



Meeting Minutes
Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors
Farmville, Virginia
March 23, 2010

Board Members Present:

Wilkie Chaffin –Director, Prince Edward County / Treasurer
Chad Gunn - Director, Nottoway County / Secretary
Donna Kerr – Director, Amelia County
Juan Whittington –Director, Amelia County
Don Maxey –Director, Prince Edward County
Chuck Arnason – Associate Director, Nottoway County
Gary Dillard – Associate Director, Amelia County
Charles Dodson –Associate Director, Amelia County
Bill Powers – Associate Director, Prince Edward County

Board Members Absent:

Larkin Moyer –Director, Amelia County / Chairman
Ricky Rash – Director, Nottoway County/Vice Chairman

Piedmont SWCD Staff Present:

Deanna Fehrer – District Manager
Robin Buckalew – Administrative and Public Information Specialist
Kevin Dunn – BMP Conservation Technician
Paula Totten – TMDL Conservation Specialist
Charlie Wootton –TMDL Conservation Specialist

Others Present:

Dennis Jones –NRCS District Conservationist for Prince Ed. and Nottoway Counties
Brian Loadholt–NRCS District Conservationist for Amelia, Goochland & Powhatan
Carrie Hagin – DCR Conservation District Coordinator
Katie Martin – NRCS/DGIF Private Lands Biologist
John Fallon – DCR Environmental Specialist

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Piedmont SWCD was held in the conference room of the Prince Edward County Natural Resources and Agricultural building March 23, 2010. Dr. Chaffin called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

WELCOME:

Dr. Chaffin welcomed directors, staff and guests. Mr. Arnason led the group in prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Chaffin introduced Ms. Katie Martin, a Floyd County, Virginia native, and currently a Private Lands Biologist on staff at the Farmville office helping generate participation in NRCS and DGIF wildlife programs. One of her focus projects is to increase quail habitat in a 23 county region.

Dr. Chaffin introduced John Fallon, Environmental Specialist with DCR. Mr. Fallon will present the final version of DEQ's End User Regulations for Poultry Litter at the April meeting.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

On motion by Mr. Gunn, seconded by Mrs. Kerr and carried by vote of 4-0, the Board approved the February 2010 minutes as mailed/emailed.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

By unanimous consent, the Board accepted the February 2010 Treasurer’s Report to be filed for audit.

COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Ms. Kerr reported

On recommendation by the Communication Committee, the Board approved granting the \$1,000 Piedmont SWCD Education Scholarship to Taylor Elleke. His application will be forwarded to compete for the VASWCD Education Scholarship.

Ms. Fehrer reported that teams from Nottoway and Fuqua schools competed at the Local Envirothon. Nottoway will represent Piedmont at the Area V competition in April. Due to the smaller number of teams involved, the District implemented some cost saving practices in their Envirothon this year.

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS COMMITTEE: Mr. Whittington reported

(Please see attached report)

Cost Share Applications

Amelia County:

1. Dexter Jones, SL-6 Livestock Exclusion (100’ Stream Bank Excluded) (TMDL)
2. Mandy Gravely, LE-1T Livestock Exclusion (1000’ Stream Bank Excluded) (TMDL)
3. Vaughan Cattle Co. LLC, SL-6 Livestock Exclusion (800’ Stream Bank Excluded) (Bay Priority)

Nottoway County:

4. John Gregory, LE-1T Livestock Exclusion (1450’ Stream Bank Excluded) (TMDL)

Prince Edward County

5. Ralph Hines, LE-1T Livestock Exclusion (5400’ Stream bank excluded) (TMDL)
6. Ralph Hines, LE-1T Livestock Exclusion (1600’ Stream bank excluded)
7. Peaceful Acres, LLC, LE-1T Livestock Exclusion (5300’ Stream bank excluded) (TMDL)
8. Twill-Do Farm Inc., LE-2T Livestock Exclusion (1700’ Stream Bank Excluded) (TMDL)
 (The LE-2T is 50% cost-share with set back of only 10 feet, compared with the 85% cost-share and 35 feet set-back of the of LE-1T. This practice is available to landowners where it is unfeasible to fence narrow strips of bottomland).

On motion by Mr. Whittington and carried by vote of 3-0, with one abstention, the Board approved the recommendation of the Conservation Committee to approve the 8 Cost-Share practices as presented.

Conservation Plans

Conservation Plans (83)

Amelia: (74)

Shannon Smith	8	R.L. Blanton Jr.	7
Vaughan Cattle Co. LLC	1	Juan Whittington	3
Whitaker Farms Inc.	10	Reamford Farms	4
Wilford Poore	12	David D. Benson II	4
Oakmulgee Dairy Farm Inc.	4	R.M. Watkins & Son Inc.	11
David Lewis	1	Hoot Owl Hollow Farm	4
Timothy Alexander	1	Jack Bulls	1
Hard Acres Farm	3		
Prince Edward: (7)			
John Johns	1	Ralph Hines	2
Peaceful Acres Farm	1	Twill-Do Farm	3
Nottoway (2)			
Shannon Smith	1	Triple R Dairy	1

On motion by Mr. Whittington and carried by vote of 3-0, with two abstentions and the presiding officer voting, the Board approved the recommendation of the Conservation Committee to accept the eighty-three Conservation Plans as presented.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Mr. Dillard reported

The Personnel Committee will continue to review travel, vehicle use and personnel policies for any needed revisions, and will report back at the April Board meeting.

FINANCIAL COMMITTEE: Dr. Chaffin reported

NRCS Supported Computers

Due to budget reductions in general, NRCS is reducing the number of supported computers available to districts from one hundred and twenty to sixty. The Piedmont District will be allotted 2 NRCS supported computers. Beginning in July, NRCS Information Technologists will begin removing 2 district computers from the USDA network and reinstalling the original operating system. The District will need to purchase any additional software needed to conduct District business. The District is on a waiting list, should another district decline their supported computer allotment in the future. Each computer connected to the network over the allotment would cost \$3,127 a year.

Ms. Fehrer indicated that all of the District's computers are routed through the NRCS quad-plate. When the 2 computers are removed from the network, the other 2 non-network computers will also be removed from the quad-plate. Ms. Fehrer is investigating all other options, including wireless. Mr. Whittington asked about security using a wireless system, and Ms. Fehrer remarked that, according to the District's internet provider, there is no increased potential for security breach using wireless.

FSA SPACE SOLICITATION Ms. Fehrer reported

The FSA long-term lease at the Natural Resources and Agricultural Building expired in 2008, with the building currently leased on a year-to-year basis. Long-term lease negotiations begin again this year. NRCS, who operates as a sub-leaser with Farm Service Agency, requested that the District document their space requirements so that

NRCS can enter this into the lease negotiation figures. NRCS recommends the District use a formula of 150 square feet per person. Mr. Whittington suggested taking into consideration part-time employees and the Amelia office so that the final space request represents the amount of space needed, not necessarily number of employees.

On motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Mr. Gunn and carried 4-0, the Board authorized Ms. Fehrer to submit Piedmont SWCD space requirements to NRCS, applying the 150 square foot per person formula.

Amelia Service Center Relocation

Ms. Totten reported that the Amelia Service Center is considering relocating their office. Any new location will include office space that will be available for the District to rent.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Dr. Chaffin reported

With the final budget signed by the Governor, conservation districts in Virginia were given no further reduction in operational funding, and a total cost-share of \$9.1 million. For the first time, there is a dedicated funding source, coming from recordation fees. Recordation fees originate when deeds are recorded. Technical Assistance, which in the past was 5% of the of the total cost-share amount, and went up to 8% last year, will be 8% (or \$1.2 million, which ever is largest) this year. This generous support of the General Assembly for conservation district work is due in a large part to efforts of the Virginia Association of Conservation Districts, especially Kendall Tyree and Don Wells.

PLANNING COMMITTEE:

NRCS Cooperative Working Agreement and the Mutual Agreement

NRCS has a Mutual Agreement and a Cooperative Working Agreement with the District that includes an annual review and discussion of Civil Rights. Mr. Jones spoke about the importance of making the extra effort to include minority participation in cost-share and other district programs. Outreach activities, like the Farmers Breakfast and Farmers Dinner held this year are good examples of the Piedmont SWCD's efforts to reach minority communities. Mr. Jones suggested that recruiting minority associate directors is also strongly encouraged as a way to increase diversity and practice inclusiveness.

WATERSHED COMMITTEE: Mr. Arnason reported

Dam Maintenance

In 2008 the District competitively awarded a two-year dam maintenance contract to the lowest bidder that included an extension clause. **On recommendation by Watershed Committee, seconded by Mr. Whittington and carried 4-0, the Board approved exercising the extension clause of the dam maintenance contract with All Around Electrical Contractors, Inc, AKA Neil Saunders, for 2010-2011.** The contract dollar amount and work detail will remain the same as the original bid, with a fuel adjustment clause included should the price of fuel dramatically change from the previous contract timeframe.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT: Ms. Fehrer reported (*Please see attached report*)

Dam inspections are scheduled March 29. An April 6 Watershed Friendly Horse Seminar is scheduled (Visit <http://piedmontswcd.org> for details).

AGENCY REPORTS:

Department of Conservation and Recreation: Mrs. Hagin reported (*Please see attached report*)

The 2010 VACS regional training in Farmville will be held at the USDA Service Center on May 7th from 9am until 1pm.

Natural Resources Conservation Services: (*Please see attached reports*)

Mr. Jones reported that Conservation Stewardship Program Contracts approved in the first round of funding number 16 with a total value of \$350,000.

Mr. Loadholt reported 2 WHIP program applications, made possible in a large part thanks to Katie Martin's hard work.

ODRC&D: No report

ROUNDTABLE:

Ms. Fehrer noted that Ms. Totten and Mr. Wootton were 2 of 12 conservation specialists selected to attend Advanced Conservation Engineering Training in May.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned 12:00 p.m.

ATTACHED REPORTS:

- Conservation Committee Report
- District Manager & Staff Report
- DCR CDC Report
- NRCS Reports

REPORTS ON FILE: Conservation Committee Report including tract numbers

Submitted By: _____ *Date:* 3-24-2010

Robin Buckalew, Administrative Secretary

Approved By: _____ *Date:* _____

Chad Gunn, Director / Secretary