

**AREA V - District Reports**  
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation District  
Quarterly Board Meeting  
September 12, 2019

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

**BLUE RIDGE SWCD**



*Pictured (L to R): Steven Meeks (VASWCD Past President, Daphne W. Jamison and Franklin Williams (SE Region Chairman)*

Daphne W. Jamison, a recognized leader in conservation for over 35 years, was inducted into the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) southeast Region Conservation hall of Fame at a luncheon in Gatlinburg, Tennessee on August 5<sup>th</sup> during the NACD Southeast Region meeting. The Hall of Fame honors distinguished conservationists whose careers have resulted in the wise use of our nations precious natural resources upon which we all depend. Jamison was nominated for the honor by the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) for her significant contribution to soil and water conservation. VASWCD President Chip Jones stated that “Daphne is an example of someone who works hard in and out of the workplace, not for fame and recognition but because she wants to and that’s who she is. She exemplifies the qualities of a true leader”.



*Jason Drew, Cahas Mountain Charcoal employee, demonstrates wood block cutting then transporting via conveyor system to storage bin before placing in drying oven.*

With beautiful weather, the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District held its’ 2019 Annual Farm Tour featuring Franklin County on August 26th. Fifty-eight guests joined this years’ event as we traveled to the following stops: Cahas Mountain Charcoal and Diesel Project featuring Nuclear Physicist and Entrepreneur Mr. Charlie Bowman, Exchange Milling with tour and upgrades hosted by owner Mr. Bruce Layman, Bull Run LLC owned and operated by Mr. Nick Fox and family which highlighted several practices that have been utilized in the successful management of this 600 + acres property, Mr. Brent Craig was presented with the 2019 BMP Forestry Award by Area Foresters Bill Sweeney and Dennis McCarthy, Scotties Fertilizer (Loafing Lot Best Management Practice) featuring special guest speaker Melanie Barrow (VCE Agent Ag & Natural Resources Horticulture) who spoke on the topic of “Urban Conservation In Relation to the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program”, “Buddy’s Bar-B-Q” served a

## **BLUE RIDGE SWCD, continued**

delicious lunch (variety of mouth-watering Bar-B-Q sauces to drizzle over pork and chicken, green beans, and macaroni & cheese), at Lazy Acres Angus (2018 Roanoke Basin Award and 2018 Clean Water Farm Award) Steve Furrow and John Thurman shared their knowledge and experience with raising beef cattle, and our final and grand finale' stop at Homestead Creamery: "The Cream Team". The 2020 Farm Tour will feature Henry County, VA. The 2020 Farm Tour will feature Henry County, VA.

**2019 Annual Farm Tour Sponsors:** Angle Hardware, Berger Dairy LLC, David Hurt & April Garrison at Land Matters LLC, Exchange Milling Co. Inc., Farm Credit of the Virginias, FarmPLUS Insurance Services (Shelton & Anderson), Flora Funeral Service, Inc., Four Oaks Farms LLC, Moneta Farm & Home Center, Organic Valley Cooperative East (CROPP CO-OP), Rockydale Quarries Corporation, Seven Oaks Landscapes/Hardscapes, Inc., Superior Retreading and White Horse Farm LLC.



**2019 BMP Forestry Award:** Brent Craig of Franklin County was awarded the Blue Ridge SWCD's 2019 BMP Forestry Award at the 2019 Annual Farm Tour. He operates and maintains a certified Tree Farm and certified Stewardship Forest. His primary objects are to successfully manage wildlife for hunting, manage timber for income and maintain forest stand management. Mr. Craig is a true lover of nature and works tirelessly to improve his land. His work is evident in the success he has had in managing a diverse farm.

*Pictured (Left to Center): Bill Sweeney (Area Forester) and Brent Craig (2019 BMP Forestry Award recipient)*

Seven of the ten district dams were sprayed for broad leaf control during this report period.

## LAKE COUNTRY SWCD

### Agricultural BMP Sign-up '20

District employees are swamped with BMP sign-up and Erosion and Sediment Control plans.

### Scholarships '19/20

Lake Country SWCD awarded two \$1,000 scholarships for college-bound students residing in Mecklenburg County.

### Oil Recycle Collection '19

-Atlantic Industrial Services Inc. and district staff collected oil in Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties for recycle program for agricultural producers.



### Outreach Programs '19

Lake Country SWCD convenes a Local Work Group meeting with representatives from the SWCD Board of Directors, FSA County Committee, the FSA County Executive Director and the NRCS District Conservationist, as well as other state agency representatives. NRCS facilitated the discussion. Input on a number of key topics of interest were gathered and sent to the State Technical Committee to develop recommendations.

**LAKE COUNTRY SWCD, continued**

Wildlife Seed Program '19

Lake Country SWCD sponsors an annual Wildlife Seed Program that provides a mixture of seed to plant ¼ acre for wildlife food plots. Local students from Bluestone and Park View High School’s Agricultural Department help bag the seed. The seed is free of charge and distributed for wildlife food plots.

Area V Envirothon 19

The Area V Envirothon was held at Gentry Farms Ringgold, Virginia. The Area V districts participated.

**PATRICK SWCD**

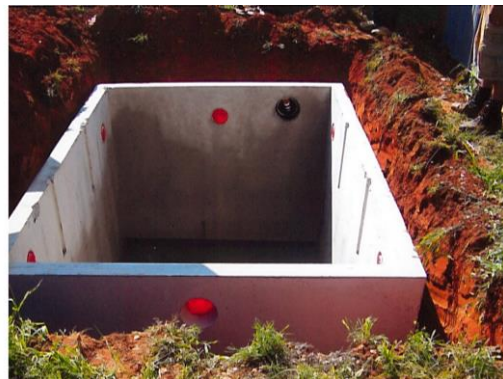
Worked with area schools with NOAA art contest. Congratulations to fourth grader Camryn Perkins for winning the NOAA contest for her artwork. Her artwork is part of their National Endangered Species calendar.

Partnering with VA Cooperative Extension with a Native Grass and Tall Fescue Pasture Walk in September.



## PEAKS OF OTTER SWCD

To contribute something useful to our community, the Peaks of Otter SWCD completed this rain water collection project for the Bedford Area Fire Training Center. It consists of a 1500 gallon modified septic tank, a dry hydrate connection to train fire fighters to pull water, and a removable cap to teach pulling water out of rivers or ponds in our county. The fire department obtained all supplies needed and Peaks of Otter SWCD provided a little over \$2400 in funding. The fire fighters then provided all the labor to make the system work.



## **PEAKS OF OTTER SWCD, continued**

The following are the Peaks of Otter SWCD fourth quarter of FY19 stats and the total for all of FY19.

### **Fourth Quarter Accomplishments:**

- \$142,339.03 was paid out on a total of 3 projects
- 16,380 ft. of fence was installed
- 6,674 ft. of pipeline was installed
- 11,032 ft. of stream bank protected

### **Tally for 12 months:**

- \$1,129,673.68 was paid out on a total of 15 SL-6 projects
- 137,042 ft. of fence (25.2 miles) was installed
- 43,540 ft. of pipeline (8.4 miles) was installed
- 98,038 ft. of stream bank protected (19.0 miles)
  
- Since the 100% SL-6 program began in FY2013, the District has put \$9,931,961.91 of conservation on the ground in Bedford County with 127 projects.

## **PETER FRANCISCO SWCD**

### Education

- District Sponsored 2 students (Foster Harkins and Resa Smith) to Youth Conservation Camp and Kelly Snoddy, PFSWCD Conservation Specialist, served as camp counselor again.
- Promoting 2019 Poster Contest “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper.” Posters are due to District office by October 1.
- Attended Buckingham and Cumberland County Public Schools teacher convocations. Ruffled 10 science exploration kits and 2 bat houses. Presented overview of SOL-related environmental programs offered by District at two 45-minute break out sessions during Cumberland Teacher Convocation.
- Coordinated 2 field trips to Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach for high school students in Buckingham and Cumberland. District received grant from Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to pay for field trips.

## **PIEDMONT SWCD**

### **Education and Outreach**

Piedmont has hired a new education coordinator! We are excited to welcome Kelly Atkinson, a former teacher who has worked closely with the District in recent years. She has served as an Envirothon coach and has hosted District staff in her classroom to educate students about conservation. Kelly has a forestry background and is conservation-minded. We look forward to her talents and creativity!

The District set up a pollinator booth at the "Butterflies on the Battlefield Pollinator & Wildlife Festival" at Sailors Creek State Park. The booth included facts about pollinators and a pollinator matching game, pictured below. Piedmont SWCD sponsored two campers at Youth Conservation Camp, and staff member Emily Gibbs served as a camp counselor.



The District set up a booth at the Virginia Dairy Expo at Richlands Dairy Farm, which is split between the Piedmont SWCD and Appomattox River SWCD. Richlands recently opened a creamery, which offers milk, ice cream, and locally-sourced meats, cheeses, produce, flowers, and beauty products.

### **Watershed Dams**

The District has performed beaver debris removal from two dams. Beaver issues have become a regular maintenance concern, and the District is considering better methods of monitoring, deterring, and removing beaver activity.

### **Residential Septic**

Piedmont SWCD has received extensions of both of its DEQ 319(h) TMDL residential septic grants. Staff have served on the Stakeholder Advisory Group and have provided input for the FY20 program manual.

## **PIEDMONT SWCD, continued**

### **Agricultural Conservation**

Staff have begun outreach for the FY20 program year. Piedmont is active on the Technical Advisory Committee with two staff and one director serving on the TAC and numerous sub-committees.

## **SOUTHSIDE SWCD**

### **Staff:**

It is with a heavy heart to announce the retirement of our Office Manager, Julie Hamlett. Julie served the District for 21 years and was the start to our amazing education program. She will be greatly missed here at Southside. I wish Julie all the happiness in the world with her retirement. Area V and all of the VASWCD family, please join me and Southside SWCD in wishing Julie the best for the future.

**Education/Outreach:** Southside worked with Charlotte County Public Schools to provide lessons for the summer school programs held over the summer. We enjoyed working with the students by doing: the Enviroscape Model, Every Tree for Itself, Farm Charms, Fish Prints, Wildlife Pelts the Water Cycle/Incredible Journey. Sara participated in the Annual Night Out Event held in Charlotte Court House and Tricia spoke at a VCE Outreach Program. Wildlife Plots were judged at the beginning of August, with 5 students from Charlotte and Lunenburg Counties.

**VACS:** The District has been extremely busy since July 1 meeting with producers and working on conservation plans. So far, 89% of the FY 2020 allocation has been committed. We look forward to putting more conservation practices on the ground.

**Watershed Dams:** The District completed 3 projects over the past two months. The damage from Hurricane Michael was repaired at Roanoke Creek 68. Tree removal was performed at the swampy beginning of the emergency spillway of Roanoke Creek 67. Ten plunge pools had new geotextile fabric and rip rap installed, making them look just like new. We received retirement Operation and Maintenance letters from NRCS on Roanoke Creek Dams 31B and 54. Currently, 11 of the 12 dams in our charge have reached the 50 year lifespan.

### **Respectfully submitted,**

Wilkie W. Chaffin

Area V Chairman

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## **AREA V DISTRICT GOALS/FUTURE ACTIVITIES, NEEDS:**

### **Blue Ridge:**

WP-2A stream restoration training, additional funding for Envirothon due to team expansion, funding for remote monitoring for district owned dams, and DEQ Ag BMP Loan Program to cover more kinds of equipment such as manure application equipment.

### **Peter Francisco:**

- VACS: Continue to support our local producers and landowners by offering cost-share funding and technical assistance on projects. We will strive to allocate as much funding as possible in order to fill the need for conservation practices.
- Residential Septic: Try for more grants whether through District or DEQ
- Education: Continue to reach out to our community and schools with our education opportunities. Be a face that our teachers can recognize and know us as a resource.
- Dams: Update formats for Emergency Action Plans and improve our process with our localities and local emergency services. Make a plan to develop a list of any and all projects for small dam repair to be able to submit to DCR for future reference.

### **Piedmont:**

- VACS: Allocate funding to BMPs with the most impact. Planned outreach includes several producer meetings, postcard targeted mailings, emails to producers, and news articles.
- Residential Septic: Finalize last 319(h) TMDL grant extensions and submit new proposals once DEQ releases the next round of Requests for Applications.
- Education: Kelly, our new coordinator, will begin establishing relationships with schools and teachers and will start new education programs, including teacher workshops focused on pollinator education.
- Dams: Begin several repair projects and conduct a dam landowner meeting.

### **Southside:**

Southside SWCD would like to see an increase in operating funding to assist us in expanding upon the services we can provide to the community. Our education program has boomed, keeping us busy with providing fun, meaningful environmental activities all year. We all agree that the last two years have been the busiest we have ever been and want to keep that going. While we appreciate the increase, we received in VACS and associated TA, we know that amount varies year to year. Having something that is stable would be the best benefit for all Districts and serving our communities.