

AREA V - District Reports
VA Association of Soil & Water Conservation District
Quarterly Board Meeting
December 4, 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

HALIFAX SWCD

Halifax County Public Schools Participate in Farm-to-School Program

After a small-scale program at Meadville Elementary School during October of 2015, Kimley Blanks, Halifax County Agriculture Marketing & Development Director, decided to try and implement a Farm-to-School program at all seven Halifax County elementary schools during the 2016 school year. The program was set to highlight locally grown sweet potatoes and to provide educational outreach to all fifth grade students attending Halifax County Public Schools. Mrs. Blanks coordinated efforts with the Halifax County Public School System, Sodexo food service management company, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the Halifax Soil and Water Conservation District. During the month of September, Virginia Cooperative Extension personnel taught classroom lessons on the different varieties of sweet potatoes, the seasonality of different food crops, the nutritional value of sweet potatoes, how sweet potatoes are transported from farms to the student's homes, and the importance of supporting local agricultural producers. On the day following each classroom lesson, Halifax SWCD personnel visited each elementary school and talked to the students about planting, growing, and harvesting sweet potatoes prior to assisting with a taste test of different sweet potato recipes that had been prepared by Sodexo and Halifax County School employees. This year's program reached approximately 400 fifth grade students and involved all seven elementary schools within Halifax County.

LAKE COUNTRY SWCD

Ag Tire Recycling Pilot Program

Lake Country Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) have started a tire recycling pilot program limited to Agricultural producers in Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties. We set a minimal fee of \$1 per passenger car/pickup tire; \$5 per big truck tire, and \$15 per rear tractor tire was required for participation in the program.

Avery Layne, District Conservation Specialist and District Directors Sam Griffin and Taylor Clarke, Jr. in cooperation with Brunswick Country's Sherriff Department provided labor for the unloading /loading tires in the tractor trailers throughout the day.

We started around 8:00am and finished around 5:00pm on November 9, 2016 our collection date.

LAKE COUNTRY SWCD, continued

Lake Country SWCD collected approximately 1200 tires for recycling. We had two tractor trailers packed full!!!! This included car, truck, and large tractor tires. The turnout was great, much better than first expected when we started advertising the program. We could have used more trailers.



PATRICK SWCD

Patrick SWCD is proud to announce Greenview Farm the recipient of the 2016 Roanoke River Grand Basin Award, as well as the 2016 local Clean Water Farm Award. Greenview Farm is a 500 acre cow/calf farm located along the North Mayo River in the Stella community of Patrick County. Elizabeth, better known as Liz, is the farm manager responsible for the 180 head of cattle that graze the luscious green fields. Liz's daughter, Cameron Kolinski, assists with the everyday responsibilities of the farm, while giving some extra attention to her registered Hereford cattle.

The District just recently completed a successful audit. Patrick SWCD was co-sponsor of the Youth Livestock Show at the Patrick County Agricultural Fair. The District partnered and assisted Patrick County Farm Bureau with a Fall Outdoor Display. The Patrick SWCD assisted Stuart Elementary 7th graders with watershed awareness project.

PETER FRANCISCO SWCD

Peter Francisco completed their Strategic Plan process with the assistance of Mike Foreman. The information for the plan was compiled from 73 returned surveys. The District held a luncheon/meeting for the attendees consisting of local citizens from both counties we serve and cooperating agencies to bring together a draft of the goals and objectives. All approved BMP practices have been given designs and are under construction.

Conservation Education

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

- Monthly email Newsletter for Teachers at Buckingham and Cumberland County Schools
- Ongoing Water quality monitoring with High School students/Envirothon team at Horsepen Creek for DEQ grant.
- Community Education – Buckingham County Library – We All Need Trees
- School programs:
 - Poster Contest – Buckingham and Cumberland
 - 136 Preschool students - On a monthly basis we are in the school. So far we have conducted these programs: We All Need Trees; Pumpkins & Pollinators Program; Who Polluted the River; Recycling.
 - 48 1st and 2nd graders – Incredible Journey
 - 3rd Graders – Soil Program
 - 200 – 4th graders – Soils Program: Soil Tunnel, Make their own soil profile, Soil scavenger hunt, Sand Silt and Clay activity.
 - We worked with Buckingham VCE and James River State Park on a macroinvertebrate program at Buckingham Middle School on October 26 – 50 students. Leaf packs were set out in advance and then brought to the classroom for students to study and have a hands-on-approach to identify the critters.
 - November 11 – Envirothon Team and some Environmental Science Students from Buckingham County High School to Virginia Beach Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Brock Environmental Center. Students boarded a 40-foot boat and explored the Lynnhaven River and Chesapeake Bay. They trawled for fish, pulled up crab pots, dredged for oysters, performed water quality monitoring, explored marshlands and toured the Environmental Center.
 - November 2 – 150 4th graders in Charlotte County. Assisted Southside SWCD on their annual program. A program was conducted on rocks and minerals.



(Macroinvertebrate ID)



(Marshes at Brock Environmental Center)

PETER FRANCISCO SWCD, continued

TMDL

Slate River TMDL Project- This quarter we have contracted two agricultural livestock exclusion with riparian buffers for TMDL implementation (LE-1T) BMP practices. The residential program has contracted fifteen septic tank pump outs (RB-1), one conventional onsite sewage system repair (RB-3), and one conventional onsite sewage system replacement (RB-4).

PIEDMONT SWCD

319 Residential Septic Grant:

Piedmont SWCD hosted two Septic Education Workshops in partnership with Prince Edward County Health Departments. The workshops provided information on proper maintenance of a residential septic system, signs of malfunctioning systems and financial assistance that is available for repairs and pump outs. The workshop is a component of the grant deliverables. Door hangers and media were used to advertise the workshops.

Conservation Education:

Amanda Hancock, the District's Admin/ Education Coordinator, recently worked with Fuqua School's Environmental Science class on water quality and macroinvertebrates. The two-part lesson consisted of a stream assessment where students conducted physical and chemical tests and then prepared leaf packs to collect macroinvertebrates.



Amanda is currently preparing for the Area V Envirothon workshop on January 7, 2017. Several new schools in our district have shown interest in forming teams. Upcoming programs include: Enviroscape, Story time at Prince Edward Library, Soils programs and a Watershed Patch Workshop for area Girl Scouts. An interactive 'urban BMP' exhibit designed by Robin Buckalew featuring a home with rain gardens, bio-retention, rain water harvesting and conservation landscaping practices was proudly displayed at the State Fair as part of the VASWCD VCAP exhibit. The landscaping practices were demonstrated using sponges and water that simulated the effect of rain and how the practices help reduce water run-off.



ROBERT E LEE SWCD

Amherst Tree Buffer Program

Anne Marie Clarke, District’s Amherst Watershed Coordinator, has been meeting with landowners about the 2017 Amherst Tree Buffer Program. 6 new projects will be installed amounting to over 1,000 trees being planted streamside. 1 new project will have live-stakes planted this year and a riparian tree buffer planted in 2018. She also has been working with volunteers checking 12 Amherst Tree Buffer Program projects this fall. Dressed in blaze orange volunteers and Ms. Clarke check the project sites for dead trees, weeds growing up in tubes, broken stakes, bird nets strangling tops of trees, tubes removed by wildlife, etc...They are diligent about checking each tree and marking the tube if trees or materials need to be replaced. Later fall is a good time to check the projects because the weeds are starting to die back and so are the ticks. One issue that can affect the survival of new seedlings is the presence of existing black walnuts in the area of the buffer project, so this is taken into account when selecting replacement trees which need to be tolerant of the chemical produced by walnuts. Also, by checking the trees in the fall you are likely to see color changes on even the smallest of seedlings!



(Tree Buffer Program)



(Farm Field Day)

Farm Field Day

On October 13th the Robert E Lee SWCD hosted a farm field day at the Appomattox FFA Alumni Land Laboratory/Farm in Appomattox County. It was a beautiful day and 28 landowners and 12 staff/agency partners attended. Presentations included: History of the farm and TMDL conservation project (ACHS FFA/District), Rainfall simulator (NRCS), Soil testing/lime applications (VCE), Soil fertility trial results (VCE), Conservation easements (CVLC), Chesapeake Bay update (DCR), Pasture management walk (NRCS), Agricultural ponds (ACOE) and agency updates (VCE, NRCS, FSA, District and DOF). The day was filled with great presentations, participation from our landowners and positive feedback! Thank you to all those who participated and to the Central VA Land Conservancy who helped sponsor this event.

SOUTHSIDE SWCD

September – November

Education: Southside SWCD continues to be extremely busy with various educational programs. A total of 536 students benefited from numerous educational programs in which Southside SWCD hosted during the past 3 months. The programs were held in Lunenburg County for Kenbridge and Victoria 1st and 2nd graders, Randolph-Henry High School 9th -12th grade ecology and earth science students, the entire Charlotte County 5th grade and Eureka Elementary 4th and 5th graders.

Monarch Way Station: As part of the Stewardship Virginia Campaign and Southern Virginia Environmental Education committee, Bob Jones, Tricia Mays and Julie Hamlett installed a monarch butterfly garden in the town of Drakes Branch adjacent to the farmer's market and pavilion where the Wilson Kautz trail marker is located.

Poster Contest: 74 posters were reviewed and judge to participate in this year's NACD Poster contest.

Watershed Dams: The 12 watershed dams have been bush hogged for the 2nd time this year and woody vegetation was removed in September. The 2016 P.E. inspections have been completed.

E/S: Several plans have been reviewed and approved.

Cost Share: Southside SWCD is currently out of funds for any new sign-ups. We are still waiting on some of the back log practices to finish up.

Southside SWCD Report Submitted by: Julie Hamlett, Education Coordinator

Respectfully submitted,

Ricky Rash

Area V Chairman

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