

**BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS, WETLAND PROFESSIONALS
and GEOLOGISTS MEETING MINUTES**

The Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists met on December 2, 2025, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

Members present for all or part of the meeting:

Citizens

Cayman Lowe
Steven Yob

Geologists

Ernest Beasley
Matt Heller
Shannon Lukens
John Pollard

Soil Scientists

Jay Conta
Alexis Jones
Richard Michniak

Wetland Delineators

Justin Brown
Emily Drahos

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Jeb Wilkinson, Director
Steve Kirschner, LRPD Director
Kate Nosbisch, Executive Director
Ecila Williams, Licensing Operations Administrator
Davon Jones, Administrative Coordinator
Greg Emerson, Executive Director - Examinations

Josh Laws, Assistant Attorney General, was present from the office of the Attorney General.

Enid Candelaria-Vega, BPOR Liaison, and Joe Haughwout, Regulatory Affairs Manager, were not present at the meeting with regrets.

Members of the audience:

Robin Bedenbaugh, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*
Thaddeus Kraska, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*
Elijah Wright, *Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals*

Mr. Brown, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Brown and Ms. Nosbisch advised the Board of the emergency evacuation procedures.

**Emergency
Evacuation**

Ms. Jones moved to approve the agenda with the addition of Board Member Training as Item VI. Mr. Conta seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

**Approval of
Agenda**

Ms. Lukens requested that the minutes be amended to reflect her last name being changed from George to Lukens. Mr. Yob moved to approve the PSSWPG Board Meeting, September 16, 2025, minutes as amended. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

**Approval of
Minutes**

Mr. Conta moved to approve the Wetland Delineator Section Meeting, October 16, 2025 minutes. Mr. Beasley seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

Elijah Wright addressed the Board with concerns regarding the interpretation of the “jurisprudential exam” under the URL process and the issuance of Professional Wetland Delineator (PWD) certifications based on out-of-state credentials that may not meet Virginia’s statutory requirements.

**Public Comment
Period**

Robin Bedenbaugh addressed the Board and stated that the New Hampshire wetland certification program is not comparable to Virginia’s Professional Wetland Delineator requirements. He also noted concerns about URL certifications issued without proper alignment to Virginia’s scope of practice.

Thaddeus Kraska addressed the Board and expressed concern that significant differences between Virginia’s wetland and soil conditions and those in other states may result in applicants lacking sufficient competency through the URL pathway.

The Board received and reviewed an email from Eli Wright, Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals, dated October 28, 2025, for informational purposes.

Communication

The Board proceeded to discuss jurisprudence examination regarding Wetland Professionals.

**Examinations
Update**

At 10:57 a.m., Ms. Drahos moved that the meeting be recessed and that the Board immediately reconvene in closed meeting for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice, as permitted by § 2.2-3711.A.8 of the Code of Virginia. Mr. Yob seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

Closed Meeting

At 11:29 a.m., Mr. Yob moved to adjourn the closed meeting and to immediately reconvene in open meeting. Ms. Jones seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

After a discussion, Mr. Yob made a motion to determine that the Professional Wetland Delineator examination does not qualify as a jurisprudence examination under Virginia law. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

**Examinations
Update (Cont.)**

Ms. Nosbisch addressed the board regarding outsourcing the Wetland Professionals examination due to the lack of an in-house psychometrician and the associated cost of exam validation. Mr. Kirschner reviewed the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, noting that outsourcing would provide professional support and regular exam maintenance.

Mr. Emerson addressed the Board on how contracted vendors monitor exam performance, identify problematic questions, and conduct interim reviews as needed. The Board received clarification on the role of subject matter experts and psychometric analysis in maintaining exam validity.

Ms. Jones moved to approve staff to move forward with outsourcing examinations for the Wetland Professional exam. Ms. Drahos seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by members: Beasley, Brown, Conta, Drahos, Heller, Jones, Lowe, Lukens, Michniak, Pollard and Yob.

Ms. Nosbisch provided an update for informational purposes.

Ms. Nosbisch stated the Executive Director Report was provided for informational purposes only.

**Executive Director
Report**

Ms. Nosbisch advised the Board of an update on the completion of all General Regulatory Reviews required under regulatory reduction initiatives. The Professional Soil Scientists regulations went into effect on October 1, 2025, and the Wetland Professional and Geologists regulations went into effect on November

Regulatory Update

1, 2025. The Application Review Matrix Guidance Document approved at the previous meeting is now open for public comment on Town Hall and will close on December 31, 2025, and will take effect January 1, 2026.

Ms. Nosbisch updated the Board regarding concerns previously raised about national pass rates for the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) examination. Ms. Nosbisch had a productive discussion with SSSA representatives, who acknowledged the issue and are working on improvements. Ms. Nosbisch noted that national pass rates mirror Virginia's results and that SSSA is seeking volunteers to assist with exam development.

**Soil Scientists
Update**

Ms. Nosbisch reported that a virtual meeting was held on November 19 with Mr. Wright, Mr. Kraska and Mr. Bedenbaugh and staff to discuss questions relating to the URL process and concerns raised at previous meetings.

**Wetland
Professionals
Update**

Ms. Nosbisch updated the Board on outreach and examination education. Ms. Williams provided a presentation virtually to Geology majors attending James Madison University on the Geologist-in-Training and Geology examination process, which was well received. Mr. Pollard provided a report from attending the National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG) Annual Meeting and Workshop, including insights into psychometric evaluation, exam development, and field workshops. Several Board members noted the value of psychometric guidance in maintaining exam integrity.

Geologists Update

Mr. Brown informed the board of the licensee counts as of November 1, 2025: Soil Scientists – 76; Wetland Delineators – 152; Geologists – 879.

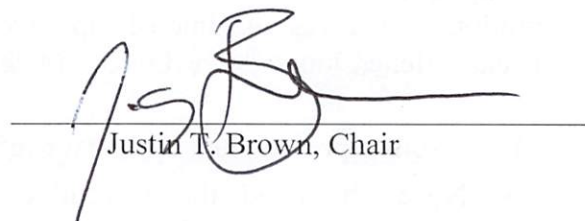
**License and
Certified
Population**

Conflict of Interest forms and travel vouchers were completed by all board members present.

**Conflict of Interest
Forms/Travel
Vouchers**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Adjourn



Justin T. Brown, Chair



Laura V. McClintock, Secretary

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Ernest Beasley
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

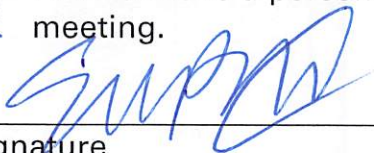
or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Signature

Date



12/2/25

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Justin T. Brown
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Signature

Date

12/2/2025

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government

1. Name: Jay Conta
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☒ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Jay F. Conta
Signature

Dec 2, 2025
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Emily Drahos
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

n/a

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

n/a

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

n/a



I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or



I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Emily C. Drahos
Signature

12/2/25
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Matt Heller
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Signature



Date

12/2/2025

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Alexis E. Jones
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

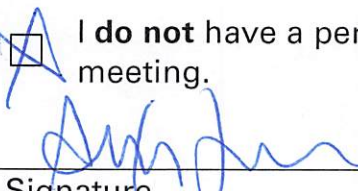
I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.


Signature

12/2/2025
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government

1. Name: Caymen Lowe
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025

5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

N/A

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

N/A

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

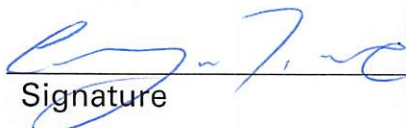
N/A

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.


Signature

12/2/2025
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Shannon Lukens
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.

Shannon Lukens
Signature

12/2/2025
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Richard Michniak
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

I declare that I am a member of the following business, profession, occupation or group, the members of which are affected by the transaction:

- ☒ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

- ☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☐ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.


Signature

12-2-25
Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: John S. Pollard
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

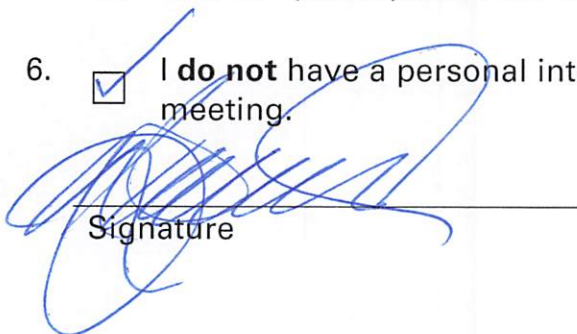
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☐ I am able to participate in this transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.



Signature

12/2/25

Date

**STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT**

**TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
for Officers and Employees of State Government**

1. Name: Steven Yob
2. Title: Board Member
3. Agency: Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetland Professionals and Geologists
4. Meeting/IFF Date: Board Meeting December 2, 2025
5. I have a personal interest in the following transaction:

Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction:

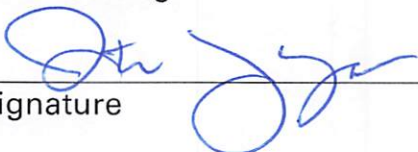
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or

☐ I did not participate in the transaction.

6. ☒ I **do not** have a personal interest in any transactions taken at this meeting.


Signature

12/2/2025
Date