

State Soil Conservation Committee
Final Minutes
May 25, 2023

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

The minutes of April 2023 were approved. (Wurmb/Posey)

The following appointments were made upon proper motion, second, and vote:
Somerset SCD - Walter "Lee" West, Jr

Discussions

Alisha Mulkey, MDA, presented information on the current Board Supervisors and Associates to inform the discussion on recruiting and retaining new Board members.

First, years of service for the current Supervisors was provided by Area and shown in the table below:

Area	Total Years Served	Average of Years Served	Max of Years Served
1	288	9.9	44.5
2	413	16.5	45.1
3	284	15	45.3
4	275	11	29.5
5	265	13.9	37.9
ALL	1,525	13.0	45.3

Additionally, Districts were surveyed on several demographic questions of the current Boards (Supervisor and Associates) - majority income from a farm operation, gender, BIPOC, Veteran, and New or Beginning farmer - with results shared. Lastly, feedback from one-on-one discussion with current Board chairs was reviewed on the process and barriers to recruiting and retaining Supervisors.

Next, Jen Nelson, MASCD provided an update on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee that has been formed. The Committee anticipates sharing a workplan at the 2023 Summer meeting. This will build actionable next steps from the [policy](#) adopted in August 2022. Beyond MASCD, efforts are also underway with NACD on several DEI topics and Jen will continue to seek good resources or ideas that could be relevant to Maryland. In the meantime, a language translator tool has been integrated into the MASCD website for easier access as well as Jen discussing several ideas for engagement and micro-volunteering that could be used by the Districts to potentially identify new Associates.

Following the presentation, Van Funk, SSCC facilitated a discussion of the SSCC members and attendees on the topics. An agenda item will be added to the June agenda to consider next steps, and the slides from today's meeting will be distributed.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE: On May 24, SSCC received petitions from land occupiers in Catoctin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts to combine the two districts into one district. Per Maryland statute, the SSCC will now have 60 days to hold a referendum on the subject and will begin providing updates at future meetings.

Reports –

Alisha Mulkey for MDA reported Hans was joining Secretary Atticks on farm tours in Garrett and Allegany counties this week. The Secretary is participating in several farm tours to see the diversity of Maryland agriculture and gain feedback from producers.

District Operations remains busy recruiting and filling for vacant positions.

Matt Hurd for DNR appreciates the welcome to SSCC on behalf of Rob Feldt, designee. Rob will be attending the June meeting.

DNR continues to fill positions (13 contractuales) to support the 5 Million Trees program.

Jim George, MDE reported a third ammonia and PM monitoring site in Harmony, MD is being established. Data collection is expected to start in July.

The new 20-CP (General Permit for Construction Activity) became effective on April 1. Existing permit holders will need to submit their NOI by September 30 to avoid lapses in permit coverage. MDE staff will be holding a webinar with District stakeholders to address questions.

The AFO program is developing new standards and guidance for organic poultry and pasture subject to the permit (~20 operations).

Darren Jarboe, UME reported University of Maryland Extension participated in the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Maryland Agricultural Commission Tour of Dorchester and Wicomico on May 10. A new law makes it legal for Marylanders to grow their own marijuana. UME has released a statement regarding UME's assistance with its production.

Dr. Paul Leisnham has been selected as chair of the Department of Environmental Science and Technology (ENST). His official appointment will begin on Sunday, July 30. Paul has been with the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources for 15 years, joining ENST in 2008 as an assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 2015 and professor in 2021. He has also effectively served as associate chair of the ENST department since 2018. Paul is an internationally recognized scholar in EcoHealth, a field of research, education, and practice that adopts a systems approach to promote the health of people, animals and ecosystems in the context of social and ecological interactions.

Sarah Llewellyn has been hired as Master Gardener Coordinator/Home Horticulture Agent Associate in Allegany County. She will also cover agriculture and food systems. A finalist has been selected and offered the precision agriculture state specialist position. He will start August 14.

Recruitment for an Agriculture and Food Systems Extension (AgFS) educator in Charles County and two urban agriculture state specialists has been initiated.

Two finalists for the assistant professor of agriculture and Extension education were brought to the UMD campus for interviews and meetings, and to present their vision for the program. The Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture is evaluating the candidates.

AGNR 2023 Faculty and Staff Excellence Awards received by UME faculty and staff:

- Off-Campus Staff Excellence Award: John Draper, MAES and Pam Thomas, UME
- On-Campus Professional Track Faculty Excellence Award: Dr. Jose-Luis Izursa, ENST
- Off-Campus Professional Track Faculty Excellence Award: Matthew Parker, UME
- Off-Campus Junior Faculty Award: Ashley Travis, UME
- Faculty Research Award: Dr. Tom Porter, ANSC
- Integrated Research and Extension Excellence Award: Rohan Tikekar, NFSC
- Extension Excellence Award: Don Webster

AGNR 2023 Cornerstone Awards:

Clean and Healthy Chesapeake Bay:

- External award: Chesapeake Bay Commission
- Internal award: Extension Water Quality Initiatives for a Healthy Bay and Population-Dr. Andy Lazur

Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems:

- External award: Maryland Public Television-Maryland Farm & Harvest TV Series
- Internal award: UMD Poultry Team-Dr. Jon Moyle, Ms. Jenny Rhodes, Dr. Nat Tablante, Dr. Mostafa Ghanem, Ms. Maegan Perdue

Human, Animal, and Environmental Health:

- External award: Maryland Farm Bureau
- Internal award: Close Encounters with Agriculture-Nutrition Track; Dr. Mona Habibi, Kelly Nichols, Anna Hamann

Leon Tillman for NRCS reported the state office has been temporarily moved to the George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, MD. The federal GSA office continues to work on leasing options in the Annapolis area.

Vacancies for DC and Soil Con positions are being advertised and filled.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds coming to the states will expand available CTA via agreements between NRCS and local partners. Program deadlines to obligate IRA funds for FA are also underway. The USDA Climate Smart Commodity projects have started. The local NRCS will have a role in the HEL and environmental site evaluations.

Jen Nelson, MASCD reported registration for the summer MASCD meeting has opened. The event will be August 27-29 in Cambridge and the hotel block will be open through July 31. A draft agenda for the meeting has been shared.

John Murphy, Ag Commission no report.

Amy Posey, Southern MD reported
Anne Arundel SCD: NO REPORT.

Calvert SCD:

- Calvert SCD is beginning a shoreline project for Calvert Parks and Recreation. Project includes 1,500 ft of sill and beach replenishment with a June 16th start date.

Charles SCD:

- Charles SCD's Annual Cooperators Dinner was held on May 24th.
- Charles SCD held the 30th Charles County Envirothon in April. All seven high schools participated. The team from Henry E. Lackey High School received 1st place. The MASCD Endowment Grant was appreciated and well used for this successful event.
- Charles SCD received a SMADC grant for the purchase of two additional conservation equipment to add to the Ag Equipment Rental Program

Prince George's:

- Purchased 5 Soil Health Assessment Kits for staff to educate producers on soil health
- DM along with other DMs around the Country is reviewing 42 NACD-Urban Ag Conservation Planning and Implementations Grant Applications. NOTE: None from Maryland. 😊
- Working through the final round of questions from USDA on \$3.5M Climate Smart Commodities Grant in partnership with Prince George's County Department of Environment, UM Extension and Bowie State University.
- We have several producers interested in the Small Acre Cover Crop Program.
- The Local Envirothon Competition was very successful with 17 teams from 10 high schools.
- Held the 47 th Annual Cooperators Dinner April 19 th w/ 190 in attendance.
- Working with Prince George's County Revitalization Authority on release of RFP for Ag and Food Security Innovation Center feasibility study.
- Completed 1500 linear feet of "living shoreline" project in partnership with Prince George's County Department of Environment and The Clean Water Partnership.
- PG, AA and Charles has a new FSA Executive Director. Suzanne Wisneiski. Patrick Goode will now be Executive Director for St. Mary's and Calvert.
- We will be hosting 2 high-school interns this summer.

St. Mary's:

- St. Mary's SCD has submitted our Farm Credit Outstanding District Award along with
- several service awards to MASCD.
- St. Mary's SCD are in the process of judging our coloring contest submissions and would like to ask you to remind all districts to send their first place coloring contest winners to St. Mary's SCD, attention Haley Carter, by the due date. We will not accept coloring sheets at the MASCD meeting.

District Wide

- The July Area 2 Meeting that proceeds MASCD date/time is being discussed as well as topics.

Bobby Guy, Lower Shore reported the Wicomico SCD office has completed its move and is working to fully settle into the new space. Staff are working on spring certification of the cover crop program, and project construction has begun for cooperators.

Ed Wurmb, Western MD reported:

Washington County SCD:

- Two stream restoration grants were awarded to the district effective April 1 for the Town of Boonsboro (\$503,122) and City of Hagerstown (\$450,000)
- The local Envirothon competition was held April 26
- Staff are currently working on spring certification of the cover crop program.

No other districts submitted reports.

Van Funk, Central MD

Baltimore County SCD:

- District staff attended two MACS trainings.
- There is a new position in Baltimore County which is intended to support agriculture. The District has begun to reach out and coordinate with them.
- District staff attended a listening session with the Baltimore County Executive on agriculture.
- The District developed a small cost-share program to assist producers with nutrient management plans written by private NM consultants.
- Extension hired a new NM consultant in Baltimore County.
- District staff supported extension on a pasture walk at the Baltimore County Ag Center.

Cecil SCD:

- The District held its spring Envirothon training and the subsequent Envirothon Competition last month with Bo Manor High School winning 1st place.
- The District attended several Education and Outreach events including Rising Sun Elementary's Earth Day event, Cecil County School of Technology Career Day, and Gilpin Manor's Environmental Education Event.
- CSCD is in the process of reviewing applications for District Scholarships and plans to award winners by the end of the month.
- CSCD has hired a District Engineer (Gerry Powell) and is looking forward to continuing with MD-378 review/approvals.

Harford SCD

- On Tuesday, May 16 the Harford SCD coordinated and participated in the Harford County Envirothon Competition. Nine high school teams competed in this annual event. North Harford High School was the winning team. North Harford High School will represent Harford County at the June 15-16th State Envirothon Competition which will be held at the Western 4-H Park in Garrett County, Maryland.

- Harford SCD is planning to conduct an ag tour for the Harford County Council, the Harford County Executive Bob Cassilly, and other local and State dignitaries. The ag tour is scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 2023. Harford SCD will be partnering with the Harford County Farm Bureau, Harford Land Trust, and Harford County Ag Land Preservation office.
- Mark your calendars for our upcoming Cooperators Banquet. This year, the Harford SCD will be hosting a picnic style dinner at Pond View Farm located in White Hall, Maryland. The banquet's official date will be Wednesday, September 13, 2023.

Howard SCD

- Howard SCD staff have been busy with "Our Environment in Our Hands", a 4th grade natural resources education program with the County School system. The program focuses on educating students from Title 1 schools about a variety of science and natural resources topics in a hands on learning atmosphere.
- Howard SCD, in cooperation with the Howard Farm Bureau, hosted the new Secretary of Agriculture, Kevin Atticks on a full day farm and conservation tour to visit a variety of agricultural operations and meet with a number of farmers in Howard County.
- The District received a new vehicle from their County partners.

The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Alisha Mulkey
Executive Secretary

SSCC Attendance: May 25, 2023

Members:

Bob Guy
Van Funk
Amy Posey
Bruce Yerkes
Darren Jarboe
Ed Wurmb
James Stanton
John Murphy
Jim George

Absent:

Steve Freeman
Suzy Daubert
John Sullivan
Hans W. Schmidt
Rob Feldt

Others:

Jim Ensor, Baltimore County SCD
John Czajkowski, Anne Arundel SCD
Tommy Briscoe, Calvert SCD
Geoff Westbrook, Calvert SCD
Chris Brown, Cecil SCD
Karen Houtman, Dorchester SCD
Robert Baldwin, Kent SCD
John Zawitoski, Montgomery SCD
John Tarr, PGSCD
Steve Darcey, PGSCD
Joe Bonanno, PGSCD
Fiona Thampi, PGSCD
Rob Schnabel, CBF
Bruce Young, St. Mary's SCD
Haley Carter, St. Mary's SCD
Mark W. Carey, Somerset SCD

Bob Fitzgerald, Somerset SCD
Wayne Widdowson, Somerset SCD
Anne-Meredith Webster, Somerset SCD
Dee Price, Washington Co. SCD
Mark Kendle, Washington Co. SCD
Chelsea Tyson, Worcester SCD
Tom Filbert, OAG
Richard Glasgow, Wicomico SCD
Luis Dieguez, Charles SCD
DeeDee Saunders, Charles SCD
Adam Lyon, MDA
Jen Nelson, MASCD
Leon Tillman, NRCS
Matt Hurd, DNR
Alisha Mulkey, MDA