virginia Department of Forestry, Water Science Institute and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.
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Engineering (SCE)

Staffing Updates

- Mat Lyons (SCE) retired effective 7/30/23.
- Chris Hamilton is currently the acting SCE until the position is permanently filled.
- The Hydraulic Engineer position has been filled, effective 9/11/23.

Dam Rehabilitation

- **Cherrystone Creek 1 and Cherrystone Creek 2A**
Pittsylvania County is leading the locally led design effort for rehabilitating the structures. Pittsylvania County has retained Schnabel Engineering as its consultant. The design process is ongoing. The design is estimated to take 18 to 24 months.
- **Beaver Creek 1**
The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) is leading the locally led design effort for rehabilitating the structure. RWSA has retained Schnabel Engineering as its consultant. The design process is just getting started. The design is estimated to take 18 to 24 months.
- **John's Creek 1**
Mountain Castles SWCD is leading the locally led design effort for rehabilitating the structure. DCR is currently assisting Mountain Castles SWCD in obtaining a consultant. The design is estimated to take 18 to 24 months.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

NRCS is providing disaster assistance to Buchanan County through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) for a rain event in the Hurley area on August 30 (estimated 6-8 inches). NRCS and Buchanan County completed damage survey reports (DSRs) for 4 county- identified sites. Funding for 3 eligible sites was received in mid-January 2022 and the EWP agreement was finalized on March 15, 2022. The County obtained all the necessary permits and started construction in June 2023. Construction has halted due to a time of year restriction (July 1 – October 31) from performing work in the stream (per their permit). Construction will resume in November 2023, with anticipated completion in December 2023.

State Resource Conservationist (SRC)

Rachel Loveday is currently acting State Resource Conservationist for Virginia for 120 days or until the position is filled.

Technical Tools (Field Office Technical Guide)

Continue to maintain the Virginia Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) as a repository of technical resources and references to include conservation practice standards, technical notes, planning criteria, resource concerns, conservation practice physical effects, cost lists and the Virginia Plant Establishment Guide.

- Virginia Technical Guide Notice 450-23-520 Farmed Wetland Hydrology Indicators

Released bulletins:

- VA Bulletin 180-23-10 Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands CRP Updates (July 25, 2023)
- VA Bulletin 450-22-1 Conservation Reserve Program General Signup 60 Updates (June 30, 2023)

Training to Field Staff

Continuing use of webinars in place of traditional in-person meetings, allowing us to disseminate information quickly and efficiently to field staff:

- CIG on NWSG Webinar – using NWSG in grazing systems (June 21, 2023)
- Overview and Updates on Feral Swine in Virginia (August 16, 2023)
- NRCS Climate Information (August 23, 2023)
- CIG Summary Webinar NWSG with Dr. Pent (September 20, 2023)
- Macro-enabled CPA-52 training (September 27, 2023)

RUSLE2 Office Hours – Mondays 2:00-4:00 pm – hosted 4 events since May 29, 2023. Staff/Partnership Trainings

- Pasture Condition Score Assessment Tool Training (SW VA Area – June 6, 2023)
- Forage Production, Management and Utilization in Livestock Production Systems (SVAREC, Raphine – June 13, 2023)
- Native Warm Season Grass Establishment and Management (SPAREC, Blackstone – June 20, 2023)
- Grazing Plan Development Training (VACDE Annual Meeting, Syria – August 22, 2023)

Staff Training/Outreach Events

- Forest Farming Fundamentals in partnership with VT and Appalachian Sustainable Development (Blackstone - July 20, 2023)
- Livestock Forage Alternatives: Warm Season Grasses for Enhanced Production, Conservation and Profitability in partnership with VFGC, American Farmland Trust and Virginia Working Landscapes (The Plains - August 4, 2023)

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- Silvopasture Fundamentals in partnership with VT and Appalachian Sustainable Development (Blackstone - August 15, 2023)
 - Alley Cropping Fundamentals in partnership with VT and Appalachian Sustainable Development (Catawba - September 21, 2023)
 - Advanced Agronomy Education Area at Ag Expo in partnership with VT and NC State (VA Beach – August 3, 2023)

Staff Training – In-the-Field-Training

- Stream Visual Assessment Protocol 2 Training (June 7, 2023)
- CD/CART Training in partnership with National Office staff (Locations and Area trained vary each day, September 19 – 22, 2023)

Customer Service and Outreach

- Partnership meeting with DCR to discuss the ongoing collaborative Data Sharing Agreement.
- Partnership meetings with FSA to keep communication ongoing regarding Compliance Issues.
- UPCOMING: Agricultural Soil Erosion Assessment for Virginia Conservationists. DCR / NRCS training to address soil erosion assessments and RUSLE2.

There are three parts to complete for full certification:

- 1) Erosion Fundamentals & RUSLE2 Background.
- 2) In-field erosion risk assessment and RUSLE2 data collection.
- 3) Using RUSLE2 erosion assessment software. (7 in-field training dates in October 2023).

State Soil Scientist (SSS)

Virginia NRCS is partnering with USGS and FPAC GEO to acquire new LiDAR data for the Cities of Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and the counties of Northampton and Accomack. This will be tide coordinated data and should be flown in the late fall after leaf off.

Soil Survey Update

The annual soil survey refresh of 108 soil survey areas is complete. The new data will be available mid-October.

Partnerships & Initiatives (P&I)

- Staff attended multiple outreach events promoting NRCS services and programs to include:
 - Virginia Dairy Expo
 - USDA Information Session hosted by VSU

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- Virginia Ag Expo
 - Rockingham County Fair
 - Boots to Roots
 - Farm Finance & Conservation Planning Seminar
 - Sovereign Nations of Virginia Conference
 - Upcoming outreach events include:
 - State Fair
 - Virginia Tech CALS Career Fair
 - Entered into agreements with multiple partners to assist with outreach and implementation of climate smart agriculture and forestry practices across the Commonwealth. The agreements are with:
 - Virginia Tech and Soil Health Coalition** to work closely with the 2020 Farmers Cooperative to increase outreach and conservation delivery to their 200+ members in Virginia.
 - Virginia State University** to increase the number of the small farm, socially disadvantaged, new, and beginning, and veteran farmers in soil and water conservation programs and provide educational workshops to increase awareness in climate smart practices.
 - American Farmland Trust** to increase technical assistance to agricultural producers to promote land stewardship and climate-smart agricultural production in communities of greatest need.
 - Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture** to build capacity to deliver Farm Bill and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) conservation programs and provide conservation technical assistance in forestry in the Blue Ridge and Ridge & Valley regions.
 - Ducks Unlimited, Inc** to increase technical assistance to producers interested in addressing wildlife and/or water quality resource concerns through the delivery of Climate SMART practices within the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.
 - Virginia Department of Forestry** to deliver the technical assistance for forestry practices planned and implemented with farm bill programs.
 - Virginia Tech** to improve economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture across VA through enhanced soil health, climate smart agriculture, and conservation agronomy outreach, technical assistance, and implementation.