

**AREA V - District Reports**  
VA Association of Soil & Water Conservation District  
Quarterly Board Meeting  
September 22, 2016

Blue Ridge SWCD  
Halifax SWCD  
Lake Country SWCD  
Patrick SWCD  
Peaks of Otter SWCD

Peter Francisco SWCD  
Piedmont SWCD  
Pittsylvania SWCD  
Robert E Lee SWCD  
Southside SWCD

**BLUE RIDGE SWCD**

On Tuesday, August 9, 2016 the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District and Farm Service Agency welcomed three research scientists from China with their area guide Dr. Dave Johnson. The Institute of Hydro-ecology is under the Ministry of Water Resources (central government), but is also a graduate degree-granting institute of the Chinese Academy of Science. The Institute focuses on both basic and applied research related to ecological and environmental issues resulting from water construction projects with the aim of supporting a sustainable development strategy in China. Since its founding in 1987, the institute has assessed the environmental effects of large hydro-projects such as the Three Gorges Project and the South-to-North Water Diversion project and carried out research on fishery resources in Chinese reservoirs and restoration of the water environment in reservoirs and lakes. Address: 578 Xiongchu Avenue, Wuhan, Hubei, China



Photo from left to right: Dr. Dave Johnson (Retired Professor of Chemistry and Environmental Science at Ferrum College), Ms. Xiaojie Pan, Associate Professor and Research Scientist, Applied Ecology Department, Institute of Hydro-ecology (IHE, MWR & CAS) and she is an environmental biologist with a focus on ecological effects, distribution characteristics, occurrence mechanism, and control measures for harmful algae, Tony Goff (Farm Service Agency Program Technician), Michael Tabor (Conservation Technician for Blue Ridge SWCD), Mr. Chengyan Wan; Professor, Research Scientist and Director of the Applied Ecology Department, Institute of Hydro-ecology (IHE, MWR & CAS) and is also Deputy Chief Engineer at IHE, and Mr. Zhiwei Zheng, Senior Engineer at IHE, Assistant Professor and Research Scientist, Applied Ecology Department, Institute of Hydro-ecology (IHE, MWR & CAS).

## **BLUE RIDGE SWCD, continued**

### **Abbott Farms Hosted Educational Field Day**

On Saturday, July 23, 2016 at Abbott Farms, the community was invited to learn more about the farm's community garden with the help of Virginia Cooperative Extension agents, Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach and the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District.

Blue Ridge SWCD's Program Manager/Education Coordinator, Kathy Smith demonstrated how to convert a 53 gallon food grade container into a functional rain water harvesting barrel. For those interested in participating in the Blue Ridge SWCD Rain Barrel Drawing, names were collected in a bucket and the winning name was drawn out. The recipient of the constructed Rain Barrel was Mrs. Carol David from Glade Hill, VA. Congratulations!!!

The community garden on Abbot Farms is open to the public. Volunteers pick produce every Monday and Thursday morning from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. with all of the produce going to local food banks.

To view the day's events on Ytube of the Abbott Farms Educational Field Day visit:

<http://www.wdbj7.com/content/news/Abbott-Farms-in-Rocky-Mount-hosts-educational-field-day-388035682.html>

### **Benjamin Franklin Middle School's MWEE Nature Trail Receives Major Face Lift**

The Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District, Pathfinders of Roanoke Greenways, Benjamin Franklin Middle School faculty and Science teachers, Ferrum College's Environmental Science Department and Western Virginia Water Authority have partnered in the last couple of years to repair and improve the 6<sup>th</sup> grade MWEE Program site located on Powder Mill Creek. Trail improvements included the redesign sections of the old trail and install new path sections to reduce storm water runoff by forming a meandering path complete with rip rap reinforcements down a steep slope for students to safely enter and exit this outdoor classroom. This outdoor classroom program enables the students gain a deeper understanding of watersheds and their relationship to water quality. They leave the program with a deeper appreciation for preserving water quality from their analytical assessment experiences of the Powder Mill Creek watershed which will enable them to develop into better stewards of their natural resources.



On behalf of the partner agencies, we are truly grateful for the hard work, efforts and support generously given by Pathfinders of Roanoke Greenways for their talented and skilled Mid-week Crew!



## **HALIFAX SWCD**

### **WATERSHED ADVENTURE CAMP**

Halifax SWCD, Southside SWCD, and Lake Country SWCD thru a partnership with the Division of State Parks sponsored the 16th annual Watershed Adventure Camp held June 20-24, 2016, at Staunton River Battlefield State Park. Six 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> graders from Halifax attended this week long camp to learn about improving water quality and the environment. Students participated in activities such as forestry, wildlife, soils, best management practices, and mapping. Students also toured the Clover Power Plant and took a canoe ride along the Staunton River.



## **LAKE COUNTRY SWCD**

Lake Country SWCD presented Magdeline Brown with the 2016 District Scholarship of \$1,000.00. Congratulations to Magdeline and good luck as you continue your education at Radford University.

The District held their annual 2016 Wildlife Seed program in May with local schools and vendors. The District continues to review and approve the Erosion and Sediment Control plans for both Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties and send correspondence to the County Zoning Administrators, Contractors, and DEQ.

The District has been busy with report requests, Year End Reports, Annual Reports, Carry-Over Reports, Quarterly reporting, FY2016 SWCD Admin & Ops and Cost Share & TA Questionnaire Report, Budget Template PY17 Report, Cash on Hand Year End Report, Year End BMP Carryover Report, APO, Strategic Plan, District Budget. The District has participated in numerous trainings: FOIA/COIA/VA Procurement Act Training, FLSA, Graves Mountain training, Your Backyard Classroom Class, and VACA training. The District assisted with the Area V Envirothon and cosponsored with Southside and Halifax SWCD a week long Watershed Adventure Camp for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Staunton River Battlefield State Park, Clover, Va..

The District's rental equipment continues to be steady.

Lake Country has allocated all of PY2017 VACS BMP Cost-Share. District Staff is busy with design layout, computer data entry, field visits, office visits, phone calls, and approval letters.

Lake Country SWCD is participating in the Southside Virginia Pasture Improvement Program. Seven applications were submitted within the District and were approved for Grant funding. Staff is working with individuals on their applications and putting together forage balance sheets in order to meet the requirement of the grant.

## **PEAKS OF OTTER SWCD**

Peaks of Otter is on pace to pay out approximately \$1 million in SL-6 practices by the end of the first quarter. We're rockin' and rollin'!

## PETER FRANCISCO SWCD

### **Technical Conservation**

Peter Francisco has allocated all of our PY2017 VACS BMP cost-share. Along with the BMP program, the District continues to provide a TMDL (319 Grant Funded) program for the Slate River Watershed. Technical staff has been consistently working on planning and designing conservation practices. Mowing/general maintenance is ongoing at this time on 17 watershed dams. Currently, we are preparing for a watershed tour for county officials and in the process of updating the District's strategic plan.

### **Conservation Education**

Elise Corbin, the District's Conservation Education Coordinator, is hard at work in the community and schools. Few highlights are:

- Water quality monitoring with High School students/Envirothon team at Horsepen Creek for DEQ grant
- Marketing Poster Contest – We All Need Trees
- Delivered 2016-17 educational programs booklets for schools
- Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences are already being planned for 6<sup>th</sup> Graders. Leaf packs will be dropped at State Parks at the end of the month to collect macroinvertebrates for programs in October

Peter Francisco SWCD was able to support 4 students to Youth Conservation Camp (July 10-16, 2016) at Virginia Tech again this year. Brandon Enders was awarded the male camper of the week. His award was overall based on conduct, participation, and interaction with: his peers, counselors, and presenters.



Pictured left to right: James Guajardo, Brandon Enders, Teosha Taylor and Alex Wood

Two scholarships were given out for \$1000 each to Bailey Anderson in Buckingham and Gillian Cabbage in Cumberland.

The District conducted their Environmental Day Camp, in cooperation with Buckingham & Cumberland VCE, June 6-9, 2016 – we had 34 participants (25 youth from Buckingham and 9 from Cumberland). Counting camp coordinators we had a total of 8 adults chaperoning the week. In addition to working with VCE we partnered with, Department of Forestry and DCR that week. Day one was held at Bear Creek Lake State Park and featured a canoe scavenger hunt, a forestry hike and swimming. Day two was held at James River State Park where we did chemical, physical and biological water quality monitoring, fishing and hiking. Day three was spent in the Richmond area and featured a historic canal cruise of the Middle James River and Kanawha Canal, a visit to Maymont Park and Powhatan State Park. June 5-12 was Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week, so our camp was timely. Following our camp, and into the weekend, students were given the opportunity to attend Jammin on the James, sponsored by VCE. It was an extension of our day camp.



## **PIEDMONT SWCD**

### **Family & Farm Day**

Over 900 people attended the Annual Family & Farm Day at the Southern Piedmont Agriculture Research & Education Center, Blackstone, VA on September 10, 2016. The event showcases the multiple ways agriculture and natural resources are part of our lives. Numerous exhibits included livestock animals, a corn maze, hands-on learning activities and crafts for youth, an exhibit showcasing Southside Virginia's proud tobacco heritage and many more. Piedmont SWCD showcased their interactive 'urban BMP' exhibit – a home with rain gardens, bio-retention, rain water harvesting and conservation landscaping practices. The landscaping practices were demonstrated using sponges and water that simulated the effect of rain and how the practices help reduce water run-off. The exhibit will be part of the State Fair VASWCD VCAP exhibit.



### **319 Residential Septic Grant**

The Piedmont SWCD was notified their 319 grant application for a residential septic program in Prince Edward County's impaired watersheds was approved. The grant will address the TMDL implementation plan for septic pump-outs, repairs and education. Several workshops are being planned along with a campaign to reach out to residents in five watersheds.

### **Area V Employee Skill List**

A resource list of skills and certifications held by Area V employees has been developed by E.B. Watson, Kelly Snoddy and Deanna Fehrer. The list includes technical, administrative, education and watershed dam expertise and has been distributed among Area V staff. The resource list will be used as a 'who to call' for questions about BMP's, accounting or other district operational and programmatic issues. The list is published on the VASWCD website.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Ricky Rash

Area V Chairman

[dairyrn@hughes.net](mailto:dairyrn@hughes.net)