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## Cecil Soil Conservation District

105 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite B-3, Elkton MD 21921

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### **Board of Supervisor's Meeting January 14, 2026**

The Cecil Soil Conservation District held a Board of Supervisors meeting with a Zoom call-in option. The meeting was called to order at 8:36 by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, Willie Ewing, and Alice Crothers. Other attendees: District Manager - Chris Brown, Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce, and District Coordinator – Tracey Rach.

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the December 17, 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. Willie Ewing made a motion to file the treasurer's report and pay bills. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### Old Business

- Chris Brown shared with the board that we have sold 180 seats for the banquet this Friday. The event schedule was outlined, including door opening times, speakers, and award presentations. District calendars will be distributed at the banquet to those with a blue sticker on their programs. The cooperator of the year video was completed by Dan, who used exiting software from CADD trainings to finish it at a lower cost that initially planned.
- Van Funk provided the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) update. The meeting agenda for the following day was outlined, with topics including agroforestry, pollution reduction grants, and the 2026 work plan. Van noted that future meetings would alternate between virtual and in-person formats, with a focus on reaching central and southern areas of the state for in person meetings.
- Chris Brown provided an MDA update on various programs and initiatives. Tina Stevens (former verification team member here in Cecil) is the new Field Assessment Supervisor, Program Administrator, within PP&E. Since it began in 2017, the role of the field assessment team has grown beyond verification – to include support for the Conservation Buffer Initiative, Cover Crop Plus Program, and Healthy Soils Program, from site visits to soil health assessments, with a portfolio of work that continues to grow. Lynn Buehler has joined Resource Conservation as our new Grants Administrator. Elizabeth Hoffman will be managing Resource Conservation's new Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program. The new version of Tracker has been delayed until March. Dan Polite has updated flat rates for conservation grants in the Central Region, reducing the maximum request from 1,200 to 400 items. The conservation buffer program has not received many applications recently. The Healthy Soils Competitive Fund is open for grant proposals. All 2025 status reviews have been completed and submitted to MDA without deficiencies. The nutrient

management certification exam is scheduled for February 6th. Andrew Sipe responded to a confirmed case of high-path avian influenza in Queen Anne's County, overseeing depopulation and composting of approximately 96,000 birds. Darren Alles will be in Cecil next week for evaluations. Planner workbook targeted for distribution to MDA planners statewide this month. SSCC will have flat rates on their agenda at meetings. Legislative breakfast will be followed by individual meetings, with a focus on discussing MACS and state funding for agriculture. Meetings are set for MASCD Winter Meeting with several legislators. Chris also discussed how planners and technicians in Cecil are participating in a pilot program for staff reviews, which has pushed our MDA staff reviews into January.

- The Cecil County Maryland Extension Winter Agronomy meeting will be February 3, 2026 at a new location, Elkton Parks & Rec on Stockton Street. Chris, Rob, Sonya, Dan and MDA planners will be attending.
- Chris provided some information on the Octoraro Source Water Collaborative. Meets bi-annually with the Chester and Lancaster County districts. Chris discussed outreach programs to the Amish community, including a liaison program by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. talked with Alexandra from Alliance for Bay. He also mentioned a grant project led by Jen Nelson for community led-led initiatives that seemed to draw parallels.
- The group discussed the scholarship programs, including efforts to encourage application from the Bohemia Manor High School. Tracey Rach shared information regarding her recent contact with Cecil College and the Cecil County School of Technology.

#### New Business

- Chris Brown presented the District Activities Report and discussed the new format. He provided a detailed overview of the district's activities, including staff training, engineering meetings, and conservation planning efforts. Staff visited farms for Inventory & Evaluations for various practices. One design was approved by NRCS. Two projects are in progress. Two claims for best management practices were submitted to MDA/MACS for cost share. Chris Brown shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities. There were sixteen Farm Conservation Plans completed this month. Chris mentioned that the planners are well above their annual goal for conservation planning, and noted some challenges with cost share and partner activities, particularly regarding manure transport approvals. Three flat rate discussion meetings were held. Twenty-two urban E&S plans were reviewed and seven urban E&S plans were approved. Six forest harvest plans were reviewed and five forest harvest plans were approved. One 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed. Two urban meetings were attended. The group discussed concerns about a development project where trees are being cut without proper permits. Chris plans to draft a letter to clarify that grading permits are required, even for tree cutting. Van Funk made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Bruce Yerkes seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Chris Brown reported NRCS updates and planning and tracking on behalf of Rob Weaver. Chris shared the program updates that were provided by Chief Aubrey J.D. Bettencourt on NRCS Priorities going into the new year.
- Chris Brown and Alice Crothers shared that they both took positions as Ag representatives on Economic Development board. An RFP for a new economic impact study is expected to be released in March. The next meeting is scheduled for February 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Van Funk made a motion to accept Wards Hill Farm Corp (T1789 & T1347), Harborview Farms (T1644) as new cooperators. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Chris Brown provided some updates on the MASCD Meeting which will be occurring February 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> in Annapolis. Chris Brown, Rob Weaver, Tracey Rach, Bruce Yerkes, and Van Funk will be attending the first day. Chris, Van, and Bruce will stay for legislative meetings the second day.

The next meeting will be held on February 11, 2026 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. Van Funk made a motion to adjourn the meeting adjourn. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce  
Administrative Assistant

Board Member Current Attendance Record January 2025 to January 2026

Bruce Yerkes, Chairman	100%
Willie Ewing, Co Chairman	83%
Van Funk, Treasurer	100%
Vic Priapi, Member	58%
Alice Crothers, Member	83%