

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Directors

- James Christian, Chairman
- James Wylie, Vice Chairman
- John Flannery, Treasurer
- Marina Schumacher, Director
- James Hilleary, Director

Associate Directors

- Robin Bartok
- Barbara Christian
- Holly Flannery
- Terri Higgins
- Gary Hornbaker
- Tia Walbridge

LSWCD Staff

- Suzanne Brown, District Operations Manager
- Charlotte DeMolay, Education Specialist
- Kris Dennen, Program Assistant
- Jay Frankenfield, Conservation Specialist II
- Peter Holden, District Financial Officer
- Pat McIlvaine, Conservation Specialist III
- Chris Van Vlack, Urban/Ag Specialist

On behalf of the Directors and staff of the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, I am pleased to present our 2018 Annual Report (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018). The report provides an overview of our programs as well as a summary of our accomplishments during the past year.

In FY18, a new initiative for the District was the Septic Tank Pumpout Rebate Program. This program provided financial incentives to homeowners that were in need of a septic tank pumpout. The County partnered with the District by sending out postcards to residents to promote the program. In addition, this program assisted the Loudoun County health department in updating septic maintenance records. The funds for this project were provided through the Virginia Conservation Assistance program and the state BMP verification funds. Technical Assistance dollars were provided for both of these projects and the District reinvested those dollars in directly promoting conservation to Loudoun landowners.

The Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) Cost-Share Program continues to be a large component of District work. Although only part of a much larger cooperative effort of local, state, and federal agencies to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, the program does much to help agricultural operators and landowners implement BMPs specifically designed to improve water quality and prevent erosion.

The District, in partnership with Loudoun County, also offers cost-share funding for urban practices such as tree planting. In addition, the county funds the District's small acreage and horse farm cost share program for farms not eligible for the state Ag BMP Program.

This year saw tremendous growth in the District Education program. Our Education Specialist took conservation education to many Loudoun schools, developed and distributed a quarterly conservation education newsletter, and recruited and promoted the District's first Dominion Envirothon team. She has also become the co-chair of the Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance promoting environmental education regionally.

In closing, I wish to thank the County of Loudoun, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, VA. Coop. Extension Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, and the many individuals who worked with us during the past year. The work of conservation in the County is great, but with the assistance of our partners, we are making great strides in the conservation of our soil and water resources.

Sincerely,

James B. Christian
Chairman

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS VIRGINIA AG BMP COST SHARE

*> (Top right)
Cost Share fence
and pipeline under
construction to pro-
tect stream and
wetland near
Round Hill.*

*(Bottom right)
Cost Share pipe-
line and frost free
water trough in-
stalled with the as-
sistance of AG
BMP cost share
funds.*

- 479,913.66 paid to local landowners in FY2018.
- 12 SL-6 practices installed with 55,437' of fencing.
- 4 WP-2 practices installed with 2368' of fencing..
- 2 LE-2 buffers with 2815' of fencing.
- 15 CCI-SE-1 practices installed with 40,703' of streambank protected.
- 8 SL-8B, SL-8, and SL-8H practices installing 614.1 acres of grass and cover crops.



*> Woven wire
stream exclusion
fencing installed
with the Loudoun
County funded
Horse Farm cost
share program
near Purcellville*

LOUDOUN COUNTY COST SHARE PROGRAM



- \$22,311.50 paid to local land owners in FY2018.
- 4 SL-6 installed with 1,428' feet of fencing.
- 4 CCI-SE-1 installed on 5,935' feet of streambank protected.

LAND USE TAX PROGRAM

The District writes conservation plans for those enrolled in the Land Use Tax program. As of June 30, 2018, 72,948 acres in Loudoun County are included in Conservation Plans that are maintained for 2,407 Loudoun County landowners. The District also writes farm plans required for residents building barns and other agricultural structures as well as those looking to enter an Ag and Forestal District. In addition, the District provides farm plans for landowners wishing to keep livestock on parcels under 5 acres. The District farm plans give basic rule of thumb management techniques and can help direct landowners to other resources available to the agricultural community in Loudoun.

URBAN CONSERVATION

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



In FY 2018, LSWCD staff assisted with the installation of 14 Virginia Conservation Assistance Program projects. These non-agricultural projects include practices like conversion of turf grass to meadow or tree plantings, removal of impervious surfaces and installation of permeable pavement, large scale rainwater harvesting, and dry wells.

Similar to the Agricultural Best Management Practices Program, participants receive cost share funds in exchange for agreeing to maintain the practice for 10 years. The practices reduce stormwater run-off, create wildlife habitat, and help reduce nutrient and sediment loads to Loudoun's streams.

Participants in the VCAP program within Loudoun have included individual homeowners, HOAs, as well as a school. More information about the VCAP program can be found at www.vaswcd.org/vcap.

In addition, the District continued its Non-Agricultural Riparian Buffer Planting program with the planting of two sites within the Willowsford neighborhood.



“Featured here (top left) Willowsford’s Wetland Meadow VCAP project planted adjacent to Founders Drive.

Featured below (bottom right) is a completed permeable driveway in Leesburg. The VCAP program assisted with converting this driveway from traditional asphalt to permeable pavement.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District (LSWCD) 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 brought in to Loudoun County from the state by the Loudoun SWCD and divide this amount by the level of County funding, the ROI is astonishing. This generated an ROI of **\$3.00** for every dollar invested by the Loudoun County BOS in FY 2018.

“For every dollar invested by the Loudoun Board of Supervisors, \$3.00 is generated from other sources of income.”



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The LSWCD website, is maintained to inform and educate the public about District activities. District activities are also publicized on the District Facebook page. Visit www.lswcd.org.

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors supports the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District through an annual grant and provides administrative assistance 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.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

RAIN BARRELS, CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS, AND MORE

- As of June 30, 2018, staff presented 67 conservation education programs for approximately 1808 students at 9 Loudoun County elementary schools and several community groups.
- The use of 16 conservation “check-out” trunks reached 428 students.
- Staff presented 5 Rain Barrel workshops: 1 in Lovettsville and 4 in Leesburg, with 54 participants.
- Staff assisted with 2 Riparian Workshop field trips held with Monroe Technology Center students.
- Staff mentored 2 students for the Youth Conservation Leadership Institute.
- Staff recruited and assisted 2 teams for the Area II Envirothon. Staff and Director also volunteered at the competition as judges and assistants.
- Staff participated in the following special events: “Hail to the Trail in Purcellville”, Unison Heritage Day, Geology Rocks program at Rust Library, Leesburg Flower and Garden Festival.
- Staff judged the Regional Science and Engineering Fair held at Riverside high School. Four Science Fair Awards, totaling \$400, were awarded to students for projects related to water quality, natural resource conservation and a “best project” award.
- Staff continues to support and collaborate with Loudoun Community groups through co-chairing LESA.
- Staff served on the Leesburg-Loudoun Arbor Day committee and the District sponsored the Annual Arbor Day celebration..
- Six mini-grants totaling approximately \$2800 were awarded to teachers at Blue Ridge Middle school, Embark Coop., Hillsboro Charter school, Park View High school, J.L. Simpson Middle School, and Sugarland Middle School.
- Staff presented at the Healthy Lands for Healthy Horses Programs in cooperation with Virginia Tech/Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center and Northern Virginia SWCD.
- Staff increased communication with LCPS and other education leaders through a quarterly newsletter.
- Staff continues to promote and support quality conservation education at the state level through participation on the Board of the Virginia Association of Environmental educators.



Chairman Christian and Associate Director Christian present District Awards at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair.

NEW CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

SEPTIC TANK PUMPOUT REBATE PROGRAM

The Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District continues to offer \$50 rebates to Loudoun landowners for pumping out their septic tanks. To date, we have issued 462 rebates, totaling \$23,100. The funds used to start the Septic Tank Pump-Out Rebate Program project came from technical assistance money from VCAP and the BMP verifications. Pump outs are verified in the online RME system before rebates are issued. This ensures that the pump out is recorded, proving that the landowner is meeting the Loudoun County requirement of having their tanks pumped out once every five years. Proper septic system use and routine care are vital to protecting public health, preserving our groundwater, lakes, streams and waterways, and avoiding costly repairs that can result from neglect.

In many cases septic system failures or evidence of possible future failures are discovered during the pump out process. These can include cracks in the tank, unusual effluent in the tank, or tree root intrusions into the tank. By regularly pumping and inspecting the tank and other aspects of the septic system, problems can be addressed before potential surface or groundwater pollution takes place.

The Septic pump out rebate program also allows the District to make landowners aware of other conservation programs available from the District that they might be able to utilize on their property to further protect our environmental resources in Loudoun. These include our Agricultural Best Management Practices Program, the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program, our Horse Farm cost share programs, and general ability to provide free conservation advice.



CONSERVATION EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Loudoun At Dominion Energy Envirothon

For the first time in many years Loudoun had teams at the Area II Dominion Envirothon competition. Education Specialist, Charlotte DeMolay, started her campaign for teams early in the fall beginning with articles in the Conservation Education quarterly newsletter and direct emails to science contacts in the school district. Next she gave a 10 minute talk to teachers before a science contact meeting at their administration building. She followed up afterwards by sending Envirothon postcards and brochures through the county-mail system to each high school.

Three schools expressed interest in creating a team. As an incentive for these teachers, their fees and any interested students' fees to the Area II training at Graves Mountain was paid through the grant provided by VASCWD. After the training, two schools were able to both create full teams and have teachers that were willing to coach them. The remainder of the grant plus money approved by our board was used to create four training trunks plus a special topics folder for the teams to rotate and share.



Heritage and Rock Ridge High School teams joined other teams from Area II at Fauquier Education Farm on April 25th. During a very wet day, teams rotated through their outdoor test sites and presented their oral presentation to a panel of judges.

Youth Conservation Leadership Institute Participants

The VASWCD's Youth Conservation Leadership Institute (YCLI) is a recognition program for students that focuses on volunteer service and environmental stewardship. YCLI began as an expansion of Youth Conservation Camp in an effort to keep students engaged in the environmental topics introduced at camp. YCLI offers high school students interested in environmental conservation and stewardship an opportunity to build leadership skills and connect with local mentors involved with environmental issues.

This year our District mentored two students through the program. Each participant completed required reading and developed their own conservation project. The projects completed by the students were a tree planting project and a wetland cleanup. Both students engaged not only our District employees and the Board but also connected with their school and community leaders to assist with planning and executing their visions.

