

**State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
April 16, 2025 (Hybrid)
Minutes**

Location: Baltimore Agricultural Center, Cockeysville, MD

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM

The minutes of March 2026 meeting were approved. (Jarboe/Feldt)

SSCC ADMIN

- May 21 meeting HYBRID at MDA Headquarters in Annapolis, MD
- June 18 meeting HYBRID at Somerset Soil Conservation District (tentative)
- Apr 21 [Stream Restoration Expert Panel Discussion](#) (MD Native Plant Society)
- [Funding opportunity from Google](#) for water replenishment projects. RFI due Apr 30
- **Supervisor Appointments:**
 - Montgomery SCD, At-Large: Robert Butz (Motion Feldt, Second Jarboe)
 - Prince George's, At-Large: Andrew V. Colevas (Motion Sandi, Second Jarboe)

PRESENTATIONS

Maryland Agricultural Cost Share (MACS) Follow-Up

Jason Keppler, MDA, provided follow-up to last month's inquiries.

- 412- Grassed waterways: MASCS standard now includes livestock and ag equipment crossing. Will be published shortly.
 - Is there support for grassed waterways being crowded out by clover? – Generally MACS does not provide support for maintenance. There may be opportunities for repair but would need to look into that.
- Checklist of what should be included in MACS application are available in the MACS manual (available on website).
- MACS website: ADA compliance must be met by state agencies in April. Some forms cannot become ADA compliant due to certain security restrictions. Creating an intranet website that will be accessible to District staff. Hope to be done in next few weeks. Will still have public-facing website with basic information. Working on allowing access for District staff that not on MDA domain.
- 316- Poultry Mortality Composting Facility: Has MACS considered cost-share on dehydrators? Modifications at operations that already received cost-share assistance for mortality composters is not an option. However, MACS will consult with NRCS on the possibilities for dehydrators on new operations (disposal of carcasses following processing is primary concern). As of now, dehydrators are not part of the MACS program.
- Small livestock grants: Working on communication from small equine operations to better understand funding options.

Erosion and Sediment Control Topics

Forest Clearing for Agriculture:

Loretta Collins, SSCC Executive Secretary, summarized issues and recommendations of the Forest Clearing Workgroup. A summary document will be brought to the SSCC at a later meeting.

Question: Is there any direction for the county from MDE regarding including stormwater management in a standard plan for Erosion and Sediment Control plan? Ray Bahr (MDE): There are a lot of discussions right now regarding standard plans for stormwater management and erosion and sediment control. Emphasized that standard plans are for small disturbances, usually less than an acre. Areas as big as 10-15 acres should not be using a standard plan.

MDE Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook Update:

Ray Bahr, MDE, discussed the draft Scope of Work for updating the Erosion and Sediment Control Standards and Specifications handbook. It is a big endeavor. The scope of work for the RFP is being developed and MDE is asking for input from the SSCC and Districts.

Purpose: Include updated precipitation data, enhance coordination with Districts, engaging other relevant stakeholders, and developing training programs for continual improvements.

Major Updates: Consistency with SWM. More emphasis on water quantity management, in addition to water quality management. Program Support: Districts, MDA, DNR, all critical partners in ESC. Considering a centralized dedicated support subject matter expert for local programs. Training: Would like local expertise to help with training. Would like to institutionalize training on regular schedule with field component. Hoping for a 3-year process beginning to end to complete Handbook. There will eventually be a portal to provide feedback to MDE.

Question: Agrivoltaics and pollinator habitats for solar installs are coming fast. Is there a way to get updated seeding requirements now? Answer: Current regulations require 95% stabilization for ESC. There is a decision up front: is this a development project or agricultural project? Can always go above and beyond what the Handbook says (such as with pollinator species) as long as it is stabilizes.

Question: What about mining? Answer: MDE defers to Bureau of Mining for ESC in those settings.

Question: Is there the possibility of a special section for solar projects in the new Handbook? Answer: MDE is planning on new guidance, perhaps through technical guidance bulletins.

The Scope of Work will be sent out to the SSCC and District Managers following the meeting. Feedback can be sent to Loretta by May 15 to send on to Ray.

MEMBER REPORTS

MD Department of Agriculture- Jason Keppler:

General Assembly concluded session on Monday

- Budget:
 - 1.5% COLA, by no step increase
 - Getting another position for procurement officer
 - \$180K in general funds for replacement of equipment
 - Cover Crop Program is flat-funded (not reduced)
 - LEEF reduced from \$900 to \$700K
 - Healthy Soils: \$100K reduction
 - Urban, Water, Power, Infrastructure: \$100K reduction
 - MALPF: \$38.7 million
 - MACS: \$8 million
- Legislation:
 - House 547: modification to tax subtraction program for ag equipment to allow for emerging/new technologies to be included after annual review.

- House 429: established on-farm organics diversion and recycling. \$250K each year starting in FY 28.

100% Cost-share for MACS sunsets June 30. Encourage applications by May 15th for 100% cost-share opportunity.

Cover Corp TAC meeting on March 26th to discuss next year's program

MACS TAC meeting to come.

MDA is getting a new database. Conservation Tracker will be replaced by ACRES.

MACS will also be transitioning to new software. Please afford patience with changes coming.

Cover Crop Program working with USGS on annual imagery analysis to start fall certification and verification.

MD. Department of Natural Resources – Rob Feldt:

- Annual Arbor Day recognition at State House where handed out seedlings with MD tree Farm Committee. Del. Anderson and Senator Rosa recognized Tree Farm of the Year and Tree Farm Inspector of the Year.
- Melissa Nash was named as the National Tree Farm Inspector of the Year. Got to attend leadership conference in Nashville.
- Francis Smith is on the LEEF Marketing Committee due to his expertise in agroforestry
- 15 major planting projects in progress
- Nursery in Preston getting a late start this year due to labor issues.
- MD Forestry Conservancy District Boards are restructured. Regional boards rather than one per county.

MD. Department of Environment – Greg Sandi:

- No updates on CAFO or stormwater permits. Hope for more information next month.

University of Maryland Extension – Darren Jarboe:

Maryland Day will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 25 at the University of Maryland. Faculty, staff and students host interactive demonstrations, performances, and workshops that celebrate community and discovery. For more information, please visit <https://marylandday.umd.edu/>.

The Agricultural Nutrient Management Program has received 1,302 plan requests, 972 of which have complete information. The team has completed 905 plans through April 3, a 93% completion rate. Farmers served, number of plans completed, and total acres planned are tracking similar to previous years through March 31.

Jon Traunfeld, long-time director of the Home and Garden Information Center, retired March 31. The search is underway for his replacement.

The search for a new assistant director and program leader for the 4-H Youth Development Program is underway. A finalist interview will take place April 22-23.

The current UME AgFS openings are:

AgFS Extension

- LEAD Maryland agent associate: Four candidates gave presentations at the Wye REC.
- AgFS county educator, Prince George's County: Funding is being secured for the position.

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

- Program director and faculty specialist: The position description will be revised and reposted.

- Two nutrient management advisor positions are currently open.

Natural Resources Conservation Service- Suzy Daubert:

- Tuesday April 28, Roundtable 10am to 1pm at Jones Station farm in Galena Dairy focused practices fence, livestock pipeline, Amendment Treatment Ag Waste, waste treatment milk house, waste separation facility, waste transfer, compost facility, critical area planting, roof runoff structure
- Thursday April 30, Poultry focused 11a to 1p DCA Georgetown, DE Short term storage, air filtration and scrubbing, Energy Efficiency Ag operations, Dust Management for pen, Amendment treatment Ag Waste, Energy Efficiency lighting, Energy Efficiency building, composting facilities, critical area planting, roof runoff structure
- Boot camp May 5 Keymar, MD
- Boot camp May 12 Easton, MD

Farm Services Agency- George Turner:

- The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced evaluation and acceptance of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)- Continuous (Signup 65) offers submitted during the first batching period. Maryland's accepted offers were 245 contracts for 2,000 acres. Conservation plans will be completed for full COC approval of the contract.
 - USDA did not reach/exceed the 27-million-acre statutory cap. Secretary Rollins has announced a second batching period for interested producers to submit offers by the May 1. CRP Continuous program offers remain competitive, so it is unknown if there will be a third batching period.
- General CRP (Signup 66) will close on April 17. Offers are submitted through a competitive bid process and ranked using environmental benefits criteria at the national level. Once evaluated, producers will be notified on the status of their offer.
- Primary Nesting Season (PNS) began on April 15 and will continue through August 15. CRP contract holders are reminded that general maintenance on CRP acres is prohibited unless requested, in writing, by the contract holder and approved by the local FSA County Committee.
- A joint training was held April 9 with FSA, NRCS, MDA, SCD staff statewide attending virtually. The training was a refresher as well as a general overview of the Conservation Reserve Program for new employees.

MASCD – John Swaine:

Meetings and Events

- **2026 NACD Fly-In-** MASCD representatives met with elected officials and staff in Washington, D.C. on March 25 to talk about the importance of support for conservation funding and the need for a new Farm Bill in 2026. Many thanks to Jenny Freebery, Robert Baldwin, Kelsie Fronheiser, Sam Leaverton, John Swaine, Rocky Donovan and Shawn Smith for their time and effort to educate our elected officials about conservation!
- **Registration is open for MASCD's 2026 Annual Meeting, August 3-5 at the Hyatt in Cambridge.** We're looking for agenda topics, so if you're aware of a program or project that's of interest to the districts and partners, let Jen know. Registration and more information about the meeting is available on MASCD's website.
- **MASCD's Board of Director's Meeting** was held on March 24 at MDA in Annapolis. We discussed recommendations from the Budget and Finance Committee and meeting policies, and heard updates from our partners.

Grants and Funding

- **Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming Program-** Please help us spread the word to good candidates! Contact Chelsea at Chelsea.Gebbia@resourcesmartllc.com for more information, or visit bayfriendlyfarms.com/ for more details and an online application.
- **NFWF Tax Ditch Grant-** Funds are available through the grant to fund wetland restoration projects, floodplain reconnection, two stage ditches, riparian buffers and other water quality practices. About \$500,000 in implementation funds remain, and about \$50,000 in incentive funds for participating public drainage associations.
- **Producer-Led Watershed Pilot Project-** We're still looking for a project idea to pursue over the next year. Projects can include on-farm demonstrations, education and outreach, innovative incentives and other ideas. Reach out to Jen if your district has an idea of a project that they're interested in pursuing.

Other Updates

- **Sine die! Thanks to Mike Mason for working with MASCD for another legislative session!** This year, we held two different legislative calls each week- an open update every Monday and an MASCD Legislative Committee call on Thursdays to determine MASCD's position on upcoming bills. This was a good structure and something we'll look forward to doing again next year.
- **Leopold Conservation Award nominations are open** through July 15 for the 2026 award. Districts should consider nominating their cooperator of the year! Farms of all sizes and operation types are eligible.
- **NACD Data Call-** NACD and NRCS are requesting information from districts across the country to describe the working relationship between NRCS and the districts. Districts are being asked to provide details about the level of support from NRCS for staff, and the portion of those employees' time that goes to support NRCS programs. NACD is also asking about NRCS-supported office space and computers. MASCD is also encouraged to provide a narrative factsheet on the partnership.

Aq Commission- NO REPORT

Area 1 (Western) – Diane Flickinger:

Carroll

- The Carroll SCD Envirothon was held on April 14. Century High School was the winning team
- Diana Burch joined the CSCD Staff as a RC&D Soil Conservation Planner.

Frederick County

- FCSCD held CPR/AED training for all FSA, NRCS, MDA and SCD staff stationed in our Suite 200 location on April 8 & 9, with 21 people signed up.
- The Frederick County Envirothon Competition Day will be held on April 28Th at the Cunningham Falls State Park. The Maryland Envirothon will be held June 10-11 at Mount St. Mary's University in Frederick County. Applications are being accepted for the 2026 George A. Nicholson, Sr. Memorial Scholarship. Deadline is April 17Th.

Washington County

- The Envirothon competition was held April 8Th. The Boonsboro High School Team was the winner.
- WCSCD updated their Strategic Plan: 2026-2030. (It can be found on their website.)
- They updated their Policy Manual to make it current.
- WCSCD is currently updating their Employee Manual. They are working with an Employment Law Attorney to do this.
- WCSCD has a new logo.
- They are currently developing a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Bonding Program.
- Harry Strite, our current Chair (Board of Supervisors) At-Large Appointment was

reappointed to another term; and the Oath of Office was completed April 2026.

Area 2 (Southern) - Amy Posey:

Anne Arundel

- Apr 9 Cooperator Dinner a success.

Calvert

- Envirothon was Apr 14

Charles

- Tri-County Council Ag Day at the Fair Ground Apr 16
- Save the Date for Wednesday, May 20 Cooperator Dinner

Prince George's

- Apr 8 hosted Secretary Atticks and EPA for MOU signing ceremony
- Save the Date Apr 24 Cooperator Dinner

St. Mary's

- Envirothon was Apr 14. 14 teams participated.
- Submitted nominations for MASCD awards.

Area 3 (Upper Shore) – Steve Freeman:

Queen Anne's

- Hosted Envirothon training yesterday and today.
- QA shop bought a litter spreader with scale a few years ago. Rented every day for the last three years. Has been a good investment.
- Mobile Ag Showcase coming to fair ground, SCD will sponsor for entire week.
- Apr 21&22: Ag Awareness Day for 7th and 8th grader at 4H park to learn about ag
- Queen Anne's thinking of upgrading cooperator's dinner next year.

Kent

- Cooperator's Dinner last week was a success at Jones Station.
- Lost SNAP coordinator due to budget cuts.

Area 4 (Central) – Van Funk:

Baltimore County SCD

- District personnel attended the Baltimore County Ag Advisory Board meeting.
- District staff continued to work with Baltimore County Public Schools on re-starting the Envirothon. Additional schools have shown an interest in participating.
- The District awarded the Cooperator of the Year to **Dancing Fox Farm**, a specialized cut flower farm.
- The staff continue to work on planning, bmp designs, and cover crop.
- Several staff members will be attending the NRCS Conservation Boot Camp at the end of April.

Cecil SCD

- On 3/24 CSCD held its Spring Envirothon Training at the Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area. Approximately 66 students from 6 different schools attended. The county competition will be held on 4/21.
- On 4/1 CSCD provided an in-classroom presentation to the Cecil County School of Technology – Ag Science class. The presentation highlighted conservation on a local dairy farm. Following the presentation an on-farm tour was provided on 4/14.
- On 4/10 CSCD hosted "Ag Day on the Farm". The event was held at the Cecil Land Trust's Fairview Farm, also known as the Patsy DuPont Farm. In addition to presentations from CSCD staff, speakers from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, University of Delaware, Stroud Water Research Center, and The Mill all gave instructions throughout the day. The event offered 3 Nutrient Management continuing education credits. The event was attended by roughly 70 participants.

Harford SCD

- On March 27th, Harford SCD distributed the electronic April 2026 edition of "The Harford Resource" newsletter. Paper copies were mailed out in early April.
- On April 3rd, with the assistance from Kimberly Doran Lyons, Agricultural Business Development Associate, with the Harford County Department of Economic Development, the Harford SCD distributed a Farmers & Veterans Internship survey to local farmers. The intent of the survey was to gauge interest from the farming community pertaining to a potential mentoring program for military veterans who are interested in an ag related profession.
- On April 10th, Harford SCD coordinated and assisted with the Harford County Envirothon spring workshop at the Harford Glen. Eight (8) local high schools participated in the event. The Harford County Envirothon Competition Day is scheduled for Friday, May 8th at the Eden Mill Nature Center.
- On April 10th, Lee McDaniel, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and Donna Stanley, Administrative Assistant, attended the Kent Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Cooperator's Dinner.

Howard SCD

- District personnel hosted a Mid-Winter Agriculture Meeting at the Howard County Fairgrounds, with speakers from ag industry, academia, and agency staff. About 45 participants from the local ag community attended to learn about current research and policies and to get their Nutrient Management Continuing Education Credits. The event was sponsored by Horizon Farm Credit.
- Several Supervisors attended the Howard County Executive's State of Agriculture Address, which highlighted the County's efforts to expand the Agricultural Preservation Program as well as the County's support for Howard SCD programs.

Montgomery SCD

- MD House Bill 1071 (Ag Stormwater Management) passed during the legislative session. It requires MDE to develop specific stormwater management standards for agricultural tourism facilities. The bill also requires a study of how jurisdictions outside of Montgomery County are coordinating stormwater management reviews/approvals locally. The Bill requires Montgomery County a report back to the legislature. As part of the process, John Zawitoski will be coordinating a survey with Montgomery's local office of agriculture, that will survey Districts on how each is handling stormwater management locally. So, you may be hearing from John soon on this subject.
- Montgomery SCD is hosting an Equine Nutrient Management Seminar on April 23rd at their office. There is still time to register for this event at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-soil-conservation-nutrient-management-for-equine-operations-seminar-tickets-1983996725614?aff=oddttdtcreator> Participants will receive 6 C.E.U's for attending.
- Montgomery's local Envirothon competition will be held on April 24th.

Area 5 (Lower Shore) – Anne-Meredith Webster:

Worcester:

- Website Creator is still working on ADA compliance for the SCD website.
- SCD/UME are planning a Lower Shore centric Grazing Field Day for Fall 2026 or Spring 2027.
- MDA Staff sent a letter to our Cover Crop Program Participants regarding timely kill-down reporting for timely aerial spot-checks and payments this Spring.
- SCD Board will be Sponsoring the Summer MASCD Meeting at the Silver Level.

Wicomico:

- Spring Certification for cover crop is picking up.
- We are completing some applications and claims for the DCA projects.

- Staff is working to get everything in Tracker in preparation for the rollout of the ACRE software.

Somerset:

- Completing cover crop spring certifications.
- Updating no-land poultry nutrient management plans.
- Updating conservation plans.

Dorchester:

- Farmers reporting Cover Crop burndown.
- Conservation Planners sending numerous Conservation Buffer Initiative Applications to Sarel Cousins at MDA.
- Deadline approaching for Dorchester SCD High School Scholarships.
- Technician working on HUA's for cooperators.

SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON APRIL 16, 2025

Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

Time of closed session: 11:32 AM

Place (location) of closed session: Baltimore Agricultural Center, Cockeysville, MD

Purpose of the closed session: 1. Discuss applications submitted for Soil Conservation District Supervisor Positions

Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

Names of members voting aye: Motion: Swaine Second: Freeman

Members opposed: NONE

Members abstaining: NONE

Statutory authority to close session:

This meeting was closed under the following provisions of General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b):

Topic #1: § 3-305(b)(1) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"

Listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

#1: Anne Arundel SCD Supervisor

In-person: Funk, Collins, Jarboe, Swaine, Posey, Sandi, Feldt, Freeman

Virtual: Flickinger, Webster

Action Taken: Discussion of application materials- no vote

The meeting was adjourned from closed session at 11:52 AM (Posey/Sandi).

Respectfully Submitted,

Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

MEMBER ATTENDANCE (OPEN MEETING): APRIL 16, 2026

Present In-Person:

Amy Posey (Vice-Chair)
Steve Freeman
Van Funk (Chair)
Rob Feldt
Greg Sandi
Darren Jarboe
John Swaine
Suzy Daubert
George Turner

Present Virtually:

Diane Flickinger
Anne-Meredith Webster
Gordon Kretser

Absent:

Hans Schmidt

ADDITIONAL PARTIES IN ATTENDANCE:

Present In-Person:

Jen Nelson, MASCD
Eric Hines, NRCS
Jason Keppler, MDA
Mike McGinnis, Baltimore County SCD
Mark Duvall, Baltimore County SCD
Eric Hadaway, Baltimore County SCD
Jim Ensor, Baltimore County SCD
Bob, Baltimore County SCD
Jeff West, Baltimore County SCD
Essy Frey, Baltimore County SCD
Sally Barnes, NRCS- Baltimore County
Chris Brown, Cecil SCD
Matt McMahon, Carroll SCD
Quintin Cornwell, Harford SCD

Present Virtually:

Ray Bahr, MDE
Chelsea Tyson, Worcester SCD
Bruce Young, St. Mary's SCD
Mark Carey, Somerset SCD
Haley Carter, St. Mary's SCD
Jason Leavitt, Calvert SCD
Dee Price, Washington County SCD
Kendra McAfee, Frederick County SCD
Mark Kendle, Washington County SCD
Rick Glasgow, Wicomico SCD
Lori Flook-Bishop, Washington County SCD
Byron Petrauskas, MDA
David Scheler, Anne Arundel SCD
Emily Doney, Frederick County SCD
Gail Myers, Prince George's SCD
David Stonesifer, Frederick County SCD
Steve Darcey, Prince George's SCD
John Tarr, Prince George's SCD
Mark Carey, Somerset SCD