

Area I Quarterly Report

Kevin Craun & Rick Shiflet; Area I Co-Chairs

November 15, 2022

HEADWATERS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT December 2022

Technical

- A new Conservation Technician/Animal Waste position was recently filled, and he is busy with training, getting familiar with VACS, and caught up on the many projects we're working on.
- New Technician staff attended the Ag/BMP Tracking, CP Module, Graze300 and VA Resource Trainings.
- Completed all the Cover Crop sign-ups.
- Technical staff will be attending the VASWCD Annual Meeting in December

Education

- Finished up the season for Underground Classroom visits, with (32) visits and over 4,000 visitors
- Started contacting Envirothon Coaches, and recruiting a couple new teams
- Volunteered to assist with VASWCD's Education Committee
- Attended several local FFA programs, including the Augusta-Rockbridge-Highland FFA Federation Banquet
- Prepping for joint exhibit w/NRCS for the 2023 VA Farm Show (January)



Partnered w/the Robert E. Lee SWCD to participate in their Annual Appomattox Railroad



Flood Control Dams

- Working on Remote Monitoring IFB
- Continuing with Fall Maintenance

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SHENANDOAH VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT December 2022

Conservation Program Roll Out

NOVEMBER 10th 2022

Learn about programs and funding opportunities from your local Soil & Water Conservation District

Agenda:
stop in as your schedule allows

5:30-6:30 Meet & Greet with staff

6:30-7:30 Presentation

- SWCD Program Overview
- Soil Health Chat
- Conservation Partner Updates

7:30-8:00 Meet & Greet with staff

Light refreshments provided

Meet us at:
Farm Credit of the Virginias
4646 South Valley Pike
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Don't attend the meeting? Scan this QR Code with your phone and read about our program on the website!

SVSWCD held two Conservation Program Roll Out events for producers in November. The first event took place on November 2 in Page County at the Stanley Fire Department, and the second event was held on November 10 in Rockingham County at Farm Credit of the Virginias. SVSWCD set up displays and provided information about programs and funding opportunities that are available through the District. These gatherings included a time to meet District Staff and a one-hour presentation that included a VACS program overview, a soil health chat, updates from our Partners in Conservation, and a time for questions and answers.

Our team has grown again! We are pleased to announce that Chris Coggin joined the



Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District as a Conservation Technician on October 31. In his short time at the District, Chris has participated in numerous site visits, both of the District's Outreach Events, attended several trainings including a Soil Health Dig & Demo, and has spent time observing the many activities that take place at the District.



District staff attended JMU Arboretum's Harvest Fest on October 22. Staff presented a lesson on soil and provided accompanying learning activities. In addition, staff provided soil related activities for children including soil painting and a station to make dirt babies.

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MOUNTAIN CASTLES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT December 2022

- The district co-hosted an in-person “Program Updates” meeting in Botetourt County. Other partners included FSA, NRCS, VA DOF, VSU Small Farm Outreach Program, Lord Botetourt HS FFA, and the Bank of Botetourt
- Conservation staff have been conducting farm visits, writing conservation plans, and completing end-of-lifespan verifications
- Education staff organized multiple field experiences for Botetourt County students this quarter, including a 2nd grade “Land Day” at Camp Bethel, a 6th grade field experience on Catawba Creek, a 7th grade paddle on the James River, and an 8th grade field trip to Carvins Cove. Over 600 students and seven partners participated.
- District Coordinator Abby Pierson left the district at the end of October to become a Nutrient Management Specialist with DCR



Central Academy Middle School students at the end of their canoe trip on the James River.



Second graders collect sunflower seeds from their school garden to be planted next spring.



Gabriel Irigaray of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission helps 6th graders identify aquatic macroinvertebrates.

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MOUNTAIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT December 2022

- The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District partnered with Virginia Cooperative Extension to hold an Ag/Natural Resources Educational Day for all 5th graders in Alleghany County and the City of Covington. This day included several different stations set up by Master Naturalists, 4-H Center Staff, local farmers and agencies.



- Staff very busy with BMP requests and visits.
- The Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District administers the Bath County Multiflora Eradication program. The program ended September 30th with great success

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NATURAL BRIDGE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT December 2022

- Natural Bridge SWCD staff participated in a Career Day hosted by Boxerwood Education Association on October 3, 2022. The event was held at the Glen Maury Park Pavilion in Buena Vista, Virginia. Partnering Agencies were also present to take advantage of the education outreach opportunity.
- Quarterly financial reports were completed and submitted by Administrative Staff by the October 17th deadline.
- Congratulations to Loughran McCabe, a young man from Rockbridge County, for winning honorable mentions in the Virginia SWCD 2022 photo contest. The photo is titled “Sparring Candy Darters.”
- Technical Staff has completed eight End of Lifespan Verifications and four Spot Check Verifications.
- A Clean Water Farm Award recipient has been selected and the District plans to recognize him during a field day this coming spring.



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LORD FAIRFAX SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT December 2022

Technical Updates

- As of October 2022, the Lord Fairfax District has obligated 32.71% of the \$8.36 million VACS funds. This totals over \$2.73 million for agricultural BMPs. Approved projects include stream exclusions, buffer tree plantings, cropland conversions to hay or pasture fields, manure storage and feeding buildings. The District still has many projects in the pipeline for approval, including cover crops, more buildings and more stream exclusion.
- LFSWCD has also expanded our staff, including a new Conservation Specialist, Shannon Gaffey, and a Conservation Technical Assistant, Sam Shelton.

Education/Information Updates

- Staff attended all Farm Bureau Annual Dinners/Meetings for our four counties (Shenandoah, Warren, Frederick, and Clarke) to talk about the VACS program, provide updates and meet with landowners. This is part of our Ag BMP Outreach Plan each year and has proven effective in keeping positive relationships with landowners and promoting signups.
- LFSWCD recently hosted the Annual Awards Luncheon, a program that has not been provided since 2019. This event recognizes local conservation leaders in our jurisdiction including landowners, farmers, volunteers, and professionals. On November 10th, LFSWCD recognized over 20 individuals/organizations for their conservation work over the last two years.

