



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

(July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014)

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, 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. **The District generated an ROI of \$2.87 for every dollar invested by the Loudoun County BOS.**

District Conservation Programs

- Provide technical assistance to landowners/users re: natural resources conservation.
- Monitor activities and legislation affecting local agricultural and conservation issues including Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD), National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), federal, local, state government.
- 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.

Federal Programs available through the District

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

State Programs available through the District

VA Ag BMP Cost-Share & Tax Credit Program: \$381,692.30 paid for:

- 50,759' of streamside fencing and 30 troughs installed for 20 property owners.
- 10,075' of streamside fencing maintenance for 6 property owners.
- 427 acres of cover crops and 22 acres converted from crops to grass.

Local Programs available in partnership with Loudoun County

Loudoun County funded (75%) cost share: \$18,959.98 paid for:

- 3,029' of streamside fencing and 2 troughs installed for 2 property owners.
- 1,660' of streamside fencing maintenance for 1 property owner.

Implemented County-funded small horse farm cost-share program to mirror state Ag BMP program. Funding for these practices has been fully obligated and additional funding has been requested.

- Land Use Tax Valuation Program - Conservation Plans written for approximately 26 property owners on 220 acres in Loudoun County in FY14.
- Small acreage livestock farm plans (Kris to supply #).
- Conducted one year inspections of non-ag riparian planting projects and all five projects are successful and in compliance.

Loudoun SWCD works locally 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)
Building & Development's Environmental Review Team (ERT)
Chesapeake Bay TMDL WIP Technical Advisory Committee
Potomac Council and the Potomac Watershed Roundtable
Regional Agricultural Working Group
Rural Economic Development Committee (REDC)
Water Review Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC)
Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA)
Upper Broad Run Watershed Project
Chair of VASWCD Marketing/Public Relations Committee
Chair of VASWCD Education Committee

The VASWCD Area II Spring Meeting was hosted by LSWCD at Leesburg Ida Lee Park conference facilities.

Education and Outreach

Contributions to Loudoun County Schools -

- 5 mini grant proposals, totaling \$2,500, were awarded to the following schools: Potowmack Elementary School, J. Michael Lunsford Middle School, Creighton's Corner Elementary, Briar Woods High School and The Hill School.
- Soil & Water Stewardship Week materials were provided free of charge to 35 Loudoun County schools.
- Staff provided watershed education presentations for approximately 300 students around the county.

- Soil, forestry and water quality activities were presented at the Monroe Technology Center Summer Camp.
- Staff represented the District at the Loudoun County 4-H Agricultural Field Day at Temple Hall Farm.
- Staff were judges at the Regional Science Fair at Tuscarora High School and provided three environmental awards to students for projects related to water quality and natural resources.

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

- Approximately \$70,000 was paid in Non-Agricultural tree plantings.
- Sponsored and participated in the LESA Teacher expo for LCPS teachers.
- Staff provided an Arbor Day Workshop at the Ashburn Library and Watershed Education programs for Girl Scout troops.
- 5 Rain Barrel Workshops were held in Lovettsville and Leesburg.
- Riparian Buffer Workshops were held as part of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Grant Program.
- Organizational support is provided to Loudoun Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations.
- Technical assistance was provided to watershed committees and other environmental groups.
- Staff presented at the Main Street Agricultural Event at the Heritage Farm Museum.

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors supports the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation through an annual grant and provides administrative assistance provided by the Department of Financial Services, Division of Payroll and Benefits, to administer payroll and benefit matters.

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Articles to local news media are prepared and submitted as needed. District information is now included on the District website, www.loudounsoilandwater.org and the District Facebook page.