HALIFAX SWCD

We have received additional cost share funds. These funds have allowed for an additional stream crossing, two tree planting and funding for several cover crops. We have been receiving a lot of inquiries for PY22 projects, many of these being SL-6. We are also in the process of moving offices. Our new location is in the same building we have been in, just in the back where Farm Credit was located.

PATRICK SWCD

- Partnering with Patrick County Farm Bureau to assist with and promote the Patrick County Farm Bureau Photo Contest with depicting barns, equipment, farm scenes, conservation and livestock throughout the seasons.

(Aerial photo of pollinator section of Tim Service Farm)

- Presented Tim Service in the Meadows of Dan Community with local Clean Water Farm Award. The farm is located in the Dan River Watershed and Cherry Creek headwaters on the farm. Mr. Service is doing his part in protecting water quality and has established warm season grasses,
PATRICK SWCD, continued

planted riparian buffers to filter runoff from his farm, as well as several pollinator habitats. Mr. Service implemented alternative water systems and additional conservation practices and intensive rotational grazing. Assisted Service in developing a “conservation plan where all the cattle are out of the streams” and because Service is “a bee producer he was also interested in not only increasing the forage for the livestock but improving the pollinator habitat. Service established productive warm season forages to improve cattle production and provide acreages of prime habitat for ground nesting birds and other wildlife.

- We continue to work with landowners on BMP installations, inspections, and cost-share payments. The ground is saturated and the county has seen at least 8 inches of precipitation since January 1, 2021.

(Pictured Lee Ann & Billy)

- Presented a plaque to Billy and Lee Ann Collins along with Dennis Cockerham with Collins Tractor Company for all their dedicated service for over 30 years with assistance in maintaining the District’s no-till drill seeder. Congratulations on their retirement!!

(Pictured l t r: E. Wayne Clark & Richard E. Kreh, Sr.)
• On behalf of the Patrick County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors and Staff, E. Wayne Clark, District Chairman recognized Richard E. Kreh, Sr for his 20 years of dedicated and devoted service as District Director of the Patrick SWCD Board and presented Mr. Kreh with an engraved compass in appreciation of his valuable service. Mr. Kreh was also recognized with a service pin by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

PEAKS OF OTTER SWCD

Peaks of Otter is celebrating paying the LAST 100% Cost-Share Backlog SL-6. This final project was paid on December 16th 2020. Grand Total numbers are: 136 projects, 9,142 animals excluded from 209.15 miles of streambank, 1,248.32 buffer acres established and $10,494,015.29 paid in cost-share! Woop Woop!

One of two funded FY21 SL-6W projects was completed in November 2020 at a cost of $49,204.77. Peaks also cost-shared on 3 EQIP WP-4’s with NRCS. These 3 facilities were all on the same family farm and located within the Chesapeake Bay. We helped off-set costs with $33,258.07 in cost-share and $12,044.18 in tax credits.

Peak’s continues to see increased interest for Stream Exclusion with Grazing Land Management practices here in Bedford County. We have conducted 8 site visits with interested producers and need to schedule 2 more once the weather clears. The estimated cost-share needed exceeds $500,000. We continue to have more demand than we have cost-share.
PETER FRANCISCO SWCD

Education

This past year, PFSWCD added Virtual Environmental Education Programs to the District’s website: https://www.peterfranciscoswcd.org/virtual-education-programs

• NATIONAL WINNER!!!
  Lillian McConkey, a 10th grader at Cumberland County High School won NACD’s “Where would we BEE without Pollinators?” poster contest for the 10-12 Category. We are so pleased to have a national winner! Lillian will be honored at the Cumberland County School Board meeting on Thursday, March 4.

• Peter Francisco SWCD partnered with Buckingham and Cumberland Cooperative Extension to produce a series of Watershed Wonder Wednesday videos. A new 3 to 5-minute video comes out every Wednesday morning and focuses on various aspects of the James River Watershed. For instance, the first video featured our very own Kelly Snoddy and gave an overview of a watershed, the second week was a review of the water cycle, and the following week focused on unique aspects of an urban water cycle.
We end our overview and focus on more specific topics starting at the Headwaters of the James and flowing to the Chesapeake Bay by early May. We solicited the help of many Virginia Cooperative Extension Units and Soil and Water Districts along the James River as well as a number of additional agencies involved in watershed education like James River Association and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Each of our partners signed up for a weekly topic and are responsible for recording a video. The videos are posted on our Watershed YouTube playlist: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzfLXclZOUcCe-5joX6cyTA_dApUrMD](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzfLXclZOUcCe-5joX6cyTA_dApUrMD). The project has been such a success that Ruth Wallace and Linda Eanes (both Associate Directors on the PF SWCD Board as well as Virginia Cooperative Extension Agents) presented the project at the Virginia Association of Environmental Educators’ annual conference on February 20.

- The District’s nominee for Secondary Conservation Educator of the Year, Andrew Schmitt, was chosen by VASWCD as their 2020 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year. Mr. Schmitt has served as Envirothon Coach Buckingham County High School for the last 4 years. He also serves as an FFA Advisor. Congratulations Mr. Schmitt. The FARMVILLE HERALD published an article detailing Mr. Schmitt’s accomplishments.

- PF SWCD was awarded its full grant request of $6,710 for 2021 from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Grant Fund

- The District began in-person educational programs at Cumberland County Elementary School on February 26. The District is providing STEM programs for K-4 students each Friday through April 23 as part of their 21st Century Grant.

- The District provided Water Science Kits for Buckingham Elementary and Middle School as part of their 21st Century Beyond the Bell Program. The kits include 6 weeks of hands-on projects including World Water Monitoring Kits which the District received through a grant from the World Water Monitoring organization.

PF SWCD has two teams participating in the 2021 Envirothon Competition. Joshua Fleenor will be coaching the Cumberland team and Andrew Schmitt will be coaching the Buckingham team. We held an in-person education program/training session for our Cumberland County High School (CCHS) Envirothon Team and their brand-new coach on the Aquatics topic. We are gearing up/coordinating with our coaches to prepare our teams for the Virtual Envirothon.

PF SWCD staff coordinated with partnering agencies (NRCS, DOF and VCE) to form a team for the Mock Virtual Envirothon.

**Picture to the right:** is Kelly Snoddy, District Conservation Specialist, teaching aquatics to CCHS students
• 2021 Scholarship information has been distributed. The District awards four $1,000 scholarships to students in Buckingham and Cumberland counties pursuing undergraduate degrees relating to the environment. Applications are due March 12.

• The District participated in VASWCD’s Mock Envirothon Competition on February 19. Kelly Snoddy served as team captain. Special thanks to Ruth Wallace (VCE, Aquatics), Tom Snoddy (VDOF, Forestry), Sara Peltier (DWR, Wildlife) and Keith Trent (NRCS, Soils)

• Ruth Wallace and Kelly Snoddy are serving as coaches for the Aquatics portion of the Area IV and V Virtual Envirothon Workshop on March 12.

Conservation

District technical staff have been busy keeping up with VACS projects as they are completed. The weather has caused some setbacks but staff, landowners and contractors are continuing to move forward. Staff continue to gather applications and build a waiting list to be prepared if funding becomes available through re-allocation.

Picture to Left:
The Peter Francisco SWCD completed their first animal waste practice that received additional funding through the Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) grant in partnership with DCR recently.

Above: completed stream crossing for an SL6W practice

Picture to the right: Shows a quick-connect as part of the water pressure system, which will allow for more intensive rotational grazing through the addition of portable troughs and fencing to the permanent pasture layout
PIEDMONT SWCD

Winter has brought challenges to the Piedmont SWCD. Inclement weather, suspected positive Covid-19 case in our building (resulted in a negative case), and USDA offices in Farmville operating at Phase Zero Covid status, have limited in-person office working hours. Staff have been teleworking, making field visits as needed and have been attending virtual trainings that are being offered. Administratively, this is a busy time of year with end of the year IRS reporting and other regular quarterly reports. Budget requests to localities are being finalized. Below are highlights from December – February.

Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program

Conservation Specialists, Charlie Wootton and Kevin Dunn, have almost completed the obligation of FY21 funding to cover crop and stream exclusion projects. Staff have completed 38 field verifications for projects in lifespan. Kevin Dunn is performing all cover crop site visits for date verifications. Conservation staff attended the weeklong virtual Virginia Forage and Grassland Council’s winter conference.

Watershed Dams

Repairs are completed Buffalo #2 dam, which includes rebuilding a training dike and repairing the outfall pool. AMT engineering has completed 95% of the engineering designs for 10 projects, which will complete phase one of our repair program. Piedmont SWCD renewed the engineering term contract with AMT Engineering for another year. Participating SWCDs with dams can utilize the term contract for engineering needs related to SWCD maintained dams.
PIEDMONT SWCD, continued

Education and Outreach

Education Specialist, Kelly Atkinson, has been preparing video clips for several upcoming events – the annual Agricultural Awareness Days held in our District, as well as the Watershed Wednesday videos series. Ms. Atkinson has been updating Piedmont’s two Envirothon teams with the latest training videos and plans for upcoming competitions. PSWCD received a grant for Envirothon from the VASWCD EF to help provide resources and stipends to our coaches. PSWCD is partnering with Prince Edward 4H to offer a "Gardening 101" course to local home school students. A demonstration garden located at our office building will be utilized for the hands-on learning.

Directors and Service

The VASWCD recognized Larkin Moyer, PSWCD Chair, for his 25 years of service to the PSWCD Board. Also recognized was Dr. Wilkie Chaffin, former PSWCD Treasurer, for 20 years of service. Dr. Chaffin lost his battle with cancer in late November.
PITTSYLVANIA SWCD

Pittsylvania SWCD has been continually working with producers and contractors as they work on completing projects. We are holding a second round of approvals on February 26th. Staff are also working closely with producers that are finishing up FY15 exclusion projects; these are all scheduled to be checked out and paid by June 30, 2021.

Cutler Blankenship is working on expanding education programs that Pittsylvania SWCD offers and worked with several elementary schools to distribute an “earth buddy” activity for the county’s students. She is currently working with teacher to offer virtual lessons and programs as well as working on future activities to take to schools for students.
ROBERT E LEE SWCD

Robert E Lee has been busy following up on projects and Dams. The Dams have held up well to the abundance of rainfall, ice and snow received. Outreach for this year’s Photo Contest and Poster Contest has been submitted to our area Public and Private Schools, as well as posted in our Districts Libraries. Scholarship information has been submitted to our local Schools Counseling offices, Ag and Science teachers. Scholarship Flyers are posted at our Districts Libraries.

We have had some promising inquiries on the Scholarship we offer from the public. Outreach continues with our Local Libraries and I am working on a Pollinator Project to be provided in March. Facebook posts are being made and I enjoy looking at all of the videos from our other Districts. Everyone is doing a great job with their videos and I enjoy posting them on our Facebook page.

Robert E Lee currently has an opening for an Education Specialist.

Jonathan, Kyle and Cindy wish everyone well.

SOUTHSIDE SWCD

Southside SWCD is looking forward to spring! The February Ice Storm kept us down for a few days with severe tree damage in both Charlotte and Lunenburg Counties. We are glad to see warmer weather on the horizon. We are closing out some of our VACS projects and working with producers for the upcoming cost-share year.

Since November, we lent out some of our education kits and provided resources to teachers that would normally request us in the classroom. We created a video about watersheds using the Enviroscape Model, requested by Randolph-Henry HS, that is available for all of our schools. We have missed in person sessions with the students, but in the meantime, doing what we can to help school staff with resources we keep in house and directing staff in the right direction to help keep learning fun.

We will be conducting annual inspections on the 12 Roanoke Creek watershed dams during the spring. Annual mowing and general maintenance will take place in May. Our trapper has removed 3 beaver so far at Roanoke Creek Dam 67 and we have him patrolling all twelve dams.

The Area 4/5 Virtual Envirothon Competition is coming up! The Virtual Area Training will take place on March 12, 2021 and the competition will be held virtually the week of April 19-25th. Thank you to Piedmont, Peter Francisco and Blue Ridge SWCD’s with assisting us with the task of finding judges and presenters. Many thanks go to Bonnie Mahl and the VASWCD for training and advice to put this competition in motion. We wish our teams LOTS of luck!

We hope everyone in all SWCD’s are staying safe and well.
Area V Meeting – March 3, 2021

Lake Country SWCD

DCR Grant Agreement Policies/Reporting
District mailed a survey to 100+ participants for our Strategic planning process. Participants return the survey with their input. We processed the information as we prepared our new plan.
Lake Country SWCD’s Strategic Plan was approved during January 2021 Board meeting.
2021 Annual Plan of Operation was Board approved during January Board meeting.
2021 Associated Directors appointed and approved.
2021 Committee members have been appointed.
2nd Quarterly Reports sent to DCR 1/5/2021

2020 Income Tax 2020 Reporting
Tax Credit Certificates and Tax Credit letters were mailed to participants 1/19/2021
1099G Tax Forms were mailed to IRS and participants 1/19/2021

Local County Funding Reporting
District reports were presented to the County of Mecklenburg and County of Brunswick and the District received FY21 funds from each County.

2021 Ag Stewardship Act Contact Appointees
ASA appointments were assigned and board approved.

OCB Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program
To date 1.11.2021, we have obligated $831,013.00 in cost-share funds and we need more funds. The District is short of funding for the extensive 2021 cover crop sign-up. In a second round of DCR funding, the District received an additional amount of cost-share $176,397, we were able to approve a small portion of cover-crop sign-up for twelve applications. This took considerable time to process and rank the applications and instances in order to allocate the additional funding. It is very frustrating to have so much interest in our best management practice programs, the request, and lack funding to help the landowners.

Providing No-Till Drill and Manure Spreader Rental Equipment
The District has four no-till drills and one manure spreader. The staff is busy with providing quotes to the board members in the process for equipment upgrade. We are getting prepared for Spring!!!

Erosion & Sediment Plans Reviewed and Board Approved & Conservation Plans Written/Bd Approved
Ten Erosion and Sediment Control Plan submittal for Lake Country SWCD Board approval for 2nd quarter. Twenty-Two Conservation Plans written and board approved for 2nd quarter.
Lake Country SWCD, continued

**Tire Recycle Reschedule**
Due to COVID, we postponed our tire recycle pick-up. We have clients waiting for us to schedule a date. We will have two/three tractor truck loads when the weather breaks and hopefully COVID will also. The work group that helps us load tires can’t participate because of COVID.
BLUE RIDGE SWCD

Administrative:

I. The District is waiting to hear back from Clifton, Larson & Allen, LLP regarding the district audit conducted last quarter.
   i. We look forward to the report from the auditors in the near future.

Conservation:

I. VCAP
   a. VEE (Virginia Environmental Endowment) planning on piloting dedicated funding for VCAP in the four MVP districts.
      i. Promote outreach, marketing and resources to ramp up VCAP
      ii. Priority given to projects located within the MVP localities but with funding available anywhere within the four districts

II. The Blue Ridge SWCD has approved $1,030,060 (24 contracts comprised of 26 instances) to assist those impacted by the Mountain Valley Pipeline. With VACS, 22 contracts have been approved totaling $293,761.65 of which $29,897.38 worth of practices have been completed and paid.

III. Dams
   a. The district board awarded two contracts: One to replace a failed culvert at Leatherwood #4 which impacts road access. This was designed by DCR; two to install remote monitoring at four of the district’s ten watershed dams.
   b. Watershed Dam Rehab: District technical staff is meeting with DCR Engineers on a need-be basis at Leatherwood #5 (Lawrence Dam). At this point in time the design is 30% complete.
IV. Education:

2020 Poster Contest: “Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators”? First place winners and Scout Patches for K-1, 2-3 & 4-6 grades:

a. K-1: Alexander Gabriel Rhodes (First Place: 1st grade)
b. 2-3: Silas Gibson (First Place: 2nd grade) not pictured below
c. 4-6: Eden Joseph Rhodes (First Place: 6th grade)
d. Isaac Rhodes (6th grade-Scout Patch)
e. Tyler Fellows (2nd grade – Scout Patch)-not pictured below

V. Giving Gardens at Booker T. Washington National Monument and Cooper’s Cove Giving Gardens: The gardens continue to do well. They continue to provide an educational site for organic square foot gardening at Booker T. Washington site. Coopers Cove garden accommodates more crops and is used for experimental gardening. Over 7,343 pounds (2,240 lbs. at Booker T. Washington national Monument and 5,103 lbs. at Coopers Cove) of organic produce during fiscal year (2020-2021) to supplement the food pantry at Lake Christian Ministry.

VI. 2020-2021 VASWCD Scholarship/Leo Painter Scholarship

a. Deadline to submit applications to the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District is April 2, 2021
b. Between April 3 – April 15, the Scholarship/Youth Committee will determine the 2020-2021 Scholarship winner(s).
c. District approved scholarship recipient(s) application will be sent to the VASWCD by April 23, 2021.

VII. Watershed Tour for 12 Elementary Schools in Franklin County is currently being developed.
VIII. Virtual Farm Tour:

Farm Tour stop #1 Home Grown Homestead
Farm Tour stop #2 Hatcher Farm (2020 State BMP Forestry Award winner)
Farm Tour stop #3 Dennis Powell (2020 Roanoke River Basin Award and 2020 Clean Water Farm Award)
Farm Tour stop #4 New Dawn Acres scheduled for April 2021

Wendell Brooks - Historian

IX. Envirothon:

The 2021 Envirothon trunks have been upgraded with binoculars and compass (drawing) sets.

2021 Virtual Envirothon
a. Western Virginia Water Authority provided a training video and Special Topic test for this year’s topic “Water Resources: Local Control, Local Solutions”
b. Toast Masters of Franklin County has agreed to provide a training video for instructing Oral Presentation techniques.
c. The Blue Ridge SWCD were among twelve districts who participated in the Mock Envirothon on February 19, 2021 to help test the platform for this year’s Dominion Envirothon. The final results are pending.

X. Awards and Recognition

Daphne W. Jamison – 45 years serving Blue Ridge SWCD
Patricia R. Hodges – 35 years serving Blue Ridge SWCD
Roanoke River Basin and 2020 Clean Water Farm Award - Dennis Powell
BMP Forestry Award - Roger Hatcher

XI. Our PY21 goals would be to allocate all of our cost-share, see the new practices and carry over through to completion, participate on the TAC, get the remote monitoring equipment installed on the dams, and continue with the Leatherwood 5 rehab. I would say as far as needs, it would be what most districts need; more cost-share to cover sign-up and remote monitoring equipment for the rest of our watershed dams.

Respectfully submitted,
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