Area III Report
Fall 2022

Area III Chair
Anne-Marie Leake
Henricopolis SWCD

Area III Vice-Chair
Robert Pickett
Northern Neck SWCD
NNSWCD OPEN HOUSE
Wednesday, July 6, 2022
10AM - 2PM
5585 Richmond Road
Warsaw, VA 22572

We help you do your share.

Local Administration:
The VACS Program is administered locally by the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District (NNSWCD).
The VACS Program year begins July 1st and demand for assistance can be great, so timely applications are encouraged.

PY23 VACS Sign-Ups:
Tuesday, July 5th – Friday, August 12th, 2022
APPOINTMENT REQUIRED = WALK-INS NOT ACCEPTED
Call to schedule your appointment: (540) 313-9102, x133

Practices that may be funded:
- Controlling erosion
- Nutrient testing and nutrient application systems
- Cover crops
- Developing nutrient plan
- Building living easements
- Protecting wetlands
- Establishing riparian buffer
- Managing nutrients, including animal waste

Tax Credits
State income tax credits are available for the purchase and use of certain conservation equipment and for specified best management practices.

Eligibility
Individuals, partnerships, corporations, trusts or other businesses operating farms in Virginia may qualify for cost-share assistance.

- Projects must:
  - Be approved in advance by your local soil and water conservation district board.
  - Meet federal specifications of the VACS Program.
  - Pass a field inspection, if one is required, prior to receiving payment.
  - Subject to audit with credit throughout the project period.

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<tr>
<th>PRACTICE</th>
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<td>CC-CNT</td>
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PY23 VACS TOTALS: $5,526,149.58 $5,531,185.90

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<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>ALLOCATION:</th>
<th>SIGN-UP:</th>
<th>ROUND 1 APPROVALS:</th>
<th>REMAINING FUNDS:</th>
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<td>FY23 VACS</td>
<td>$4,925,144.08</td>
<td>$6,326,149.59</td>
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For more than 40 years, the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts has sponsored a week-long summer conservation camp for Virginia high school students (currently enrolled in grades 9th-12th) on the campus of Virginia Tech. The program brings together about 70 interested students for a week of learning about Virginia’s natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Virginia Tech. Most of the instruction is hands-on and outdoors.

This year, Youth Conservation Camp was held July 10-16th. Hanover-Caroline SWCD conservation specialists, Kelsey Williams and Kemper Marable, both served as energetic camp counselors this year. The District was also proud to sponsor a Caroline County camper, Elijah Usher, who, according to Marable, "was very loved and enjoyed by all the campers and counselors alike."

VA SWCD’s education and training coordinator, Maura Christian, praised the District’s contribution and specifically Marable and William’s participation. "Both Kemper and Kelsey were a huge asset to camp...their willingness to serve as counselors again demonstrates their dedication to the promotion of stewardship and conservation of natural resources and leadership skills...a camper wrote in their evaluation that YCC was 'one of the greatest experiences of my life,' and another wrote that this experience helped them 'think deeper into future college majors.' Youth Conservation Camp would not be a success without great counselors like Kemper and Kelsey," she said.

Scholarship funding to cover the registration fee for next year’s YCC will be available from Hanover-Caroline Soil & Water Conservation District for up to five local high school students. For an application, please email Karen Fetty in January, 2023.
NOAA B-WET-FUNDED GRANT AWARDED TO HANOVER-CAROLINE SWCD FOR INNOVATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PROJECT

NOAA’S Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program is an environmental education program that promotes place-based experiential learning for K–12 students and related professional development for teachers. B-WET fosters the growth of new, innovative programs and encourages capacity-building and environmental education partnerships.

Working together with Caroline, Essex, and Middlesex public school districts, Hanover-Caroline SWCD and key partners, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Friends of the Rappahannock, will bring an innovative approach for advancing environmental literacy to the diverse communities of Caroline, Essex, and Middlesex counties in Virginia.

The two-year project will result in systemic Environmental Literacy Plans (ELPs) in each school district that leverage community-based resources for interdisciplinary Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences and student-led action projects.

For more information about this exciting collaborative project and to learn how your community or business can be involved, please contact District education specialist, Karen Fetty, at kifetty@hanovercounty.gov. And please stay tuned for for progress reports and upcoming opportunities for engagement!
Agricultural Incentive Programs

The Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost Share Program is currently open for sign up. All eligible applications will be considered and any approvals will be made during monthly Board meetings in accordance with the primary and secondary considerations that have been approved by the District Board.

Community Outreach

Henricopolis joined numerous Henrico County agencies in the Henrico County Schools Back to School Night where 400 new teachers and 2000 families were served and 1000 backpacks were given away. Henricopolis gave away 200 gift bags.

In Person School Programs Are Back

Henricopolis will resume In-Person classroom programs with the 2022 Fall Semester. A license plate grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund will help fund watershed education for underserved elementary schools in the County.

We Love Our Volunteers

Our HAWQS Team volunteers are out testing Henrico waters each month, collecting basic water quality conditions. The team is currently full— but we have macroinvertebrate monitoring and stream cleanups in the fall where more volunteers can help.

Henricopolis Board of Directors

Ed Olsen
Leon App*
Elizabeth Beckley*

Joyce Davis*
Herb Dunford*
Terri Higgins*
Jon Hruska*

*Associate Director
Three Rivers SWCD hosted a Middle Peninsula Producer Conference on July 20, 2022 with 102 Producers in attendance. The evening consisted of a catered BBQ dinner with a wide array of informational speakers. Speakers included:

Robert Bland, Three Rivers SWCD Chair
Waring Baylor & Sarah Cole, TRSWCD
(New Whole Farm Approach BMP’s & VACS Cost Share Program Details)

Amy Walker, DCR
(Nutrient Reduction Goals Met through WFA Pilot Grant)

Andrew Smith, VA Farm Bureau
(Ag Road Law)

Tracy Porter, VSU
(Small Farm Outreach Coordinator)

Joey Reinhardt, Essex Volunteer Fire Department
(Grain Bin Extrication Device)

FY 23 Whole Farm Approach - WFA - NM & WFA-CC

Three Rivers SWCD will once again prioritize both Whole Farm Approach practices in our conservation toolbox. $4.4 million has been allocated to producers for the implementation of BMP’s such as cover crops and precision nutrient management.
Awarded Brenna Hendrix the Martin Menges $1,000.00 college scholarship.

Welcomed Deborah Billings as our new Conservation Office Assistant.

Meredith Rose transitioned into her new role as Conservation/Education Specialist.

Hosted an informational Cost Share breakfast meeting at Nick’s Spaghetti & Steak House in Shacklefords. Attendees were provided VACS and USDA updates and a overview of the Whole Farm Approach Program. Featured speakers included Tracy Porter and Fredrick Custis - Virginia State University - Small Farm Outreach and Robert Harper - Virginia Farm Bureau Grain Division

We have been busy processing VACS and Whole Farm Approach applications.
We’re Hiring

The Colonial SWCD is currently recruiting to fill up to 3 staff positions. Two of the open positions, the VACS Program Technician and Conservation Specialist, are focused on the implementation and administration of the district’s agricultural programs. The candidate(s) selected to fill the job(s) will join a seasoned staff and will work in a team-oriented environment to meet contract deliverables related to VACS, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, and other grants.

The third opening is a newly created position that will be tasked with promoting the work of the district through improved outreach, marketing, and communication. The district’s current strategic plan identifies the need for an increased on-line presence and increased participation in community events. The candidate selected to fill the Outreach Specialist position is expected to have a working knowledge and practical experience in web design and should have excellent communication skills.

Job announcements for each position, including starting salary range, can be found on the Colonial SWCD website at www.ColonialSWCD.org.

Tom Dunlap Leaves Colonial SWCD

Conservation Specialist, Tom Dunlap, left the Colonial SWCD at the end of August to accept the position of the James RIVERKEEPER®, with the James River Association. Tom served the Colonial SWCD for 6 years as a Conservation Specialist, delivering the VACS program and other grant projects including a precision agriculture grant funded by the Virginia Environmental Endowment.

Tom will be missed by district directors, staff, and constituents, and we all wish him the best as he advocates for the James River.
Monacan has been working on VACS for the 2023 program year. This includes the completion of four stream exclusion practices. A high number of cover crop applications were processed. Staff also participated in the Tillage Survey program through DCR.

Our Conservation Specialist II, Betty McCracken, partnered with local groups to provide educational programs for school-age classes. Keith Burgess, the District Manager, assisted DCR staff with a livestock watering systems training.

Staff attended the annual VACDE training at Graves Mountain. Trainings included VACS File Management, Canva and Community Engagement, and As-Built Certification. Two staff were able to participate in-person while two utilized the virtual training option.

Staff have also been working on grant deliverables, including a DCR audit at the end of August. The district has also been working to review and update policies. The board nominated to appoint associate director Sebastian Volcker for the At-Large Director position that will be open in January of 2023. He resides and runs a business in Goochland County. Sebastian has been a very active Monacan board member. The board also appointed Dan Jones as an associate director at the August Board of Directors meeting. He resides in Powhatan County and has been an active member of the community. Monacan board members and staff look forward to what lies ahead.