

SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF May 1, 2025
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
KEEZLETOWN RURITAN HALL
KEEZLETOWN, VIRGINIA

Board Members Present:

Directors: Charles Newton, Betty Reese, Elizabeth Baldwin, Jeff Heie (Left the meeting at 11:55 a.m.), Jimmy Burke

Associate Directors Dan Downey (Left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.), Matt Dale, John Hoffman

Board Members Absent:

Directors: Keith Sheets, Kevin Craun

Associate Directors: Keith Thomas, Walter Heeb, Lisa Perry

District Staff Present: Megan Dalton, Megan Trice (Left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.), Hunter Arehart

Cooperating Agency Representatives Present: Cory Guiliams (NRCS), Tad Williams (DCR), Felicity Zimmerman (CBF)

Guests: none

Megan Dalton advised the group that Hunter Arehart, Conservation Technician at the SVSWCD was going to provide an overview of his experiences as a new employee at the District. Hunter gave a lighthearted PowerPoint presentation highlighting the many, varied experiences that he has had during his first 6 months on the job. Several questions were asked and answered after the presentation.

Charles Newton, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:53 a.m.

Jimmy Burke moved to accept the April 3, 2025 Board Meeting minutes. Betty Reese seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Elizabeth Baldwin moved to receive the March 2025 Treasurer's Report. Betty Reese seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Megan Trice, Hunter Arehart, and Megan Dalton each highlighted items outlined on their Staff Report. See attached Staff Report.

Megan Trice advised that typically posters for our Stewardship Week Poster Contest are judged at the spring Education Committee Meeting which took place on April 15th, but noted that poster entries were down so she extended the deadline for submission. She explained that she had brought the posters with her today and asked that all Education Committee members along with anyone else who was interested in judging the poster, plan to complete their ranking during our meeting break.

Following Megan's report, Dan Downey expressed concern with the USFS's recent response to the downed trees at the Hog Pen dam. He suggested that this issue be discussed in more detail during the upcoming Dam Maintenance Committee Meeting and that the District consider sending a letter outlining our concerns with how the situation is being handled.

Mr. Newton advised that we were going to discuss an item listed under new business at this time, because Megan Trice would be leaving the meeting soon and since she needed to be included in the discussion on IT Services, we were going to discuss this item at this time.

Megan Dalton and Megan Trice reviewed the spreadsheet of quotes for IT services that they had obtained from several local vendors. There were some questions and some discussion regarding the information shared. Following some brief conversation, Charles Newton stated that he felt that there was consensus among the group that staff proceed with using ITdecisions for our IT services. He asked if anyone had comments or concerns with this approach, no concerns were stated. He advised staff to proceed as necessary to work with ITdecisions.

Charles Newton called for a break and reminded those interested in judging the posters see Megan Trice for instructions.

Mr. Newton reconvened the meeting at approximately 11:00 a.m.

PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS

Cory Guillems (NRCS) – Cory highlighted items on the NRCS report.

Elizabeth Baldwin (VCE) – No written report provided. Ms. Baldwin stated that there were not a lot of programs going on right now. She mentioned that they have been doing a lot of in school programs with many planned for May. She also advised that she would be working to deliver Extension's Private Pesticide Licenses course for the students at Page County High School, noting that she would be delivering several study sessions and proctoring the exam for the students. Elizabeth also noted that she had help deliver the "Reality Store" event at local high schools. Elizabeth also explained that she had recently attended a training entitled "Ag in the Middle" and explained that this training focused on how to assist the farmers who operated in the "middle" those who grossed between \$350,000 and \$1,000,000. She explained that this training offered information on how to support these operations.

Tim Higgs (VDACS) – Not present. No report.

Stuart Baker (DOF) – Not present. No report

Sara Jordan (DEQ) – Not present. See attached DEQ Report

Tad Williams (DCR) – Tad highlighted several key items from the DCR – CDC report. See attached CDC Report.

Felicity Zimmerman (CBF) – Felicity highlighted items on her report, See attached CBF report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chesapeake Bay –

Jimmy Burke advised that the Chesapeake Bay Committee met on April 28th to review and discuss various ag BMP related business. Mr. Burke advised that there were a number of actionable items from this meeting that require Board action today.

Jimmy moved to approve the Agricultural BMP Conservation Plans listed on the attached Chesapeake Bay Committee Report. Betty Reese seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Jimmy Burke moved to approve the Agricultural BMP Contracts listed on the attached Chesapeake Bay Committee Report. Betty Reese seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Jimmy Burke moved to approve the Agricultural BMP Tax Credit Certificates listed on the attached Chesapeake Bay Committee Report. Betty Reese seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Jimmy Burke moved to approve the Project Cancellation listed on the attached Chesapeake Bay Committee Report. Elizabeth Baldwin seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Dam Maintenance – Megan advised that our annual dam inspections were completed in early April. She provided highlights from the inspections. She also noted that the spring mowing window open today, May 1st and runs through June 15th. She indicated that she and Shelby would be visiting the dams to inspect the work completed by our contractor, noting that there would likely be a few task order items for the contractor to complete in addition to the normal mowing.

Education & Awards – Elizabeth Baldwin mentioned that an Education & Awards Committee had met on April 15th at the SWCD office. She overviewed the Committee's actions from that meeting including: review of teacher of the year application and selection, scholarship application review and selection as well as discussion about sponsorship of a camper to Youth Conservation Camp. Megan mentioned that staff would be submitting all the paperwork to the VASWCD needed for them to get our Youth Conservation Camper registered and needed for

them to process our endowed scholarship to the selected recipient. She also advised that staff would be attending local awards assemblies at the High Schools of our scholarship recipients noting that we welcomed Board Member assistance and participation with scholarship participation.

Finance – Megan Dalton advised that the Finance Committee met on April 23rd at 1:00pm at the District office. She explained that the group reviewed several policies related to finance and noted that draft copies of these policies were provided in the Director's packets. She also noted that the Committee had reviewed the Draft Budget prepared by staff and advised that a copy of Draft FY26 Budget was also included in the Director packets sent via email. Mr. Newton encouraged Directors to review the draft documents and to reach out to staff with questions, noting that these documents would be acted on at June Board meeting.

Urban – Megan Dalton noted that the Urban Committee met on April 15th and the during that meeting, the Committee reviewed and recommended that 4 urban BMP projects be approved by the City for the HCAP Program. She noted that the next scheduled Urban Committee Meeting was scheduled for May 20th. She mentioned that the Committee also reviewed a detailed report summarizing the HCAP program's work since its inception in 2020.

Personnel – Megan Dalton stated that the Personnel Committee has not met since the last Board meeting. She noted that she and Megan Trice had reviewed the 11 applications received and selected 4 candidates for the 2025 PSNT team. She stated that she had extended offers to the 4 candidates and all 4 had accepted the offers. She noted that the four new PSNT Technicians would be on-boarded on May 28th. Megan noted that she hoped to post announcements for the District's open positions in the coming month or so.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS –

Megen reviewed and summarized the EPA Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) sampling project drawing attention to the 1-page project summary that was included in the Board meeting packets. She explained that some SWCD and NRCS staff had recently participated in a virtual meeting with Charlie Brown, EPA Scientist leading the project. She indicated that Mr. Brown was looking for support from the District for the project. Megen explained that EPA would be reaching out with a letter to a set of landowners that they had identified as having good sampling sites seeking permission to access the stream from their property. She stated that EPA was hoping to include in their letter our support of the project. Following some brief discussion, **Betty Reese moved to provide a letter of support to EPA for their HAB sampling project, Jeff Heie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Megen Dalton reminded the group of a past agricultural producer survey effort undertaken by the Virginia Cooperative Extension several years ago aimed at getting information about their operations and the conservation best management practices that they were implementing on their operations. She advised that at the recent Area I Spring Meeting held in March, a VCE representative explained that VCE had been working with a large stakeholder group to revise and update their previous survey and advised that they plan to initiate a new survey effort focused at obtaining operation and conservation practice information about farms in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. She explained that VCE was seeking support and assistance from Soil & Water Conservation Districts, in promoting the survey, and helping farmers complete or prepare to complete the survey. She detailed that VCE was encouraging SWCDs to sign on as an official "partner" by agreeing to the Memorandum of Agreement that outlined the purpose, financial incentives, and requirements. Megen reminded the group that a copy of the Memorandum of Agreement had been provided in their Board Meeting packets and noted that the Agreement had been vetted by our OAG representative. Megen stated that she thought it was a good idea for the District to sign on as a partner and accept the Agreement. **Elizabeth Baldwin moved that the Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District enter into an agreement with the VCE for support of the Chesapeake Bay Voluntary Ag BMP Producer Survey. Jeff Heie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

CORRESPONDENCE – None

Cory Guilliams noted that the Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative/Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley was recently notified that their NFWF grant had been unfrozen. He advised that this grant provided critical funding support for agricultural BMP projects across the Valley.

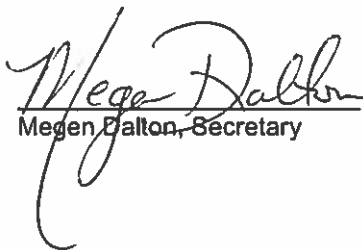
BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Jimmy Burke – Jimmy noted that the Cyrus McCormick farm would be hosting a Conservation Day on May 22nd. He explained they will highlighting the use of native warm season grass in a rotational grazing sytem.

Betty Reese – Betty thanked the staff for their work in delivering a great Rain Barrel Workshop in Bridgewater last weekend. She noted that she had attended and constructed a barrel and was very impressed with staff's presentations and delivery of the workshop.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL:


Megan Dalton, Secretary

APPROVED:


Charles Newton, Chair

Chesapeake Bay Committee Report

5/1/2025

Conservation Plan Approvals

Plan #
PB-09-25-0285
PB-09-25-0015
CP-9-24-0055

Agricultural BMP Contract Approvals

Contract #	Practice	Estimated Cost	Cost Share	Cost Share Buffer	Staff
Contract # 09-25-0342, Instance # 656894, 656895	NM-6	\$6,061.50	\$3,636.90	N/A	SNDF
Contract # 09-25-0285, Instance # 585473	FR-1	\$5,799.77	\$3,203.35	N/A	EFD
Contract # 09-25-0015, Instance # 591027	SL-6W	\$80,045.63	\$30,898.11	\$7,276.88	EFD
Contract # 09-24-0321, Instance # 588709	WP-4	\$106,898.68	\$6,213.00	\$621.30	EFD
Contract # 09-24-0321, Instance # 588710	WP-4	\$50,356.63	\$2,537.00	\$253.70	EFD
Contract # 09-25-0341, Instance # 655624	SL-1	\$5,268.25	\$5,572.19	N/A	JC
Contract # 09-25-0340, Instance # 655992	CCI-FRB-1	\$1,720.00	\$1,720.00	N/A	JC
Contract # 09-25-0340, Instance # 656773	CCI-HRB-1	\$240.50	\$240.50	N/A	JC
Contract # 09-25-0340, Instance # 655990	CCI-SL-6W	\$10,433.75	\$10,433.75	N/A	JC
Contract # 09-25-0322, Instance # 651197	CCI-WP-4	\$8,564.00	\$8,564.00	N/A	JC
Contract # 09-25-0322, Instance # 651757	CCI-WP-4C	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	N/A	JC

Ag BMP Tax Credit Approvals

Contract #	Practice	Tax Credit	Staff
Contract # 09-24-0243, Instance # 584672	SL-1	\$76.36	EFD
Contract # 09-24-0207, Instance # 583405	WP-4	\$1,935.75	EFD
Contract # 09-24-0207, Instance # 584692	WP-4C	\$289.25	EFD

Project Cancellations

Contract #	Practice	Cost Share	Program	Staff
Contract # 09-24-0062, Instance # 527898	SL-6W	\$8,326.16	VACS	EFD

IT Service Cost Comparison

Vendor	Monthly Services				IT Service					Total Monthly Charge with 4 hours of Service Included	Hardware Replacement Upgrades	Sell Hardware & Software	Notes
	Datto NAS/Server Back Up	Saas/Google Suite Back Up (Per User)	Webroot Antivirus - Monthly Subscription (Per Machine)	Total Cost	Contract/Agreement Yes/No	Service Agreement Charge (Per month)	Hourly Rate for Service	Estimated Monthly Charge for 4 hours of Service	Total Monthly Charge				
Valley Micro	\$120.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$186.00	No								
IT Decisions	\$120.00	\$3.00	\$6.33	\$241.62	No	\$97.30	\$90.00	\$360.00	\$336.12	\$696.92		Yes they sell both	
VTG	N/A all under one contract			#VALUE!	Yes	\$1,122.50	N/A		\$1,122.50	\$1,122.50		Yes they sell both	Price increases after 1st year
LLC Computers	\$29.95		\$4.00	\$85.95	Buyers Choice	NA	\$116.00	\$460.00	\$85.95	\$545.95	\$763.85	Yes they sell both	2 quotes for sonic wall replacement - 1st quote for buying and owning the device no monthly charge associated and last for 3 years, 2nd quote we don't own but pay for it monthly and they upgrade if needed after 3 years (if we change providers we would have to replace device)
Trellis	N/A all under one contract			\$0.00	Yes	\$430.00	N/A		\$430.00	\$430.00		Yes they sell both	Contract only 430/month. Do not do structured cabling due to time - Outsourced. Offer discounted rates on scanning if needed. Unlimited service calls



We work with the people who work the land.

Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District
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Staff Reports –May 2025

Megen Dalton

- I met with three local IT service providers this month to overview, review and discuss our operations and IT service needs. I have received a total of 4 quotes IT services from 4 local vendors. Each vendor “does things a little different” so it has proven difficult to compare services. A summary of the quotes will be provided for review in your 2nd round packet. I plan to review and discuss these quotes at the Board Meeting as we need to select which IT service provider we would like to use.
- We had a very successful Rain Barrel Workshop in partnership with the Town of Bridgewater. We had approximately 13 participants/sets of participants who made 20 barrels. We even had a Director attend this event and make their own rain barrel.
- The tractor trailer truck load of 55-gallon Pickle Barrels arrived as scheduled on the morning of Thursday, April 3rd. A team of SVSWCD staffers and 3 inmates worked most of the day to wash, rinse, load, stack and store all 300 barrels at Harrisonburg Public Works. We greatly appreciate the City’s support and partnership – and the use of their wash bay and storage space.
- We are gearing up for a busy PSNT season. We selected 4 candidates to serve as our 2025 PSNT Technicians-from our pool of 12 applications. These new team members will be on-boarded on Wednesday, May 28th and will be receiving several days of training before jumping into the fire, as we expect to have fields to sample by the end of May or first of June. In addition, we are assisting John Benner, VCE Agent in Augusta County and his summer intern with completing some PSNT sampling and analysis for a few Augusta County farmers. We are excited to share our knowledge and experience in hopes that more farmers can benefit from PSNT testing.
- Worked to coordinate and schedule HCAP site visits with 6 City residents. These site visits will be conducted on Monday, May 5th. We have approximately a half dozen urban site visits that need to be scheduled and conducted in the coming months. We allocated nearly all of our HCAP cost share allocation for the FY25 year. We continue to have lots of interest in the program.
- I assisted the City with set up, clean up, registration, and lunch during their annual Black Run Clean Up Day event held on April 12th. During the event, Chris Coggin manned a table with information about the SVSWCD and our urban programs.
- Chris and I worked to create a “Master” HCAP Spreadsheet containing information from the start of the HCAP program. This spreadsheet allows us to have a complete list of all HCAP contracts and will be used for administering and documenting the spot check process.
- We spent 2 great days in early April completing our annual dam inspections. We continue to have lots of dam work to be done. Our newest project includes tree removal at the Hog Pen dam. There are dozens of large white pine trees blocking access to the dam, resulting from the ice/wind storm that occurred in early February. Unfortunately, we learned that our current USFS special use permit does not include road maintenance/tree removal, and therefore we must submit paperwork to request that our current permit be modified to allow for and include these tasks. We will be working on this paperwork and are actually planning to request that these tasks be added to all of our existing USFS permits. We will be preparing a solicitation (likely an RFP) to contract and complete this critical maintenance task.
- I completed and submitted quarterly reports/reimbursement requests for the following programs: Sustainable Chesapeake RCPP, DCR Data Tech, NFWF- Manure Injection, VDH- Well & Septic Program, and HCAP.

- Elizabeth and I spent time working to prepare for the Finance Committee Meeting held on 4/23. Copies of a DRAFT Budget and DRAFT copies of several policies are being shared in the 2nd Round packet documents for Board Member review. Action on the Budget and policies will take place at the June Board Meeting. Please reach out to Elizabeth or I if you have any questions about the Budget or policies.
- I coordinated a virtual meeting with Charles Brown with the EPA to review and discuss their plan to develop standardized methods for sampling, analyzing, and assessing HAB- Harmful Algal Blooms. Refer to the document included in your 1st round packet document for more information. EPA has requested SVSWCD support for their efforts. This will be an action item for our May meeting.

Elizabeth Dellinger

Ag Cost Share Implementation/Management

- Worked with Jack to teach him about making SL-1 Payment Statements
- Prepared S. Horst sizing & worked with him to decide if he is going to participate
- Participated in multiple site visits for projects in different stages
- Worked to prepare 2 District Only projects for approval
- Completed CPA-52s for several projects
- Reviewed Estimated Cost Sheets & Payment Statements for multiple staff
- Prepared Payment Statements for 2 projects
- Worked with Shelby to do a revised Estimated Cost & Payment Statement for a difficult project
- Worked with Shelby & Megan to determine best way to proceed with a complicated potential piggyback project
- Worked with Jack on creating Estimated Cost Sheets for piggybacks and completing Risk Assessments
- Taught Hunter how to enter payments in Tracking and print Part III's
- Gleaned NRCS files for initial gleaning of potential piggyback project information
- Tested Tracking for new CAS rebuild items and corresponded with Roland
- Worked on the TAC letter with Megan
- Worked with Hunter to teach him about Risk Assessments and what documentation to get & send to DCR with RA for review
- Worked with Chris to reassign his projects and review those I am taking over

Financial

- Wrote checks and made deposits
- Entered cost share checks into Tracking & printed Part III's
- Generated Treasurer's Report
- Filed sales tax & paid
- Scanned & saved reconciliation reports
- Completed Journal Entries and completed Attachment E
- Prepared Preliminary District Reserves for Finance meeting
- Worked with Megan to create the FY25-26 budget
- Conducted Finance Committee meeting
- Revised Attachment E for an error in the mileage rate
- Sent TIN for verification of information and worked on necessary edits

Office Administration

- Attended District Staff Meeting
- MED/ED Consultation

VACDE

- Reconciliation
- Deposits and marking members paid
- Treasurer's & Membership Reports

Megan Trice

- Hosted the Local Envirothon and assisted with the Area Envirothon – Harrisonburg City Schools and Eastern Mennonite School will advance to the State Envirothon
- The Education Committee Met on April 15th
 - Selected 2 Scholarship Recipients – Ayla Janney and Lucy Whitely
 - Selected Teacher of the Year Recipients – K-5 – Lauren Arbogast & 6-12 - Heather Miller
 - Reviewed Youth Conservation Camp application – Only one received
- Watershed and Ground water lesson at Page County Middle School
- Agventure at Turner Ashby High School
- Soils Lesson for Spotswood Elementary School
- Various ag work

Josh Walker

- Site visits for construction
- Stream crossing designs, watering system designs
- Survey new stream crossings
- As-built visits for completed structures
- As-built inspections for Roof runoff
- Training new staff on designs
- Training new staff on FieldDoc grant reporting
- Inventory and Evaluation for potential piggyback projects
- Created CAD template for district only stream crossings
- Pennsylvania Manure Injection Partnership meeting Zoom

Shelby Foosness

- Dam Inspections! All the dams looked great. We made a list of maintenance items to attack in the future. We will have a large cleanup project at the Hog Pen Dam to remove 30+ large white pines that had fallen across the access road
- Uploaded Dam Inspection Reports and photos into the Dam Safety Inventory System
- Began to prepare Cover Crop Payments
- Assisted with the rain barrel drop off, cleaning and storing
- Sent off multiple Piggyback projects to DCR engineers for I&E review and Risk Assessment and Sizing approval
- Went out with Josh to complete As-built measurements for District only watering system
- Prepped and sent out PSNT approval packets
- Participated in webinar with Charles Brown (EPA) where they discussed plans to develop standardized methods for sampling, analyzing, and assessing Harmful Algal Blooms
- Met with Chris to review projects that I will be taking over from him

Chris Coggin

- Assisted with Local Envirothon
- Worked on HCAP project approvals
- Manned Erosion Box Table at Blacks Run Cleanup Day
- Assisted and presented at Bridgewater Rain Barrel Workshop
- Worked on updating projects for handoff to other staff members as I prepare to leave the district

Hunter Arehart

- Conservation Selling Skills course in Lynchburg
- Rain barrel cleaning day
- Assisted with Bridgewater rain barrel workshop
- Assisted with local envirothon
- Two soils lessons with Megan Trice at Spotswood Elementary
- Continued annual practice work
 - Cover crop payment processing
 - PSNT approvals

Jack Carlton

- Assuming CCI work with Chris leaving.
- SL-1 planning and payment processing
- Taking on more district only projects and piggyback projects.
- Food for America event with Mini at Turner Ashby High School
- Local Envirothon
- Rain Barrel Cleaning/Storage project



United States Department of Agriculture

Harrisonburg Field Office Monthly Report

Shenandoah Valley SWCD Board Meeting
April 30, 2025

Program Updates/Deadlines:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - So far, of the 36 EQIP applications that we submitted for FY2025 funding consideration, 14 have been preapproved for funding. We are in the process of notifying these participants.
 - Our FY2025 Inflation Reduction Act funding continues to be frozen at the present time. Because of this freeze, Virginia NRCS has had to reshape our FY2025 EQIP program to only utilize Farm Bill EQIP funding.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
 - So far, of the 5 CSP applications that we submitted for FY2025 funding consideration, 4 have been preapproved for funding. We have not been instructed to notify these participants at this time.
 - Participants with 2021 CSP contracts have been notified that they can sign-up for the renewal of their contract for additional five years. The deadline for these participants to sign up for the renewal of their contracts is June 20, 2025. We have 14 of these contracts that are eligible for renewal. So far, 7 of these participants have signed up to renew their contracts.
- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**
 - Over the past couple of weeks, the Field Office has been working with State Office Easement staff on needed Environmental Evaluation documents for the 3 preapproved Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley ACEP-ALE RCPP applications for conservation easements in Rockingham County.

Outreach/Education/Agency Activities/Events:

- On April 9th, Megan served as an Oral Presentation Judge for the Local Envirothon Competition held at Hillandale Park in Harrisonburg. During the event, Megan listened to, asked questions, and judged multiple presentations from participating schools at the event.
- On April 15th, Megan and Cory spoke to over 75 elementary school students and their teachers about soils with the NRCS Soils Tunnel and some soil props at the Agriculture Day event held at John C. Myers Elementary School in Rockingham County.
- On April 22nd, Ariel and Megan spoke to over 75 elementary and high school students and teachers about soils and soil erosion using the NRCS Soils Tunnel and the Erosion Boxes at the Turner Ashby AgVenture Day Event held at Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County.

- On April 23rd, Cory assisted with a conservation practice tour at Cub Run Dairy, LC in Rockingham County as a part of a meeting with Congressmen Cline organized by the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley (ASV). Cory spoke about many of the conservation projects installed at the farm as well as similar projects installed on other farms in the region. Overall, the purpose of the meeting was for farmers in the area and ASV staff to meet with the Congressmen to relay the importance of federal conservation programs, the importance of the Chesapeake Bay Program, and the need for the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) program (the replacement program for the Partnership for Climate Smart Commodities).
- On April 24th, Ariel and Megan spoke to over 150 elementary school students and their teachers about soils with the NRCS Soils Tunnel at the Farm Day event held at Plains Elementary School in Rockingham County.
- On April 25th, Adam and Cory spoke to over 275 elementary school students and their teachers about soils with the NRCS Soils Tunnel and some soil props at the Farm-to-School event held at Lacey Spring Elementary School in Rockingham County.
- On April 29th, Cory served as an Oral Presentation Judge for the Area I Envirothon held at Shenandoah Valley AREC in Steele's Tavern. During the event, Cory listened to, asked questions, and judged four separate presentations from participating schools at the event.

Upcoming Training Opportunities in the Area (JEDs, Webinars, Field Days):

- On May 13th, the Area JED Training will be on Golden-winged Warblers and will be held at the BSA Camp Shenandoah in Swope from 9:00AM-3:30PM
- On May 15th, VCE is holding a Seasonal High Tunnel Production Workshop at Second Mountain Farm in the Hinton area of Rockingham County from 9:00AM-12:00PM.

Other Information:

- Cory assisted the SWCD with annual inspections of the 11 dams located in the SWCD's service area on April 7th and 9th. No major issues were observed on any of the dams. The SWCD is to be commended, again, for their great work on routine maintenance over the past year on the 8 dams under their responsibility in Rockingham County.
- Megan Comfort, Soil Conservationist, in the Harrisonburg Field Office applied for and was approved for the second round of the Deferred Resignation Program. Her last day was April 29th.

Submitted By: Cory Guilliams, District Conservationist

DEQ-Valley Regional Office Report to the Shenandoah Valley SWCD May 2025

- DEQ will begin monitoring Shenandoah River nuisance algae in May. The monitoring stations selected for 2025 and 2026 Seasons are summarized below. There are four stations on the North Fork Shenandoah and two stations on the South Fork Shenandoah River. These stations will be visited monthly through the recreational season, defined as May through October, to determine if enough algae growth is present for sample collection. Please contact Tara Wyrick, Water Monitoring & Assessments Manager, at tara.wyrick@deq.virginia.gov with questions.

STATION ID	RIVER	DESCRIPTION
1BNFS007.93	North Fork Shenandoah River	Upstream Cedar Creek confluence
1BNFS011.81	North Fork Shenandoah River	Strasburg Town Park
1BNFS028.66	North Fork Shenandoah River	Bear Paw Rd.
1BNFS046.79	North Fork Shenandoah River	Lupton Rd., 7 Bends State Park entrance
1BSSF004.03	South Fork Shenandoah River	Upstream Luray Ave, Front Royal
1BSSF022.71	South Fork Shenandoah River	Hazard Mill

- DEQ's Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program's Agricultural Loan Dashboard as of April 21, 2025, is found below. For more information, contact Phil Davis, Ag BMP Project Manager with the Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program: (540) 209-4201, philip.davis@deq.virginia.gov.

AgBMP Loan Program Dashboard 04/21/2025

Application Status	Total Number	Total Value	Average	Median
Application Pending	9	\$ 3,069,560.00	\$ 341,062.22	\$ 300,000.00
Conditionally Authorized	58	\$ 14,813,775.08	\$ 255,409.92	\$ 227,000.00
Not Authorized	1	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
Application Withdrawn	71	\$ 10,558,950.04	\$ 148,717.61	\$ 110,000.00
Inactive	20	\$ 3,593,093.52	\$ 179,654.68	\$ 97,500.00
Credit Approved	23	\$ 5,038,959.25	\$ 219,085.18	\$ 199,543.20
Credit Not Approved	10	\$ 1,631,181.53	\$ 163,118.15	\$ 96,938.51
Loan Closed	69	\$ 13,018,682.09	\$ 188,676.55	\$ 147,362.19
Loan Closed with PF Granted	3	\$ 919,035.22	\$ 306,345.07	\$ 440,924.00
Project Complete	128	\$ 22,247,129.12	\$ 173,805.70	\$ 115,515.94
Project Complete with PF Granted	14	\$ 2,153,475.97	\$ 153,819.71	\$ 95,104.08
Completed without DEQ Funding	26	\$ 2,971,538.29	\$ 114,289.93	\$ 58,129.63
Equipment Purchase Complete	22	\$ 1,639,630.00	\$ 74,528.64	\$ 39,249.50
PF Granted SWCD	20	\$ 349,370.43	\$ 17,468.52	
Total PF Granted to Producers	17	\$ 1,268,932.43		
Total Applications	475			
Total Active Projects	163			
Beginning Fund Balance		\$ 18,659,552.00		
Additional Funds Authorized by DEQ		\$ 10,000,000.00		
Total Projects and Loan Funds Obligated		\$ 55,458,409.42		
Total PF Granted		\$ 1,562,966.52		
Total Repayments		\$ 18,219,936.30		

May 2025 – Conservation District Coordinator (CDC) Report

Tad Williams; Conservation District Coordinator
DCR-Division of Soil and Water Conservation
tad.williams@dcr.virginia.gov | 540-414-1278

1) Administrative and Operational Items

- **End of Fiscal Year 2025 Checklist (Attached Page 4-5):** As we enter the 4th quarter of FY 2025, I encourage you to reference the attached checklist, which has been prepared to assist SWCDs ensure that they have satisfactorily completed many of the deliverables in the FY25 Grant Agreements.
- **SWCD Director and Admin/Manager Financial Training.** Will be held on June 6, 2025 from 9:30AM until 3:00PM at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, VA. Sarah Adams has been confirmed as a speaker and will be discussing audit pitfalls that can occur with journal entries, voided checks, bank reconciliations and changes in liabilities, and how to appropriately handle these items in QuickBooks. There will also be an Attachment D Budget Template Q/A session and a grant writing workshop. This training will be in-person only with no virtual attendance option available.
- **Meeting Minutes Follow Up Training, May 29th @ 10 am:** You've heard the basic expectations of Robert's Rules of Order for meeting minutes, now come learn in greater detail the meeting minutes requirements for FOIA, how to properly document going into and coming out of closed meeting, documenting BMP/RMP/CP approvals, and more. Join the FOIA Council, the OAG, and DCR on the webinar! No registration required, just click the link to join: [Join the meeting now](#). This training is not a DCR requirement.
- **Audit Reports -** The Audit General Management Letter was sent to all districts on 3/26 by Blair Gordon. If this letter was not discussed at the April 2025 board meeting, then it should be discussed at the May 2025 board meeting.
- **FY27 Budget Template or Attachment D:** due to DCR by July 15.

2) Ag and Cost Share Items

- **PY 2026 VACS Program Updates Sessions:** Virtual with two identical sessions scheduled for **Thursday, June 12; 1:00 PM-4:00 PM** and **Tuesday, June 17; 9:00 AM-12:00 noon**. All technical staff must attend one of the two sessions in order for the SWCD to receive full credit for the related grant agreement deliverable.
- **Reallocation of Cost-Share to SWCDs.** There will be a reallocation of cost-share funds in the OCB area. The VSWCB will be reviewing funding availability and a listing of eligible projects at its May 28 meeting. Funds will be disbursed in FY26. If your SWCD has projects that it cannot fund due to an insufficient level of VACS funds, please ensure that the following is in CAS for each eligible application no later than **May 9, 2025**: Projects are in PY 2025 CAS with a status of *Cancelled* (when selecting the status of *Cancelled*, please make sure that the "Cancellation Reason" selected is *Lack of Funding*).
 - The appropriate measurements are filled in for the instance on the "Measurements" tab.
 - The "Programs" tab reflects appropriate information in the "Estimated/Requested Cost-Share Payments" section and that "2025 OCB VACS" is selected as the funding source for the request.
- **Please ensure that when participants self-install any portion of a BMP that the participant provides receipts for all materials purchased by the participant for the installation of the BMP component(s).** An invoice from the participant that simply lists materials and their respective cost(s) as purchased by the participant is not acceptable.
- **CY 2025 Random Verifications (spot checks) and 25,26 & 27 EOL BMP Verifications:** Lists have been provided to SWCD staff. Over the summer/fall DCR will accompany the SWCD on the Random Verifications.
- **PY 2026 Secondary Considerations:** Require DCR approval. Must be submitted for review and approval on or before **06/30/25** to Sara Bottenfield, DCR-DSWC Ag Incentives Program Manager. If you delay submission your board may not approve PY26 cost share contracts until after DCR approves your secondary considerations.

- **PY 2026 Average Cost List:** requires local SWCD board approval before being submitted to DCR. Submit to Sara Bottenfield and copy your CDC. Don't forget to include a good and implementable contingency clause.
- **Cost-Share Obligations and Transfers.** If your SWCD is unable to obligate the cost-share funds provided and wishes to transfer funds to another SWCD, please let me know and I will work with Central Office to try and find a SWCD that can utilize some additional funds. Likewise, if your SWCD needs additional VACS funds, please let me know how much funding is needed. Remember that the BMPs serving as the basis for the additional funding request should be loaded in CAS at the time of the request. Please remember that all allocation transfers must include the transfer of a proportional amount (13%) of technical assistance funds. Please note that all transfers must be approved by both the giving and receiving SWCDs no later than June 15, 2025. Please recall that per the PY 2025 Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Policy, the return of VACS and TA funds to DCR is no longer an option.
- **Carryovers:** Encourage VACS participants to complete their projects in time for payment prior to the end of the fiscal year to reduce carryovers into FY26. Keep in mind that only certain practices are eligible for carryover status. Districts should reference Pages II-42-II-46 of the *FY25 VACS Program Manual* for a list of practices eligible for carryover and an explanation of the carryover procedures. Practices approved in FY25 that are listed as "two-year completion date eligible" do not need formal board approval prior to the end of this FY. Other practices substantially under construction and eligible for carryover will need approval by SWCD boards prior to COB 06/30/25.

Carryover BMPs coming to the end of their third PY and not expected to be complete by 06/30/25 can only be carried over again with prior approval from DCR. Requests to carry over BMPs a 3rd time into a 4th PY must be submitted to Sara Bottenfield, Ag Incentives Program Manager, by May 15. For each practice requested, District staff will need to:

- Update the Carryover section of the Measurements tab by selecting 'Other (describe in BMP comments)' as one of the justifications and entering a comment on the General tab to thoroughly explain the reason for an additional carryover. Include the date and initials of the person entering the request in the comment.
- Send an email to Sara (sara.bottenfield@dcr.virginia.gov), copying your CDC, with the contract number, instance number, and justification. This can be in the body of the email or as an attachment, but if submitting requests for multiple practices please include them all in a single email.

The "Cost-Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs to be Completed, Canceled or Carried Over into FY26" is available in Logi for assessing Carryovers.

VCAP: The VASWCD will convene both a VCAP Steering Committee and a VCAP Technical Advisory Committee to discuss and propose revisions to the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) for PY27. Please respond to the Feedback Survey with ideas and suggestions. Suggestions may be prioritized to manage workload and allow for thorough consideration. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete **VCAP Program Year 2027 Feedback Survey:** <https://forms.gle/8NmXgT57Gw2LJvW8> it is due no later than Friday, May 30 at 5:00 PM.

Upcoming Training and Important Dates

- **April 30:** All approvals must be in CAS by COB to be considered for disbursement if a disbursement is needed in May. Disbursement reports will be pulled on May 1, 2025.
- **May 7:** Overview of Nutrient Management Plans, 1:30pm;
Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/c3Vu_pVDT0qP3nA8Du94tg.
- **May 14, 2025:** VASWCD Education Foundation Golf Tournament at 10:00AM at the Hollows Golf Course in Montpelier, VA.
- **May 15, 2025:** Deadline for submitting fourth year carryover requests to Sara Bottenfield (cc the CDC on requests).
- **May 18-19, 2025:** State Envirothon Competition at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA.
- **May 21:** Perennial Stream ID Course from 8:00AM-4:30PM in Charlottesville, VA.
- **May 28:** VSWCB Meeting, VA Farm Bureau building in Goochland
- **May 30, 2025:** All approvals must be in CAS by COB to be considered for disbursement if disbursement is needed in June. Disbursement reports will be pulled on June 1, 2025.
- **June 6, 2025:** SWCD Director and Admin/Manager Financial Training from 9:30AM until 3:00PM at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, VA. Registration is available through the VASWCD.
- **June 12, 2025:** PY 2026 VACS Updates Session from 1:00PM until 4:00PM (virtual).

- **June 15, 2025:** All transfers of cost-share and technical assistance funds between SWCDs must be complete.
- **June 17, 2025:** PY 2026 VACS Updates Session from 9:00AM until 12:00PM (virtual).
- **July 15, 2025:** Fourth Quarter Reports and EOY and Carryover Reports are due to the CDC.
- **July 15, 2025:** PY 2027 Attachment D Budget Template is due to DCR.
- **July 30, 2025:** Deadline for resolution of all QAQC issues.
- **August 19-21, 2025:** Graves Mountain Training in Syria, VA.

cc: Blair Gordon, Soil and Water Conservation District Liaison
Sara Bottenfield, Agricultural Incentives Program Manager
Dr. Angela Ball, Western Area Manager

Electronically sent to SWCD offices 4/28/25.

End of Fiscal Year 2025 Items: As the end of the fiscal year approaches, please be mindful that the following items must be completed, approved by SWCD boards, and recorded in the minutes by June 30, 2025, as per the grant agreements. Once documents are approved, please ensure that the new revision/approval date is included on the document. Except for Employee Performance Reviews, FLSA Position Description Tests, and Pay Action Approval Forms, you should send a copy of all items to the assigned CDC once they have received board approval. The CDC will not be able to call these items fulfilled on the assessment until they are both approved by the board and received. Remember, assessments will be conducted in July and August.

Year End Item	Notes
Review of FY 2024-2025 Annual Plan of Work & Current Strategic Plan (One review of each plan is required)	Review Only (In open board meeting; record in minutes)
Develop 2025-2029 Strategic Plan (If plan expires on or before June 30, 2025)	Board Approval Required
Develop FY 2025-2026 Annual Plan of Work	Board Approval Required
Employee Performance Evaluations (Minimum of 1 written review per year)	Keep on File at SWCD
Personnel Pay Action Approval Form (For any Salary Adjustments made; Salary Adjustments must be specifically noted in the SWCD minutes as well)	Keep on File at SWCD; *Salary Adjustments Require Board Approval
Personnel Policy (Please reference the <u>Personnel Resource Management Guide</u> as provided by the VASWCD while working through the personnel policy)	Board Approval Required
Employee Position Descriptions & Performance Expectations	Board Approval Required
FLSA Tests for Each Position Description (As per the <i>Desktop Procedures</i> , tests should be conducted a minimum of once every three years; however, within the three-year period, the current test on file should be reviewed any time there is a change in job duties or when salary adjustments are made.)	Keep on File at SWCD
Annual Review of SWCD Policies (Required policies include: Travel, Check Signing, & Purchasing, and where applicable, Vehicle Use, Credit Card, & Gift Card. Annual review also includes any additional policies that are not required but are unique to your SWCD such as computer usage policy, telework policy, policy for charging for FOIA requests, etc.) <i>* Note: The Desktop Procedures (Page 7) states that each SWCD should maintain a comprehensive manual of all SWCD policies; Recommend having a Policy Manual/Handbook (i.e. SWCD Operations Manual) with all the policies in one location.</i>	Board Approval Required, even if no changes are made to policies; Update revision date/ approval date on all documents
PY26 District Budget Final cost share amounts not yet available Admin/Operations Allocations and Base TA Allocations will remain level for PY26	Board Approval Required
Dedicated Reserve List (Unrestricted reserve funds exceeding 12 months of routine SWCD operating expenses must have a designated purpose)	Board Approval Required
PY 2026 Average Cost List (Please reference pages II-10 and II-11 of the PY25 VACS Program Manual and the Average Cost List and Secondary Considerations Information Session at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6yWr1RQhMU)	Board Approval Required; Submit to Sara Bottenfield
PY 2026 Secondary Considerations (Please reference pages II-9 and II-10 of the PY25 VACS Program Manual and the Average Cost List and Secondary Considerations Information Session at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6yWr1RQhMU).	Board Approval Required; Submit to Sara Bottenfield for approval

<i>Note- If your SWCD elects to utilize a cap that is lower than the VACS cap, please ensure that this is stated in the Secondary Considerations. Consider all implications of this decision very carefully.</i>	
Desktop Procedures Review (1 Review/ Year Required)	Review in BOD Mtg or Finance Committee Mtg; Record review in minutes
FOIA Officer Training Completed (Training must be completed every two years based on the date of the last training taken by the FOIA Officer; Incumbent officers should check their most recent completion date)	Send Completion Certificate to CDC
Library of Virginia Records Retention Courses (5) Completed (Training must be completed every three years by the Records Officer; Incumbent officers should check their most recent completion date)	Send All 5 Completion Certificates to CDC
Compliance/ Resolution of Audit Findings (Provide written documentation of resolution of audit findings as well as controls that were put in place to prevent the issue in the future; <i>Ensure this documentation is recorded in the minutes</i>)	Report Completion of Requirement in Board Meeting Minutes & to CDC
Host at least one agricultural community outreach event during the year & Ensure VSU-Small Farm Outreach Program has been invited to participate (Event must meet <u>all</u> requirements listed in Attachment F of the Operations Grant Agreement.)	Send documentation of marketing efforts, email invitation to VSU regional & state SFOP representatives & agenda to CDC
Carryovers (Carryovers should be updated in the Ag BMP Tracking Module of CAS and the carryover list/ report should be generated from Logi for board approval and signature; just remember to allow for Logi to update overnight since changes made to an instance are not available instantaneously in Logi. If you need a Logi login, please contact Jen Edwards. Please refer to pages II-42 thru II-46 of the VACS Program Manual for more information on carryovers as well as handling of two-program year completion date practices.)	Board Approval Required; Board should be approving and signing the Logi carryover report and the Logi report should be attached to the minutes

**** Please remember that committee meetings are public meetings and must be held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (Advertise, Take Minutes, Bring Minutes back to Full Board)***

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)

May 2025 Agency Report

- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is doing a tree giveaway on Saturday May 10 from 8-12. Locations include Bridgewater, Verona and Troutville Ace Hardware. We will give out free trees and also give landowners information on our programs, and set up site visits with interested landowners. I have attached the flyers if you know anyone interested in a free tree.
- Currently, through the Shenandoah Turnkey Grant, Felicity is providing project management assistance on two SWCD/NRCS projects in Rockingham County.
- Clean the Bay Day is Saturday June 7, 2025. Closest site is in Staunton, VA. Sign up here if you or someone you know are interested:
<https://www.cbf.org/events/clean-the-bay-day/locations-registration.html>
- Reminder: CBF has grazing kits available to loan out free of charge to help producers improve their rotational grazing. If you know a producer that would benefit from this, please put them in contact with Felicity or Alston.



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

Saturday May 10th, 2025
8:00 am – 12:00pm



Free Tree Giveaway!!

Come join a Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) staff member at one of three Rockingham Cooperative locations (Troutville, Verona, and Bridgewater) to learn about conservation and restoration programs CBF has to offer landowners. Whether you need help with grazing, infrastructure on your farm, or planting a riparian buffer along your stream, please join us to learn about these programs and get a free tree to plant on your property. Perfect for a Mother's Day gift and to brighten your lawn for spring and summer!

Location #1:

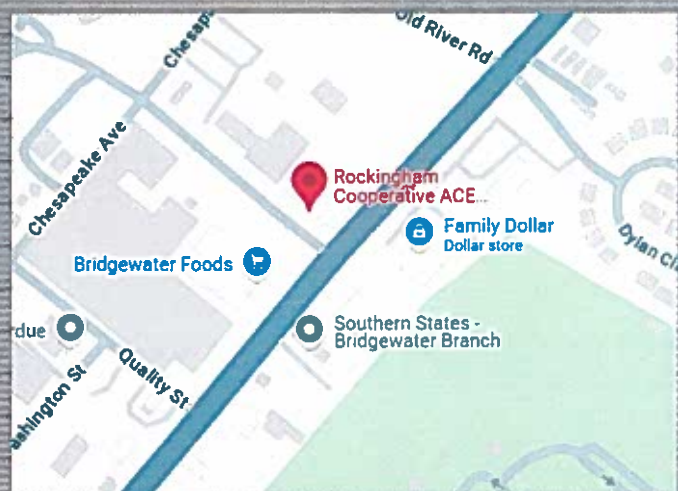
Bridgewater

601 N. Main

Street

Bridgewater, VA

22812





CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

Saturday May 10th, 2025

8:00 am – 12:00pm



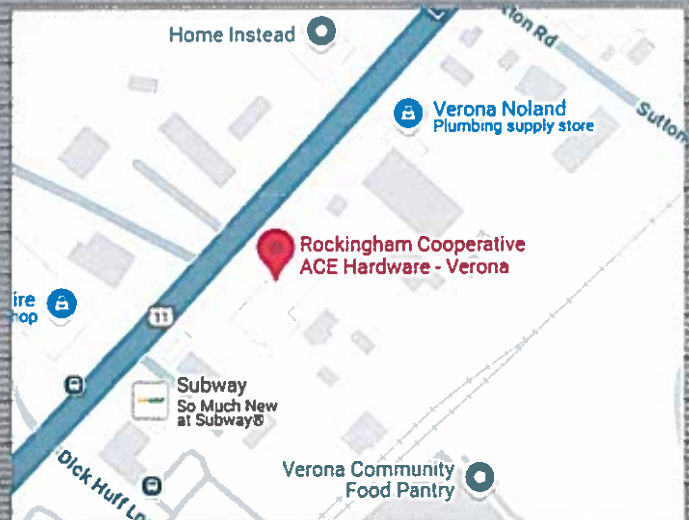
Free Tree Giveaway!!

Come join a Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) staff member at one of three Rockingham Cooperative locations (Troutville, Verona, and Bridgewater) to learn about conservation and restoration programs CBF has to offer landowners. Whether you need help with grazing, infrastructure on your farm, or planting a riparian buffer along your stream, please join us to learn about these programs and get a free tree to plant on your property. Perfect for a Mother's Day gift and to brighten your lawn for spring and summer!

Location #2:

Verona

**241 Lee Highway
Verona, VA 24482**





CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

Saturday May 10th, 2025

8:00 am – 12:00pm



Free Tree Giveaway!!

Come join a Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) staff member at one of three Rockingham Cooperative locations (Troutville, Verona, and Bridgewater) to learn about conservation and restoration programs CBF has to offer landowners. Whether you need help with grazing, infrastructure on your farm, or planting a riparian buffer along your stream, please join us to learn about these programs and get a free tree to plant on your property. Perfect for a Mother's Day gift and to brighten your lawn for spring and summer!

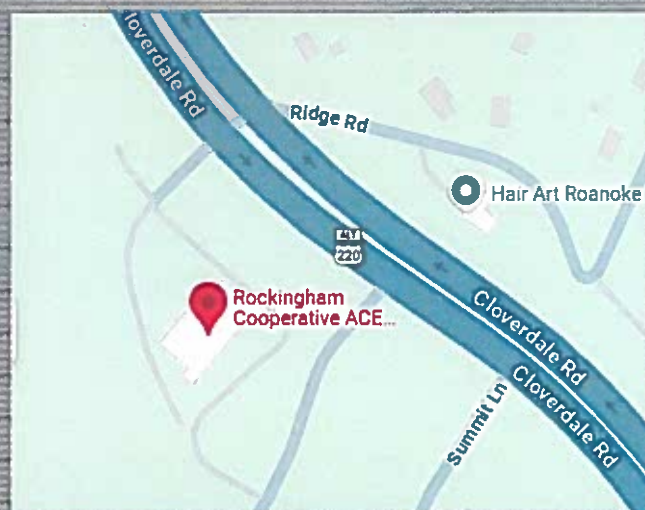
Location #3:

Troutville

8649 Cloverdale

Road

Troutville, VA 24175





epa.gov/research

Developing Standardized Methods for Sampling, Analyzing and Assessing Benthic Harmful Algal Blooms

Innovative Science for a Sustainable Future

Background

Benthic harmful cyanobacterial blooms (HCBs) and their toxins pose a significant environmental threat to domestic animals, wildlife, and humans, and have impacted drinking water treatment operations in recent years. Specifically, dog and cattle deaths have been attributed to exposure to benthic HCBs in various states across the nation (and internationally). With this in mind, state, tribal, and local agencies have expressed a need for a greater understanding of the role of benthic versus planktonic blooms in cyanotoxin production and tools for identification and quantification of HCBs.

Issue

To date, limited work has been done to review and evaluate appropriate collection and analysis methods for benthic HCBs. While the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC) has developed valuable draft guidance with multiple sampling approaches, it does not specify the most appropriate way to characterize risk quickly and effectively during an HCB event. EPA also doesn't currently have comprehensive guidance on characterizing and responding to benthic HCBs to share with states, tribes, and local agencies.

This lack of information can hinder scientists' and decision-makers' ability to characterize risk and quickly respond during a time-sensitive HCB event, leading to further adverse impacts.

Methods

EPA researchers plan to conduct an estimated six pilot studies during the summer of 2023 and 2024 at streams and rivers across the United States that

have recently experienced benthic HCBs.

Researchers are looking to characterize locations on wadeable streams and wadeable areas of larger rivers where high exposure risks have the potential to occur, such as places where children and pets (i.e., dogs) play in water, wade, or have the potential for direct interaction with benthic cyanobacteria; and locations that are in the vicinity of vulnerable drinking water systems.

Sites will be sampled up to three times a year during the bloom season for each pilot study. Researchers will analyze cyanobacterial composition, associated toxins, and areal extent of benthic periphyton and cyanobacteria mat samples. Periphyton are the benthic algae and organic debris that cling to surfaces and aquatic plants. They are an important part of the aquatic community, especially in shallow lakes, streams and rivers.

Results

The anticipated results of this study will enable EPA to work more effectively with state, local and tribal partners by providing sampling protocols and analytical methods that can be employed to efficiently assess potentially life-threatening benthic HCB events. Results will also help state and tribal partners develop benthic HCB plans that use common sampling and analysis methods, with the goal of identifying and reducing vulnerabilities for drinking water supplies and risk of adverse impacts to pets, wildlife, and humans recreating in and around water.

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Related Links

Cyanobacterial Harmful Algal Blooms (CyanoHABs)
in Water Bodies: www.epa.gov/cyanohabs

EPA Newsletter and Collaboration & Outreach on
HABs: www.epa.gov/cyanohabs/epa-newsletter-and-collaboration-and-outreach-habs#benthic

EPA HABs Contacts List:
www.epa.gov/cyanohabs/epa-office-water-and-regions-contact-information

National Office for Harmful Algal Blooms:
hab.whoi.edu/impacts/impacts-wildlife

ITRC Strategies for Preventing and Managing
Harmful Cyanobacterial Blooms (Benthic):
itrcweb.org/itrcwebsite/teams/training/hcb

Technical Contacts for this Project

- **Tina Laidlaw**
laidlaw.tina@epa.gov
Contact for EPA Region 8
www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-8-mountains-and-plains
- **Rochelle Labiosa**
labiosa.rochelle@epa.gov
Contact for EPA Region 10
www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-10-pacific-northwest
- **Jim Lazorchak**
lazorchak.jim@epa.gov
Contact for general study design & implementation
- **Avery Tatters**
tatters.avery@epa.gov
Contact for sampling methods

December 2022

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Memorandum of Agreement

between

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by and through its Virginia Cooperative Extension,

and

(District Name) Soil and Water Conservation District

Members of Virginia's Voluntary Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Task Force crafted the Chesapeake Bay Voluntary Ag BMP Producer Survey over many months, with a goal of learning more about conservation practices on farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Task force members worked closely together and included representatives from the: Virginia Agribusiness Council, Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia Cattlemen's Association, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Department of Forestry, Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District, Environmental Protection Agency, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Office of the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, and Virginia Commonwealth University's Survey and Evaluation Research Lab, among other partners.

I. PURPOSE

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and the (District Name) Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) desire to enter into a joint agreement for the mutual benefit of the organizations, our clientele, and Commonwealth of Virginia Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP) III goals that will be derived from achieving a high response rate for the Chesapeake Bay Voluntary Ag BMP Producer Survey. The survey is designed to learn more about voluntary conservation practices on Virginia farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. For purposes of this survey, "voluntary" implies practices carried out at the producer's own expense (i.e., without cost-share) and includes practices that may have been cost-shared at one time and continue to be maintained past the cost-share contract period (out of practice lifespan). The information gleaned from the survey is intended to help the Commonwealth of Virginia understand how farmers are conserving soil, improving water quality, and helping Virginia agriculture achieve its water quality goals for the Watershed Implementation Plan III for the Chesapeake Bay.

II. FINANCIAL INCENTIVE

Fifty dollars (\$50) will be provided to SWCD for each eligible completed survey that is credited to its efforts, invoiced quarterly as described further below. SWCD may also invoice for postage and travel expenses incurred in support of the project. Postage expenses will be 100% reimbursed and mileage will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS mileage rate.

While all the task force partners will be working to actively market and encourage participation in the survey throughout the project period, only VCE and SWCD are being incentivized to assist producers with survey completion.

III. REQUIREMENTS

Opting in to assist with this project is accompanied by the following expectations for SWCD throughout the project period, which begins with the execution of this agreement and concludes June 30, 2026.

- SWCD will assist with marketing efforts to reach potential survey participants. Examples of marketing efforts might include: content in SWCD newsletters encouraging producers to personally complete the survey if it is applicable to them; encouraging producers to spread the news about the survey to friends and neighbors through “word of mouth”; sharing information about the survey at SWCD events, and; sharing information about the survey in conversation with prospective clients.
- SWCD will assist participants with completing surveys as requested. Note that requests may either come directly from the participant, as referrals from VCE organizers (in cases where participants ask for SWCD staff assistance in completing the survey), or from another organization such as Virginia Farm Bureau, the Virginia Soil Health Coalition, the Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Program, or similar.
- Surveys can be completed online or in hard copy form. Hard copies of the survey can be downloaded from the survey webpage at <https://vaswcd.org/virginia-farm-voluntary-agricultural-bmp-inventory/>. SWCD can also request that hard copies of the survey be mailed to its office by e-mailing Matt Lail at mlail@vt.edu. Please include the number of copies requested along with the mailing address.
- SWCD may choose, but is not obligated, to enter survey data into the online application on behalf of participants that complete a paper survey. Alternatively, SWCD may mail completed hard-copy surveys requiring data entry to:

Virginia Commonwealth University
Survey Evaluation and Research Laboratory
917 West Franklin St
Box 843016
Richmond, VA 23284-3024

Alternatively, surveys can be e-mailed to VCU SERL at vcuserl@vcu.edu .

- SWCD will invoice VCE quarterly in arrears for incentives, mileage, postage, and/or costs associated with informational meetings. Invoices should reference the number of surveys completed attributable to SWCD efforts multiplied by \$50; number of miles incurred multiplied by the prevailing IRS mileage rate; postage incurred (i.e., mailing hard copies of the survey to producers, mailing hard copy surveys to VCU SERL for data entry, etc.), and; costs associated with hosting informational meetings whose primary intent is to market the survey. Please prepare and mail invoices quarterly to:

Virginia Cooperative Extension
c/o Voluntary Ag BMP Producer Survey
115 Hutcheson Hall (MC 0908)
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Alternatively, invoices can be e-mailed to Matt Lail at mlail@vt.edu.

- Please note that, due to funding considerations, expenses need to be accounted for in a timely manner and within the correct quarters to ensure accurate accounting of remaining funding. The invoicing timeline is as follows and invoices cannot be rolled over to the next quarter for missed deadlines:

For the quarter ending:

Invoices will be postmarked by:

March 31

April 30

June 30

July 31

September 30

October 31

December 31

January 31

Payments should be received by SWCD approximately six weeks from when the invoice is received by VCE.

- It is possible that the survey will be released prior to SWCD executing this agreement. In these cases, SWCD will be able to retroactively request reimbursement for expenses incurred and surveys completed between the survey release date and the date the agreement is executed by SWCD.
- Approximately 10% of the farms responding to the survey will receive site visits to confirm that the data reported from the project is statistically accurate. Completing follow-up site visits and surveys for this purpose will be the sole responsibility of VCE. The Extension Agents will invite the appropriate SWCD

staffer to join them on the site visit. SWCD staff may voluntarily join Extension Agents during site inspections if they choose. There is no obligation under the terms of this agreement that requires any SWCD staffer to attend any site inspection conducted by an Extension Agent.

- Either SWCD or VCE may terminate this agreement upon 30 days' written notice to the other party. Upon termination by either party, SWCD will submit a final invoice to VCE and be reimbursed for all outstanding costs incurred during the quarter in which the termination occurred. Unless otherwise terminated as provided herein, this agreement will begin once executed by both parties and continue through June 30, 2026.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Choice of Law: The parties hereby agree that this agreement is subject to the application of the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and shall be interpreted in accordance with this applicable law.
- b. Notice to Cure: In the event that either party alleges that the other has committed a material breach of this agreement, then said party shall be required to provide the party alleged to have committed a material breach with a written Notice to Cure. The Notice to Cure letter shall be delivered to the other party by email and mail to the addresses shown below and shall provide the alleged breaching party with at least fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of receipt to cure the alleged material breach.
- c. Failure to Cure: When a party receives a notice to cure and fails to cure the alleged material breach within the allotted time set forth in the notice (which must be a minimum of 14 calendar days), then the other party shall have the right to pursue a cause of action for breach of contract in a manner in accordance with the terms of this agreement.
- d. Jurisdiction and Venue: The parties hereby agree that, in the event of a dispute and need for judicial intervention, that the courts of the Commonwealth of Virginia shall have jurisdiction over any and all disputes arising under or in connection with this Agreement. The parties further agree that any action filed relating to this Agreement shall be filed in either the Circuit or General District Courts of the City of Richmond, depending upon the amount in controversy and the applicable jurisdictional limits.
- e. Attorneys' Fees: In the event of a dispute, both parties agree that they shall incur their own court costs and attorneys' fees unless otherwise permitted by statute.
- f. Severability: If any provision of this agreement shall be held or made invalid by a court decision, statute or rule, or shall otherwise be rendered invalid, then the remaining portions of the agreement shall remain in full force and effect.
- g. Assignment: Neither party may assign nor transfer this agreement or any rights or obligations hereunder without the prior written consent of the other party.

- h. Entire Agreement: This document represents the entire agreement between the parties and serves to supersede any prior written or verbal promises, agreements, understandings, or negotiations relating to the subject matter of this agreement.
- j. Modification: Modification of this agreement may only be accomplished by executing a written instrument with the same formality and process as followed with the initial execution of this agreement.
- j. Counterparts: The parties agree that this document may be executed in any number of counterparts and by different parties, each of which when so executed shall be deemed to be an original and all of which taken together shall constitute one and the same agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this agreement:

(DISTRICT NAME) SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND
STATE UNIVERSITY

By: _____
(District Responsible Party Name)
(District Responsible Party Title)
(District Name) Soil and Water Conservation
District

Address: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

By: _____
Dr. Mike Gutter
Associate Dean and Director
Virginia Cooperative Extension

250 Drillfield Drive
101 Hutcheson Hall (0402)
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Email: _____

Date: _____