

# Area I Quarterly Report

Linda Campbell, Area I Chair

September 13, 2018

## HEADWATERS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### Technical Staff

- It's that time of year again for cover crop sign-ups! Technical staff have been busy preparing for participant sign-ups and mailing postcards.
- Technical staff had the opportunity to attend a training by a local well pump service and installer, Ben Law with Law Well Drilling Inc. Staff felt this was a very beneficial training and gained a deeper understanding of the work that well drillers and pump installers do for our cost-share practices. We thank Ben for taking time out of his busy schedule to share his knowledge and experience with us.
- BMP verifications are being done as time allows.

### Education

- Headwaters partnered with FSA and NRCS for our annual display booth at the Augusta County Fair. The fair was held from July 31<sup>st</sup> through August 4<sup>th</sup> at the Augusta Expo in Fishersville. While the weather was uncooperative at times, the fair was a great way for us to connect with current producers and answers questions from the public.
- Two students from our district had the opportunity to attend Youth Conservation Camp. They each sent notes highlighting what a wonderful time they had. They enjoyed the presentation, electro-fishing, canoeing, and hiking the Cascades.



### Flood Control Dams

- July 16<sup>th</sup> through July 30<sup>th</sup> Headwaters completed mowing of our Flood Control Dams. District staff mowed 13 of the 16 dams in Augusta County. This year's mowing went very well. Mowing began with the North River dams which includes: Todd Lake, Hearthstone and Elk Horn Lake; and then moved on to the South River portion. These structures are mowed once a year to keep the vegetation at bay. There were a number of maintenance tasks performed at each dam to ensure the structures are safe and clear of any obstructions during a storm event. This included clearing outlet pipes, risers, abutments and cleaning the IFLOWS gauges. The district will begin fall maintenance on the dams starting November 1st.



# Area I Quarterly Report

Linda Campbell, Area I Chair

September 13, 2018

## LORD FAIRFAX SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Technical Updates:** With the SL-6 backlog now completely funded, LFSWCD is once again offering our full suite of conservation practices for cost share in FY2019. Producer interest has been high over the last several years, despite the shortage of available cost-share, so now that funds are available technical staff have accepted many applications for a wide range of practices. At its August meeting the Conservation Technical committee approved more than \$820k worth of practices, including SL-6, SL-1, FR practices and more. \$200k is being held for cover crop practices, which will be considered for funding in November once producers have reported planted acreages.

**Education Updates:** LFSWCD education programming has been in full swing this summer. We have partnered with local 4-H groups to attend summer camps, providing MWEE's to campers. Through our partnership with Master Gardeners, we were able to add a children's program to run concurrently with



all Strasburg Community Garden adult workshops. The children have learned about pollinators by investigating bee hives, decomposition and compost by observing worms, and learned to harvest by picking salsa ingredients. LFSWCD has also partnered with an environmental education organization, Sustainability Matters VA, to co-host a workshop series "On the Farm at Hedgebrook". This workshop series has classes on organic gardening, farm animal welfare, native trees and Italian cheese making.



**Urban Conservation and Strasburg Community Garden Updates:** VCAP continues to draw applications from our district. Most recently, an application in our district was approved for Conservation Landscaping on a residential property in Shenandoah County. This project will replace 5,234 square feet of turf grass with native plants to create a meadow, mulched beds and tree plantings. The project will decrease stormwater runoff from the property and create wildlife habitat. The district has three other VCAP applications waiting funding.

The Strasburg Community Garden continues to grow with the help of LFSWCD, partner organizations and our active community members. With the garden construction complete, the plot holders have taken over their beds, growing enough produce for themselves and for donation. So far this growing season, the garden plot holders have donated 254 pounds of produce to local food pantries. The District, along with VCE and Master Gardeners, has continued to provide workshops on various gardening topics for the plot holders and community. We also partnered with the Town of Strasburg (where the garden is located) to host the first annual Harvest Festival. This event was to help celebrate a successful first year of the garden, as well as highlight other local harvests.

# Area I Quarterly Report

Linda Campbell, Area I Chair

September 13, 2018

## MOUNTAIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Mountain SWCD annual Conservation Field Day was held August 15, 2018 in Bath County, Virginia. Stops on the tour were at Buxton Farm viewing a SL-6 project and then at Speyside Bourbon Cooperage Stave Mill with an overview of facilities and operations.



## MOUNTAIN CASTLES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- MCSWCD had one camper and provided one staff member for Youth Conservation Camp.
- The Mountain Castles SWCD staff supervised Molly Austin, a summer volunteer majoring in environmental horticulture at Virginia Tech. Molly researched, designed, and constructed a retaining wall that addressed a severe erosion issue at Read Mountain Middle School. Molly's project also highlighted the use of native plants.
- MCSWCD received notice of an EPA 319 grant awarded to the District to implement a residential septic program in the southern part of Botetourt County.
- The rehabilitation of Johns Creek Dam #1 continues, which the District co-owns with Craig County. Phase 1 of the "design phase" is nearly complete.



# Area I Quarterly Report

Linda Campbell, Area I Chair

September 13, 2018

---

## NATURAL BRIDGE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



We work with the people who work the land.

- District Staff and Directors have been in attendance at the WIP III regional meetings held by DCR and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) in recent weeks.
- Planning is taking place for a Fall Field Day and Outreach Event for the Buffalo, Colliers and Cedar Creeks Watershed. Grant funding in the amount of \$1314 has been provided by the Upper James RC&D Grant. The field day will be held in partnership with the Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. There will be a focus on outreach for livestock exclusion, rotational grazing and forage stockpiling with talks provided by conservation experts. The event will be held October 4, 2018.
- Planning is underway for the Annual Conservation Awards Dinner to be held October 17. Awards are being considered by committee for Clean Water Farm and Forestry Awards.
- District technical staff worked throughout the quarter to complete Voluntary BMP Data Collection on structural BMP practices.
- The district continues to be involved with three (3) TMDLs for Rockbridge County. Staffers attended an Implementation Plan Development Public Meeting held on August 15 at the Rockbridge Regional Library. This was a stakeholders meeting for the development of the Woods Creek TMDL in Lexington.
- District technical staff continues to meet with interested landowners while making site visits for potential BMP practice approvals and implementation.



# Area I Quarterly Report

Linda Campbell, Area I Chair

September 13, 2018

## SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- The Shenandoah Valley SWCD said good bye to our two summer interns Kayla Mathews and Parker Barnard who volunteered a combined total of 665 hours. The bulk of their time was spent assisting with the SWCD's Pre-Sidedress Nitrate Testing (PSNT) Program. They also had the opportunity to assist with outreach and education and VACS related field work.



- In mid-August, District Director, Charles Newton, was appointed by Governor Northam to serve on the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. Mr. Newton fills the Area I position previously held by Stephen Lohr. Mr. Newton's term will begin 1/1/2019.

- The District is pleased to have Evan Knowles, District Technical Assistant and Chelsea Trice, Administrative Coordinator/Program Assistant on board. We are pleased to have these two new team members on our amazing conservation team.

- In late August, District staff participated in a float trip along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River hosted by the Valley Conservation Council (VCC) and the Pure Water Forum (PWF). The trip offered a great opportunity for staff to meet partners and engage in conservation conversation.



- The District has been an engaged participant in the WIP III Ag Sector meetings and has also attended the PDC meetings held in our Area. The District coordinated an Ag partners meeting to solicit input and programmatic suggestions for the cost share programs.

- Staff participated in a Dairy Farmer Appreciation Dinner coordinated by the local VCE office. The event drew over 300 dairy producers from the local area. Various vendors and organizations set up displays offering information and resources to local producers.

- The District set up displays at both of our County Fairs. This opportunity serves as good general outreach to our local constituents.

