



MINUTES OF MEETING
HANOVER-CAROLINE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Hanover, Virginia July 14, 2009

Board Members Present:

Donald L. Wells – Chair / Director
Park Dodd – Director
Mac Saphir – Secretary / Director

Bruce Cauthorn – Treasurer / Director
Rose Bradshaw – Associate Director

Staff Present:

Sharon Conner – District Manager
Jim Tate – Conservation Specialist
Rebecca Jones – Education Specialist
Marian Moody - Conservation Specialist
Ann Edmonds – Administrative Assistant

Others Present:

Wayne Davis – Department of Conservation and Recreation
Mike Flagg – Hanover County Director of Public Works
Dwight Forrester - Department of Conservation and Recreation
Colleen Calderwood

Absent:

Joe Stepp – Vice Chair / Director
Bill Orrock - Director
Tim Etheredge – Associate Director
Leigh Pemberton – Associate Director
Dave Terwilliger - Department of Forestry
David Nunnally – Caroline County Senior Environmental Planner
Brian Wooden - Natural Resource Conservation Service

Call to Order:

The July 2009 meeting of the Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation District was held in the Hanover USDA Service Center Conference Room on Tuesday, July 14, 2009. Mr. Wells called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Secretary Report:

The minutes of the June 2009 meeting were presented as e-mailed to the Directors. A motion was made by Mr. Saphir and duly seconded by Mr. Dodd to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's Report for June 2009 will be presented at the August 2009 meeting.

Agency Reports:

Department of Conservation and Recreation:

Mr. Davis' report was provided in the packet.
Mr. Davis reviewed his report.

NRCS:

Mr. Wooden apologized for his absence; he was attending an Operation and Maintenance training in Staunton. Mr. Wooden provided a written report.

Cooperative Extension:

Mr. Saphir reported:

Pond Management Meeting will be June 20th at Mt. Olympus

Mr. Saphir has planted crop trials to test a new agriculture soap used to increase crop production.

Ms. Bradshaw reported:

Cancellation of the program "Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills" due to budget constraints

Ms. Bradshaw has been working with individuals on business planning sessions
July 31 to August 2, 2009 -Young Farmers Expo

August 6, 2009 - Ag Expo

August 20, 2009 - Paul Davis' surprise retirement party

Mr. Wells welcomed Dwight Forrester, Nutrient Management Specialist from DCR. Mr. Forrester offered his services to the district for planning needs in Caroline County.

Hanover County:

Mr. Flagg commented on the budget cuts and revenue concerns in Hanover County.

Mr. Flagg noted VDOT'S cuts regarding maintaining secondary roads and the effects this will have on many sectors.

Mr. Flagg reported that a Stormwater Regulations hearing will take place July 14, 2009 with public comment period through August.

Mr. Flagg requests a joint meeting with the District and Ray Simms, representative to the Soil and Water Board in regards to the new Stormwater Regulations.

Mr. Flagg notes the need of all parties involved directly or indirectly with the New Stormwater Regulations to keep the dialog open.

Mr. Flagg also reported on the county's new dam monitoring system incorporating radio transmission in real time coordinating with the county emergency system. Mr. Flagg invited the District to invest in the technology to plug into this system for monitoring Site 52 B.

District Business:

2009 (transitioning 2010) Ag BMP Cost-share Program:

Ms. Conner reported:

The FY 2008-2009 Cost Share Progress Report is in the packets. Ms. Conner reviewed the report noting the deletion of several tracts for Christopher Lane due to duplication in the system and the addition of two Smith Dairy tracts. A motion was made by Mr. Saphir to approve the reallocation of the 2008-2009 cost-share funds. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cauthorn and the motion carried.

Ms. Conner reviewed the 2010 Program Year Cost Share Priorities, noting the changes. A motion was made by Mr. Dodd to approve the 2010 Program Year Cost Share Priorities. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cauthorn and the motion carried.

Education Program Report:

Ms. Jones reported:

MWEE meeting was held at Meadow Park on June 18th for six middle school teachers for training and to review the progress made on the curriculum. The next meeting is scheduled for Aug 20th. A formal teacher training will be held this fall and Hanover County students will attend the first training in spring 2010.

No-Till Drill /Rain Barrel /Wildlife Boxes Report:

Ms. Edmonds stated that the reports are in the packets.

Tributary Strategies Reports:

Rappahannock River:

The nonpoint source work group has presented their recommendations on the new Storm Water Regulations.

York River:

Ms. Edmonds reported that a canoe trip at Zoar State Park and business meeting will be held on July 16th.

Other Business:

Local Working Group Discussion

The financial assistance programs of NRCS contained in the Farm Bill are divided into three categories: Easements, Stewardship, and Environmental Improvement. Specific input from the Local Working Group is requested in these three areas.

EASEMENTS:

NRCS offers easement opportunities to landowners under three programs: the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP), the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). The FRPP is offered through partnering entities that currently can hold conservation easements. GRP and WRP are direct easements with landowners and these easements are held by NRCS. ***What can NRCS and the conservation partnership do at both the state and local levels to increase interest and participation in easement programs?***

Simplify the procedures to include a timely closing on the easements.

- The new Farm Bill rules instruct NRCS to pay the lower of three amounts for an easement: the price derived from a market analysis of the region, a geographic rate cap for the region or the landowners bid. ***How can we make this more understandable or "user friendly" to landowners?***

Provide consistent training opportunities for localities, districts, and landowners. Provide prompt program information and details at the appropriate time to all partners.

- NRCS in Virginia does not fully utilize all of the funds available to us to restore wetlands under the WRP program. ***What practices, information material, or outreach efforts would be needed in your area to restore more wetlands?***

Trainings

STEWARDSHIP:

The Farm Bill modified the former Conservation Security Program (CSP) into the new Conservation Stewardship Program. The intent remains the same, to reward outstanding natural resource stewards with financial assistance payments to maintain current conservation practices and to implement even greater levels of treatment. The new program will be administered statewide rather than on a watershed-by-watershed basis.

- Program guidelines call for the identification of a minimum of three resource concerns and a maximum of five that direct conservation treatment within a state. Under the former program, the State Technical Committee identified Water Quality, Soil Quality, and the loss of on-farm wildlife habitat as our three major resource concerns. ***Do you agree with these? What additional resource concerns would you recommend for statewide implementation?***

Yes. Water quantity

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT:

WHIP:

- NRCS, working through the Wildlife subcommittee of the State Technical Committee, has identified the following resource concerns for Virginia: Loss of early successional habitat; declining habitats; wetland habitats; oak/hardwood restoration; stream, riparian, and estuarine habitats, and invasive species control. ***Are there any others that should be added? Should any be removed, and why?***

Wildlife management techniques added. Proper planting of species added.

- In support of the VDGIF master state wildlife plan and specific Quail Action Plan (QAP), 50% of total funding has been directed to establishing early successional habitat for small species such as quail, rabbits, song birds, and beneficial pollinator insect species. Each of the other resource concerns receives 10% of the total funding. This breakdown replicates historical trends in the requests from landowners. ***Does this breakdown, appear reasonable for your area? What wildlife practices are needed in your area that are not currently offered?***

We do not have enough information to comment. Has this breakdown been successful? We suggest a holistic approach to wildlife practices to include the entire property and surrounding lands.

EQIP:

- For the last several years: we have identified the following priority concerns in Virginia: Water Quality degradation from improper grazing, animal waste, cropland, and forest land; the need for more on farm wildlife habitat, ground and irrigation water use concerns, IPM for orchards, and poultry litter transfer. ***What other resource concerns does the Local Working Group feel needs to be addressed? What specific practices are needed?***

Water quantity issues need to be addressed. Water capturing and recycling practices for livestock, alternative watering systems, animal mortality BMP'S.

- The Farm Bill also placed greater emphasis on organic agriculture. NRCS is specifically charged with conservation practice to aid organic production. ***What cropland or grazing land practices do you feel are needed in your area for organic producers?***
Integrated pest management - how to get rid of invasive species, transport of manure from one facility to another and composting practices
- Much of our historical cropland efforts have been directed to grain production systems. We are hoping to expand the emphasis to address the conservation needs of specialty crops such as tobacco, cotton, vegetables, nursery crops, etc. ***What practices do you feel need to be emphasized that would benefit your area?***
Cover crop, no-till, irrigation management and rotational systems practices for vegetable producers, nitrogen injection equipment - possibly put a few into use in the state.
- The new Farm Bill also allows producers to receive financial assistance to develop a conservation activity plan with a private Technical Service Provider (TSP). These specific plans would be Forest Management, Grazing Management, Integrated Pest Management, Irrigation Water Management, Agricultural Energy, Comprehensive Air Quality, Drainage, Water Management, Transition to Organic, and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management.
Which of these would be high priorities for your area? What priority should be given in terms of funding plans over practice installation?
TSP certification should be more flexible. Priority should be given to practice installation
- Farm Bill rules still direct 60% of total EQIP funding to livestock agriculture. ***What additional needs of livestock in your area are not being addressed by the EQIP program? What additional practices or changes to practices are needed?***
Capturing and recycling water.
- Virginia has the ability to fund small-scale applied research projects to test new innovative practices under a state Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program. ***What specific items do you see as a priority and need in your area that could be evaluated and considered for funding?***
Waste burners / generating electricity, innovative vegetable BMP'S, composting systems, horse management, cisterns, alternative manure management

CBWI:

- The new Farm Bill authorized NRCS a new initiative called the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative to support clean up efforts in the Bay. Many of the stakeholders that were active in the development process stressed the need to fund practices in high priority watersheds only. With the increase in federal as well as state funding, we are working to utilize these funds effectively. ***Please provide any suggestions on which priority watersheds should be targeted for this program initiative.***
No priorities all watersheds to be included
- During the development process, we also heard stakeholders ask for accelerated efforts on key practices and not "more of the same" with our traditional practice offerings. We have tried to add specific practices such as aerial seeding of cover crops, 10-foot stream exclusion and nutrient management implementation to try to encourage adoption of new techniques. ***What additional efforts would you recommend for an accelerated approach within the Chesapeake Bay watershed?***

We commend the flexibility in the adoption of new techniques

- Our traditional financial assistance program efforts have been very closely aligned with the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program so that state and federal offerings were not in competition or in conflict. **What practices, cooperative efforts, or suggestions can you offer to make both programs work more efficiently together or separately? Would you have any specific suggestions for cooperative efforts on cover crops, conservation tillage and nutrient management?**

Better communication with partners regarding producer's participation in programs to avoid duplication. Assistance with engineering practices

Please feel free to make other comments on any NRCS program.

The Virginia Association of Conservation Districts Employees suggests training for employees in order to achieve DCR'S deliverable of Level 1 certification

SENACD

Mr. Wells stated that the district has been selected to showcase a district project at the SE NACD meeting August 13, 26 in Charleston SC. A motion was made by Mr. Saphir to approve travel for Ms. Conner to present at the meeting . The motion was seconded by Mr. Dodd and the motion carried. Ms. Conner will showcase the Boy Scott Jamboree 2010 in and effort to promote and encourage financial and volunteer support .

There being no further business, Mr. Wells adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Correspondence in Packets:

DCR Activity Report
NRCS Report
SWCD Staff Activity Reports
Cost-share Report
Cost-share Secondary Considerations/Caps
Local Working Group Questioner

UPCOMING EVENTS

District meetings - August 11, 2009 September 8, 2009 October 13, 2009 (Sharon will not be in town)
DCR Dam Safety Quarterly Meeting – Charlottesville, VA; July 23, 2009
Ag Expo – August 6, 2009; King William
MWEE Meeting – August 20, 2009; Meadow Farm Event Park, Caroline
SENACD Meeting – August 23 – 25, 2009; Charleston, SC
VACDE Employee Training – August 25 – 27, 2009; Graves Mountain Lodge, Syria VA
Rain Barrel Pick-up Days – September 1 and 2, 2009; Hanover
Annual Award Banquet – November 19 2009; Doswell Ruritan Center
VASWCD Annual Meeting – December 6-8, 2009; Richmond, VA

Respectfully submitted:

Ann Edmonds, Administrative Assistant

Date Approved

Donald Wells, Chairman

Date Approved

Mac Saphir, Secretary

Date Approved