



**We work with the people who work the land.**

## **2012 ANNUAL REPORT (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012)**

### **Return on Investment**

The Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia funded by four revenue streams: federal, state and local governments, as well as the private sector. The federal government, through the USDA, provides a full time employee to the Loudoun SWCD at no expense to the locality. The state provides funding for operational expenses, technical assistance and cost share funds. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (BOS) has provided most of the District staff's salaries for over 40 years. The private sector provides funds through the purchase of rain barrels, tree seedlings, the Healthy Waters initiative, and their equity share of the Cost Share Program.

The directors of the Loudoun SWCD are appointed or elected volunteers. Their hundreds of hours of devoted public service are provided at no cost the taxpayers of Loudoun County. Few taxpayers look at local government expenditures as an investment with a tangible Return on Investment (ROI). However, if one were to total revenues assembled by the Loudoun SWCD and divide this amount by the level of County funding, the ROI is astonishing. In spite of drastic cuts in state funding for FY12, the District generated an ROI of \$3.03 for every dollar invested by the Loudoun County BOS.

### **District Conservation Programs**

●Conservation farm/land management plans for farmers and other land users help them implement Ag BMPs designed to reduce non-point source pollution and improve water quality and meet requirements of Federal, State, and local government programs including:

#### **State Programs**

- VA Ag BMP Cost-Share & Tax Credit Program
  - 45 plans on 2382.9 acres
  - 16 livestock watering sites with 30,655 feet of fencing and 29 troughs installed
  - 34,485 feet of streambank protected

#### **Local Programs**

- Small Acreage Grazing Plans (under 5 acres)
- Ag and Forestal Districts Program
- Land Use Tax Valuation Program
- County building permits re: barns, sheds, etc.

### Federal Programs available through the District

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
- Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
- Wetland Reserve Program

● Technical assistance is provided to landowners/users re: natural resources conservation.

● Administer VA Ag BMP Cost-Share Program to help reimburse farmers and land users for costs incurred in implementing BMPs designed to improve the quality and quantity of surface and ground water, control point source and nonpoint source pollution, and prevent erosion.

VA Ag BMP Cost-Share paid 2012: **\$357,470.85**, including carryover funds.

● Monitor activities and legislation affecting local agricultural and conservation issues VASWCD, NACD, federal, local, state government.

● Work with environmentally oriented groups and organizations to monitor streams, encourage good soil and water conservation habits and appreciation of the environment:

Ag and Forestal District Committee (ADAC)

B&D's Environmental Review Tem (ERT)

Potomac Council and the Potomac Watershed Roundtable

Rural Economic Development Committee (REDC)

Water Review Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC)

Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA)

### **Outreach and Education**

Loudoun County's diverse population and needs are reflected in Urban Conservation Awareness Programs.

- 8 mini grant proposals, totaling \$4,000, were awarded to the following schools: Park View High School, Potowmack Elementary, Briar Woods High School, Newton-Lee Elementary School, Mountain View Elementary, Tuscarora High School, Newton Lee High School and Mountain View Elementary School.
- A Youth Conservation Camp Scholarships of \$400 each was awarded to a Leesburg student to attend Youth Conservation Camp.
- 5 Rain Barrel Workshops were held in Leesburg, Purcellville and Lovettsville.
- A Twilight Dinner Meeting for Horse Owners was held on March 15, 2012 at the Taintor Farm in Waterford, Virginia. Attendees saw fencing and a water system installed with LSWCD cost share funds.
- The Riparian Buffer Tree-Planting Workshop was held on February 15th. The unique no agricultural lands riparian buffer tree-planting project is funded by Loudoun County and will be administered by the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District. The program was very well received by local landowners.

- Organizational support is provided to Loudoun Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations.
- 9 Earth Day Awards totaling \$900 were awarded to science clubs at Loudoun County high schools, middle schools and elementary schools.
- 17 environmental education classroom presentations were provided to elementary schools around the county.
- Technical assistance was provided to watershed committees and other environmental groups.
- At 4-H Ag Field Day, students participated in a soil horizon activity, constructed soil tubes and enjoyed the Soil Tunnel.
- Suburban homeowner's environmental concerns were addressed with information provided to HOA's, and other civic groups.
- Educational materials are provided free of charge to teachers for special programs such as Soil and Water Stewardship week.
- Articles to local news media are prepared and submitted as needed. District information is now included on the District website, [www.loudounsoilandwater.org](http://www.loudounsoilandwater.org) and the District Facebook page.