

State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
July 17, 2025 (Hybrid)
Salisbury Animal Health Lab, Salisbury MD
Minutes

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM

The minutes of June 2025 meeting were approved. (Posey/Feldt)

SSCC ADMIN

Appointments

District	Affiliation	Appointed	Motion/Second	Term Expires
Charles	At-Large	John "Jack" Welch	Freeman/Feldt	4/18/30
Kent	At-Large	Charles Miller	Posey/Swaine	5/28/30
Howard	Farm Bureau	John Dove	Freeman/Swaine	7/10/30
Prince George's	At-Large	Tracey Duval	Swaine/Sandi	4/15/30
Wicomico	Farm Bureau	James Adkins	Jarboe (by proxy Hirsh)/Feldt	7/14/30

- No SSCC meeting in August
- Supervisors- please complete the "Supervisor Survey" emailed by Loretta Collins at earliest convenience.
- Area 2 (Southern) Representative Amy Posey has completed her first 4-year term. Amy is eligible for a second term. Appointments are made by the MDA Secretary. Area 2 will receive further information via email shortly.
- Area 5 (Lower Shore) Representative Terry Nuwer's 5-year term on the Dorchester SCD Board has ended and Terry is not seeking reappointment. The SSCC thanks Terry for her years of service. A new appointment to the SSCC will be needed for the Lower Shore. Appointments are made by the MDA Secretary. Area 5 will receive further information via email shortly.
- Montgomery SCD requested that the SSCC ask for a legal opinion from the Office of Attorney General (OAG) regarding E&S Control requirements and oversight related to agritourism activities. A draft memo was considered by the SSCC. Any potential action on the part of the SSCC is on hold to allow for further discussions, including at the annual MASCD meeting in August.
- MDE representation: The SSCC wished Jim George the best in retirement. Greg Sandi is filling the role (awaiting final confirmation from Secretary of MDE). Welcome Greg!

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Briefing

Guest Speakers: Jason Keppler and Dr. Kimberly Abramo, MDA

Jason and Kimberly provided an overview of HPAI discussing prevention, detection and response, the Incident Command Structure (ICS), typical battle rhythm, and next steps looking towards the next flu season.

MEMBER REPORTS

MD Department of Agriculture – Hans Schmidt:

- Address LEEF questions to website:
 - https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/LEEF.aspx
- Chesapeake Bay Program: Agricultural Advisory Committee is up and running to provide a voice at the table for ag in discussion on meeting conservation and restoration goals. The two MD representatives are: Amanda Cather and Barb Glenn. Every bay state has two representatives.
- Cover Crop Program: It's been a tough year financially. Last year had record acres for the cover crop program and there were carry-over funds available to cover the acres that qualified. The 2025-2026 Cover Crop Program received the same funds as last year (\$23 million), however there are no extra funds to rely on. For this reason, MDA has to be careful to stay within the allocated \$23 million. Program changes are meant to address the hard budget cap this year. Emphasized importance of farmers getting nutrient management plan well in advance of cover crop program. As of now- there will be no changes to program, but MDA will review numbers to see if any updates are possible given financial constraints.
- In current fiscal environment, things are very tight across all state agencies. Trust fund is under a great deal of pressure.
- Cuts to Districts were made by looking at return on investment (ROI), efficiencies, etc. For this reason, cuts varied by District. Further discussions can be had at the annual MASCD in August. If the financial situation continues to worsen, there may come a time that some programs are cut.

MD. Department of Natural Resources – Rob Feldt: NO REPORT

MD. Department of Environment – Greg Sandi:

- CAFO permit is being reviewed by senior leadership then goes to EPA for 90-day review period. MDE is asking for an expedited review.
- Fiscal is tough at MDE as well. 3 positions have been lost. Bay Restoration Fund is due to sunset in 2030 resulting in 50% reduction in fees- thus 50% reduction in Fund (approx. \$100 million down to \$50 million). May be coming back to groups such as SSCC in the future for support. Fund primarily fund improvements to wastewater treatment plants as some are coming to the end of functional design life. Other things include cover crops, septic upgrades, clean water commerce act and whole watershed act are all supported by Fund.

University of Maryland Extension – Darren Jarboe:

Dr. Wendy Powers started as dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR), on July 1. She is actively engaging with stakeholders to gain insights into Maryland's agricultural and natural resource challenges and opportunities.

Due to the loss of federal funding, all SNAP-Ed program operations will conclude by September 30, 2025. SNAP-Ed currently employs 72 faculty and staff across UME county offices and collaborates with approximately 700 community partners. UME is dedicated to ensuring a responsible and supportive transition for affected faculty and staff.

Extension Workforce Development Program interns continue their 10-week full-time internship. The program is supported by an AFRI Competitive Grant from USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Student blogs can be accessed at go.umd.edu/umeinterns25.

LEAD Maryland is recruiting for Class XIV, with the new cohort beginning in early 2026. For details on participation benefits and application information, visit go.umd.edu/LEAD26-27-pdf.

Dr. Pride Ebile has joined the Agriculture and Food Systems Program (AgFS) Program as the local foods and entrepreneurship specialist. He has over 10 years of experience in agriculture, sustainable farming, agroecology, and regenerative agriculture. Pride received a Ph.D. and M.S. in Agricultural Sciences from the University of Hohenheim. He attended additional training in sustainable food systems, innovation and scaling, and rural investment project management. He will be located in Southern Maryland.

Nutrient management advisors have been appointed in the following counties:

- Allegany: Brianna LeMay
- Charles: BJ Bowling
- Washington: Craig Yohn
- Wicomico/Worcester: Claudio Rubione

The current UME AgFS openings are:

AgFS Extension

- AgFS IPM entomology specialist, ornamental horticulture finalists are being evaluated.
- AgFS county educator, Frederick County: The position is being evaluated by the college. The search for a temporary hire to serve Frederick County is underway.
- AgFS county educator, Prince George's County: The position is being evaluated.

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

- Program director and faculty specialist: The position is being evaluated by the AGNR Dean's Office.
- The search for two nutrient management advisors will begin soon.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Suzy Daubert

I have received letters from a number of Soil and Water Board members and want to thank those that reached out. I want to recognize the work that goes into the letters and assure

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that I welcome and always invite the communications. I want to encourage each of the boards to invest into the Local Working Group Process. This process is key in directing our conservation programs, tell us if there are specific needs or priorities that are not being met. We have yet to exercise the flexibilities we have in our programs to assure that Locally Led conservation remains a key part of the process. Please evaluate to me through this process if there are program gaps or if there are practices that don't fit Maryland. The Farm Bill Programs are typically written for the Mid-West and we need to adjust the programs to the needs of Maryland. I believe in data driven decisions and will need data in order to make the positive impacts on the ground.

Farm Services Agency:

CRP:

In mid-May, we were able to begin accepting offers again for CRP. We're accepting offers on a first come, first served basis until tomorrow, July 18th.

Offices have been swamped with crop acreage reporting so the July 18th deadline hasn't been ideal, but they've done their best to work new offers into their workload even in the thick of their busiest few weeks of the year and the roll out of new disaster programs.

All offers from the first batching period were accepted in Maryland and all General CRP offers were accepted (about 3200 acres accepted across all types of CRP).

A Grasslands CRP sign up was just announced and offers can be accepted until August 8th. More information will be sent to partners this week regarding Grasslands CRP.

For those offers that are accepted, we'll be able to utilize interim conservation plans which gives technical staff an extra few months to complete conservation plans.

ECAP:

Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) signup is ongoing until August 15th. This is the 10 billion provided through American Relief Act. Applications have been mailed to all producers and they can also just stop by the county office to sign if that is their preference. Most payments going out within weeks of signing. Nearly 30 million dollars have been paid out in Maryland.

LFP:

Unfortunately, drought conditions have triggered LFP in 7 counties, mainly on the western shore.

Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's are LFP eligible in 2025 with various signup dates. Give those offices a call to learn more.

SDRP:

Agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 can now apply for \$16 billion in assistance through the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP).

We're delivering the program in two stages. The first is for those that carried crop insurance or NAP during 2023 and 2024 and prefilled applications have been mailed to those producers. Stage two will begin in early fall.

More information can be found [here](#).

County Committee Elections:

If you've ever considered being a member of a county committee for FSA or have someone you'd like to nominate, county offices are accepting nominations until August 1st.

MASCD – Jen Nelson:

Monthly Highlights

- We look forward to seeing many of you at MASCD's Annual Meeting in Rocky Gap! Registration closes on July 18. Remember to share notes and resolutions from Area Meetings if they were held ahead of time with Jen. Thanks to all of the districts and MDA who are sponsors of the meeting!
- The next quarterly District Manager call will feature a webinar on Time Management for the first half of the call, which is open to anyone interested. The webinar is next Monday from 10 – 11. Let Jen or Alisha know if you'd like to attend and they'll share the meeting link.

Grants and Funding

- MASCD is working with ShoreRivers to implement three wetland restoration projects in Kent County, DE as part of our NFWF Grant for "Nature Based Structural Practices in Tax Ditch Watersheds". Once completed, these projects may serve as good projects to highlight through a field day or webinar. Additional funds are available through the grant to fund other wetland restoration projects, floodplain reconnection, two stage ditches, riparian buffers and other water quality practices. Jen is working with NFWF to extend the grant through April of 2027.

NFWF Tax Ditch Grant Funding Status	Total Budget	Committed Funds	Remaining Funds
Implementation Funds for projects in Chesapeake Tax Ditch Watersheds	\$750,000	\$256,000	\$494,000
Incentive Funds for Tax Ditch Organizations	\$75,000	\$20,000	\$50,000

- The Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming Program is seeking farmers for certification! Please help us spread the word to good candidates, including those farmers who were certified through FSCAP. Contact Chelsea at Chelsea.Gebbia@resourcesmartllc.com for more information.

MASCD Annual Meeting

- Registration is open for MASCD's 2025 Annual Meeting! The meeting will be held August 4-6 at Rocky Gap Casino & Resort. Visit <https://mascd.net/2025-mascd-annual-meeting/> for hotel information, sponsorship details and online registration. A few topics from the agenda includes:
 - Alice Crothers, co-owner of Long Green Farms, Inc. and Cecil SCD Board Member, will give our keynote address about how she and her husband incorporate conservation into their farm's business plan
 - Representatives from Perdue Agribusiness, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association will participate in a panel discussion to talk about their sustainability programs and opportunities for farmers and districts
 - At the Policy Development Session, MASCD members will discuss potential legislation and shape our advocacy efforts for 2026. Districts are encouraged

to develop draft policies at their Area Meetings to submit for consideration at the session on August 6.

Other Items

- **Restructuring MASCD's Committees-** MASCD is seeking your feedback on if and how we restructure our committees to our current needs. A survey was sent out to districts toward the end of April, with a request to submit feedback by June 30. Thanks to those who have gotten back to us already!
- **The Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative** hosted a workshop on June 24, "Understanding Nutrient Dynamics and Water Quality on Delmarva". This workshop brought together scientists, conservation groups and ag industry representatives to discuss possible reasons for disparities between expected and observed results in water quality monitoring.

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

DATE	EVENT
July 24-30, 2025	NACD's 2025 Summer Conservation Forum & Tours, Milwaukee, WI
August 4-6, 2025	MASCD 2025 Annual Meeting, Rocky Gap Hotel & Casino, Flintstone
September 21-25, 2025	NACD Northeast Region Meeting, East Syracuse, NY

Aq Commission- Gordon Kretser: NO REPORT

Area 1 (Western) – Diane Flickinger:

Washington County:

- Approximately 32 applications with 12,996.7 acres for the 2025/2026 Cover Crop Program as of July 11, 2025.

Frederick County:

- The Soil Smart Farm Tour will be held on September 4th focusing on the Walkersville area.
- The FCSCD held the elections of officers at the July 15th meeting.

Allegany:

- MASCD Summer Meeting, August 4-6, will be held at Rocky Gap Resort in Flintstone MD.

Carroll:

- Matt McMahon reports, our Secretary Kayla Hartman and her husband Neil welcomed their second child, a daughter, Nora Rose on Monday, July 14th. 6lbs 11 ounces and 19inches. Mother and baby are doing well.

All of the SCD Offices in the Area 1 – Western Region have been busy with the Sign-Up for the 2025-2026 Maryland Cover Crop Program.

Area 2 (Southern) - Amy Posey:

Anne Arundel:

- Nothing to Report

Calvert:

- Nothing to Report

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Charles:

- Tim Wells began as the new District Manager on June 30, 2025. Luis Dieguez will be staying on until 7/28/25 to assist with the transition. We will be having a retirement luncheon for Lui on 7/25 at the Charles SCD office. Everyone should have received an invitation by e-mail. Please RSVP by 7/18/25.
- We have advertised for a District Engineer, primarily to work on urban E&S and 378 pond review. Best consideration date of 7/18/25.
- We have advertised for the NACD grant planner position. Best consideration date of 7/25/25.
- Charles SCD Board sent a letter to NRCS state office requesting that the Local Work Groups be funded with a minimum allocation per work group to improve equity in distribution of EQIP funds.
- Charles County Government provided funding within their budget to fund the installation of acoustic sound proofing panels for the hall in our building. Should result in a huge improvement in the acoustics for future training and events.

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Prince George's:

- Nothing to Report.

St. Mary's:

- The Hog Point Shoreline project is completed. Marsh grass planting was finished in early July and the final deliverable is the as-built certification and acceptance by the Navy.
- Cover Crop sign-up ends today. With the program's changes for this year, St. Mary's numbers are better than expected, but total applicants and acres are less than last year.
- Two Farmers Feeding St. Mary's events are coming up. Staff and supervisors are volunteering to help hand out food at both events.

District Wide

- The District Managers have been asked to collect resolution topics from their boards this month and submit them to Amy by August 1st. So far, there are no resolutions.

Area 3 (Upper Shore) – Steve Freeman:

- Upper Shore meeting on June 26th. Topics discussed included District updates, impact of solar arrays on Counties and Districts, cover crop program, NRCS and MDA programs, and state budget.
- One resolution will be brought to the MASCD meeting.

Area 4 (Central) – Van Funk:

The annual Central Area Meeting occurred on July 16th. Topics discussed during the Area Meeting included:

- Discussion of appointments for proposed MASCD committee realignment.
- Status of the Forest Clearing Policies & Rules SSCC Subcommittee.
- Discussion of MACS cover crop program, notice of recordation requirements and "resetting" of bmp maintenance life following minor repairs.
- Overview and discussion of solar projects, which included the notification process for project completion/close-out and L-O-D determinations.

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Two resolutions were approved which will be presented at the MASCD Summer Meeting in Rocky Gap.

All of the Central Area Districts noted that the cover crop sign-up numbers were similar to previous years, but the acreages are somewhat reduced.

Baltimore County SCD

- The board recently met with Councilman Marks and had a productive interaction.

Harford SCD

- North Harford High School Envirothon Team will represent the State of Maryland at the National Envirothon Competition to be held at Mt. Royal University, Calgary, Canada between July 20th – 26th.
- Harford SCD and MDA staff have been diligently assisting cooperators/applicants with the 2025-2026 Winter Cover Crop Program sign-ups.
- Look for the July 2025 Newsletter to be sent out soon.
- On October 23rd, the Harford SCD will be hosting its annual Cooperator's Dinner at the Level Volunteer Fire Hall. Invitations will be sent out later this summer.

Montgomery SCD

- On July 8, the county council held a public hearing on Council bill 18-25, which will amend the county's local forest conservation law. This proposed bill was introduced by the council president at the request of the planning board director. The bill proposes to regulate and classify a tree down to anything at least 1 inch in diameter. This in effect would make nearly any land grubbing activity subject to forest conservation in Montgomery County. The district board submitted written testimony for the public hearing providing the council with a better definition as to when a tree should be classified as a tree. Primarily the board advocated that the trees ability to produce flowers and seeds is an indicator of maturity and should be the key factor in determining when a tree transitions from a sapling to a tree. Generally, this occurs around 4 inches in Dbh. The district board also asked the county council to consider an exemption for agriculture from forest conservation if the landowner is working with the district and the activity is in accordance with an NRCS standard and incorporated into a conservation plan.

Area 5 (Lower Shore) – Terry Nuwer:

Somerset SCD:

1. 2025-2026 cover crop sign up.
2. Working with poultry producers on a variety of different tasks.
3. Sediment and Erosion control plan review for solar, poultry, and industrial construction.

Wicomico SCD

*Wicomico staff busy taking cover crop applications.

*We will be hosting the SSCC Meeting at MDA Animal Health Lab on Thursday and the Lower Shore Area Meeting at the District office on July 22nd.

*Wicomico staff will have a booth at the Wicomico County Fair August 15-17 at Winterplace Park in Salisbury.

Dorchester SCD

1. Dorchester SCD busy with Cover Crop sign up.
2. Lower Shore Area meeting being held July 22nd at Wicomico SCD.

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3. Coloring Contest students were recognized and first place applicants forwarded to St. Mary's for MASCD Conference.
4. Numerous solar array projects being submitted for Sediment & Erosion Control review.

Somerset SCD

- Chelsea Tyson has taken over the Sediment and Erosion Control Plan Review in Worcester.
- Staff has been working diligently to sign-up cover crop participants by the July 17th deadline: acres and participation overall are down from last year.
- SCD Board hosted their Annual Summer Luncheon for Service Center Staff.
- SCD has begun paying on the PDA repairs, mowing, and maintenance completed via an MOU with MDA.
- Lower Shore Annual MASCD Meeting Scheduled for July 22nd at Wicomico SCD (I'm sure Dorchester has this one covered)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 AM (Swaine/Schmidt) and followed by optional tour of Animal Health Lab.

Respectfully Submitted,



Loretta Collins
Executive Secretary

Attendance: July 17, 2025

*in-person

SSCC Member	Name	Present	Absent
Area 1- Western	Diane Flickinger	X	
Area 2- Southern	Amy Posey	X	
Area 3 - Upper Shore	Steve Freeman	X*	
Area 4 - Central	Van Funk (Chair)	X*	
Area 5 - Lower Shore	Terry Nuwer		X
MDA	Hans Schmidt (until 10:27)	X*	
DNR	Rob Feldt	X	
MDE	Greg Sandi	X	
UMD	Darren Jarboe (Sarah Hirsh, proxy)	X*	
MASCD President	John Swaine	X*	
Ag Commission	Gordon Kretser	X*	
USDA-NRCS (non-voting)	Suzy Daubert	X*	
FSA (non-voting)	Russ Clanton		X

Organization /Office	Attendee(s)	Organization /Office	Attendee(s)
Allegany SCD		Howard SCD	
Anne Arundel SCD		Kent SCD	
Baltimore County SCD	Jim Ensor	Montgomery SCD	
Calvert SCD	Jason Leavitt	Prince George's SCD	Steve Darcey, Kim Rush-Lynch
Caroline SCD		Queen Anne's SCD	Tony Riggi,
Carroll SCD	Matt McMahon,	Somerset SCD	Mark Carey*, Anne-Meredith Webster*, Robert Fitzgerald*
Cecil SCD		St. Mary's SCD	Bruce Young
Charles SCD	Luis Dieguez, Tim Wells, Dee Dee Saunders	Talbot SCD	Shawn Smith*
Dorchester SCD	Karen Houtman*	Washington County SCD	Lori Flook-Bishop, Mark Kendle, Dee Price
Frederick County SCD	Heather Hutchinson	Wicomico SCD	Richard Glasgow*, Bobby Guy*
Garrett SCD		Worcester SCD	Chelsea Tyson*
Harford SCD			
MDA (HQ)	Alisha Mulkey*, Loretta Collins*, Jason Keppler*, Byron Petrauskas*, Kimberly Abramo*	MDA	David Mister (Eastern Shore), Adam Lyon (Southern MD),
MASCD	Jen Nelson*	NRCS	Kendrick Flowers*
Office of Attorney General	Tom Filbert	Chesapeake Bay Foundation	