



Cecil Soil Conservation District

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

(410) 398-4411 Ext.3

Board of Supervisor's Meeting April 22, 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 8:35 by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, and Willie Ewing. Other attendees: District Manager - Chris Brown, NRCS District Conservationist – Robert Weaver, Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce, District Coordinator – Tracey Rach and Darren Alles, MDA Area Coordinator, Visitors: Chris Schlette – NRCS – Assistant State Conservationist

Visitor: Chris Schlette introduced himself explaining his role with NRCS. Mr. Schlette is the Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy. He is attending district board meetings to address questions about non-program aspects including leasing, fleet, and IT concerns.

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the March 18, 2026 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. Van Funk made a motion to file the treasurer's report and pay bills. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Old Business

- Chris Brown provided a District Scholarships update. The district received a thank you letter from The Hevelow family regarding the scholarship named after Duty Hevelow. Chris Brown and Tracey Rach brought forth to the group information regarding the third scholarship and having no applicants. They considered potentially partnering with the Cecil County Forestry Board, which offers \$500 scholarships for the Natural Resource Career Camp. The group discussed being selective of the opportunity and changing the guidelines. Chris and Tracey will do more research. Cecil College is promoting scholarship on their social media college site. The district is providing pamphlets to Cecil College for Earth Day – April 21st.
- Chris Brown discussed outreach efforts and educational programs, including presentations at the School of Tech and an Ag Day event at Cecil Land Trust Fairview/DuPont Farm that will provide 3 nutrient management credits. The team reviewed their participation in School of Tech's career day, which resulted in potential student resumes and sparked discussion about possible internships. There were concerns about staff transitions in the school system, particularly regarding Rachael Coffey's and Day Mashogamende's replacement and the potential impact on their Envirothon program, leading to discussions about creating multi-year agreements with schools to ensure program stability. Chris shared with the Board recaps on past events and news and updates on all of the Education and Outreach that is happening the next couple of months (all listed below).

- Ag Day Dupont Farm – April 10th

- CCST Tour – Long Green Farms – April 14th
- Career Day at CCST – April 16th - resumes were received and the group discussed possibly having a one-day internship.
- Envirothon Spring Competition – April 21st – recap. About 100 ppl – 70 students. Rising Sun High School got
- 7th Grade Ag Education Day – April 28th – April 30th. Chris Brown is hosting the volunteer orientation zoom meeting is this coming Friday.
- DNR Senior Ranger Program – May 13th
- Bohemia River State Park – BioBlitz – June 5th
- Chesapeake Blvd. Cleanup Day – June 5th
- Cecil County Wade-In – June 13th
- Natural Resource Careers Camp – July 20th – Lauren Gilbert

New Business

- Rob Weaver presented the District Activities Report. He provided a detailed overview of the district's activities and discussed various technical assistance requests, staff trainings, conservation planning activities and engineering designs. They discussed the progress of resource conservation plans. Engineering activities included projects surveyed, tech meeting, and site meeting. Eight full resource conservation plans are in progress. One full resource conservation plan was completed. Three designs were reviewed "in-house" and one designs was approved "in-house" and one as-built design was approved "in-house". Six projects are in progress. Three applications for best management practices were submitted to MDA/MACS for cost share. Rob Weaver shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities. With an additional \$8 million in program funding expected to lead to more contracts. Thirty urban E&S plans were reviewed and seventeen urban E&S plans were approved. Five 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed and three 378-Small Pond plan was approved. Eight urban meetings were attended. Staff completed Inventory and Evaluations for Agricultural Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control. Four Agricultural E&S/SWM Plans are currently under CSCD Development and eight Agricultural Stormwater Management and E&S/SWM projects are in progress. Question raised regarding staff job approval authority for engineering designs, particularly regarding a livestock pipeline project. Van Funk made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Chris Schlette and Rob Weaver shared NRCS updates on project approvals noting smoother processes with Warren. The group discussed office space constraints and potential lease modifications, proposing to conduct a CAD analysis to optimize the current space before considering a lease break. Technical issues with internet speed were addressed, with participants noting ongoing slow performance despite a recent fiber optic upgrade, particularly when multiple users are connected simultaneously. The group discussed recent power issues and agreed to speak to the building landlord and state level through multiple channels. The group discussed an upcoming NRCS roundtable discussion event on dairy practice standards at Jones Dairy Farm on April 28th.
- Chris Brown shared the staff recommendation for Cooperator of the Year. Van Funk made a motion to select Pleasanton (Louisa Zeh) for 2026 Cooperator of the Year, with Bill Pleasanton as the main contact. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried. The group also discussed a special recognition award be presented to (DNR) Bohemia State Park in conjunction with conservation planning.
- Van Funk made a motion to accept John P. Campbell (T2723), Ravi Gupta, Ordinary Point Farm, AJ Majors, and Daniel & Sarah King as new cooperators. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- The MASCD Summer Meeting is scheduled for August 3-5 at the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, Maryland. Registration is happening now so please let Tracey Rach know if you are attending. The MASCD District Awards are completed. The forms need to be signed in order to submit by May 1st. The group agreed to sponsor at \$1,000 Gold level. Chris sent legislative email from Mike Mason to everyone after legislative sessions end.
- Chris Brown talked about the authorized MACS signatures. Van Funk made a motion to approve the MACS signature changes. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Darren Alles provided an MDA update on various programs and initiatives. ACRE system (Agricultural Conservation Reporting Evaluation) meetings are being held regionally throughout the state. Cherish Warner and Sean McCandless have been helpful in providing feedback. Conservation Tracker went offline and ACRE will be up and running tomorrow. Planner workbook changes are being incorporated and will be delivered July 1st statewide. NRCS Bootcamp is May 5-7 in Keymar, MD. Carroll, Harford and Talbot had 14 interviews for MDA Soil Conservation Associate II positions. Healthy soils program was discussed. Environmental Justice Plan was discussed and will be sent to districts for feedback. Maryland Cover Crop Program TAC meeting was held on March 26th – discussed the traditional cover crop program, USDS satellite imagery used for spring kill-down verification, FY26 cover crop program projected to be under budget, and FY27 payment rates similar to FY26 rates. Cover Crop selection tool is helpful as you can put in cover crop goals and will calculate mixes. Darren provided updates regarding state soil conservation committee meeting - May 15th is deadline to submit applications for BMP 100% cost share. He shared information regarding small scale equine program. HPAI pullet commercial farm here they are going to do temperature check but if normal will move forward with normal operation guidelines.
- Chris Brown provided a County Budget meeting update. Bruce Yerkes and Chris agreed the budget meeting with county council went well. Chris stated that he shared with the county how many years in a row our district has won the MASCD Education District of the year award as well as well as the low staff turnover rate. The council seemed impressed.
- Van Funk provided a SSCC meeting update. The meeting was April 16th. Update E&S design manual and regulations were discussed. MDE is putting together an RFP and hiring a consultant to update the 2011 Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. The draft RFP was distributed to all districts by Loretta Collins after the meeting. Mari McNinch and Ryan Fisher are reviewing the draft and will give recommendations to Chris Brown prior to the May 15th deadline. Guidance for reviewing mining operations would be great. Next months meeting will be held at MDA headquarters on May 21st. The June 18th meeting will be held in Somerset County (lunch and bus tour after). Van would like all districts to attend.
- Chris Brown shared a solar update. Bruce asked if we can add which are ag acres for solar projects.

The next meeting will be held on May 20, 2026 at 8:30AM. 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 10:10AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A Pierce

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Administrative Assistant

Board Member Current Attendance Record March 2025 to March 2026

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|---------------------------|------|
| Bruce Yerkes, Chairman | 100% |
| Willie Ewing, Co Chairman | 91% |
| Van Funk, Treasurer | 100% |
| Vic Priapi, Member | 50% |
| Alice Crothers, Member | 83 % |