

State Soil Conservation Committee

Final Minutes
May 16, 2024

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

The minutes of April 2024 were approved. (Swaine/Posey)

The following appointments were made upon proper motion, second, and vote:
None

Presentations

Suzy Daubert, Maryland NRCS updated SSCC and attendees USDA's Climate Smart Commodity Program. The program is designed to create a new market and recognition for crops grown with "climate smart" methods, at a federal investment of \$3.1 billion to-date. USDA selected 141 pilot projects, with 25 projects in Maryland. Suzy reviewed 5 project scopes and budgets:

- American Farmland Trust: Producer-led Effort to Transition the US Beef Supply to Carbon Neutral
- PG Department of Environment: Climate Smart Local Producer Pilot
- The Nature Conservancy: Expanding Agroforestry Production and Markets
- Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Ag: Engaging in Community Science & Practice
- Conservation Innovation Fund (CIF): Mid-Atlantic CIF, dairy focus

The state office and SCDs have limited roles in the projects at this time. It is not known when or how BMP implementation from these projects will be reported locally.

Next, Terry Nuwer, Harry Hughes Center for AgroEcology updated attendees on Maryland's Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Agriculture. The project includes two parts: research team and farmer outreach. As the initial phase of the project comes to a close this year, a comprehensive data set and library of tools will be available to guide discussions with farmers and to inform decision making. The final work products will be released this summer with listening sessions scheduled in May and June.

Registration details and project information is at <https://agnr.umd.edu/research/research-and-education-centers-locations/harry-r-hughes-center-agro-ecology/maryland/>

Next, Ryland Taylor, DNR presented the Next Generation Adaptation Plan developed for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC). The MCCC advises the Governor and Assembly on ways to mitigate, prepare and adapt to climate change. Its work is organized through 8 working groups, of which the Adaptation and Resiliency Work Group (ARWG) is focused on the latter goal of the MCCC. The ARWG is chaired by Secretary Kurtz from DNR. In 2023, the ARWG released the Next Generation Adaptation Plan to guide strategies and activities for the next 10 years in MD. Multiple agencies collaborated, including MDA, and Ryland reviewed the key themes and sector goals most relevant to agriculture and natural and working lands. The Plan is intended to align work across multiple agencies and should establish priorities within the adaptation planning for our sector.

Finally, Nadya Chehab, MDA presented her role as MDA's Climate and Equity Initiatives Coordinator. She explained the definition of EJ in the context of state policy and programs and elaborated on her role to support state-wide efforts to increase awareness and address EJ concerns. As the state expands planning and activities to address climate change, it is a priority of the Moore administration to engage communities that have been disproportionately affected by climate change. While she coordinates with counterparts in other state agencies, her purview is specific to MDA programs. She has several resources to share with programs and welcomes the opportunity to engage with your team or partners.

Following the presentations, attendees had Q&A with the speakers.

Slides from the presentation will be distributed.

Reports

Hans Schmidt, MDA reported an All-Hands Resource Conservation meeting was held May 15 at Sandy Point State Park.

District Operations has sent draft agreements to each SCD. Please review and respond with your Boards ASAP.

The one-on-ones with SCDs for Phase 3 WIP progress have been completed. Please review the information provided by Elizabeth Hoffman and elevate any questions.

The equine outreach initiative, led by Adam Lyon, is building interest for new Cooperators. Technical and funding needs are being organized, and questions should be directed to Adam.

Rob Feldt, DNR reported Governor Moore and Sec. Kurtz held an event declaring Maryland had reached its 30x30 goal (30% of lands conserved by 2030), six years early. The Governor has set a new goal for 40x40 now.

Recruitment for the Associate Director of Forest Services is underway.

Jim George, MDE reported the water appropriation permit regulations are being updated, and the Land Materials Administration is planning regulatory updates to the CAFO permits. No details were available. MDE has hired a new Assistant Secretary for EJ, Aneca Atkinson.

Darren Jarboe, UM Extension the Agricultural Nutrient Management Program (ANMP) has received requests for 1,250 nutrient management plans, 78% have all the information needed to write the nutrient management plans, and 19% are new to the ANMP. Of the plans with complete information, 85% have been delivered to farmers.

The external review team for University of Maryland Extension's (UME) departmental review visited campus and the Wye Research and Education Center (REC) on May 14–15. The team will provide a report to UME later this year.

The Workforce Development Internship Program will host 12 students from six colleges and universities for the 2024 intern cohort. They will work in county Extension offices and research and education centers across Maryland.

Hayden Schug will join UME as the Agriculture and Food Systems Program (AgFS) educator in Charles County. Hayden is currently an agricultural commodity grader in Specialty Crops Inspection at USDA in Philadelphia. Previously he was a horticulture and animal science teacher for the Wake County Public School Systems in Raleigh, North Carolina; graduate research assistant in Entomology at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina; and horizontal construction engineer in the United States Army Reserve at Knightdale, North Carolina. Hayden completed a M.S. in Entomology and B.S. in Agricultural Science with a minor in Agricultural Business at North Carolina State University, and an associates degree in science at Wake Technical Community College. He will start with UME on June 3. Four nutrient management advisors have been hired. The new advisors are Madylin Dilling, Caroline County; Nick Nuwer, Wicomico and Worcester Counties; Abigail Selnick, Montgomery County; and Taylor Wright, Washington County. They have started or will start within the next month.

The AgFS Program has seven open positions. Five AgFS vegetable production specialist candidates have been identified and will be invited to present at the Wye REC in early June. Ruminant livestock specialist candidates have been selected for initial Zoom interviews. The Caroline County AgFS educator position description has been posted with a best consideration date of May 24.

The faculty specialist, ANMP program director candidates have been evaluated and Zoom interviews are being scheduled. The faculty specialist for nutrient management training position has posted on the University of Maryland (UMD) website and has a best consideration date of May 24. The nutrient management advisor positions in Carroll and Charles Counties will be submitted to UME human resources soon.

Karen Rane, director of the UMD Plant Diagnostic Laboratory, retired. A replacement is being recruited. Paul Goeringer, Agricultural and Resource Economics (AREC) and the Agriculture Law Education Initiative received the UMD 2024 Professional Track Faculty Excellence Award.

Tom Porter, UMD poultry researcher, was named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Tom is a former associate dean for Extension.

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Awards

- Ensure Healthy Watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay, External Award: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Ensure Healthy Watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay, Internal Award: The Garden Thyme Podcast, Emily Zobel, AgFS , Mikaela Boley, Environment and Natural Resources-Sea Grant (ENR-SG), and Rachel Rhodes, ENR-SG, UME
- Advance Innovative, Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems, External Award: Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board
- Off-Campus Junior Faculty Award: Amanda Grev, AgFS, UME
- On-Campus Junior Faculty Award: Macarena Faruh, Plant Science and Landscape Architecture (PSLA)
- Integrated Research and Extension Excellence Award: Nicole Fiorellino, PSLA
- 2024 Dean's Grantsmanship Award: Mengjun Hu, PSLA; Stephanie Lansing, Environmental Science and Technology; James MacDonald, AREC; and Tom Porter: Animal and Avian Science

Grants

- Hemendra Kumar and Haley Sater. 2024. Optimizing Watermelon Spraying: Assessing Drones for Effectiveness and Efficiency. Mar-Del Watermelon Association. \$14,945.
- Andrew Ristvey, Stanton Gill, Dave Clement, and Hemendra Kumar. 2024. Precision Horticulture using Unpiloted Aerial Vehicles as part of an Integrated Plant Management Approach for Ornamental Nurseries. Extension Foundation New Technologies for Agriculture Extension. \$97,476 to University of Maryland Extension.

Laura Pleasanton for FSA reported Grassland CRP will open soon. Several re-enrollments for CREP are underway.

Nominations for FSA county committee members will open June 17.

Suzy Daubert, NRCS reported an NRCS office space in Baltimore City is being explored.

A DC for Wicomico and Worcester SCDs has been selected, and the name will be announced soon. Several USDA agreement options are open for applications, and webinars are being hosted for potential applicants.

Jen Nelson for MASCD reported

Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming Certification Program- MASCD has worked with partners to review the certification standard. One notable change to the new program is greater flexibility in enrolling leased acres. Certified farmers must be in compliance with nutrient management regulations on all owned and leased land, but the conservation component of certification no longer requires that leased acres have a fully-implemented conservation plan. Chelsea Gebbia will be sending letters to FSCAP certified farmers in June/July to inform them about the new program and offer the opportunity for re-certification.

NFWF Grant for Public Drainage Projects- MASCD has been working with partners in Maryland and Delaware to develop guidance for public drainage associations on water quality projects that are eligible for funding. We're looking for opportunities to help get the word out about the availability of funding and cash incentives for PDAs, including newsletter articles and mailings where we can include a program brochure.

Underwood Stream Restoration Site Visits- It's not too late to join us on site visits at Clagett Farm and Tag Along Farm in Anne Arundel County on May 17. It's a good opportunity to learn about stream restoration methods and funding sources, and how the districts can partner with Underwood and other contractors to get projects on the ground. Contact Jen for details.

Amy Posey, Southern MD reported

Anne Arundel:

- The Envirothon competition was held on 4/25 at Arlington Echo. There were 18 teams in total. South River High won every event and was the champion.

Charles:

- The Charles SCDs Annual Cooperator Dinner will be held on May 22nd.

Prince George's:

- Annual seedlings giveaway. Our partners at the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission raised 1000 tomatoes, peppers, and herbs in their greenhouse for our giveaway. We are partnering with multiple groups in May and June to pass out the seedlings.
- We honored the Garrett family at our Cooperator of the Year event on April 19th.
- The Envirothon competition had 17 teams from 11 high schools. Laurel High School was the winner, and the Academy of Sciences was runner-up.
- One-year grant planner position has been announced on our website. This is through the NACD Technical Assistant grant. The announcement was also posted on various social media outlets.
- Our 2023 Annual Report is complete. An electronic copy was emailed through MailChimp. If you didn't receive a copy, please contact the office to get on the mailing list. Also this can also be found on their website @ www.pgscd.org.

District Wide

- Discussion on the date and time for the Area 2 meeting for Summer MASCD is currently being discussed.

Mark Carey for Lower Shore reported an Area meeting for the Lower Shore is being scheduled soon. SCDs are steadily reporting cover crop termination.

Van Funk, Central MD no report.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Alisha Mulkey
Executive Secretary

SSCC Attendance: May 16, 2024

Members:

Van Funk
Amy Posey
Terry Nuwer
Hans W. Schmidt
Rob Feldt
John Swaine
Darren Jarboe
Jim George
Suzy Daubert

Absent:

John Sullivan
Steve Freeman
Ed Wurmb
John Murphy

Others:

Dee Dee Saunders, Charles SCD
David Scheler, Anne Arundel SCD
Jim Ensor, Baltimore County SCD
Jason Leavitt, Calvert SCD
Matt McMahon, Carroll SCD
Luis Dieguez, Charles SCD
Karen Houtman, Dorchester SCD
Heather Hutchinson, Frederick County SCD
Diane Flickinger, Frederick County SCD
James "Smokey" Stanton, Garrett SCD
Robert Baldwin, Kent SCD
David Plummer, Howard SCD
Gail Myers, PGSCD
Mark Carey, Somerset SCD
Mark Kendle, Washington County SCD
Byron Petrauskas, MDA
Adam Lyon, MDA
Keith Potter, MDA
Jen Nelson, MASCD
Chelsea Tyson, Worcester SCD
Richard Glasgow, Wicomico SCD
Jessica Linn, MDA
Ryland Taylor, DNR
Nadya Chehab, MDA
Sherri Degraphenreed, NRCS
Laura Pleasanton, FSA
Alisha Mulkey, MDA