

**State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
December 18, 2025 (In-person)
MD Farm Bureau, Davidsonville, MD
Minutes**

Van Funk, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM

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

SSCC ADMIN

Appointments

District	Affiliation	Appointed	Motion/Second	Term Expires
Dorchester	At-Large	Christopher Wayne Griffith	Swaine/Jarboe	5/15/30
Garrett	At-Large	Patrick Sines	Posey/Feldt	10/20/30

- Jan 15 and Feb 19 meetings will be virtual-only.
- SSCC will continue with alternate meeting locations (outside Annapolis) in 2026.

UPDATE: Definition of Agriculture

The MD Agricultural Commission finalized the agriculture definition and shared it with Secretary Atticks for consideration. Anticipated next step: Review with Governor's Intergovernmental Commission for Agriculture (GICA) in the spring after legislative session and continue to use it as a "north star" definition rather than adopting regulations or pursuing legislation. Guest Speaker: Harrison Palmer, MDA

WORKPLAN DISCUSSION

List of ALL items discussed and notes on following pages. A draft 2026 Workplan based on this information will be reviewed at January SSCC meeting.

SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON December 18, 2025

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

Time of closed session: 1:00 PM

Place (location) of closed session: MD Farm Bureau, Davidsonville, 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: Sandi

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: Allegany SCD Supervisor Applications	Flickinger, Posey, Funk, Webster, Schmidt, Feldt, Sandi, Jarboe, Swaine, Kretser, Nelson, Mulkey	Follow-up discussion of application materials- no vote

The meeting was adjourned from closed session at 2:30 PM (Webster/Posey).

Respectfully Submitted,

Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary

Attendance: Dec 18, 2025

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 (arrival 11:30)	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 Heydsha Cordero (AM proxy), Brad Michael (PM proxy)	X	
FSA (non-voting)	George Turner		X

Organization /Office	Attendee(s)	Organization /Office	Attendee(s)
MDA (HQ)	Loretta Collins Alisha Mulkey	MDA	
MASCD	Jen Nelson	NRCS	
Office of Attorney General			

Timing/Priority	Topic	Lead/Speaker	Notes
Monthly	Supervisor Training: Short trainings as standing agenda item (5-15 min)?	SSCC admin	<p>Possible Topics: Fiduciary Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary Procedure and Consensus • What needs to go to a closed public meeting and what can be discussed at an open public meeting? • How to have more productive Board Meetings? (I understand that the District Managers had a workshop on this topic. A book was recommended). • What is the SSCC? What is the authority?
Monthly	"Good News" stories from SCDs	Area Reps	Success story about an activity or event that your SCD is most proud of from this past year? What new partnerships are working for you?
On-going	Farm Bill/USDA Updates	NRCS, FSA	
On-going	Budget shortfall: Impacts on agricultural programs	MDA, NRCS	Can districts create taxing structures? Board supervisors think there is a magic hat of money... Explicitly explain budget structure and constraints to supervisors. Fiscal 101 from MDA. Trust fund currently carries 50+ District positions.
January	2026 Workplan Approval	SSCC	
January CONFIRMED	Agroforestry Systems	Francis Smith, DNR; USDA; Alison Lorentz, M DE; UME, new forester	Francis Smith: presentation about agroforestry work. MDA- Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (multi-state)
Early January update, Feb, post-legislative	Legislative Updates	MDA- Speaker TBD	Concern that bills may surprise Districts.
February and on-going	Forest Clearing Workgroup (updates and resolution)	Loretta Collins	Several meetings in 2025 Participants: DMs, DNR, MDE, NRCS

Timing/Priority	Topic	Lead/Speaker	Notes
February and end of the yr	MACS practices and component flat rates	MDA- Cost share program	District concern about moving to component based system without guidance. Hear from DMs- perhaps 1 rep per area.
March	E and S New Manual Update, including Small Ponds.: possible SSCC subcommittee	MDE	2-3 year process. SSCC role: establish sub-committee to review 2011 manual and generate list of desired updates/edits. Current regs not consistent with changing storm intensity and frequency. Forest clearing recommendations. Pollinator vegetation habitats. Minimum standards and exceeding those standards.
March	Solar Panels and Conservation Practices [bundle with E&S]		E&S practices not working with panel structures
March	Data Centers and Conservation Practices, including water quality, etc. [bundle with E&S]		Concern about WQ for livestock
March/April	Carbon Sequestration/Climate Resiliency/ MDA Healthy Soils	MDA, Harry Hughes Center, UME researchers, USDA-NRCS	Programs that Farmers can utilize. Harry Hughes report on climate smart ag coming in January. Alternative cover crop research (Sarah Hirsch). Younger farmers are engaging these practices. CSP cooperators extending beyond baseline. USDA Regenerative pilot program (suite of qualifying practices). New research/ emerging technologies.
TBD	From the Field: E&S Technicians/Engineers [bundle with E&S]		How does E&S play out in the real world? Are standards hamstringing better conservation?
Spring/early summer	CAFO permit		Comment period closes in January
May	Legislative Update	MDA	Post-Session
June/July	Bay Program Updates: New Watershed Agreement, 2025 progress, What's Next?	MDA	2025 progress will be early June. What does future look like with "new" WIP. What to do to include new BMPs? What is the process for BMP inclusion? What is in the pipeline?

Timing/Priority	Topic	Lead/Speaker	Notes
2 nd half of 2026	Update on the MD LEEF Program, BFF updates	MDA/MASCD	LEEF program lead coming on soon.
July (after nationals)	Envirothon and our hosting of NCF Event.	Envirothon Rep, Diana Bruch, Bruce Young	What are the criteria for schools? Private schools as well? A lot of ag community go to private/home school. How to build a program? Can be any youth organization. Barry Burch good contact from Frederick County. Chelsea (MASCD) is the coordinator in DE.
Fall	MDA updates: nutrient management (MDA) regulations.	MDA- Dwight Dotterer	As necessary
November	Reserved for future issue		
December	Workplan 2027		
Pending more info TBD	MOU: MDA/MDE Pollution from ag lands Remediation - Addressing soil contamination from industrial and agricultural pollutants		Subcommittee in SSCC?? Forest Clearing issue could include DNR.
TBD: Where it fits	Producer-Led Initiatives; The Whole Watershed Act	Jen Nelson	
TBD: Pending more info	Conowingo WIP	?	Status of WIP and work permit and impacts on ag. Follow-up with MDE
TBD	Cooperate Sustainability Program	Industry Leaders	Carbon market update (the economics of sequestration) – industry speaker. Purdue coming to MASCD winter.
TBD: Check relevancy	PFAS [with legislative update]		Taking out ag products on new legislation. Directed at consumer goods (narrowing focus)
MASCD/NACD	How do we as supervisors and the SCD Board build a more positive relationship with local County Government and State legislative delegates?		Helpful to have bigger participant pool (multi-state, NACD) Panel discussions
MASCD/NACD	SCD Outreach		Helpful to have bigger participant pool (multi-state, NACD)

Timing/Priority	Topic	Lead/Speaker	Notes
			Panel discussions What are other SCD supervisors and boards doing for Outreach to the community? How do we share our mission and vision with others? How do we show the positive influence we make to the County and State?