

Area I Quarterly Report

Kevin Craun & Rick Shiflet; Area I Co-Chairs

June 25, 2019

HEADWATERS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Technical Staff

- The weather conditions have improved and significant progress has been made on many structural BMP projects. We anticipate many will be completed in June and July.
- Associate Director Charlie Huppuch and Patti Nylander with VA DOF hosted a forestry training at McCormick Farm for district staff in May.
- Headwaters SWCD hosted the VASWCD Area I Spring Meeting on April 25th at the Weyers Cave Community Center. The district was glad to see the meeting well attended.
- Headwaters directors and staff attended the April meeting of the South River Science Team. The SRST is brainstorming the creation of a watershed-level stakeholder group.

Education

- Headwaters hosted our local Envirothon on April 4th at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. We had two competing teams, and three participating middle and high school teams. Our two teams, Fort Defiance HS and Stuarts Draft FFA, competed in the Area competition held on May 1st. Fort Defiance HS placed 1st at the Area Envirothon and finished in 3rd place at the state Dominion Envirothon. We congratulate both of these teams on their successes in all levels of the Envirothon program.



- We are currently in the designing phase of our Mobile Soils Education Unit. We can officially unveil a preliminary image of the *Underground Classroom*. Headwaters SWCD is working with Gropen, a local design firm in Charlottesville for the designing and fabrication phases of the project. The district aims to have the classroom completed in time for 2019-20 school year.

- Headwaters participated in Earth Day Staunton and Waynesboro's Riverfest this spring. Our displays included information on district programs, our model BMP farm, and conservation jeopardy.

Flood Control Dams

- Hearthstone Rehab is in full swing, the majority of Tillman road has been excavated and the contractor will work on installing a new toe drain below the dam. Spillway and riser modifications are currently ongoing. Rehab is scheduled to be completed in the fall 2019.
- District staff has also secured a contractor for herbicide applications on 9 of the flood control dams. Mowing is scheduled to take place the third week of July.
- Headwaters recently held their annual EAP Drill with partner agencies and localities to review the emergency action plan procedures and contact information.



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LORD FAIRFAX SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Technical Updates: With just a few weeks left in FY 2019, our District has allocated nearly all of our cost-share funds for the year, and plan to allocate unused funds from the Culpeper District. In looking ahead to FY 2020 we anticipate an increase in sign up of stream fencing for all perennial streams and rivers, and animal waste practices with the proposed project cap increase. We hope to target landowners within our District who have worked with us in the past to strengthen our cover crop practice participation. 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 Envirothon on April 10th at the Strasburg Town Park. We had a total of eight teams and a team of alternates compete this year from 5 different schools. In addition to the LFSWCD staff and director participation, we had many local partner organizations volunteer for the day, including: Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, DGIF, NRCS, DOF, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Mountain Vista Governor's School Team A took first place, Massanutten Regional Governor School placed second, and Sherando High School Team A placed third. Mountain Vista and Sherando HS advanced to the Area 1 competition, coming in 4th and 8th place.



LFSWCD participated in two community Earth Day events: Earth Day Shenandoah in Shenandoah County and the Earth Day Celebration at Skyline High School in Warren County. We set up a display table with information on our programming, general backyard conservation resources, and kid's activities.

We finished out the school year by providing outdoor classroom activities with schools within our District. This included macroinvertebrate collection and identification, water quality testing, habitat and wetland explorations, conservation awareness fairs, and watershed investigations.

Urban Conservation and Strasburg Community Garden Updates: The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) continues to draw applications from our district. We have an average of 4-5 inquiries each month about VCAP, ranging in practices. Most landowners in our area are interested in Conservation Landscaping, Rain Gardens, Permeable Paving, and Rainwater Harvesting.

The Strasburg Community Garden is already over-growing in its second year! Each plot has been rented and planted by local families and organizations. The Strasburg Rotary Club received a grant to build a garden shed, fill it with tools and a solar pump to help transfer water from the harvesting system to the barrels in the garden.

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MOUNTAIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District administrators the Bath County Multiflora Eradication program; which is in full force. Below are before and after pictures.



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MOUNTAIN CASTLES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- Grace Harwin has been hired as our new Office Coordinator. A graduate of Virginia Tech, Grace comes to the District from Clean Valley Council, a Roanoke environmental nonprofit. We will also be hiring a new Conservation Technician later in the summer.



- Mountain Castles SWCD hosted three different field experiences for over 300 hundred middle school students in Botetourt County and Craig County. Students conducted macroinvertebrate sampling, performed stream chemistry & a stream visual assessment, and learned about forestry and groundwater, including karst aquifers. These experiences were partially funded through a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund.



- The District hosted a local Envirothon at Fenwick Mines Recreation Area in Craig County, with three high school teams and 10 middle school teams participating.
- With Natural Bridge SWCD, Mountain Castles co-hosted the Area I Dominion Envirothon held at McCormick Farm. James River HS represented our District at the competition.
- Mountain Castles has had a strong response to our new Tinker & Glade Creek Residential Septic Program, with over \$40,000 in contracts written so far, mostly for replacement systems.



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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 co-hosted the Area I Envirothon on Wednesday, May 1, 2019. The competition was held at the McCormick Farm-Shenandoah Valley AREC in Raphine, VA. The day provided beautiful spring weather. Many volunteers helped make the event a success. Our many thanks go out to Area I District Staffers and partnering agencies for lending support and expertise for the Area I Envirothon.
- 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 Staffers have been busy getting cover crop payments verified and paid, and finishing up current program year contracts with agricultural producers. End of year financial preparations have taken place with committee work on the Operational Budget and FY21 Budget Template.
- District technical staff, NRCS staff and the new district office administrator have attended the FY2020 Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program (VACS) update session held in Charlottesville.
- Due to the upcoming retirement of Margaret Spencer, a district veteran of 23 years, the Natural Bridge SWCD has hired a new Office Administrator, Lisa M. Howe. Lisa has been a Lexington city resident since July 2015, when she moved here from Roanoke after getting married. Her husband has been with VMI since 2009 and coaches the men's rugby team. In her previous positions, Lisa has directed HR and payroll operations, as well as served as Executive Assistant to a CEO and Board of Directors.

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SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- Staff have worked to wrap up various components of the Linville Creek TMDL Program.

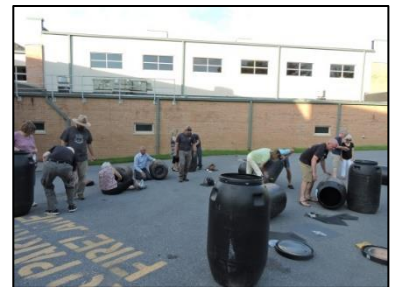
- Staff and interns completed the design for three (2'x3') High Pressure Laminate (HPL) graffiti proof signs to be located in the Linville Creek Watershed. Two signs highlight the importance of managing pet waste and the third sign summarizes the benefits of riparian forest buffers.
- Following an Invitation to Bid (IFB) for the small bioretention project at Broadway High School (BHS), the project was installed in early April by a local contractor. Staff coordinated a planting day with students in the horticulture department at Broadway High School. The planting day offered the opportunity for staff to provide students with an overview of the importance of stormwater management as well as highlight the function of the newly installed Bioretention facility at their school.
- In addition to the BHS project, a second Stormwater bioretention BMP, located at the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren, was constructed in April. Staff coordinated with Church members to plant Native plants in their newly installed above-ground bioretention box in late May.



- Staff held a Rain Barrel Workshop in May with the City of Harrisonburg. Over 20 barrels were constructed! Prior to building the barrels, staff summarized the District's programs and activities and overviewed the importance of storm water management. The presentation also included

a step by step guide on how to properly install and care for their rain barrels.

- Pre-Sidedress Nitrate Testing (PSNT) season has arrived! The SVSWCD has three college students from local colleges helping to collect and analyze soil samples this summer. The season got off to a booming start at the end of May. PSNT offers the students the opportunity for hands-on conservation experience, the chance to



see our service area and provides team building experiences. In addition, this program continues to support conservation implementation, specifically nitrogen reductions in our district.

