

**VASWCD URBAN COMMITTEE REPORT
DECEMBER 2015 ANNUAL MEETING**

Background

In 2012, staff from several SWCDs discussed the need to engage residential property owners in conservation efforts, since their actions are not regulated, nor do they receive incentives to implement conservation practices. It was noted that the lack of conservation measures on urban and residential property was identified as a gap in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Phase I. Additionally, Virginia's Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan recognizes urban/residential BMPs in its "Local Implementation Strategies for Urban/Suburban Source Sector" (Appendix C) with the following strategies:

- Implement bioretention/rain gardens ... and demonstrate effectiveness to the public
- Consider implementing a rain garden, cistern installation and/or downspout disconnection program for homeowner properties
- Partner with SWCDs and DCR to reduce residential fertilizer use through public awareness campaign
- Implement urban forest buffers in accordance with funding availability and demonstrate effectiveness to the public
- Consider developing a cost-share program to encourage private properties to plant trees to convert land into forests or to provide streamside riparian buffers.

These SWCD staff members approached the Urban Committee of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) to begin an effort to develop support for, and ultimate adoption of, an urban/residential BMP cost share program in Virginia.

Following, is a list of the Committee's **original goals**, with notes on progress:

1. Develop a programmatic template suitable for Virginia, using components of Virginia's Agricultural BMP Program and components of North Carolina's Community Conservation Assistance Program (NCCCAP). **GOAL COMPLETE – The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP), including the development of a VCAP Manual is complete. One revision of the manual was completed in July as we gained implementation experience through the pilot program. Another revision is in the works as we adapt to a Bay-wide program. VCAP currently encompasses 13 best management practices that are eligible for funding:**
 1. Pet Waste Stations (PWS)
 2. Impervious Surface Removal (ISR)
 3. Conservation Landscaping (CL)
 4. Rain Gardens (RG)
 5. Bioretention (BR)
 6. Dry Well (DW)
 7. Infiltration Basin (IB)
 8. Rainwater Harvesting (RH)
 9. Vegetated Stormwater Conveyances (VSC)
 10. Constructed Wetlands (CW)
 11. Permeable Pavement (PP)
 12. Green Roofs (GR)
 13. Urban Nutrient Management Planning (UNMP)
2. Implement a pilot "community-residential BMP cost share program" across the four soil and water conservation districts that initiated the effort. These Districts (comprising a total of 15 localities) are the Thomas Jefferson, Culpeper, Piedmont, and Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation Districts. **GOAL COMPLETE – To-date, the four SWCDs were able to garner \$670,235 in funding for VCAP. This figure includes the most recent commitment of \$475,000 from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The tables below show the status of cost share practices and grant funds to date.**

PRACTICES

PRACTICE	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	PENDING INSTALLATION	COMPLETED INSTALLATION
Turf Conversion to Natives (TCN)	45 (246,948 sq. ft.)	9 (104,642 sq. ft.)	36 (142,306 sq. ft.)
Rainwater Harvesting (RW)	13	6	7
Rain Gardens (RG)	10	1	9
Pet Waste Stations (PW)	16	0	16
Impervious Surface Removal (ISR)	4	0	4
Bio-Retention (BR)	3	1	2
Vegetated Stormwater Conveyance (VSC)	3	0	3
Green Roof (GR)	1	1	0
TOTAL	95	18	77

GRANT FUNDS

SOURCE OF GRANT FUNDS	SPONSORING SWCD	PURPOSE OF FUNDS	TOTAL FUNDING	BALANCE REMAINING
NFWF	CSWCD	Programmatic Template, Manual & Practices	\$28,405	0
CBRF	CSWCD	Rain Gardens (RG)	\$7,550	0
VDOF	CSWCD	Turf Conversion to Natives Tree Planting (TCN)	\$2,590	0
VEE	TJSWCD	Turf Conversion to Natives (TCN)	\$21,665	0
NFWF	TJSWCD	Turf Conversion to Natives (TCN)	\$23,765	0
Dominion Power	TJSWCD	TJSWCD (& other areas within Dominion service area on case-by-case basis)	\$25,000	\$2,774
Charlottesville	TJSWCD	All practices w/in City of Charlottesville (on-going @ \$32,000 per year)	\$48,000	\$13,814
HCSWCD (anonymous)	HCSWCD	Rainwater Harvesting (RWH)	\$20,000	\$823
York Roundtable (DEQ/CBIG)	HCSWCD	RG, TCN, & RWH in York Watershed	\$9,150	0
CBRF	PSWCD	Pet Waste Stations (PW)	\$2,700	0
DEQ – CBIG	4 pilot SWCDs	All practices except PW & UNMP	\$475,000	\$475,000

3. Establish support (financial and legislative) for a statewide (or Chesapeake Bay wide) program based on lessons learned from the Pilot Project. **GOAL COMPLETE – Support for a Bay-wide program has been confirmed with the commitment of funding from DEQ. Significant interest and offers of support from other Districts have been communicated to the four pilot SWCDs over the past year. A portion of the DEQ funds will be used to hire a coordinator to hopefully take this program to the next level.**

In summary we believe that the pilot program’s success, and our current momentum for a Bay-wide program, indicated a high potential for a sustainable Virginia Conservation Assistance Program in the near-future. This success would not have been possible without the extraordinary working relationship that the four SWCDs, and the VASWCD, developed and maintained to keep moving forward. All involved contributed a great deal of time and energy to get to this point.

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