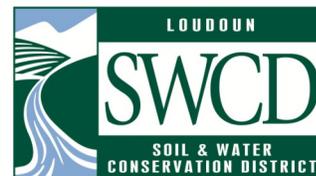


2020 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

Directors

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

Associate Directors

- Robin Bartok
- Barbara Christian
- Holly Flannery
- Terri Higgins
- Tia Walbridge
- James Wylie

LSWCD Staff

- Suzanne Brown, District Operations Manager
- 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
- Jennifer Venable, Education Specialist

On behalf of the Directors and staff of the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, I am pleased to present our 2020 Annual Report (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020). The report provides an overview of our programs as well as a summary of our accomplishments during the year.

For decades, LSWCD has always taken full advantage of the cost share dollars allocated to the District from the Commonwealth of Virginia to implement the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Program, but FY2020 was an extraordinary year.

The Virginia Ag BMP Cost share Program financially and administratively assists Ag producers with installing practices that will help protect, clean up and keep clean Loudoun's streams, ponds, and wetlands, and further downstream, the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. Ag producers can choose from a variety of practices including installing live-stock fencing to keep farm animals out of surface water, installing frost free water troughs to supply clean drinking water to the animals, and planting cover crops to help trap nutrients and reduce soil erosion during the winter months.

In FY2020 LSWCD allocated over \$1,300,000.00 in state dollars to Loudoun Ag producers to assist with the installation of these and other conservation practices, far exceeding any other annual total in the history of the LSWCD. That number is a testament to the partnership LSWCD has forged with Loudoun producers and landowners and their commitment to protecting Loudoun's natural resources.

Loudoun also allocated \$50,821.14 for similar practices to small acreage and non-income producing horse farms that aren't eligible for state cost share dollars. LSWCD's County Funded Horse and Small Farm Cost Share Program has been a successful partnership between the District and the County to help landowners with projects that might otherwise not be possible. Since Loudoun has the largest equine population in the Commonwealth, assisting our equine producers, whatever the size or type of their operation, is critical!

This year saw continued growth in the District School Education program. Our Education Specialist began the year presenting in class conservation education to students and as the schools closed (due to the pandemic), adapted the programs to meeting the needs of students. Awareness of the District's online resources was increased and videos were created to help engage students virtually. She has also assisted in the online marketing efforts to our adult clients to ensure they are aware of the cost-share programs available to Loudoun residents.

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 need for conservation in the County is great, and increases every year. With the assistance of our partners, we continue to make 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) LSWCD provided funding for stream fencing and a frost free water trough for this horse operation near Morrisonville.

> (LSWCD provided funding for pond fencing through our County funded horse and small farm program at this small pig farm near Wheatland.

- \$821,933.13 paid to local landowners in FY20.
- 25 SL-6 and SL-7 practices installed with 57,762' of fencing.
- 3 WP-2 practices installed with 8,521' of fencing.
- 16 CCI-SE-1 practices installed with 38,684' of streambank protected.
- 21 SL-8B, SL-8, SL-8H, and SL-1 practices installing 1,539.2 acres of grass and cover crops.



LOUDOUN COUNTY COST SHARE PROGRAM



- \$32,034.24 paid to local landowners in FY2020.
- 4 SL-6 installed with 1,539 feet of fencing.
- 5 CCI-SE-1 installed on 7,500' of streambank protected.
- 3 WP-2 w/1925' fence.

CONSERVATION FARM PLAN ASSISTANCE

LSWCD currently maintains farm plan assistance files for over 1500 Loudoun landowners. These plans serve a number of purposes; for some, the plans meet a requirement for entering the County's Ag and Forestal Districts or Land Use Tax Assessment program for Open Space or Agricultural Land Use. For others, the plans were required for documenting an agricultural operation prior to acquiring a zoning permit for building a barn or other ag structure.

More recently, plans have been required by Loudoun zoning ordinance for residents looking to keep livestock on properties of under five acres. While these plans were usually completed during an in-person meeting at the District office, with the restrictions put in place during the pandemic, the District now has moved to assisting landowners via phone and email. Despite this, the plans themselves still contain the same sound conservation advice and property maps. Even before the pandemic, backyard poultry had been "trending" in Loudoun, but the advent of quarantine requirements led to many more inquiries regarding keeping chickens, and LSWCD was happy to help! Overall, 43 new Conservation Plans were prepared by LSWCD in FY20.

URBAN CONSERVATION

Despite more limited statewide funding for the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program, LSWCD continued to deliver the Commonwealth’s urban and suburban conservation cost share program to Loudoun residents.

This year the projects included Conservation Landscaping, where bare ground and turf areas are replaced with native plantings to improve water quality as well as Permeable Pavement installation, where traditional asphalt or concrete is replaced with pavers or pavement that allows water to flow through.

In addition to these state programs, LSWCD also delivers our county funded Non-Agricultural Forest Planting program to help reforest turfgrass areas. This year projects were completed and certified for survival in both Cascades HOA in Sterling and in Lucketts in a collaboration with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy. The Forest Planting program can assist with small, non-farm scale tree plantings that private landowners or HOA’s can complete to add forest canopy to their community. Trees help slow and absorb stormwater, trap nutrients and sediment, provide habitat, and replace the need for costly turf grass maintenance. The program also helps Loudoun meet its Chesapeake Bay TMDL goals.



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 2020.

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



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 571-918-4530
www.lswcd.org

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 OUTREACH EDUCATION GROWTH

Despite missing out most of our spring programs due to COVID-19, the LSWCD educational outreach has continued to grow in 2019-20. Educational connections with Loudoun County Public Schools have actually increased despite the year being cut short. In addition to presentations in the classroom, participating with community organization events, such as Scouting, Career Day/Info events and Fall Festivals (Hail to the Trail, Ayrshire Farm Fall Festival), have helped to spread the “conservation word”.

	Program Presentations	Program Checkouts	Youths Reached	Adults Reached	Storm Drains Marked
2017-18	51	16	1808	91	6
2018-19	86	46	2903	251	140
2019-20	116	3	3011	291	130

Our quarterly Conservation Education newsletter continues to be a valuable resource to help advertise our education programs as well. COVID-19 has created a new focus on utilizing online resources to pursue Education. Learning how to improve outreach with social media and our website has allowed us to create and share conservation topics and resources to a broader audience.



CONSERVATION EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Conservation Leadership Institute (YCLI)

Meet Maria McDonald, a 2019-20 YCLI participant from Loudoun County. Maria chose to TAKE ACTION in her community based on her concern for the local environment through her Water Quality monitoring project. Even after COVID-19 prevented the YCLI Recognition Banquet from happening, Maria stayed flexible and presented her important work to an online audience. 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. Students choose projects of their interest to carry out in their community. We love being able to connect with our High School Students through this opportunity!



Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon

LSWCD continues to support the Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon program. A new team was created this year with students from the Academies of Loudoun. LSWCD attended the Graves Mountain Training for Area II in support of this new team and coach. We also coordinated local Forestry training with Kyle Dingus (Loudoun County Urban Forester), as well as assisted in scheduling the students for Soils and Aquatics training with NVSWCD. LSWCD arranged a tour with Loudoun Water for students as well, but unfortunately it had to be canceled at the last minute due to COVID-19. LSWCD also supported our local program by designing and coordinating the Area II T-shirt, providing training trunks to the students and participating in Q and A sessions with the team. The Envirothon students worked hard to prepare for the competition in the spring, only to have it canceled. When VASWCD offered an online Natural Resource competition in its place, many students from this team competed and finished in the Top Ten of many testing categories

WHAT DO THESE STUDENTS HAVE IN COMMON?

TOP TEN FINALISTS!!!

MARIA MCDONALD JUNIOR (AOS) Aquatics	TYCHO SVOBODA SENIOR (AET) Aquatics Wildlife	AMIKA KAPOOR SOPHMORE (AET) Aquatics Wildlife Water Resource Management	ISHA SHAH SOPHMORE (AET) Forestry	SABRINA YU SOPHMORE (AET) Water Resource Management
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These Academies of Loudoun students all put in a lot of hard work outside of the classroom to learn more about Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatics, Soils and Water Resource Management during the 2019-20 school year in preparation for the ENVIROTHON competition scheduled for April 2020. Their ENVIROTHON team, lead by Lori Stone, AP Environmental Science teacher at AET and Jennifer Hiltner, Research Librarian at the Academies, kept up incredible tenacity after learning the ENVIROTHON competition they had worked so hard to prepare for was cancelled due to COVID-19 by continuing with their pursuit of Natural Resource knowledge and competing in the Virtual Natural Resource Event in June. These sharp environmentalists all scored in the top ten of one or more of the Natural Resource testing categories. CONGRATULATIONS to you all! We appreciate your efforts in learning about the natural world and know you are making a difference in the world!!

INTERESTED in the 2020-21 Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon Competition?
Go to www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/envirothon to learn more.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION HIGHLIGHTS



(Top Left)

LSWCD provided funding for stream fencing for this horse operation near Morrisonville.



>>>> Electro-Braid fencing installed with funding from LSWCD protects a stream on this horse operation near Lucketts.



A newly planted Forested Riparian Buffer on a vegetable and cattle operation in Wheatland installed with funding from LSWCD as part of the Ag BMP Cost-Share Program.

>>>>

“Temporary electric fencing allows dairy goats rotational grazing adjacent to crops at this Lovettsville farm.”

