

New River SWCD

August 18, 2025

Directors present:

David Frazier Pete Farmer Gary Boring J.D. Testerman
Cindy Webb

Staff present:

Tracy Goodson B.T. Tomlinson Tim Phipps Emily Coomes

Others present:

Stacy Horton Nathan Osborne John Womack

The New River Soil & Water Conservation District Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Frazier on August 18, 2025.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

After review, Gary Boring made a motion to approve the minutes for July 21, 2025, Board meeting. Cindy Webb seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

After review, Cindy Webb made a motion to approve the financial report, subject to audit. Seconded by Gary Boring, the motion carried.

The District purchased a 2022 Big Tex Trailer for \$3,500.00.

Personnel evaluations for Scotty Hines and Crystal Cox are scheduled for next month, as both employees are currently on vacation.

Following our discussion, Gary Boring proposed a motion to maintain the existing ASA Policy. The motion was seconded by Cindy Webb and the motion carried.

Several conservation plans were submitted to the Board for approval (see attached). Gary Boring proposed a motion to approve the conservation plans, seconded by Cindy Webb. The motion carried.

Several BMP applications were presented for approval (see attached). Gary Boring made a motion to approve the BMP applications. Seconded by Cindy Webb, the motion carried.

Several CREP renewals for a duration of ten years have been submitted for approval (see attached document). Cindy Webb proposed a motion to approve these ten-year CREP renewals, which was seconded by Gary Boring. The motion was carried successfully.

A tax credit was submitted for approval (see attached). Gary Boring made a motion to approve the proposed tax credit. Seconded by Cindy Webb, the motion carried.

Tim Phipps gave a farm and forest update. A Field Day with Carroll County students will be held on October 7th and 8th, 2025.

The September Board Meeting will be held at Pat Davis's Building on the 15th. Tours will begin at 4PM and the meeting will start at 5:30PM.

Stacy Horton gave a DCR report (see attached).

Nathan Osborne presented a report from NRCS (attached for reference). Additionally, John Womack provided an update, noting that a block grant from VDACS will soon become available. This grant aims to offer direct assistance to eligible producers and timber owners impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Gary Boring gave an association report.

With no further business, Cindy Webb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pete Farmer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Secretary: Gary Boring

Chairperson: Daniel Frozier

August 18, 2025

Conservation Plans

CREP - Farm #3252 Tract#7367

CP#11-26-0004	SL-6W
CP#11-26-0007	SL-6W
CP#11-26-0021	SL-7
CP#11-25-0022	SL-6W

BMP Applications

11-26-0006	WFA-NM	\$961.80
11-26-0008	WFA-NM	\$109.20
11-26-0009	WFA-CC	\$1,729.60
11-26-0011	WFA-CC	\$2,100.00
11-26-0012	WFA-NM	\$1,027.80
11-26-0013	WFA-NM	\$320.40
11-26-0014	WFA-CC	\$4,485.60
11-26-0007	WFA-CC	\$7,467.60
11-26-0020	WFA-CC, WFA-NM	\$2,048.40
11-26-0022	WFA-CC, WFA-NM	\$1,656.00
Total		\$21,906.40

11-26-0023	SL-6W	\$48,466.25
11-26-0024	SL-6W	\$59,079.75
11-26-0025	SL-6W	\$24,925.19
11-26-0027	SL-7	\$20,976.00
Total		\$153,447.19

CREP Renewals

FSA#11005
FSA#11008
FSA#101A
FSA#106B
FSA#81A

Tax Credit		
11-26-0027	SL-7	\$1,311.00

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

1. **New Data Services Manager:** Jennifer Ciminelli joined DCR on July 10, 2025 as the new Data Services Manager. Jennifer can be reached via telephone at (804) 845-2189 or via email at jennifer.ciminelli@dcr.virginia.gov.
2. **ASA Policy.** Per the annual request of Darrell Marshall of VDACS, please revisit and update your district's policy regarding the handling to Ag Stewardship Act Complaints (this includes primary and secondary contact information). If there are no changes to your district's existing policy, please send an email to Darrell Marshall that provides the date that the board discussed the policy and states that there are no changes to your SWCD's existing policy. If there are changes (remember that this includes changes to the primary and secondary contacts as well as the preferred procedure), a new form must be submitted to VDACS.
3. **Return of Funds Invoice.** As PY 2025 end of year reports are processed, all SWCDs with unobligated cost-share funds will receive an invoice and a letter containing instructions for returning both unobligated cost-share funds and the associated technical assistance funds.
4. **SPDA Account Verification.** Please remember to go <https://spda.trs.virginia.gov/search> and verify that all public fund bank accounts are collateralized in accordance with the Security for Public Deposits Act (SPDA) for the quarter ending June 30, 2025. Please be sure to verify all account information no later than September 28, 2025 and retain documentation of the verification for each account.
5. **Quarterly RMP Disbursement Correspondence.** SWCDs no longer need to provide correspondence to Barbara McGarry each quarter notifying her that RMP funds would/would not be requested for the quarter. DCR has a new system in place to determine RMP disbursement needs.
6. **Administrative Audits and Cost-Share File Administrative Audits:** RFCA will soon be contacting SWCDs to schedule audits for fall/winter 2025. Cost-Share File Administrative Audits will be conducted by CDCs on a two-year cycle consistent with SWCD audits. CDCs will not be conducting cost-share administrative audits when a SWCD is receiving a one-year financial audit due to staff changes or a special one-year financial audit, unless directed by the VSWCB.
7. **VACS Program Match Requests.** DCR has established a new process to request a letter of support or in-kind match of funds from the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share (VACS) Program for grant project proposals. A description of the process and the new request form can be found at www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/vnrcf-match. Just remember that the request form must be submitted at least 21 days before the letter of support or the letter of commitment of in-kind match from DCR is needed.
8. **VASWCD and VACDE Award Nominations.** Please be mindful of the upcoming VASWCD and VACDE award opportunities. Many of these awards are due in September, so please check the VASWCD website or contact the VASWCD for more information on eligibility and deadlines.

COST-SHARE/ TAX CREDIT/ CREP ITEMS:

1. **First Quarter Cost-Share Disbursement Letters.** Please ensure that all approved cost-share practices are loaded in CAS and are in *Approved* status no later than August 22, 2025 so they can be included in the August disbursement letter.
2. **Data QA/QC Deliverable in PY 2026 Grant Agreement.** Please remember that the PY 2026 grant agreement language requires that all QA/QC issues be corrected within 30 days of notification of the data issue. Daily copies of all CAS data are being retained and analyzed regularly. Please remember that SWCDs can run QA/QC reports in CAS (Click the "Reports" tab and then click on "Emailed Reports").

3. 2025 CWFA Local Award and Grand Basin Award Applications. Are due on October 1, 2025 to the CDC. Please be mindful of the following:

- ✿ The CWFA application form is available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/cwfa>.
- ✿ There is a separate Grand Basin Award Nomination Form that must accompany any application being considered for the Grand Basin Award. It is also located at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/cwfa>.
- ✿ Each SWCD can have one local winner per locality but may only submit one grand basin award nominee per river basin that falls within the SWCD's boundaries.
- ✿ The application packet must contain a completed and signed application form (please use the fillable online version), a narrative of one to two pages that highlights the farming operation and outstanding conservation practices of the farm operation, and a PowerPoint presentation of at least six slides containing photos and detailed descriptions of conservation practices depicted in the presentation.
- ✿ A photo of the applicant should be included in the presentation.
- ✿ The narrative should not be repetitive of the application material but should expand upon that information and should even speak to the applicant's ethics and ideas behind implementation of conservation practices on the farm.
- ✿ Please ensure that the application form is completed electronically and is not handwritten and that both the applicant and the SWCD sign the application form.
- ✿ No application forms will be accepted after October 1, 2025 (this includes local award applications). Please strive to get application forms approved and signed no later than the September Board meeting. Local award applications that are not received by the October 1 deadline will not receive a local sign or certificate.

UPCOMING CONSERVATION PLANNER CERTIFICATION & ENGINEERING TRAINING EVENTS:

- ✿ **October 15-16, 2025:** Virginia Resource Training (attendees must attend all three sessions to receive credit for attending). Four contact hours are available for certified conservation planners. Registration is required at <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/2a0ca63f-968b-4d31-8d0e-e7076cdfc9af@620ac5a9-4ec1-4fa0-8641-5d9f386c7309>
 - October 15, 2025: Department of Historic Resources from 9:00AM till 11:00AM
 - October 15, 2025: Department of Wildlife Resources from 1:00PM till 3:00PM
 - October 16, 2025: DCR's Division of Natural Heritage from 9:00AM till 11:00AM
- ✿ **October 21-23, 2025:** DCR Conservation Planner Course in Buckingham County, VA.
- ✿ **TBD in 2025:** RUSLE 2 Training (Parts A, B and C).

UPCOMING EVENTS/ IMPORTANT DATES:

- ✿ **August 19-21, 2025:** VACDE Training at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, VA.
- ✿ **September 15-16, 2025:** The VSWCB Meeting tentatively scheduled to be located in Abingdon, VA.
- ✿ **September 25, 2025:** Quarterly Dam Owner's Meeting at 10:00 at the Augusta County Government Center.
- ✿ **September 25, 2025:** Introduction to Row Crop Training from 9:00AM till 4:00PM at the Tidewater AREC in Suffolk, VA. RSVP with Vanessa Lewis (vanessa.lewis@dcr.virginia.gov) by August 27, 2025.
- ✿ **September 30, 2025:** PY 2025 Annual Reports should be completed.
- ✿ **October 1, 2025:** CWFA Local Award Applications and CWFA Grand Basin Award Nominations are due to the CDC.
- ✿ **October 7, 2025:** VASWCD Grant Training Part #2, Developing a Grant Budget. Training will be virtual from 9:00AM till 11:00AM. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/cGZtYoFrSJK9kMQGoclWww>.
- ✿ **October 30, 2025:** Full TAC Meeting.

- ❖ **November 1, 2025:** Deadline for applicants to apply for funds provided by the VSWCB to address BMPs damaged/destroyed by Helene or storms that occurred February 10-18, 2025. Applications must be loaded in CAS with the “*Storm Damage VACS*” program type selected.
- ❖ **December 7-9, 2025:** VASWCD Annual Meeting at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in Williamsburg, VA.
- ❖ **December 10, 2025:** VSWCB Meeting at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel in Williamsburg, VA.

PY 2026 START UP REMINDERS & PITFALLS TO AVOID (REFERENCE THE PY 2026 VACS MANUAL AND THE COST-SHARE FILE ADMINISTRATIVE AUDIT FORM FOR MORE INFORMATION):

- ❖ **W-9 Form.** Please make sure that each applicant fills out a W-9 form since this is required for all applications.
- ❖ **Contract Sign Up.** Please make sure that the participant is aware that once he/she signs up a contract under a social or a tax ID number that this information cannot be changed in the Conservation Application Suite without a signed transfer agreement. Please remember that the transfer agreement must be approved by the SWCD board if the practice has already received board approval at the time of the transfer request. It would be wise to ensure that the participant understands the financial ramifications of receiving cost-share funds for a practice and that he/she checks with a financial advisor if unsure of the impacts of receiving a cost-share payment.
- ❖ **Contract Part I Signatures.** Please be reminded that participants must not initiate VACS or tax credit practices prior to application. Per page II-16 of the VACS manual, “BMPs initiated prior to submitting a cost-share or tax credit application are not eligible.”
 - Participants interested in implementing a cover crop practice need to sign a PY 2026 Contract Part I form prior to planting.
 - Participants seeking tax credit on a VACS-eligible NRCS practice(s) need to sign a PY 2026 Contract Part I form prior to practice implementation and must be certified as meeting VACS or tax credit specifications after completion.
 - Structural practices should never be initiated prior to signature of a Contract Part I, receipt of a practice design *and* notification of board approval.
- ❖ **Resource Reviews.** There is a suite of practices on pages II-20 thru II-22 of the manual that require digitization of components in the Conservation Application Suite as part of the general Ag BMP Tracking Module data entry.
 - As components are digitized, the program will run a query against FEMA, DHR, DWR, DCR-DNH, and DEQ TMDL data and a list of identified resource concerns will be generated. A copy of this report must be maintained in the case file.
 - These concerns must be addressed with the appropriate agency and documentation retained in the file to show that these concerns were addressed.
 - This includes both CREP practices and practices piggybacked with NRCS, where components must still be digitized in CAS but query results may be compared with the CPA-52 results. If the CPA-52 addresses all hits on a CREP or piggybacked project, then this must be noted in the file and a copy of the CPA-52 must be maintained in the file. For concerns/ “hits” that are generated in the query but not addressed by the CPA-52 process, the SWCD must follow up with the appropriate agency and include documentation in the file.
- ❖ **Conservation Plans.** Per the PY 2026 grant agreement, please ensure that a conservation plan is approved by the SWCD board and recorded in the minutes prior to VACS, CREP or tax credit application approval and prior to practice implementation.
 - CREP practices and other practices receiving state funding in addition to funding from a federal program must have a USDA conservation plan.
 - If a practice is receiving cost-share only, a list of VACS exemptions are listed in the manual on pages II-19 and II-20.
 - There are no exemptions when considering tax credit and a listing of acceptable types of plans is included on page IV-6. Code requires that all tax credit applications have a board approved conservation plan on

file at the SWCD in order to be eligible for tax credit. Please note that a Nutrient Management Plan is not an acceptable form of a Conservation Plan to meet the conservation plan requirement for tax credit.

- Please ensure that the Conservation Plan Approval Date is filled into the *Conservation Plan Board Approval Date* box in the General Tab in the Conservation Application Suite.
- Please ensure that the plan receives all appropriate signatures and that the plan is signed and dated by a director at the time of board approval. Remember that the conservation plan should never be signed by a director prior to board approval.

✿ **Grazing Management Plans.** The SL-6N, SL-6W, SL-7 and SL-10 practices require a grazing management plan. A grazing management plan is required for the SL-6N and SL-6W practices when more than three new grazing units are being created by the installation of interior cross fencing. When implementing a SL-7 or SL-10 practice, a grazing management plan is required for all acres in the grazing system.

✿ **Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs).** Nutrient management plans are required as a prerequisite for many practices. This includes, but is not limited to, animal waste practices, cover crop practices and the cropland conversion practice (SL-1).

- Ideally, a nutrient management plan should be in hand at the time of practice implementation and absolutely must be in place for the acreage included in the BMP at the time that cost-share payment or tax credit is granted.
- Please check the NMP expiration date when working with each participant to ensure that the participant is aware of the NMP expiration date and the requirement to have a current NMP at the time of payment or issuance of tax credit.
- If a participant has no NMP or has an expired or expiring NMP, please provide them with contact information for their respective DCR Nutrient Management Specialist or provide them with a copy/link to the certified private nutrient management planner directory.
- In the case of annual practices such as cover crops, it might be helpful for your SWCD to consider setting an internal deadline that your SWCD expects to receive a copy of the nutrient management plan and receipts for processing tax credit (if applicable) to ensure that there is not a last-minute rush on your end or on the part of the DCR Nutrient Management Specialist. This deadline should be clearly communicated to the applicant via a letter, and a copy of the correspondence should be maintained in the case file.

✿ **Soil Loss Calculations.** Please ensure that accurate soil erosion reduction numbers are reported in the Conservation Application Suite where required.

✿ **Engineering Job Approval Authority.** Please remember that if something exceeds your recognized EJAA level, a request for assistance should be submitted to DCR's Ag BMP Engineering Services staff. Please do not attempt to design and/ or sign off on practice job sheets for practices that exceed your recognized EJAA since you could be held personally liable for any practice failures that occur as a result.

- Please reference pages II-27 thru II-30 and pages IV-8 thru IV-10 of the manual for a list of practice components that require EJAA or PE review and approval.
- Remember that engineering forms, including the Engineering Assistance Request form, and job sheets are now located in the Ag BMP Tracking Module of CAS under "*Support*" and then "*Forms*".
- Please recall that NRCS may serve as the lead for all engineering services for practices that are more than 50% federally funded. However, an individual with appropriate EJAA or an individual from DCR Ag BMP Engineering Services must review the inventory and evaluation to ensure that all VACS program qualifications and practice specifications are met prior to board approval of the project.
- Please pay special attention to EJAA QA/QC reports that are periodically generated to ensure that proper steps have been taken by your SWCD.

✿ **Design Sheets:** Please ensure that design sheets and "as built" documentation receive all required signatures. This should be done even if the participant is planning to complete the job rather than hire a contractor to complete the job.

- ☛ **Caps:** Per the PY 2026 policy, “State participant caps are based upon the fiscal year that the practice is approved rather than the fiscal year in which the cost-share payment is distributed.” Please make sure that you are monitoring practice caps using the *Participant Cost-Share* function of the Conservation Application Suite. Remember, the cap is now \$300,000 per applicant per program year for all practices.
- ☛ **Ranking and Estimating Applications.** Please be reminded that all PY 2026 applications must be ranked and funded according to PY 2026 secondary considerations and estimates must be drawn from the SWCD’s PY 2026 average cost list.
- ☛ **Required Completion Date:** Please make sure that a required completion date is filled in the appropriate blank on Part II of the contract at the time of contract approval.
 - This should be done as directors are signing and dating the Part II form.
 - This date should also be put into the Conservation Application Suite.
 - Please keep in mind that the required completion date is the date that the practice is expected to reach completion.
 - For cover crops, this date is the date that the cover crop is ready to be certified and paid and is not same as the cover crop planting date.
 - For two program year completion date practices, this should be June 30, 2027.
- ☛ **Bid Sheets.** Per the VACS manual, for each applicable practice, the SWCD must retain a completed VACS Bid Solicitation Sheet in the cost-share file to document:
 - Whether the Bid Process was required;
 - Whether an applicant completed the work on his/her own; or
 - Whether the applicant did not complete the work on his/her own and bid solicitation was required for each component with an estimate of \$50,000 or greater.

A listing of applicable practices can be found on page II-37 and II-38 of the VACS manual.

 - The bid process must be used when the cost of any one component of a VACS contract is estimated to equal or exceed a billable expense of \$50,000.
 - Remember, practice approval is contingent upon the completion of the bid sheet and a practice must be cancelled if the bid sheet is not received by the SWCD within 120 days.
 - There is a form letter in the Conservation Application Suite and a status of “Conditionally Approved Pending Bids” that must be assigned to practices requiring the bid process.
 - The bid sheet must be maintained in the file.
 - Please see page II-37 thru II-41 of the VACS manual for more information.
- ☛ **Estimate and Payment Calculators:** Please make sure that there is an estimate calculator and a payment calculator present in the case file for all practices, including cover crop practices.
- ☛ **Cover Crop Reminders (includes WFA practices):**
 - Collect receipts as supporting documentation and verification of seed purchases (type of seed and amount of seed planted). If participants utilize their own seed, the participant should provide some type of written documentation regarding the type of seed and amount of seed planted.
 - Ensure that the case file contains maps that show all fields that are included in the practice.
 - Fields contained in the practice should be labelled with a field identifier as well as the number of acres in the practice on the file maps.
 - Please ensure that maps have some type of location identifier, such as roads, labelled on the map. Or driving directions to each respective field from the SWCD office can be included in the case file.

cc: Blair Gordon, Soil and Water Conservation District Liaison
 Sara Bottenfield, Agricultural Incentives Program Manager
 Dr. Angela Ball, Western Area Manager

Sent electronically to SWCD offices: 08/07/2025

GALAX SERVICE CENTER REPORT

NEW RIVER SWCD Board Meeting

August 18th, 2025

Program Updates/Deadlines:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - Took 87 applications for FY25, 20 high tunnels, 1 cropland, 3 wildlife, 17 forestry, 46 livestock
 - FY26 Application deadline is October 10th
 - Ranked 76 EQIP applications. Of those 61 have been preapproved and all but 1 has been obligated, 19 high tunnels \$659,516, 9 Forestry \$220,483.57, 20 Livestock CICs \$667,571.7, 5 Agland Disaster \$539,850.93, 1 Irrigation \$25,207, 8 livestock \$2,183,444. bringing the FY totals \$4,296,073.20.
 - FY 2025 134 payments on 240 items for \$2,267,151.99.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
 - Several FY26 interested applicants
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**
 - Waiting on the state office to contract 1 preapproved ALE, 2 more interested in applying
- **Conservation Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP/CREP)**
 - CREP enrollment is back open and already have completed 1 plan with cost estimate. Also completed the reenrollment assessments and plans for 5 reenrollments.

Conservation Technical Assistance

- EWP DSR's completed, meet with Grayson County administration with Staff Office Staff to go over the findings. Roughly \$4.5 million in damages with 100% cost share found throughout mostly western Grayson. Engineering team is nearing completion of woody debris design work with the hopes of construction beginning the first of September.

BMP Projects/Partnership Activities

- 2022 NACD TA Grant for NRSWCD continued the partnership on CREP/BMP's and with help on existing EQIP projects. Grant is coming to a close.

Other Collaborations/Key Interactions Benefitting Districts

- Recently worked on piggybacking 3 new and old EQIP projects with several more coming.

Local Working Group/Public Meetings

- Cancelled for 2025

Outreach/Agency Activities/Events (dates)

- Carroll County Ag Fair Today through Wednesday

Upcoming Training Opportunities in the Area (JEDs, Webinars, Field Days)

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Earth Team Volunteer Program**VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Changes**

- John Womack Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations is acting for Area II until the position is filled.

Submitted By Nathan Osborne, District Conservationist