



Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District
Serving Botetourt & Craig Counties
36 Executive Circle, Roanoke, VA 24012
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www.mountaincastles.org

We work with the people who work the land.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 12, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.
USDA Service Center, Bonsack

Directors Present: Jeff Henderson, Chair, Botetourt
Preston Wickline, Vice Chair, Botetourt
Jason Williams, Craig
Walter Nelson, Botetourt
Jonathan Stanley, VCE-Craig County

Directors Absent: Andrew Keffer, Craig

Staff Present: Tim Miller
Dan Naff

Others Present: Michael Beahm, Associate Director
Jeff Munsey, Associate Director
Tasha Snavelly, Associate Director
Stacy Horton, DCR
Denny McCarthy, Virginia DOF

Quorum: Jeff Henderson called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. A quorum was established.

Minutes: Minutes from the July 8, 2026, board meeting were reviewed. Preston Wickline moved to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Walter Nelson, motion passed by unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report: Preston Wickline moved to accept the attached report; second by Walter Nelson, motion passed by unanimous consent.

Committee Reports:

- BMP – no report
- Dams – Minutes from the July 8, 2026, meeting of the Dams Committee were reviewed. Preston Wickline moved to approve the minutes as presented, second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- Budget/Finance – no report
- Personnel – no report
- Education – no report

Agency Reports:

- DCR – written report provided by Stacy Horton – received and placed on file (see full report)
- VCE – Jonathan Stanley provided VCE updates, including an upcoming Kentland Farm Field Day which will focus on drought issues

- **VDOF** – Denny McCarthy updated the Board on relevant forest management and stewardship plans and on his recent wildfire details
- **FSA** – no report
- **NRCS** – written report received and placed on file (see full report)

Other Business

- Jeff Henderson used his Board-delegated authority to sign the DCR FY 2027 Admin/Ops grant agreement and the FY 2027 Cost Share and TA grant agreement on 7/30/2026.
- The board reviewed the updated PY 27 budget. Preston Wickline moved to approve the updated budget as presented, second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- Walter Nelson moved to approve the use of the new IRS mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.76/mile. Second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- After discussion, Walter Nelson moved to increase the mileage reimbursement allowance for the district summer intern by \$500. Second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- After discussion, Jason Williams moved to approve the District Dedicated Reserves List. Second by Preston Wickline, motion passed by unanimous consent. (Reserves List attached).
- The Desktop Procedures for District Operations were reviewed.
- After discussion, Jason Williams moved for the District to use Admin/Ops funds to cover the accidental overpayment of contract #45-26-0013 in the amount of \$2,986.60. Second by Walter Nelson, motion passed by unanimous consent. The overpayment was due to double payment of Instance 712978. A letter will be sent to the producer explaining the situation.
- Tim Miller reported that the Farm Bureau is planning to cancel insurance coverage on the District vehicle effective 9/30/2026. The Board directed Tim to look for new insurance options and provide an update at the September meeting.
- After discussion, Preston Wickline moved to approve the following local Clean Water Farm Award winners: Jason and Kim Martin (Botetourt); Michael and Kathy Tickle (Craig). Second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- The Board discussed the possibility of conducting VCAP site visits outside of Botetourt and Craig in areas covered by Skyline SWCD, which does not offer VCAP. The decision was made for staff to not actively promote the possibility of conducting site visits in this situation, but to keep the Board informed as inquiries are made.
- Jonathan Satnley moved to approve the PY 2026 Annual Report, second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent. (Annual Report attached)

319 Contracts

The following 319 contracts were reviewed:

- #45-26-0042; Instance 737843; a cost share increase of \$750 for this previously approved contract was requested due to the tank size being 1,500 gallons, rather than 1,000 gallons, which was used in the original quote from the contractor; new maximum cost share is \$5,250
- 45-27-0004; Instance 745067; RB-4 (system replacement); 50% cost share; maximum cost share = \$6,400
- 45-27-0005; Instance 745206; RB-3M (minor repair); 50% cost share; maximum cost share = \$500
- 45-27-0006; Instance 746885; RB-4 (system replacement); 50% cost share; maximum cost share = \$6,400
- 45-27-0007; Instance 755319; RB-4 (system replacement); 50% cost share; maximum cost share = \$6,400

Walter Nelson moved to approve all 319 contracts as listed above, second by Preston Wickline, motion passed by unanimous consent.

VACS Program

*Note: Jeff Henderson left the room before tax credit discussion and vote.

The following Tax Credits were reviewed:

- 45-26-0004; Instance 650618 (SL-6W); eligible tax credit: \$733.55
Jason Williams moved to approve the tax credit, second by Walter Nelson, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- 45-26-0039; Instance 739939 (SL-1); eligible tax credit: \$852.59; Instance 737612 (SL-1); eligible tax credit: \$96.58
Preston Wickline moved to approve the tax credits, second by Jonathan Stanley, motion passed by unanimous consent.

Jeff Henderson returned to the room after the vote on tax credits.

The following Conservation Plans were reviewed:

- CP-45-25-0006
- CP-45-26-0008
- CP-45-27-0003

Jason Williams moved to approve all Conservation Plans as listed above, second by Preston Wickline, motion passed by unanimous consent.

The following VACS contracts were reviewed:

- 45-27-0010; Instance 736885 (SL-1); Maximum cost share: \$94,882.55 (CB VACS)
Jason Williams moved to approve the contract, second by Preston Wickline, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- 45-27-0011; Instance 762353 (SL-1); Maximum cost share: \$6,292.08 (CB VACS)
Walter Nelson moved to approve the contract, second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent.
- 45-27-0012; Instance 762694 (SL-1); Maximum cost share: \$81,479.03 (CB VACS)
Walter Nelson moved to approve the contract, second by Jonathan Stanley, motion passed by unanimous consent.

Dams

After discussion, Walter Nelson moved not to award the Johns Creek 2 small dam repair contract to MC3 Solutions. Second by Jason Williams, motion passed by unanimous consent. The \$573,806.66 bid submitted by MC3 Solutions was considerably more than the estimated project cost provided by Schnabel and the Small Dam Repair award from DCR. This was the only bid received.

After discussion, Jason Williams moved to approve the \$400.00 quote from Lawrence Narehood for gravel spreading at Johns Creek 2 to be completed at the time of fall mowing/maintenance. Second by Preston Wickline, motion passed by unanimous consent.

Conservation Specialist Report: submitted by Dan Naff – received and placed on file (see full report)

Conservation Technician Assistant Report: submitted by Emily Williams – received and placed on file (see full report)

District Coordinator Report: submitted by Tim Miller – received and placed on file (see full report)

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m. with a motion from Walter Nelson, second by Jason Williams. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

Approved:

Walter Nelson

Date: 09 Sept 2026

~~Jeff Henderson, Chair~~

Walter Nelson, acting chair

Respectfully submitted/prepared by:

Tim Miller

Tim Miller

12:45 PM

08/11/26

Cash Basis

Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District**Profit & Loss**

July 1 through August 11, 2026

	Jul 1 - Aug 11, 26
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
LOCAL/OTHER SOURCES	
Local Government Funding	
Botetourt County	10,000.00
Total Local Government Funding	10,000.00
Total LOCAL/OTHER SOURCES	10,000.00
Interest	
Operational -Bank of Fincastle	24.38
Interest - Other	4,395.45
Total Interest	4,419.83
Total Income	14,419.83
Gross Profit	14,419.83
Expense	
Operations MCSWCD	
I. Employee Compensation	
Intern stipend	
Intern mileage	173.66
Intern stipend - Other	1,299.00
Total Intern stipend	1,472.66
Technician Assistant	
FICA	52.22
Salary	682.50
Total Technician Assistant	734.72
Directors	
Meals/Expenses	468.60
Travel/Mileage	329.88
Total Directors	798.48
Education Coordinator	
Benefits	1,652.85
FICA	513.48
Salary	6,885.48
Total Education Coordinator	9,051.81
VNRCF TA - Conservation Tech	
Benefits Paid	2,428.94
Education & Training	4,519.93
FICA & Medicare	363.78
Salary	5,163.44
Total VNRCF TA - Conservation Tech	12,476.09
Total I. Employee Compensation	24,533.76
II. Office Expenses	
Membership Dues, Various Org	
VASCWD Support Services	3,592.00
Total Membership Dues, Various Org	3,592.00
Xerox Lease (ESI)	227.33
Phones/Internet (Cox Business)	330.24
Computer programs & software	270.41
Office Rent	1,500.00
Postage	95.58
Office Equipment and Supplies	45.97

Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District
Profit & Loss
July 1 through August 11, 2026

	Jul 1 - Aug 11, 26
U.S. Cellular -VNRCF TA	155.59
Total II. Office Expenses	6,217.12
V. Education, Youth Classroom Resources	142.14
Total V. Education, Youth	142.14
VI. Education, Public UJRC&D Grant	25.00
Total VI. Education, Public	25.00
Vehicle Maintenance	381.38
Fuel	168.18
Insurance - Vehicle	-717.66
Total Vehicle	-168.10
Total Operations MCSWCD	30,749.92
DCR - Obligated Cost-share Cost Share Payments	
2026 OCB VACS	81,354.69
2026 CB VACS	45,822.72
Total Cost Share Payments	127,177.41
Total DCR - Obligated Cost-share	127,177.41
Dam Maintenance	5,045.00
TMDL TMDL Cost Share	24,200.00
Total TMDL	24,200.00
Total Expense	187,172.33
Net Ordinary Income	-172,752.50
Net Income	-172,752.50

Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District
Balance Sheet
As of August 11, 2026

	Aug 11, 26
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
COST-SHARE - First Bank	1,396,345.85
OPERATIONAL - First Bank	105,476.63
TMDL - Bank of Botetourt	18,385.00
CDs for District	
BoB CD Personnel 4	50,991.78
BoB CD - Personnel 3	50,991.78
BoB CD - dam projects	50,991.78
BoB CD - vehicle 2	50,991.78
BoB CD Education	48,391.04
BoB CD vehicle 1	48,391.04
BoB CD Personnel 1	50,341.75
Total CDs for District	351,090.95
First Bank Savings	38,446.81
Total Checking/Savings	1,909,745.24
Total Current Assets	1,909,745.24
TOTAL ASSETS	1,909,745.24
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Bal Equity	368,750.81
Retained Earnings	1,713,746.93
Net Income	-172,752.50
Total Equity	1,909,745.24
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,909,745.24

Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District
Outstanding check Report

All Transactions

Date	Num	Name	Memo	Account	Amount
02/09/2026	3877	Anne Jones	Replaces check #3800	OPERATIONAL - First Bank	-19.60
06/01/2026	3915	Preston Wickline	April-May mileage	OPERATIONAL - First Bank	-55.10
06/01/2026	3920	Tom Williamson	April-May mileage	OPERATIONAL - First Bank	-21.03
07/29/2026	3939	Treasurer of Craig County	July payroll	OPERATIONAL - First Bank	-17,742.69
					<u>-17,838.42</u>

PY27 Budget Update through 7/31/26						
INCOME			Budgeted	Actual through July 2026		% of budget
Operational grant			\$ 165,492.00	\$ -		0%
Dam Maintenance			\$ 18,000.00			0%
VNRCF Base TA			\$ 48,809.00	\$ -		0%
VNRCF additional TA			\$ 112,806.00	\$ -		0%
VCAP TA				\$ -		
TMDL TA			\$ 4,000.00	\$ -		
Locality Funding			\$ 13,000.00	\$ 10,000.00		77%
EXPENSES			Budgeted	Actual through July 2026		% of budget
Dam maintenance			\$ 18,000.00	\$ -		0%
VCAP TA			\$ 2,581.75			0%
Payroll			\$ 235,000.00	\$ 17,777.69		8%
Intern stipend			\$ 1,299.00	\$ 700.00		54%
Scholarships/donations			\$ 8,500.00	\$ -		0%
Rest Fund MWEE grant			\$ 8,984.01	\$ -		0%
ATC grant			\$ 1,500.00			0%
Envirothon			\$ 300.00			0%
Classroom resources			\$ 1,500.00	\$ 104.46		7%
Outreach			\$ 8,000.00	\$ -		0%
RC&D grant			\$ 1,200.00	\$ -		0%
VASWCD support fees			\$ 3,750.00	\$ 3,592.00		96%
NACD dues			\$ 775.00	\$ -		0%
Other dues/memberships			\$ 250.00	\$ -		0%
Office equipment & supplies			\$ 6,000.00	\$ -		0%
Computer software/IT			\$ 4,500.00	\$ 135.38		3%
Copier lease			\$ 2,750.00	\$ 227.33		8%
Postage			\$ 400.00	\$ -		0%
Internet			\$ 2,500.00	\$ 165.12		7%
Marketing			\$ 1,500.00	\$ -		0%
Team building			\$ 500.00	\$ -		0%
Rent			\$ 9,500.00	\$ 750.00		8%
Cell phone			\$ 1,100.00	\$ 77.70		7%

Field equipment		\$ 750.00	\$ -		0%
Insurance		\$ 750.00	\$ -		0%
Vehicle		\$ 9,000.00	\$ 68.79		1%
Training -Tim		\$ 1,500.00	\$ -		0%
Travel-Tim		\$ 1,500.00	\$ -		0%
Training - Dan		\$ 7,500.00	\$ -		0%
Travel-Dan		\$ 750.00	\$ -		0%
Training-Emily		\$ 1,500.00	\$ -		0%
Travel-Emily		\$ 1,000.00	\$ -		0%
Travel-Makayla		\$ 500.00	\$ -		0%
Training - Directors		\$ 1,500.00			0%
Meals - Directors		\$ 3,250.00	\$ 252.89		8%
Travel - Directors		\$ 3,500.00	\$ -		0%

Mount **Castles Soil & Water Conservation District**
FY 27 Budget version 2.0 (August 12, 2026)

Approved 8/12/26

NEW INCOME FY27

	NEW INCOME	
Operational Grant	\$ 165,492.00 (less \$500)	
Dam Maintenance	\$ 18,000.00	
County Support Funding	\$ 13,000.00	
VNRCF Base TA	\$ 48,809.00	
VNRCF Cost Share TA	\$ 112,806.00 (based on \$930,311 allocated -40%)	
TMIDL TA	\$ 4,000.00	
RC&D Grant	\$ 1,200.00	
Total Admin & Ops Support	*** \$ 363,307.00	
2027- CB VACS (CB) (100%)	\$ 1,975,778.00	
2027 - OCB VACS (OCB) (100%)	\$ 350,000.00	
	\$ 2,325,778.00	
Total Cost Share		
FY27 New Income	\$ 2,689,085.00	

CARRYOVER FUNDS

State Sources	CARRYOVER	
DCR Operating Funds	\$ 24,110.04	
Dam Maintenance	\$ 22,878.71	
VNRCF - T/A	\$ 90,625.36	
VCAP TA	\$ 2,581.75	
Rest. Fund MWEE Grant	\$ 8,984.01	
RC&D Grant	\$ 759.62	
Envirothon Grant	\$ 556.13	
Total Operational Carryover	\$ 150,495.62	
Local/Other Sources		
Local Government	\$ 9,571.67	
ATC Grant	\$ 2,212.46	
Total Local/Other Sources	\$ 11,784.13	
Savings Account (First Bank)	\$ 38,446.81	
CD - new vehicle (Bank of Botetourt)	\$ 48,391.04	





Dam Maintenance		\$	18,000.00	State-Dam Maint
VCAP TA:				
VCAP TA (intern, supplies, travel, marketing materials)		\$	2,581.75	Local/Other-VCAP TA
Payroll				
Payroll - 2 F/T employees; 1 P/T employee (1000 hrs max)				
Payroll - Subtotal		\$	235,000.00	State-Admin/Ops - Tim State-VNRCF-Dan & Emily
Education / Public Relations:				
Scholarships/Donations		\$	8,500.00	Local/other-Local govt
HS scholarships				
VASWCD YCC				
Camp Woods & Wildlife				
4H Camp for Botetourt & Craig				
FFA Banquet & Convention				
Education				
ATC Grant		\$	1,500.00	Local/other- ATC grant (c/o funds)
Rest. Fund MWEE Grant		\$	8,984.01	State-Rest Fund (c/o funds)
Envirothon		\$	300.00	Local/other-Envirothon (c/o funds)
Classroom Resources		\$	1,500.00	State-Admin/Ops
			\$	10,784.01
Outreach				Total c/o funds in PY27 budget
Outreach events (Winter banquet, farm tour)		\$	8,000.00	State-VNRCF
RC&D Grant		\$	1,200.00	State-UJRC&D grant
Internship stipend		\$	1,299.00	State-Admin/Ops
Internship mileage		\$	500.00	State-Admin/Ops
VASWCD Support Fees		\$	3,750.00	State-Admin/Ops
NACD Dues		\$	775.00	State-Admin/Ops
Other dues/memberships		\$	250.00	State-Admin/Ops
Education/Public Relations Subtotal:		\$	36,558.01	
Operating Expenses:				
Office equipment and supplies		\$	6,000.00	State-Admin/Ops new computer - Dan
Computer software/subscriptions		\$	4,500.00	State-Admin/Ops
Copier lease		\$	2,750.00	State-VNRCF
Postage		\$	400.00	State-Admin/Ops
Internet/old phone #		\$	2,500.00	State-VNRCF
Marketing (hats, t-shirts, printing)		\$	1,500.00	State-VNRCF
Team Building		\$	500.00	State-Admin/Ops
Rent, LJH Properties		\$	9,500.00	State-Admin/Ops
Telephone - US Cellular (VNRCF)		\$	1,100.00	State-VNRCF



Field Equipment - Conservation	\$	750.00	State-VNRCF	
Workers compensation insurance	\$	1,000.00	State-Admin/Ops	
Vehicle (fuel, maintenance, and insurance)	\$	9,000.00	State-VNRCF	
Office & Operations Subtotal	\$	39,500.00		
Training & Travel:				
District Coordinator				
Education & Training	\$	1,500.00	State-Admin/Ops	
Travel	\$	1,500.00	State-Admin/Ops	
Conservation Specialist				
Education & Training	\$	7,500.00	State-VNRCF	includes \$6000 for
Travel	\$	750.00	State-VNRCF	
Conservation Technician Assistant				
Education & Training	\$	1,500.00	State-VNRCF	
Travel	\$	1,000.00	State-VNRCF	
Directors & Associate Directors				
Education & Training	\$	1,500.00	State-Admin/Ops	
Meals	\$	3,250.00	State-Admin/Ops	
Travel	\$	3,500.00	State-Admin/Ops	
Training and Travel Subtotal	\$	22,000.00		
Total Operational expense without dam repair/rehab ***	\$	353,639.76	\$ 20,451.25	under/over income
Savings Account		38,446.81		
CDs - DISTRICT				
CD - New vehicle	\$	48,391.04		
CD - Educational programming	\$	48,391.04		
CD - Personnel	\$	50,341.75		
CD - Dam projects	\$	50,991.78		
CD -- New vehicle 2	\$	50,991.78		
CD -- Personnel 2	\$	50,991.78		
CD -- Personnel 3	\$	50,991.78		
Total CDs and Savings:		338,545.98		
TOTAL FY27 EXPENSES + CDs	\$	4,546,524.50		
Board approval date: 8/12/2026	Signed:			



ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

1. **VSWCB Update.** The VSWCB met on July 24, 2026 and approved PY 2027 Policies and Grant Agreements.
 - ✿ The VSWCB decided to approve a funding scenario that was based on the numbers submitted via the Attachment D process but capped SWCDs at a 15% increase or a 15% decrease from PY 2026 funding levels.
 - ✿ The VSWCB approved an increase in Base TA funding amounts and reduced Addition to Base TA amounts from 13% to 12%. This provides for an increase to the more stable TA funding source since Base TA funding does not fluctuate with the SWCD's cost-share allocation.
 - ✿ If your SWCD has not yet signed and returned its respective grant agreements, please do so as soon as possible.
2. **SWCD Final Budget and Dedicated Reserves List.** Now that grant agreements have been received, SWCDs should plan to approve a final PY 2027 budget and dedicated reserves list at their respective August board meetings. Remember to make any corresponding dedicated reserves transfers in QuickBooks during the first quarter and on the first quarter Attachment E form.
3. **Delegated Authority Ratification in the Minutes.** If your SWCD provided and utilized dedicated authority to address grant agreements, please make sure that this is ratified by the SWCD board. The date of signature of the Admin/Ops and Cost-Share/TA grant agreements should be reported at the board meeting and recorded in the minutes as a matter of record.
4. **ASA Policy.** Per the annual request of Darrell Marshall of VDACS, please revisit and update your district's policy regarding the handling of Ag Stewardship Act Complaints (this includes primary and secondary contact information). If there are no changes to your district's existing policy, please send an email to Darrell Marshall that provides the date that the board discussed the policy and states that there are no changes to your SWCD's existing policy. If there are changes (remember that this includes changes to the primary and secondary contacts as well as the preferred procedure), a new form must be submitted to VDACS.
5. **At-Large Director Appointment Paperwork Due August 31, 2026.** This is the last month to address approval of the nomination for appointment of the at-large director position to ensure that the nomination is included in the VSWCB's September board meeting packet. Please recall that the SWCD board is responsible for nominating someone to fill this position via official board action. Then, the SWCD must submit DCR Forms 199-014 and 199-015 (for a new nomination for appointment) or DCR Form 199-014 (for a nomination for reappointment), along with a copy of the minutes (or draft minutes) where the nomination for appointment was approved, so the VSWCB can act on the SWCD's nomination. SWCDs should utilize the fillable PDF version of DCR Forms 199-014 and 199-015. Once blessed by the VSWCB, the nominee must take the oath of office. Please also remember the requirement to notify the local governing bodies of the nomination as well. This can be accomplished with a simple letter.
6. **PY 2026 Annual Report.** Should be completed by September 30, 2026. The annual report should cover SWCD accomplishments from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Please recall that the grant agreement requires an **acknowledgement statement** to appear in all such documents crediting the VSWCB and DCR for administrative and financial support to the SWCD (reference page 3 of the Administrative and Operational Grant Agreement for specific language). As always, the annual report should be approved by the SWCD board. Please remember that the annual report is a great tool to share with local government(s).
7. **IRS Mileage Rate Increase.** Effective July 1, 2026, the IRS standard mileage rate increased from 72.5 cents per mile to 76 cents per mile. If you haven't already done so, please adjust accordingly; just remember that the SWCD can elect to use any mileage rate that it desires as long as it does not exceed the IRS standard mileage rate. Please note that any such adjustment requires board action and must be recorded in the minutes

and that respective policies referencing this amount must be updated accordingly. If policies specify that the SWCD will follow the current IRS rate, please include a note in the minutes to record the increase as a matter of acknowledgment of the new rate for audit purposes.

8. **SPDA Account Verification.** Please remember to go <https://spda.trs.virginia.gov/search> and verify that all public fund bank accounts are collateralized in accordance with the Security for Public Deposits Act (SPDA) for the quarter ending June 30, 2025. Please be sure to verify all account information no later than September 28, 2025 and retain documentation of the verification for each account.

9. **Requirements Regarding Signed Board and Committee Meeting Minutes.**

✿ Per Deliverable #4 of the Admin & Ops Grant agreement, please ensure that signed board meeting and committee meeting minutes are provided to the CDC each month immediately upon approval and signature. Electronic or paper copies are both acceptable (your preference). Please make sure that meeting minutes are complete and in keeping with page 5 of the Desktop Procedures Manual.

✿ §2.2-3707.2: “Except as provided in subsection 1 of § 2.2-3707, any local public body subject to the provisions of this chapter shall post minutes of its meetings on its official public government website, if any, within seven working days of final approval of the minutes.

If a local public body does not own or maintain an official public government website, such public body shall make copies of all meeting minutes available no later than seven working days after final approval of the minutes (i) at a prominent public location in which meeting notices are regularly posted pursuant to subdivision D 2 of § 2.2-3707; (ii) at the office of the clerk of the public body; or (iii) in the case of a public body that has no clerk, at the office of the chief administrator.”

10. **Return of Funds Invoice.** As PY 2026 end of year reports are processed, all SWCDs with unobligated cost-share funds will receive an invoice and a letter containing instructions for returning both unobligated cost-share funds and the associated technical assistance funds.

11. **Administrative Audits and Cost-Share File Administrative Audits:** RFCA will soon be contacting Blue Ridge, Patrick, Peaks of Otter and Pittsylvania SWCDs to schedule two-year audits for fall/winter 2026. Cost-Share File Administrative Audits will be conducted by CDCs on a two-year cycle consistent with SWCD audits. CDCs will be conducting Cost-Share File Administrative Audits in the fall of 2026. Please note that CDCs will not be conducting cost-share administrative audits when a SWCD is receiving a one-year financial audit due to staff changes or a special one-year financial audit, unless directed by the VSWCB.

12. ***NEW* FOIA Posting Requirement for Meeting Agendas.** As of July 1, 2026, in addition to the current FOIA language requirements to post meeting dates/locations, agendas must also be posted at least three business days prior to the meeting date (please note that the meeting date does not count as a business day). Considering this information, please make sure that board meeting and committee meeting agendas are as thorough as possible and include ALL items to be considered at the board meeting or committee meeting.

✿ §2.2-3707(G): “At least one copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting shall be made available for public inspection at the same time such documents are furnished to the members of the public body. The public body shall also post the proposed agenda on the public body's official government website, if any, prior to the meeting. No final action may be taken on items added to the agenda after the meeting commences unless they are time-sensitive or are the subject of a closed meeting properly identified in a motion in accordance with § 2.2-3711.

For purposes of this subsection, “final action” means a vote, adjudication, or other formal action taken by a public body that completes a matter or acts as a final consideration of an item. “Final action” does not include:

- (1) Referral to a committee or advisory body;*
- (2) Referral to a future meeting for action;*
- (3) Direction to staff to provide further information; or*
- (4) Issuance of a commending or memorial proclamation.”*

13. OAG Contact Information. The SWCD’s point of contact at the Virginia Office of the Attorney General is Darrell Kuntz (Telephone: (804) 371-5207 or Email: dkuntz@oag.state.va.us).

14. FOIA Training Opportunities for Directors: Please recall that the Code of Virginia requires locally elected officials to take the FOIA training once every two years based on the date of completion of the last training session. Most SWCD directors last took this training in 2024 between the months of July and December and will need to be prepared to complete this requirement this year. The Virginia Freedom of Information Act Advisory Council has a couple of options available for fulfilling the FOIA training requirement. It is recommended that you take a screen shot of the completion message once you finish the training. Please visit <https://foiacouncil.dls.virginia.gov/training.htm> to access these options.

✿ Click on the link (above) and scroll down to the heading “*Other Courses*” and then to the sub heading titled “*Local Officials Course*”. In this section, there should be a hyperlink that says “Register Now!”. Use this link to register for one of the two upcoming webinar courses listed below.

- i. Tuesday, October 20, 2026 at 1:00PM
- ii. Thursday, November 12, 2026 at 10:00AM

✿ Please recall that appointed directors are highly encouraged to take FOIA training per the Desktop Procedures Manual, even though they are not required per the Code of Virginia to take the course.

15. VASWCD and VACDE Award Nominations. Please be mindful of the upcoming VASWCD and VACDE award opportunities. Many of these awards are due in September, so please check the VASWCD website or contact the VASWCD for more information on eligibility and deadlines.

COST-SHARE/ TAX CREDIT/ CREP ITEMS:

- 1. First Quarter Cost-Share Disbursement Letters.** Will be transmitted on August 28, 2026.
- 2. Data QA/QC Deliverable in PY 2027 Grant Agreement.** Please remember that the PY 2027 grant agreement language requires that all QA/QC issues be corrected within 30 days of notification of the data issue. Daily copies of all CAS data are being retained and analyzed regularly. Please remember that SWCDs can run QA/QC reports in CAS (Click the “*Reports*” tab and then click on “*Emailed Reports*”).
- 3. Computer Generated Contract Part II and Contract Part III.** As a reminder, all fields of Contract Part II should be computer-generated except for the signatures. There should be no handwritten data fields on the Contract Part II. Everything should be computer-generated to the extent possible on the Contract Part III; however, it is allowable for the SWCD Payment Amount, Payment Date and Check Number to be handwritten if circumstances dictate. After payment, please make sure that both the Contract Part II and Contract Part III (as printed from CAS) have all necessary signatures prior to filing them in the case file. Also, please remember to retain old Contract Part II forms in the case file as a matter of record when cost-share increases are approved by the SWCD board.

4. **Update to PY27 VACS Program information following the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (SWCB) meeting on July 24th.** Materials from the SWCB meeting can be found at <https://townhall.virginia.gov/L/meetings.cfm>.
 - ❖ **VACS Manual and Policy Documents:** These documents include allocation information and are now available in the online VACS Manual.
 - ❖ **Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Policy Language Change:** The Cost-share Policy defines agricultural land as a minimum of five contiguous acres with verifiable gross receipts in excess of \$1,000 per year from the production or sale of agricultural, horticultural, or forest products produced on the land for each of the past three years. Non-industrial private forest lands are exempt from the \$1,000 requirement. The VSWCB approved an update to the forest lands eligibility to state that non-industrial private forest lands are exempt from the \$1,000 requirement when managed for commercial production according to a plan prepared by a professional forester (new language is underlined). This brings the expectations for qualifying, exempt forest lands more in line with the requirements for other agricultural land. Note that this change only impacts scenarios where the land is qualifying for VACS through the forest land exemption. If the land meets VACS eligibility requirements based on production, then the forest management plan requirement is not applicable. This change does require an update to the self-certification section of the Contract Part I and the self-certification form, which will be made as soon as possible. Any PY 2027 Contract Part I forms that have already been completed are acceptable and do not have to be re-done.
 - ❖ **Cover Crop Practices:** In June 2026, the VSWCB approved a change to cover crop specifications to add and standardize language across all practices regarding establishment of 60% cover by January 1 and a deadline to complete cover verification checks by January 31. At the July 24 meeting the VSWCB took action to undo the insertion of that language in the WQ-4 Legume Cover Crop and SL-8A Protective Cover for Agricultural Cropland as it is not applicable to those practices. The WQ-4 practice incentivizes reduction of nitrogen application on the subsequent crop rather than establishment of winter cover, and the SL-8A includes Spring and Summer planting options that are not consistent with January dates for establishment or verification.
5. **2026 CWFA Local Award and Grand Basin Award Applications.** Are due on October 1, 2026 to the CDC, per the July 6, 2026 memo from DCR Director Nikki Rovner. Please be mindful of the following:
 - ❖ The CWFA Application Form is available at <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-007.pdf>.
 - ❖ There is a separate Grand Basin Award Nomination Form that must accompany any application being considered for the Grand Basin Award. It is also located at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-008.pdf>.
 - ❖ Each SWCD can have one local winner per locality but may only submit one grand basin award nominee per river basin that falls within the SWCD's boundaries.
 - ❖ Please ensure that the CWFA Application Form is completed electronically and is not handwritten and that both the applicant and the SWCD sign the application form. This form is required for all local winners and for all Grand Basin Award nominees.
 - ❖ The Grand Basin Award application packet must contain a completed and signed CWFA Application form (please use the fillable online version), a Grand Basin Award Nomination Form (please use the fillable online version), a narrative of one to two pages that highlights the farming operation and outstanding conservation practices of the farm operation, and a PowerPoint presentation of at least six slides containing photos and detailed descriptions of conservation practices depicted in the presentation.
 - ❖ A photo of the applicant should be included in the presentation.

- ✿ The narrative should not be repetitive of the application material but should expand upon that information and should even speak to the applicant's ethics and ideas behind implementation of conservation practices on the farm.
- ✿ No application forms will be accepted after October 1, 2026 (this includes local award applications). Please strive to get application forms approved and signed no later than the September Board meeting. Local award applications that are not received by the October 1 deadline will not receive a local sign or certificate.

CONSERVATION PLANNER CERTIFICATION COURSE INFORMATION:

- ✿ **October 7-8, 2026:** Virginia Resource Training (Online Webinar Series).
- ✿ **October 14-16, 2026:** DCR Conservation Planner Course in Buckingham County (In-Person Course).
- ✿ **Winter 2026:** Nutrient Management Training Course will be offered again.

UPCOMING EVENTS/ IMPORTANT DATES:

- ✿ **August 18-20, 2026:** VACDE Graves Mountain Training in Syria, VA. A total of 9 Conservation Planning CEUs will be available for attending specific sessions at Graves.
- ✿ **September 14-15, 2026:** VSWCB Meeting in Pittsylvania County.
- ✿ **September 28, 2026:** Deadline for completing SPDA Account Verification with the Virginia Department of Treasury (<https://spda.trs.virginia.gov/search>) for the fourth quarter.
- ✿ **September 30, 2026:** Deadline for completing PY 2027 and PY 2028 EOL Verifications in exchange for the incentive payment.
- ✿ **October 1, 2026:** CWFA local award and grand basin award nomination packets are due to the appropriate CDC.

PY 2027 START UP REMINDERS & PITFALLS TO AVOID (REFERENCE THE PY 2027 VACS MANUAL AND THE COST-SHARE FILE ADMINISTRATIVE AUDIT FORM FOR MORE INFORMATION):

- ✿ **W-9 Form.** Please make sure that each applicant fills out a W-9 form since this is required for all applications. Remember that the address on the W-9 Form must match the address on the Contract Part I form.
- ✿ **Contract Sign Up.** Please make sure that the participant is aware that once he/she signs up a contract under a social or a tax ID number that this information cannot be changed in the Conservation Application Suite without a signed transfer agreement. Please remember that the transfer agreement must be approved by the SWCD board if the practice has already received board approval at the time of the transfer request. It would be wise to ensure that the participant understands the financial ramifications of receiving cost-share funds for a practice and that he/she checks with a financial advisor if unsure of the impacts of receiving a cost-share payment.
- ✿ **Contract Part I Signatures.** Please be reminded that participants must not initiate VACS or tax credit practices prior to application. Per page II-16 of the VACS manual, "BMPs initiated prior to submitting a cost-share or tax credit application are not eligible."
 - Participants interested in implementing a cover crop practice need to sign a PY 2027 Contract Part I form prior to planting.
 - Participants seeking tax credit on a VACS-eligible NRCS practice(s) need to sign a PY 2027 Contract Part I form prior to practice implementation and must be certified as meeting VACS or tax credit specifications after completion.
 - Structural practices should never be initiated prior to signature of a Contract Part I, receipt of a practice design *and* notification of board approval.
- ✿ **Resource Reviews.** There is a suite of practices on pages II-20 thru II-22 of the manual that require digitization of components in the Conservation Application Suite as part of the general Ag BMP Tracking Module data entry.

- As components are digitized, the program will run a query against FEMA, DHR, DWR, DCR-DNH, and DEQ TMDL data and a list of identified resource concerns will be generated. A copy of this report must be maintained in the case file.
- These concerns must be addressed with the appropriate agency and the appropriate required documentation retained in the file to show that these concerns were addressed.
- This includes both CREP practices and practices piggybacked with NRCS, where components must still be digitized in CAS but query results may be compared with the CPA-52 results. If the CPA-52 addresses all hits on a CREP or piggybacked project, then this must be noted in the file and a copy of the CPA-52 must be maintained in the file. For resource concerns/ “hits” that are generated in the query but not addressed by the CPA-52 process, the SWCD must follow up with the appropriate agency and include the appropriate documentation in the file.

 **Conservation Plans.** Per the PY 2027 grant agreement, please ensure that a conservation plan is approved by the SWCD board and recorded in the minutes prior to VACS, CREP or tax credit application approval and prior to practice implementation.

- CREP practices and other practices receiving state funding in addition to funding from a federal program must have a USDA conservation plan.
- If a practice is receiving cost-share only, a list of VACS exemptions are listed in the manual on pages II-19 and II-20.
- There are no exemptions when considering tax credit, and a listing of acceptable types of plans is included on page IV-6. Code requires that all tax credit applications have a board approved conservation plan on file at the SWCD to be eligible for tax credit. Please note that a Nutrient Management Plan is not an acceptable form of a Conservation Plan to meet the conservation plan requirement for tax credit.
- Please ensure that the Conservation Plan Approval Date is filled into the *Conservation Plan Board Approval Date* box in the General Tab in the Conservation Application Suite.
- Please ensure that the plan receives all appropriate signatures and that the plan is signed and dated by a director at the time of board approval. Remember that the conservation plan should never be signed by a director prior to board approval.
- Please ensure that the signature page of the conservation plan is uploaded into CAS immediately upon approval of the conservation plan. In the case of a USDA conservation plan, please upload the entire conservation plan with the signature page as approved by the board.

 **Grazing Management Plans.** The SL-6N, SL-6W, SL-7 and SL-10 practices require a written grazing management plan. A grazing management plan is required for the SL-6N and SL-6W practices when more than three new grazing units are being created by the installation of interior cross fencing and must include all acres in the grazing system. When implementing a SL-7 or SL-10 practice, a grazing management plan is required for all acres in the grazing system.

 **Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs).** Nutrient management plans are required as a prerequisite for many practices. This includes, but is not limited to, animal waste practices, cover crop practices and the cropland conversion practice (SL-1).

- Ideally, a nutrient management plan should be in hand at the time of practice implementation and absolutely must be in place for the acreage included in the BMP at the time that cost-share payment or tax credit is granted.
- Please check the NMP expiration date when working with each participant to ensure that the participant is aware of the NMP expiration date and the requirement to have a current NMP at the time of payment or issuance of tax credit.
- If a participant has no NMP or has an expired or expiring NMP, please provide them with contact information for their respective DCR Nutrient Management Specialist or provide them with a copy/link to the certified private nutrient management planner directory.
- In the case of annual practices such as cover crops, it might be helpful for your SWCD to consider setting an internal deadline that your SWCD expects to receive a copy of the nutrient management plan and

receipts for processing tax credit (if applicable) to ensure that there is not a last-minute rush on your end or on the part of the DCR Nutrient Management Specialist. This deadline should be clearly communicated to the applicant via a letter, and a copy of the correspondence should be maintained in the case file.

- ✿ **Soil Loss Calculations.** Please ensure that accurate soil erosion reduction numbers are reported in the Conservation Application Suite where required.
- ✿ **Engineering Job Approval Authority.** Please remember that if something exceeds your recognized EJAA level, a request for assistance should be submitted to DCR's Ag BMP Engineering Services staff. Please do not attempt to design and/or sign off on practice job sheets for practices that exceed your recognized EJAA since you could be held personally liable for any practice failures that occur as a result.
 - Please reference pages II-27 thru II-30 and pages IV-8 thru IV-10 of the manual for a list of practice components that require EJAA or PE review and approval.
 - Remember that engineering forms, including the Engineering Assistance Request form, and job sheets are now located in the Ag BMP Tracking Module of CAS under "*Support*" and then "*Forms*".
 - Please recall that NRCS may serve as the lead for all engineering services for practices that are more than 50% federally funded. However, an individual with appropriate EJAA or an individual from DCR Ag BMP Engineering Services must review the inventory and evaluation to ensure that all VACS program qualifications and practice specifications are met prior to board approval of the project.
 - Please pay special attention to EJAA QA/QC reports that are periodically generated to ensure that proper steps have been taken by your SWCD.
- ✿ **Design Sheets:** Please ensure that design sheets and "as built" documentation receive all required signatures. This should be done even if the participant is planning to complete the job rather than hiring a contractor to complete the job.
- ✿ **Caps:** Per the PY 2027 policy, "State participant caps are based upon the fiscal year that the practice is approved rather than the fiscal year in which the cost-share payment is distributed." Please make sure that you are monitoring practice caps using the *Participant Cost-Share* function of the Conservation Application Suite. Remember, the cap is now \$300,000 per applicant per program year for all practices.
- ✿ **Ranking and Estimating Applications.** Please be reminded that all PY 2027 applications must be ranked and funded according to PY 2027 secondary considerations and estimates must be drawn from the SWCD's PY 2027 average cost list.
- ✿ **Required Completion Date:** Please make sure that a Required Completion Date is filled in the appropriate blank on Part II of the contract at the time of contract approval.
 - This should be done as directors are signing and dating the Part II form.
 - This date should also be put into the Conservation Application Suite.
 - Please keep in mind that the required completion date is the date that the practice is expected to reach completion.
 - For cover crops, this date is the date that the cover crop is ready to be certified and paid and is not same as the cover crop planting date.
 - For two program year completion date practices, this should be June 30, 2028.
- ✿ **Bid Sheets.** Per the VACS manual, for each applicable practice, the SWCD must retain a completed VACS Bid Solicitation Sheet in the cost-share file to document:
 - Whether the Bid Process was required;
 - Whether an applicant completed the work on his/her own; or
 - Whether the applicant did not complete the work on his/her own and bid solicitation was required for each component with an estimate of \$75,000 or greater.

A listing of applicable practices can be found on page II-37 and II-38 of the VACS manual.

- The bid process must be used when the cost of any one component of a VACS contract is estimated to equal or exceed a billable expense of \$75,000.
- Remember, practice approval is contingent upon the completion of the bid sheet and a practice must be cancelled if the bid sheet is not received by the SWCD within 120 days.
- There is a form letter in the Conservation Application Suite and a status of “Conditionally Approved Pending Bids” that must be assigned to practices requiring the bid process.
- The bid sheet must be maintained in the file.
- Now excludes FR-1, FR-3, SL-1 and SL-11 practices.
- Please see page II-37 through II-41 of the VACS manual for more information.

📌 **Estimate and Payment Calculators:** Please make sure that there are an estimate calculator and a payment calculator present in the case file for all practices, including cover crop practices.

📌 **Contract Part II and Contract Part III Signatures:** Please check to ensure that all signatures are present on the Contract Part II and Contract Part III forms prior to closing out a case file.

📌 **Case File Checklist:** Each SWCD is strongly encouraged to utilize a case file checklist whether it be an internal checklist or the Cost-Share File Administrative Audit Form to ensure that case files contain all required documentation. This includes CREP files as well as VACS and tax credit files.

📌 **Cover Crop Reminders (includes WFA practices):**

- Collect receipts as supporting documentation and verification of seed purchases (type of seed and amount of seed planted). If participants utilize their own seed, the participant should provide some type of written documentation regarding the type of seed and amount of seed planted.
- Ensure that the case file contains maps that show all fields that are included in the practice.
- Fields contained in the practice should be labelled with a field identifier as well as the number of acres in the practice on the file maps.
- Please ensure that maps have some type of location identifier, such as roads, labelled on the map. Or driving directions to each respective field from the SWCD office can be included in the case file.

cc: Blair Gordon, Soil and Water Conservation District Liaison
Sara Bottenfield, Agricultural Incentives Program Manager
Angela W. Ball, PhD, DCR Western Area Manager

Sent electronically to SWCD offices: 08/11/2026



BONSACK NRCS MONTHLY REPORT

Derek W. Hancock, District Conservationist
August 2026

Farm Bill Program Workload:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - Managing 35 contracts totaling \$2,025,942.74 in obligated cost assistance
 - \$1,204,015.34 of that assistance has been paid out
 - 2675.70 acres of conservation contracted
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
 - Managing 24 contracts totaling \$1,527,243.57 in obligated cost assistance
 - \$486,744.57 of that assistance has been paid out
 - 14,566.50 acres of conservation contracted
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**
 - Currently managing one Wetland Reserve Program contract in Craig County on Sinking Creek.
 - Easement is being monitored annually for compliance.
 - Refer to annual monitoring report in NRCS case file.
- **Conservation Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP/CREP)**
 - 39 Active Contracts
 - 36 CREP & 3 CRP Grasslands
 - **Total acres contracted:**
 - Botetourt (453.6ac.) Craig (50.04ac.) Roanoke (32.68ac.)

Conservation Technical Assistance:

- Several technical assistance site visits were made. All were to determine eligibility for cost assistance programs such as BMP, EQIP, CSP or CREP.

BMP Projects/Partnership Activities:

- Refer to SWCD staff reports on BMP activities.
- Continue to provide engineering and conservation planning support as resources are available.
- Always promote program and technical collaboration with SWCDs.

Local Working Group/Public Meetings:

- Nothing to report

Outreach/Agency Activities/Events/ Important dates:

- TBD

Earth Team Volunteer Program:

- Nothing to report this month, but please encourage anyone you know who would benefit from volunteering with USDA, to contact District Conservationist Derek Hancock for more info.

VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Changes:

- NRCS is now being restricted as part of a state-wide re-organizational plan. Offices will now be a part of a multiple office "team", which all employees that are members of the team will answer to a supervisory DC. More info to come as letters of intent are mailed to employees and area-wide Q&A meetings are conducted.



Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District
Serving Botetourt & Craig Counties
 36 Executive Circle, Suite 1, Roanoke, VA 24012
 540-797-0217
 tim.miller@mountaincastles.org
 www.mountaincastles.org

We work with the people who work the land.

Approved 8/12/26

Accumulated Cash Balances (balances as of 6/30/2026)

Type	Account ending in	Balance	Purpose
CD	4237	\$48,391.04	New vehicle 1
CD	4234	\$48,391.04	Education program/scholarships
CD	7420	\$50,341.75	Personnel/payroll expenses 1
CD	2652	\$50,991.78	Dam projects
CD	2655	\$50,991.78	New vehicle 2
CD	2658	\$50,991.78	Personnel/payroll expenses 2
CD	2661	\$50,991.78	Personnel/payroll expenses 3
Savings		\$38,446.81	Emergency Funds

Attachment E Balances as of 6/30/2026

Category	Balance
DCR Operating Funds	\$21,123.44
VNRCF-TA	\$90,625.36
Dam Maintenance	\$22,878.71





COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

TO: Soil and Water Conservation Districts

FROM: Nikki Rovner, Director *Nikki Rovner*

SUBJECT: 2026 Clean Water Farm Awards

DATE: July 6, 2026

We are proud to be a strong supporter of the Clean Water Farm Awards program. Through this partnership between Soil and Water Conservation Districts (districts) and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), farmers who demonstrate their conservation ethic receive the recognition they deserve. The program also enables communities to learn about local farmers whose conservation practices help improve water quality – and all Virginians benefit from clean water. It is through our partnership and your dedication that we are able to make this happen.

We are counting on your continued support for the 2026 Clean Water Farm Award (CWFA) program as we strive to select an outstanding farm in each of the 112 counties and cities that comprise Virginia's 47 districts. You can access the CWFA application online at <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-007.pdf>. Again this year, DCR will provide signs and certificates signed by the Governor for all local winners. To order CWFA signs and certificates, submit your local winners' name, farm name, county, and a completed and signed CWFA application to your CDC by October 1, 2026.

Clean Water Farm Award winners will again be eligible for Virginia's Grand Basin Awards. Grand Basin winners represent the most outstanding examples of conservation on farms in the Commonwealth's 10 major river basins. Districts may submit one local award recipient for each river basin that falls within the district's boundaries. Nominee(s) must be selected by the district. Submit your district nominee(s) to the DCR regional office that will coordinate selection for the corresponding river basin. Please see the list of offices and river basins at the end of the Grand Basin Award Nomination Form and direct any questions to your CDC. District nominations must contain:

- A Completed Grand Basin Award Nomination Form (Found online here <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-008.pdf>)
- A completed and signed Clean Water Farm Award Application.
(Online application form - <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/form/DCR199-007.pdf>)
- A narrative, between one and two pages, highlighting outstanding conservation practices of the farm operation and information about the operation itself (size, all farming activities- not just those where practices are installed, and a couple of personal details if appropriate).
- A PowerPoint presentation of at least six slides representing significant conservation practices. Each slide must be accompanied by a statement describing the farm scene. One slide depicting the farm owner or manager is requested.

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor | Richmond, Virginia 23219 | 804-786-6124

A century of protecting Virginia's natural and cultural treasures.

*State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Planning and Recreation Resources
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation • Public Safety and Law Enforcement*

The deadline for submitting nomination packets to your CDC is October 1, 2026. We will have an in-person presentation of the Grand Basin winners at the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual meeting in December. DCR will provide signs for presentation at the Annual Meeting and framed copies of the Virginia General Assembly resolution for the Grand Basin winners later in the spring of 2027.

We are looking forward to another successful year of recognizing Virginia's farmers. We appreciate your support and assistance.

CC: SWCD Administrative Secretaries (please distribute to all district directors and staff)
DCR Conservation District Coordinators



Mountain Castles
Soil & Water Conservation District

ANNUAL
REPORT
Program Year 2026



OUR PROGRAMS



FARMERS

Mountain Castles SWCD administers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share Program (VACS) which provides financial and technical assistance for agricultural producers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to improve water quality on their farm and downstream.



HOMEOWNERS

The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) provides financial reimbursement to homeowners installing Best Management Practices (BMPs) which reduce stormwater runoff and erosion on their property. Churches, local government, and businesses are also eligible to participate.



RESIDENTIAL SEPTIC

Up to 50% financial reimbursement for residential septic improvements may be available for homeowners in the Tinker Creek watershed (Daleville, Cloverdale, parts of Troutville) and the Glade Creek watershed (Blue Ridge). Eligible practices include pump outs, repairs, and replacement systems.



EDUCATION

Mountain Castles SWCD delivers free K-12 educational programming both in the classroom and through District-organized outdoor field trips, including the "Every 7th Grader Canoes" program. Outreach programs for all ages are delivered through clubs, festivals, fairs, and local libraries, including our popular rain barrel workshops.



VACS

New contract obligations

Chesapeake Bay watershed: **\$774,941**

Outside the Chesapeake Bay: **\$340,082**

Total amount obligated in PY26: **\$1,115,023**

Payments

Chesapeake Bay watershed: **\$528,211.29**

Outside the Chesapeake Bay: **\$235,539.24**

Total amount paid in PY 26: **\$763,750.53**

VCAP

Total cost share provided:

\$8,356.00

Emily Williams was hired as our new part-time employee dedicated to VCAP.



RESIDENTIAL SEPTIC

Total cost share provided: **\$13,169.15**

New grants received: **\$100,706.00**

PY 26 was largely spent compiling a “wait list” as we applied for additional funding from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, which we received in June. With over \$90,000 of cost share available, the program will fully resume in PY 27.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Total number of programs: **111**

Partner organizations: **13**

Total participants: **3,687**

Educational grants received: **\$9,600.00**

Scholarships awarded: **\$8,145.00**

OPERATIONAL INCOME

Income (state): **\$328,769.23**

Income (local): **\$10,000.00**

Income (other): **\$18,827.91**

Dam maintenance (state): **\$22,640.00**

Interest: **\$7,537.31**

Total operational income: **\$387,774.45**

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Operations & Education:
\$294,245.00

Dam maintenance: **\$17,259.54**

Total operational expenses:
\$311,504.54

DAMS

Mountain Castles SWCD manages four flood control dams on Johns Creek in Craig Co.

Income

Small dam repair (state): **\$42,000.00**

Johns Creek #1 rehab (state/federal):
\$103,395.14

Expenses

Small dam repair: **\$40,000.00**

Johns Creek #1 rehab: **\$175,267.35**

Mountain Castles SWCD



2026 DISTRICT AWARDS



S&R Family Homestead was the recipient of this year's Clean Water Farm award. The Smith and Ribble families expanded their original stream exclusion project to incorporate rotational grazing and improve pasture quality. They have been exceptional collaborators with the District over the years and serve as role models for the farming community.

Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, the CWFA celebrates dedicated farmers who lead by example to preserve water quality through conservation practices.

High School Scholarships

Mountain Castles SWCD annually awards \$2,000 scholarships to graduating seniors from District high schools. Recipients must major in natural resource conservation, agriculture, environmental studies, or a related field.



Georgia Miller,
James River High
School



Tiffany Ratliff & Carter
Calfee, Craig County
High School

IT'S A TEAM EFFORT



Contact Us

Daniel Naff, Conservation Specialist
daniel.naff@mountaincastles.org
(540) 580-8373

Emily Williams, Conservation Tech Assistant
emily.williams@mountaincastles.org
(540) 268-8868

Tim Miller, District Coordinator
tim.miller@mountaincastles.org
(540) 797-0217



Our Website
mountaincastles.org



Partners

Virginia Dept of Conservation & Recreation
Virginia Association of Soil & Water
Conservation Districts
Botetourt County Board of Supervisors
Botetourt County Schools
Craig County Board of Supervisors
Craig County Schools
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm Service Agency
Shenandoah Valley Conservancy
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
Virginia Cooperative Extension



Board of Directors

Jeff Henderson, Botetourt (chair)
Preston Wickline, Botetourt
Walter Nelson, Botetourt
Andrew Keffer, Craig
Jason Williams, Craig
Jonathan Stanley, VCE

Associate Directors

Michael Beahm (treasurer)
Jeff Munsey
Tasha Snavelly
Tom & Tara Williamson

Virginia Dept of Forestry
Virginia Dept of Wildlife Resources
Virginia Dept of Environmental Quality
Virginia Department of Health
National Assoc of Conservation Districts
VSU Small Farm Outreach Program
Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional
Commission
Upper James RC&D
Upper & Middle James Buffer Consortium
James River Association
Roanoke Cement



Conservation Specialist Report:

Board of Directors Meeting

August 12, 2026

By: Daniel Naff, Conservation Specialist

VACS Program

- **25% Out-of-pocket Tax Credits for Approval**
 - **45-26-0004**
 - **Instance #650618 (SL-6W)**
 - Out-of-pocket: \$2,934.20
 - Eligible tax credit: \$733.55
 - **45-26-0039**
 - **Instance #739939 (SL-1)**
 - Out-of-pocket: \$3,410.34
 - Eligible tax credit: \$852.59
 - **Instance #737612 (SL-1)**
 - Out-of-pocket: \$386.31
 - Eligible tax credit: \$96.58
- **Conservation Plans for Approval/Re-Approval**
 - **CP-45-25-0006**
 - **CP-45-26-0008**
 - **CP-45-27-0003**
- **VACS Contracts for Approval**
 - **45-27-0010**
 - **Instance #736885 (SL-1)**
 - 117.32 acres of summer annuals converted to grass for 5 years
 - Average soil loss reduction of 0.23 T/ac/yr
 - Estimated cost: \$122,599.40
 - Max CS: \$94,882.55 (CB VACS)
 - **45-27-0011**
 - **Instance #762353 (SL-1)**
 - 7.78 acres of summer annuals converted to grass for 5 years
 - Average soil loss reduction of 0.25 T/ac/yr
 - Estimated cost: \$8,130.10
 - Max CS: \$6,292.08 (CB VACS)
 - **45-27-0012**
 - **Instance #762694 (SL-1)**
 - 87.26 acres of summer annuals for hay converted to grass for 15 years
 - Average soil loss reduction of 0.53 T/ac/yr
 - Estimated cost: \$91,186.70
 - Max CS: \$81,479.03 (CB VACS)
- **Recent site visits with Derek / Possible projects**
 - (3) SL-7s
 - (3) SL-6Ws

- (1) FR-1/FR-3

Dams

- Johns Creek 1 Rehab Update
 - Meeting scheduled for 8/13/2026, updates TBD
- Johns Creek 2 Small Dam Repair Project Update
 - Public bid opening held on 7/31/2026
 - We received one bid: MC3 Solutions (Elliston, VA): \$573,806.66
 - Estimated project cost from Schnabel: \$262,825.00
 - Total Small Dam Repair award from DCR: \$360,000.00
 - Due to the large disparity in the bid cost and the estimated project cost, DCR and Schnabel conclude that the best solution would be to reject the bid.
 - Charles Wilson suggested including the work for JC2 as a bid item when we bid out the construction for Johns Creek 1 Rehab
 - The contractors for JC1 will have to pass the pre-qualification process
 - There is already an identified borrow-area at JC1 for fill and waste dirt
 - The proximity of the two sites makes it “worth the trip” and contractors can assign a crew to work on JC2 while already at JC1.
 - Can assign a flexible start date, but require that work be completed after X days of being started
 - **Board motion required to either award or not award a contract to MC3 Solutions.**
- **Quote for gravel spreading at Johns Creek 2 by Lawrence Narehood**
 - Estimated 5 hrs of work with Ventrac to scoop gravel from bottom of the access road, move it to the top, place, and compact it with the bucket during the fall mowing cycle
 - Intended to make landowners happy until next spring
 - Quote amount: \$400.00
- Annual inspections completed 6/11/2026 with Charles Wilson – no issues observed.

Training & Certifications

- VACDE Training at Graves Mountain Lodge 8/18-20/2026
- Virginia Natural Resource Leadership Institute Training Dates:
 - 8/26: Virtual session
 - 9/23-25 @ Shenandoah National Park
 - 11/18-20 @ Virginia Beach
 - 1/13-15 @ Richmond
 - 3/3-5 @ Harrisonburg
 - 4/27-30 @ somewhere in SWVA (exact location TBD)
 - 6/9-11 @ Charlottesville

Misc. Updates

- Makayla’s last day will be 8/21/2026
- Participated in the Virginia Highlands Partnership event 7/30/2026
- VACDE Conservation Planning Committee – on Stream Protection subgroup to come up with standardized planning/design/check-out process for DCR to incorporate into the new Conservation Planning curriculum

Conservation Technician Assistant Report

*Submitted by: Emily Williams
for August 2026*

Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District Board meeting

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

Information items:

- Heatmap creation tool concept design was shared with VASWCD. Elements of concept included in the Statement of Requirement for VCAP module of CAS III, but complete deployment judged to be an unnecessary risk by VASWCD. VASWCD encouraged Mountain Castles to use the tool for landowner education of programmatic details.
- Met with two potential contractors for VCAP on 7/21/2026.
- Scheduled multiple VCAP site assessments for August and September.
- Reviewed 45-27-200 RWH application first and second draft. Working with landowners to finalize application.

Action items:

- (none)

Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share (VACS)

Information items:

- Prepared PY27 CC mailer for postal delivery to potential applicants
- Emailed CC mailer to potential applications
- Published cover crop webpage on Mountain Castles website

Action items:

- (none)

Other

Attended VCAP updates webinar, 07/14/2026

Attended WFA training, 07/16/2026

Attended CAS training, 07/23/2026



District Coordinator/Education Update Report:

Board of Directors Meeting

August 12, 2026

By: Tim Miller

We work with the people who work the land.

General Update

- Attended Whole Farm Approach webinar and CAS Updates webinar on 7/16
- Watched recorded VCAP updates video on 7/27
- Records management: PY23 file destruction
- Revised District Budget after receiving DCR Grant Agreements
- Completed draft of District Annual Report
- Residential septic grant back in full swing (applications, approvals, payments)
- Scheduling classroom programs and fall field trips

Education & Outreach

Classroom programs

- None this month

Outdoor programs

- None this month

Community programs

- 8/1 – Botetourt County Fair
- 8/7 – Partner Paddle on the James River

Upcoming events

- Sept 24-25 – RMMS canoeing at Oxbow Farm
- Sept 26 – Rain barrel workshop at Eagle Rock Library
- Oct 3 – Rain barrel workshop at Blue Ridge Library
- Oct 13, 15, 16 – 2nd grade “Land Day” at Camp Bethe
- Oct 16 – Rain barrel workshop at Buchanan Library

