

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Wednesday, December 7, 2022
Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board took place at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke Virginia.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Charles A. Arnason, Chair | Dr. Stephen R. Hill |
| Adam D. Wilson, Vice-Chair | Pamela Mason |
| Jay C. Ford | Charles Newton |
| Matthew S. Wells, DCR Director, Ex Officio | |
| Dr. Edwin M. Martinez, NRCE, Ex Officio | |
| Dr. Daniel Goerlich, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Invitee | |

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Anna Killius | Dr. Dahlia O'Brien |
| Kat Maybury | |

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Darryl Glover, Deputy Director, Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Wendy Howard Cooper, Director, Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Blair Gordon, SWCD Liaison
Angela Ball, Conservation District Coordinator
Sara Bottenfield , Agricultural Incentives Program Manager
Debbie Cross, Conservation District Coordinator
Mark Hollberg, Conservation District Coordinator
Stacy Horton, Conservation District Coordinator
Marrisa Roland, Conservation District Coordinator
Jeffrey Rogers, Grant Manager
Olivia Leatherwood, Conservation District Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT

Anne Coates, Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Kimberly Gleason, Loudoun SWCD
Lynn Graves, Culpeper SWCD, VASWCD President
Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau
Kathy Shamblin, Hanover-Caroline, SWCD
Dr. Kendall Tyree, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With six (6) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Arnason called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Arnason called for a moment of silence in remembrance of Pearl Harbor Day.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2022

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the minutes from the September 26, 2022, meeting.

Ms. Mason seconded, and the motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Matthew S. Wells, DCR Director

Director Wells gave a brief update from DCR. He noted that most of the issues had been covered during the course of the VASWCD Annual Meeting. He thanked Dr. Tyree and the Association for their work in hosting the meeting.

Director Wells noted that the Governor will release his budget on December 15, 2022.

APPROVAL OF BOARD BYLAWS – Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and Regulatory Coordinator

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that the Board had been presented with updated draft bylaws at the September meeting. She noted that the use of chair versus chairman was clarified to say that under parliamentary authority, Robert's Rules of Order apply to the procedures, but not titles.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Newton moved that the updated Bylaws of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board be approved as submitted by staff.

Mr. Wilson seconded, and the motion carried.

DAM SAFETY AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT DIVISION - Wendy Howard Cooper, Director, Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management

Ms. Howard Cooper gave the report for the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management. A copy of that report is included as Attachment #1.

Mr. Ford asked for clarification regarding the term “unknown” with regard to a dam status.

Ms. Howard Cooper replied that the term “unknown” is used when DCR is aware of a dam and has prepared a preliminary assessment, but a hazard classification has not yet been assigned.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION - *James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation*

Mr. Martin gave the report for the Division of Soil and Water Conservation.

VACS Program 2023

- Outside of the Chesapeake Bay area, districts have allocated more than 98% of funding.
- In the Bay areas, 52% of the allocated funds have been allocated.

Mr. Martin noted that this was five months into the program with historic funding.

Engineering Job Approval Authority

Engineering Job Approval Authority allows staff to design and oversee the construction of projects. DCR recently sent a letter to a number of District Chairs to outline some changes that will allow the Boards to be better informed.

Perennial Stream Update

DCR continues to work on the perennial stream map data. Some manual cleanup of the data was required which is almost complete. This will be followed by some comparisons with other local and Chesapeake Bay datasets as well as some field spot checks. The goal is to have a high quality map product ready for release by next summer.

Data QA/QC

In the spring DCR began a new automated process to assist in the quality assurance (QA) of best management practice (BMP) data submitted to DCR through the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program. The new process sends an email to each District every two weeks identifying potential QA issues in the data. The effective use of these new reports to resolve potential data issues as they arise resulted in the Division being able to successfully transmit the annual Bay data ahead of schedule.

Thank you

Mr. Martin noted that he wanted to recognize and thank Division staff in attendance for their efforts to plan and carry out the annual meeting.

Approval of Small Dam Repair Projects for Districts (Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund) – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the recommended action for the Small Dam Repair Projects for Districts. She noted.

- These projects fall between routine maintenance and rehabilitation
- Contingency fund recommendation - \$165,005.23
- Emergency fund recommendations - \$50,000
- Budget provides \$500,000 a year to this fund for these projects
- Recommendations for this year:
 - 10 projects
 - \$1,170,803 in total funding
 - Projects are:
 - Blue Ridge (2)
 - Culpeper (1)
 - Headwaters (1)
 - Piedmont (1)
 - Peter Francisco (3)
 - Southside (1)
 - Remote monitoring project

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Newton moved the following:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) approves funding for ten (10) projects in the amount of \$1,170,803.00 as presented and recommended by the Department. For FY2023, the Board also approves allocating \$165,005.23 for contingency funds and \$50,000 for emergency project funds.

Additionally, the Board directs the Department to reimburse Soil and Water Conservation Districts for all eligible costs associated with the installation of the remote monitoring equipment as provided for in Chapter 2 of the 2022 Special Session 1 Acts of Assembly. The funding for the reimbursements shall be provided from the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund.

Further, the Board authorizes the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District to utilize any remaining funds from projects ID#21-09 (Bush River #2 – wave berm, auxiliary spillway storm damage repair; gate valve repair project) and SDR22004 (Bush River #7 – emergency spillway storm damage repair; gate valve repair project) for use towards project ID#21-10 Bush River #5 (INV#147039) wave berm project.

Mr. Wilson seconded and the motion carried with Chairman Arnason abstaining.

Update on TAC recommendations related to WP-4 (Animal waste control facilities) – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones gave the update regarding TAC recommendations. She noted:

- The Animal Waste Subcommittee met 5 times during this year's TAC cycle.
- The Subcommittee focused on this item for the majority of their meetings.
- Consensus was reached regarding the recommendations that went before the full TAC for action.
- The full TAC met on October 18, 2022. The recommendations presented by the Subcommittee were approved by the TAC.
- These recommendations will be presented to the Board at the March 2023 meeting.
- The recommendations related to the WP-4 are:
 - To keep the existing Risk Assessment worksheet with a few changes for the WP-4.
 - To include poultry operations in the Risk Assessment. There is no technical reason to consider poultry operations differently from other animal operations.
 - To recognize that poultry operations tend to have higher nutrient loadings than other animal operations, in part due to the volume of animals on the operation.
 - To amend the scoring on the Risk Assessment to increase the point value for any nutrient loads (nitrogen or phosphorus) that exceed a certain baseline load of nutrients. This more accurately accounts for the increased nutrient loads associated with poultry operations, dairies, and highly stocked feedlot type operations (beef cattle).
- Any revisions to the specification should be effective in the upcoming program year FY2024, rather than during this program year.
- Changes to the Risk Assessment will impact only the WP-4; the other animal waste practices will utilize the existing Risk Assessment with no changes.
- Instruction documents were also created by the Subcommittee to assist District staff with completing the Risk Assessment. These documents will be posted on the AgBMP Tracking Module.

Approval of District Director appointments and resignations – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones gave the update regarding District Director appointments and resignations.

James River

Appointment of Mr. Gregory Powers, of Chesterfield County, effective 1/1/2023, to fill the vacant at-large appointed director position (term of office expires 12/31/2026)

Mountain

Appointment of Ms. Kari Sponaugle, of Bath County, effective 12/7/2022, to fill the unexpired Extension Agent appointed director position of Mr. Berkeley Clark (term of office expires 12/31/2024).

Natural Bridge

Appointment of Mr. Robert Beard, of Rockbridge County, effective 1/1/2023, to fill the

unexpired at-large appointed director position of Ms. Becky Szarzynski (term of office expires 12/31/2026).

Peaks of Otter

Appointment of Mr. Stacy Simmons, of Bedford County, effective 1/1/2023, to fill the vacant at-large appointed director position (term of office expires 12/31/2026).

Prince William

Appointment of Mr. John B. Price, of Prince William County, effective 1/1/2023, to fill the vacant at-large appointed director position (term of office expires 12/31/2026).

Thomas Jefferson

Resignation of Mr. Lonnie Murray, of Albemarle County, effective 6/29/2022, elected director (term of office expires 12/31/2023).

Appointment of Ms. Rosalyn Koontz, of Albemarle County, effective 12/7/2022, to fill the un-expired elected director position of Mr. Lonnie Murray (term of office expires 12/31/2023).

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the list of District Director appointments as presented by staff.

Ms. Mason seconded, and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Watlington Jones noted that the Workgroup Discussing VACS Implementation, established by the Board at the September meeting, would have the first meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield, Virginia.

PARTNER REPORTS

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Dr. Martinez gave the report for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A copy of the report is included as Attachment #2.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service

Not represented.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Dr. Goerlich gave the report for Virginia Cooperative Extension. A copy of the report is included as Attachment #3.

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Mr. Graves thanked the Board and staff for helping to make the annual meeting a great success. He advised that the Association would be represented at the December 13 workgroup meeting.

Chesapeake Bay Commission

Not represented.

Virginia Agribusiness Council

Not represented.

Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Ms. Moore expressed appreciation for being a part of the meeting. She advised that having the meeting regarding the agricultural needs assessment provided partners with more tools to advocate for additional funding. She noted that providing full funding for agricultural BMPs is a priority for the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

Ms. Moore thanked the Association and all involved with continuing to meet the water quality goals.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETINGS

Upcoming meetings will be held in March, April, and May of 2022. Dates and locations are to be determined.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

ATTACHMENT #1

Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
 Division Director's Report
 December 7, 2022

Presented by Wendy Howard Cooper
 Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management

Mr. Chairman, members of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, please accept this Dam Safety and Floodplain Management Division Report.

Critical Statistics of the Dam Safety Program as of October 31, 2022

| Count of Dams Regulated By DCR by Hazard Classification | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Calendar Year | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Total Number of Dams Regulated by DCR | 2056 | 2663 | 2645* |
| High | 326 | 348 | 371 |
| Significant | 170 | 173 | 171 |
| Low | 261 | 266 | 269 |
| Regulatory Size with Undetermined Hazard Classification | 1299 | 1876 | 1828 |

*Note: Fully breached and decommissioned dams excluded 2022

| Type of Hazard Classification for Dams Regulated by DCR | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Calendar Year | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Total Number of Dams Regulated by DCR | 2056 | 2663 | 2645* |
| High | 16% | 13% | 14% |
| Significant | 8% | 6% | 6% |
| Low | 13% | 10% | 10% |
| Regulatory Size with Undetermined Hazard Classification | 63% | 70% | 69% |

| Certificate or Permit Status | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|--|
| Calendar Year | 2021 | 2022 | |
| Total Number of Dams Regulated by DCR | 2663 | 2645 | |
| Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificate or General Permit Issued and Current | 10% | 10% | |
| Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate Issued and Current | 9% | 10% | |
| Regular or Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate Expired | 10% | 12% | |
| No Operation and Maintenance Certificate | 68% | 68% | |

| Certificate or Permit Status – High Hazard Dams Only | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--|
| Calendar Year | 2021 | 2022 | |
| Certificate or Permit Status –HH Dams -371 | 348 | 371 | |
| Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificate | 35% | 37% | |

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate Issued and Current | 7% | 16% |
| Expired Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificate | 17% | 5% |
| Expired Conditional Operation and Maintenance Certificate | 17% | 39% |
| No Operation and Maintenance Certificate | 3% | 3% |

Dams of Regulatory Size without Hazard Classification:

As of this report, there are 1,828 dams of regulatory size without a hazard classification in the DCR dam safety inventory. This is down from 1,877 from our report in March 2022.

DCR has implemented a mapping initiative to develop inundation maps with impact data for emergency plans and hazard classification determinations. To date 25 maps with hazard classification have been created. This data is now in Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS) and available for emergency planning and response. These maps do not relieve the dam owner of their responsibility to provide the regulatory products. A mapping engineer was hired October 25, 2022 to assist with this effort and a second mapping engineer position is under recruitment. The second mapping engineer will allow DCR to reinstate the Simplified Mapping Program as outlined in 4VAC50-20-54. Dam break inundation zone mapping.

Staff are conducting property research to identify owners of dams. All localities do not have this data available electronically and identification requires significant resources to find alternative methods of identification. One resource that has proven helpful is the hunter's database for rural properties. Staff continue to search for data sources to identify dam owners.

The number of dams of regulatory size with unknown ownership has been reduced from 812 to 638 or a reduction of 174 dams, approximately 22%.\\

Letters of Engagement:

DCR has sent "Letters of Engagement" to the owners of 401 dams considered to have the highest downstream risks. These "Letters of Engagement" are directly tied to the funding strategy identified in the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund (DSFPPAF) grant manual approved by the Board in September 2021 and September 2022.

| | |
|------------|---|
| 9/30/2021 | 127 letters issued for 100 dams (multi-owners) |
| 12/17/2021 | 112 letters issued for 100 additional dams (multi-owners) |
| 10/31/2022 | 211 letters issued for 201 additional dams (multi-owners) |

The letters provided a specific pathway to compliance for dam owners and advised that as the owner of a regulated dam, dam owners were responsible for the safe design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the dam and must, at a minimum, have the following on file with DCR:

1. Annual Inspection Report (4VAC50-20-105(C)(2) and (E))
2. Dam Break Inundation Study to determine Hazard Classification (4VAC50-20-54)

3. Emergency Action or Emergency Preparedness Plan (4VAC50-20-175 and 4VAC50-20-177)
4. Operation and Maintenance Certificate (4VAC50-20-105 and 4VAC50-20-150)

Dam owners were advised that financial assistance would be available through the DSFPPAF grant to those who received a Letter of Engagement. Dam owners were encouraged to apply for all eligible categories under the 50/50 matching grant program. Dam owners who chose not to apply for grant funding were provided a specific timeline to provide the required documents to DCR

Public Outreach:

During the month of October 2022 DCR launched a Dam Safety Public Outreach Campaign across the state. The campaign included public service announcements and news releases in both English and Spanish, social media ads and messaging, and radio and newspaper ads. The campaign was designed to heighten awareness and inform the public about dam safety responsibilities, and drive questions and requests for technical assistance to the DCR website.

DCR will offer a virtual training session for owners of the state's more than 2,600 regulated dams. Training will be offered from 2-4 p.m. on three different dates: Dec. 5, Jan. 17 and Feb. 7. Consultants and professional engineers are also welcome to attend. Attendees will learn about regulatory requirements, managing dam safety within the Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS) and the funding available through the 2023 Dam Safety Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund. The training will be taught by DCR dam safety engineers and program staff and will include time for questions and answers. A total of \$5 million is available to eligible Virginia dam owners for engineering studies, plans, repairs and other measures to help bring dams into compliance with regulations. Participants are able to register online at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dam-safety-and-floodplains/dsfpm-grants>

Additional outreach activities planned for 2023:

- Flood Awareness Week: March 12-18, 2023
- Low Head Dam Awareness Month: April 2023
- Dam Safety Awareness Day: May 2023

Status Report on Key Initiatives:

1. Lake Accotink Dam Consulting Committee: Staff continues to work with the Office of the Attorney general to identify a path forward.
2. Local Government Pilot Project: Southampton County and City of Franklin: Staff continues to work with the Office of the Attorney general to identify a path forward.

Dam Incidents and Failures 2022:

| Year | Date of Failure | No. | Dam Name | Damage or Deaths | County | Hazard Class |
|------|-----------------|--------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 2022 | 1/5/2022 | 099006 | Lake Monroe Dam | Pipe Collapse | King George County | High Hazard |
| 2022 | 1/17/2022 | 193011 | Chandler's Mill Dam | Partial Failure | Westmoreland County | Significant |
| 2022 | 3/21/2022 | 065006 | McIver Dam | Pipe Collapse | Fluvanna County | Unknown |

Enforcement

There are currently 24 dams under active enforcement. Six high hazard, three significant hazard, four low hazard and 11 with an unknown hazard classification.

For the first time in the history of the program, the division has received reimbursement for a portion of the costs associated with action taken under § 10.1-608. Unsafe dams presenting imminent danger. On November 16, 2020, DCR was notified that Spotswood Drive Dam in Orange County presented an imminent threat to life and safe and was authorized by the Governor's office to take immediate action to lower or completely drain the Spotswood Drive Dam pond until the unsafe condition was corrected. DCR had authorized the expenditure of reasonable and necessary costs incurred by Orange County associated with the corrective action. DCR reimbursed the county \$17,261.23 for its costs and provided the necessary information to DCRs Finance division for debt collection and to the Attorney General's office. . The dam owner made an initial payment of \$4,315.31 and will make three additional payments over the next three quarters. Funds recovered are returned to the Dam Safety Fund.

There is currently more than \$250,000 still outstanding and owed to the department for emergency dam actions.

Additional Activities:

The following activities are currently underway in the division and directly impact the results above:

- **DSS-WISE Lite:** DSS-WISE Lite is a web-based dam-break flood inundation modeling and mapping service available 24/7 to Federal, State, and Local dam safety officials through a cluster maintained by the National Center for Computational Hydroscience and Engineering (NCCHE) at the University of Mississippi. This system's fully automated data preparation components require the digital elevation model (DEM) data, which are used as inputs to the model, to be prepared in a certain format and to be made available locally within the cluster's storage server. At a cost of \$10,000, DCR has entered into an agreement with the University of Mississippi to update DSS-WISE Lite with Virginia specific data to allow more accurate mapping and hazard classification identification.
- **Dam Safety Inspection App:** DCR is working with GeoDecisions to develop and deploy a dam safety inspection app that will allow inspections to be primarily completed and

automatically uploaded into DSIS. This application will reduce the administrative burden for dam owners and engineers in completing the inspection. The app should also reduce the overall time necessary to complete inspections and may reduce costs for dam owners. With increased efficiency, it is anticipated owners will be able to provide condition assessments more readily for dams where condition assessments are missing. DCR is in the process of upgrading its servers and ESRI technology to allow the app to proceed. It is anticipated the app will be completed by the end of the year.

- **FEMA Collaborative Technical Assistance:** On 9/29/2022 The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management was notified of their selection for the FEMA Collaborative Technical Assistance (CTA) program. The goal of the "CTA is to help communities at risk of dam-related flooding to better understand their risk landscape and the potential consequences of dam-related emergencies. The CTA will include planning for emergencies related to operational discharges or dam-related infrastructure failure, a facilitated planning process with community stakeholders to build relationships, develop plans, and collaborate with whole community partners to achieve the goal of increased preparedness to dam-related hazards." VDEM will be a primary partner in this effort and is an active partner in the dam safety workgroup. A second meeting of the workgroup occurred 11/10/2022 and included FEMA, VDEM and DCR. A community wide exercise is being planned for January. Stakeholders will include local, state, and federal emergency managers; dam owners and operators; private sector representatives; community planners; floodplain managers; nonprofit partners; and other individuals and organizations facing dam-related emergencies. The CTA is another tool in the resilience toolbox and will be used to create whole community best practices for dam safety and risk communication across the state.
- **Grant Application:** NOAA Dam Removal and Fish Passage Restoration Notice of Funding Opportunity under the IIJA: DCR submitted a grant application to remove two dams along Cedar Creek located on the property of Natural Bridge State Park in Rockbridge County, VA. This project has three objectives: 1) decommission Natural Bridge Dam #4 and Natural Bridge Dam #5 so that they no longer pose a potential failure and flood risk downstream of the dams; 2) eliminate potential hazard to aquatic species because of sedimentation; and 3) re-establish the natural aquatic and riparian systems that existed prior to dam construction. The removal of unsafe dams furthers the mission of the department to protect public safety.

Removal of Natural Bridge Dam #5 and Natural Bridge Dam #4 will fully open approximately 30 miles of Cedar Creek to aquatics species. DCR collaborated with DWR and FWS on the application. This is a 100% federal grant. DCR requested \$9,671,226. Notices of award will be made in December 2022.

Funding and use plan for increased funding in the budget

- **Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund:** \$10,000,000. Per Section 10.1-603.19 F of the Code of Virginia “[t]he total amount of expenditures for

grants in any fiscal year shall not exceed 50 percent of the total non-interest or income deposits made to the Fund during the previous fiscal year, together with the total amount collected in interest or income from the investment of monies in the Fund from the previous fiscal year as determined at the beginning of the fiscal year.”

While \$10,000,000 will be deposited into the Fund during SFY2023, funds will not be eligible for grant award until SFY2024. In SFY2024 up to \$5M will be used for grants and loans to address all non-compliant dams, including the more than 1,800 dams of regulatory size without a hazard classification. Where appropriate and allowable, funds will be used to leverage and reduce match requirements for federal funding for dam safety projects. Funds will also be used to continue the support of agency needs in the administration of the program including personnel, contractual services, and emergency dam removals.

- **American Rescue Plan Act Funds:** \$10,000,000. Per 2022 Special Session I Budget amendments - HB30 (Conference Report) Bill Order » Item 486 #25c Water Impoundment Structures Central Appropriations, provides funds to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for improvements to privately owned high-hazard dams across the Commonwealth.

Four million (\$4M) of ARPA grant funds was announced for application on November 1, 2022 under the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund. Due to potential greater availability of non-state funding during the SFY2024 application period, remaining funds are reserved to maximize the Commonwealth’s ability to match and leverage future federal funds, including Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act funding. Up to \$6M will be offered in SFY24 for dam safety projects.

- **National Dam Safety Program (NDSP):** During the SFY22 application cycle, the federal NDSP offered a total \$5,897,140 across 50 state and territory programs. During the SFY23 application cycle, the federal NDSP offered a total of \$11,000,000 across 50 state and territory programs. This increase resulted in a 46% increase in program funding in Virginia from \$192,913.00 to \$358,520.00, including \$136,155 in IIJA funding that will be used to develop and conduct risk assessments on existing high hazard dams.

Per the IIJA, \$148,000,000 of the amounts made available in this Act shall be for grants to States pursuant to section 8(e) of the National Dam Safety Program Act (33 U.S.C. 467f(e)). The NDSP is allocated based on total number of all regulated dams for all programs relative to the number of dams regulated by each state. Based on current estimates over a five year allocation period, this will translate to over \$900,000 per year or \$4.5M over five years. If the allocation period is extended to eight years, the annual allocation will be approximately \$560,000 per year. This increased funding will allow DCR to hire additional engineering staff to support the mapping and regulatory efforts of the department and aid the departments OKR efforts.

- **High Hazard Potential Dam Program (HHPD):** Per the IIJA, \$585,000,000 of the amounts made available in this Act shall be for grants to States pursuant to section 8A of

the National Dam Safety Program Act (33 U.S.C. 467f-2), of which no less than \$75,000,000 shall be for the removal of dams: Provided further, That dam removal projects shall include written consent of the dam owner, if ownership is established. Maximum funding available in previous years has ranged from \$10M to \$22M annually.

The HHPD is allocated based on total number of regulated dams in poor or unsatisfactory condition for all applicants relative to the number of regulated dams in poor or unsatisfactory conditional for each applicant. This increase in funding and the identification of new high hazard eligible dams will drive additional funding to the Virginia Dam Safety Program. The amount will be dependent upon the number of other states that apply. DCR intends to use the DSFPPAF and ARPA funding to offset 50% of the dam owner match to expand the number of owners who are able to bring dams into compliance.

- **Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Dams:** With a total estimated cost of \$245M, eight (8) SWCD high hazard dams are slated to begin or complete rehabilitation by 2028. General fund appropriations of \$15M in SFY2021 and \$45M in SFY2023 are available for this effort. While it is anticipated that federal funding through NRCS will be available to support these efforts, additional funding is necessary to meet the estimated costs.

ATTACHMENT #2

NRCS REPORT
Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting
December 7, 2022
Hotel Roanoke
110 Shenandoah Avenue NE • Roanoke, Virginia 24016

State Conservationist (STC) Highlights

- **Smith Creek Partnership (2010)** – Established to foster conservation collaboration in our Chesapeake Bay Showcase Watershed. Continued long after the Maryland and Pennsylvania projects wrapped due to the community of committed partners involved in the effort. More than 20 groups, including the Shenandoah Valley SWCD, joined forces to help farmers and residential landowners voluntarily implement best management practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff into the Chesapeake Bay.
- **Soil Health Initiative (2013)** – This ongoing partnership effort has been highly successful in increasing awareness and adoption of four core management principles. NRCS established the Virginia Soil Health Coalition as part of the 2013 launch to strengthen coordination and provide a consistent message to producers. Outreach tools such as the “Gaining Ground” and “Common Ground Soil Stories” videos were great examples of this partnership in action. In May 2020, we finalized the *Virginia NRCS Strategic Plan for Soil Health Promotion & Implementation*, which formalized many of our existing strategies and outlined priorities for state-level soil health activities. The next year, the coalition teamed up with Virginia Cooperative Extension to launch the 4theSoil campaign to further extend our reach.
- **State-Level CIGs (ongoing)** – Between 2010 and 2021, Virginia NRCS provided more than \$1.7 million in funding to support 41 partnership projects to evaluate and accelerate adoption of new approaches to natural resource protection. The program has been a pillar of our soil health strategy, supporting numerous demonstration projects. CIG and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) initiatives implemented throughout the commonwealth are changing the landscape for the better by enhancing soil health, reducing damaging impacts of invasive species, protecting threatened and endangered species, and reducing nutrient and sediment runoff for improved water quality.

Assistant State Conservationist for Programs (ASTC-P)

EQIP, CSP, RCPP, CIG, VPA-HIP and Easement Programs

Field staff are currently managing 2,207 active conservation program contracts with our participants. These contracts represent \$137 million in financial assistance to Virginia farmers on nearly 470,400 acres.

- **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)**
Received 1,047 EQIP applications. Applications are currently being assessed and evaluated by field staff. Added at statewide Urban Agriculture fund pool. Received an FY23 EQIP allocation of \$24.5 million.

NRCS REPORT

Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting

December 7, 2022

Hotel Roanoke

110 Shenandoah Avenue NE • Roanoke, Virginia 24016

- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)–Classic, Renewals & GCI**

Preapproved 125 CSP Renewal applications for \$8.5 million. Preapproved 16 CSP-GCI applications. Received 218 FY23 CSP Classic applications. Received an FY23 CSP allocation of \$21.5 million.

- **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

NRCS funded a new partnership project with the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley that will focus on funding easement acquisitions in the Shenandoah Valley. Total obligations since 2015 now stand at \$10 million for 417 contracts tied to 10 projects.

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**

Received 6 ALE applications from three partner organizations. Currently 7 ALE acquisitions are in progress. Existing recorded easements now total 146 on 17,112 acres of farm and wetland.

- **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**

Awarded \$395,351 for Virginia Tech and the Clifton Institute state CIG proposals. The Virginia Tech project will focus on soil health on grazing lands and the Clifton Institute project will be centered around pollinator habitat restoration. Virginia NRCS is currently managing 10 active CIG projects throughout the state.

- **Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)**

Virginia NRCS continues to assist DWR with VPA-HIP. The program now has 23,000 acres enrolled in the Coalfields region of Southwest Virginia. Enrolled acres consist of 13 elk viewing properties, 12 elk hunting properties, 24 birding trail sites and 350 acres of managed habitat sites.

Engineering (SCE)

Dam Rehabilitation

- **Beaver Creek 1**

The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) is the sponsor for the locally led planning effort and has retained Schnabel Engineering as their consultant. The draft environmental assessment is currently out for public and interagency review. The final environmental assessment is projected to be ready March 2023.

- **Cherrystone Creek 1 and Cherrystone Creek 2A**

Pittsylvania County is the sponsor for the locally led design effort for rehabilitating the structures and has retained Schnabel Engineering as their consultant. NRCS and the

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county have signed separate cooperative agreements to obligate the funding. The consultant has started the design process, which is estimated to take 18 to 24 months.

- **John's Creek 1**

Mountain Castles SWCD is the sponsor for the locally led design effort for rehabilitating the structure. NRCS has requested funding.

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

- NRCS is providing disaster assistance to Buchanan County through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) for a rain event in the Hurley area on August 30 (estimated 6-8 inches). NRCS and Buchanan County completed damage survey reports (DSRs) for 4 county-identified sites. Funding for 3 eligible sites was received in mid-January 2022 and the EWP agreement was finalized on March 15, 2022. Buchanan County is currently working through the engineering design, permitting, and scheduling for the approved sites.
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State Resource Conservationist (SRC)

Technical Tools (Field Office Technical Guide)

Continue to maintain the Virginia Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) as a repository of technical resources and references to include conservation practice standards, technical notes, planning criteria, resource concerns, conservation practice physical effects, cost lists and the Virginia Plant Establishment Guide.

- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-503, Forestry Technical Note 5 on Shelterbelts for Livestock.
- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-504, Revised Ecological Science Practice Standards for FY2023.
- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-505, Pest Management guide for common weeds and brush on pasture, hay land and grasslands.
- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-506, Pasture Planting Cost Estimate Tool to assist planners in applying pasture and hay plantings.
- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-507, Conservation Practice Physical Effect (CPPE) and Resource Management System (RMS) planning tool.
- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-508, Plant Establishment Guide revisions.
- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-509, Resource Concerns and Planning Criteria update for FY2023.

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- Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-510, Revised Engineering Practice Standards for FY2023.
 - Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-511, Wetland Job Approval Authority update.
 - Released Virginia FOTG Notice 450-23-512, Invasive Species References to assist in identifying common invasive species and general control recommendations.
 - Released Virginia Bulletin 180-23-1, which provides reminders on the Virginia Conservation Planning Policy and Ecological Sciences Job Approval Authority.
 - Released Virginia Bulletin 180-23-2, which provides guidance on permitting, the NRCS-CPA-52 and the new Ecological Sciences Practice Cover Sheet.
 - Released Virginia Bulletin 180-23-3, which provides updated FY2023 NRCS Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Practice List.

Training to Field Staff

- Continue the use of SRC webinars in place of tradition in-person meetings, allowing us to disseminate information quickly and efficiently to field staff:
 - October 15 – FY23 Programs Rollout (82 participants)
 - November 2 – FY23 Ecological Sciences Rollout (85 participants)
 - November 9 – Engineering Emergency Animal Mortality
 - November 16 – Conservation with the Army Corps of Engineers (82 participants)
 - Continuing the RUSLE2@2 office hours help sessions for staff and partners.
 - Continuing the soil health assessment workgroup discussions and soil health outreach meetings to emphasize and evaluate the effectiveness of soil health assessment and outreach/training.
- Scheduled in-the-field JED trainings for the first time in over two years due to COVID training and travel restrictions, focusing on outdoor events and under 20 staff attendees:
 - National Soil Health Division Soil Health and Sustainability training for NRCS planner certification delivered October 4-6.
 - National Conservation Planning modules 6-8 training for NRCS planner certification delivered October through November.
 - Delivered 8 Soil Health Dig & Demo field trainings across the state in October and November.

Customer Service and Outreach

- Provided four 30-minute presentations at the VSU Farm Field Day describing forage and livestock systems demonstration site and how we used warm season and cool season

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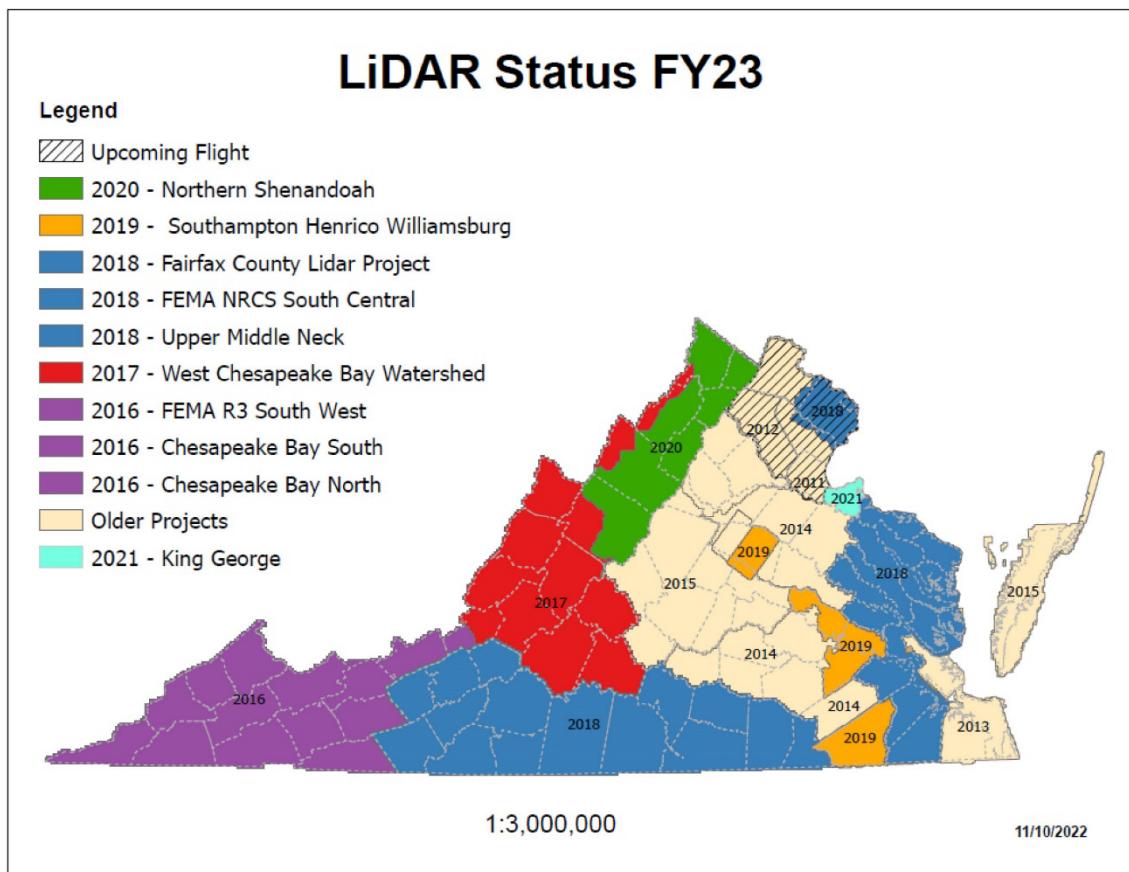
perennial forages to increase and balance the production system to meet livestock needs. Presented to 100 participants and encouraged them to contact their local conservationist to discuss technical and financial assistance that is available.

- Collaborated with Public Affairs to migrate and update the Virginia website.

State Soil Scientist (SSS)

LiDAR-

In partnership with the USGS, there will be flights in the Loudoun, Stafford, Prince William Fairfax, and Fauquier counties this December for new LiDAR acquisition.



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Soil Survey Update

All 108 soil survey area's soils data in Web Soil Survey have been updated for FY 23. Some soil interpretations were made better during this refresh. If your district uses a soil downloaded layer for conservation work in your district, they should download the latest copy.

Public Affairs (PAS)

Communications/Outreach

- **Conservation/STEM Education.** Collaborated with Harvie Elementary School staff to deliver an educational program on agricultural professions for CAMP3401 on July 26. This summer career exploration camp used project-based learning and real-life experiences to introduce rising fifth and sixth graders to various occupations and demonstrate how the required skills are connected to reading and math. The Henricopolis SWCD donated ice cream for a wrap-up activity highlighting the food value chain. Many of the rising sixth graders will attend Fairfield Middle School, where NRCS is already working to support Virginia's new People's Garden.
Fairfield Middle School also hosted a "round robin Q & A" where their Backyard Urban Gardening (B.U.G.) students interviewed NRCS along with Henricopolis SWCD and RVA Black Farmers Market. The students asked questions about the importance of agriculture on the community and used the information they obtained to write letters to the school's administration inviting them to a future Fall Fest event.
- **Feds Feed Families.** Kicked off state activities for this annual summer food drive with a July 21 gleaning event at Holyoke Farm in Lancaster. A team of 11 volunteers harvested 2,965 pounds of sweet corn for distribution through the Healthy Harvest Food Bank that services the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula and Greater Richmond areas. Seven USDA agency volunteers also packaged prepared food products at Feed More on Sept. 8 for distribution to Meals on Wheels and other clients. The summer food drive yielded a total of 3,240 pounds of individual and group donations.
- **Minority Farmer Recognition.** Solicited statewide nominations for the Virginia NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee's 2022 Farmer of the Year award. The outreach subcommittee received six strong nominations this year, the highest number submitted since the inception of this recognition effort in 2009. The winner, Thelonius Cook, was presented the award at the Virginia Small Farm Conference on Nov. 3 in Portsmouth.
- **NRCS in the News.** Released a story map on the Fairfield Middle School People's Garden on July 6 through the state website, Twitter, and GovDelivery. An "Augusta Free Press" article was picked up in the July 7 NRCS national news clips and generated an invitation to

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appear on the July 29 "12 About Town" noon show

(<https://www.nbc12.com/video/2022/07/29/people-garden-fairfield-middle-school-highlights-community-nutrition/>).

Also showcased the strength of our district partnerships in the June 28 Water & Runoff episode of "Virginia Home Grown," which featured an in-studio interview with Mat Lyons and a pre-recorded segment with Harrisonburg DC Cory Guilliams and Shenandoah SWCD District Manager Megan Dalton at the Hone Quarry Dam.

- **Social Media Engagement.** Leveraged state Twitter account to publicize programs, tie ag to current events and implement campaigns like 4theSoil. Posted **12** tweets between June 20 and Sept. 2 that yielded more than **2.7K** impressions. Top tweet: #Throwback Thursday Launch of 4theSoil (**297** impressions).
- **Other Outreach Highlights.** Shared information on NRCS programs and services at the Virginia Ag Expo in Port Royal (Aug. 4), Ethnic Crop Production and Marketing workshop in Orange (Aug. 13), the Nansemond Indian Nation Pow Wow in Suffolk (Aug. 20-21), VA Women's Learning Circle Field Day (Aug. 24), VSU College of Agriculture Field Day (Sept. 1), VSU's Small Farm Outreach Annual Conference (Nov. 3-4), Fairfield Middle School's Fall Fest at Cornerstone Farm (Nov. 5), and over 20 other outreach activities. Staff members networked with more than 3,000 producers, community members and students attending these outreach events.

Earth Team Program

Public Affairs Co-hosted a joint training webinar with VASWCD on July 22 to update district and NRCS staff on recent changes in the process for registering new volunteers and tracking their service. Toni Flax from the national office provided a comprehensive overview of program changes and introduced attendees to the new tracking system to help them understand the rationale behind them. Attendees and registrants received the meeting recording, presentation, and current forms. Reached out to NRCS and district staff to solicit nominations for 2022 state and national Earth Team awards. The Earth Team Advisory Committee reviewed submissions and the state winner will be announced at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

ATTACHMENT #3

Virginia Cooperative Extension Report

December 2022

- Dr. Michael Gutter, Associate Dean for Extension & State Program Leader for 4-H Youth Development, Families and Communities for the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida has been named as the next Associate Dean and Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Dr. Gutter began work November 1, 2022. He will be attending the VASWCD meeting on Monday, December 5.
- Virginia Cooperative Extension was charged under HB894 Section 3 with developing a map or repository of prime farmland in consultation with relevant and necessary state agencies to assist localities with solar project siting considerations. A report on the project was submitted to the Governor and General Assembly on December 1, 2022. We hope to release the outcome of this collaborative effort--the Virginia Land and Energy Navigator (VaLEN)--by the end of December.
- In the interest of insuring that all local SWCD's have Extension agent Appointed Director positions filled, in 2022 VCE and VASWCD worked together to appoint Extension agent representation to Mountain SWCD, Mountain Castles SWCD, Tri-County/City SWCD, Thomas Jefferson SWCD, Piedmont SWCD, and Patrick SWCD.
- Recognizing the importance of strong organizational support to the success and retention of Extension agents and specialists, VCE is currently in the process of revamping our new faculty onboarding process.
- VCE will be embarking on a statewide situation analysis (i.e., needs assessment) in 2023. Situation analysis is an integral part of the Extension Programming Model and insures that VCE programming is focused on Virginia's evolving needs. VCE carries out situation analysis formally every five years and informally on a continuous basis.
- When all the positions currently advertised are filled VCE will have 239 Extension agents, as follows: 102 Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), 91 4-H, 34 Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), and 12 FCS SNAP-Ed.
- Virginia Cooperative Extension has an existing network of facilities (107 city and county unit offices, 11 Agricultural Research and Extension Centers, six 4-H centers and two university campuses and satellites), professional extension staff, and university specialists to deliver vital educational programs to the public. This network is enhanced by a connection to the resources of the land grant universities across the nation and is located in every county and major city in the state. Extension faculty and staff come from a variety of backgrounds, which helps us better understand the distinct needs of all

Virginians. It is through this lens that we can accurately and effectively assess, prioritize, and respond to local and state needs.