



VACDE
VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

*Professional development, leadership, and a voice
for communicating issues and solutions on behalf of
conservation district employees*

March 28, 2017

Dear VASWCD Educational Foundation Board Members:

The Virginia Association of Conservations Districts Employees (VACDE) is seeking financial assistance for support of our annual employees training and our employee training scholarship program. **The VACDE requests the VASWCD Educational Foundation/George Beals Conservation Fund consider support for 2017 Employees Association Training efforts in the amount of \$1,500.**

As you are aware, the VACDE hosts a three day training held each year at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, VA at the end of August. The dates for this year are August 22-24. Typically we offer a variety of training sessions for technical, educational and administrative staff. The VACDE Executive Committee and Area Representatives from across the State with partnership from the VASWCD work to plan and coordinate this event. In planning the various training sessions, we consider surveys of employees, employee certification needs, as well as educational programs and other relevant topics. The VACDE is striving to keep Graves Mountain Training costs to a minimum. The requested funds will help us provide employee scholarships and offset expenses associated with speakers. These funds will help keep registration fees for district employees low, encouraging greater participation. In the past, the generous support from the VASWCD Education Foundation has been used to minimize registration fees and we expect it keep the fee below \$25/person. The assistance from the Beals Fund will not be used for VACDE operational expenses. As in the past, the VACDE plans to offer employee scholarships, to those who express a financial difficulty in attending or to those employees who have never attended this training in the past.

We request that a portion of the VASWCD Educational Foundation funds be available for use to fund scholarships. The VACDE plans to match VASWCD Educational Foundation funds used for Graves Mountain Training scholarships and estimates providing at total of \$1,000 in employee scholarships (\$500 from the Foundation and \$500 from VACDE).

The VASWCD staff and the VACDE Board recently discussed the need to encourage and incentivize employee attendance at other training events, such as the VASWCD Annual Meeting. Therefore, we request that any unused Educational Foundation funds that remain after covering our training costs and employee scholarships for the Graves Mountain training be available to provide employee scholarships for the VASWCD Annual Meeting. We frequently hear from district employees about their difficulty obtaining Board approval for their attendance at the Annual Meeting or learn that they are forced to choose between attending either the Graves Mountain Training or the Annual Meeting due to limited District funds. These Annual Meeting scholarships are one way to increase employee attendance.

The VACDE has worked hard over the past year to improve and streamline the scholarship application ranking process in an effort to ensure that we are selecting the best candidates. As districts continue to struggle statewide with very lean budgets, support from the Educational Foundation/Beals Fund is very much appreciated.

Planning is underway for our 2017 Graves Mountain training and suggested sessions include:

Technical Track

- BMP Manual 101: Discussion of Glossary and Section II of BMP Manual
- Engineering Topics: Cropland & Livestock Practices
- VCAP-Rain Gardens and Dry Wells; Vegetation and Soil Suitability; Soils and Vegetation Assessment
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Simplified for All Users

Administrative Track

- Logi/Ag BMP Tracking Program Updates
- Financial Planning for Districts
- Parliamentary Procedures

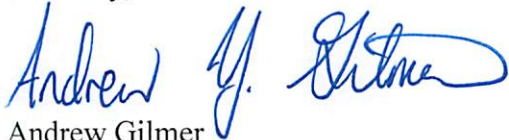
Education Track

- Make and Take Tools for Schools/Fairs
- Education Share-Fair – Soil Trailers, Envirothon, etc.
- CPR Instruction and Certification

The total request for support from the Educational Foundation/Beals Fund is \$1,500 to support our employee training and scholarship program.

Thank you for your continued support of the Soil and Water Conservation District employees across the state and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Andrew Gilmer
President, VACDE