



# Area II Update



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## Thomas Jefferson SWCD “Helps Guide Solar Development in Louisa”



### **Area II Chairman**

*John Flannery*

*Prince William SWCD*

### **Area II Vice-Chairman**

*Will Linter*

*Prince William SWCD*

### **Potomac Watershed**

**Roundtable Forum**

Virginia has become a hotspot for solar developers looking to convert vast swathes of agricultural and forest lands into fields of solar panels. These projects aim to provide the thousands of megawatts of power needed for the 100percent renewable grid VA lawmakers have pledged to create by 2050 with the passing of the Virginia Clean Economy Act. Our service is no exception to this development. To help plan for smart growth localities are looking at how these projects should be implemented. Louisa Co. has recently put forth a draft Solar Facility Ordinance to help address solar projects in their area. TJSWCD Staff has been working collaboratively with Louisa Co. staff to help provide technical assistance to the county on best environmental practices. One item that has been added as a result of those conversations, has been the implementation of the Virginia Pollinator-Smart Program into the draft ordinance. “Areas where the vegetative buffering will be installed and maintained and areas where pollinator-friendly and wildlife-friendly native plants, shrubs, trees, grasses, forbs, and wildflowers will be installed and maintained following Virginia Pollinator-Smart Program best practices.” We look forward to continuing to provide best information to our localities in helping them find the balance between conservation and development. More information about the Virginia Pollinator Smart program can be found at, <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/pollinator-smart> Photo Credit, <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/image/copleschool-pollinatorsmartsite.png>

## Loudoun SWCD “Education Accomplishments”

### **Youth Conservation Leadership Institute Students in Action...**

We are so proud of our Youth Conservation Leadership Institute participants! Maria McDonald, a 2019-20 participant, and our current participants, Lexi Howard and Charles Robertello, are busy high schoolers who recently stepped up to help Brambleton Middle School's 6th Grade Science students. These amazing conservation leaders took extra time out of their crazy schedules to create inspiring videos about their YCLI conservation efforts for the BMS distance-learning Project-Based Learning (PBL) opportunity centered around the human impact and conservation of watersheds. We wanted to share the awesome spotlight LCPS shown on this project in their recent Business Partnerships Network newsletter. Thank you YCLI students!!

*Below article from LCPS Business Partnerships Network February 2021 Newsletter .*

## FEATURE ARTICLES



### **PROJECT BASED LEARNING**

#### **Brambleton Middle School/6th Grade Science**

6th Grade Science classes completed a distance-learning Project-Based Learning (PBL) opportunity around the human impact on and around the conservation of watersheds. Although unable to implement all steps of PBL, due to distance learning barriers, students focused on contribution, one of the LCPS [5 C's](#). Middle school students didn't have to look far for role models in environmental activism and research: LCPS high school students from Heritage HS, Independence HS, and the Academies of Loudoun created videos to share with students related to their work. [Jennifer Venable](#), Education Specialist with [Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District](#), and her mighty team of Youth Conservation Program participants partnered with the school to make this work come to life. Great work students, Jennifer Venable, Monica Mitchell, Science teacher, and Karin Nixon, Division Instructional Facilitator!

## Culpeper SWCD “Launches Program for Lawn Soil Testing”

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District is working with local Extension agents to make sure homeowners have the knowledge and resources to do their part in preventing lawn fertilizer from going into the Chesapeake Bay. Originally funded by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, participants mail their soil samples to Virginia Tech. The results are sent to the homeowner and CSWCD, allowing the homeowner to make data-informed decisions about lawn management. The Soil Lab gives current rates for pH and macro and micronutrients as well as amounts of lime and fertilizer application for ideal turf growth. After the grant was completed, the Board decided to continue funding the program. In the last year, 79 homeowners have participated in the program. Each test costs \$10. Participants have been surveyed post soil test to evaluate understanding. Most participants found the results easily understandable, appreciate the guidance received and express an intention to use the recommendations moving forward.

### Madison County Farm Recognized with Rappahannock River Grand Basin Award



*Left to Right: Senator Hanger, Darryl Glover (DCR), Paul Goodall, Amy Goodall, Joe Goodall and Gaye Goodall*

Altogether, the Goodall's have protected 28,794 feet of streambank by installing livestock stream exclusion fence, creating nearly 80 acres of riparian buffer. They have planted hardwood and pine trees on 23 acres of the newly established buffer, with an additional 9 acres planned for planting this fall. Along with the fencing, the Goodall's installed alternative water systems to provide the livestock water, including 12 new troughs and one new well. They also installed 3 stream crossings and one heavy use area to protect the streambanks when moving livestock and equipment. Through the stream exclusion fencing projects, the farm established a rotational grazing system and they are currently working to improve the soil and pasture health through soil testing and enhanced management. Additionally, the family has and follows a Forest Stewardship Plan from the Department of Forestry and is enrolled in the VA Tree Program to manage and maintain the existing 160 acres of established forest land on the property. As well, the Goodall's have recently put the farm into an Agricultural Land Easement and received their centennial farm status for farming the land since 1906.

The Goodall family recently received both the Madison County Clean Water Farm Award and the Rappahannock River Grand Basin Clean Water Farm Award.

