

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District

April 17, 2025, 7:00pm

Regular Board Meeting, Approved Minutes

The Greenbrier Valley Conservation Board of Supervisors met on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 7:00pm in the conference room of the USDA service center located in Lewisburg.

Those Present:

Supervisors:

Chairman, Gary Sawyers

Gary L. Truex

Avery Atkins

Timothy VanReenen

Donald McNeel

Carolyn Miller (Teams)

Others:

Adam Merritt, NRCS

Wanda Smith, NRCS

Jeremy Salyer, WVCA (Teams)

Morgan Dial, WVCA (Teams)

Jacob Lavender, WVCA (Teams)

Angela Feamster-Sawyers, WVCA

Chairman Sawyers called the meeting to order at 7:02pm and welcomed everyone.

Donald McNeel led in the Pledge of Allegiance; Gary Truex led in Prayer.

Approval of Minutes

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2025, regular board meeting. Donald McNeel seconded; motion carried.

Guests

No guests were present.

Administrative Specialist Report

Angela Sawyers reviewed the highlights of her report, which is attached.

Cooperating Agency Reports

- NRCS – Adam Merritt reviewed the highlights of the Greenbrier Valley North Work Unit DC report and the State Conservationist's report, and Wanda Smith reviewed the highlights of the Greenbrier Valley work unit Union DC report. All reports are attached.
- FSA
- Forestry
- WVCA – The board of supervisors reviewed the highlights of area director, Jeremy Salyer's report, which is attached.
- Other

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

- **Financial Reports**

Gary Truex moved on behalf of the committee to pay the bills, per payables list. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved on behalf of the committee to accept the general and CDO funds report, and file for audit. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved on behalf of the committee to accept the WVCA restricted funds report, and file for audit. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

- LOR

Gary Truex moved to approve the following LOR:

LOR ID: 16293

Purpose: FY24 Audit Reimbursement – 01/16/2025

Amount: \$3,500.00

AGR: 1071-05

Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

Agricultural Enhancement Program Committee

- AgEP funding discussion

Following a brief overview of previous discussions concerning district allocation percentages from the WVDA pasture renovation program and the AgEP allocation formula:

Timothy VanReenen moved to schedule a meeting with WVCA staff involved with AgEP and to contact the eight top funded districts through the WVDA Pasture Renovation Grant to see if there is any interest in changing the funding formula, by June. Gary Truex seconded; motion carried.

Grassland Committee

- The board of supervisors held discussions concerning the farm tour.

- Applications for Approval:

Gary Truex moved to approve the following WVU Extension GRASS Program applications:

- Todd Belcher – NTE \$20,000.00
- James Tuckwiller – NTE \$20,000.00
- Michael Moran - NTE \$20,000.00
- Linda Rodgers – NTE \$20,000.00

- Timothy VanReenen - NTE \$20,000.00

Donald McNeel seconded. Due to a conflict of interest, Timothy VanReenen recused himself from voting. All others were in favor; motion carried.

Gary Truex moved to approve and send the following LOR:

LOR ID: 16299

Purpose: WVU Extension GRASS Partnership

Amount: \$100,000.00

AGR: 1488-00

Donald McNeel seconded. Due to a conflict of interest, Timothy VanReenen recused himself from voting. All others were in favor; motion carried.

Building/Equipment Committee

The board of supervisors reviewed the monthly equipment report, which is attached.

Updates

Gary Truex reviewed the equipment's profit and loss reports from the last and current fiscal year. Following discussion among the board of supervisors concerning staffing for the equipment coordinator position, an increase in rental rates, and compensation for Gary Truex, who has been providing interim coverage, the following motions were made:

- 1. Timothy VanReenen moved that the district pay Gary Truex through Per Diem for his work as interim equipment coordinator, and to reimburse the Per Diem through the district's equipment program for his services in that regard. Avery Atkins seconded. Gary Truex recused himself from voting due to a conflict of interest. All others were in favor; motion carried.*
- 2. Gary Truex moved to increase the rental rates as presented, effective July 2025. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.*
- 3. Gary Truex moved that the district hire a part-time employee for up to 5 hours a day, 25 hours a week and the wages will be determined. Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.*

Education Outreach/Events Committee

Following some discussion, Gary Truex moved to designate Carolyn Miller and Angela Feamster-Sawyers authority to plan this year's Legislative & Awards banquet. Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Watershed

Jacob Lavender presented quotes from SCD for the mowing & weed eating of the Marlin Run and Howard's Creek Dam. Jacob also noted that he requested a quote from SCD for the removal of the debris from the upstream left gutter of the flood pool and will present it to the board once he receives it.

Timothy VanReenen moved to approve the following work estimates provided by the Southern Conservation work crew:

- Mowing & weed eating of the Marlin Run Dam- \$3,000.00
- Mowing & weed eating of the Howard's Creek Dam- \$4,350.00

Donald McNeel seconded; motion carried.

319 Committee

Donald McNeel moved on behalf of the committee to approve returning the following funds, the balance as of April 17, 2025, and any accrued interest:

- 20052- GV: NPS 1791Second Creek Karst V AgBMP - \$7.24

Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

- **Contract Cancellation**

Donald McNeel moved on behalf of the committee to cancel the following contract:

- Indian Creek IV:
 - Motion to approve septic repair/replacement contract cancellation -John Kochergin

Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

- **Payments for Approval**

Donald McNeel moved on behalf of the committee to approve the following payments:

- Second Creek VI:
 - SGS WQ Monitoring in the amount of \$433.10 for March 2025
- Indian Creek IV:
 - SGS WQ Monitoring in the amount of \$129.93 for March 2025
 - John Kochergin-Septic System Pumping 50% NTE \$300.00 for the amount of \$238.50
- Spring Creek II:
 - SGS WQ Monitoring in the amount of \$86.62 for March 2025

Avery Atkins seconded; motion carried.

Donald McNeel moved on behalf of the committee to approve the following payment:

- WVDA- Invoice#15652372: \$600.00 for EDDM Fliers

Timothy VanReenen seconded; motion carried.

Other Business

- GVCD Employee Policy Review/Revision – this item was tabled until the upcoming committee meeting.

Chairman Sawyers reviewed the following dates:

WV Envirothon Competition: April 16-17, 2025, at Cedar Lakes Conference

GVCD Local Working Group Meeting: May 22, 2025, at 9:00am, in the conference room of the Lewisburg USDA service center

GVCD & SCD Land Judging and Homesite Evaluation Contest: May 29th at the PMC in Alderson at 9:00am

With no further business the meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:12 pm.



Gary Sawyers
Chairman



Gary Truex
Secretary/ Treasurer

GS/GT/as

Recorded by: Angela Feamster-Sawyers, Administrative Specialist

Administrative Specialist Report

April 17, 2025

- The following funds have been received since my last report:

\$100,000.00 – LOR 16276 – WVU Extension GRASS Partnership
\$12,668.00 – LOR 15144 – FY25 Q4 District Support Allotment
\$18,852.80 – LOR 16281 – Round #2 WVDA Pasture Renovation Program
\$131,520.80 Total Funds
- O&M Sponsor letters and agreements for FY26 have been mailed, along with reminders for FY25 contributions.
- WVDA Pasture Renovation Program payments have been distributed, except for one that needed to be reissued and some that will be processed in the second round.

Reminder: The Greenbrier East FFA Chapter will hold their Banquet on May 02, 2025, if you wish to attend, please RSVP by April 20, 2025.

Dates to remember:

GVCD Committee Meeting: May 07, 2025 @ 9:00am

GVCD Regular Board Meeting: May 15, 2025 @7:00pm

GVCD Local Working Group Meeting: May 22, 2025, 9:00am

GVCD & SCD Land Judging and Homesite Evaluation Contest: May 29th at the PMC in Alderson @ 9:00am.



United States Department of Agriculture

April 17, 2025

GVCD-N NRCS Report for April 2025

AMA & EQIP Update

AMA

This month the Lewisburg/Buckeye Field Offices received two preapprovals for the Fiscal Year 2025 Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA):

- Buckeye: 1 contract - \$80,565
- Lewisburg: 1 contract - \$20,521
- Total obligated funds: \$101,086

There were nine AMA applications for Lewisburg and seven applications for Buckeye, totaling 16 applications for GVCD-N.

EQIP

We are currently working on Fiscal Year 2025 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Assessments and Rankings. The deadline for completion of Assessments and Rankings is April 30th, and we likely will find out the number of preapprovals in early May.

The total number of current EQIP applications are as follows:

- Buckeye: 9 EQIP applications
- Lewisburg: 36 EQIP applications
- Total: 45 EQIP applications

Other

Total of approved payments for existing contracts since 3/25/25 is \$123,536.90.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contract holders with Fiscal Year 2021 contracts are being notified that their contracts will end this year and that they may file an application for renewing these CSP contracts. There are six FY21 CSP contracts that will be potential renewals this fall for GVCD-N.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out.

Adam Merritt
Acting District Conservationist

Natural Resources Conservation Service
LEWISBURG SERVICE CENTER
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LEWISBURG, WV 24901
Phone: (304) 681-4030
Helping People Help the Land

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West Virginia State Conservationist's Report

April 2025

Program Priorities

NRCS WV began the 2025 fiscal year with a focus on obligating Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) funds. Sixty-two FY2020 CSP contracts were renewed for an additional five years, totaling over \$3 million across 10,376 acres. An additional 179 CSP – Classic contracts were obligated totaling over \$4.5 million across 14,336 acres.

Field Office staff are currently working on assessing and ranking 1,301 EQIP and 311 AMA applications received prior to September 13, 2024. Funding is expected to be competitive across all funding pools, with an EQIP allocation of \$8.8 million and an AMA allocation of \$598k.

Payments on CSP & EQIP contracts that were obligated using Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding were briefly paused, however on February 20th Secretary Rollins instructed NRCS to resume issuing payments. Secretary Rollins continues to evaluate other paused funding as she ensures that programs are focused on directly supporting America's farmers and ranchers.

Over the next few months, our District Conservationists will be assisting Conservation Districts to hold Local Working Group (LWG) meetings in each of the 14 Districts. These LWG meetings are an essential component in NRCS programming. We rely on local input to help set program priorities and focus funding to directly meet locally identified resource concerns.

Drought Recovery

NRCS WV is assisting the Farm Service Agency with the implementation of their Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). ECP provides emergency water for livestock and existing orchard and vineyard irrigation systems. To date, NRCS has assisted with 485 applications with the majority of applications Monongahela, Potomac Valley, Greenbrier Valley, Little Kanawha, and Western Districts. Designs for these watering systems will be developed and delivered to FSA by April 30, 2025.

Staffing Updates

A national level contract that supported 10 employees in WV was terminated on March 28, 2025. This impacted positions that provided administrative assistance to both the field and state offices as well as our Public Affairs Specialist. We are developing new payment review and contract management processes to ensure that our customers are minimally impacted and are utilizing staff from bordering states for public affairs assistance.

NRCS WV lost 21 probationary employees on February 14, 2025. This decision was since reversed and as of April 7th several of those employees have returned to work or are in the process; a few have taken other employment opportunities.

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District Greenbrier Valley Work Unit Union DC Report

4/17/2025

Follow Ups from Previous Meetings

Cultural Resources:

- WV NRCS has Jacqueline Monsell on board now as our Cultural Resources Specialist. We should see the results of this happy news very soon.

Engineering:

- We have been making progress on getting completed designs.
- We are feeling a bottleneck: ECP 2024 Drought program is administered by FSA but will be NRCS designed livestock water systems. 75 applications in Monroe.

Financial Assistance Programs

Active Contracts

- 179 Active contracts in Monroe

Contract Management –

- 27 contract items certified February 27, 2025 – April 17, 2025
- \$64,983.94 in cost-share monies paid

Working Applications –

- 88 EQIP and AMA applications for PY2025 so far; currently have 38 for ranking by April 30, 2025

Expiring Contracts

- Currently addressing 8 contracts that expire 12/31/2025. That is down from 13.
- 2 of these 8 are completed and final payments forthcoming soon
- 3 more have been making good progress and are expected to complete
- 3 are probably facing termination

Cancellations

- No new cancellation requests in recent months.
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Greenbrier Valley Conservation District Greenbrier Valley Work Unit Union DC Report

4/17/2025

Office Administration

News and Events

- Local Work Group Meeting set for May 22, 2025.
- Land Judging contest set for May 29, 2025.
- Deadline to apply for CSP Renewal is June 20, 2025
- ECP 2024 Drought: NRCS responsible for:
 - feasibility field visits
 - well siting requests to NRCS Geologist
 - Threatened & Endangered Species & Eagles presence & mitigation requirements reports
 - oversight of potential conflicts/overlap (no double dipping!) with existing cost-share contracts, coordination with other applications (such as WVU Extension's GRASS program and our own EQIP)
 - survey & design of livestock water systems
 - certification of installed practices
- Accepting applications year-round for CSP, AMA, and EQIP. Application cut-offs for PY2026 not yet established

Field Office Priorities

- Planning/Assessments/Rankings/Estimates for PY2025 EQIP & AMA applications
- Contract Reviews:
 - Priority #1 expiring contracts
 - Priority #2 contracts without payment within past 12 months
- Ongoing engineering design work for existing NRCS contracts
- Ongoing field inspection and certification work for existing NRCS contracts
- ECP 2024 Drought work. The WV State Conservationist's Report (attached) states that the designs for these watering systems will be developed and delivered to FSA by April 30, 2025. That will NOT happen by April 30, 2025 in Monroe.

Staffing Updates

- Asa Dick, who started 12/16/2024 in Union as a Natural Resources Specialist, was among the terminated probationary employees. He took another job and did not return.
- Mark Pontius, contracted Program Assistant for the 3 Greenbrier Valley counties, was among staff lost due to termination of a nationwide contract.

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District
Greenbrier Valley Work Unit Union DC Report
4/17/2025

Any questions may be directed to the undersigned at wanda.smith@usda.gov or (304) 772-3006 ext. 115 (office) or (304) 216-9353 (mobile).

Wanda Smith

District Conservationist

Distribution:

Jon Bourdon, State Conservationist (STC)

Brandon Duckworth, Assistant State Conservationist – Field Operations (ASTC-FO), South Area

Burton “Matt” Murphy, Area Resource Conservationist (ARC), South Area

Julie Stutler, NRCS Outreach Coordinator

Greenbrier Valley Conservation District Board of Supervisors (c/o Angela Feamster-Sawyers)

Adam Merritt, Acting GV North District Conservationist

NRCS Field Office Staff: Union Service Center



West Virginia
Conservation Agency

April 2025 WVCA Report

Request to Conservation Districts

The WVCA is encouraging Conservation Districts to review and update your District Policy Manuals. In addition to your policy manual, you are encouraged to review your CD Employee Manual (if you have one) and your CD Plan of Work. If you are already doing these reviews, please disregard this request.

Annual Work Plan

Reminder - District annual work plans are due **June 30** to Guthrie.

Conservation Farm Tour

It is time for districts to think about the conservation farm families to be awarded. CDs should have their district farm selection to their Area Directors by June 16.

O&M Agreements:

CD's are encouraged to continue to work with local sponsors for O&M funding. The change will be that these agreements will not be matched dollar for dollar as they were in the past. The WVCA will be allocating funds on a watershed basis moving forward to help with O&M costs.

Ag Enhancement Program Timeline

- May/June/July – CDs to finalize upcoming FY program, update AgEP agreement addendums, take action to approve LORs Mid June – Deadline for CDs submit final practice list to WVCA (CDs can submit final list any time after SCC approval of practice list)

Press contact reminder

The WVCA wants to remind all CDs that the WVCA Communications specialist is available to help districts with press releases, and media contacts, especially if it the situation involves WVCA programs or staff.

**Greenbrier Valley Conservation District
Monthly Equipment Report**

Month/Year MARCH 2025

Equipment	Number of Days Rented	Number of Acres	Total Revenue	Total Cost of Repairs & Maintenance	Total Field Service Mileage
Tye #1					
Tye #2					
Great Plains #1					
Great Plains #2	2		225		
Great Plains #3	2		225		
No-till Seeder Totals					
Cricket					
Grasshopper	1		123		
Big Silver					
Lime/fertilizer Totals					
Chemical Sprayer					
Litter Spreader #1	1		123		
Litter Spreader #2	4		246		
Litter Spreader Totals					
Post Driver #3					
Post Driver #4					
Post Driver #56	1		200		
Post Driver Totals					
Potato Planter					
Potato Sprayer					
Potato Hiller					
Potato Totals					
Portable Scales					
Other					
Shop Supplies					
GRAND TOTALS (all equipment)			91142		

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