

SSCC

Minutes: June 20, 2024

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

The minutes of May 2024 were approved. (Posey/Freeman)

The following appointments were made upon proper motion, second, and vote:

- Prince George's SCD – Amy Posey (Freeman/George)
- Talbot SCD – Colin Jones (Freeman/Feldt)
- Talbot SCD – Gavin Roe (Swaine/Jarboe)

Administrative Updates

Horse Outreach Workgroup (HOW):

SSCC supported the assignment of Amy Posey to represent the interests and expertise of the SSCC in the recently re-invigorated HOW.

July SSCC will be cancelled in light of the annual MASCD meeting in Cambridge, MD.

New SSCC Executive Secretary:

Loretta Collins was recently hired to take over the role of SSCC Executive Secretary from Alisha Mulkey. Alisha will continue participating in SSCC affairs and will be able to dedicate more time to other responsibilities under her role as manager of Program Planning and Evaluation.

Discussion

Rachel Jones, MDA provided a summary of outcomes related to the 2024 Maryland General Assembly Legislative Session:

Departmental Bills:

- **HB 234/SB 278** was a combination of 5 bills regarding amount, allocation, and/or application of fees pertaining to nutrient management, Weights and Measures/Plant Industries & Pest Management, and apiaries. **FAILED**
- **HB 290** modifies reporting deadline for the Certified Local Farm and Fish Program. **PASSED**

Solar Siting: Multiple bills regarding local preemptions of solar projects by the MD PSC, local ordinances banning solar projects and HOA/community association allowances to install solar in common areas

- **HB 1407: FAILED, HB 366: PASSED IN HOUSE/FAILED IN SENATE**
- **HB 361/SB 640** Property tax credits to incentivize community solar projects: **FAILED**

Renewable Energy: Supporting goals will require capacity enhancements such as commercial electric vehicle chargers for public use.

- **SB 951** creates a work group for MDA, the Public Service Commission (PSC), and the Comptroller's Office to develop a framework for reliability and reporting standards for EV charging stations, to study and make recommendations regarding which agencies have responsibility of ensuring accountability regarding EV charging stations and setting rates. The work group will make recommendations regarding adopting and implementing regulations. **PASSED**

Deer Mitigation:

- **HB 447/SB 440:** Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation. **PASSED**
- **HB 481/SB 367:** Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs – Authorization. **PASSED**
 - Authorizing a person to receive a raffle ticket for each antlerless deer hunted by the person during a certain raffle program that has as its objective the hunting of antlerless deer.

Native Plant and Invasive Species:

- **SB 915:** regarding regulatory approach to controlling invasive plants. **PASSED.** *Goes into effect October 1.*
- **SB 360:** Provision in recommended budget to reduce MDA's Native Plants Program funding by \$100,000. **PASSED**
- **SB 956:** The bill requires SHA to form a pollinator habitat plan for state highways. **PASSED**

DAF Material/Food Processing Residuals:

- **HB 991/SB 1074** was a bipartisan bill that as initially drafted would've taken regulatory authority over dissolved air flotation (DAF) material, AKA food processing residuals (FPRs) away from MDA and given it to MDE. **PASSED**
 - The bill was amended to create a regulatory permitting structure for hauling, storing, and land application of DAF material.
 - MDA is currently drafting the regulations for the permitting process. *The law goes into effect on July 1, 2024.*

Agricultural Use Assessments: In 2020 SDAT began assessing some acreage on ag land as commercial, therefore increasing property tax assessment

- **HB 640/SB 869:** would have required owners of certain buildings (like riding arenas and tasting rooms) to provide certain information to SDAT within a certain period of time after construction or renovations creating a subclass assessment for on farm buildings with processing or public uses that would've been higher than the standard Ag Use Assessment rate. **WITHDRAWN**
 - The Secretary of Agriculture is expected to consult with new SDAT leadership.

Pesticides and PFAS:

- **HB 929:** Funds MDA's 50% cost-share to treat black flies. **PASSED**
- **HB 1190:** Would have banned pesticides with PFAS. **FAILED**
- **SB 956:** Requires MDE to identify industrial sources of PFAS and mitigation strategy by July 2026. **PASSED**

Food Resiliency and Anaerobic Digestion:

- **HB 808** requires MDA & UME to coordinate efforts and resources to establish on farm anaerobic digestion operations. **PASSED**
- **HB 1318** would have established the On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant Program in the Department of Agriculture to award grants to eligible entities for on-farm organics recycling and compost use, wasted food prevention. **FAILED**

Climate Change and the Chesapeake Bay:

- HB 233 Authorizes the Critical Area Commission to adopt regulations governing the transfer of development rights, fee in lieu payments, the assessment of and adaptation of the critical area for climate resiliency, enhancing environmental justice and equity initiatives **PASSED**
- **The Whole Watershed Act/SB 969** establishes the Whole Watershed Restoration Partnership to accelerate restoration of the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays and their watersheds. **PASSED**
- **MD Agricultural BMP Best in Show/SB 932** would have drawn up revenues to MDA for BMP implementation. **FAILED**

Following the presentations, attendees had Q&A with the Ms. Jones.

A question was asked about expanding the deer raffle program to new counties. Per the legislation, "This bill authorizes a person to receive a raffle ticket for each antlerless deer hunted by the person during a raffle program that (1) is held in January; (2) has as its objective the hunting of antlerless deer; and (3) *was previously held at least once from January 1, 2020, through January 30, 2024*" (emphasis added)

Slides from the presentation will be distributed.

Reports

Hans Schmidt, MDA reported regulations for the Food Processing Residuals permit have been drafted and submitted to AELR. Interim guidelines have been established until the regulations are approved as final.

Montgomery County hosted a delegation tour for several farm operations. Thank you to the SCD for supporting.

Cover crop sign-up for 2024-2025 season will open June 21.

Rob Feldt, DNR reported staff are working toward year-end close of budgets.

DNR is keeping an eye on fungal disease Diplodia Tip Blight currently affecting pine trees

Jim George, MDE reported that the Air & Radiation Administration has installed a 3rd monitoring site on the Lower Shore in Harmony (Caroline County) to account for ammonia, particulates and meteorological metrics.

Darren Jarboe, UM Extension: The Agricultural Nutrient Management Program (ANMP) has received requests for 1,301 nutrient management plans, 80% have all the information needed to write the nutrient management plans, and 20% are new to the ANMP. Of the plans with complete information, 93% 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 provided a report to UME. UME had its exit interview with USDA for the compliance review.

The ANMP held its in-service on May 22 at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center in Clarksville. The AgFS Summer In-Service and Maryland Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting took place June 12–14 in Ocean City, which included a tour of Lower Shore agriculture. All three events are professional development activities for AgFS faculty and staff.

LEAD Maryland held a seminar focused on forest resources, forest management, and conservation, and the forest products industry; rural community development and rural services, and the Rural Maryland Council on June 11–13 in Western Maryland.

Dr. Nat Tablante, professor of veterinary medicine, will retire on June 30th. He is UME's long-time Extension veterinarian focused on poultry health and has led UME's biosecurity efforts.

Vernelle Mitchell-Hawkins, Andy Kness, and Chuck Schuster have been named interim county Extension directors for Baltimore, Harford, and Carroll Counties, respectively.

The Agriculture and Food Systems (AgFS) Program has eight open positions. Three AgFS vegetable production specialist candidates presented at the Wye REC in early June and are being evaluated. Five ruminant livestock specialist candidates have been invited for in-person presentations at the Western Maryland Research and Education Center in Keedysville on June 26–27. Three candidates were interviewed in early June for the Caroline County AgFS educator position. Candidate presentations in the county will be conducted in July.

The faculty specialist, ANMP program director candidates have been evaluated and Zoom interviews have been scheduled. The faculty specialist candidates for the nutrient management training position have been identified and initial Zoom interviews are being scheduled. The nutrient management advisor positions in Anne Arundel, Carroll, and Charles Counties will be submitted to UME human resources soon.

Grants

- Darren Jarboe, Neith Little, Shauna Henley, and Shannon Dill. 2024. Technical service support for entrepreneurship in rural Maryland. Rural Maryland Council Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund. \$80,000.
- Mark Townsend, Sarah Hirsh, Haley Sater, Shannon Dill, Amanda Grev, Jenny Rhodes, Charles Sasscer, Kelly Nichols, Jeff Semler, Benjamin Beale, Dwayne Joseph, Andrew Kness, and Darren Jarboe. 2024. Improving Soil Health and Water Quality Through Improved Cover Crop Planning and Management. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. \$595,600.

Eric Hines for NRCS reported staff are busy obligating funds for regular FA sources prior to program deadlines.

Area engineers have been recently reorganized to report to Eric and Jackie Byers. The transition is still underway but will allow a more streamlined method to assess JAA needs. A new area engineer, GIS specialist, and archaeologist have been hired.

Laura Pleasanton for FSA reported Grassland CRP is open June 5-28. Other CRP/CREP is currently open.

Nominations for FSA county committee members is open through August 1.

FSA Organic Certification Cost Share Program is open.

Jen Nelson for MASCD reported

A few notes on MASCD's Annual Meeting coming up next month- registration and the room block at the Hyatt are closed. While our overall registration numbers are roughly comparable with recent years, the number of supervisors registered barely meets a quorum for our General Business Meeting on Wednesday. We ask that everyone who has registered stays through the whole meeting so that we can conduct business and vote on any resolutions. If anyone still needs to register, they should reach out by email to Missy. If they need a hotel room, they should contact the Hyatt directly or look at other hotels in the area.

The 2024 Maryland Envirothon was held on June 12 & 13 at Mount St. Mary's University in Frederick County - Congratulations to Harford County for their first-place finish in the state competition and wish them luck at the NCF Envirothon next month in New York. Montgomery came in 2nd and Allegany in 3rd.

NRCS Cooperative Agreement- MASCD and NRCS continue to work on an agreement that would provide funding for administrative support specialists at Caroline and Talbot SCDs and continue to fund a program support specialist at QASCD.

The Campbell Foundation- MASCD has been extended an invitation to apply for a grant to support the Maryland Bay Friendly Farming (Maryland BFF) Program.

MASCD/SSCC Survey for Districts- SSCC and MASCD received 15 responses to a joint survey of the districts to learn about the specific policies and governance documents that each district has in place. Thanks to Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Calvert, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, St. Mary's, Talbot, Washington and Worcester SCDs for completing the survey!

Nominations are open for this year's Leopold Conservation Award through 8/1. We've had a trend of recipients with strong ties to the conservation districts so far- help us get a great pool of nominees by sharing this in your newsletters and on social media! Thanks to the districts who have shared this on social media already. For those who would like to, you can link to this page in a post:

<https://sandcountyfoundation.org/news/2024/maryland-leopold-conservation-award-seeks-nominees>

PlantMap3D Webinar- MASCD helped to coordinate a webinar to highlight a new RCPP project that will bring a cover crop and nutrient management decision-making tool to Maryland farmers. The project, led by The Nature Conservancy in cooperation with USDA ARS, Growmark and Willard Agriservice, will use field imagery captured during cover crop burndown to estimate biomass and nitrogen contribution to the following crop. That information can then be used to tailor variable-rate sidedress N applications. With cover crop signups soon underway, districts may be able to connect interested farmers to one of the project partners for more information.

Underwood Ecological Restoration Site Visits- MASCD also helped to coordinate a visit on May 17 to two restoration sites in Anne Arundel County- the Clagett Farm in Harwood and Tag Along Farm in Davidsonville. Participants learned about the prior conditions at each site and the techniques used for remediation, and discussed potential opportunities to expand implementation of similar projects.

Amy Posey for Southern Maryland: The Area 2 report summarizes MASCD discussions and may be requested by email.

Karen Houtman for Lower Shore reported staff are preparing for Cover-Crop program sign-up.

The Area meeting for MASCD was held May 24 date set for area meeting

Terry Nuwer, Lower Shore reported Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester are working on cover crop reporting.

Wicomico is wrapping up MDA's FY 2024 cover crop program and preparing for the FY 2025 program. The lower shore Counties are continuing to finalize all the details for the MASCD summer meeting.

Worcester has signed up to host a staffed table for Outreach at Blessing of the Combines August 3rd. Lower Shore Managers are making the final preparations for the MASCD Summer Meeting in Cambridge.

Steve Freeman, Upper Shore reported Area 3 meeting details still TBD and dry weather in an on-going issue for farmers

Van Funk, Central MD reported Harford SCD coordinated the Harford County Envirothon Competition on April 26th. North Harford High School placed 1st, Aberdeen High School finished 2nd, and Harford Christian School placed 3rd. On June 13th, North Harford High School Envirothon team won the Maryland State Envirothon Competition. The State's event was held at Mount St. Mary's College/University. North Harford High School Team will represent the State of Maryland at the National Envirothon Competition to be held at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York.

Unfortunately, the Harford County Farmer Community Partnership Committee's 6th symposium dubbed "Nourishing our Resources Together" event for May 11th was canceled due to low ticket sales.

Beginning July 20th through July 27th, the annual Harford County Farm Fair will be held at the Harford County Equestrian Center/Fairgrounds.

Ed Wurmb, Western MD no report

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Alisha Mulkey
Executive Secretary

SSCC Attendance: June 20, 2024

Members:

Van Funk
Amy Posey
Steve Freeman
Ed Wurmb
Terry Nuwer
Hans W. Schmidt
Rob Feldt
Jim George
Darren Jarboe
John Swaine
Eric Hines (proxy for Suzy Daubert)
Laura Pleasanton (proxy for John Sullivan)

Absent:

John Murphy

Others:

Adam Heavner, Allegany SCD
David Scheler, Anne Arundel SCD
Jim Ensor, Baltimore County SCD
Matt McMahon, Carroll SCD
Chris Brown, Cecil SCD
Luis Dieguez, Charles SCD
Dee Dee Saunders, Charles SCD
Karen Houtman, Dorchester SCD
Diane Flickinger, Frederick County SCD
Ruth Cassilly, Harford SCD
Robert Baldwin, Kent SCD
Steve Darcey, PGSCD
Bruce Young, St. Mary's SCD
Haley Carter, St. Mary's SCD
Mark Carey, Somerset SCD
Chelsea Tyson, Worcester SCD
Richard Glasgow, Wicomico SCD
Rachel Jones, MDA
Jason Keppler, MDA
Jen Nelson, MASCD
Gail Myers, PGSCD
Eileen Beard, MDA
Tom Filbert, OAG
Walter Wells, Calvert SCD
Mark Kendle, Washington County SCD
Dee Price, Washington County SCD
Alisha Mulkey, MDA
Loretta Collins, MDA