



Cecil Soil Conservation District

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Board of Supervisor's Meeting November 17, 2025

The Cecil Soil Conservation District held a Board of Supervisors meeting with a Zoom call-in option. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, Willie Ewing, and Vic Priapi. Other attendees: District Manager - Chris Brown, District Conservationist - Robert Weaver, Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce, District Coordinator – Tracey Rach. Visitor: Loretta Collins, SSCC & Darren Alles, MDA Area Coordinator.

Loretta Collins shared State Soil Conservation Committee activities and challenges. The state committee meetings discuss several key topics, including upcoming meetings, budget concerns, and challenges in recruiting new members. The next meeting is Thursday, November 20th at MDA Headquarters in Annapolis, MD. Loretta provided updates on the state committee's activities and mentioned the need to improve communication with Maryland Farm Bureau. She will attend the Maryland Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Convention in December where she hopes to attend their district meetings to discuss the importance of State Committee. She is working on creating new materials to better explain the responsibilities of soil conservation district supervisors. The committee also discussed the importance of flexibility in meeting expectations and the need to attract members interested in various aspects of soil conservation work.

Darren Alles – Darren discussed the development of a Planner Reporting Workbook, which will mimic the current technician reporting workbook but go a step further to capture detailed information for planners. The workbook will include various tabs for conservation plans, best management practices, training, records, and telework activities, with a dashboard for a panoramic view of planners' work. Darren and Chris will be able to monitor planner activities, and the final template is expected to be finalized in a workgroup meeting next month, with distribution to all planners statewide planned for January. Training events, including the NRCS Boot Camp, have been postponed to spring, while the ESRI Federal GIS 2026 Conference is scheduled for February 10-11 in Washington D.C. Additionally, changes to PEP procedures are expected, with supervisors receiving training in December and PEPs being conducted in January through the Workday system. Darren provided updates on the Program Planning Conservation Tracker, which will be available through December, and the planned transition to the Salesforce platform in January. Chris Brown raised concerns about the lack of a method to report cover crops planted by farmers not participating in the cover crop program. Darren agreed to pass on this information, and Chris Brown mentioned a previous pilot program exploring aerial and satellite methods to monitor cover crops, which may provide insights for future tracking efforts. Darren provided a nutrient management update regarding upcoming meetings and testing dates. High path Avian Influenza training was held Sept 29-Oct 3 and November 17th. Lastly, an AFO permit public hearing event is scheduled for November 18th in Salisbury.

- Vic Priapi made a motion to accept the October 22, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the treasurer's report, and expenses. There were no questions. Vic Priapi made a motion to file the treasurer's report and pay bills. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Old Business

- Chris Brown orchestrated Annual Elections. Bruce Yerkes, Willie Ewing and Van Funk nominated to remain in their positions as Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer respectively. The board agreed to close nominations and approve the current leadership structure. Van Funk made a motion to approve nominations as closed. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Chris Brown and Tracey Rach provided some updates on the upcoming Cooperator Banquet to be held on January 16th, which is expected to have over 200 attendees. We have sold a handful of tickets. Tickets are being sold through the Zeffy online platform. Tracey Rach and Patty Pierce are following up with partnering agencies, county administration and those that have attended previously. Chris Brown reviewed the status of various planning activities, they are still developing the presentation with Alice Crothers and gathering historical pictures from Linda Crothers. A discussion was held about how we should include Jonathan Quinn in our presentation.
- Patty Pierce provided a status update on Fall Cover Crop Certification. The program has seventy-five applicants. She has twenty-seven fall certifications to complete in SQL and submit to MDA. The deadline for applicants to report fall cover crop certification to the district is December 1st. Fall cover crop certification must be submitted to MDA no later than December 19th.
- A reminder that the NACD Annual Meeting in San Antonio is February 15th-19th. Right now, Van Funk and Bruce Yerkes are registered but Tracey Rach requires arrival and departure dates from them for hotel reservations. Sean McCandless has been chosen as the staff member to attend. Tracey is registering him for the event and confirming arrival and departure dates as well.
- The MASCD Winter Meeting is to be held February 9th and 10th at the Westin in Annapolis, MD. Currently, Chris, Tracey, Bruce and Van are to attend. If any other board members are interested, please let Tracey know at your earliest convenience for registration and hotel reservations.
- Next year scholarships process was discussed. One scholarship will run through Cecil College and one through the Cecil County School of Technology, the last one will run as open. Tracey Rach will be reaching out to the College and School of Technology for handling the application processes.

New Business

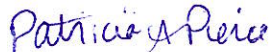
- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the Activity Report. There were no questions. Willie Ewing made a motion to accept the activities report. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- NRCS updates were provided by Rob Weaver. Rob explained back pay information. Under new bill USDA is fully funded so there should not be a shut down again in January. Rob shared NRCS recent State staff changes. NRCS Bootcamp has been cancelled due to shut down. The previously scheduled quality review was cancelled and will be rescheduled.
- Willie Ewing made a motion to accept Ruth Preisch as a new cooperator. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Sean McCandless discussed the planning and execution of the Boh Blitz, an environmental education event for 7th graders at Bohemia Manor High School. The annual event will be held this Friday, November 21st at Bohemia State Park. Sean McCandless will once again be presenting at the event. Sean provided an overview of the event, which includes 12 stations covering topics such as aquatics, trees, and birds, with students rotating through each for 20-minute sessions. The event is held in the spring and fall. The students return to school and review with their teachers what they have learned. Sean teaches about birds and discusses different conservation programs such as CREP for bird habitat.
- Today, November 17th Andrew Sipe is participating in the 5 State HPAI response training.
- Chris Brown discussed with the board dates for our annual holiday open house. It was determined that December 17th at 10am would be the date for the event.

The next meeting will be held on December 17 at 8:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the office with a teleconference option. The teleconference option will continue to be offered for those working in the field.

As there being no further general business, Bruce Yerkes called for a motion to adjourn the general meeting and to go into “closed session” meeting. Van Funk made a motion to adjourn the general meeting and to go into “closed session”. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 3:38 PM. Closed Meeting Session meeting begun at 3:38 and was closed at 4:01.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce
Administrative Assistant