HEADWATERS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
September 2022

Technical

- Two new Conservation Technicians were recently hired and are busy with training and getting familiar with the VACS and VCAP programs.
- Staff attended the Ag 101 Training at Whiskey Creek Farm in Churchville and the 2022 AREC Field Day at McCormick Farm.
- Several staff attended the VACDE Graves Mountain Training
- Technician staff have been busy with VACS and VCAP projects
- PY22 Financial reports were all completed and submitted

Education

- Underground Classroom visits have been very busy, including summer camp visits and attending several County Fairs (Augusta, Rockingham, Highland and Bath)
- Staff attended annual VAEE Conference at Airfield 4-H Conference Center

Flood Control Dams

- Staff coordinated an on-site demonstration with the RC (Remote Control) Mower Co. at Hearthstone Lake Dam, to show the equipment’s ability to safely mow steep sloped areas
- IFB (Invitation For Bid) was issued for Todd Lake maintenance
- IFB packets for Remote Monitoring being finished up

A remote control mower mows the steep (28%) slope on the backside of Hearthstone Lake Dam
NATURAL BRIDGE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
September 2022

Technical

- Natural Bridge SWCD staff participated in an Agriculture 101 training held at Whiskey Creek Angus in Churchville, VA. Instructor and farm owner Bobby Whitescarver provided participants with knowledge of farm practices while detailing how to positively interact with landowners. Keith Burgess led an informative presentation as well.

- Staff members also attended a Field Day held by Shenandoah Valley Agriculture Research and Extension Center at McCormick Farm on August 3, 2022. Participants were led via hay wagon to each presentation within the farm. There were multiple topics presented to include “Stockers fed sericea lespedeza pellets show reduced impacts of fescue toxicosis” and “Biodiverse forage mixtures for bees and beef cattle.”

- End of Year financial reports were completed and submitted by Administrative Staff by the July 15th deadline.

- Technical staff continue to be busy conducting site visits, planning and estimating future projects to be approved. Several large projects have been wrapped up this quarter.

- A second technical advisory meeting for the Moores and Mill Creek water quality improvement study was held Thursday, August 11, 2022 in the Rockbridge County Virginia Cooperative Extension Office. The purpose of the study is to identify sediment sources and work to find the sediment reductions needed in order to restore the benthic macroinvertebrates.
Megen Dalton and Cory Guilliams, NRCS District Conservationist were featured on the June 28, 2022 televised segment of “Virginia Home Grown” that was aired on PBS. This segment helped acquaint viewers with the many functions of Virginia’s dams, and promoted the numerous benefits these structures provide in controlling runoff and preventing flash floods. Megen and Cory were interviewed by Bridgewater College professor Robyn Puffenbarger at the Hone Quarry Dam in Rockingham County. The interview included some history of when and how the earthworks dams were engineered and built, as well as information on the need to maintain appropriate and adequate vegetation on the dams. Cory also mentioned that some dams provide not just flood control, but are a water source for localities. The segment ended with Megen and Cory noting that dams do more than protect – they provide scenic areas of recreational opportunity for people in the community as well as a place to fish, enjoy a picnic, birdwatch and hike. “Virginia Home Grown” is a monthly gardening program now in its 22nd season on PBS. For those interested in viewing the segment, please contact the District office for the link to this show.

Our team has grown! We are pleased to announce that Shelby Foosness joined the Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District as a Conservation Technician on June 28. In her short time at the District, Shelby has participated in numerous site visits, attended several trainings including the annual VACDE Graves Mountain Training, helped with PSNT collection and analysis, and has spent time observing the many activities that take place at the District.

Pre Side-dress Nitrate Testing (PSNT) season has concluded! Three local college students and one high school student helped staff collect and analyze soil samples this summer. The season ran from the end of May to mid-July. This program continues to support conservation in helping farmers determine the amount of nitrogen needed for side-dress application. 362 samples were collected and analyzed representing over 6,440 acres of corn. 220 of those samples were part of the SVSWCD’s cost share program.
MOUNTAIN CASTLES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
September 2022

Technical

- The district had its first VCAP application approved by the VCAP steering committee
- The district co-hosted an in-person “Program Updates” meeting in Craig County. Other partners included FSA, NRCS, VA DOF, Craig County Farm Bureau, Craig County HS FFA, and the Bank of Botetourt
- Conservation staff have been working with producers on cover crop applications and conducting farm visits with new clients
- Jeff Mutter attended VASWCD training at Graves Mountain Lodge

Education

- Education staff organized a partner networking canoe trip as part of an Upper James RC&D program; 24 people representing 19 organizations attended
- District staff had an outreach booth at the Botetourt County Fair
- Education staff have been preparing for outdoor outreach events for students in grades 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8.
Area I Quarterly Report

Kevin Craun & Rick Shiflet; Area I Co-Chairs

September 15, 2022

MOUNTAIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
September 2022

- Mountain SWCD has been very busy finishing up BMP projects as well as ongoing BMP Projects.
- Staff attending trainings and meetings.
- The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District administers the Bath County Multiflora Eradication program. The program ends September 30th.

The Underground Classroom and staff from Headwaters SWCD were at the Highland County Fair Sept. 3, 2022. Mountain SWCD sponsored the classroom. This hands on learning tool is used to educate youth and adults about soil health and conservation.
Technical

- Technical staff have been busy promoting the cost-share program and taking applications for the 2023 program year. Staff are continuing to work with established landowners, as well as making new connections with local producers.

- LFSWCD will be welcoming two new staff members in September, a Conservation Specialist, and a Conservation Technical Assistant. These two new employees will be essential to meeting the goals set by our $8.36 million VACS allocation.

- Staff have been working to improve our outreach materials to be more interactive with landowners and producers at events. We purchased new display boards, designed posters with VACS and VCAP information, purchased a tablecloth with our logo and display stands for information sheets.

- In addition to revamping our own marketing materials, LFSWCD worked with the Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative, Shenandoah Valley SWCD and Headwaters SWCD to create info sheets that partner agencies can provide to landowners to promote the cost share program and yard signs to acknowledge practices like growing cover crops and structural practices being constructed.

Education

- This summer, LFSWCD co-hosted environmental education summer camps with Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (FNFSR) for two age groups, River Players (6-9 years old) and River Rangers (10-13 years old).

- The District also co-hosted the Fish Fry Float for Father’s Day with FNFSR and the Town of Strasburg. This community event highlights local conservation efforts to protect water quality while offering free activities, like kayaking, and float shuttles to appreciate the river.