

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board  
Wednesday, December 7, 2016  
Hotel Roanoke  
Roanoke, Virginia**

**TIME AND PLACE**

The meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board was held at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 in the Buck Mountain Room at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, Virginia.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Daphne W. Jamison, Chair  
Richard A. Street, Vice-Chair  
Gray Coyner  
Jerry Ingle  
Janette Kennedy  
Stephen Lohr  
Barry L. Marten  
Cindy Smith  
David C. Dowling for Clyde E. Cristman, DCR Director, Ex Officio  
Keith Boyd for John A. Bricker, NRCS, Ex Officio  
Dr. Bobby Grisso, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Invitee

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

C. Frank Brickhouse, Jr.

**DCR STAFF PRESENT**

Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director of Administration and Finance  
Angela W. Ball, Conservation District Coordinator  
Jim Echols, Western Area Manager  
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison  
Darryl Glover, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation  
Mark Hollberg, Conservation District Coordinator  
Wendy Howard Cooper, Business and Administration Manager  
Arthur Kirkby, Conservation District Coordinator  
Stacy Horton, Conservation District Coordinator  
Stephanie Martin, Soil and Water Conservation District Liaison  
Barbara McGarry, Resource Management Plan Program Specialist  
Gary Moore, Ag Incentives Program Manager  
Amanda Pennington, District Engineering Service Manager  
Carl Thiel-Goin, Conservation Planning and Training Coordinator  
Christine Watlington, Senior Policy and Planning Analyst  
Matthew Gooch, Office of the Attorney General

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Richard P. Chaffin, VASWCD  
Sharon Conner, Hanover-Caroline SWCD  
Margie Davis, James River SWCD  
Kristal Evans, Tidewater SWCD  
Pete Farmer, New River SWCD  
Bob Lund, Colonial SWCD  
Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau  
Alyson Sappington, Thomas Jefferson SWCD  
Steve Smith  
Greg Wilcheln, Culpeper SWCD  
Jonathan Wooldridge, Robert E. Lee, SWCD  
Bill Worrell, Virginia Cooperative Extension

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM**

With eight (8) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS**

Chairman Jamison called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and declared a quorum present. She introduced new members Gray Coyner and Cindy Smith and then called for the introductions of members, staff, and guests.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 7, 2016**

Mr. Lohr moved for the approval of the minutes from the September 7, 2016 meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. Mr. Marten seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

**CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR ELECTIONS**

Chairman Jamison turned the gavel over to Vice Chairman Street for the purposes of elections.

Ms. Kennedy moved that Ms. Jamison be re-elected to serve as Board Chair. Mr. Lohr seconded and the Ms. Jamison was re-elected unanimously.

Mr. Street turned the gavel back to Chairman Jamison.

Mr. Marten moved that Mr. Street be re-elected to serve as Board Vice-Chair. Ms. Kennedy seconded and Mr. Street was re-elected unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF RECOGNITION MOTIONS FOR PAST BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Dowling presented resolutions of recognition for former Board members Gary Hornbaker and Raymond L. Simms. Neither Mr. Hornbaker nor Mr. Simms were able to be present. Mr. Dowling said that, upon Board approval, the resolutions would be presented at their respective area meetings.

Mr. Street moved that the recognition resolutions be approved as submitted. Mr. Ingle seconded and the following resolutions were approved:

**VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD  
COMMENDING RESOLUTION**

Presented to

***GARY W. HORNBAKER***

At a regular meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at the Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke Virginia, the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS, Gary W. Hornbaker of Berryville, Virginia was appointed by Governor Tim Kaine to serve as a member of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board from 2008 through 2012;

WHEREAS, Mr. Hornbaker was reappointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe to serve as a member of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board from 2012 through 2016;

WHEREAS, Mr. Hornbaker owns and operates Mutton Bust'n Farm in Berryville, Virginia;

WHEREAS, Mr. Hornbaker serves as Rural Resources Coordinator for the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development;

WHEREAS, Mr. Hornbaker served as an Agricultural Extension Agent for Virginia Cooperative Extension from 1982 through 2003, and served as past president of the Virginia Agricultural Extension Agents Association; be it

RESOLVED that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board recognizes and applauds Gary W. Hornbaker for his services to the Board and extends sincere appreciation for his services to this Board, recognizing with gratitude his contributions and dedication to protecting the quality of the land and water resources of the Commonwealth.

**VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD  
COMMENDING RESOLUTION**

Presented to

***RAYMOND L. SIMMS***

At a regular meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at the Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke Virginia, the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

WHEREAS, Raymond L. Simms of Fredericksburg, Virginia was appointed by Governor Mark Warner to serve as a member of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board from 2005 through 2008;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms was reappointed by Governor Tim Kaine to serve as a member of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board from 2008 through 2012;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms was reappointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe to serve as a member of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board from 2012 through 2016;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms served as Vice Chairman of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms serves as a Director and Vice Chairman of the Tri-County Soil and Water Conservation District;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms serves as a Director and Treasurer for the Spotsylvania Farm Bureau;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms served as Past President of the Fredericksburg Feeder Calf Association;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms is a member and Past Director of the Virginia Cattleman's Association;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms is a member of the Spotsylvania Extension Leadership Council;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms is a member and Past Director of the Central Virginia Cattlemen's Association;

WHEREAS, Mr. Simms is a Director of Farm Credit of the Virginias; be it

RESOLVED that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board recognizes and applauds Raymond L. Simms for his services to the Board and extends sincere appreciation for his services to this Board, recognizing with gratitude his contributions and dedication to protecting the quality of the land and water resources of the Commonwealth.

#### **DAM SAFETY AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT DIVISION REPORT**

Mr. Dowling gave the report for the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management. He first noted that Director Cristman had been unable to attend the meeting due to business obligations but had spoken earlier in the week at the Association meeting regarding Department program and budget status. All state agencies had been asked to submit five percent reductions for the current fiscal year. Additional reductions have also been submitted for FY 2018. However, DCR has been working with the Secretary of Natural Resources to recommend that there would be no reductions in district funding in FY 2017 or 2018. The Governor's budget will be released on December 16, 2016.

Mr. Dowling introduced Wendy Howard Cooper who is now the Business and Administration Manager for the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management as well as the Division of Soil and Water Conservation.

With regards to Dam Safety, Mr. Dowling reviewed an interim report on the Rehabilitation of High Hazard Soil and Water Conservation District Impounding Structures submitted to the Governor and General Assembly.

He provided a Dam Safety and Floodplain Management year-in-review report for the Board and noted that the Division had been successful in advancing significant program improvements in many key Divisional programmatic areas. He indicated that much of this was accomplished due to the hard work and dedication of Divisional staff. He noted the following program improvements:

1. Returned to our regulatory priorities and conformance with law including certificate and permit issuance and Emergency Action Plan approvals.
2. Stabilized and enhanced our funding; developed and are implementing an operational budget.
3. Filled/Filling key vacant positions.
4. Began an effort to massively improve our data capture and management abilities.
5. Made sure that we developed or are developing additional Guidance on key programmatic processes. Finished Enforcement Manual; worked to pursue enforcement actions where reasonable to do such.
6. Initiated a substantial update to the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund grants program.
7. Completed and implemented the Probable Maximum Precipitation study results. Initiating a study to produce new rainfall temporal distribution curves.
8. Developing a plan to standardize our public outreach/ educational program(s) to insure consistency of message; working to update our support materials including videos.
9. Eliminated the backlog on Simplified Dam Mapping.
10. Stabilizing our vehicle fleet.
11. Reinvigorated and focused our District and State Park Engineering Support Staff. (Created the Office of District Engineering Services).
12. Initiated a significant update to the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund grant program. Infused \$500,000 per year into the Fund.
13. Filed on October 31, 2016 the Interim Report indicating how we plan to develop the final Report on the Rehabilitation of High Hazard Soil and Water Conservation District Impounding Structures. Working to dedicate Dam Safety Bond Fund balances to the District Dam Rehabilitation Study and hire two restricted engineering positions to work on the rehabilitation study, priority ranking, and preliminary engineering.
14. Developed a Virginia Flood Risk Information System 2.0. with VIMS. Initiating plans for Phase 2 of this effort and to begin some Zone A mapping. Developed web page outline for new Flood Management Plan components.
15. Participated in FEMA Joint Field Office operational activities related to storm damage relief.

Mr. Dowling provided additional details on several of the key accomplishments. He noted that Divisional dam safety metrics were being collected and for the period of January 1 – September 30, 2016, for certificate and permit issuance, emergency action plan/ emergency preparedness plan approvals, dam visits/ inspections, and table top exercise participation, the following results were available:

Regions	Certificate and Permit Issuance	EAP/ EPP Approvals	Dam Visits/ Inspections	Table Top Exercises Participated In
Totals	226	60	185	8

From a budget perspective, Mr. Dowling explained that just a short year ago, the Division was \$300,000 in the hole and was facing a \$500,000 shortfall. Through a number of administrative and fiscal actions, the Division was able to close out the fiscal year almost exactly within budget. He noted that the 2016 General Assembly supported the Governor's proposed action to provide in the FY 2017-18 biennial budget an additional \$546,080/ year in funding for operational support within the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management. He shared that this, paired with the continuation of FEMA grants, has helped to provide fiscal stability to the Department's Dam Safety and Floodplain Management

program and is allowing for the hiring of key program personnel and for the implementation of a balanced FY 2017 operating budget.

In terms of hiring actions, he explained that the Region 3 Dam Safety Engineer position has closed and that the Department is currently reviewing applications and is setting up interviews for early January. He noted that the Department has hired two new floodplain planners this year. Gina DiCicco began June 10th and Kristen Owen is scheduled to begin on December 19th. On February 25th, Charles Wilson began as the District Dam Safety Engineer.

Mr. Dowling noted that database management and redevelopment is a key issue for the Department. The Department, working collaboratively between divisions, has developed and submitted a final Statement of Requirements (SOR) for Phase 1 of the Dam Safety Database Development. Through this process, the Department is working to ensure the stability and accuracy of our data and to make key portions of it readily accessible to the public, particularly focusing on Emergency Action Plans. We have initiated preliminary discussions with our partners at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Department of Health as well as individuals within the Office of the Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security. Phase 1 is to be fully completed and tested by July 1, 2017. Phase 2 of the project will begin shortly upon the completion of Phase 1.

Mr. Dowling provided an overview of the Dam Safety, Flood Protection and Assistance Fund. He noted that the Division has been working to revamp the grant program manual including application and administrative processes. Staff are working to include more structure and fiscal accountability to the grant process and to address the significant internal audit issues raised regarding the past administration of the grant program by the Division. The Division has prepared a first draft of the manual that will soon be circulated for staff review.

As part of the overview, he stated that the Virginia Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund was established to:

1. Provide matching grants to local governments and to private entities owning existing dams to improve dam safety. State-owned and federally-owned dams, or dams not regulated pursuant to the Dam Safety Act (§10.1-604 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*) are ineligible.
2. Provide matching grants to any local government for the purpose of assisting the local government with improvements to flood prevention and protection.

He outlined that the Fund consists of moneys appropriated by the General Assembly, assessments made on flood insurance premium income pursuant to § 38.2-401.1 of the Code of Virginia, funds returned in the form of interest and loan principal by recipients of funding, income from the investment of monies contained in the Fund, and other public and private funds eligible for deposit. Governing legislation state the following administrative rules:

- § 10.1-603.19 F. The total amount of expenditures for grants in any fiscal year shall not exceed 50 percent of the total noninterest 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 moneys in the Fund from the previous fiscal year as determined at the beginning of the fiscal year.

G. Any grants made from the Fund shall require a 50 percent project match by the applicant. Any loans made from the Fund shall require a minimum of a 10 percent project match by the applicant.

From a fiscal perspective, Chapter 780 of the 2016 Virginia Acts of Assembly Item 364 I.1. states that “[o]ut of the amounts appropriated for Dam Inventory, Evaluation, and Classification and Flood Plain Management, \$4,039,884 the first year and \$464,294 the second year from the general fund shall be deposited to the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund, established pursuant § 10.1-603.17, Code of Virginia. Out of these amounts, \$633,100 in the first year from the general fund shall be provided to match federal and local funding for the rehabilitation of the Hearthstone Lake Dam in Augusta County and \$2,942,490 in the first year from the general fund shall be provided to match federal and local funding for the rehabilitation of the Lake Pelham and Mountain Run dams in Culpeper County”. He noted that given the fact that no grant awards were made last year that this year we would have a combined total of about \$1.4 million available for the grant round.

He further noted stated that per the law, the Director shall, after consultation with all interested parties, develop a guidance document governing project eligibility and project priority criteria, and the Director, upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, shall direct the distribution of loans and grants from the Fund to local governments and private entities. He noted that this was the language stipulating the role of the Board. He further noted that the Virginia Resources Authority shall administer and manage the Fund.

Regarding the FY 2017 grant issuance, he offered the following draft timeline:

- November 2016 complete analysis of prior year grant balances for review by Deputy.
- December 15, 2016 – Send memo/email to Dam Safety and Floodplain Management Staff asking them to mark-up the draft 2017 grant document. Program aspirations include:
  - § *Requests must be project specific, can be completed in one year, not multi-phased.*
  - § *Fully fund 50 percent of eligible projects instead of partial funding to increase likelihood of completion as recommended by internal audit.*
  - § *Potential for one-year extension.*
  - § *Proof of payment must be strengthened (cancelled check, bank statement etc. not just invoice).*
  - § *Frequently asked questions should be added.*
  - § *Funds automatically revert at the end of year one unless extension requested not later than 90 days prior to end of grant period.*
- January 27, 2017 changes and updates completed and sent out to Regional Engineers and Floodplain Management staff for final check for major changes. Other dates were offered for subsequent review of revised drafts.
- February 15, 2017 announcement for grants placed on DCR website, emailed out to DCR dam owner’s list, dam engineer’s list, floodplains list, VLWA list etc. Postcards sent by U.S. mail from

lists maintained by each regional engineer to dam owners we do not have an e-mail for. Grant package also placed on the DCR website.

- March 31, 2017 grant packages due by 4:00 p.m.
- April 2, 2017 grant packages logged, scanned, and e-mailed along with list of all applicants to regional engineers and floodplain management by close of business.
- April 3, 2017 through April 24, 2017 grant reviews.
- May 8, 2017 grant award application list, comprehensive scoring sheet and summary and grant award recommendations sent to VSWCB members for review.
- May 23, 2017 VSWCB meeting for approval of grant award recommendations for July 1, 2017 start.

As part of the grant clean-up process, Mr. Dowling advised that staff was recommending that older grants (pre-2015) be closed and that money be returned to the fund for future use. He anticipated that there could be as much as \$800,000 in additional funds available to be added to the FY 2017 grant round. He further recommended that a blanket extension be offered for those awarded 2015 grants. 2015 grant statistics indicated the following:

105 applications received

102 funded

\$500,000 awarded

47 projects paid out

7 of 47 did spend full award

\$269,866.61 remaining balance (55 projects); of which

- \$15,600 granted extension
- \$8,000 requested extension
- \$3,107.50 balance from completed projects to de-obligate
- \$243,159.11 recommend auto extend to May 1, 2017.

Mr. Dowling noted that the blanket extension would be applicable to the remaining 55 projects from the 2015 grant round.

#### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board approves the offering of a blanket extension until May 1, 2017 to all of the remaining recipients of 2015 Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund grants. After such time, no additional extensions shall be granted and any outstanding grants shall be cancelled and the funds shall be de-obligated. For older grant rounds, where there has been no activity or extensions requested or approved, the Board approves that funds from all such projects be de-obligated. Remaining funds from closed out projects shall also be de-obligated.

Moved by Mr. Lohr. Seconded by Mr. Ingle. Motion carried.

#### **SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION REPORT**

Mr. Glover presented the following written report.

### **District Recognition**

The Department expressed our appreciation by presenting plaques to both the Culpeper and Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation Districts for hosting farm tours for both the Department of Planning and Budget prior to the 2016 Virginia General Assembly session, and later for the Environmental Protection Agency. Each of these tours was very informative for our guests and provided excellent examples of the great work producers are doing in placing conservation on the ground.

### **Livestock Stream Exclusion Update**

As of November 30, 2016, the backlog in SL-6 practices that remain in pending status (awaiting funding) was reduced to \$31 million. \$55 million of SL-6 practices have been completed statewide and another \$30 million of SL-6s, approved by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, are currently awaiting completion. Districts that have been designated SL-6 funds they cannot use are asked to notify their Conservation District Coordinator by the end of February. Once a total has been calculated, the Department will report to the Board at a future meeting with a recommendation on how these funds might be used for other SL-6 projects still in need of funding.

Despite a reduction in state cost reimbursement to 80% and a cap on payments for new signup since July 1, 2015, interest in SL-6 remains steady. Signup for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has increased, especially in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, since state match doubled from 25% to 50% in July 2015. Recently, Secretary of Natural Resources, Molly Ward, signed an addendum to the Chesapeake Bay CREP Agreement with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). Using the increased portion of state CREP match since it was doubled, Virginia will soon fulfill the state match required for FSA to receive an additional \$1 million in federal CREP funding, which they will use to increase CREP incentive payments and land rental in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Further, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) working with the Department, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the Virginia Department of Forestry, recently issued more lenient qualifications for producers in designated Chesapeake Bay counties in Virginia, to apply for 100% federal/state cost reimbursement for livestock stream exclusion under the remaining Resource Conservation Partnership Program Grant funds the Department was previously awarded.

Given all of the work being completed to exclude livestock from streams, the Department has begun collaborating with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), to evaluate the possibility of repositioning some DEQ water monitoring stations to demonstrate water quality improvements accomplished, including in waters previously impaired for bacteria, resulting from such practices. It will take a couple of years to gather enough data to show firmly conclusive results.

### **Resource Management Plans**

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) Program has prepared its annual highlights report, covering the 12 months ending October 31, 2016. That report will be summarized a little later in your meeting today.

The Department has worked with the Virginia Farm Bureau and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) to create a new logo for the program and signs to recognize fully implemented RMPs. These signs are now available for purchase by certified RMP participants. The sign was unveiled by Virginia's Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Basil Gooden at the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention on November 29. Upon mutual agreement with VDACS, the Virginia Grown logo has since been removed.

For calendar year 2017, the Department will soon award contracts funded by \$120,000 in federal funds for additional RMP development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. These funds will provide up to as many as 34,000 additional acres of RMPs by the end of next year. Approximately \$200,000 of state cost-share this Board designated statewide for both RMP development (via the RMP-1 practice) and RMP implementation (via RMP-2) is also available.

### **BMP Verification**

As reported at an earlier meeting, Virginia's BMP Verification Plan that the Department of Environmental Quality submitted to US Environmental Protection Agency was approved. It must be fully implemented, through our Quality Assurance Project Plan, next year (in FY 2018).

Verification of nutrient management plans by Department staff is ongoing. To date, over 300 farms have now been reviewed. Consistency with nutrient management plans written by staff has held steady, at about 71% on an acreage basis.

As previously reported, the Verification Plan also calls for tillage surveys in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay watershed every five years. In 2015, Districts conducted such surveys statewide. 34 Chesapeake Bay drainage surveys were completed. The overall percentage of conservation tilled cropland in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay drainage increased to around 80%. It was approximately 69% Outside the Chesapeake Bay (OCB).

We also offered separate grant agreements in 2015 to selected Districts to recertify structural BMPs that had gone out of their contractual lifespans, in order to continue to receive pollution reduction credit from the US Environmental Protection Agency. Out of the 1459 BMPs that were identified for recertification, roughly 700 were successfully recertified. Similar activity will need to be conducted annually. The Department has calculated the number of BMPs that will fall out of lifespan in the Chesapeake Bay watershed each year through 2025, and is developing a strategy for verifying these BMPs are still functional (see Table 1). The Department can either offer supplemental grant agreements to Districts, as we did in 2015, or can pursue hiring part-time employees to inspect and verify these BMPs, possibly without District support where their staffs are not available to assist due to competing obligations. Additionally, strategies to bring these out-of-lifespan BMPs back under contract may also be considered in the future.

**Table 1: BMPs in Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed that will fall out of lifespan 2016 - 2025**

<b>End of Practice Lifespan Date</b>	<b>Number of BMPs falling out of Lifespan</b>
<b>12/31/2016</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>12/31/2017</b>	<b>620</b>
<b>12/31/2018</b>	<b>518</b>
<b>12/31/2019</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>12/31/2020</b>	<b>533</b>
<b>12/31/2021</b>	<b>788</b>
<b>12/31/2022</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>12/31/2023</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>12/31/2024</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>12/31/2025</b>	<b>383</b>

Spot checks of BMPs currently under contract in 2016 continued to show a small BMP failure/abandonment rate (3.1% or 14 of 449 BMPs). Another 14.3% of BMPs spot checked were functional but needed maintenance, while 82.6% of BMPs spot checked this year needed no maintenance at all.

District staff will soon be invited to participate on a stakeholder group that will assist us in developing more detailed documentation for agricultural BMP spot checks. More detailed spot checks are required by the verification plan.

**Stakeholder Groups**

The Department will soon form three stakeholder groups that District staff will be invited to join; one to assist us with development of Conservation Planning and Certification, another, as noted above, to help us further refine changes to best management practice (BMP) spot check procedures in order to be consistent with the BMP Verification Plan for Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and a third to assist us with requirements gathering and the conceptual design of a Financial Database. A presentation on Conservation Planning will be given later that will provide more information.

The 2016 Virginia General Assembly appropriated funding specifically for creation of a Financial Database. This database will assist both the Department and Districts. The Statement of Requirements is being released this week. The purpose of this initial phase is to develop a software and database design for the integration of a complete Financial Management solution into DCR’s existing AgBMP Tracking Module. The Financial Database will be designed to achieve:

1. Full tracking of all financial support provided to DCR, and to the SWCDs from DCR, for water quality program delivery and implementation, including the ability to input fiscal year budgets

by subprogram, funding source, cost code and project codes, and to track project expenditures by fiscal year. This includes tracking initial fiscal year of allocation, even when funds are subsequently transferred and/or expended in other program years.

2. The ability to calculate allocations to SWCDs for Administration and Operations and for Cost-Share and Technical Assistance and the ability to generate contracts for each SWCD.
3. Integration between the AgBMP Tracking Module and other DCR financial data management systems.
4. Automation of financial data management transactions.
5. Clear and concise reporting of all financial data by both DCR and SWCDs including the ability for SWCDs to perform all of their required financial reporting, as well as generating information for annual audits.

### **Nutrient Management**

The Department is providing advice, and other assistance, on several grant projects involving nutrient management. One of these projects involves surveys of farmers and industry professionals by Sustainable Chesapeake and the Institute for Environmental Negotiation. These surveys will hopefully provide insight as to why more agricultural producers do not obtain nutrient management plans despite the fact the plans can be obtained at no cost to them.

A project to fully integrate the Nutrient Management Database into the Ag BMP Tracking System should begin by February with a target date for completion of around one year. A project to improve the Dam Safety database will also begin in a few months.

As of November 30, 2016, approximately 180 golf courses still needed nutrient management plans. The Department will soon award 10 new contracts for private nutrient management planners to continue to provide plans for golf courses at no cost to the operators.

### **Other Activities and Division Staffing**

The Department will soon advertise another full-time position for the Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (SEAS), to provide additional technical assistance on tidal shoreline and nontidal stream bank erosion control to landowners. Also, a SEAS intern will be hired for one year, beginning in the summer of 2017 under a Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship, with funding from Virginia Sea Grant (VASG), the Virginia Institute for Marine Science (VIMS), and the Virginia Environmental Endowment. This intern will verify, calculate, and report sediment reduction credits from properly installed shoreline erosion protection projects for submission to the Chesapeake Bay Program for reduction credit.

Regarding the Super Tech concept, concerns have been raised by the Virginia Association for Soil and Water Conservation District Board about existing workloads (e.g. livestock stream exclusion projects) that experienced District technical staff (Super Techs) already have, potential liability surrounding the design of BMPs outside of an employee's home District, concerns about Fair Labor Standards Act, e.g. required overtime pay in addition to any reimbursements from Districts receiving assistance, processes for transfers of funds between Districts, etc.. Accordingly, the way Super Techs would help other Districts has been reversed, in that District staff who need assistance would travel to the home Districts of Super Techs, to ride along with them to see how a given Super Tech performs their duties.

The Department continues to work with Dr. Bridgette McIntosh (Virginia Cooperative Extension) on what will be called the "Horse Farm Conservation Steward Project". The purpose of this project is to increase the adoption and implementation of conservation BMPs on horse farms with a focus on small lot owners in Fairfax, Prince William, Loudoun, and Fauquier counties. Six seminars will be conducted on related topics, which will also be available via webinar, as well as a field trip to demonstrate effective BMPs for horse owners. This project will be implemented during Spring-Fall 2017. Staff in the Department's Warrenton Office is coordinating this project.

Our Staunton Regional Office will relocate at the end of December, from Verona to 12 Sunset Boulevard, which is off Route 11, behind Staunton Mall.

### **FY 2017 SMALL DAM REPAIRS APPROVALS**

Ms. Pennington gave an overview of the project funding recommendations for the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund.

The Fund is managed by DCR and is subject to the approval of the Board. A report detailing the updated grant procedures, evaluation process, and award recommendations was provided in member packets.

Ms. Pennington asked that the Board approve the funding as recommended. A total of \$474,938 is being recommended for 31 projects with \$40,500 remaining in contingency funds and \$45,243.12 in emergency funds for a total funding of \$560,243.12.

### **BOARD ACTION**

Mr. Ingle moved that the Board approve the FY 2017 Project Funding Recommendations for the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund as presented by staff.

Mr. Lohr seconded and the motion carried.

### **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS ANNUAL REPORT**

Ms. McGarry presented the Resource Management Plans Annual Report.

#### *Program Background and Focus*

In 2011, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 1830 (Chapter 781 of the 2011 Virginia Acts of Assembly), which allowed for the creation of the Resource Management Plan Program. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board worked with the representatives from the soil and water conservation districts, agricultural commodity groups, conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies to develop RMP regulations. The Board approved the regulations in 2013, and they became effective July 1, 2014.

#### *Results since the program's beginning*

- As of October 31, 2016, there were 326 plans covering 68,147 acres. Of those, 47 RMPs covering just over 19,600 acres have been developed in the last 12 months.
- Fifty-nine participants (owner or operator) hold 319 plans in Chesapeake Bay Drainage area.

- Three participants (owner or operator) hold seven plans outside Chesapeake Bay drainage area.
- Average plan coverage is 209 acres.
- Includes 57,791 acres of cropland, 6,524 acres of hayland and 6,514 acres of pasture.

#### *All best management practices included in RMPs*

- 2,170 total BMPs are included in RMPs that meet or exceed the minimum requirements.
- 1,621 of the total BMPs exceed the minimum RMP requirements.
- 264 BMPs installed or implemented using cost-share assistance are already completed.
- 625 BMPs are proposed to be installed or implemented using cost-share assistance.
- 1,281 are proposed to be installed or implemented without any cost-share assistance.

#### *Certified RMP Developers*

The RMP regulations established specific criteria for becoming a certified RMP developer. All RMP developers must be certified nutrient management planners in Virginia. Candidates must also demonstrate a suite of conservation and water quality planning skills to be certified as an RMP planner.

Currently DCR has a registry of 16 certified RMP developers. Several are district employees who intend to write plans as needed, when a private RMP developer is not available.

#### *Looking ahead*

DCR is encouraged by producers' interest in earning certificates through the RMP program. We anticipate the numbers of certified operations to increase significantly in FY 2018.

According to the program's regulations, a periodic program assessment will be conducted by DCR at least once every five years. DCR will develop a schedule to begin assessment of district RMP review activities in FY 2018.

### **CONSERVATION PLANNING BACKGROUND; LEGAL FOUNDATION; PROGRAMS SATISFIED, AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORIZATION**

Mr. Thiel-Goin gave an overview of the Conservation Planning and Certification Program.

#### *Purpose*

- Conservation plans are required to implement existing Programs
  - State Tax Credit (§ 58.1-339.3 and §58.1-439.5)
    - § soil conservation plan
  - Resource Management Plans (§ 10.1-104.8)
    - § soil conservation plan or pasture management plan
  - State Cost Share (VACS BMP Manual)
    - § conservation plans
- Virginia-focused planning components and methodologies
- Increased opportunities for planning certification

### *Value of Planning*

#### Producer

- Technical assistance
- Eligibility for VACS, Tax Credit, and RMP participation
- May assist producers with:
  - Chesapeake Bay Act assessment and plan
  - DEQ confined animal permits
  - Agriculture Stewardship Act plans

#### Commonwealth

- Water quality improvements
- Nutrient and sediment controls

### *Steps so Far*

- Initiated development of DCR conservation planning program
- Survey conducted of District staff
- Timeline for development
- Conservation planning and training coordinator position
- New conservation planning function within tracking module
- Integrated mapping

### *General Plan Components*

- Narrative
- Site or farm resource assessment
- Conservation planning notes
- Maps
- Supporting documents
- Recommended actions
- Signatures and dates
  - Plan writer
  - Producer or land owner
  - Soil and Water Conservation District Board

### *Planning Steps*

- Identify problems
- Determine objectives
- Assess resources
- Analyze resource data
- Recommend actions
- Make decisions

- Implement the plan
- Evaluate the plan

#### *Resource Assessment*

- Resources included
  - Soils
  - Water quality
  - Threatened and endangered species
  - Cultural resources
- Resources not included
  - Energy
  - Air
  - Forestry
  - Human

#### *DCR Conservation Planning Certification*

- Soil and Water Conservation District staff, private consultants, and DCR staff will be able to become DCR conservation planner certified.
- Certification and recertification will be for a period of three years.
- DCR will continue to recognize NRCS conservation planning certification.

#### *Conservation Planning Certification Transition*

The DCR effective dates and requirements for certification are listed in the table below.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Action</u>
1. Have never been NRCS conservation planner certified.	Must take DCR's required certification coursework (DCR-provided or DCR-approved) and initial plan review/approval requirement.
2. Have taken NRCS required certification courses since January 1, 2013 or are in the process of taking them.	Must finish all DCR certification course work, submit a plan for review and approval, and provide a copy of all courses taken and when taken.
3. Currently NRCS-certified or NRCS-certified as of January 1, 2016.	Certification will be recognized and given a DCR certification date matching the NRCS certification date.

#### *What is Next?*

##### December 2016

- Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the development of Program and establishment of stakeholder group.

January 2017

- Stakeholder group holds first meeting.

May 2017

- Additional guidance and program details brought to Board for approval.

*Stakeholder Group Involvement*

- Plan component
  - What does each component require?
  - Impact to threatened and endangered species and cultural resources
  - Review of agriculture tracking database module
  - Policy considerations
- Certification and recertification
  - Review of NRCS curriculum
  - Review of survey completed by SWCDs
  - Required coursework
  - CEUs
  - Plan review

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Street moved the following motion. Mr. Lohr seconded and the motion was approved.

**MOTION to authorize the Department of Conservation and Recreation to develop the Conservation Plan Program**

WHEREAS, §10.1-505 of the *Code of Virginia* (Code) authorizes the Board "to provide for the conservation of soil and water resources, control and prevention of soil erosion, flood water and sediment damages thereby preserving the natural resources of the Commonwealth";

WHEREAS, the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program (Program) supports and encourages conservation planning on all agricultural land in Virginia;

WHEREAS, certain agricultural best management practices have been exempted from the Program's requirement to have an approved conservation plan prior to receiving cost-share funding approval in an effort to reduce the amount of administrative time and effort required to implement practices;

WHEREAS, §10.1-104.8 of the Code establishes the criteria included in a resource management plan;

WHEREAS, a resource management plan for cropland, specialty crops, or hayland must contain a soil conservation plan that achieves a maximum soil loss rate of "T";

WHEREAS, a pasture management plan or a soil conservation plan must be included for all pasture land included in a resource management plan;

WHEREAS, §58.1-339.3 of the Code states that "any individual who is engaged in agricultural production for market, or has equines that create needs for agricultural best management practices to reduce nonpoint source pollutants, and has in place a soil conservation plan approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), shall be allowed a credit against the tax imposed by § [58.1-320](#)...";

WHEREAS, Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share (VACS) BMP Manual (Manual), as approved by the Board, states that "individuals wanting to participate in the Tax Credit Program must have a soil conservation plan approved by the local District Board of Directors prior to BMP installation";

WHEREAS, the Manual further requires that "at a minimum, a conservation plan must contain the BMP and an implementation schedule for the specific field or site";

WHEREAS, the Department has historically allowed various types of plans to be considered a soil conservation plan including soil erosion plans, nutrient management plans, pest management plans, Department of Forestry cost-share plans, Agricultural Stewardship Plans, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Plans, and Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation plans for agricultural lands;

WHEREAS, the Department recognizes that the varied types of plans considered to be conservation plans has led to duplication of efforts by state and federal agencies and potential confusion within the farming community;

WHEREAS, the development of a formal and streamlined Conservation Plan Program for Virginia has value for the farming community and increases the conservation of the natural resources of the Commonwealth;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the Department to develop a Conservation Plan Program including provisions for the training and certification of individuals developing conservation plans;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department shall establish a working group of stakeholders to offer recommendations and insight into the resources to be considered, components of a plan, training and certification requirements, and other policy and Program considerations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department is authorized to coordinate and consult with federal and state agencies and other stakeholders as needed to develop the Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department will bring additional guidance and program details for approval by the Board at the Board's May 2017 meeting.

**BMP TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE AND KEY ISSUES**

Mr. Moore gave an update from the BMP Technical Advisory Committee. The TAC has been meeting continuously since 1988 and is designed to receive suggested changes from the field. He reviewed preliminary suggested changes to the Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-share Program:

**Suggested Changes by the Technical Advisory Committee to the 2018 Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost-share Program**

Allow a participant to receive cost-share for RMP-1 (Development of an RMP) and NM-1A (Writing and Revision of a Nutrient Management Plan) simultaneously.

There have been many suggestions tied to revision of the NM-5 (Precision Nutrient Management Plan).

Split the NM-5 into two different BMPs. Both will receive nutrient reduction credits from the Chesapeake Bay Program Office and may be stacked on the same crop land.

1) NM-5N, (Precision Nutrient Management for Nitrogen):

- Include plant tissue sampling;
- Include multiple split application of Nitrogen;
- Cropland and managed hay land eligible. Need to define managed hayland;
- Must implement 2 components;
- Results of soil and tissue testing must be used to develop a prescription of variable rate Nitrogen application and the prescription must be followed;
- Supply as applied map before payment is issued;
- Apply before April 1<sup>st</sup> and provide SWCD verification of bill or work order within 45 days of sample analysis; and
- Fields that have received Biosolids applications within previous 24 months are not eligible.

2) NM-5P, (Precision Nutrient Management for Phosphorous):

- Include plant tissue sampling;
- Only row crops eligible;
- Implement one component;
- Results of soil and tissue testing must be used to develop a prescription of variable rate Phosphorus application and the prescription must be followed;
- Supply as applied map before payment is issued; and
- Fields that have received Biosolids applications within previous 24 months not eligible.

Keep cost-share for feeding pads associated with SL-6 (Stream Exclusion with Grazing Land Management), requires 35' set back fence.

Allow tax credit for feeding pad under SL-11B (Farm Road, Animal Travel Lane, Heavy Use Area Stabilization), no access to surface water in field where pad is located.

Provide better guidance about what is required before payment can be issued in SL-15A (Continuous High Residue Minimum Soil Disturbance Tillage System).

- Strike reference to NRCS 590 standard substitute "signed by a VA certified NMP".

- Look at other BMP specifications and strike 590 substitute VA certified NMP for consistent language.

Seek Office of the Attorney General's interpretation about requiring the use of a previously cost-shared animal waste management structure that is out of lifespan before approving new cost-share to build another animal waste management structure. Clarify that only producers of litter can receive WP-4 (Animal Waste Control Facility) cost-share for litter storage sheds, end users (only) are not eligible for cost-share on a litter shed.

Mr. Moore advised that this item would be on the March 2017 Board agenda for further discussion and consideration.

### **DISTRICT ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Ms. Martin presented the District assessment results. She noted that at a previous meeting concerns had been expressed regarding the rankings. DCR staff has worked diligently with Districts to make certain that the assessments were objective.

New guidance going into effect in 2017 will require those Districts receiving C ratings to come before the Board with a plan to address deficiencies.

Ms. Martin reviewed the scoring for the DCR/SWCD FY 2016 Administrative and Operation Support Grant Agreement Deliverables and the DCR/SWCD FY 2016 Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Grant Agreement Deliverables. She noted that Districts receiving a C rating have been working with DCR staff for corrective measures.

### **APPROVAL OF TIMBERLAKE WID TRUSTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Martin presented a request from the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District regarding the appointment of Trustees to the Timberlake Watershed Improvement District.

### **BOARD ACTION**

Mr. Street moved that the Board accept the resignation of Timberlake WID trustee Craig Brewer, and approves the appointment of George G. Myrick, Jr. to serve as a trustee on the Timberlake WID and further that the Board accept the appointment of Everett Chadbourne to fill the open trustee seat on the Timberlake WID. Ms. Kennedy seconded and the motion carried.

### **DISTRICT DIRECTOR RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Martin presented the District Director Resignations and Appointments.

#### *Colonial*

Appointment of Charles Morse, City of Williamsburg, to fill the unexpired term of Colleen Heberle, elected director position (term of office to begin upon qualifying\* through 1/1/20).

*Chowan Basin*

Appointment of Afton (Livvy) Preisser, Isle of Wight County, to fill the vacant at-large appointed extension agent position (term of office to begin upon qualifying\* through 1/1/21).

*John Marshall*

Resignation of William R. Frazier, Fauquier County, effective October 28, 2016, elected director position (term of office expires 1/1/20).

Appointment of John Schied, Fauquier County, to fill the unexpired term of William R. Frazier (term of office to begin upon qualifying\* through 1/1/20).

*Natural Bridge*

Resignation of Ward H. Robens, Jr. Rockbridge County effective November 30, 2016, at-large appointed director position (term of office expires 1/1/19).

Appointment of Sandra W. Stuart, Rockbridge County, to fill the unexpired term of Ward H. Robens, Jr. (term of office to begin upon qualifying\* through 1/1/19).

*Robert E. Lee*

Resignation of John J. Petchul, Amherst County, effective September 21, 2016, elected director position (term of office expires 1/1/20).

*Skyline*

Resignation of Diane E. Price, Giles County, effective November 1, 2016, elected director position (term of office expires 1/1/20).

Appointment of Ricky L. Johnston, Giles County, to fill the unexpired term of Diane E. Price (term of his office to begin upon qualifying\* through 1/1/20).

\*NOTE: To qualify, an appointed Director shall complete and file the Oath of Office prior to assuming the title and responsibilities of District Director. An appointed Director may not act in office or function before taking the Oath.

**BOARD ACTION**

Mr. Ingle moved for the approval of the District Director Resignations and Appointments as submitted by staff. Mr. Street seconded and the motion carried.

**PARTNER REPORTS**

*Natural Resources Conservation Service*

Mr. Boyd gave the report for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A copy of that report is included as Attachment #1.

*Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts*

Mr. Chaffin thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. The Association just completed the largest annual meeting on record. The meeting focused on expanding partnership opportunities and enhancing public awareness. Mr. Dowling thanked Mr. Chaffin, on behalf of the Department, for his service to the Association and for his willingness and desire to collaborate and partner with the Department.

*Virginia Cooperative Extension*

Dr. Grisso distributed a copies of the 2016 Virginia Cooperative Extension Annual Report. The report is available at this link: <http://news.cals.vt.edu/229-report/tag/2016-report/>.

Dr. Grisso reported VCE is hoping to produce a webinar on equine issues. He noted that NRCS has been quite successful with webinars for professional development. The NRCS Webinar Portal for Professional Development in 2017 is located at this link: <http://www.conservationswebinars.net/documents/planned-conservation-webinars> .

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no additional old business.

**NEW BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETINGS**

Mr. Dowling reviewed the proposed 2017 work plan for the Board.

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board DRAFT Work Schedule for the First Half of 2017: December 7, 2016**

(These items are in addition to regular meeting actions.)

Legislative Session: January 11, 2017 through February 25, 2017

**Thursday, March 9, 2016 (day of the week may be subject to change)**

- Legislative Update
- Budget Update (Discussion of Administration/Operations, Cost-Share, and Technical Assistance Funding Levels)
- Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Manual Amendments
  - Precision Agriculture BMPs
  - Other
- Board Discussion of Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2018 Alternatives
- Board Discussion of Policy and Procedures on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations (Fiscal Year 2018) Alternatives
  - How to allocate TA

- Dam Safety Enforcement Case Update/ High Hazard Dam Review
- Agricultural BMP Engineering Update

**Thursday, April 20, 2016 (day of the week may be subject to change)**

- Approval of the Board's Fiscal Year 2018 Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Manual
- Review of Draft Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2018
- Review of Draft Policy and Procedures on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations (Fiscal Year 2018)
- Review of Administration and Operations and Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Contracts and Deliverables
- Review of Dam Safety Special Low Hazard Dam Guidance
- COIA/FOIA Update Training
- Review of District Board Member Nominations (Areas V and VI)
- Approval of District RMP Program Review Schedule

**Tuesday, May 23, 2016 (day of the week may be subject to change)**

- Board Approval of Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2018
- Board Approval of Policy and Procedures on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations (Fiscal Year 2018)
- Approval of Administration and Operations and Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Contracts and Deliverables
- Approval of Grants from the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund
- Approval of Conservation Plan Program Implementation
- Approval of Probable Maximum Precipitation Temporal Distribution Curves and Approval for a Regulatory Action
- Presentation on the Dam Safety Database

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Daphne W. Jamison  
Chair

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Clyde E. Cristman  
DCR Director

Attachment #1

**NRCS REPORT**  
**Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Board Meeting**  
**December 7, 2016 ♦ Roanoke, VA**

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**Farm Bill Programs**

**Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)**

- Ranked 2,177 applications requesting more than 71.7 million in funding on 61,425 acres.
- Contracted 499 applications for \$22,933,616 across 35 fund pools: StrikeForce, Climate Change (Soil Health), Forestry, Seasonal High Tunnel, Cropland, Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, GWW, livestock, Long Leaf Pine Initiative (LLPI), National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), and Wildlife.

**Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG)**

- Funded 3 CIG proposals for \$200,573
  - High Residue Cover Crops for Weed Suppression and Impact on Cash Crop Performance
  - Establishing Native Warm-Season Grass Stands under Grazing.
  - Demonstrating Conversion of Wildtype to Novel Endophyte Fescue Pastures for Greater Livestock Performance and Better Environmental Outcomes.

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)**

- Received renewal applications from 91 contract holders for additional conservation activities
- Contracted 31 of 81 CSP General Signup applications for the 14,131 acres allocated.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

- Invited three applicants to submit full proposals for the current APF. Awardees will be announced in January and will begin signup in FY18.
- Current RCPP efforts by award:

Project Name	Award (FA)	Start Year	Contracts	Future Signup
RCPP-DOF	\$940,000	FY15	172	None – All FA allocated
RCPP-DCR	\$1,450,000	FY16	21	FY17 Year 2
RCPP-NFWF	\$992,000	FY16	8	FY17 Year 2
RCPP-PRISM	\$643,915	FY17	--	FY17 Year 1
RCPP-TNC	\$2,040,000	FY17	--	FY17 Year 1

**Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

- Received five ALE applications for 1,143 acres and seven WRE applications for 750 acres. Funded one ALE in the Warsaw office on 162 acres for the allocated \$1.7 million and one WRE in the Abingdon office on 73 acres for the \$400,000 allocated.
- Proceeding with acquisition on six newly enrolled ACEP FY15 applications (two WRE, four ALE) and four other prior year easements.
- Closed our first ACEP-WRE for 293 acres (largest wetland easement to date).

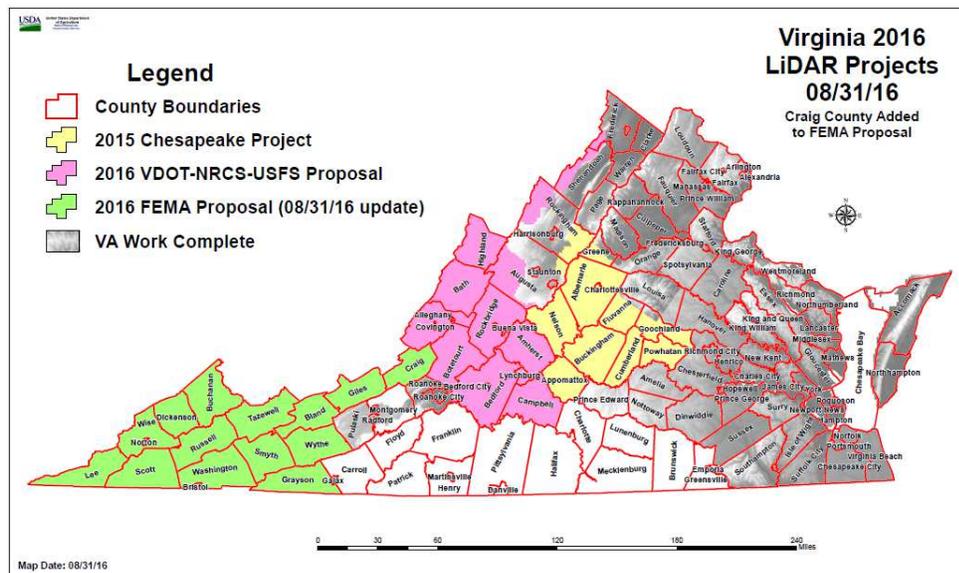
### Dam Rehabilitation

- **Upper North River 77** final design has been put on hold while NRCS National Design Center and Soil Mechanics Center re-analyzes the existing conditions. Anticipated date for completion is February.
- **Cherrystone Creek 1 and 2A** geotechnical investigation field work is complete.
- **Mountain Run 11 and 50** final designs in progress. Anticipated date for completion is April. Construction is expected to begin in the spring.

### Soil Health

- **Held 41 different soil health events where NRCS organized with partners and was a keynote presenter. This represented over 5,549 agency staff, partner staff, industry and producers,** a key feature of the VA Soil Health Initiative of training everyone at the same time. Since the 2013 Soil Health Kickoff event in Virginia, NRCS has helped organize and lead 160 soil health events which were attended by over 13,849 participants.
- **Created video of farmer Ellen Polishuk soil health lecture from Farm to Table Conference, now posted to VA NRCS YouTube page.**
- **Continued highly innovative “Cover Crop Deep Roots Demo” including capture of footage to create YouTube video for NRCS site.**

### LiDAR



2015 Chesapeake Project is going through quality assurance checks currently, and should be available soon.

- Worked with FSA to address the 20,000+ fields with a UHEL determination from lost or misplaced FSA records. Coordinated the effort to adopt the Kevin Godsey model using 1 meter LiDAR and 3 meter DEM's with SSURGO frozen T&K factors to prepare county erosion index grids to process HEL determinations in office. This gained national attention from NRCS where we spoke at 4 different

NRCS teleconferences nationwide on our efforts and at a regional FSA teleconference. Using this tool has the ability to streamline the determination process to make a call in less than 15 minutes from the office where traveling to and from the field to gather slope measurements can take up to 4 hours. This also provides much greater consistency and a defensible process on making HEL determinations.

- 5,100 known HEL AD-1026's needed
    - 5,100 x 4 hours on average going to the field = 20,400 hours
    - 5,100 x .25 hours on average using LiDAR = 1275 hours
- A savings of over 9 FTE's!

### **Soil Mapping**

Initial soil mapping of the cities of Waynesboro, Staunton, and Winchester has begun. Virginia NRCS is working with the MLRA project office out of Mill Hall, PA to complete the soil mapping in a timely manner. The soils requests from these cities are mainly for Hydrologic Soil Groups used to calculate storm water runoff to design for storm water management structures.

### **Training**

- **Virginia has a total of 134 NRCS Certified Conservation Planners (80 NRCS and 54 SWCD employees).**
- **Number of CEU's and Trainings in FY16 to maintain planner certification:**
  - **56 Training Events**
  - **163 CEU's issued**
- **Planned, coordinated, and helped conduct 62 training/outreach events that were attended by over 6,683 staff/partners/producers.**
- **Held the week long Virginia Conservation Planner "Boot Camp" for new employees to receive classroom/field training to successfully become a Virginia Certified Planner in FY16.**

This resulted in 10 SWCD and 10 NRCS employees being trained and meeting these requirements for becoming certified planners.
- **Planned, coordinated, and assisted in delivering the Prescribed Burn Awareness training for FY16.**

This resulted in 9 SWCD and 7 NRCS employees being trained and meeting these requirements for becoming certified planners
- **Planned, coordinated, and assisted in delivering the Cultural Resource Modules 7 & 8 training in FY16.** This resulted in 9 SWCD and 8 NRCS employees being trained and meeting these requirements for becoming certified planners.
- **Provided three day-long formal RUSLE2 training NRCS staff and SWCD partners.**

This resulted in 76 SWCD and NRCS employees being trained and meeting these requirements for becoming certified planners.

### **Outreach, State Conservation Engineer**

- SCE participated in local government official and dam owner informational meeting on watershed dams put on by the Peter Francisco SWCD. Meeting was held to provide information about the history and continued need for the structures.

**Outreach, Public Affairs**

- **StrikeForce Computer Donations.** Delivered 45 desktop computers to Raven Elementary School in Tazewell County on October 18. This is the last of three 2016 donations with a combined value of \$213,884 made possible through the “Computers for Learning” program.
- **Veterans Farmers.** Supported the Small Business Administration’s “Boots to Business” Reboot class for veterans at Virginia State University on November 2. Louisa Soil Conservationist Jon Lipinski delivered one of the training modules and Disability and Veterans Special Emphasis Program Manager Derek Hancock spoke to attendees. Dinwiddie DC Anthony Howell attended to connect with veterans and assist with the NRCS information booth.
- **Urban Farming.** Joined Tricycle Gardens and Bon Secours for a September 14 announcement on our partnership project to develop a curriculum and certification process for urban farmers in Virginia. NRCS Chief Jason Weller was a featured speaker during the program at the group’s Manchester site, which also included remarks from First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe and Bon Secours Richmond East CEO Mark Gordon.
- **Small and Nontraditional Operations.** Networked with small farmers from across the U.S. at the National Small Farm Conference on September 20-22 in Virginia Beach. The NRCS booth highlighted Virginia StrikeForce, locally-led partnerships and organic offerings. Many of the approximately 700 attendees stopped by the booth to get a closer look at Virginia’s high tunnel model, planted with cabbage and USDA-certified organic lettuce. Virginia speakers also teamed with partners to provide breakout sessions on urban farming and organic production.
- **2016 Farmer of the Year.** Selected Accomac poultry producer Mohammed Igbal for the Virginia NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee’s 2016 “Farmer of the Year” award. Igbal has served on the Delmarva Poultry Industry’s Board of Directors since 2008 and works with new farmers in his area to help them understand state and federal conservation programs. The presentation will be made at a Delmarva Poultry Industry meeting next year and include a tribute video.

**Earth Team Program**

Coordinated with VASWCD liaison Beth Beran and local district staff to solicit nominations for the 2016 state Earth Team awards. The VASWCD Youth Conservation Camp project (outstanding group) and the Hanover-Caroline SWCD (outstanding partnership - district) will be recognized at the annual meeting awards luncheon on December 5. State winners have also been submitted for national award consideration.

**VA NRCS Personnel Changes**

***New Hires, FY16***

<b>Positions Filled</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Soil Con. Rec. Grad.	Lawrenceville	Jenna Swanson	10/4/15
Soil Scientist	Christiansburg	Tyler Witkowski	10/18/15
District Conservationist	Fredericksburg	Lucia Kossler	10/18/15
Soil Conservationist	Verona	Wesley Hedrick	10/18/15
Soil Scientist	Rustburg	Mary Jacques	11/1/15

Soil Conservationist	Hanover	Telicia Berry	11/1/15
Soil Conservationist	Amelia	David Smith	11/1/15
Soil Conservationist	Smithfield	Robert Norris	11/1/15
Soil Con Tech	Culpeper	Nancy Utz	11/29/15
District Conservationist	Gate City	Mark Jessee	01/10/16
District Conservationist	Tazewell	Greg Meade	04/18/16
Soil Conservationist	Lexington	Allison Moore	04/18/16
Environ Specialist	Richmond	Dana Perkins	07/25/16

**Positions Vacated, FY16**

**Lucia Kossler**, Soil Conservationist, 10/17/15

**Wesley Hedrick**, Soil Conservationist, 10/17/15

**Adam Williams**, Soil Conservationist, 1/9/16

**Mark Jessee**, District Conservationist, 1/9/16

**Becky Faught**, Management Analyst, 2/6/16

**Damien Loeper**, Soil Conservationist, 4/2/16

**Thomas Finsterle**, Soil Conservationist Technician, 4/2/16

**Greg Meade**, Soil Conservationist, 4/15/16

**Lexi Clark**, Soil Conservationist, 4/15/16

**Aaron McCann**, Soil Conservationist, 5/13/16

**Jessie Howard**, District Conservationist, 6/10/16

**John Cooke**, Civil Engineering Technician, 7/22/16

**Positions Vacated, FY17**

**Shavon Miller**, Administrative Assistant, State Office (SRC), 10/1/16

**Robert Williams**, District Conservationist, Chesapeake, 11/12/16

**Rolf Swainston**, Design Engineer, State Office, 11/12/16

**Kelley Ramsey**, Hydraulic Engineer, State Office, 12/24/16

**Marcie Cox**, Area Administrative Coordinator, Christiansburg, 12/31/16

**Retirements**

**Ronald Wisniewski**, District Conservationist, Fredericksburg, 10/3/15

**Buddy Gilmer**, District Conservationist, Gate City, 12/31/15

**Barry Mason**, Civil Engineering Technician, Farmville, 2/29/16

**Alvin Phelps**, Area Conservationist, Christiansburg, 4/30/16

**Mike Liskey**, District Conservationist, Strasburg, 7/2/16

**Upcoming Retirements**

**Rodney Williams**, District Conservationist, Wytheville, 12/31/16

**Steve Cassada**, District Conservationist, Chatham, 12/31/16