



**VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION BOARD
POLICY ON SOIL AND
WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION
AND OPERATIONS FUNDING
ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2026**

(Approved by Board on May 28, 2025)

1. Purpose:

This Policy document specifies the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board's (Board) process by which funds are to be allocated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (Department) to the Commonwealth's 47 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) for administrative and operational support in Fiscal Year 2026. A separate Policy shall govern the Fiscal Year 2026 distribution of cost-share and technical assistance funds to Districts.

2. Authority:

This funding distribution Policy is required in accordance with Item 359 of Chapter 725 of the 2025 Session Acts of Assembly (the 2025 Appropriation Act) that specifies that the "funds shall be distributed upon approval by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board to the districts in accordance with the Board's established financial allocation policy". Funds subject to this Policy are set out in Sub-program 50320 (Financial Assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts) and are guided by the following specific budget provisions within Item 359:

A.1. Out of the amounts appropriated for Financial Assistance to Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts, \$15,044,091 the first year and \$15,044,091 the second year from the general fund shall be provided to soil and water conservation districts for administrative and operational support. These funds shall be distributed upon approval by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board to the districts in accordance with the Board's established financial allocation policy. Of this amount, \$12,809,091 the first year and \$12,809,091 the second year from the general fund shall be distributed to the districts for core administrative and operational expenses (personnel, training, travel, rent, utilities, office support, and equipment) based on identified budget projections and in accordance with the Board's financial allocation policy; \$468,000 the first year and \$468,000 the second year from the general fund shall be distributed at a rate of \$4,500 per dam for maintenance; \$1,500,000 the first year and \$1,500,000 the second year from the general fund for small dam repairs of known or suspected deficiencies; and \$267,000 the first year and \$267,000 the second year to the department to provide district support in accordance with Board policy, including, but not limited to, services related to auditing, bonding, contracts, and training. The amount appropriated for small dam repairs of known or suspected deficiencies and the purchase and installation of remote

monitoring equipment is authorized for transfer to the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 10.1-611.1, Code of Virginia, the department is authorized to use interest earnings from the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund to support two positions to oversee maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation projects necessary for District-owned dams to be in compliance with the Dam Safety Act (§ 10.1-604 et seq.) and attendant regulations.

In addition to the authorities set out in the 2025 Appropriation Act, the *Code of Virginia* contains the following Board duties applicable to this Policy:

§ 10.1-505. Duties of Board.

In addition to other duties and powers conferred upon the Board, it shall have the following duties and powers:

1. To give or loan appropriate financial and other assistance to district directors in carrying out any of their powers and programs....
3. To oversee the programs of the districts....
9. To provide for the conservation of soil and water resources, control and prevention of soil erosion, flood water and sediment damages thereby preserving the natural resources of the Commonwealth....
11. To provide, from such funds appropriated for districts, financial assistance for the administrative, operational and technical support of districts.

3. Definitions:

“District” or “local soil and water conservation district” or “SWCD” means a political subdivision of the Commonwealth organized in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Virginia contained in Chapter 5 of Title 10.1 (§ 10.1-500 et seq.) and with the powers and duties set out in Chapters 1, 5, 6, and 21.1 of Title 10.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

“FTE” means a full time equivalent position.

“Total Maximum Daily Load” or “TMDL” means a calculation of a maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards.

4. Allocation Process:

For Fiscal Year 2026, \$12,809,091 (Item 359 A.1 - see Part 2, Authority) is available for allocations to the Districts for administrative and operational support, including funding for small dam repairs, and to the Department for the administration of contracts in support of the Districts. Those allocations are set out in Attachment A and are developed in accordance with Part 4.

SWCD (Column 1)

For Fiscal Year 2026, the 47 listed Districts will be eligible for administration and operations funding allocations.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS CORE FUNDING (Column 2):

For the purposes of the Fiscal Year 2026 Policy allocations, District allocations have been based on the budget templates submitted by each District as part of the FY2023 end-of-year reporting requirements. The Board has funded Districts based on their needs as demonstrated in the budget template. Districts shall ensure that funds provided in Fiscal Year 2026 are utilized to support and deliver the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program and other *Code of Virginia* specified responsibilities. No funds shall be obligated or expended for the design, implementation, or installation of BMPs unless they are fully consistent with BMP specifications that have been formally approved by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Department, the Department of Environmental Quality or the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

DAM MAINTENANCE \$4,500/dam) (Column 3)

For Fiscal Year 2026, \$468,000 is provided for out of the amounts appropriated in Item 359 A.1. of the 2024 Appropriation Act (Sub-program 50320) for the maintenance of the Districts' 104 impounding structures. This represents a total of \$4,500 per dam.

NUMBER OF DAMS (Column 4)

This column indicates the distribution of the Districts' 104 impounding structures within the 12 Districts that have dams.

SUBTOTAL ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS ALLOCATIONS (Column 5)

This column represents the total amounts the specified District will receive during Fiscal Year 2026 to support the administration and operations within the District (Sum of Columns 2 and 3). The District may also be eligible for additional allocations from the Small Dam Repair funds (Column 6). For Fiscal Year 2026, this total amount (the Sum of Columns 2 and 3) is \$13,277,091.

SMALL DAM REPAIR Item 357 A.1. (Column 6)

For Fiscal Year 2026, \$1,500,000 for small dam repairs is appropriated in Item 359 A.1. of the 2025 Appropriation Act (Sub-program 50320) for the maintenance and small repairs to the Districts' 104 impounding structures. Purchasing procedures consistent with the Virginia Public Procurement Act shall be followed. To be eligible for the funding, Districts shall apply for consideration in accordance with guidance issued by the Department's District Engineering Services Unit in the Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Once awards are determined, at the District's request, the Department is authorized to provide an initial drawdown of the approved funding amount based on actual contract needs. Final disbursement of grant funds shall be disbursed on a reimbursement basis only. A project close-out letter will be issued by the District Dam Engineer once all required documentation has been reviewed and approved. The project close-out letter will authorize the final disbursement of project funds as supported by the financial documentation provided, up to a total amount not to exceed the amount of the award. Upon the final disbursement of project funds, any unexpended funds shall be returned to the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund, shall be unobligated, and shall be available for subsequent project awards. The Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund Grant Agreement for each award contains additional procedural and compliance details.

DCR MANAGED FUNDS FOR DISTRICT SUPPORT (Column 7)

An amount of \$267,000 is set aside to provide for support of District requirements and responsibilities set out in Chapter 5 of Title 10.1 of the Code of Virginia including, but not limited to, those relating to audits in § 10.1-535 of the Code as follows:

AUDITS OF DISTRICTS \$140,000)

Twenty-four audits (at up to \$5,500) per audit) will be budgeted for during Fiscal Year 2026 for the Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 period. These funds shall be used for any additional audit approved by the Audit Subcommittee of the Board and for which the Subcommittee directs the Department to pay and for any audit needed for a District if they exceed \$750,000 in expenditures of federal funds in a one-year period. However, should it be found that audit expenses are less than that budgeted, the balance of these funds may be transferred to address **Other Support Expenses.**

§ 10.1-535. Bonds of officers and employees; records and accounts.

The district directors shall (i) provide for the execution of surety bonds for all employees and officers who shall be entrusted with funds or property; (ii) provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings and of all resolutions, regulations, and orders issued or adopted; and (iii) provide for an annual audit of the accounts of receipts and disbursements by the Auditor of Public Accounts or a certified public accountant approved by him.

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (ASSOCIATION) CONTRACT (\$78,000):

For Fiscal Year 2026, \$78,000 has been set aside to contract with the Association to perform duties that generally include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Administrative (\$12,000)
 - Communications
This item supports maintaining and updating an Association website; maintaining a District e-mail list serve; conducting conference calls relating to board meetings, committee meetings, and other partner meetings; and conducting appropriate mailings.
 - Accounting Services
This item supports the reimbursement of costs associated with performance of accounting services and fiscal management related to Association financial records and accounts.
- b. Statewide Training Initiatives that Enhance Skills & Capabilities of District Directors & Staff (\$61,000)
 - Minimum of four statewide partner meetings during the grant period
This item supports forums for discussion of issues relevant to Districts and the Department and their partners.
 - Provide assistance and support to Districts

- This item includes costs associated with assisting District committees, including the Executive Board meetings.
- District Director Trainings
This item supports the Association conducting statewide director trainings throughout the year in varying locations across the state or electronically, including at the annual meeting. As schedules permit, staff will also provide training to individual districts on topics at their request.
- District Staff Trainings
This item supports the Association conducting statewide trainings throughout the year in varying locations across the state or electronically, including at the annual meeting. Training opportunities will be provided for both administrative and technical staff and will be coordinated with the Department to address any identified training needs. As schedules permit, staff will also provide training to individual districts on topics at their request.
- Annual Meeting of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
This item supports the expenses associated with planning, promoting, and implementing a statewide annual meeting event for Virginia's 47 districts.
- Additional Professional Services for Districts
This item supports the Association providing additional professional services for Districts. Professional services may include services within the practice of accounting, human resources, information technology, or other needed resource. Any service should include a training component, in addition to being a continuing resource for Districts.

c. District Development & Outreach (\$5,000)

- Area Meetings
This item supports the Association in their support and assistance in work related to hosting six Area meetings. Each Area will be provided up to \$200 per Area meeting.
- Compile, revise, post on the Association web site, print (limited quantity) the SWCD Directory, assist with printed copy distribution and maintain an online directory.
This item supports Directory production and online updates throughout the year.

Use of any funds made available by the Department through this Agreement are prohibited from being utilized to support any lobbying activities by Association members or others.

The Department shall release funding to the Association on a cost reimbursement basis upon receipt and approval of the Association's quarterly and final reports. Any cost overruns incurred by the Association during the time of performance shall be the responsibility of the Association.

OTHER SUPPORT EXPENSES (\$49,000):

- Clean Water Farm Award (CWFA) support. This includes, but is not limited to, production of local CWFA signs; production of Basin Winner Medallion signs; the framing of resolutions; and reception costs, mileage, and lodging for program winners.

- Revisions or limited printings of the *Virginia Agricultural Cost-share Manual*, *Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations*, the SWCD Director Handbook and Director Orientation materials.
- Training opportunities related to conservation planning, engineering job approval authority, implementation of the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) Program, and administrative and financial operations of Districts.
- Training opportunities for Department staff that will enhance their ability to assist Districts including attending spring area meetings and the annual meeting of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- Printing of educational and marketing brochures.
- To cover identified shortages in other estimated categories.

During the fiscal year, the Department shall make periodic assessments of any unused balance in the DCR Managed Funds for District Support category and determine where adjustments should be made to optimize expenditure of category funding.

In accordance with this Policy, the Department is authorized to enter agreements or contracts for the activities specified above.

5. Disbursement Schedule:

Disbursements to Districts shall be conducted on a semi-annual basis in accordance with the DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION AND VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (Department/ District) GRANT AGREEMENT: Administrative and Operational Support from the Commonwealth of Virginia. Except due to extenuating circumstances or as otherwise set out in the Grant Agreement, disbursements to Districts will be executed within 45 calendar days following the beginning of the first and third quarter contingent upon the satisfactory completion of database updates and the receipt of complete and accurate reports.

6. Grant Agreements and Accountability:

On behalf of the Board and in accordance with this Policy and a Grant Agreement entered between the Department and each District, such District shall receive administrative and operational support funding only after the Fourth Quarter Fiscal Year 2025 report has been submitted (including the District's End of Year Cash Balance Report, and Carry Over Report) and upon the complete execution of the Grant Agreement and the return of an original signed Agreement to the District's assigned Department Conservation District Coordinator (CDC). The Grant Agreement shall include the Board's expected outcomes or "deliverables" for each District as a result of the funding provided. The Fiscal Year 2026 Grant Agreement template shall be approved by the Board.

The Department is directed by the Board to assess at the end of Fiscal Year 2026 each District's success in meeting the deliverables utilizing an A (fully satisfied), B (partially fulfilled), and C (did not fulfill) evaluation scale.

The results of the assessment, the two-year financial audit, and the cost-share file audit shall be shared with the Audit Subcommittee, and the Board as needed. In conjunction with the results, any explanations or actions taken by the District as result of the assessment, financial audit, or cost-share file audit should be presented to the Audit Subcommittee. For any Districts where deficiencies were noted in the assessment, financial audit, or the cost-share file audit, the Audit Subcommittee shall direct actions for the District, and the Department if applicable, to take to address the deficiencies. The timeframe for the actions to be taken shall also be established by the Audit Subcommittee. A letter to the District Chair from the Audit Subcommittee Chair shall provide notice of the actions taken by the Subcommittee, or Board if applicable, and the expectations for District action. Additionally, the Audit Subcommittee or the Board may request the District Board Chair or a designated Director attend the next scheduled Audit Subcommittee meeting to discuss the actions taken by the District or to address concerns raised by the Subcommittee.

If during a District's financial audit, either additional or repeat comments are cited, the Audit Subcommittee may require the District undergo a special audit to ensure the integrity of the District's financial policies and procedures. Any special audits will be conducted at the expense of the District and will be reduced from the upcoming fiscal year's allocation.

The Board continues to reserve the right to make funding adjustments to future fiscal year's funding allocations and/or other fiscal corrective actions, including those related to special audits, in accordance with Part 7.

7. Noncompliance with this Policy:

In the event any District fails to comply with the provisions of this Policy, the Board reserves the right to require repayment of previously issued funds and/or direct further appropriate actions based upon noncompliance circumstances. Should an issue arise that impacts funding, the affected District(s) will be apprised of the issue(s) and provided an opportunity to address the concerns of the Board prior to Board action. The Board may reduce future funding to Districts that fail to act upon guidance and recommendations from auditors, the Department, the Audit Subcommittee, and the Board. Decisions and Board actions will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

8. Unexpended State Funds Maintained by Districts:

Administration and operational support funds issued to Districts that remain unexpended at the close of the grant period will remain in the District's account(s).

It is unadvisable for any District to accumulate more than about twelve months of undedicated reserve funds. Public funds from local, state, and federal sources are provided to Districts not for savings, but strictly for performance of conservation. The Department will monitor the growth of unexpended funds through Grant Agreement required audit reports and report situations of concern to the Board.

9. Criteria for Financial Assistance:

Funding granted to Districts is contingent upon appropriations by the General Assembly. Should a reduction of funds occur during the course of Fiscal Year 2026, after the Department has utilized all unallocated and unobligated balances it may have available, every District will receive an equal percent reduction which will be calculated and deducted from each District's total approved administrative and operational funding specified within this Policy and the Department/District Grant Agreement (excluding dam maintenance funding). If additional direction is necessary, the Department shall consult with the Board. Should a reduction of funds occur, every District must return funding within 30 days of receiving notice of such reduction from the Department.

In the event a new District is formed or an existing District alters its boundaries, the Board will examine the total financial resources under its control and its priorities for use of these funds and adhere to its Policy titled Financial Commitments For Establishment of a New Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD/district), or Realignment of an Existing District on all funding decisions in this Policy. The newly created or altered District may be funded at a reduced level, or may be required to share funding in an arrangement determined by the Board until sufficient funding is made available to fulfill provisions of this Policy and priorities of the Board.

Expenditure of District funds, regardless of source, will be made without regard to any person's race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or political affiliation.

All funds received by Districts are public funds and provision of the Freedom of Information Act shall apply to financial records, unless otherwise specified within the Act or elsewhere in the *Code of Virginia*. Each District shall safeguard, provide accountability, and expend funds only for approved purposes.

10. Electronic Copy:

An electronic copy of this policy guidance in PDF format is available on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's website at <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/laws-and-regulations/lr8a>.

11. Contact Information:

Please contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Soil and Water Conservation Division by calling the Division's Administrative Support at 804-225-3653 with any questions regarding the application of this Policy. The call shall be referred to program staff accordingly.

12. Authorization:

Upon the approval of this Policy, the Department shall, in accordance with its fiduciary powers and responsibilities, make and enter into any and all Grant Agreements and contracts, and take all actions necessary, to fully implement and administer this Policy.

13. Adoption, Amendments, and Repeal:

This document supersedes the Board's Policy titled Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2025 adopted June 26, 2024 and will remain in effect until rescinded or superseded.

Attachment A: Fiscal Year 2026 Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations

District	FY2026 Adminstration and Operations Core Funding	# of dams	Dam Maintenance (\$4,500 per dam)	Subtotal Administration and Operations Allocations	Small Dam Repair Funds	DCR Managed Funds for District Support	Total
APPOMATTOX RIVER	\$220,331		\$0	\$220,331			\$220,331
BIG SANDY	\$175,690		\$0	\$175,690			\$175,690
BIG WALKER	\$282,231		\$0	\$282,231			\$282,231
BLUE RIDGE	\$285,638	10	\$45,000	\$330,638			\$330,638
CHOWAN BASIN	\$198,840		\$0	\$198,840			\$198,840
CLINCH VALLEY	\$191,821		\$0	\$191,821			\$191,821
COLONIAL	\$327,693		\$0	\$327,693			\$327,693
CULPEPER	\$553,384	11	\$49,500	\$602,884			\$602,884
DANIEL BOONE	\$204,477		\$0	\$204,477			\$204,477
EASTERN SHORE	\$249,006		\$0	\$249,006			\$249,006
EVERGREEN	\$136,096		\$0	\$136,096			\$136,096
HALIFAX	\$147,886		\$0	\$147,886			\$147,886
HANOVER-CAROLINE	\$384,673	1	\$4,500	\$389,173			\$389,173
HEADWATERS	\$486,608	11	\$49,500	\$536,108			\$536,108
HENRICOPOLIS	\$192,660		\$0	\$192,660			\$192,660
HOLSTON RIVER	\$178,603		\$0	\$178,603			\$178,603
JAMES RIVER	\$310,727		\$0	\$310,727			\$310,727
JOHN MARSHALL	\$269,438		\$0	\$269,438			\$269,438
LAKE COUNTRY	\$254,072		\$0	\$254,072			\$254,072
LONESOME PINE	\$155,599		\$0	\$155,599			\$155,599
LORD FAIRFAX	\$413,183	2	\$9,000	\$422,183			\$422,183
LOUDOUN	\$246,695		\$0	\$246,695			\$246,695
MONACAN	\$255,289		\$0	\$255,289			\$255,289
MOUNTAIN	\$157,147		\$0	\$157,147			\$157,147
MOUNTAIN CASTLES	\$144,547	4	\$18,000	\$162,547			\$162,547
NATURAL BRIDGE	\$216,910		\$0	\$216,910			\$216,910
NEW RIVER	\$249,129		\$0	\$249,129			\$249,129
NORTHERN NECK	\$300,047		\$0	\$300,047			\$300,047
NORTHERN VA	\$411,003		\$0	\$411,003			\$411,003
PATRICK	\$249,579		\$0	\$249,579			\$249,579
PEAKS OF OTTER	\$173,555		\$0	\$173,555			\$173,555
PEANUT	\$242,246		\$0	\$242,246			\$242,246
PETER FRANCISCO	\$204,261	17	\$76,500	\$280,761			\$280,761
PIEDMONT	\$273,946	14	\$63,000	\$336,946			\$336,946
PITTSYLVANIA	\$222,697		\$0	\$222,697			\$222,697
PRINCE WILLIAM	\$335,595		\$0	\$335,595			\$335,595
ROBERT E. LEE	\$197,675	6	\$27,000	\$224,675			\$224,675
SCOTT COUNTY	\$241,195		\$0	\$241,195			\$241,195
SHENANDOAH VALLEY	\$488,657	8	\$36,000	\$524,657			\$524,657
SKYLINE	\$228,350		\$0	\$228,350			\$228,350
SOUTHSIDE	\$222,420	12	\$54,000	\$276,420			\$276,420
TAZEWELL	\$174,208		\$0	\$174,208			\$174,208
THOMAS JEFFERSON	\$573,557	8	\$36,000	\$609,557			\$609,557
THREE RIVERS	\$442,717		\$0	\$442,717			\$442,717
TIDEWATER	\$279,194		\$0	\$279,194			\$279,194
Tri-County/City	\$319,802		\$0	\$319,802			\$319,802
Virginia Dare	\$340,014		\$0	\$340,014			\$340,014
TOTAL	\$12,809,091	104	\$468,000	\$13,277,091	\$1,500,000	\$267,000	\$15,044,091