

**State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
July 16, 2026 (Hybrid)
Minutes**

Location: MDA Headquarters, Annapolis, MD

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM

The minutes of June 2026 meeting were approved. (Swaine/Posey)

SSCC ADMIN

- No August Meeting. Next meeting Sept 17. Location TBD
- Leadership: SSCC approved Amy Posey as Chair, Steve Freeman as Vice Chair (Sandi/Feldt)
- The SSCC thanks Van Funk for 8 years of service to the SSCC, 6 years as chair. Van received a citation from Secretary Atticks for his years of above-and-beyond efforts.
- **Supervisor Appointments:** NONE

PRESENTATIONS

Quick Review:

Speaker: Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

A broad overview of establishing record retention and disposal schedules for public bodies. The review will be distributed to District Managers, Board Chairs, and SSCC Area Reps for distribution following the meeting.

Supervisor Application Update

Speaker: Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

Discussion of re-formatted supervisor application for SSCC appointments appearing later in the fall.

MACS Update

Speaker: Jason Keppler, MDA

Discussed pending updates to the Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share MACS Program. Question arose on role of SSCC in inclusion of new BMPs in MACS Manual. SSCC considered special session at MASCD to review BMPs. Clarification to follow.

**Progress Update: MOU for Inspections and Enforcement on Ag Land
(MDA/MDE/SSCC)**

Speaker: Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

Explanation of context and progress towards an updated MOU, including next steps. Each District Area was asked to review the current DRAFT MOU with suggested edits from MDE. Feedback from the Districts will be summarized and shared at the summer MASCD meeting.

MEMBER REPORTS

MD Department of Agriculture- Hans Schimdt:

- Tomorrow is last day for Cover Crop Program sign-up
- Cover Crop Plus sign-up ends next Friday.

- WIP team had successful meeting with the Areas. Reach out to Alisha Mulkey with further questions.
- The Environmental Justice survey is still open. Find it on the webpage: https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/environmental_justice.aspx
- MDA working internally on the MOU for Inspections and Enforcement- hope to have a draft flowchart for MASCD to review at summer meeting with suggested process.
- Planner reporting workbooks have gone out to Districts. A monthly report can be generated that can be used to convey information at monthly board meetings
- Appreciate District patience with new PEP system for employee evaluations
- Still working on getting supplies for heat safety in the field for all vehicles. If staff want to buy equipment ahead of delivery reach out to Byron or Area Coordinator.
- General Fund and Trust Fund MOUs have been completed for Districts and should be out this evening.

MD. Department of Natural Resources – Rob Feldt:

- Making progress on 5 million trees goal.
- Tree planting opportunity layer in mapping software for entire state. Excludes prime ag land. Focus on urban areas.
- Today is a bad air quality. Just dispatched staff to help with western fires. Canadian fires are affecting the East Coast. Western fires now trend into October rather than September.
- State Wildlife Action Plan on a 10-year cycle. Close to being finalized following year-long revision.

MD. Department of Environment – Greg Sandi:

- CAFO fees were due July 7th to automatically renew payment. Once requirements are deemed met, permit will be issued by the end of August.
- Ray Bahr will be presenting sediment and erosion control update at MASCD Summer Meeting.
- Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee: Current fee will be sunseting (reduced) in 2030 which will cause funding challenges. Stay tuned for further updates.

University of Maryland Extension – Darren Jarboe:

Agriculture and Food Systems Extension held it Summer In-Service in conjunction with the Maryland Association of County Agricultural Agents (MACAA) Annual Meeting in Queenstown on June 16-18. Attendees participated in a one-day tour of Upper Shore farming operations and agribusinesses.

The Western Maryland Research and Education Center (REC) hosted an AgFS Pasture Walk on June 23. Participants observed annual, perennial, and mixed forage species trials at the event.

UME Weed Management Field Day took place at the Wye REC on June 24. Participants viewed plots and learned about weed management strategies. This work helps crop protection companies provide products to Maryland farmers. The Delmarva Farmer featured an article titled *Drones used for weed mapping research* from the event.

The new Blueberry & Blackberry Twilight Tour took place June 24 at the Wye REC in Queenstown. Approximately 50 people participated in the field demonstrations and blueberry and blackberry tasting.

Maryland Crop Scouting School at WYE was a new offering at the Wye REC in Queenstown on June 25. Participants focused on building practical skills for identifying and managing pests, diseases, and crop issues in the field. Effective scouting, recognition of key problems, and making informed management decisions using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles were covered. The event included common pests in row-crop and vegetable production systems.

The Lower Shore Vegetable and Small Fruit Twilight Tour took place on June 25 at the Lower Eastern Shore REC in Salisbury.

Dr. Pride Ebile joined MDA's Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Community Best Practices | Food Systems subcommittee

The search for a new assistant director and program leader for the 4-H Youth Development Program continues.

UME AgFS Openings

AgFS Extension

- Urban agriculture production state specialist: The request for the position has been initiated.
- AgFS county educator, Prince George's County: The position has been approved and recruiting will start soon.
- AgFS county educator, Talbot County: The request for the position has been initiated.

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

- Program director and faculty specialist: The request for the position has been initiated.
- Nutrient management advisors in Montgomery, Talbot, and Washington Counties: The requests for the positions have been initiated.
- Administrative assistant: The request for the position has been initiated.

Publications

Nichols, K. (2026). Efficacy of Chelated Iron in Turf Weed Control (FS-2026-0806). University of Maryland Extension. go.umd.edu/FS-2026-0806.

Sater, H., & Butler, B. (2003, updated 2026). Blueberry Cultivars for Maryland and the Greater Mid-Atlantic Region (FS-2025-0777). University of Maryland Extension. go.umd.edu/EBR-2025-0777.

Sater, H., & Butler, B. (2003, updated 2026). Growing Blueberries in the Mid-Atlantic (FS-2025-0766). University of Maryland Extension. go.umd.edu/EBR-2025-0766.

Grants

Kate Tully, Becky Epanchin-Niell, and Sujay Kaushal. 2026. Land-Sea Exchange Network for Salinity (LENS): An Early Warning System for Detecting and Managing Salinity Risks from Land to Sea. UMD Grand Challenges Grant 2.0 Team Award, \$600,000.

Miao Yu, Nikhil Chopra, Yang Tao, Hemendra Kumar, Matt Parker, Don Webster, 2026. Sustainable Precision Aquaculture Network for Shellfish (SPANS). UMD Grand Challenges Grant 2.0 Team Award, \$600,000

2026 National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Award Winners

National Winners

- Maegan Perdue, Achievement Award
- Neith Little, Distinguished Service Award
- Haley Sater and Emily Zobel, Applied Research Poster: Evaluation of Organic Insecticides for Harlequin Bug Management in Kale, Second Place

National Finalists

- Emily Zobel, Mikayla Boley, Rachel Rhodes, and Madeline Potter, Audio Recording
- Rachel Rhodes, Event Promotional Package
- Erika Crowl and Andy Kness, Extension Education Poster: Mitigating Risk Through Education in Agricultural Drone Adoption

Regional Winners

- Rachel Rhodes, Computer Generated Presentation with Script
- Qianwen Lu and Neith Little, Fact Sheet
- Amanda Grev, Publication
- Hayden Schug, Published Photo

State Winners

- William Lantz, Philip Malone, and Karen Wood, Search for Excellence in 4-H Programming
- Paul Goeringer, Christin Redding, Alex Chan, Elizabeth Thilmany, Meghana Kotraiah, Nyrene Monfort, and Zoe Matthews, Search for Excellence in Farm and Ranch Business Management

Field Days and Twilight Tours (<https://extension.umd.edu/news-events/events/>)

AGNR & IAA Prospective Student Info Session

10:00 AM-11:30 AM, Monday, July 20

10:00 AM-11:30 AM, Monday, August 03

Friday, Aug 14, 10:00 AM-11:30 AM

<https://go.umd.edu/visitagnr>

futureagnr@umd.edu

Anne Arundel County Urban Farm Tour and Ice Cream Social, 5:00 PM-7:30 PM, Thursday, July 23

Anne Arundel Extension Office, 97 Dairy Lane, Gambrills, MD 21054

(301) 226-7470

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aaufrc-urban-farm-tour-ice-cream-social-tickets-1988005464861?aff=oddtcreator>

Coffee and Conversations #1 Friday, 9-11am, July 24

Fox Haven Farm and Learning Center, 3630 Poffenberger Rd, Jefferson, MD

Coffee and Conversations #2 Friday, 9-11am, August 21

Mountain Gate Family Restaurant, 133 Frederick Rd, Thurmont, MD

<https://forms.gle/A81j41bhmyo11Sbx8>

301-600-3577

Coffee and Conversations for Veteran Farmers Saturday, 9:30-11:30am, August 22
Twin Arch Tavern, Mount Airy, MD
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeSP9LUAUGTGTJnQppuOGpN7yuirub4XJybip1-oNco3e_4aA/viewform

Mid-Shore Grain Marketing Breakfast, 7:30 AM - 10:30 AM, Tuesday, August 04
6275 Lords Crossing Road, Hurlock, MD, 21643
Cost is \$10. If the registration cost is a barrier, please call Emily at 410-228-8800.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mid-shore-grain-marketing-breakfast-tickets-1991243295299?aff=oddtcreator>

Fields Crops Research Twilight, Barbecue and Ice Cream Social at CMREC, 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM, Tuesday, August 04
Central Maryland Research and Education Center (CMREC), 2005 Largo Road, Upper Marlboro, MD
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/crops-twilight-bbq-ice-cream-social-tickets-1987150687198?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true
gknaub@umd.edu, 301-226-7472

Cover Crop Showcase, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM, Wednesday, August 19
Kings Grant Farm, 7029 Quakerneck Road, Chestertown, MD
go.umd.edu/covercropshowcase
410-651-1350

Ornamental Hort IPM Diagnostic Session, 12:30-3 p.m., July 22
Cost: \$18
CMREC-Clarksville REC, 4240 Folly Quarter Rd, Ellicott City, MD
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/july-22-2026-ipm-diagnostic-session-tickets-1992657500224?aff=oddtcreator>

Stanton A. Gill Symposium: Focus on Biological Control August 4 and 5, 2026 Location: CMREC-Clarksville, 4240 Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD
<https://mnlga.org/Login.aspx?optional=1&store=1&returl=%2fstore%2fRenewMembership.aspx>
office@mnlga.org
410-823-8684

Agronomic Crops Field Day, August 18
Wye REC, 211 Farm Lane, Queenstown, MD
Registration information TBA

Maryland Crop Scouting School at CMREC Clarksville, 9:00 AM-2:45 PM, Thursday, September 24
Cost: \$10
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1988091185253?aff=oddtcreator>

Natural Resources Conservation Service- Suzy Daubert:

- Wrapping up obligations for FY 2026.
- The National Deadline for sign-ups is December 18th for FY 2027

Farm Services Agency- George Turner:

- July 15 was the deadline for acreage reporting. Can still take some late-filed acreage. Accurate acreage reporting is critical for programming.
- Aug 3 is FSA County Committee nomination deadline.
- Aug 7 is Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers deadline.
- Aug 12 is Supplemental Disaster Assistance Relief Program ends, based on 2024/2025 drought disaster.
- Organic Certification Cost-Share Program providing assistance to producers and handlers runs until Dec 31. 75% of eligible costs up to \$750.
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/income-support/organic-certification-cost-share-program-occsp>
- Implemented a new digital platform for appointments. Will allow for virtual interaction. In-person meetings will still be available. Will get a confirmation of appointment.

MASCD – John Swaine:

- **Registration is open for MASCD's 2026 Annual Meeting, August 3-5 at the Hyatt in Cambridge.** Registration closes July 17. A draft agenda has been posted to MASCD's website at: <https://mascd.net/2026-mascd-annual-meeting/>
 - **Area Meetings-** Thanks to the areas who have met already ahead of the meeting! The areas will have a 1-hour time slot at the Annual Meeting to recap their discussions, if desired.
 - **ADA Website Compliance Session-** Missy will lead a session for district staff to outline requirements for an ADA-compliant website. There will be time to visit a few district websites and walk through the elements on the site for recommendations. The presentation will be available as a reference to the districts for use after the meeting.
- **MASCD is seeking comments from districts on a draft MDE/MDA MOU,** especially regarding SCDs' role in resolving cases of water pollution caused by agricultural activities. Comments are welcome from individuals or districts following discussion at Area Meetings. Please share with Jen and Loretta ahead of MASCD's Annual Meeting by July 24.
- **2026 NCF Envirothon-** Best of luck to the Montgomery County Team from Richard Montgomery High School, who is headed to Mississippi for the NCF Envirothon! The competition takes place July 19-25.

Grants and Funding

- **MASCD is working with NRCS** to add funds to our agreement that will help to support the NCF Envirothon competition in 2027.
- **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-** MASCD is pursuing alternative projects to the original “producer-led watershed pilot project” concept. These two projects are based on conversations with board supervisors, but will be coordinated by MASCD rather than the districts. More details will be available once the projects are confirmed to move forward.

Ag Commission- Gordon Kretser: No Report

Area 1 (Western) – Diane Flickinger:

Frederick County SCD:

- FCSCD hosted a successful Silvopasture Field Day on July 15Th. Two local farms were visited in the Woodsboro area to hear directly from farmers who have implemented Silvopasture systems on their operations and showcasing two different stages of development. Topics covered included the benefits and challenges of Silvopasture, lessons learned from real-world experience and practical tips for implementation. There was an opportunity to ask questions and network.
- Staff have been very busy accepting applications for the 2026-2027 Cover Crop Program. We finish up the sign-up period on Friday July 17Th.
- The Western Area 1 will hold their Pre-MASCD Meeting on July 20Th.

Area 2 (Southern) - Amy Posey:

Anne Arundel:

- Submitted application for 2026 Leopold Conservation Award

Charles:

- Meeting with county govt for potential E&S standard plan for forest clearing on ag operations
- Received two new manure spreaders and warm-season grass drill for equipment rental program
- Tim Wells attended first solar workgroup meeting at MDA on 13th.
- Staff attended NRCS MD organic training

Prince George's:

- Hosting executive exchange expo agricultural edition. Celebrates ag inditry throughout District on July 23
- Hosting “From Seed to Plate” PG County Food System Happy Hour. PGCC, Parks and Planning, PG SCD, and Bloomin’ PGC. Hosting at culinary arts center at PGCC on July 29th.

St. Mary's:

- Robust cover crop sign-up this year.
- Working hard on MASCD Summer Meeting plans.
 - Coloring Contest submissions MUST come to St. Mary's before MASCD meeting.

Area-Wide:

- Area meetings were successful in preparation for MASCD. Many supervisors attended.
- WIP progress meeting with Alisha Mulkey at MDA went well.

Area 3 (Upper Shore) – Steve Freeman:

Queen Anne's:

- Cooperator of the Year Sept 4 at Godfrey's Farm. Will celebrate two farms. Award will be re-named for Godfrey.
- Cover crops sign-ups down about 40% as of today.

Area 4 (Central) – Van Funk:

Baltimore County SCD:

- Busy with Cover Crop Program sign-up
- Attended WIP meeting with Alisha Mulkey
- Attended Central Area meeting yesterday
- Completed MDA PEPs
- Attended Baltimore County Ag Land Preservation Board meeting.

Harford:

- July 8th release of July 2026 of Harford Resource Newsletter
- July 15th participated in Central Area meeting
 - Lee McDaniel volunteered for MASCD Nominations Committee
 - Ruth Cassilly volunteers for MASCD Legislative and Policy Committee
- July 18-25 Harford County Farm Fair: tractor pull, livestock show, bands, and more at Equestrian Center in Bel Air

Area-Wide:

- Attended WIP updates with Alisha Mulkey earlier this week
- July 15th Central Area meeting. Good turn-out.
 - Expect to have a new Central Area representative for Sept SSCC.

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

Worcester:

- Cover Crop: MDA Staff completing 25/26 follow-up inspections with photos submitted, as requested. Also signing up participants for the 26/27 Program: 23 entered in the SQL database to-date.
- SCD/MDA Outreach booths planned at the Blessing of the Combines and Worcester County Fair; NRCS partner staff also assisting.
- SCD Board hosted local and regional support staff at their Annual Summer Luncheon last week; thanking them for their continued professionalism and support.
- Lower Shore Beyond 2025 WIP4 and prior to MASCD Area Meetings complete.

Wicomico:

- Wicomico is working through cover crop signup, preparing for Wicomico County Fair and completing E&S reviews on multiple projects.

Somerset:

- Staff are signing up applicants for the FY 26-27 MACS cover crop program.
- Staff and supervisors attended the WIP-4 Lower Shore meeting.
- Somerset SCD hosted the Lower Shore Area Meeting.
- Staff continue to work with poultry producers on a variety of different tasks.

Dorchester:

- Dorchester SCD has entered and submitted 50 Cover Crop applications.
- Purchased note pads to give out at Caroline/Dorchester Fair Booth
- Dorchester SCD Board Supervisors discussed concern over lack of Weed Management at solar sites. Will MDA be sending them letters? I have reached out to Jim Calao - Weed Control Specialist for MDA.
- Also participated in WIP 4 meeting with Lower Shore Region.

SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON JULY 16, 2026

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

Time of closed session: 11:25 AM

Place (location) of closed session: MDA Headquarters, Annapolis, 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: Freeman Second: Webster

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: Charles SCD Supervisor Applications

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

Virtual: Flickinger, Webster, Kretser

Action Taken: Discussion of application materials- no vote

#2: Howard SCD Supervisor Applications

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

Virtual: Flickinger, Webster, Kretser

Action Taken: Discussion of application materials- no vote

#3: Talbot SCD Supervisor Applications

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

Virtual: Flickinger, Webster, Kretser

Action Taken: Discussion of application materials- no vote

#4: Wicomico SCD Supervisor Applications

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

Virtual: Flickinger, Webster, Kretser

Action Taken: Discussion of application materials- no vote

#5: Worcester SCD Supervisor Applications

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

Virtual: Flickinger, Webster, Kretser

Action Taken: Discussion of application materials- no vote

The meeting was adjourned from closed session at 12:04 AM (Jarboe/Swaine).

Respectfully Submitted,

Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

MEMBER ATTENDANCE: JULY 16, 2026

Present In-person:

Van Funk (Chair)
Amy Posey
Steve Freeman
Byron Petraskaus (MDA proxy)
Rob Feldt
Greg Sandi
Darren Jarboe
John Swaine
Jake Dieguez (NRCS proxy)
George Turner

Present Virtually:

Diane Flickinger
Anne-Meredith Webster
Gordon Kretser

Absent:

None

ADDITIONAL PARTIES IN ATTENDANCE:

Present In-person:

Loretta Collins, MDA
Jen Nelson, MASCD
Jason Keppler, MDA
Eric Hines, NRCS

Present Virtually:

Chris Brown, Cecil SCD
Jim Ensor, Baltimore County SCD
Tim Wells, Charles SCD
Dee Dee Saunders, Charles SCD
Karen Houtman, Dorchester SCD
Chelsea Tyson, Worcester SCD
Gail Myers, PG SCD
Kim Rush Lynch, PG SCD
Dee Price, Washington County SCD
Lori Flook-Bishop, Washington County SCD
Bruce Young, St. Mary's SCD
David Scheler, Anne Arundel SCD
Wyatt Newcom, Washington County SCD
Mark Kendle, Washington County SCD
Rick Glasgow, Wicomico SCD
Quintin Cornwell, Harford SCD
Dana Adipietro, OAG
Sarel Cousins, MDA
Thomas Bagamsah, MDA
Heather Hutchinson, Frederick County SCD