

New River SWCD

March 16, 2026

Directors present:

David Frazier Gary Boring J.D. Testerman Cindy Webb

Mike Rhudy

Staff present:

B.T. Tomlinson Tim Phipps Tracy Goodson Emily Coomes

Others present:

Nathan Osborne Becky Hubble Carrol Boring

The New River Soil & Water Conservation District Board meeting was called to order by Chairperson David Frazier on March 16, 2026.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Becky Hubble gave a DCR report (attached).

After review, Gary Boring made a motion to approve the minutes for February 23, 2026, Board meeting. Cindy Webb seconded the motion. 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.

Tracy reviewed the Desktop Procedures with the Board. Gary Boring made a motion to approve the review. Mike Rhudy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Tracy received information about the memorial scholarship for Don Phillen. It is a \$25,000.00 investment for the scholarship to the Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District Education Foundation.

The Area IV meeting will be held on March 17, 2026, at the Abingdon 4-H Center. Gary Boring made a motion to nominate Steve Pottorff, at the Area IV meeting, for the State Water Control Board. Cindy Webb seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Gary Boring made a motion to nominate Steve Pottorff as an Associate Director to the New River Soil & Water Conservation District Board. Cindy Webb seconded the motion. 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 Mike Rhudy. The motion carried.

Cindy Webb made a motion to approve BMP applications #11-26-0073 and #11-26-0075 (attached). Seconded by Gary Boring, the motion carried.

Cindy Webb made a motion to approve BMP contract #11-26-0054 to reduce the cost of the contract due to the participant's decision not to fence off as much as initially planned. Mike Rhudy seconded the motion, the motion carried.

Mike Rhudy made a motion to approve BMP contract #11-26-0002 (attached), requesting additional funds of \$5.45, raising the total from \$101,936.25 to \$101,941.70 to cover out-of-pocket fencing expenses incurred by the participant. Cindy Webb seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Gary Boring made a motion to cancel contract #11-24-0067 (attached) due to health concerns affecting the participant. Cindy Webb seconded the motion, the motion carried.

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

Tim Phipps gave a farm update.

The District will host the Area IV Envirothon at New River Hill Farm and Forest on April 30, 2026.

The Envirothon training was held on March 11, 2026, at the Forestry office in Galax.

The District will host a fence building school at the farm on April 8, 2026, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The cost will be \$15 a person.

Our District and other agencies will partner together to host Earth Day Field Days on April 22 and 23, 2026, at the Galax Forestry office.

Nathan Osborne gave a NRCS report (attached).

Gary Boring gave an Association report.

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

Secretary: *Gary Boring*
Chairperson: *David L. Frazier*
Prepared by: *Emily Coomes*



March 2026 – Conservation District Coordinator (CDC) Report

Becky Hubble, Conservation District Coordinator

DCR-Division of Soil and Water Conservation – Radford Regional Office

Becky.hubble@dcr.virginia.gov | 804.997.5069

• Administrative and Operational Items

- **Desktop Procedures Manual:** A DRAFT version of the Desktop Procedures for District Operations was shared via email. This DRAFT version is now open for comment and we welcome all suggestions. **Please take some time to review the document thoroughly and send your comments and questions to blair.gordon@dcr.virginia.gov by March 16th.** Following this comment period, the edits will be presented to the Va. Soil and Water Board at their April board meeting for their review and comment. The final, board approved version will not be in effect until July 1, 2026. You can also see the email from Kendall Tyree on 03/03/2026.
- **Quarterly Reports due April 15, 2026:** 3rd quarter Attachment E, cash balance and Profit and Loss reports.
- **Finance Committee Meetings:** The Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations requires that “the finance committee (or designed group) meet at least twice a year to establish a budget and to review financial statements. Minutes of these meetings must be prepared and maintained by the district in accordance with FOIA. The Chair of the Finance Committee should sign the minutes.
- **SWCD Director Appointment and Resignation Deadline 03/25/26:** Should a SWCD have any director appointments and/or resignations that need approval from the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board (VSWCB) those need to be submitted to Blair Gordon via email with the assigned CDC copied no later than 03/25/26. Director appointment submittals must include the following documents: DCR 199-014 (Nomination for Appointment Form), DCR-199-015 (Bio Form), and a copy of the SWCD board meeting minutes. Note: DCR-199-015 is not required for VCE Agents. Resignations must include a copy of the SWCD board meeting minutes.
- **Committee Meetings:** As your SWCD schedules committee meetings to handle end-of-fiscal year items, please remember the following:
 - Make sure that committee meetings are held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. That means that all committee meetings, including Personnel Committee meetings, must be advertised to the public and minutes must be taken at each meeting.
 - Remember to reference the closed meeting guidelines in the event that the SWCD will be discussing subject matter that is recognized by the Code of Virginia to be exempt from FOIA (Reference FOIA Code §2.2-3711(A) for a complete list of closed meeting allowances).
 - A committee report should be presented to the board at the next appointed SWCD meeting.
 - Committee meeting minutes should be handled one of two ways:
 - Minutes should be approved by the committee at the next committee meeting; OR
 - Minutes should be approved by the full board at a regular board meeting if no committee meeting is scheduled for the near future.
 - Once approved by the committee or Board of Directors, committee meeting minutes should be signed by the committee chair. Per the grant agreement, committee meeting minutes must be submitted to the CDC
- **Dates for Obligations data pull and Disbursement letters:**
 - Pull obligations May 1, letters to DCR May 6, dated to SWCDs May 11
 - Pull obligations June 1, letters to DCR June 3, dated to SWCDs June 8

- **Complete your Annual Fixed Asset Inventory** –See the Desktop Procedures Manual for additional details (Pages 26, 27, 41) All inventory items should be tagged, and the serial tag number included on the inventory listing. Remember that all external data storage devices, regardless of value, must be included on the inventory list due to the important data and intellectual property stored on these devices. The fixed assets inventory should be revisited annually and all changes should be board approved and recorded in the minutes.
- **Security for Public Deposits Act (SPDA) Verification:** This is an ongoing Audit Find. This is just a friendly reminder about the requirement under the Security for Public Deposits Act (SPDA) that requires verification for bank account balances of public funds. <https://spda.trs.virginia.gov/search/user/sign-in>. SWCDs must have a log-in and verify accounts on a quarterly basis. Anyone who sets up a log-in and password will get a notification regarding the deadline each quarter.
 - Balances for the quarter ending September 30th will be available on November 1st for review and verification. The account information must be verified no later than December 28th.
 - Balances for the quarter ending December 31st will be available on February 1st for review and verification. The account information must be verified no later than March 28th.
 - Balances for the quarter ending March 31st will be available on May 1st for review and verification. The account information must be verified no later than June 28th.
 - Balances for the quarter ending June 30th will be available on August 1st for review and verification. The account information must be verified no later than September 28th.

• **Ag and Cost Share Items**

- **PY 2027 WFA Participation.** If your SWCD is interested in participating in the Whole Farm Approach (WFA) program in PY 2027, please let me know by email with a CC to Sara Bottenfield.
- **Carryovers:** Encourage VACS participants to complete their projects in time for payment prior to the end of the fiscal year to reduce carryovers into FY27. Refer to Pages II-42-II-46 of the FY26 VACS Program Manual for a list of practices eligible for carryover and an explanation of carryover procedures. Practices approved in FY26 that are listed as "practices with two-program year completion date" do not need formal board approval prior to the end of this FY. Otherwise, practices substantially under construction and eligible for carryover will need approval by SWCD boards prior to 06/30/26. The "Cost-Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs to be Completed, Canceled or Carried Over into FY27" is available in Logi for assessing Carryovers.
 - Carryover BMPs coming to the end of their third PY and not expected to be complete by 06/30/26 can only be carried over again with prior approval from DCR. Requests to carry over BMPs a 3rd time into a 4th PY must be submitted to Sara Bottenfield, Ag Incentives Program Manager, by May 15. For each practice requested, District staff will need to:
 - Update the Carryover section of the Measurements tab by selecting 'Other (describe in BMP comments)' as one of the justifications and entering a comment on the General tab to thoroughly explain the reason for an additional carryover. Include the date and initials of the person entering the request in the comment box.
 - Send a single email from each district to Sara (sara.bottenfield@dcr.virginia.gov), copying your CDC, with the contract number, instance number, and justification. This can be in the body of the email or as an attachment.
 - The "Cost-Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs to be Completed, Canceled or Carried Over into FY27" is available in Logi for assessing Carryovers.
- **Cost Share Reallocation:** For Districts with cost-share applications that exceed their available FY26 VACS funds, please enter any unfunded requests in CAS with a status of 'Canceled' and 'Lack of Funding' as the cancellation reason **by March 31**. Practices must be on a PY26 contract with all appropriate entries on the Measurements tab and with accurate data on the Programs tab in the "Estimated/Requested Cost-Share Payments" field and the appropriate VACS funding source selected. This will allow DCR to assess unmet cost-share needs and allow the SWCB to take action on reallocation so that District Boards can then approve reallocated funds before June 15

- **DCR Conservation Planner Certification Courses Announced:** Training dates have been announced for CY 2026 for anyone working towards the DCR Conservation Planner Certification. Questions should be directed to Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR-DSWC Conservation Planning and Training Coordinator at carl.thiel-goin@dcr.virginia.gov
 - **April 1-2, 2026:** Conservation Selling Skills at Central Virginia Community College in Lynchburg, VA.
 - **May 20, 2026:** Stream ID Course from 8:00AM until 4:30PM in Charlottesville, VA.
 - **Summer & Winter 2026:** Nutrient Management Training Course.
 - **October 7-8, 2026:** Virginia Resource Training (Online Webinar Series).
 - **TBD:** RUSLE 2 Part A, B, C.
 - **October 14-16, 2026:** DCR Conservation Planner Course in Buckingham County (In Person Course).

- **Verifications:** The Random Verifications are uploaded into CAS Tracking.

- **NRCS/ SWCD Piggyback Reminder.** Please make sure that both the SWCD and NRCS are working together in the planning stages of piggyback practices to ensure that these practices receive SWCD board approval prior to the participant initiating the practice. Remember that the VACS program goals are slightly different than those of NRCS and there may be items included by NRCS that are not eligible to receive VACS funding so please check components carefully against VACS practice specifications. It is also important to note that there may be additional requirements in the VACS specifications that must be met prior to practice approval, particularly where animal waste practices are concerned. Finally, please remember to abide by the rate set forth in the VACS practice specifications to ensure that it is not exceeded when paying the SWCD portion of the cost-share.

- **Conservation Planning Training Update:** The associated tests for the online courses in COVLC are **no longer required**. When you finish the video for the training, log your completion date in the CAS training tracking section.
 - The classes affected are:
 1. Overview of Water Quality Resource Assessment
 2. Nitrogen Management and Concerns
 3. Phosphorus Management and Concerns
 4. Sediment Management
 5. Water Bodies
 6. Pest Management and Water Quality Implications
 7. Water Management

- **IMPORTANT** Don't get caught issuing contract payments before all signatures are received. Please review Section 12 (Page 25-26) of the PY26 Cost-Share and TA Policy, which addresses missing signatures on the VACS Contract. I have cut and pasted the section immediately below for your convenience. As a reminder this is not a new policy as it was initially implemented and went into effect July 1, 2022.
 - Signatures on the VACS Contract - For any practice funded in whole or in part by the VACS Program, a VACS contract must be completed and signed in its entirety by both the appropriate District staff, District Director, and the participant. For any practice marked complete and issued payment on or after July 1, 2022, failure to obtain the appropriate signatures on a VACS contract in its entirety will result in the amount provided in VACS cost-share funding for the practice, including the associated technical assistance funding, being withheld from the District's cost-share and technical assistance allocation for the next fiscal year by the Department. VACS cost-share files will be examined during financial audits, administrative cost share file reviews, and verifications to ensure the appropriate signatures have been obtained.

Should your CDC discover missing signatures on Contract Part I, II, or III while completing a cost-share admin review, it will be documented on the current admin review worksheet, which is reported to DCR-Richmond. Additionally, the District Liaison, Ag Incentive Program Manager and DCR Area Manager will be made aware of the discovery. As a reminder: this is an OAG driven policy change and consequences for not following the policy require VSWCB action.

- **VACS Practices Requiring Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) Before Cost-Share Payment/Tax Credit Issued:** This is the annual reminder that many VACS Program Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as cover crop and animal waste, require that a NMP be prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner before such BMPs can be certified as complete and paid. Refer to the BMP Table Pages 1-4 of the *PY26 VACS Program Manual* for a complete practice list. Cost-share payments or tax credits cannot be issued until a current NMP is on file with the SWCD. Please assist participants in need of NMPs to contact a planner well in advance of practice completion to ensure that payments are not delayed. DCR nutrient management specialists are available and willing to write plans but cannot always fulfill last-minute requests. Another option is to refer producers to DCR's Direct Pay Program that pays private plan writers to provide plans. DCR created a NMP Information Sheet for districts to use. It can be downloaded from DCR's website: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/document/VACS-NutMgmt-FILLABLE-flyer.pdf>

- **Grant Agreement Reminders**

- **Signed Board Meeting Minutes:** Per the *FY26 Administrative and Operational Grant Agreement, Deliverable #7*, DCR-DSWC **CDCs are required to maintain copies of the approved, signed meeting minutes** (regular, special-called, and committee). Please continue to **email me approved signed minutes** each month, as they become available or include them in the following month's board meeting packet.
- **Host at least one agricultural community outreach event** during the year that met the following:
 - Was marketed through at least one venue that was directed towards producers with small farms or producers considered socially disadvantaged
 - Included an introduction of District, programs, staff and directors; and
 - Included a discussion featuring local agricultural producers that utilized the VACS Program
 - Provided notice to partners, including the Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program, of the event and provided an opportunity to partners to participate in the agenda

Upcoming Training and Important Dates

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 14: Virginia General Assembly adjourns ▪ March 17: Area IV Meeting Abingdon, VA ▪ April 13: Review of the Proposed Changes to the Desktop Procedures, 11:00 am Zoom mtg details forthcoming from VASWCD ▪ April 15: Quarterly Report Due to CDC ▪ April 22: General Assembly reconvenes to act on Governor's amendments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April 30: Area IV Envirothon hosted by New River SWCD ▪ May 1: Obligation report will be pulled from CAS for the fourth quarter disbursement. ▪ June 1: Obligation report will be pulled from CAS for the mid-fourth quarter disbursement. ▪ June 15: Deadline for obligating/approving PY 2026 VACS funds |
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cc: Blair Gordon, SWCD Operations Coordinator
 Sara Bottenfield, Agricultural Incentives Program Manager
 Angela W. Ball, PhD, DCR Western Area Manager

Electronically sent to SWCD offices 03/04/2026.

GALAX SERVICE CENTER REPORT
NEW RIVER SWCD Board Meeting
March 16th, 2026

Program Updates/Deadlines:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - FY26 Application ranking set for March 25th for Act Now, and May 1st for everything else. 70 applications accepted. Cost lists and ranking tools have been finalized and released. So far we have ranked all forestry applications and most of the high tunnel applications to meet the Act Now deadline
 - FY 2026 56 payments on 125 items for \$1,044,482.4.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
 - 3 FY26 Applications, ranking deadline is May 1st
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**
 - Receiving some interest on at least 1 ALE application
- **Conservation Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP/CREP)**
 - 14 expiring contracts are up for reenrollment. Macey is working on these this week

BMP Projects/Partnership Activities

- Applied for NACD TA Grant for NRSWCD to continue the partnership on CREP/BMP's and with EQIP.

Other Collaborations/Key Interactions Benefitting Districts

Local Working Group/Public Meetings

- Will be returning for this year. More details to come.

Outreach/Agency Activities/Events (dates)

- Held an outreach event for easement interest last Tuesday the 10th with Conservation Partners

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

- JED meeting May 21st on Nutrient Management Training, for SWCD employees also. DCR Planner CEU's will be offered. Need to know a head count on attendees by this Friday the 27th.
- Area IV meeting 3/17

Earth Team Volunteer Program

VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Changes

- Still no vacancies are being advertised, and John Womack is continuing to act for Area II.

Submitted By Nathan Osborne, District Conservationist

March 16, 2026

Conservation Plans

CP #11-26-0015

CP #11-26-0017

CP #11-26-0026

CP #11-26-0028

BMP Applications

#11-26-0075 SL-6W \$20,083.75

#11-26-0054 Reduce cost-share from \$73,847.25 to \$50,291.25

#11-26-0002- instance #660828 Additonal \$5.45 – from \$101,936.25 to \$101,941.70

#11-24-0067 Cancel \$36.480.00

Tax Credit

#11-26-0002 \$7,608.33