

Area I Quarterly Report

Kevin Craun & Rick Shiflet; Area I Co-Chairs

April 4, 2019

HEADWATERS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Technical Staff

- Headwaters SWCDs held a booth at the Virginia Farm Show held January 16th-18th at Augusta Expo. Technical staff developed a model BMP farm to display at the show. The model worked great for catching the attention of the show attendees.
- Staff attended the VANTAGE No-Till Conference and VA Forage and Grassland Council's Winter Meeting.
- Headwaters hosted a meeting of 7 agencies and organizations with overlapping interests in the South River Watershed from Stuarts Draft to Waynesboro. The meeting was beneficial in identifying common goals among those present and areas for future cooperation.



Education

- Headwaters hosted our District Awards Banquet on January 4th. This is the first banquet the district has had since 2013. It was very successful with over 60 people in attendance.
- Education staff have been busy providing programs and outreach to our school districts. School presentations were recently held for Buffalo Gap FFA, Beverley Manor Middle School, and the Valley Career and Technical Center.
- The district held a local Envirothon workshop at Bridgewater College on February 14th. College professors taught teams on the field identification and hands-on portions of the tests. We will host our local Envirothon competition on April 4th at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. 4 high school teams and 3 middle school teams are planning to participate.



Flood Control Dams

- Headwaters and project sponsors have started rehab on Hearthstone flood control dam. The contractor has dewatered the reservoir and began removing parts of Tillman Rd. Rehab will consist of riser upgrades, auxiliary spillway modifications, toe drain replacement and access road improvements. Staff has been meeting monthly with project engineers and contractors to ensure the project continues to move forward. Work is scheduled to last 10-12 months, Tillman



Rd will remain closed through the majority of the rehab.

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LORD FAIRFAX SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Technical Updates:

- The record precipitation of 2018 has caused major struggles for our agricultural producers, with conditions making it nearly impossible to complete construction of structural practices. Though the state's extension of the cover crop planting deadline helped boost sign up of cover crop acres we found ourselves canceling a much larger than usual percentage of those acres due to insufficient cover at the December field checks. On a positive note, there is still strong interest in a wide variety of programs and our District has allocated nearly all of our cost-share funds for FY 2019. In looking ahead to FY 2020 we anticipate an increase in sign up of stream fencing and animal waste practices if the changes proposed by the TAC subcommittees are officially adopted. We also suspect we will have an increase in requests for critical area seeding and grassed waterways as producers attempt to repair eroded lands.

Education Updates:

- LFSWCD hosted a free Contractor Training for local professionals in our area who focus on water systems and hardened stream crossings. Raleigh Coleman with DCR, presented on the engineering specification with practice designs, while staff described the VACS program and our role in implementing conservation plans. We had over 25 register to attend, with 21 attending. As an incentive, contractors who chose to attend will be listed as "preferred" for upcoming projects.
- The second annual Youth Conservation Leadership Summit was held on February 28th at the Massanutten Regional Governor's School in Mt. Jackson, Virginia. The 80+ juniors and seniors at MRGS rotated through discussion tables led by local conservation leaders doing work in the area, state-wide and on a federal level. The goal of the event was to connect students to these professionals, discussing environmental issues we face, and what the next generation of conservation leaders will look like.
- The LFSWCD Envirothon will be April 10th at the Strasburg Town Park. Planning is underway as we anticipate eight competing teams.



Urban Conservation and Strasburg Community Garden Updates:

- The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) continues to draw applications from our district. A large conservation landscaping project was completed in Shenandoah County where a homeowner replaced over 11,000 square feet of yard with a combination of tree plantings, pollinator habitat mulched beds and native meadow plantings. We continue to have an

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average of 4-5 inquiries each month about VCAP. We currently have two approved conservation landscaping projects with completion deadlines of June 1st and five applications in the works for practices ranging from rainwater harvesting to rain gardens.

- The Strasburg Community Garden is gearing up for the second year of growing and programming. 2019 workshops have already begun, and we have the plots “rented” out by returners and some newcomers. We are in the process of interviewing and hiring a Garden Manager Intern who will take over the communications and organizing of most of the garden events. Partners will be working with the district in this coming growing season to create a webpage for the garden where backyard gardeners and community garden plot holders can get expert help virtually and where resources can be posted for public access

MOUNTAIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Mountain SWCD assisted with the Annual 4-H Agriculture/Natural Resources Field Day held October 24th for all 5th graders in Covington City and Allegheny County.



The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District’s equipment program is underway. We offer a little Spreader, No-Till seeder, pasture drag, and weed wiper.



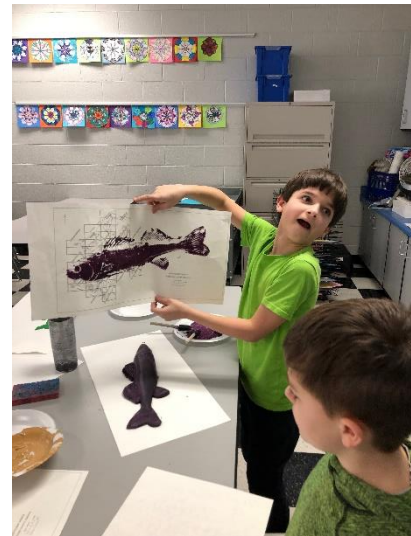
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MOUNTAIN CASTLES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- With the Craig County Board of Supervisors and NRCS, the District co-hosted a public meeting concerning design options for the rehabilitation of Johns Creek Dam #1
- MCSWCD staff have been working hard to support local teams for the Dominion Envirothon. The District has developed a middle school Envirothon program and will have over 10 middle school teams at its local competition.
- The District has had a very positive response to its new residential septic program supporting the Roanoke River TMDL.



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NATURAL BRIDGE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



We work with the people who work the land.

- The Natural Bridge SWCD and the Mountain Castles SWCD will co-host the Area I Envirothon on Wednesday May 1, 2019. The competition will be held at the McCormick Farm-Shenandoah Valley AREC in Raphine, VA. The co-hosting districts will hold a planning meeting at McCormick Farm in early April. Approximately 12 teams, plus alternates are expected to compete.
- The district has also been involved with two TMDLs for Rockbridge County. The district is actively working to extend outreach to landowners in the Buffalo, Colliers, and Cedar Creeks TMDL areas and is currently exploring potential stream exclusion projects and septic outreach strategies.
- District technical staff attended the VASWCD Annual Meeting, including COIA and FOIA trainings, Farm to Table Conference, the Forage and Grasslands Council Winter Forage Conference in Weyers Cave on January 18, 2019 and the No-Till Conference at Rockingham County Fair Grounds on February 5, 2019. Staff also completed the Computer Security Training and other various training provided on the DCR training website.
- The Upper James RC&D is expecting another grant for the new year 2019 through the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. A proposal was submitted by the district on behalf of the RC&D for \$15,436. (As we act as the fiscal agent for the grant funds). All of the grant partners were notified of their grant awards in January. Many of the partners will be ready to start planning and implementation in the spring.
- Newspaper articles have appeared and outreach measure taken to get the word out about the VASWCD Youth Conservation Camp and Camp Woods and Wildlife.
- Local funding support was requested of the three entities served by the district during the month of January.

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SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- The SVSWCD has had another successful season selling plant materials harvested from our Nursery located at MillerCoors in Elkton. Our plant materials are used for stream bank restoration/stabilization projects around the state. Cuttings, planted along un-vegetated streambanks serve as a great bio-engineering practice that helps stabilize eroding stream banks. Staff spent a day in the sun harvesting plant materials for the sale. **Fun in the Sun!**



- In association with the SVSWCD's Linville Creek TMDL, staff have worked to prepare an Invitation to Bid (IFB) for a small bioretention project at Broadway High School. We hope that the implementation of this stormwater project will service as a tool to educate BHS students about the importance of stormwater management. Staff plan to work with the BHS teachers to incorporate this new school yard feature into new learning experiences for the students. Student will learn about the design components of this BMP and will care for the bioretention for years to come.



- In association with the Linville Creek TMDL grant, staff have begun planning a second stormwater BMP project. Due to the karst nature of the site, an above-ground bioretention project (urban bioretention) is being implemented at the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren. This urban bioretention will consist of bioretention components (under drain, gravel, soil media and plants) inside of a pre-cast concrete container. Staff met with a church representative

and the project contractor in early March, in the snow to review project plans. **Conservation doesn't stop for snow!**

- **Interns Survey!** College intern, Chloe finished out her internship with the SVSWCD spending some time out in the field assisting with a survey. In addition, the SVSWCD and our NRCS partners continued mentorship of two high school students. Felicity, a high school senior who is a part of the new Ag Production



Technology Program at Massanutten Technical Center wrapped up her internship in mid-January. Melanie, a high school senior and former YCC camper, continues her learning at the SVSWCD office. She will conclude her mentorship at the end of the school year. These student assist with SWCD office activities and also have the opportunity to participate in field visits, dam visits, education events and more!



- Director William Latham visited the Hone Quarry dam to assist staff in installing an IFLOW topper complete with Bird-X to deter roosting birds. **Bring on the owls!**