Cecil Soil Conservation District

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Board of Supervisor's Meeting
September 23, 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 8:30 AM 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, John Gonzalez, Dave Reisler, David Dale, Lauren Anders, Alisa Webb, and Darren Alles, MDA Area Coordinator. Visitor: Rachael Coffey – Cecil County Economic Development Agribusiness Coordinator.

Rachael Coffey introduced herself as the new Agribusiness Coordinator at Cecil County Economic Development and she discussed her plans to focus on education and outreach. The Economic Development office is currently focused on preparing for next week's Economic Week. She is excited to be signed up for three conferences. Her background is being an Educator in agriculture at the Cecil County School of Technology. She also currently teaches an Introduction to Ag at Cecil College. Educating and informing the public is important to Rachael. Her focus is on education and outreach about agriculture's importance to the community. The group discussed ensuring agriculture has a voice in the county's economic development process and potentially creating an ag commission.

The meeting began with introductions from the board, new associate board members, staff, and visitors.

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the August 26, 2026 Board meeting minutes. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the treasurer's report, expenses and agree to pay the bills. 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 an update on education and outreach initiatives. Chris Brown and Mari McNinch met with Jim Zimmer, the new science coordinator for Cecil County Public Schools, and planning for Envirothon with a new regenerative agriculture topic. The Cecil County Economic Development Harvest Dinner is October 22nd. Currently, Tracey Rach, Patty Pierce, Chris Brown, Van Funk with two guests and Sean McCandless with one guest will be attending. The group discussed a potential collaboration with other counties, ag partners such as forestry board, and NRCS regarding planning careers outreach. Rob Weaver shared the 2027 Envirothon has a regenerative ag topic.

- Tracey Rach reported on the district's scholarship through Cecil College. Tracey shared that Cecil college's scholarship program has successfully of awarded over $478,000 in scholarships to students. She shared an update on the accounting review for the district finances. Per the last meeting it was

discussed that Maryland Department of Agriculture did not include the mandatory review in the FY27 MOU. However, Chris Brown is working with Darren Alles to obtain clarity if it is required for FY26 even though districts have not received a memorandum indicating due dates or guidelines. Tracey Rach has already dropped off the FY27 financial documents to Magnum Advisors for review but are awaiting a due date from our office.

New Business

- Rob Weaver presented the District Activities Report. He presented a comprehensive monthly activity report covering various agricultural and conservation activities. The group reviewed technical assistance requests received and completed and other ag activities. Staff attended several trainings and meetings. Chris Brown shared an update regarding MASCD and NACD summer meetings. Chris emailed draft meeting minutes for MASCD and requested changes be emailed back if they see changes. The NACD regional meeting was held in Wilmington, hosted by Delaware districts. It was a good meeting with good presentations. Next year's meeting will be hosted in West Virginia. The progress of resource conservation plans was discussed. Conservation planning activities included an inventory and evaluation on a covered heavy use area. Twenty-seven resource conservations plans are in progress. One resource conservation plan is awaiting guidance for ACRE. The group discussed challenges with the ACRE tracking system, including issues with parallel accounting across multiple land uses. Eleven full resource conservation plans were completed. A request was made to add total plans per planner. Engineering activities included three inventory and evaluations, one lined outlet, a soils investigation, and an ag waste, roof runoff, stream crossing and animal walkway. One grassed waterway design was reviewed and one watering facility was approved "in-house". Five projects are in progress. A technical meeting was held regarding workload. One hundred fifteen conservation practices were applied in ACRES. One claim for best management practices was submitted to MDA/MACS for cost share. Chris Brown explained the process for the WIP Reconciliation Round 33 vs. MDA verification. Rob shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities with program contracts with pending obligations. The group discussed cancelled contracts that will be deferred until next year and see if cost-share is better. A NRCS spot check review is scheduled for November 18th or 19th. NRCS monthly activities included completing and signing CREP plans and Re-enrollments, contract reviews, completing end of year fiscal year payments and modifications, and preparing application list/status of applications for upcoming fiscal year. Rob provided updates on various urban plan reviews and approvals. Thirty-four urban E&S plans were reviewed and eighteen urban E&S plans were approved. Four urban E&S meetings were attended. Six 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed and two 378-Small Pond plan was approved. One forest harvest plan was reviewed and one forest harvest plan was approved. Two Agricultural Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control plans were reviewed and approved. Five Agricultural E&S/SWM Plans are currently under CSCD Development and seven Agricultural Stormwater Management and E&S/SWM projects are in progress. Van Funk made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Rob Weaver provided an NRCS update. Rollout training will be beginning in December. Rob will be attending in Annapolis. The training will consist of two days with FSA regarding program rules and eligibility. November 13th is the application deadline for FY27 contracted year.

- Darren Alles, MDA Area Coordinator provided MDA updates. Planner reporting workbook meeting is scheduled for October 6th for planners statewide. The meeting will request workbook feedback for any revisions that need made. General fund payments have been released to districts. Tracey Rach is working on the district compilation for annual review of district accounts. MDA will send out a memo regarding the due date. Van Funk requested the number of planners statewide MDA vs NRCS. BMP Reconciliation report was discussed. Round 34 is due October 19th. Cover Crop program held online training for fall certification. State Soil Conservation Committee has appointed Robert Buttz as the new Central Area Representative for a four-year term. Highlights from the Central Area meeting were focused on improving report generation capabilities and tracking implementation performance.

The next meeting is October 15th in Annapolis. Chris Brown has SSCC meeting notes and presentations and will forward to the group. Other boards asked for talking points to talk to new legislators.

- Chris Brown led a discussion on Forest Harvest Inspections. Chris Brown and Van Funk discussed the expiration of an MOU between DNR and MDE for erosion and sediment control inspections on forest harvests, creating a gap in enforcement and allowing potential misuse of forest harvest plans. This is a topic that should go to the State Soil Conservation Committee.

- Willie Ewing made a motion to accept WTC2 (T1114, T1116, T1017, T1072), Spry Brothers, Inc. (T365, T671, T672, T673, T678, T683, T1052, T1203, T2181, T2185, T2316, T2598) as new cooperators. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Chris Brown shared with the board that the Octoraro Watershed Association offered the district with a $5,000 grant for BMP projects within the watershed. Octoraro Watershed Association is creating an MOU.

- The Cecil County Council Work Session Presentation is scheduled for March 16th at 4:30 pm for a 30-minute presentation to highlight the district's roles and services to new council members.

- All staff and board members are scheduled for an afternoon of CPR training on October 20th at 1:00 pm in the Elk Room at the County Administration Building.

- Chris Brown shared with the board that Tracey Rach reached out to the Chesapeake Conservancy regarding the Conservation Planner Tool that Harford Soil Conservation District is now offering. Harford had received a grant from NACD to develop the tool. The quote back from Chesapeake Conservancy to tailor the tool to Cecil County was quite high requiring board discussion. The board requested a demo of the tool.

- Rob Weaver provided an update regarding local work group meeting which is typically held at the end of October. Local Workgroup may provide potential funding opportunities for repairing older ponds with failing risers, though cost-sharing challenges remain a significant barrier.

The next meeting will be held on October 21, 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. Willie Ewing made a motion to adjourn. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Adjournment by Chairman, Bruce Yerkes adjourned the meeting at time 10:01am.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Pierce

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Administrative Assistant

Board Member Current Attendance Record September 2025 to September 2026

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