

Area I Quarterly Report

Kevin Craun & Rick Shiflet; Area I Co-Chairs

June 25, 2020

LORD FAIRFAX SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Technical Updates: Beginning on Wednesday, March 18th, technical staff moved from their offices to alternative work spaces. Even though staff has been working from home, they've been busy working with producers and landowners to close out PY2020. As of June 5th, LFSWCD has obligated a total of \$3,386,990 of VACS funds. That's puts LFSWCD at 97.8% allocated for this record-high funding year. The LFSWCD Board moved to hire a District Technical Assistant on a temporary contract to focus on Continuing Conservation Initiative practices through the end of PY20. Mariah Temkin was hired in April and has contracted 10 CCI projects so far, as well as provided education to landowners whose contract will be expiring in years to come.

Education Updates: LFSWCD was able to host one of our popular annual DIY workshops with Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River group before the shutdown canceled the remaining events throughout the spring and summer. The DIY Birdhouse Workshop was well attended by adults and children, with 33 in attendance.

Our Education Specialist worked closely with the state association to test and trouble-shoot the virtual Envirothon program known as "Natural Resources Testing Week". We had 5 students compete online – two students from the Independent School of Winchester (ISW) and three students from the Mountain Vista Governor's School (MVGS) campus in Middletown, VA. Congratulations to Rena Kornreich from ISW for placing in the top ten students for the Water Resource Management and Soil tests!

LFSWCD was proud to forward the application of Jana Bowman of Strasburg High School to state consideration for the VASWCD state scholarship.

Urban Conservation and Strasburg Community Garden Updates: The district just completed a 1,000 sq.ft. conservation landscaping project in Warren County. LFSWCD also has one conservation landscaping project in Shenandoah County on the state waitlist. Interest for the VCAP program and various BMP practices is still growing in our jurisdiction.

The Strasburg Community Garden is underway for the current growing season. Management of the garden has been taken over by invested community members, and the District is still involved through our demonstration plot. Unfortunately all education workshops for the season have been canceled, including those for adults and children.

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MOUNTAIN CASTLES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- District staff have worked remotely during this time, but the work of the district continues as normally as possible. Conservation projects are under construction and residential septic cost-share applications/contracts are being submitted, approved, and completed.
- Education staff reached out to Botetourt County and Craig County schools to help provide teachers with remote learning resources, including launching a new district YouTube Channel.
- District staff were able to solicit nearly 50 responses to an online strategic planning survey and have used those comments to help write a new four-year strategic plan, which the district board is expected to approve at their June meeting.
- The district continues to focus on the Johns Creek Dams. The dams recently experienced extremely heavy rains with no major issues. Studies are currently being conducted to move an access road that crosses the emergency spillway of one of the dams.



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SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The SVSWCD office “closed to the public” on March 20th due to COVID-19. Since that date, only one staffer per agency has been allowed to visit the office at a time. We are able to remote access our office computers and can check our voicemail from home, so staff have been able to keep up with phone calls and messages. We have been holding weekly video conferencing staff meetings via Google Hangouts. These meetings have been going great and have helped keep us all connected to ensure that we are staying on top of all of our work projects.



We take this opportunity to say **Thank You to our Partners In Conservation!** In this time of figuring out new ways to move forward in our work, we are reminded how valuable it is to be able to continue to work together. We appreciate the working relationship and the opportunities to collaborate on projects with our colleagues at:

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- City of Harrisonburg
- Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Farm Service Agency
- Friends of the North Fork
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Page County
- Rockingham County
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality
- Virginia Dept. of Forestry
-and many more!



Our office has been busily preparing for PSNT Season. Staff and technicians have been trained in the procedures that are necessary to make this a smooth sampling season. Postcard reminders have been mailed to our PSNT customers and we are already scheduling times for our technicians to collect samples to be analyzed. Spring is a very busy time for our producers and our office is humming with activity as we provide this very important, time sensitive program that aids the farmer in knowing what their field soils need to maximize corn growth.