



Cecil Soil Conservation District

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

(410) 398-4411 Ext.3

Board of Supervisor's Meeting June 25, 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 8:33 AM by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, Willie Ewing, and Alice Crothers. 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. Guests include John Gonzalez and Dave Reisler.

Visitor: Dave Reisler introduced himself – local beef operation. Mr. Reisler is interested in one of the “At Large” board positions currently being advertised. The group introduced themselves to Dave and explained a little about the duties of a supervisor.

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the May 20, 2026 Board meeting minutes. Alice Crothers seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the treasurer's report, and expenses. There were no questions. Tracey reviewed the Donation/Sponsorship budget for FY27. Van Funk made a motion to file the treasurer's report, set the donation/sponsorship to \$30,000 for FY27 and pay bills. Alice Crothers seconded the motion. Motion carried. The group discussed a potential donation for ENERA (Elk and North East River Watershed Association) testing equipment, though they decided to first invite the organization to present their case and discuss their long-term sustainability plan before making funding decisions.

Old Business

Chris Brown provided updates on the following education and outreach events:

- Cecil County 17th Annual Wade In recap – June 13th Mari reported on a successful event with over 280 attendees, including meaningful conversations with potential partners and interest from visitors. Kids were excited to do craft.
- The State Envirothon Competition results were shared, with Rising Sun High School's team placing 11th out of 16 teams. The competition was held June 10th & 11th at Mount St. Mary's.
- Chris Brown was a panelist on the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture Conference Panel – June 16th at the Hyatt in Cambridge, MD. The panel discussed the importance of voluntary conservation and the effects on the Chesapeake Bay WIP.
- Chris Brown shared Cooperator of the Year update. The award will be presented to Louisa Pleasanton Zeh, with initial interviews already underway. Her son Bill Pleasanton says she is very excited to accept the award. Dan Polite will start to get photos and drone footage of planting activities.
- Cecil County Fair
 - Plans for Children's Day activities on July 27th were discussed, including the creation of 150 fabric crayons small fabric bags for the children to decorate and take home. Tracey Rach will

reach out to CCST for potential recruitment of Ag Science Program students to help manage the event.

- Ag Showcase Day is July 28th
- Patty Pierce and Chris Brown provided updates on the Cover Crop FY27 sign up process, explaining payment rates and new requirements. Sign up is June 22nd to July 17th
- Bruce Yerkes discussed the district's board member "At Large" positions.
- Chris Brown provided an Amish Community Outreach Discussion Update – Chris spoke with Levi Glick who suggested their community come up with a committee to meet with our District regarding regulations of the permitting process. Bruce Yerkes had also spoken with David Stoltzfus and had a similar conversation. County representation will need to involve Steve O'Conner and Malik Grace, Ag Coordinator to see what can be done to assist the process of getting the Amish community in compliance with county permits.
- The board discussed and approved the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund CAD agreement, which will receive an additional \$10,000 in funding through MDA. The additional funds will allow the agreement to hold a 2-year lifespan. Van Funk made a motion to approve the two-year Chesapeake Bay Fund Agreement as presented. Alice Crothers seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The group discussed outreach efforts to Amish community leaders regarding county permitting processes, meeting with several individuals including David K. Stoltzfus who suggested forming a liaison committee with a chairman, vice chair, and treasurer. Four farmers were taken to court recently for permit violations, with the judge making it clear they must comply with regulations or face contempt charges. The group plans to meet with county representatives including Dan Schneckenberger and Sandra Edwards to discuss how to help the Amish community navigate permitting processes more effectively.
- The group discussed Economic Development and how agriculture plays a significant role. Alice expressed concerns about the Economic Development Commission's focus on economic competitiveness at the expense of quality of life and rural character, noting that many commission members may not live in Cecil County. She and Chris Brown discussed the need to balance economic development with preserving agriculture, suggesting they should conduct their own survey or focus groups rather than relying solely on the commission's approach. Chris offered to help distribute paper copies of an upcoming economic development survey to ensure better rural community representation. They identified potential collaboration with University of Maryland and MARBIDCO for agricultural economic analysis and discussed how to demonstrate agriculture's connection to the commission's five strategic focus areas. The meeting covered updates on various agricultural and environmental projects, including discussions about the Route 40 corridor being an ideal location for development, with economics being a key driver.

New Business

- Rob Weaver presented the District Activities Report. Rob provided a detailed overview of the district's recent activities, including technical assistance requests, staff trainings, and ongoing projects such as grassed waterways and pond evaluations. A significant discussion centered around the need for cost-sharing to repair failing agricultural ponds, as current funding options are insufficient to address the growing concern of aging ponds potentially failing and releasing sediment into waterways. Rob explained the technical assistance requests received and completed. Staff attended several trainings and meetings. They discussed the progress of resource conservation plans. Conservation planning activities included four inventory and evaluations. Thirty full resource conservations plans are in progress. Seven full resource conservation plans were completed. Engineering activities included a pipe drop design approved "in-house". Six projects are in progress. Two as-built surveys were completed by staff. Three grassed waterway & diversions, and one grade stabilization structure were approved "in-house". Thirty-eight conservation practices were applied in ACRES. One application for best management practices was submitted to MDA/MACS for cost share. One approval for best management practices was received from MDA/MACS for cost share. Rob shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities with twenty-nine program contracts with six pending obligations. NRCS monthly activities included approving contracts,

preparing documents and submitting reviews for obligations, new preapprovals, processing payments, CREP re-enrollment status reviews, and new CREP suitability and feasibility site visits. Thirty-four urban E&S plans were reviewed and twenty-three urban E&S plans were approved. Six urban E&S meetings were attended. Nine 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed and two 378-Small Pond plan was approved. Staff completed one Inventory and Evaluations for Agricultural Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control. Three Agricultural E&S/SWM Plans are currently under CSCD Development and six Agricultural Stormwater Management and E&S/SWM projects are in progress. Van Funk made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Alice Crothers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Rob Weaver provided an NRCS update. He updated the committee on NRCS leadership changes, with Colton Buckley now serving as chief, and shared the new mission and vision statements along with seven strategic priorities for fiscal year 2026 and beyond.
- Darren Alles provided an MDA update on various programs and initiatives. Darren provided updates on the ACRE migration, explaining the new ACRE sheet 13. A virtual training was held on June 2nd on the use of this form for MDA staff and, as designated by DMs, DCs, and SCD employees. Chris Brown explained the significant amount of time (hours) it takes to enter information in ACRE. These are hours taken away from planning and other district activities. Chris Brown shared concerns and challenges regarding pulling reports. The discussion highlighted concerns about the system's efficiency, and data sharing limitations, and the need for clarification on what information can be shared between NRCS and MDA. MDA designated two users per county due to licensing restrictions. Van Funk will take concerns to SSCC meeting. The new planner reporting workbook was finalized and distributed to planners statewide, though some district managers experienced access issues with the 365-co-pilot system. Chris Brown should receive an MDA email address. Darren shared FY26 end of year general fund report information. MDA is implementing a new Heat Stress Policy, which necessitates equipment to be provided to staff by MDA. There is also a monitoring component of this new policy, which he will share more about at later date. MDA staff PEPs scheduled for Cecil on July 1st. Alisha Mulkey will be holding the Central Area WIP meeting on July 13th with more details to come. The group also discussed upcoming deadlines for AFO permits in Maryland.
- Van Funk provide an SSCC meeting update. Van and Chris attended the meeting on June 18th at Somerset Soil Conservation. The next meeting is July 15th in Annapolis. Van is finalizing the agenda.
- Chris Brown provided a MASCD report. Chris and Bruce will attend. It is in Wilmington, DE. Chris shared tax ditch grant information.
- Van Funk made a motion to accept J&G Price Investments (T541, T542, T545, T1402, T1405), Chris Price (T456), Price Investments LP (T1796) and Israel Fisher/Benjamin Fisher (T1982) as new cooperators. Bruce Yerkes seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The group discussed recognition of service for Vic Priapi at the next banquet. Suggestions included a plaque and gift certificate to Elkton Music Hall.
- Chris Brown and Van Funk shared a list of suggested places to visit for legislative tour, board and staff tour, considering visits to construction sites, an Amish farm, and other locations to showcase both challenges and successful projects.

The next meeting will be held on July 15, 2026 at 10:30 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. Alice Crothers seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 10:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce
Administrative Assistant

Board Member Current Attendance Record June 2025 to June 2026

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