

**State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
November 20, 2025 (Hybrid)
MDA Headquarters, Annapolis MD
Minutes**

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

The minutes of October 2025 meeting were approved. (Freeman/Posey)

SSCC ADMIN

Appointments

| District | Affiliation | Appointed | Motion/Second | Term Expires |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Baltimore County | At-Large | Walter "Toby" Mays, III | Swaine/Freeman | 10/17/30 |
| Carroll | At-Large | Janet O'Meara | Freeman/Posey | 11/17/30 |
| Harford | At-Large | Richard Holloway, Jr. | Sandi/Freeman | 10/17/30 |

- Dec 18 All-Day 2026 Workplan meeting @ MD Farm Bureau (Davidsonville, MD) In-person only
- Update: MDA definition of agriculture: Harrison Palmer, Executive Secretary of the MD Ag Commission, provided context for the draft definition of agriculture being reviewed by stakeholders. The most recent version is below. The Commission is aiming to finalize the draft on Dec 10 and send to Secretary Atticks. The finalized definition will serve as guidance for MDA and other agencies. It is not intended to be codified in statute. Please send any feedback prior to the Dec 10 meeting directly to Harrison Palmer (Harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov) or Gordon Kretser (gkretser@chesapeakevalleyseed.com)

Quick Review:

Officer Elections and Attendance Requirements

Loretta Collins, SSCC Executive Secretary, reviewed state law requirements for District Board officer elections and supervisor attendance.

MEMBER REPORTS

MD Department of Agriculture: NO REPORT

MD. Department of Natural Resources: NO REPORT

MD. Department of Environment – Greg Sandi:

- 3 listening sessions occurred for the updated stormwater regulations and design manual. No date yet for when MDE stormwater program will have responses to feedback received.

Approved December 18, 2025

- There are some updates on the CAFO permit. More to come in December.

University of Maryland Extension – Darren Jarboe:

UME will present administrative and programmatic overviews to the county Extension advisory councils and board members across the state on December 2.

The Engaging Extension: Connecting Research, Teaching, and Community meeting was held in College Park on November 6. The objective was to foster collaboration among campus and field faculty.

The 2025 Agricultural & Environmental Law Conference took place November 10 at the Graduate Hotel in Annapolis. The major topics were From Crops to Kilowatts: Growing with Maryland's Energy Demands, Maryland's New Heat Illness Prevention Standard, Addressing Local Food Security through Farmer-Centered Community Partnership Networks, From Fields to Courtrooms: Ag Law Shifts in 2025 and Beyond, Effectiveness of Economic Incentives to Enhance Riparian Buffer Adoption and Environmental Benefits in Maryland, and Unpacking Federal Agriculture Appropriations and Budgetary Decisions on USDA Grant Programs.

The current UME AgFS openings are:

AgFS Extension

- AgFS county educator, Frederick County: Presentations and interviews of three finalists took place November 12.
- AgFS county educator, Prince George's County: Funding is being secured for the position.
- AgFS county educator, Talbot County: Initial interviews have been conducted and finalists selected.
- LEAD Maryland agent associate: The job announcement has been submitted to University Human Resources. The search committee members are Susan Harrison, chair; Joseph Cho; Nevin Dawson (Class VII); Antonio Silas; and Emily Zobel (Class X).

Agricultural Nutrient Management Program

- Program director and faculty specialist: The position description will be revised and reposted in early spring.
- Nutrient management advisor positions in Baltimore, Harford, and Montgomery Counties: Candidates have been interviewed and offers have been made.

Natural Resources Conservation Service- Suzy Daubert:

I ask for patience as our staff gets back to work from furlough.

There will be a National Application Batching date for all Financial Assistance Programs like EQIP, CSP, and AMA. Maryland has received our initial allocations:

- EQIP \$18,287,000
- CSP \$6,864,000
- AMA \$ 214,845
- Air Quality \$ 300,000
- ALE \$1,000,000
- WRE \$1,642,000

Temporary leadership updates:

- Sherri DeGraphenreed will be acting ASTC Field Ops eastern/southern until March
- Leon Tillman acting ASTC Programs until March
- Brad Micheal acting ASTC Field Ops Western/Central

Farm Services Agency- George Turner:

- Limited services during the shutdown to provide safety net payments.
- Waiting for CRP funding to be put in place. Annual rental payments usually come out in October. Asking for patience.
- Some program deadlines will need to be extended due to shutdown. Encourage folks to check with local office for more information.

MASCD – John Swaine:

November Highlights

- **With Maryland’s Legislative Session and MASCD’s Winter Meeting coming up**, we’ll be working on convening our Legislative Committee to prepare. Keep an eye out for registration to open for our Winter Meeting on February 9-10 and a new Advocacy Toolkit for our members.
- **Mark your calendar! MASCD’s 2026 Annual Meeting will be held August 10-12 at Solomons Inn.**

Grants and Funding

- MASCD received notification of two funding awards through the Campbell Foundation this month, to continue our Leadership Development Initiative and to support the Maryland Bay Friendly Farming Certification program.
- Our NFWF grant to support the Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming Program is also back up with the conclusion of the federal shutdown. 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, or fill out an application online at https://bayfriendlyfarms.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/MD-BFF-Program-Sign-Up-Application_fillable.pdf
- **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. This month, we received approval to extend the project through April 2027.

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

Other Items

- **MASCD hosted their October Board of Directors Meeting** on October 28 in Annapolis. The group heard updates from issues raised at our Annual Meeting related to MACS, privacy concerns and supervising remote employees. We also heard from Liz Warren with Delmarva Chicken Association about their conservation program for poultry producers.
- **District Managers Roundtable-** Our DM Roundtable discussion was held on October 20, focusing on how to supervise employees remotely. Our survey is still open for district managers to let us know which topics they’d like to hear about at future webinars.

- **2026 NACD Northeast Region Meeting-** We've secured a contract with Chase Center on the Riverfront for August 24-27. The venue has a variety of meeting spaces that can meet our needs.
 - **"Management Excellence" Breakout Track-** Jen has acquired funding to sponsor a breakout track with Bryan Peterson from Associated Employers. Bryan led a three-day management training in Maryland earlier this year that was well-received and it's an exciting opportunity to offer similar training for district managers throughout the Northeast Region and beyond.
- **Chesapeake Ag Networking Forum-** This NFWF-sponsored meeting was held November 12-14 in Hershey, PA. I contributed to 3 sessions at the meeting, including a presentation on the Chesapeake Bay Program's Ag Advisory Committee, a session about Farmer-Led Initiatives and a session about novel TA approaches. I outlined some of the districts' TA challenges and opportunities for NFWF to provide funding assistance.

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

| DATE | EVENT |
|----------------------|--|
| October 28, 2025 | MASCD BOD Meeting, MDA Headquarters |
| November 12-14 | NFWF Chesapeake Ag Networking Forum, Hershey, PA |
| February 9-10, 2026 | MASCD Winter Meeting, Westin Annapolis |
| February 15-19, 2026 | NACD Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX |
| March 24, 2026 | MASCD BOD Meeting, Location TBD |

Ag Commission- Gordon Kretser: NO REPORT

Area 1 (Western) – Diane Flickinger:

Washington County

1. Our Keedysville Stream Restoration Project is currently underway; going well! Visit our website (www.conservationplace.com) for a note from one of the landowners!
2. Cover Crop Program Fall Certifications complete; Staff completing field inspections. 8-9 Producers canceled for various reasons, to include, changes to the program.
3. Washington County Soil Conservation District is creating a new Wildlife Habitat Program working in partnership with a local wildlife stewardship group.
4. Washington County Soil Conservation District presented to the Town of Boonsboro Environmental Commission, November 12, 2025; discussed who we are, what we do, programs, and future connections we can make.

Frederick County

1. The Frederick County Soil Conservation District Annual Cooperators Banquet was held November 19. Ryan and Rebecca Grove, Mountainside, were selected as the 2025 Cooperator of the Year.
2. Planning is underway for the "Digging Deeper into Soil Health" educational event, which is held in February 2026.

Area 2 (Southern) - Amy Posey:

Calvert:

- Initial Envirothon training on Wed 19
- Continuing with oyster renumeration projects: 2 in design and 1 in planning stages

Approved December 18, 2025

- Jason Leavitt, District Manager, attended and hosted the Calvert County government farm tour on Oct 22. Shared how conservation practices throughout the District have helped shape farm and grazing model

Charles:

- New engineer started last week. Working on E&S Control and reviewing small ponds.
- Participated in the outreach training for soils and meadows establishment and maintenance with Chalres County Resilience Authority
- Acoustic project has been completed at District office. Looking forward to hosting events in the future.

Prince George's:

- First Envirothon training was on Nov 4

St. Mary's:

- Christmas on the Square will be in Leonardtown on Nov 29. SCD will pop kettle corn for Envirothon fund raising.
- Staff assisted SoMD RC&D with a Rural Legacy Easement monitoring for the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area
- The District is selling a 2012 12 ft Great Plains turbo-till drill. If interested, go to District website.
- SCD is participating in St. Mary's County comprehensive plan update. Multiple work sessions are planned in the next several months.

District-Wide:

- Southern Area Dinner was hosted by Anne Arundel District on Oct 23rd and was well-attended.

Area 3 (Upper Shore) – Steve Freeman:

- Cover crop sign-up ended. Great sign-up in Kent and Queen Anne's County.
- Kent Cooperator's Dinner is in April. Actual date to be announced.

Area 4 (Central) – Van Funk:

Baltimore County SCD

- NRCS staff are back at work!
- The District's Urban Department held their annual meeting with Baltimore County Sediment Control Inspectors on November 19th to discuss the effectiveness of E&S plan implementation in the field.
- District staff participated in a "Farmer Fair" which was organized by Baltimore County. There will be a second event in January 2026
- The District is supporting and participating in Baltimore County's UME's "Field Crops Day" on December 3, 2025.
- The Baltimore County Noxious Weed Program ended 2025 on a positive note.
- The District will hold their December meeting at one of the supervisor's farms. After the meeting, there will be lunch for the staff and a tour of the farm.
- The District Manager attended the Harford SCD Cooperators Dinner.

Cecil SCD

- Cecil SCD continues with Fall Cover Crop reporting, inspections, and certifications. Inspections are ongoing and will be wrapped up and finalized by December 19th.
- Select staff have continued with HPAI response training and attended the 5-state response training held in Salsbury on 11/17.

Approved December 18, 2025

- Cecil County's Envirothon Fall training was held 10/21 with a record turnout of over 85 students.
- Cecil SCD will also be training students at the annual "Boh-Blitz" at Bohemia State Park on 11/21 explaining the importance of Warm Season Grasses to nesting birds. The event hosts roughly 145 students.

Harford SCD

- Harford SCD and MDA staff are working on the 2025-2026 Cover Crop (CC) "fall certification" reporting and conducting "spot checks" on 20% of the planted CC crop fields.
- On October 23rd, the Harford SCD hosted its annual Cooperator's Dinner at the Level Volunteer Fire Hall. Jeremy Peters, NACD Chief Executive Officer, was one of two keynote speakers. Harford SCD recognized Frank Richardson as its "2025 Conservationist of the Year" and Mel Huber, Jr. as the "2025 Cooperator of the Year".
- On November 6th, Harford SCD led the Harford County Envirothon Steering Committee meeting. The committee is focusing on preparing for the 5th Topic training in January 2026. The 5th topic is: "Non-Point Pollution: It begins at Home".
- On November 12th, Lee D. McDaniel, Chairman of the Harford SCD Board of Supervisors introduced the new student associate to the board members. During this school calendar year, Harford SCD will have two (2) student associates serving on the board.

Howard SCD

- No Report

Montgomery SCD

- No Report

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

Worcester:

- New Board Supervisor Val Nasir attended her first monthly meeting on 11/13
- MDA Staff are focusing on Planning details and MACS Applications for (6) Delmarva Chicken Association Buffer clients
- SCD NM License for No-Land Planning Renewed with MDA NM
- Worcester SCD is planning their Annual Holiday Luncheon following their December Meeting

Wicomico:

- Wicomico is working through Fall Certification for cover crop,
- Buffer planting with associated practices for co-cost-share with DCA,
- No-Land NMPs being completed,
- Panning issues being resolved for Tracker entry.

Somerset:

- Erosion and Sediment control has been busy again this month.
- MDA staff has been busy certifying cover crop.

Dorchester:

- Dorchester SCD busy with Fall Certification of Cover Crop.
- Dorchester County has advertised for County Soil Technician.
- Staff looking into possible DCA Buffer Plantings.
- Cooperator of the Year to be chosen for 2025.

SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON November 20, 2025

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

Time of closed session: 10:36 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 2. Discuss administrative matters dealing with the operations of SSCC

2. 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

3. Statutory authority to close session:

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

4. Topic #1: § 3-305(b) (x)

"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:

| Topic description | Persons present for discussion | Action Taken/Each Recorded Vote |
|--|--|--|
| #1: Garrett SCD Supervisor Applications | In-Person: Freeman, Funk, Schmidt, Sandi, Swaine Virtual: Flickinger, Posey, Kretser, Webster | Follow-up discussion of application materials- no vote |
| #2: Dorchester SCD Supervisor Applications | In-Person: Freeman, Funk, Schmidt, Sandi, Swaine Virtual: Flickinger, Posey, Kretser, Webster | Discussion of application materials- no vote |
| #3: Draft Supervisor Application | In-Person: Funk, Schmidt, Sandi, Swaine Virtual: Flickinger, Posey, Kretser, Webster | Feedback provided on revised draft supervisor application- no vote |

The meeting was adjourned from closed session at 11:25 AM (Webster/Posey).

Respectfully Submitted,

Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

Attendance (Open Meeting): Nov 20, 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 | Anne-Meredith Webster | X | |
| MDA | Hans Schmidt | | X |
| DNR | Rob Feldt | | X |
| MDE | Greg Sandi | X* | |
| UMD | Darren Jarboe | | X |
| MASCD President | John Swaine | X* | |
| Ag Commission | Gordon Kretser | X | |
| USDA-NRCS (non-voting) | Suzy Daubert | X* | |
| FSA (non-voting) | George Turner | 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 | | Prince George's SCD | |
| Caroline SCD | | Queen Anne's SCD | |
| Carroll SCD | | Somerset SCD | |
| Cecil SCD | Chris Brown | St. Mary's SCD | Bruce Young, Bobby Cooper |
| Charles SCD | | Talbot SCD | |
| Dorchester SCD | | Washington County SCD | Lori Flook Bishop |
| Frederick County SCD | Heather Hutchinson | Wicomico SCD | |
| Garrett SCD | | Worcester SCD | Chelsea Tyson |
| Harford SCD | Quintin Cornwell | | |
| MDA (HQ) | Loretta Collins | MDA | |
| MASCD | Jen Nelson* | NRCS | Steve Strano |
| Office of Attorney General | | | |
| | | | |